



**Fund  
Raising**

**Secrets**

**Online**

Alan  
Sharpe,  
CFRE

Attract  
Website  
Visitors

Email  
Newsletter

Acquire  
Supporters

and

Raise  
Funds

Website

with Your

Generate  
Buzz



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## - CHAPTER 1 -

# How to Move Your Website Beyond the “Donate Now” Button

A year and a half ago I conducted an experiment. I went online and visited the websites of 20 leading nonprofits, some of them in Canada and quite a few of them in the United States. They included The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, Amnesty International, Red Cross, Greenpeace, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and the World Wildlife Fund. I made an online donation of \$20 using my credit card. Then I watched my Inbox and I watched my mailbox to see how these organizations would respond.

My findings were startling. Four organizations out of 20 did not thank me for my online gift; some of them never wrote to me again. Seven of them have not written to me in over a year and a half. A few of them have sent me direct mail. But out of a group of 20 organizations that I sent a gift to a year and a half ago, seven have not written to me since, even though I was an online donor.

In this chapter we’re going to look at an overview of what you have to do as an organization to establish a website, set up your email, and win these people to your website and get a donation from them. Over the next seven chapters, we’ll look at this in far more detail, but we’re going to cover the basics now.

### Why you need a donor-centered website right now

I imagine you’re reading this book either because you’re already raising funds online and you’d like to improve your results or you’re thinking of raising funds online and you don’t want to be left behind. I’d just like to encourage you to get online and start raising funds for a number of reasons.

### **An increasing number of people are going online every day**

The first reason is that an increasing number of people are going online every day. We’re finding that the trends in online shopping and online banking are being closely followed by people donating online. People are becoming more comfortable going online to various websites like Amazon and eBay, and giving over their credit card information and buying things over the Net. People are becoming more comfortable going online to do their banking. And we’re finding that as people go online in larger numbers to give merchants their money and to do their banking, increasing numbers of people are also visiting charitable websites and making donations.

The ePhilanthropy Foundation discovered that in the year 2000 in North America, around \$250 million were giving to charity online. And just five years later, that number had risen from \$250 million to \$4.5 billion. If you look at the chart they’ve produced, you see the numbers are going up almost exponentially.

In the U.S. alone, there are over 100 million adults with Internet access. In Canada, it’s about 15 million; it’s half the population. And all of these people are active users of the Web. They’re online all week and they use email just about every day.

### **Your competitors are using the Internet**

Not just people who are in the same line of work as you are using the Internet, but also nonprofits in the same city as you—they *are* your competitors because they are trying to get donations from the same donors.

The Internet allows you to cast your net a little farther afield. If you’re just a local small nonprofit and most of your direct mail donors, your banquet donors, and your telephone donors come from a 50 to 100 mile radius of your city, that radius is also where you’re going to get most of your online donors, which is the same Internet audience your competitors will try to reach.

## **The average user is also getting older**

We're finding that the average age of the Internet user during the year 2000 was 20 or early 30s, and we're finding that donors over the last couple of years have been getting older. Now we're seeing donors in their 50s and 60s going online and giving gifts. And you likely know that the most faithful, generous donors in North America are women over 60. So it makes sense to go online because those donors are also going online.

## **Most donations that nonprofits get come from individuals**

Another reason you should have a donor-centered website right now is that most donations most nonprofits get come from individuals. If you look at a breakdown of the revenue of your organization and most others, you'll discover that about 80% of your donations come from individuals, and most of those donations come in the form of small gifts.

Your organization may be exceptional and you may get a disproportionately large percentage of your income from government or foundations or businesses or churches or even organizations like Rotary International, Kiwanis and the Lions Club. But most nonprofits today get about 80% of their income from individuals. And donations that come online to your website or through email will come through individuals and they will be small gifts. They will rarely be in the thousands of dollars. So the Internet is a great way to raise the kinds of donations that individuals tend to give.

## **Donors visit a nonprofit's website before making a donation**

One reason you should have a donor-centered website is that the chances pretty high—they're better than 50%—that before a donor gives a gift to you, that donor will go online and visit your website. Let me just quote you some statistics.

There's an organization in the U.S. called Harris Interactive. They worked in collaboration with an online fundraising organization called Verilion. They discovered that 62% of adults will link directly to an organization's website for information about the organization before donating. That's an alarming number. Before they give a gift to a charity, 62% of adults will go online and visit that charity's website. The participants of that survey were 18 and over and they had volunteered or donated or advocated for a nonprofit in the previous 12 months. So these were not people who were new to online fundraising and giving online.

### **Online fundraising should be part of an overall strategy**

It's not a way to get rich quickly, and it will not likely replace any of the ways that you're currently raising money such as direct mail, telephone, special events, and major gifts. It's just one of many methods; it's a new method. But if you're a particular type of organization in a particular sector of the nonprofit sector, you may find that online fundraising will gradually replace one of your currently popular methods of fundraising.

### **People use the Internet to find information**

The other reason you should have a donor-centered website right now is that people use the Internet to find information. That's why people go online. They boot up their browser, they go to Google or they type into the browser address, and they go online to find stuff, to find information.

Many of those people are going online and they're searching for information about colleges. Or they're searching information about climate change, animal welfare, AIDS in the third world, poverty. They're looking for information about zoos, museums. Your constituents or your potential donors are online and they're searching for information about people like you. And you want to make sure they find you. So you need a good website. If you have a good website, you'll be able to raise money online.

## Advantages of online fundraising

Let's go over a couple of advantages and disadvantages of online fundraising. It's important to be prepared mentally and emotionally for the investment that you need to make if you're going to raise money online. Some people have unrealistic expectations for online fundraising. They think that it's almost free and that the money will roll in if they simply put up a website and have a Donate Now button on it.

I'll start with the advantages. I'll start with the good news first.

### **Donors find you**

One of the advantages of online fundraising is that donors find you. Traditionally in fundraising, you have to go out to find new donors. In direct mail, for example, which is my specialty, I know and you know, too, that if an organization

wants to find new direct mail donors, they have to rent a list of potential donors. That costs around \$75 to \$100 per 1,000. Then they have to write an appeal. They have to design it. They have to get an envelope, letterhead, business reply envelope, business reply card. They have to print it, put postage on it, and mail it.

If they want to be successful, they have to mail 10s of 1,000s of those pieces. And they have to mail them to a list of people who will likely only respond in one case out of 100. If you get a one percent response rate in direct mail fundraising, you're considered doing well. That's one in 100 people who are interested in what you're saying, and 99 out of 100 who are not. That's not a very good average, but it's the industry average.

Whereas, online you don't rent lists of potential donors. They find you. People searching for the kind of information you have on your website are searching for you and they are contacting you. Potential donors, potential advocates, members, constituents—they find you. And it does not cost you a lot of money to acquire them. In some cases, it might only cost you a few cents to raise a dollar online.

## **Always on**

Another advantage of online fundraising is that your fundraising method is always working for you. Unlike banquets, which you start and end at a given time, and unlike direct mail campaigns, in which you mail and wait for a couple a months before all the results have come in, unlike telephone fundraising, which can only take place during the day, the Internet is always on.

You're restricted with telephone fundraising and banquets and direct mail, but the Internet is always open and your website is always pushing out your message and potentially raising money for you. So it works for you 24 hours a day. It also works for your donors and your advocates 24 hours a day, too, because they can't always pick up the phone and call you. Some of them aren't inclined to write you a letter. But they can always visit your website and send you an email. They can always get the information they want, too. They might just want your phone number. They might want your charitable status number and they can simply go online and find that. So you do your donors a service by having a system that's on all the time.

### **Less expensive than offline fundraising**

Online fundraising is also less expensive than many offline fundraising methods. For example, if you want to put together a full color brochure, you have to write it, design it, and print it. It costs a lot of money to print full color brochures these days. But if you have a full color website and you decide you want to change one of the images or change the text, it costs you almost nothing to make those changes.

Testing is also cheaper than direct mail. It's much cheaper to send out 2,000 emails with a subject line that you want to test, or an *ask* that you want to test, or a visual look that you want to test, or a campaign that you want to test. It's much cheaper to mail 2,000 emails than it is to mail 2,000 direct mail pieces. So online fundraising is cheaper in that way.

Also, there's no penalty for publishing a lot of words. If you want to have a lot of words in a direct mail appeal, you have to add pages, so you go from a one page letter to a two page, or a two page to a four page. The more you want to say, the more paper that's involved, and it costs you more money to print every one of those words. But online, you can add 100 words; 500; 1,000; 10,000; and it doesn't really cost you anything extra.

It's also cheaper to process gifts online than it is offline. You don't have to have as many people. You don't have a staff person physically opening your envelopes, taking out the reply card, looking at the check, entering into the database by hand. All of that's done for you online. So it's cheaper to process gifts.

It's also cheaper to customize your appeals. The data work that's involved is integrated into your system, if you get the right kind of system. And you can personalize your emails. You can personalize your web pages far less expensively than hiring a data house or a letter shop to personalize direct mail appeals for you.

You also don't waste as much money. If you were to send out a donor acquisition package, as I just mentioned, and you sent out 100,000 pieces with only a one percent response rate, then that means a lot of paper and ink and postage went right into the trash, and it was entirely wasted if they didn't even open your envelope. But if you send 100,000 emails or have 100,000 web pages and your recipients don't open them, it doesn't cost you in the same way that the postage and paper in the trash can does. So online fundraising is less expensive that way.



## **Faster than offline**

Having a web presence allows you to reach people faster. You can launch an appeal in hours. This happened during the U.S. election campaign. Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, Mike Huckabee, and all the other candidates were able to send emails every day to their donors and supporters. They were able to send an email within an hour and get the message out to their supporters within minutes of an event taking place.

The same is true when natural disasters occur. When one of the worst tornado storms that the U.S. has had in decades, there were people without houses, 50 were killed and many people were injured. People were in desperate shape, and organizations like the Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and the Salvation Army were able to send out email appeals immediately to their donors.

If these relief organizations wanted to place an ad in the paper, they would have had to wait a day. If they wanted to take out a radio spot, that would have taken longer. A direct mail appeal would have taken even longer to write, create, print, and mail. And by the time they mailed it, it's a week or two too late. Online, you can do things immediately. Online is a great way to raise funds for emergencies or any hot issue, like a political election campaign.

Another nice thing about online fundraising is that the results are almost immediate. I know this firsthand. When I send out my newsletters on Friday and I offer a handbook for sale or a booklet, I usually get a sale within 15 minutes. And it's the same with online fundraising. When you send out an email appeal that resonates with your donors, you can expect to receive your first gift within minutes, not within days or weeks (like direct mail), or months (like major gifts), or years (like planned giving).

With direct mail, you have to wait weeks for most of your results to come in. But with email, some campaigns are over within just a few days. Most of the money has come in by the end of the week. You measure them in days, not weeks or months.

## **Automated**

Much of online fundraising is automated, which is nice. A lot of the time-consuming steps of offline fundraising, like manually putting together packages, walking packages to the post office, processing them, opening the envelopes, taking out the checks, addressing, mailing, and even taking the funds to the bank, don't exist in online fundraising. Those checks have to be taken to the bank and

deposited into the bank; they all have to be written on a deposit slip. All those things are taken care of for you with online fundraising.

### **Online is interactive**

The whole nature of the Internet is that people have something to do. When you send them a direct mail letter, they read it. When people attend a banquet or a special event that you have, they generally sit in the audience, they eat their dinner, and they listen to a lot of speeches, and they applaud. But there's not much for them to do.

Some special events are different, of course. You can have golf tournaments and walkathons and runs, where people participate. But online by its very nature is interactive. There are things that your donors can do, things that activists who visit your website can do. They can click on things. They can watch things. They can listen to things. They can download things. They can click around your website and they can interact with your message much more than they can by sitting in a banquet or listening on the telephone or reading a direct mail piece from you.

### **Viral**

Another advantage of online fundraising is its great potential to be viral. Viral is simply the word used on the Internet to describe a word-of-mouth campaign that really takes off. It's almost like a bug that everybody gets. Good examples of these happen on FaceBook, MySpace, and particularly YouTube.

There's a video on YouTube of an exploding whale. This is a whale that some American staff blew up on a beach. It was a beached whale and they didn't know what to do with the body. It was rotting. It was stinking. This was back in the 1970s. They put dynamite around it and they blew it up and they videotaped it. That video is one of the most popular videos on YouTube, and everybody and his cousin will email a link to that video to his friends and family and brothers and sisters. It becomes viral in that way.

And the same is true with online fundraising.

If you have a particularly funny video that is on target and presents your brand in a good way, if that video gets uploaded to YouTube, you can have a viral campaign going on where everybody gets excited about your campaign and what it is that you're promoting. They get online and they visit those websites and watch those videos. So it's good for viral word-of-mouth advertising.

## Online donors give more

Another advantage of online fundraising is that online donors tend to give more. We'll look at this in a minute when we look at a profile of an online donor.

## Disadvantages of online fundraising

So those are the advantages. What's the downside? What are the disadvantages of online fundraising?

## Spam

If you're going to launch an online fundraising program, you should go into this forewarned. And one of the great, great disadvantages of online fundraising is spam.

This is my email Inbox (Figure 1.1). There are eight messages, and all are spam except one. You might go through that list and think, "Well, I don't see it. I don't see it. I don't see it. Oh, yeah, there it is. Okay."

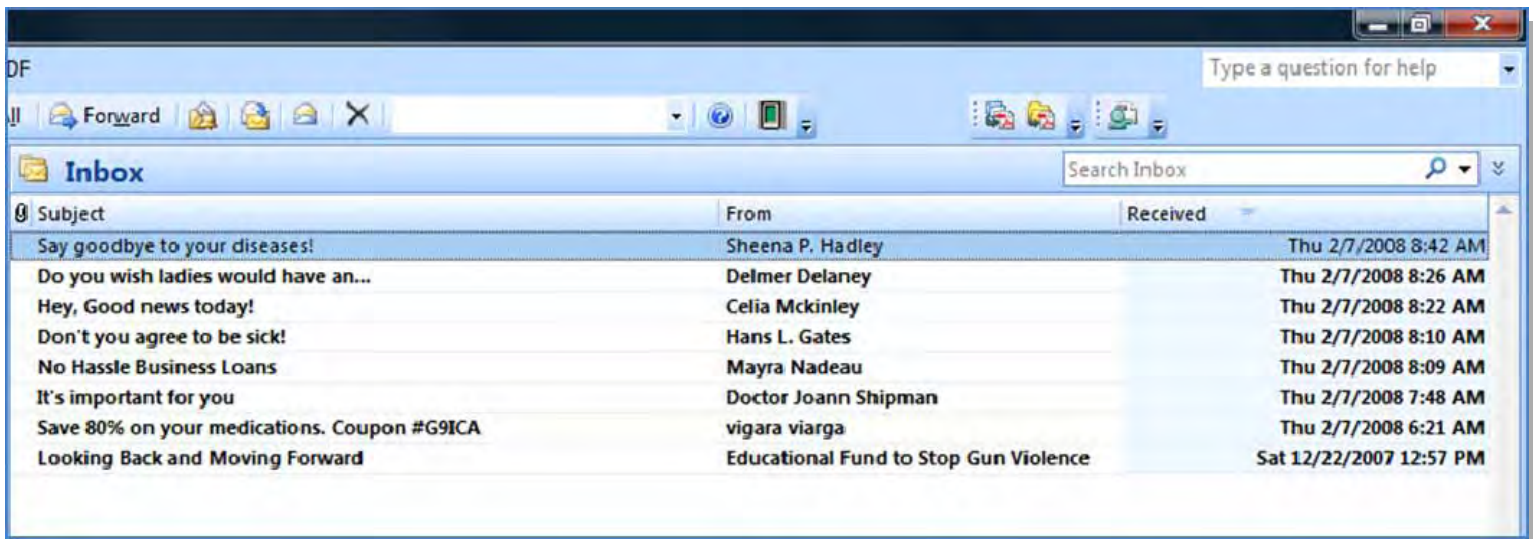


FIGURE 1.1

The last message in my Inbox, the one at the bottom has the subject line, "Looking Back and Moving Forward." That's not a very descriptive subject and it doesn't really tell me the organization it's from. Then if I look over to see who it's from, it's from the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. This is the charitable arm of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence.

