

BETH KANTER • ALLISON H. FINE

FOREWORD BY RANDI ZUCKERBERG

"URGENT! Read this book. Take notes. Take action. If you work for a nonprofit, you don't have to do every single thing these seasoned authors have to share, but you certainly have to know what you're missing." **—SETH GODIN**

THE NETWORKED NONPROFIT



CONNECTING
WITH
SOCIAL MEDIA
TO DRIVE
CHANGE

“URGENT! Read this book. Take notes. Take action. If you work for a nonprofit, you don’t have to do every single thing these seasoned authors have to share, but you certainly have to know what you’re missing. To do otherwise is malpractice.”

—**Seth Godin**, author, *Linchpin*

“*The Networked Nonprofit* is a must-read for any nonprofit organization seeking innovative, creative techniques to improve its mission and better serve its communities.”

—**Diana Aviv**, president and CEO, Independent Sector

“The Internet means never having to ask permission before trying something new; in *The Networked Nonprofit*, Fine and Kanter show nonprofits how to harness this flexibility to pursue their missions in partnership with two billion connected citizens.”

—**Clay Shirky**, author, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations*

“*The Networked Nonprofit* uniquely describes the historical context and the current challenges that compel nonprofit leaders to work in networked ways and offers easy steps to help users exploit the potential of social media and ‘working wikily.’”

—**Stephanie McAuliffe**, director, organizational effectiveness,
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

“A must-read for nonprofit leaders who want to change their organizations from the inside out by embracing the power of social networks.”

—**Charlene Li**, founding partner, Altimeter Group,
author, *Open Leadership*, and coauthor, *Groundswell*

“This is a perfect handbook for those who want to leapfrog their current limitations of understanding and find real-world applications of technology to extend their mission.”

—**Michele Nunn**, CEO, Points of Light Institute, and
cofounder, HandsOn Network

“Kanter and Fine provide the ‘Google Maps’ for nonprofits so they can harness social media to kick butt and change the world.”

—**Guy Kawasaki**, cofounder, Alltop.com, and former chief evangelist of Apple

“The preeminent experts in social media for social good, Beth Kanter and Allison Fine provide an excellent guide for helping nonprofits become more effective and nimble in this new, highly networked world.”

—**Jean Case**, CEO and cofounder, Case Foundation

“Allison Fine and Beth Kanter have done an amazing job of bringing their experience and expertise to a readable technology book that will help non-techie decision makers understand how to use new technologies to move their organizations forward.”

—**Marnie Webb**, co-CEO, TechSoup Global

“Social media are deeply changing the way people relate to one another, in business, politics, and the nonprofit world. *The Networked Nonprofit* gets you up to date on how nonprofit workers can use social media to help their organizations help their communities.”

—**Craig Newmark**, founder, Craigslist

“Whether you’re an early technology adopter or a lagging Luddite, there’s something in here of value for anyone seeking to create greater impact. This book is a must-read for those serious about social change.”

—**Heather McLeod Grant**, consultant, The Monitor Institute, and author, *Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits*

“Social media isn’t about Twitter or Facebook, it’s about a whole new way for nonprofits to create social change. Kanter and Fine have had their fingers on the pulse of this change and reveal what it means for you in a book that is smart, clear, and even entertaining.”

—**Holly Ross**, executive director, NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network

“Don’t just pick this book up and think you’ll get a few tips. This is raw, mind-changing, and not likely to let you put it down right away.”

—**Chris Brogan**, author of *Social Media 101*, and blogger at [chrisbrogan.com]

“Social media have changed everything. Now what? Buy this book for all the answers. It shows how to embrace this new world, navigate it with confidence, and harness its collective power to accelerate social change. Your cause will flourish with this guide in your hands.”

—**Katya Andresen**, COO, Network for Good, and author, *Robin Hood Marketing*

“*The Networked Nonprofit* provides compelling motivation and practical coaching to nonprofit leaders so that even the most reluctant can join in the game. Vivid real-life stories illustrate the range of emerging opportunities while concrete examples of low-cost, low-risk experiments provide a bridge to action.”

—**Jill A. Schumann**, president and CEO, Lutheran Services in America

“Kanter and Fine underscore that social media aren’t a fad or trend or even a new Web site to discover; rather, they are the means of communicating, convening, building communities, and creating change in society today and tomorrow. Networked nonprofits are our tomorrow.”

—**Sharna Goldseker**, vice president, The Charles and Andrea Bronfman Foundation

“Part manual, part manifesto, Kanter and Fine’s guide for nonprofits shows how to embrace the future. It is packed with step-by-step guidelines and success stories so you know you are not alone. Read it, then get engaged in the power of networks.”