So this email has a subject line and it has a "From," a "To", and a "Date."

But it looks much the same as all the other emails. It’s bold and it arrives in the Inbox exactly the same way. I poise my finger over the Delete button and decide if it is spam or not. I get hundreds of spam a day and I imagine you do, too, if your email address has been found by the spammers. And you know the kinds of spam you get. It’s very, very annoying.

One of the great disadvantages of online fundraising is that perfectly legitimate, reputable, decent nonprofits have to compete in the mailbox with these spammers for the attention of donors.

### **Online-only donors are harder to renew**

Another disadvantage of online fundraising is that an online only donor—in other words, a donor who just gives online—is much harder to renew than an offline donor. Let me explain what I mean by renewing. The secret of success in fundraising is to get more than one gift from a donor. It’s very expensive to find a brand new person and just get one gift from them and then they vanish. Ideally, you should build a relationship with your donors so that they give you one, two, three, four gifts. They stay with you for years and they become a good friend of your organization. You become good friends of theirs. You develop a relationship where they trust you, they admire you, and they give over time. That’s an ideal donor.

But it’s been known anecdotally in the industry, and it’s been corroborated by the director of donor development at Habitat for Humanity in the U.S. (she went on the record recently in a trade publication), that online only donors are much harder to renew. They’re not as loyal as offline donors. So if you have someone who gives just on your website and just by email, that donor is not as likely to stick around and keep giving as the donor you have who gives regularly through your monthly giving program or by direct mail or by phone or in another method that’s offline.

### **Online donors are younger**

Online donors are younger, which is a disadvantage. The profile of the average donor in North America is a woman, 60 or over, who supports 13 charities. Most online donors are 38, and so they don’t meet your profile of an ideal donor. Another disadvantage they have if they’re younger than 38 is that they’re probably cash strapped. They might be graduating. They might have student debt. And if

they're just starting their careers, they're not earning the kind of money that somebody is in their 50s and 60s. They don't have as much money to give, and for that reason, they're not as generous as older donors.

## Online is not tangible

Another disadvantage of online fundraising—and you can take this one for what it is—is that you can't hold it in your hand the way you can with a letter. I suppose if you visit a website, you can always print the website. And if you get an email, you can always print that email and take it to bed with a cup of coffee and read it through. But it's not the same as being in a chair with a letter or being on the phone and listening to the voice of somebody talking to you about the organization.

You don't have that tangible expression of the organization. You don't see a smile the way you do with a personal visitation from a solicitor. And you don't hear the inflection or the tone of voice of the person who's asking you for the gift. Online fundraising is impersonal. It's not as tangible as other methods of fundraising, which is a disadvantage of sorts. So it's a different type of medium, as you can see.

## Profile of Today's Donor

I'm thankful to Network for Good. They're an organization in the U.S. that helps nonprofits receive charitable gifts. In fact, they're the largest nonprofit giving portal. You can go to their website and give funds to nonprofits through Network for Good. And they've done a lot of studies of online donors. And in recent years, they've discovered that online donors fit a pretty typical profile.

They figure that the average age is 38, and they found this out by profiling the donors who went online and gave through Network for Good. The average age of a direct mail donor is 60. Around 52% are female and 48% are male. Some of these donors are new to online giving, but they are not new to giving. They are familiar with giving to charity, but they might be giving to charity online for the first time. We're not talking about brand new people who've never given a charitable gift before.



They’re more generous than offline donors. The average gift in direct mail fundraising is \$27, but the average gift of an online donation is \$137. That was true in 2005, and I believe the ratio is probably the same today.

Another thing about online donors is that lots of them tend to give to the same charities. They tend to give to charities online that are in some way involved in disaster relief. Any charity that was involved in the tsunami or Hurricane Katrina or any major disaster (such as the American Red Cross or the Salvation Army), those types of disaster relief charities tend to get most of the donations from online donors. But having said that, if you look at all the online organizations and you simply take out the disaster relief groups and look at all the others, then you discover that around 70% of donor dollars went to these small and mid-size groups that aren’t in the disaster relief arena.

If you wanted to know what the most popular destinations for online donors are, they are the disaster relief groups and international groups like Doctors Without Borders. Next are animal welfare organizations like the Humane Society and animal rights groups like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Then you have human services, which include shelters and organizations for the homeless and the poor, followed by education, universities, and colleges. That’s your average online donor. It’s a different profile from your direct mail donor and has to be approached in a slightly different way.

### Nonprofits are using the Internet to acquire new donors and members

One thing that nonprofits are using the Internet for is to acquire new members and new donors. I went to Google and I simply typed in “animal rights,” which you can see in the search box in Figure 1.2. You see the word “Google” in multi-colored letters, and right next to it there’s the search box with “animal rights.” It’s a pretty broad term. And number one in the search results was the charity called the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

You notice that there’s a charity above that called End Animal Cruelty, but that’s a paid sponsored link, which it states on the right-hand side. An organization paid to have that there, but PETA has optimized their website so well for the phrase “animal rights,” (those keywords) they’re number one in the world, at least in North America for searches.

And if somebody goes online and wants to find out about animal welfare and ethical treatment of animals, the first place they would likely look is the website for PETA. When they click on that link, they would be taken to the home page

# Online Fundraising Secrets

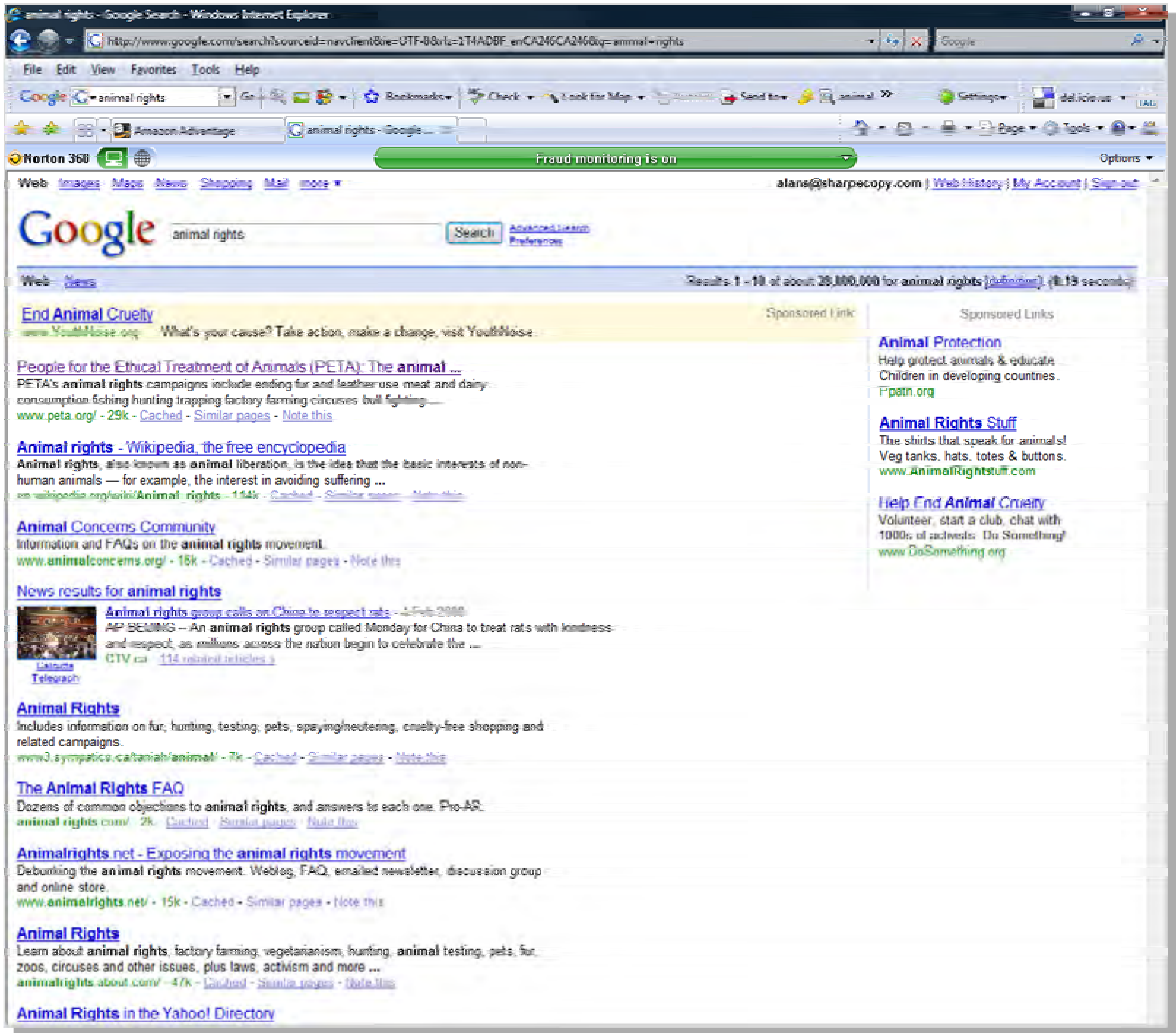


FIGURE 1.2

of PETA, seen in Figure 1.3.

The navigation bar at the top of the screen includes PETA's ACTION CENTER., which takes you to the page you see in Figure 1.4. There's a place where the donor can click the link Get Active.

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA): The animal rights organization - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.peta.org/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Google C america second harvest Go

Bookmarks Check Look for Map AutoFill Send to america

People for the Ethical T... LinkedIn: Sign In

Norton 360 Fraud monitoring is on

**PETA**  
PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

SEARCH  GO

SUBSCRIBE TO PETA E-NEWS  GO

HOME ACTION CENTER BLOG TV LIFESTYLE FORUMS KIDS DONATE NOW MEDIA CENTER SHOP ABOUT PETA peta2

### Undercover Investigation Uncovers Horrors at PetSmart Supplier

Video footage obtained in a new PETA undercover investigation reveals horrific conditions for small animals and birds bred and brokered by a major supplier to PetSmart. Tell PetSmart to end live-animal sales now! [READ MORE](#)

- Investigation at a PetSmart Store
- Report Neglect or Abuse at PetSmart

### Vote for the Sexiest Vegetarian Next Door!

More than 1,000 of the hottest people on the continent entered our annual Sexiest Vegetarian Next Door contest, and now we need you to choose the winners! [READ MORE](#)

### PETA's Banned 'Kentucky Fried Cruelty' Super Bowl Ads

Wanna get fried? Take a trip with the old Kentucky Colonel as he attends to business down on the farm ... [READ MORE](#)

### What's New

- Jenna Jameson Speaks Out Against KFC
- Tell Mars to Have a Heart This Valentine's Day
- PETA's 2008 State of the Union Undress
- Tell Lowe's to Stop Selling Glue Traps!
- Tyson's Dirty Deeds Exposed During New Investigation
- Miami Ink's Ami James' New Anti-Fur Ad
- Tell Donna Karan to Ditch Her Killer Fashion

[SEE ALL FEATURES](#) | [SUBSCRIBE TO FEED](#)

### BLOG The PETA Files

- Talking to bin Laden
- PETA to FOX: WTF?
- Super Chewday!
- Sexy Time!
- Katherine Heigl in a PETA Tee!
- Giants, Improbably, Win Super Bowl
- An Interview with Ingrid

[SEE ALL ENTRIES](#) | [SUBSCRIBE TO FEED](#)

### CRUELTY-FREE LIFESTYLE

**FREE VEGETARIAN STARTER KIT**

**COMPANIES THAT DO AND THAT DON'T TEST ON ANIMALS**

**SHOP PETA'S CATALOG**

**FABULOUS RECIPES**

### Lifestyle Blogs

- VegCooking Blog
- KP's Dog Blog

- If Food Could Talk ...
- Chocolate-Chili Truffles
- Win Vegan Chocolates for Valentine's Day!
- Top Five Vegetarian Cooking Shows
- Grit-Style Golden Bowl

[SEE ALL ENTRIES](#) | [SUBSCRIBE TO FEED](#)

### GET INVOLVED

### Action Alerts YOUR VOICE NEEDED TODAY!

- URGENT: Tell Lewisville High School to Nix 'Donkey Basketball' Game
- Urgent: Allegedly Abused and Neglected Animals Betrayed by Prosecuting Attorney; Demand Action!
- Urgent: Help Secure Justice for Allegedly Murdered Cat and Missing Animal Companions
- Ask the USDA to Include Animal Welfare Guidelines for 'Naturally Raised' Label!

[MORE](#)

### Support Our Campaigns

### REMEMBER NEVER EAT!

Watch Video Now

LEARN MORE OTHER VIEWING OPTIONS

### Chew on This

"Chew on This" sheds light on animal suffering in the meat industry and highlights many of the other reasons to choose a compassionate, plant-based diet.

- PETA's Banned 'Kentucky Fried Cruelty' Super Bowl Ads
- Testing ... One, Two, Three!
- Road to the Greenhouse
- A Shocking Look Inside Chinese Fur Farms

[MORE VIDEOS](#)

FIGURE 1.3



# Online Fundraising Secrets

**PETA's ACTION CENTER**  
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals

Fighting Animal Abuse Worldwide

Home | Get Active | Media Center | TV | Cruelty-Free Living | Shop | About PETA | Donate

Search:  Go

Sign Up to Get Active for Animals  
Log In

- Learn
- Speak
- Act
- Join
- Give
- Buy
- Applaud
- Share

**Time to Get Active**

- Five Minutes or Less
- Fifteen Minutes or Less
- Commitment

**Make a Difference**

- Kids (Ages 8-13)
- Students (Ages 14-21)
- Teachers
- Retirees
- Parents
- Companies
- Civic Groups

**Online Activism**

- Put PETA Into Your Web Site or Blog
- Add a Banner or Link
- Buddy Icons
- Stream PETA Videos

More >

**ACTION ALERT**

Get Active: **Easy Winter Outreach Ideas**

With holiday shopping, seasonal celebrations, and visiting family members, the winter months can be a busy time for everyone. Here are some easy ways to fit activism for animals into your winter schedule!

**Take Action!**

**GET ACTIVE**

- Leafletting Alert**  
Take action this month to show people that there's nothing sweet about candymaker Mars' experiments on animals... [Read more.](#)
- Activism Idea**  
*I Am an Animal: The Story of Ingrid Newkirk and PETA* is an HBO documentary that takes viewers inside the daily life of PETA President Ingrid Newkirk. Share this award-winning documentary with your friends and family members by hosting a screening party. [Read more.](#)
- Now on PETA TV**  
*Weeds* star and *Saturday Night Live* alum Kevin Nealon combines humor and compassion to encourage people to explore vegetarianism. [Watch now.](#)
- Speak Up for Animals!**  
Do you want to speak up for animals but not know how to get started? Want to meet like-minded animal advocates in your area? Whether you're brand-new to animal activism or a seasoned pro, "Speak Up for Animals" is for you! [Learn more.](#)

**GET MOTIVATED**

- Recent Victories for Animals**  
[Coca-Cola Pulls Funding for Animal Tests!](#)
- Ready ... Set ... Join PETA!**  
Join PETA's online community to learn about and respond to urgent alerts and to

**ACTION ALERTS:**

**Your Voice Urgently Needed**

Urgent: Allegedly Abused and Neglected Animals

FIGURE 1.4

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

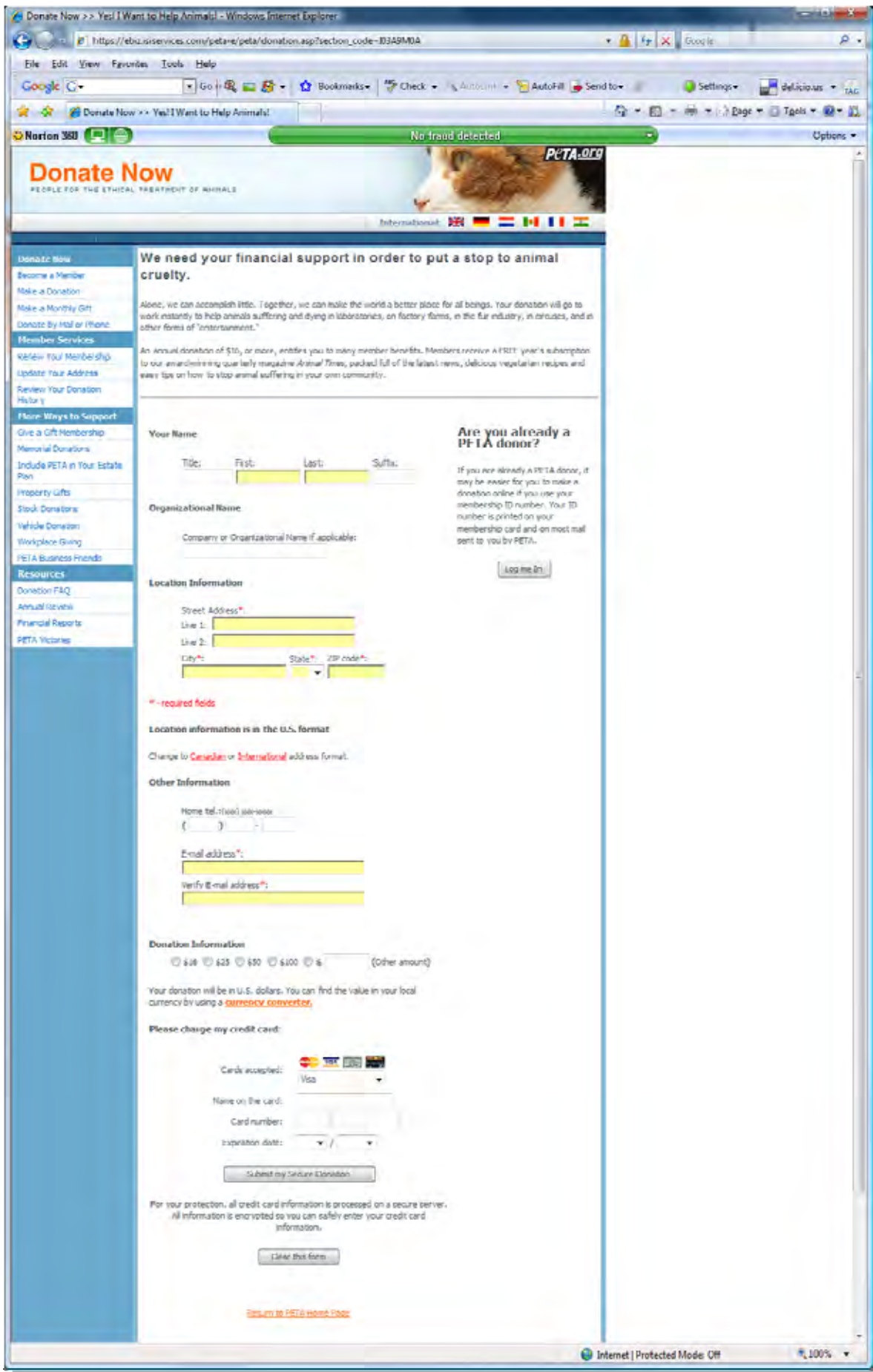


FIGURE 1.5

And you see that there's place where you can Join PETA. You can join this organization and become an advocate by becoming a donor. Look at Figure 1.5. This is the page where you would sign up to become a donor, an activist, and a supporter of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. So there are nonprofits today that are acquiring new donors using their website. That's one way that they're using the Web.

## Nonprofits are also using the Internet to raise funds offline

You can visit the Red Cross (Figure 1.6) and click the DONATE ONLINE button and be taken to a page where you can donate online. You can use your credit card and make a gift right away. Or you can donate through Google Checkout, which means that when you buy something online through Google Checkout, a portion of that gift will go to the charity. If you're not comfortable giving your credit card information online, you can pick up the phone and gift a gift, or you can click the DONATE BY MAIL button. That will take you to a page where you complete a form and then print that information. You write in your credit card information and you mail your gift with a check.

If you have stocks, you can give those to charity. You can give a planned gift, such as leaving a bequest in your will. You see all these other ways on the following page, in Figure 1.6, that nonprofits are using their websites to raise funds offline. You can even raise funds by instant messaging and donating spare change. Nonprofits are using their websites to raise funds online and offline. It's important to know that your website can be used for more than just receiving credit card gifts. It can be far more productive than that.

## Nonprofits are using their websites to raise funds by selling products

Look at Figure 1.7 and you see that nonprofits are also using their websites to raise funds by selling products. One mistake you have to avoid if you're a really small nonprofit and you don't have much money for website development is buying or renting one of these shopping carts that lets you sell all sorts of knick-knacks from your website that don't have anything to do with your mission or the people you help or the work you do. You don't want to turn your website into a shopping mall or a bazaar where people can come and just buy any old thing and you get a percentage of the profits. This hurts your brand. People will think that you're just selling stuff.

The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada (SickKids) sells things

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the American Red Cross website. The address bar shows the URL: [http://american.redcross.org/site/PageServer?pageno=sec001\\_01\\_01\\_01](http://american.redcross.org/site/PageServer?pageno=sec001_01_01_01). The browser's address bar contains the text "American Red Cross: Other Ways to Donate". A green notification bar at the top of the page states "Fraud monitoring is on".

The main content area features a large banner image of a young boy and a woman holding a baby, with the text "American Red Cross Disaster Relief". Below the banner is a navigation menu with the following items:

- DONATE ONLINE
- OTHER WAYS TO DONATE
- FAQs
- REDCROSS.ORG
- CRUZROJAAMERICANA.ORG

The main heading is "Other Ways to Donate". Below this heading is a list of donation methods:

- [DONATE ONLINE](#)
- [DONATE THROUGH GOOGLE CHECKOUT](#)
- [DONATE BY PHONE](#)
- [DONATE BY MAIL](#)
- [DONATE STOCK](#)
- [DONATE THROUGH PLANNED GIVING](#)
- [DONATE BY WIRE TRANSFER](#)
- [DONATE MUTUAL FUNDS](#)
- [DONATE IN-KIND PRODUCTS](#)
- [DONATE SPARE CHANGE](#)
- [DONATE THROUGH REWARDS PROGRAMS](#)
- [DONATE BY INSTANT MESSAGING](#)
- [DONATE BY RAISING FUNDS FOR DISASTER](#)

Below the list is a section titled "Matching Gifts" with the following text:

**Matching Gifts** – Your gift could be matched dollar for dollar! Many companies offer matching gift programs that will double, even triple a donation's value. Check with your company or visit this [online directory of matching gift companies](#) to find out if your company will match your contribution to the American Red Cross. If you have questions about your company's matching gift program, please contact your personnel office.

Once you have determined that your company matches donations made to the Red Cross, obtain the appropriate form from your personnel/human resources office and send it with a copy of your gift receipt to the address below:

American Red Cross  
PO Box 37295  
Washington, DC 20013  
Attn: J. Porter

The American Red Cross Tax Identification Number (also known as Employee Identification Number or EIN) is 53-0196605.

On the left side of the page, there is a "DID YOU KNOW?" section:

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
The American Red Cross provides disaster assistance to people in need...**FREE OF CHARGE**...every single day!

Below this section are three logos: "iM American Red Cross", "HACKER SAFE TESTED DAILY 06-FEB", and "VeriSign Secured VERIFY ABOUT SELF-CERTIFICATES".

FIGURE 1.6

# Online Fundraising Secrets

Windows Internet Explorer  
http://www.shopsickkids.com/default.aspx?

ew Favorites Tools Help

hopSickKids

Fraud monitoring is on

**SickKids**  
FOUNDATION

Home Shopping Cart About the Store FAQs Contact Us

Welcome to ShopSickKids [Login](#)

Valentine's Day Gifts  
On Sale  
For Her  
For Him  
For Kids  
Books, Toys & Stationery  
SickKids Wish List  
Create Possibilities  
View All

What makes a hero?  
[CLICK HERE TO PLAY](#)

**Denate Now**

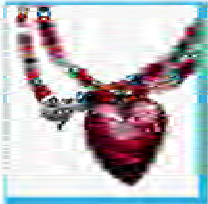

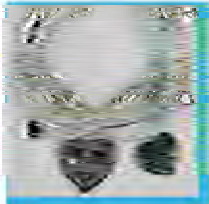
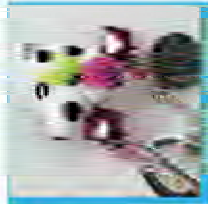
grant the hospital's wishes  
Give a gift to a child at SickKids

Discovery & Worldwide Packages

**Believe in SickKids**

Sterling Silver Believe Tag Necklace  
**\$50.00**

FEATURED ITEMS:

 <b>Bravery Heart Necklace</b> \$25.00	 <b>Sterling Silver Believe Tag Necklace</b> \$50.00	 <b>Bravery Heart Silver Heart Charm Bracelet</b> \$25.00	 <b>Operation Heroes 'Queen of Hearts' Bracelet - White</b> \$55.00
---	--	--	--

Send a customized greeting card  
Unique and thoughtful ways to send greetings to special people in your life.

Create your own SickKids web page

Home | Donate Now | About the store | FAQs | Contact Us | Store Policies | Privacy / Security | Links  
Order online or by Phone: 1-800-661-1083  
Copyright © 2007, SickKids Foundation. All rights reserved.

FIGURE 1.7

online, but these products are closely related to the work that SickKids does helping children. Look at the featured items in Figure 1.6. There’s a Bravery Heart Necklace. This would be given to children that are going through cancer treatment and have lost all their hair and are very sick. These are courageous children. Some loved one will buy the Bravery Heart Necklace for them, and a portion of that money would go to the charity to carry out its mission. The rest will pay for the cost of the product and overhead such as operating the online store.

Look on the left-hand side where I've circled with a red oval. SickKids has gifts for him, for her, for children, for baby. They have their gifts organized by the person who would get them, and they also have them arranged by type—books, toys. There’s even a wish list people can fill in.

As you can see, organizations are raising money by selling products. My caution is simply that you sell products related to your mission. Don’t fall into the trap of selling stuff just to make money.

### Nonprofits are using the Internet to raise funds with special events

A couple of nonprofits have done something interesting using the Internet to raise funds with special events (see Figure 1.8). They’ve held an actual online event where you had to go online and bid for things that were being auctioned online at the website. Some organizations are doing online auctions, but they’re using eBay. eBay has a special little section of the website where charities can auction items and the money goes to the charity. So there are online auctions where you can raise money. That’s sort of a special event.

But there are all sorts of other special events that take place offline. And organizations like the American Cancer Society are using their websites not only to promote the special event, but also to manage the special event. In Figure 8, we’ve clicked on the Gala navigation link on the left-hand side. If you visit the American Cancer Society at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org), you can simply type in your ZIP code or type in your city or your state to locate the nearest gala so you can attend. That’s a helpful way of finding special events in your area, and it’s done using the website.

There are all sorts of other fundraisers that they do during the year. The Relay for Life is one of the most well known and most popular. Another one is Making Strides Against Breast Cancer. You can click on any of those links and participate. The more innovative nonprofits are using their websites not only to

# Online Fundraising Secrets

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the American Cancer Society website. The address bar shows the URL [http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PAR/PAR\\_6\\_Galas.asp](http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PAR/PAR_6_Galas.asp). The browser interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, Help), a toolbar with various icons, and a search bar. The website header features the American Cancer Society logo and navigation links: Home, Community, Get Involved, Donate, Contact Us, Site Index, and Search. A prominent green 'Participate' button is visible. Below the header, a blue navigation bar contains 'Planner', 'Register', and 'Sign In'. The main content area is titled 'Galas' and includes a sidebar with a 'Participate' menu. A red circle highlights this menu, which lists various fundraising events: Relay For Life, Making Strides Against Breast Cancer, Daffodil Days, Golf Tournaments, Galas, Coaches vs. Cancer, Team ACS, Flowers for the Fight, and Mosaic of Memories. The 'Galas' section text describes community events and provides a 'Find Galas Near Me' search box with fields for ZIP code, City, and State, along with checkboxes for 'Show All Events Past and Future' and 'Remember my location'. The footer contains contact information and copyright notices for 2008.

FIGURE 1.8

acquire registrations and get people to sign up for these offline special events, but they’re also using their websites to keep people updated on what’s happening.

In the city of Toronto, for example, we have the CN Tower. Until very recently, it was the tallest freestanding structure in Canada, and it has hundreds of steps from the bottom to the top. Every year, there are various charities that conduct a run from the base of the CN Tower up to the top. You can raise money for every step that you take. You get friends and family to sponsor your every step.

These charities allow individual runners to create their own web page on the organization’s website, and you can invite your friends, family, and colleagues to visit your page. You can invite your friends to come and pledge a certain amount of money for every step that you take. You can put photographs of yourself in training and photographs of you on the climb. You can keep your friends, family, and others updated on your progress. Organizations are using the Web in innovative ways for special events.

### Nonprofits are using their websites to engage donors and members

In Figure 1.9 you can see that organizations are also using their websites to engage donors. This is a vital step in raising money online. It’s not enough just to have a Donate Now button. You have to have a website that actually encourages people to do something on your website and get involved in some way.

Here’s an example from Heifer International’s website. Heifer does relief and development work overseas. If you visit their website, you’ll see a simple navigation bar. You can learn about their WORK. You can GET INVOLVED. You can GIVE a gift. And you can LEARN more about the people who they help. If you click the GET INVOLVED link, it takes you to a page with the headline, “Get Involved - Help Heifer End Hunger.” And you can see all the ways that you can get involved with this organization.

You can become more engaged with the organization. You can Volunteer, for one thing. You can visit their learning centers. You can Support Partnerships, large and small, to help them achieve their mission of ending hunger around the world. You can even Take a Study Tour where you travel overseas and study the work that they’re doing and the people who they’re helping. You can help them Raise Funds. You can attend a special event, invite a speaker to come and speak to your group. And you can even refer this page (Email Page) or this organization to others that you know. There are lots of ways that you can get involved, and many nonprofits are using websites like this to engage their members and



# Online Fundraising Secrets

Hunger & Poverty | Volunteerism & Learning Centers - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.heifer.org/site/c.edJRKQNI6I6/b.201471/

View Favorites Tools Help

Go Bookmarks Check Look for Map AutoFill Send to Settings

Stop World Hunger & ... LinkedIn Sign In

Fraud monitoring is on

FAQs: Please Select

Search GO

**HEIFER INTERNATIONAL** *Ending Hunger. Caring for the Earth.*

**OUR MORE** **GET INVOLVED** **GIVE** **LEARN** **INSIDE HEIFER**

**Get Involved - Help Heifer End Hunger**

Ending world hunger and poverty globally is a large feat but it's not unrealistic. It takes each and every single one of us to do our part to be able to attain a world without poverty and hunger. Heifer offers various avenues for public involvement.

With [volunteering opportunities](#) and unlimited experiential learning programs at our [learning centers](#), there is room for everyone who wants to be involved. So, join us and get involved! it's easier than ever to do your part to help end hunger and poverty and care for the earth. Just imagine if everyone did.

[Volunteer](#) – Help struggling families around the world find new beginnings by lending your time and talents to Heifer.

[Visit the Learning Centers](#) – Experience firsthand successful solutions to hunger, poverty and saving the environment at three scenic educational sites across the U.S.

[Support Partnerships](#) – Businesses both large and small are helping Heifer achieve its mission to end hunger and poverty through innovative partnerships.

[Take a Study Tour](#) – Travel with a purpose by visiting Heifer project sites around the world, and learn more about the families and communities that have become truly self-reliant.

[Raise Funds or Donate](#) – Discover innovative ideas for fighting hunger from groups and individuals just like you.

[Check the Calendar](#) – Find information on educational opportunities, speakers, events, courses and more.

[Pass it On](#) - Check out our tips and Web site links for things you can do right now that will make a difference.

**Heifer in Your Community**

Get involved in your local community with Heifer events, volunteer opportunities, fundraising and more. Contact the [Regional Office](#) nearest you for more information.

[Sign up for Our Email List](#)

Would you like to know when new jobs are available at Heifer International? [Sign up for our email list](#) and you'll be notified automatically of positions within our organization.

Home | Our Work | Get Involved | Give | Learn | Inside Heifer  
Contact Us | Privacy Policy | FAQs | Site Map

Heifer Project International, 1 World Avenue, Little Rock, AR USA 72202  
Tel.: (800) 422-0474

Required: Internet Explorer 3.5 or higher, Firefox 1.06 or higher, Safari 1.3 versions or higher. Heifer Catalog requires cookies and javascript. [More Information](#)

BBB ACCREDITED CHARITY  
bbb.org/charity

Hilton Humanitarian Prize Winner

A Kinder Empowered Community

FIGURE 1.9

donors.

In the past, in the direct mail arena, the only option like this was Friend-Get-a-Friend mailings, where we would encourage recipients of the direct mail piece to pass along a card or a buck slip or ask them to tell their friends about the organization. Whereas, online, you have many, many more creative ways and fun ways and engaging ways that you can spread the word and get your donors involved in your organization. It’s a well known fact in North America that households that volunteer give 40% more money per year to charity than households that do not volunteer. So if you use your website to engage your donors, you’ll see your revenue increase over time.

### Nonprofits are using email to advocate for change

Nonprofits are also using their websites to advocate for change and to bring about change in the world. In Figure 1.10 on the next page, you see an email from the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. It has a call to action to phone the U.S. Capitol switchboard (they give you the phone number) and it asks you to speak to the two senators for your state to tell them that you do not want the Coburn Amendment to pass. You want to keep guns out of U.S. National Parks. This is a good example of an email being used to drive people to take an action, to make a difference.

You can use email to inform people. You can use it to motivate them to give a gift. And you can use email to drive people to take action to help your cause and the people who you help.

### What do you need to succeed online?

Online fundraising accounts for a small percentage of most organizations’ overall revenue. For some organizations it’s only five percent. Five cents of every dollar they raise comes in online, but that percentage is growing for some organizations. To succeed online you need to be willing to invest in online fundraising. It doesn’t happen just by putting up a website. “If you build it they will **not** come.” And you can’t just rely on a passive Donate Now button.

You need to make three investments. You need to invest money, you need to invest in your staff, and you need to invest time. There will be upfront expenses in putting up a website. One of them is simply designing a website. You need to write it and design it. You probably want to have original photography. You

# Online Fundraising Secrets

Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (csgv@csgv.org) Sent: Wed 2/6/2008 11:40 AM  
Alan Sharpe

Tell Your Senators to Vote NO on Guns in National Parks

## COALITION TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE

Imagine a future free from gun violence.

February 6, 2008 [Forward to a Friend >](#)

### Keep Guns Out of Our National Parks

In December, 47 pro-gun senators sent a [letter](#) to Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne, requesting the repeal of a regulation that prohibits guns from being transported through National Park lands unless they are unloaded and safety stored. Their proposed changes would allow concealed carry permit holders to carry handguns on most National Park lands. Long guns, including assault weapons, could in many cases be openly carried.

Not content to wait for a response from the administration, Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) will now seek to attach an amendment to an upcoming bill, S. 2483, to codify these changes in law and override the need for any executive action on the matter.


A broad coalition of conservation and environmental groups have stepped forward to oppose the Coburn amendment, including the National Park Rangers Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Park Rangers Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, the Coalition of National Park Service Retirees, the Association of National Park Rangers, and The Wilderness Society.

As stewards of our parks, these organizations understand that gun proliferation can only exacerbate the already pervasive effects of poaching and park destruction that threaten to permanently alter our national heritage. Without sensible gun regulations, [individuals who would do harm to visitors](#), wildlife and park property will be able to more easily evade prosecution. Add to this the post-9/11 threat of terrorism, and it becomes even more difficult to understand how Senator Coburn and his colleagues believe that loosening gun regulations will make our national parks safer.


**We need your help to defeat this dangerous amendment. Please call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard today at (202) 224-3221 and ask to speak to your two senators. Tell them to vote NO on the Coburn Amendment to S. 2483 to keep our National Park lands safe for America's families. If you do not know who your senators are, click [here](#) to find out.**

The last thing the people who maintain and protect our national parks need is politically-motivated legislative tinkering to make their jobs more difficult and complex. As Badlands National Park Superintendent Paige Baker recently put it: "The system is working as it is. When people come out here, it's to look at the wildlife and the natural beauty, not to shoot."

Sincerely,



Josh Horwitz  
Executive Director



**The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence**  
1023 15th St., NW, Ste. 301, Washington, DC 20005  
202-408-7560 | [development@csgv.org](mailto:development@csgv.org)

If you have received this message from a friend, please visit [www.csgv.org](http://www.csgv.org) and sign up for information on our activities. When you register, you can modify your email communication preferences, make a personal profile or remove yourself from all email lists and visit the site whenever you please.

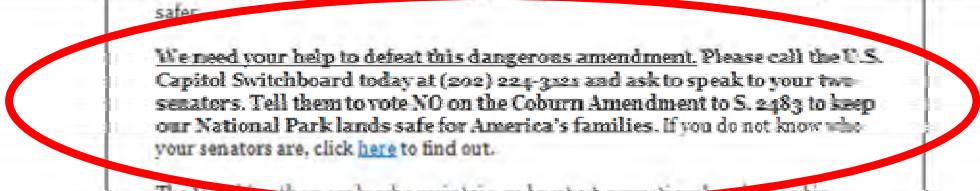


FIGURE 1.10

want to have a website *look* that is different from other websites. This means you need to hire someone or have a staff person design your website for you.

### **Money**

If you're going to take credit cards online, you need online payment processing ability, and there are many ways to do that. That's all in the backend that nobody sees, but you have to pay for that. You either buy it or rent it. And then you have your cost of hosting your website and the cost of having a domain name. Those are ongoing costs.

### **Staff**

If you want to put up a decent website, then you're going to discover that it increases your staff workload. There are all sorts of people online who will not pick up the phone and call you, they will not write you a letter, and they will not respond to your direct mail. But if they're on your website, they will send you an email. If you put up a decent website that's provocative and gets people talking, you can start getting lots of emails from people, maybe even phone calls, too. A good website will increase the burden on your staff. They are the ones who have to answer all new online inquiries. You have to manage all of that increased activity.

Online donations increase your workload, too. A lot of it is automated, but you still have to manage those new donors who come on board. They're going to come through a new channel—online. That's going to decrease your offline workload to a degree, but you still need staff to manage that aspect of your database.

Keeping a website up to date also takes staff. If you have a very small shop and you wear all the hats—you're the major gift officer and the planned giving officer and the annual giving officer—and suddenly you're also responsible for online fundraising, you'll probably be disappointed. You'll discover that keeping your website up to date with images and content, and keeping your calendar up to date, takes time. Either you're going to do it or you'll have to hire a staff person (a dedicated team member) or a freelancer to keep your website up to date.

You need to make a strategic decision early on in this process to be committed to online fundraising. Don't be tempted to rely on the cousin or the daughter of a board member who just happens to be an Internet whiz and is really good at

creating websites and knows how to do the backend because when that person quits as a staffer or as a volunteer, then you're sunk. You need to make a commitment to being online and staying online. You need to get the buy-in from your board of directors down. You need to get institutional, managerial, and executive agreement that online fundraising is going to be a commitment of your organization.

## **Time**

Online fundraising also takes time. Some of the gifts will come in right away. But you're not going to develop an online presence in a few months that is really popular in the search engines. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals is ranked first on Google, but it didn't get there in just a weekend. It takes time and effort to get high rankings on search engines when people type in keywords to search for what you champion.

It also takes time to cultivate donors. It takes time to develop a relationship with them and build their trust. People won't trust you right away and give you lots of money. It takes time. It takes months. It takes years. You have to be willing to wait out that time.

You also need to understand that website visitors don't give just because you have a Donate Now button. You have to cultivate them. You have to develop that relationship. That takes time, too.

## Why people visit nonprofit websites: to Discover, Do, or Donate

Let's look at the three reasons that people visit websites. This is important to know so that you can structure your website—the content, the visuals, and your whole plan for your website—to cater to the three kinds of people who come to your website.

People go online to do one of three things. They go online to discover something, to do something, or to donate. The website in Figure 1.11 is from the American Cancer Society, and the home page caters to each of these three groups. You see right away that it has something for people who want to discover something. They might have cancer. They might think they have cancer. Or they may have a loved one who has cancer. As soon as they visit the website of the American Cancer Society, it greets them by saying, “Find out more about the American Cancer Society's Global programs.”

They see another link, Learn about Cancer. It couldn't be much simpler than that. They may be a doctor, a patient, a family member, or a survivor of cancer. They may be a health professional. And there's a little box on the left, I need information for... with links to the different types of visitors they get to their website. They're all listed right there. So if anybody comes to the website of the American Cancer Society and wants to know something or learn something, it's right there.

If you look down the left-hand side of the page, you'll see a navigation column. It's called “Find it Fast.” Let's say I'm going online and I'm searching for something. I would look down this list and what the American Cancer Society has done. This is very helpful for their donors. They've taken the most popular searches that people do online, and they put them down the left-hand side of the page. So the most popular pages people visit are all listed right there. I might want to quit smoking; there's a Guide to Quitting Smoking. I might be wondering, “What should I do to get treated for my cancer?” There are Treatment Decision Tools I can use. There are Stories of Hope, so I can read about people who have gone there before me. I can learn all sorts of things about cancer.

I might be well educated about cancer, and I might decide, “I want to do something about this.” Let's say my dad just died of cancer, or my sister died of cancer and I think I want to do something. I don't just want to sit and do nothing. I want to get involved. So I visit the American Cancer Society and I discover right there in the middle of the page there's a little button, Join the Fight Against Cancer. That tells me right away that I can join the fight. I can get involved. I can participate in an event. I can volunteer my time. I can give a gift or I can advocate for change. I can get involved. I can do something, not just visit the website and read and learn, but I can actually advocate for change or I can volunteer. I can participate. So that caters to me as well.

If I'm informed about the organization and I'm involved in the organization, I can also give a gift. This is one of the key things that we'll look at in the next chapter when we examine how a web page is structured and how a website is built. We're going to discover that you need to have your Donate Now button in a very clear, obvious place on the website and have it more than once.

If I wanted to donate and I came to this page, I would see at the very top of this page they have a Donate Now link just above the search box. I'd look down just a third of the page and I'd see, Join the Fight Against Cancer. I could donate. On the left-hand side, where it says I need information for, I see that there's a link for donors. Just beneath that, there's a Donate Now button. All sort of ways

# Online Fundraising Secrets



FIGURE 1.11

I could donate and they’re in very obvious places on this website.

So those are the three reasons that people come and visit a website. Let’s look at those in a little more detail so you understand why people are coming to your website.

### Why people visit nonprofit websites: to Discover

People are online to learn stuff. That’s the main reason people go online. They go online to do banking, and they go online to buy stuff. But mainly, people go online because they want to find out something. That’s why they probably land on your website. They’re searching for something that has to do with what you champion.

They might want info about your services, like the American Cancer Society. They might want to read about news, about poverty, or the conflict in Darfur, or the AIDS epidemic Africa. They may be visiting your website to find out your phone number. And so the key thing you have to give to your visitors is content, and we’ll be discussing this in the next chapter. You need to have the content that people expect to find on your website. That would include a description of your services, obviously. You would explain who you are and who you help and what you do. You have to have contact information on your website. People have to be able to find you, phone you, email you, and find your physical address. It won’t be a post office box number.

They come for news. They come for background information. And the American Cancer Society is a good example of this. They come because they want facts and figures and statistics. They visit websites because they want updates. They want an update on the political scene. They want an update on what is happening on campus. They want an update on clear cutting or what’s happening with the campaign to end whaling in the South Atlantic. They want updates, either weekly, monthly, daily. They want to know what’s going on in their part of the world. Can they come to an event? Can they hear a speaker? Can they take part in your golf tournament? Is there something going on this week that they can attend? They’ll visit your website to find out the calendar of events.

This is the reason that you need to make your website donor centered. You need to have information on your website that reflects what your donors are looking for, what visitors are looking for. It’s not simply your brochure put online. It has to be the content that people are looking for when they visit you. The American Cancer Society does this so beautifully. On the left-hand side, as I



mentioned, they have a link there for every type of visitor that might come, whether it's a family member, a patient, a friend of someone who has cancer. It might be a doctor, a nurse. It might be a volunteer. It might be someone who is simply seeking information about cancer. They have a link there for each type of visitor who comes to their page.

## Why people visit nonprofit websites: to Do Something

Why else do people visit nonprofit websites? Well they come to do something. Your goal as an online fundraiser is to keep visitors on your website for as long as possible.

You need to make a website that is sticky. That's the expression we use in online fundraising. You want it sticky so that when people visit, they stick around. They are glued to your website and they don't leave in a hurry. And the secret to making a website sticky is to have fresh, updated content that's delivered in an engaging way. Not just new content, but actually new content that is fun to look at and that the person can interact with.

You need to give your donor something to do. Look again at the home page of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in Figure 1.3 on page 18. I don't know how many things there are that you can do, but there are quite a few. Right at the top of the page, you can search the website. You can subscribe to an eNewsletter. You can renew your membership by clicking on the dog in the upper right. You can watch videos. You can read a blog. You can donate. On the left-hand side, you'll see What's New halfway down the page. For Valentines' Day, PETA encouraged people to tell the people who make the Mars Bar to have a heart. So you can actually get involved politically. You can start taking action and signing a petition of some kind. This is just at the home page of the website.

You need to give your donor something to do. That's the secret to building a relationship and making your website the kind of website that people want to return to time after time.

## How to make your website sticky

You may be wondering, "Exactly how do I make my website sticky?" One of the most popular ways today is to post videos. You can post your videos on YouTube with a link on your website visitors can click to access the video on YouTube. They don't have to go anywhere else.

## 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the “Donate Now” Button

You can offer a quiz. Test people on their knowledge of a certain subject. You can offer a poll. People like to give their opinions, and you can have a poll where you ask them their opinion about something. Make it simple. Make it straightforward. Make it quick. And people will give you their opinion. They can take part.

The *Globe and Mail* newspaper website, for example, has a poll every day, and many people will visit that page of that newspaper online every day because they want to answer the question—The Poll of the Day. You can ask a provocative question on your home page and have people respond to it in an email giving you their answer. You can invite people to sign up for a newsletter or a bulletin or news alerts or a prayer letter. You can post a petition and ask visitors to sign it and email their member of Congress perhaps.

You can ask friends to tell other friends about your website. You can have a button or a link where you can refer the site to someone else. That’s a great kind of endorsement, by the way. You’re not spamming anybody, but your visitors are telling their friends and family. People will trust their friends and family, and they may visit your website as a result.

You give them something to do. You can have a comments page on your website where people can leave a comment at the foot of every article on your website. You could have a little place where people can comment, give their comments about this article. You stir up a little bit of controversy and that makes your website more sticky because people like controversy. They like opinion. They like to visit a website where there’s more than just the organization’s voice being shared.

Now obviously, you have problems with your brand and public relations. You have to be very careful about the comments you allow to be posted on your website. The way to do it is to have a moderated comments board where no comment gets onto your website unless it’s been moderated by somebody in a trustworthy position in the organization. But once you get a good comment and you decide that you want to post it, you can post it and make your website more sticky that way.

There’s an organization in the United States called Union Rescue Mission. They put a really interesting calculator on their website. You could visit their



website and you could key in the amount of money that you were thinking of donating. Let's say \$50.00. You put that into this little online calculator, click a button, and it immediately told you what that \$50.00 would buy. It might buy 10 meals. It might buy clothing for a family for a week. It might buy two beds for two nights for two people. But you could see right away what a gift of \$50.00 would buy. And if you increased your donation, you could see all the different things that it would buy.

Certain fields on that calculator were always empty unless you gave a really large gift, like if you gave a gift of \$1,000.00 or more. Suddenly one of the little fields on the calculator would be populated with something that your donation could buy or that the organization could buy with your money. It was really an innovative calculator. You could have one of those on your website and people would be more likely to stay on your website and use the calculator and interact with you.

The model that you should be using for your website is not thinking of it as a brochure that represents your organization. Don't think of your website as an annual report. Think of your website as a daily newspaper where the content has to be updated daily. It has to be fresh. The content has to be not only fresh, but it has to be compelling. The statistical tables at Statistics Canada are updated daily, but they're not very compelling. The stock tables—if you go to *The Wall Street Journal* online, you can see the stock tables are updated daily, but they're not that exciting to look at and most people are not interested in them.

So your website not only has to be fresh (daily if at all possible), but it has to be engaging. People have to be able to read the content and see the images that you're using and be compelled to stay there and read on. And we're going to look at that in the next chapter—how you create a website that looks and sounds compelling.

## Why people visit nonprofit websites: to Donate

The third thing that people want to do online is they want to give a donation. This is the hardest thing to get people to do. You can drive people to your website. You can give them information. You can get them involved. But getting them to actually give you a gift is the hardest part of online fundraising.

If you want your visitors to reach this step, the donation step, you have to make it easy for your donors to give a gift. Don't make it complicated. Don't make it cumbersome. And you also need to remember that a Donate Now button

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the “Donate Now” Button

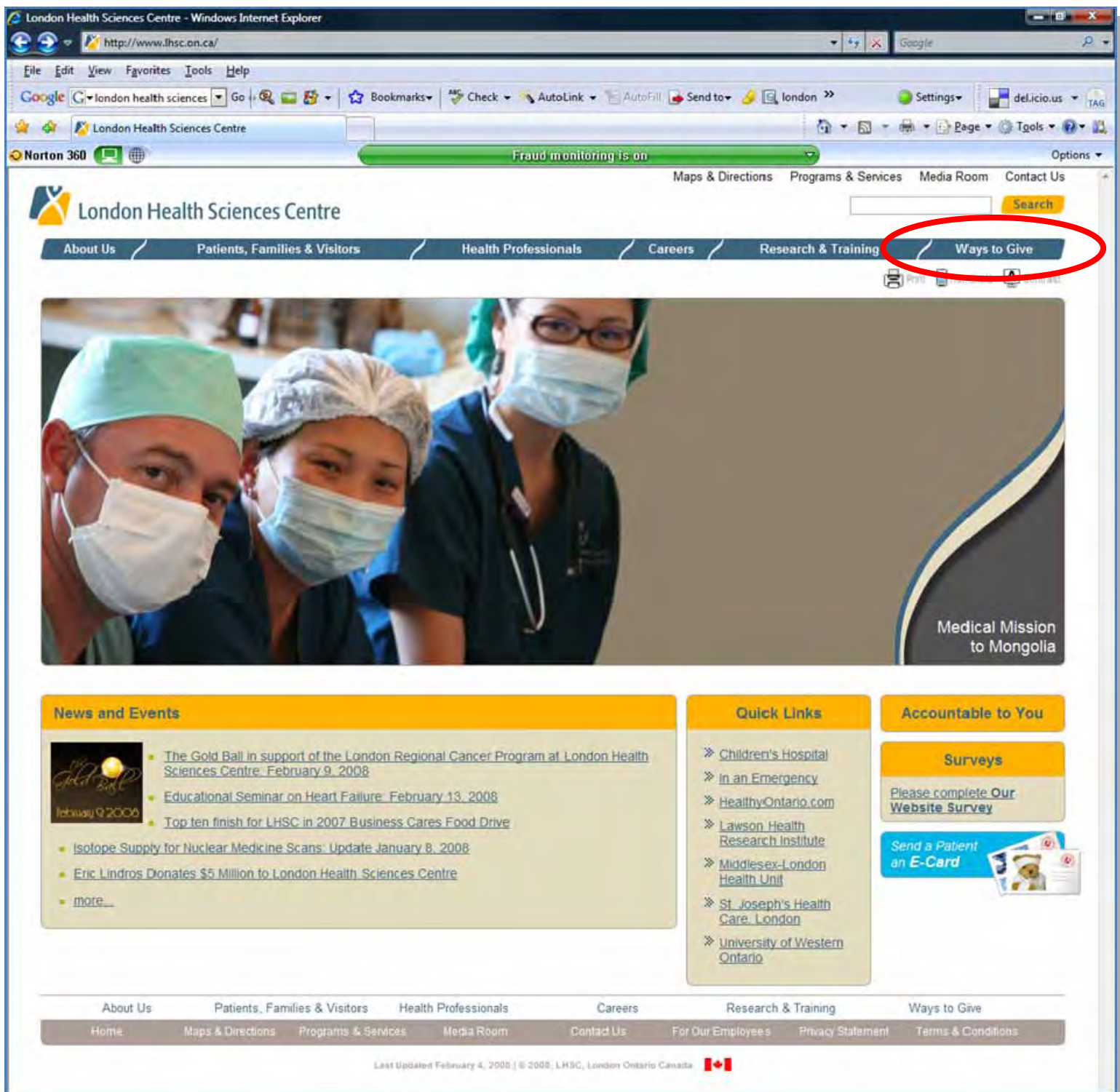


FIGURE 1.12

is not a case for support. I could mail you a postcard that says “Give us a gift,” and that would be the exact same thing as having a Donate Now button on your website. People will not click your Donate Now button and give you a gift if they know nothing about your organization. Nobody goes online and visit websites arbitrarily and gives money.

Many people who go online and visit websites and give a donation, they're giving online for convenience. Offline they've decided to make a gift to Doctors without Borders or Habitat for Humanity or Amnesty International. They've received a direct mail piece or they've read an article in the paper, and they've decided to give online because it's convenient and it's immediate. They would visit your website and click the Donate Now button, but most people don't.

Let me just give you an example of how not to do it. On the home page of the London Health Sciences Centre (Figure 1.12), you will not find a Donate Now button.

You can look all around, and if you went there to give a donation, you would not see a button that said, Give Now or Donate Now. You don't want a button that says Support Us or Help Us. Give Now or Donate Now are the phrases that people are looking for online. And we'll be learning in upcoming chapters that words you put on the bottom are important, too. On the London Health Sciences Centre website there is no button that says Give Now. They have a button that says Ways to Give. If you wanted to make a donation, you would probably do what I did, and you'd think, "Okay. I suppose that's where I have to click. I have my credit card in my hand. I'm ready to give a gift," and so I click on there and it takes you to the page in Figure 1.13, Ways to Give.

I'm still not able to give a donation. I have to decide if I'm giving my gift to the Children's Health Foundation or the London Health Sciences Foundation. Who am I giving to? I decide I'm going to give to the London Health Sciences Foundation. That's the link in the middle of the page circled in red. I click on that link. I'm now on step 2 of the giving process. This link takes me to the page in Figure 1.14.

Now I'm at the page of London Health Sciences Foundation. Hospitals generally have a foundation that manages their charitable giving. And I see a big button there. It's in red and it says Invest in Excellence. Donate Now! Aha. So I'm on step 3, and I click on that red button and it takes me to the page in Figure 1.15.

When I get to the page in Figure 1.15, my eye immediately goes to the right-hand side and I see that red box that says Donate Now. And I think, "Oh, that's where I'm supposed to click." It's the same button that was on Figure 14. But here I am. I'm seeing the same button again and so I click it, and what happens? Well, it just takes me to this very page that I'm already on.

I look down at the options and it says "Your donation can make a difference. Make personal donation." Okay. That's what I want to do. I look at the options

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the 'Ways to Give' page of the London Health Sciences Centre website. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'http://www.lhsc.on.ca/Ways\_to\_Give/LHSC/index.htm'. The website's navigation menu includes 'About Us', 'Patients, Families & Visitors', 'Health Professionals', 'Careers', 'Research & Training', and 'Ways to Give'. The 'Ways to Give' section is active, showing a breadcrumb trail: 'Home >> Ways to Give >> London Health Sciences Centre'. Below this, there are three main sections: 'Children's Health Foundation', 'London Health Sciences Foundation', and 'Volunteering at LHSC'. The 'London Health Sciences Foundation' section is circled in red. The page also features a 'News and Events' sidebar, 'Quick Links', and 'Accountable to You' section. The footer contains navigation links and a copyright notice: 'Last Updated October 1, 2007 | © 2007, LHSC, London Ontario Canada'.

Ways to Give - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://www.lhsc.on.ca/Ways\_to\_Give/LHSC/index.htm

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help  
Google london health sciences Go  
Bookmarks Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to london  
Norton 360 Fraud monitoring is on  
Maps & Directions Programs & Services Media Room Contact Us  
Search

**London Health Sciences Centre**

About Us Patients, Families & Visitors Health Professionals Careers Research & Training **Ways to Give**

Home >> Ways to Give >> London Health Sciences Centre  
Print Handheld Contrast

Ways to Give  
▶ Programs and Services

## Ways to Give

### Children's Health Foundation

Children's Health Foundation is the charitable fundraising resource for Children's Hospital and Children's Health Research Institute. We are an independent, incorporated non-profit organization that has been raising money and granting funds to children's health care for over 80 years.

Children's Health Foundation is dedicated to raising and granting funds to support specialized health care and research for children and youth—now and in the future.

**For more information:**  
[Children's Health Foundation](#)

### London Health Sciences Foundation

London Health Sciences Foundation is a non-profit, charitable organization established to strengthen London Health Sciences Centre's ability to provide health care of the highest quality to patients in southwestern Ontario and beyond. London Health Sciences Foundation is committed to enhancing and expanding the health care resources of the community. Through the generosity of our community members, London Health Sciences Centre will remain on the leading edge of medical advances, living its mission of excellence in patient care, education and research.

We do this through a comprehensive, diverse menu of exciting fund raising programs that provide opportunities for donors to touch the lives of thousands. Visit the Foundation's website at [www.lhsc.ca](http://www.lhsc.ca) to learn more about the Foundation, how philanthropy helps patients and families at our Hospital and how you can support excellence in health care at London Health Sciences Centre, through donations, or by participating in our events and lotteries.


**For more information:**  
[London Health Sciences Foundation](#)

### Volunteering at LHSC

LHSC is grateful for the support of our hundreds of dedicated volunteers. Volunteers assist LHSC through [Volunteer Services](#), the [Auxiliary](#), [London Regional Cancer Program](#), and our Foundations.

**For more information:**  
[Volunteer Services](#)

#### News and Events

-  The Gold Ball in support of the London Regional Cancer Program at London Health Sciences Centre: February 9, 2008
- Educational Seminar on Heart Failure: February 13, 2008
- Top ten finish for LHSC in 2007 Business Cares Food Drive
- Isotope Supply for Nuclear Medicine Scans: Update January 8, 2008
- Eric Lindros Donates \$5 Million to London Health Sciences Centre
- [more...](#)

#### Quick Links

- Children's Hospital
- In an Emergency
- HealthyOntario.com
- Lawson Health Research Institute
- Middlesex-London Health Unit
- St. Joseph's Health Care London
- University of Western Ontario

#### Accountable to You

Surveys

Please complete [Our Website Survey](#)

Send a Patient an **E-Card**

About Us Patients, Families & Visitors Health Professionals Careers Research & Training **Ways to Give**

Home Maps & Directions Programs & Services Media Room Contact Us For Our Employees Privacy Statement Terms & Conditions

Last Updated October 1, 2007 | © 2007, LHSC, London Ontario Canada

FIGURE 1.13

# Online Fundraising Secrets

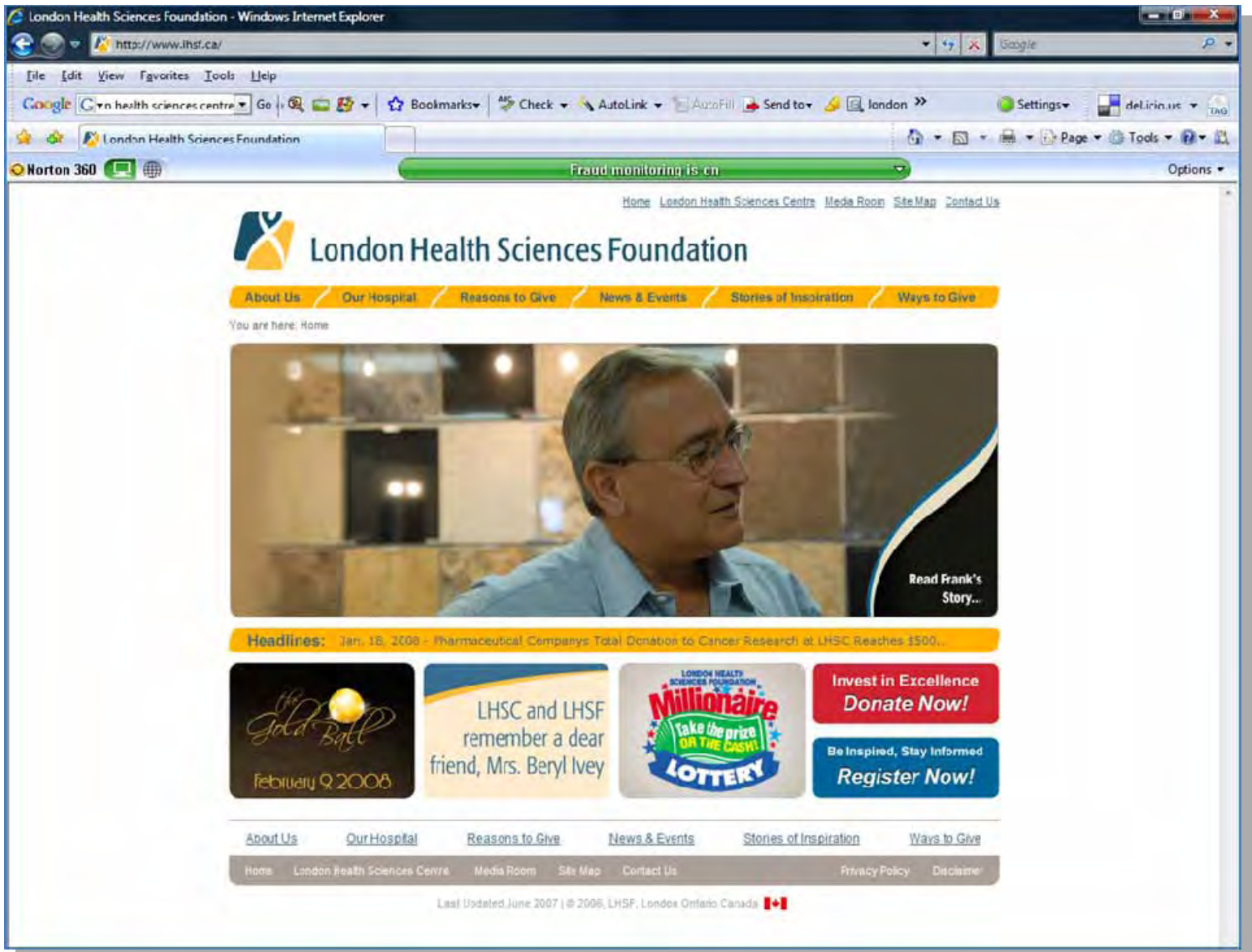


FIGURE 1.14

and click on Make a personal donation. I click Continue. And that takes me to the page in Figure 1.16.

I get to the page in Figure 1.16 and I look—just glance down the page and I see, Invest in Excellence. Donate Now. I think, “Oh, I’ve already clicked that button twice.” No point clicking that again because it’ll just take me to the page I was on just a minute ago. Why this organization has a Donate Now button on the donation page, I don’t know, but they do. So here I can give them my information. And once I’ve given them my information, this takes me to another page, and then I have to click another button that takes me to another page, and then I have to click a button and finally my gift will be processed. So after I reach this page, which is step 5, I still have another three to go. It’s a cumbersome process,

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the “Donate Now” Button

I think I you’ll agree.

Let’s look at another way to do it—and we’ll learn about this in upcoming chapters, how you actually design and structure your web page, and particularly how you design your donation pages so that people who visit your website and want to give a gift are likely to do it and don’t bail out. A large percentage of people who go online to give a gift, never complete the transaction. They might be like I am and they get to step 3 or step 4 of the process, and they just say, “Forget it. It’s too lengthy, too cumbersome.” Or the organization asks them for their fax number, asks them for their phone number, asks them for something

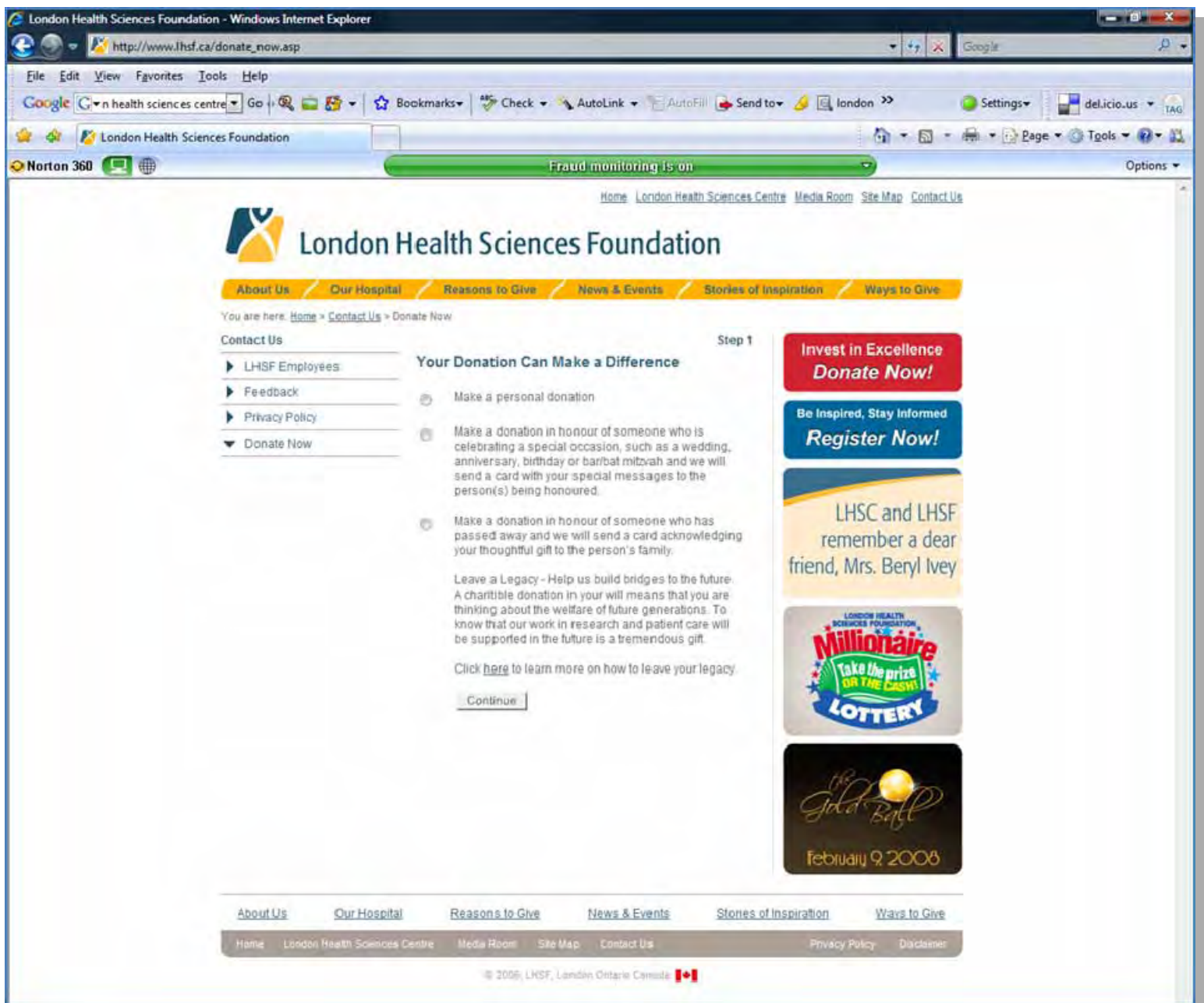


FIGURE 1.15



# Online Fundraising Secrets

London Health Sciences Foundation - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://www.lhsc.ca/donation2.asp?mtid=9675333295

London Health Sciences Foundation

Home London Health Sciences Centre Media Room Site Map Contact Us

London Health Sciences Foundation

About Us Our Hospital Reasons to Give News & Events Stories of Inspiration Ways to Give

You are here: Home > Contact Us > Donate Now

Contact Us Step 2

- LHSC Employees
- Feedback
- Privacy Policy
- Donate Now

### Your Donation Makes a Difference

\* denotes a required field

#### Donor Information

Organization/Group:

Title:

First Name:

Last Name:

#### Your Contact Information

Address:

City/Town:

Province/State:

Postal/Zip Code:

Country:

Phone:

Ext:

Email Address:

I give London Health Sciences Foundation permission to contact me by email.

Please direct my gift to:

If you selected 'Other' above, please specify:  
(Note: Fund must be currently established by London Health Sciences Foundation)

What inspired your donation today?

If you selected 'Other' above, please specify:

Additional Comments:

#### Payment Information

Donation Amount (for monthly amounts, enter the amount to be donated per month)

Is this a one time, or monthly donation?

**Invest in Excellence**  
**Donate Now!**

**Be Inspired, Stay Informed**  
**Register Now!**

LHSC and LHSC  
remember a dear  
friend, Mrs. Beryl Ivey

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES FOUNDATION  
**Millionaire**  
Take the prize  
ON THE CASH!  
**LOTTERY**

FIGURE 1.16

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the “Donate Now” Button

that’s not relevant, and they say, “Oh, I’m not going to give.” We’re going to look at that in future chapters.

When you visit the home page of SickKids in Toronto as seen in Figure 1.17, you’ll see at the top left-hand corner they have the Donate Now button in their navigation bar.

It’s in capital letters. It’s the first choice that you have apart from the home page, and it’s very obvious. It’s right where you’d expect to find it. Donate Now. So you click on that button. You have your checkbook in hand or your credit card in hand. You’re ready to give a gift. You click on that button and it takes you to step 2, which you’ll see in Figure 1.18. And right there you have a couple of choices.

You can give a gift to SickKids today. You can give a gift in someone’s

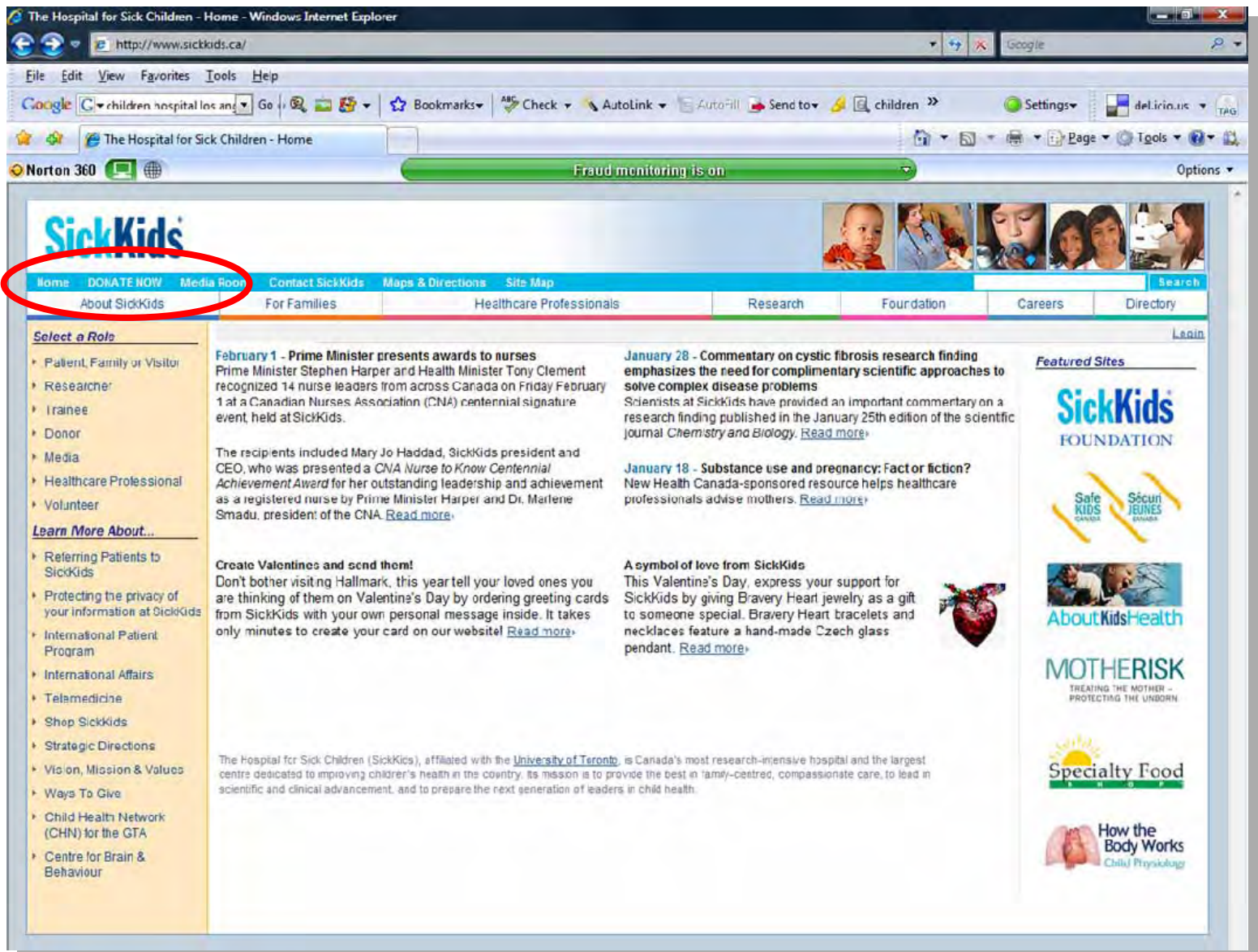


FIGURE 1.17

# Online Fundraising Secrets

SickKids Foundation: Donate Now - Windows Internet Explorer  
http://www.sickkidsfoundation.com/donate/

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help  
Google children hospital los an Go  
Bookmarks Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to children Settings del.icio.us TAG  
SickKids Foundation: Donate Now  
Norton 360 Fraud monitoring is on Options

**SickKids**  
FOUNDATION

My SickKids | e-Newsletter Sign Up | Contact Us | ShopSickKids | Search Go

Why Give **Donate Now** More Ways To Give Our Stories Events News & Media About Us Grants

## Donate Now

Your donations make the difference.

Share on Facebook Email To Friend

**Thank you for supporting SickKids!**

Choose one of these great ways to help SickKids today.

**Make a one-time donation:**  
Fast, easy and secure. Your donation makes the difference.

**Make a difference!** [Donate Now](#)

**Donate in someone's name:**  
Make a donation to celebrate, honour or remember a loved one.

Please choose **one** of the options below:

**YES, I want to send a card** [Create Card](#)

**New cards!** **NO, I don't want to send a card** [Donate Now](#)

**Join The Miracle Club with a monthly donation:**  
Miracle Club members receive a welcome package & updates from SickKids.

Your monthly gift makes miracles possible:  
**Join the Miracle Club now!** [Join Now](#)

\*Web site donors will receive their tax receipt immediately by email.

**Our mailing address**  
SickKids Foundation  
525 University Avenue, 14th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2L3

**Our phone numbers**  
1-800-661-1083  
416-813-6166

Home | Donate Now | FAQs | Privacy | Donor Services | Send us your Feedback | Visit www.SickKids.ca  
Copyright © 2007. SickKids Foundation. All rights reserved.

FIGURE 1.18

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the SickKids Foundation donation page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://secure.e2rm.com/registrant/donate.aspx?EventID=2034&LangPref=en-CA>. The page features the SickKids Foundation logo and a "Donate Now" button with the text "Please give generously." Below this, a "Thank you for supporting SickKids!" message is displayed. The main form is titled "Please complete the information below." and includes several sections:

- Donation Type:** Radio buttons for "Make personal donation:" (selected) and "Make donation on behalf of an organization:". Fields for "Title:", "First Name:", "Last Name:", and "Organization:" are present.
- Contact Information:** Fields for "Address:", "City/Town:", "Province/State:" (set to Ontario), "Postal/Zip Code:", "Country:" (set to CANADA), "Phone Number:" (with area and extension fields), and "Email Address:".
- Permissions:** A checkbox for "I give SickKids Foundation permission to contact me by email." is checked.
- Additional Information:** A dropdown menu for "What led you to donate today?" and a text area for "Additional Comments:".
- Payment Information:** Fields for "Donation Amount:", "Currency:" (set to Canadian Dollars), "Credit Card Type:" (set to Visa), "Credit Card Number:", "Cardholder's Name:", and "Credit Card Expiration:" (with two dropdown menus for month and year).

The form includes a "VeriSign Secured" logo and a "VERIFLY" logo. At the bottom, there is a "Privacy Policy" link and "Back" and "Continue" buttons.

FIGURE 1.19

name, which is like an honor gift, or you can join their monthly giving program. I decide I want to Make a one-time donation and I click that little button right next to the mother and daughter, and it takes me to step 3 shown in Figure 1.19. That's it. I fill this in. I fill in my name, my address, my credit card information. I click continue and my gift is processed. Only three steps instead of the eight or nine needed by that other organization.

There are ways to design a donation page. This donation page could be better, and we're going to go over design aspects later in the book. The vital part of your online giving strategy is to make sure that your form doesn't work against you; it doesn't have people leaving due to frustration.

## How online fundraising works

Let's look at the five ways that online fundraising works. We've gone over these in overview, but I now want to drill down just a little bit so you have a good basic understanding of how you raise money online. Some people think of the online environment as kind of scary and complicated and confusing, and there is plenty of jargon like HTTP, FTP, and HTML. There are servers and hosts and it sounds very complicated. So I just want to demystify it for you so you understand what is involved in raising money online.

### **You create a site reflecting your strategic development plans**

Basically there are five things you have to do. The first is to create a website that reflects your strategic plan and your development plan. You don't just put up a website. You build a website that is strategic, is part of your mission, will advance your mission, and meets the goals of your development plan. You don't do this because you're in IT, and you don't do it because you're a fundraiser. You do it because you have the buy-in of the board and the executive director, right down from the top.

There are three ways you develop a website. You could build it in-house. You could buy Dreamweaver or FrontPage or another program that helps you build a website. You could design all the pages yourself, write all the copy yourself, and you could go out and find the shopping cart you need to manage transactions. You would need to sign up for merchant account and a payment gateway. You would need to get a security certificate so that you could have the

HTTPS secure site. You’d have to do all of that yourself. That’s one way to do it.

Another way to do it is to hire an outside firm that specializes in designing websites. They would design it for you. They could host it for you or they would put it up on your website for you. They would manage all the backend of what I just mentioned: the merchant account, payment gateway—all the credit card processing. They could help manage all of that for you. That is your second option. This allows you quite a bit of control over that process.

The third option is to rent an application. An example would be Blackbaud’s Online Fundraising Suite, Convio, GetActive, or Kintera. You’ll see more about this option later in the book. I’ll list some of the vendors and show samples of their websites. I’ll also explain the functionality that these ready-made applications offer.

These vendors are called ASPs, application service providers. What they offer is software that you rent. They provide the software. They put up the website for you, and provide all of the functionality that you need to manage, update, and run a website, as well as have people sign up for your newsletters, give donations, become members and renew their memberships. All that functionality is taken care of by this application service provider. This is probably the easiest way to go, but it’s also the most expensive.

You need to make sure that you have a website that reflects your strategic plan. It shouldn’t just be for fundraising. It’s also for communicating your brand. Look at the example in Figure 1.20. On their website, Mothers Against Drunk Driving tells you what their mission is. Their mission is to stop drunk driving. It’s to support the victims of this violent crime. And it’s to prevent underage drinking.

When you visit their home page, the top item on the navigation bar is DRUNK DRIVING. That’s number one in their mission statement. VICTIM SERVICES is number two in their mission statement. And the next item, UNDER 21, that’s part three of their mission statement. Their mission statement is reflected in their navigation scheme. This isn’t the best home page—there are lots of things wrong with it, but they’ve done this right. They have a strategic website that reflects who they are and where they’re headed. It’s not just for fundraising.

# Online Fundraising Secrets



FIGURE 1.20

You make the website donor centered and interactive

Once you've built your website, you need to make it donor centered and interactive. You can't have a website that's simply flat and never changes. It doesn't inspire anybody. You need to have the kind of content that your visitors are searching for. You need to have visuals that will stir the emotions of your people. And in some nonprofits, this is obviously not true.

If it's the Contemporary Museum of Art, you're not necessarily looking for an emotional appeal. But most nonprofits help the needy. You need to have photos, particularly on your home page, that stir the emotions of your people. People give with their heart first and their mind second. You can have a photograph like the one in Figure 1.21 on the Doctors without Borders website—a child in a needy country receiving a nutritious meal.

You need to have multiple ways for visitors to interact with your website.

The screenshot shows the MSF website interface. At the top left is the MSF logo. A navigation bar contains links for HOME, COUNTRIES, CONTENT, ABOUT MSF, DONATIONS, and VOLUNTEER. A search box is located to the right of the navigation bar. The main content area features a large banner for the 'LAUNCH: MSF MALNUTRITION CAMPAIGN' with a photo of a child and the text: 'Persistent high rates of child mortality in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will not be reduced if malnutrition is not addressed more aggressively. This is a medical emergency. FOOD IS NOT ENOUGH. WITHOUT ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS, MILLIONS OF CHILDREN WILL DIE'. Below the banner is a link to 'Download the complete PDF document'. A video player is embedded, showing a play button and a progress bar. Below the video player is a quote from Dr. Milton Tectonidis, MSF nutrition advisor: 'Unfortunately, sometimes, the problem of malnutrition gets hidden under the big discussions on eliminating poverty or eliminating hunger, but medical science is not in a position to say any better than anyone else how to go about eliminating hunger. What we do know is how to control malnutrition.' To the right of the main content is a 'RELATED LINKS' section with several entries, including 'New York Times: Instant Nutrition' and 'Niger: International Activity Report, 2007'.

FIGURE 1.21



We looked at a few of those before. You need to have videos the way Doctors without Borders does. You need to have a search box. You need to have a way for them to donate, to find out more, to download content, to interact with your website. It needs to be interactive. You need to have multiple ways for donors and visitors to increase their level of commitment. Another example of a donor-centered website is Amnesty International. Look at their home page in Figure 1.22.

If you visit Amnesty International and you're concerned about a particular country where abuses are taking place, you can search by country in the upper left part of the page. If you're concerned about a particular issue such as the death penalty or torture, you can search by issue. You can donate, you can take action, and they've also taken the most popular issues that they're facing and put them right there on their navigation scheme. Guantanamo, Violence in Darfur, and Pakistan. It's a donor-centered website.

Don't think of your website just as a brochure and don't think of it just as a way to process online gifts. People have to be able to take themselves to the next level of commitment. The lowest level of commitment is they visit your website and they meander around and look at stuff. If they ask for something, for instance, if they ask to sign up for your newsletter, this shows a certain level of commitment. If they donate, then they've moved up. Not only are they informed, now they're giving out of their own pocket. If they join and become a member, that's another level of commitment. If they volunteer, that's a further level of commitment. So your website should have many ways for your visitors to increase their level of commitment.

Don't think of your site simply as an online version of the printed brochure or an annual report. The Internet doesn't work that way. It used to back in 1997. That's what most nonprofit websites were like, but not anymore.

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

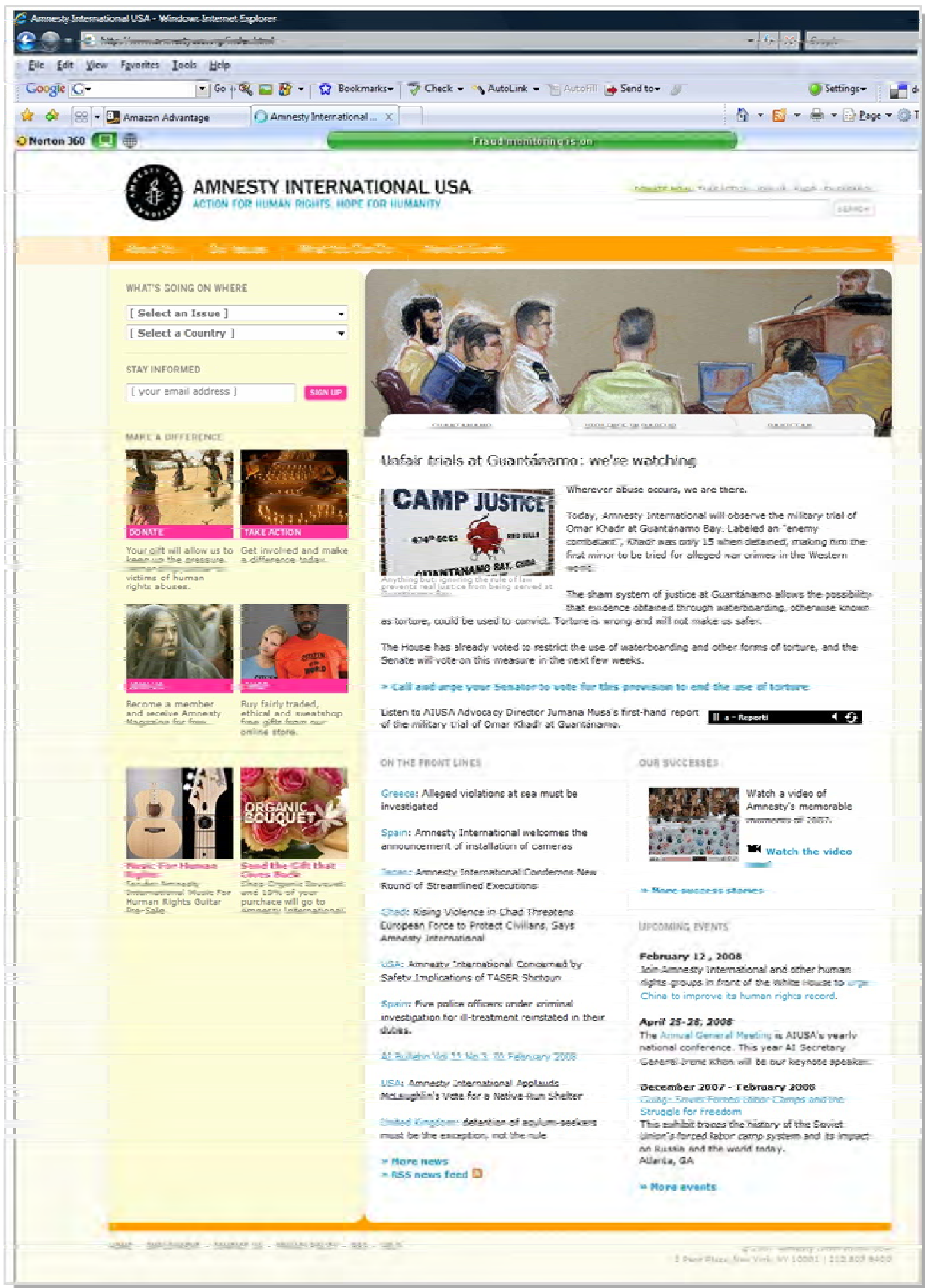


FIGURE 1.22

# Online Fundraising Secrets

## You drive people to your website

After you've built your website and after you've made it donor centered and interactive, you have to drive people to your website. You have to get eyeballs to your website. This is one of the hardest parts about online fundraising. You need visitors, and there are basically two ways to get visitors to your website. One way is to pay for them and the other is just to do it yourself, which takes time.

In Figure 1.23 is a sample of a search engine result on Google. If you go to Google and you type in "stop gun violence," you'll get two sets of results. On the left-hand side you have what's called organic search. These are web pages that are listed in a certain order because Google went out on the Web, found these websites, indexed them, and ranked them according to relevance.

You receive these results because Google thinks these are the most relevant results for the phrase, "stop gun violence." Over on the right-hand side, you see Sponsored Links. These are paid ads. They have a headline, a few words, and the website URL—the unique resource locator, which is the website address.

Those are the two ways you drive people to your website. You either create a website rich in content and you write it so well that search engines find it, index

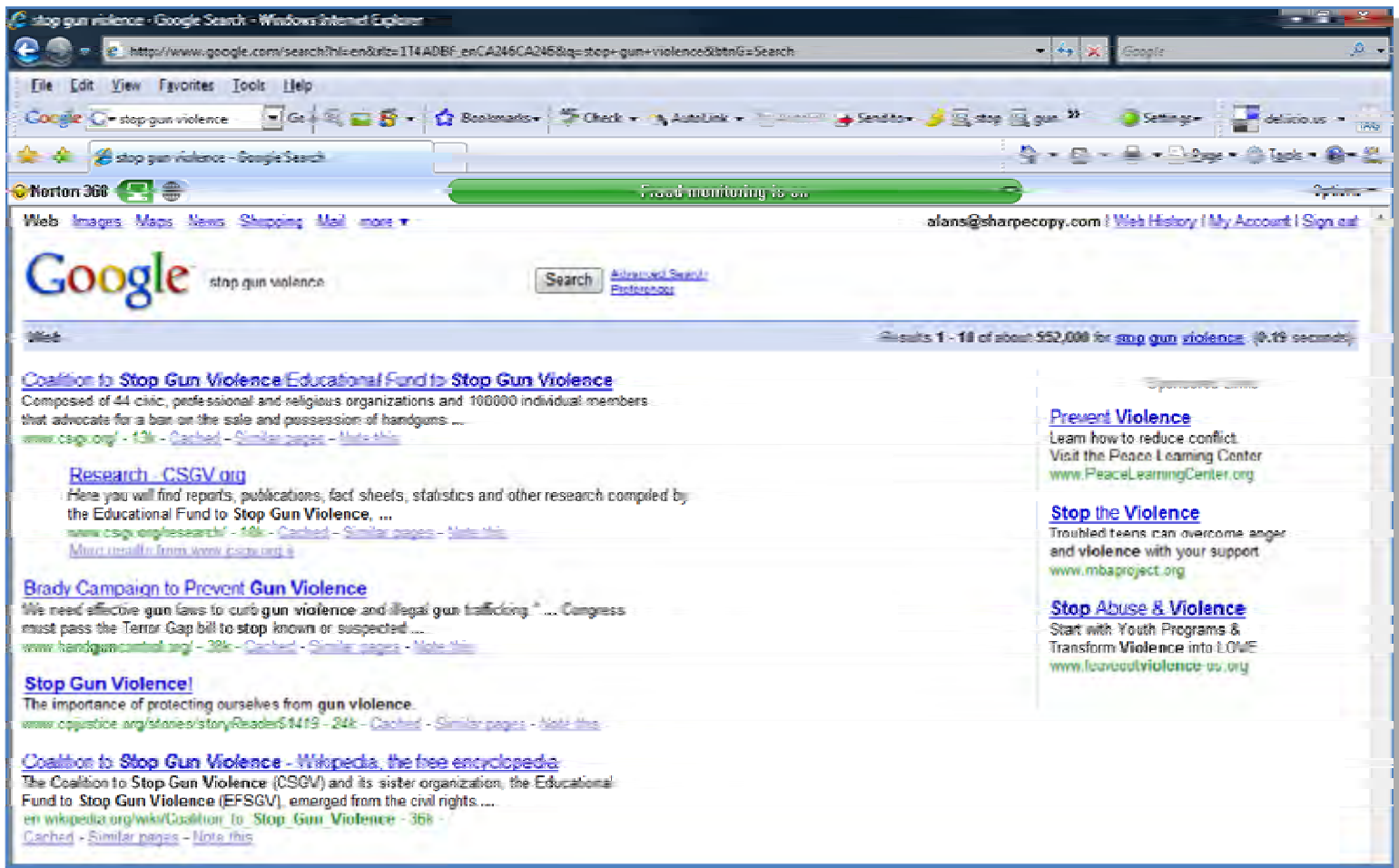


FIGURE 1.23

it, and rank you near the top (you’ll learn how to do that as the book progresses) or you take out an ad on Google, Yahoo, or Microsoft Network. You take out an ad that targets that same phrase, for example, “stop gun violence.”

The organization with the Sponsored Link at the top on the right is Peace Learning Center. They are paying for every visitor who clicks that link. They’re paying a couple of cents each time someone clicks that link and goes to their website. You can drive people to your website with paid advertising or you can drive people to your website with what’s called organic search engine optimization where you optimize every page on your website to attract the kind of visitors that you want.

Another way, which is more passive, is using your web address wherever possible. If you have a sign outside your building, you can put your website on it. If you’re talking on the phone, you can invite people to visit your website. If you have a special event, you can have a banner that has your website. The event program can have your website on it. When you send a direct mail letter, which is a little more active, you can add a line at the bottom of the letter saying, “Give online now. Visit [canadiancancersociety.org](http://canadiancancersociety.org),” and you can drive people to your website. It’s just another vital way, but there are basically three ways. You either pay to get people there, you design your website so that people find you, or you drive them there offline.

### You capture visitors’ email addresses

After you’ve driven people to your website, they arrive on your home page. The most important thing you have to do is give them valuable content and find out who they are. The easiest way to find out who they are is to ask them to give you their email address and their name. You offer them a newsletter, updates, tips, alerts or announcements—in an obvious and nice way, like it is in Figure 1.24.

You offer them something of value, preferably something that you can email them weekly or monthly. You need to capture email addresses. This is vital. You can also invite them to take some action. If you’re an advocacy-based organization like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch, you can ask people to take action and get their email address that way.

Another obvious step is to capture the email addresses of your current donors. You’re likely to do that offline by direct mail or phone, inviting them to tell you their email address. You add that to your database. That’s how online fundraising works.

# Online Fundraising Secrets

The image shows the homepage of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). At the top, there is a navigation bar with a "Choose a Country:" dropdown menu displaying various national flags (Australia, Canada, China, EU, France, Germany, India, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Russia, South Africa, UK, USA) and an "International" option. Below this are four main action buttons: "DONATE NOW", "SAVE ANIMALS", "JOIN CAMPAIGNS", and "GET INVOLVED", each with a corresponding animal image. The IFAW logo is prominently displayed on the left. A secondary navigation bar includes "UNITED STATES", "WHO WE ARE", "PUBLICATIONS", "MEDIA CENTER", "IFAW WORLDWIDE", and "CONTACT US". A search bar is located in the center, with a "SEARCH IFAW" label and a submit button. To the right of the search bar is a link to "VISIT IFAW CAMPAIGNS AND COUNTRIES". The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, a large image of a polar bear cub is accompanied by the text "A Better World for Animals and People". Below this is a list of four action items: "MAKE THIS MY HOMEPAGE", "EMAIL THIS SITE TO A FRIEND", "MAKE A DONATION", and "TAKE ACTION". The central section features a "FEATURES" heading and two news items. The first is "Taiping Four Arrive Safely in Cameroon", which includes a small image of a gorilla and text describing the safe return of four infant Western Lowland gorillas. The second is "Cape Cod Stranding Network joins IFAW", which includes a small image of a whale and text about the merger of the Cape Cod Stranding Network (CCSN) with IFAW. On the right side, there is a "SIGN UP" section for action alerts, a "BREAKING NEWS" section with three headlines, and an "Animal Action Week" banner at the bottom right.

FIGURE 1.24

You send email newsletters and appeal letters to your email list

The final step in online fundraising is to take those email addresses and names of people who have visited your website, and you correspond with them over time. The secret to effective and successful online fundraising is not your website. It's the email you send to your donors, your advocates, and your visitors over time.

That’s where you make your money. You send them emails that are donor centered, informative, helpful, inspiring, motivational, and compelling. People get those emails and they click them, visit your website, and they give a gift.

You develop the relationship with email. Email is the secret to online fundraising success. The language needs to inspire them to take action. You need to inspire them to visit your website, read more, and give. I gave a gift to Amnesty International and Figure 1.25 shows my Inbox for just 12 months worth of emails.

These emails were sent between February 6, 2007 and January 23, 2008. Amnesty International wrote to me over 50 times in those 12 months. Some of those emails have been excellent, excellent emails. An example is shown in Figure 1.26.

You can see that when Amnesty International sends an email, it’s a donor-centered email. For one thing, it’s personalized. The email in Figure 1.26 says, “Dear Alan,” not “Dear Friends,” not “Dear Subscribers,” plural, but “Dear Alan.” It’s addressed to me. I realize this is done by a computer, but they’ve taken the effort to send me a note addressed to me by name and I appreciate that.

Also, this is a message from Larry Cox, and he’s not a faceless executive director. He’s got his face right there at the bottom of the email. He’s even signed it, which is a little bit artificial because this is obviously coming by email. It’s not his signature, right? But it is a signature, so it does personalize it. You’ll notice here that this particular appeal, which was sent in January 2008, says that Amnesty International has made one New Year’s Resolution. It’s to fight torture and that includes making private military contractors accountable in Iraq. This is a particular campaign for a specific issue.

When I click on that link at the bottom, it takes me to the page shown in Figure 1.27. That link takes me right to the donation page at Amnesty International’s website. You see the circled red text that shows I’m on the donation page for a gift that will make private military contractors accountable. This is an integrated online fundraising campaign that ties the email they sent to the home page. It not only integrates the *ask* and the designation of the gift, but it knows that this is from a specific donor. This email is for Alan and when I fill in this information and give them my gift, they’ll know that it came from me.

I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter that I gave a gift to 20 charities online. Seven of them have never written to me again. So just look at the difference. Amnesty has written to me 50 times about issues that I care about, and those other charities have never written to me. Who do you suppose gets my at-

# Online Fundraising Secrets

Amnesty International – Microsoft Outlook

File Edit View Go Tools Actions Help Adobe PDF

Send/Receive All New Reply Reply to All Forward

Search Amnesty International

Subject	From	Received	Size	Categories
Gang raped in Iraq?	Amnesty International USA	Wed 1/23/2008 11:07 AM	31 KB	
Getting away with murder	Amnesty International USA	Wed 1/16/2008 12:39 PM	29 KB	
Thousands stand against Guantanamo	Amnesty International USA	Fri 1/11/2008 3:05 PM	21 KB	
Last chance to make a tax-deductible gift in 2007!	Amnesty International USA	Mon 12/31/2007 11:34 AM	20 KB	
Stop the human rights meltdown	Amnesty International USA	Sun 12/30/2007 11:31 AM	19 KB	
What your gift will do next year	Amnesty International USA	Thu 12/27/2007 12:57 PM	22 KB	
Solidarity with those on the front lines	Amnesty International USA	Thu 12/20/2007 3:08 PM	23 KB	
Our ad in today's New York Times	Amnesty International USA	Wed 12/5/2007 11:21 AM	20 KB	
Give a gift that reflects your values	Amnesty International USA	Thu 11/29/2007 9:40 AM	14 KB	
Celebrate with us	Amnesty International USA	Mon 11/19/2007 2:46 PM	17 KB	
Shop Amnesty for the holidays	Amnesty International USA	Sun 11/18/2007 4:47 AM	30 KB	
Confronting the crisis in Pakistan	Amnesty International USA	Thu 11/8/2007 12:56 PM	21 KB	
Help get our ad in the New York Times	Amnesty International USA	Wed 11/7/2007 10:05 AM	21 KB	
Your letters, their hope	Amnesty International USA	Mon 11/5/2007 2:46 PM	19 KB	
A voice from death row	Amnesty International USA	Thu 11/1/2007 12:46 PM	18 KB	
Be an Early Bird for the Holidays	Amnesty International USA	Sun 10/21/2007 1:02 PM	23 KB	
Two dates you should know	Amnesty International USA	Wed 10/17/2007 9:54 AM	20 KB	
Accountability for Blackwater's hired guns	Amnesty International USA	Mon 10/15/2007 9:36 AM	16 KB	
Guess who's turning 1 year-old	Amnesty International USA	Thu 10/11/2007 10:10 AM	18 KB	
You can tear down Guantánamo Bay one pixel at a time	Amnesty International USA	Fri 10/5/2007 9:53 AM	16 KB	
October 24 - A day for action on Darfur	Amnesty International USA	Thu 10/4/2007 12:00 PM	17 KB	
For Burma	Amnesty International USA	Thu 9/27/2007 1:18 PM	16 KB	
Why now? What can I do to help for Darfur?	Amnesty International USA	Fri 9/21/2007 1:05 PM	18 KB	
Models wanted -- No experience necessary	Amnesty International USA	Sun 9/9/2007 11:08 AM	24 KB	
Texas Halts Execution of Kenneth Foster	Amnesty International USA	Fri 8/31/2007 12:24 PM	13 KB	
Double your impact in the fight against torture	Amnesty International USA	Mon 8/20/2007 9:51 AM	21 KB	
Double your impact in the fight against torture	Amnesty International USA	Wed 8/15/2007 12:46 PM	21 KB	
Wrong place - Wrong time - Death in Texas	Amnesty International USA	Mon 8/13/2007 1:16 PM	14 KB	
Tickets from the Cure for Auction!	Amnesty International USA	Wed 8/8/2007 6:28 PM	18 KB	
Darfur: A major victory	Amnesty International USA	Thu 8/2/2007 12:51 PM	18 KB	
Turn talk into action	Amnesty International USA	Tue 7/31/2007 11:51 AM	21 KB	
Straight talk on Darfur	Amnesty International USA	Mon 7/30/2007 12:34 PM	19 KB	
My story - surviving rape, becoming an advocate	Amnesty International USA	Thu 7/26/2007 10:22 AM	20 KB	
Katrina -- Uphold the Right of Return	Amnesty International USA	Sun 7/22/2007 11:06 PM	17 KB	
Halt rampant sexual violence right here at home	Amnesty International USA	Thu 7/19/2007 12:18 PM	21 KB	
Voice your opposition to the violence	Amnesty International USA	Tue 7/17/2007 9:33 AM	20 KB	
Help fix damage done to human rights	Amnesty International USA	Mon 7/16/2007 10:10 AM	17 KB	
Help set our agenda	Amnesty International USA	Mon 7/9/2007 11:50 AM	15 KB	
Instant Karma CD 30% off	Amnesty International USA	Sun 7/8/2007 11:35 AM	18 KB	
Help Troy Davis, unjustly sentenced to die	Amnesty International USA	Thu 6/28/2007 4:54 PM	16 KB	
385 prisoners, only 1 conviction	Amnesty International USA	Wed 5/27/2007 10:33 AM	18 KB	
Help get Karma on the Top 10 list	Amnesty International USA	Sun 6/24/2007 11:36 AM	19 KB	
The list is life - are you on it?	Amnesty International USA	Thu 6/21/2007 9:38 AM	18 KB	
Put a stop to the abuses!	Amnesty International USA	Wed 6/20/2007 1:14 AM	20 KB	
Hold torturers accountable	Amnesty International USA	Thu 6/14/2007 5:14 PM	18 KB	
Instant Karma -- words from Darfuri refugees	Amnesty International USA	Tue 6/12/2007 9:21 AM	18 KB	
Live from Guantanamo	Amnesty International USA	Tue 6/5/2007 10:13 AM	19 KB	
Green Day video launches today	Amnesty International USA	Fri 6/1/2007 12:25 PM	21 KB	
Amnesty supporters like you DO make a difference!	Amnesty International USA	Tue 5/29/2007 9:35 AM	21 KB	
American Idol gets Instant Karma	Amnesty International USA	Thu 5/24/2007 9:49 AM	14 KB	
Native American and Alaska Native women suffering shocking rates of rape	Amnesty International USA	Thu 5/10/2007 12:48 PM	22 KB	
Green Day covers legendary Lennon song	Amnesty International USA	Tue 5/8/2007 10:27 AM	20 KB	
Make your voice count - only a few hours left	Amnesty International USA	Mon 4/30/2007 9:15 AM	19 KB	
Wear an Amnesty t-shirt and say no to torture	Amnesty International USA	Sun 4/29/2007 10:31 AM	27 KB	
Last chance: Believe and Be Counted	Amnesty International USA	Wed 4/25/2007 9:23 AM	20 KB	
Members like you and me make a difference	Amnesty International USA	Wed 4/18/2007 9:22 AM	20 KB	
Witnessing the horrors in Guantánamo	Amnesty International USA	Wed 4/11/2007 9:20 AM	19 KB	
We need you now more than ever	Amnesty International USA	Wed 4/4/2007 12:56 PM	21 KB	
On the ground in Guantánamo	Amnesty International USA	Wed 3/28/2007 1:22 PM	14 KB	
What we must do to stop the killing in Darfur	Amnesty International USA	Wed 3/21/2007 9:56 AM	21 KB	
Dispatches from a land in crisis	Amnesty International USA	Wed 3/14/2007 9:29 AM	20 KB	
Help us keep up the pressure for Darfur	Amnesty International USA	Fri 3/9/2007 8:44 AM	17 KB	
Don't let 2 men die for 1 bullet	Amnesty International USA	Thu 3/1/2007 5:01 PM	10 KB	
Guess who doesn't believe in habeas corpus	Amnesty International USA	Thu 2/22/2007 1:05 PM	20 KB	
Do you know writ from wrong?	Amnesty International USA	Thu 2/15/2007 9:43 AM	20 KB	
Clearance Sale on Amnesty Merchandise	Amnesty International USA	Sun 2/11/2007 11:32 PM	20 KB	
How we lost our Fifth Amendment rights	Amnesty International USA	Fri 2/9/2007 1:17 PM	14 KB	
Call for Human Rights with Amnesty Wireless	Amnesty International USA	Tue 2/6/2007 10:41 AM	16 KB	


Navigation Pane

FIGURE 1.25

# 1. How to Move Your Website Beyond the "Donate Now" Button

From: Amnesty International USA (ajrto@usaaction.amnestyusa.org)  
To: Alan Sharpe  
Cc:  
Subject: Getting away with murder

Sent: Wed 1/15/2008 12:41 PM

 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA


**Our new year's resolution: Fight torture wherever it occurs. Your support is invaluable to our efforts in 2008 to bring accountability to private military contractors in Iraq, publicize illegal activities in Bush's war on terror, and close Guantánamo prison once and for all.**

**DONATE NOW!**

Dear Alan,

As we begin 2008, many of us are busy making new year's resolutions. At Amnesty International, we're starting the year energized and focused on the promise of change.

Our Denounce Torture campaign has taken on even greater urgency in recent weeks, with news that the CIA destroyed tapes of interrogations it conducted with "high value" detainees that involved waterboarding, a form of torture, and mounting evidence of murder and rape being committed by private U.S. military contractors in Iraq - who now operate there with total immunity.



Amnesty is working to hold military contractors accountable for the crimes they commit in the U.S. "war on terror."

**DONATE NOW!**

[Help us fight torture and halt human rights abuses wherever they occur in 2008.](#)

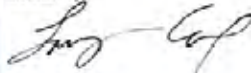
Just five days ago, on January 11th, we kicked off our new Counter Terror with Justice campaign in Washington, DC. This date marked the sixth anniversary of the first detainee transfers to Guantánamo prison. Our new campaign aims to take our America I Believe In movement to a global stage by mobilizing public outrage against the use of torture in Bush's war on terror and intensifying pressure to close Guantánamo forever.


[But we need your help to stop these and other abuses in 2008. Your gift today will be used to:](#)

- Pressure the Senate to pass a loophole-free version of the Security Contractor Accountability Act, a bill that would help make sure private military and security contractors are not above the law. *A similar bill has already passed in the House - but we need to keep up the momentum!*
- Hold events across the country to expand our network of Denounce Torture activists.
- Run ads and host film screenings to publicize the United States' illegal practices in the war on terror.

In order to maintain independence from government, corporate, or national interests, Amnesty International relies heavily upon individual contributions. This makes your support invaluable. [Please make a tax-deductible gift today to help ensure that we have the resources to tackle these pressing human rights emergencies in 2008.](#)

Thank you for all you do in pursuit of a just and more peaceful world.

Sincerely,  
  
Larry Cox  
Executive Director  
Amnesty International USA



DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. Messages sent to this email address are not read. If you have a question or comment, please use our interactive [online help system](#). Subscribe to our [RSS feeds](#).

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[Remove yourself from this mailing.](#)

[Remove yourself from all mailings from Amnesty USA.](#)

FIGURE 1.26



explorer

.amnestyusa.org/site/c.jhKPIXPCIoE/b.3806141/apps/ka/sd/donorcustom.asp?msource=W81PMCL1SS&aid=3308005&kntav

ools Help

Go Bookmarks Check AutoLink AutoFill Send to

antage AIUSA 2007

No fraud detected

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA**  
ACTION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. HOPE FOR HUMANITY.

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**Amnesty depends on the generosity of individuals like you to fund our life-saving work.**

Your support is invaluable to our efforts in 2008 to bring accountability to private military contractors in Iraq, publicize illegal activities in Bush's war on terror, and close Guantánamo prison once and for all.

**Please select your gift amount below:**

\$1,000  
 \$500  
 \$100  
 \$50  
 \$35

TOTAL (or enter another amount here): \$

**\* required information**

**Your Information**

First Name: \*   
Last Name: \*


  
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tention, gets my loyalty, and eventually gets my donation? This is the key. You need to remember that online fundraising is still about relationships. And you develop those with email, not so much with your website. Those are the five steps that you need to take.

Let me just repeat as I conclude. You need to move beyond the Donate Now button. If you just have a Donate Now button on your website, it’s insufficient. It’s passive. You need to work hard at attracting people to your website, giving them the content that will inspire them and keep them coming back, and you need to develop a relationship with them over time using email.

In the next chapter, we’ll look at your home page and how you write, design, and illustrate with photographs, how you produce a navigation scheme that gets people to your website so they can find exactly what they want, and how to make your site sticky so that visitors ultimately give you a gift.