—**Larry Blumenthal**, head of Social Media, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

“*The Networked Nonprofit* takes social media beyond the marketing and IT departments of philanthropy—it’s a book every board member and executive director should read, not just for great stories of how to use social media well, but because Allison Fine and Beth Kanter convincingly answer the question Why?”

—**Tom Watson**, author, *CauseWired: Plugging In, Getting Involved, Changing the World*

The Networked Nonprofit

**CONNECTING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA
TO DRIVE CHANGE**

Beth Kanter
Allison H. Fine

Foreword by
Randi Zuckerberg
Director of Marketing
Facebook

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FOREWORD

The tragic earthquake in Haiti reverberated around the world on social media **channels** such as Facebook. Millions of people responded immediately by sending money by text message, sharing stories online, and organizing help for Haitians. Because of the spread of **social media**, we were able to respond in numbers and ways that would have been impossible just a few years ago.

We are social beings who thrive on connecting with one another and sharing our interests and issues. People love sharing their stories with one another. Sites such as Facebook enable us to connect with friends, new and old, all around the world and share our stories.

I truly enjoy my job at Facebook, where I focus on politics, nonprofits, and news and current events. We get to witness firsthand the conversations people are having around the world about important topics and events. There are more than 350 million people connecting with one another on Facebook, posting updates, sharing photos and videos, and promoting causes they are passionate about. What makes Facebook so powerful is that an individual can share content with his or her friends, who in turn share it with their friends—and in just a short time, a large number of people can come together around a common interest in a truly global conversation.

Let's look at some of the interesting ways people have used Facebook for breast cancer awareness and action. A few years ago, a Facebook user named Eric Ding used Facebook to ask friends to donate money for breast cancer research. Eric is a researcher at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Eric's friends supported his cause and shared the message with their friends. In a few months, he had over 2.2 million people signed on to support his efforts. By the end of 2009, Eric's cause had 5.5 million friends and over \$135,000 to support breast

cancer research. And in January 2010, a grassroots movement sprang up on Facebook where women suddenly began updating their status update with just one word, their bra color, to promote breast cancer awareness. Friends shared this message: “List the color of your bra in your FB status, just the color, nothing more. Then send this msg to your girlfriends too . . . no men. The point is to see how far we can spread breast cancer awareness . . . and make the men wonder what’s up.” Within a few hours, hundreds of thousands of people had updated their Facebook status and shared it with their network. This caught the attention of the national media, and everyone from CNN to *The Wall Street Journal* to ABC News reported on the effect of “the bra-vado.”

And that’s just one cause. Thousands of people use sites like Facebook every day to share their passion for causes, ranging from women’s issues and illiteracy to the genocide in Darfur, to raise money and awareness. And it’s not just young people—one of the fastest growing demographics on Facebook in 2009 was women over fifty! I’ve watched the amazing energy that people put into their causes online, and we’ve seen dozens of creative ideas and successful implementations, but I also know that it’s only the beginning: we’ve only seen the tip of the iceberg when it comes to using social media channels for social change. And that’s why I was so excited when Beth and Allison told me about this book, *The Networked Nonprofit*, because I know so many nonprofits and people who want to help, and who would benefit from hearing the authors’ thoughts and ideas on putting the pieces together to be more effective solving social problems.

The power of social media to connect people, build relationships, and allow anyone, anywhere, to share their passions and interests, is amazing. But leveraging the power of social media isn’t always intuitive for nonprofits. *The Networked Nonprofit* provides a framework for understanding how nonprofit organizations can become more open and connected and use social media more effectively for their causes. The first section of this book is really important because it focuses on ways that nonprofits and their leaders need to think and work differently to best use social media. The second section focuses on all the things that nonprofits can do once they embrace social media and open themselves up on channels like Facebook. That’s when I get really excited about the new, fun, and creative ways that people can participate in to change the world for the better!

One of the most amazing aspects of the Internet and the Web is that there are simply no boundaries. There are no limits for who can participate. Whereas

in the past, there were only two ways to get involved (donate money or donate time), now there are dozens of ways in which people can support the organizations they care about using social tools: updating their Facebook status about a cause, organizing a fundraising event, writing a blog post, producing and sharing a video, and many more. We are all learning together how to use social media well for causes, and there is so much value in sharing our successes and failures in this space. That's why *The Networked Nonprofit* is so important, because it helps everyone learn how to work together to leverage social media for social causes, to make a tremendous, positive impact on the world.

*Palo Alto, California
April 2010*

Randi Zuckerberg
*Director of Marketing
Facebook*

To our husbands, Walter and Scott,
and children, Harry, Sara, Maxwell, Zachary, and Jackson,
whose patience we needed to write this book
and whose love we need to get through life.

P R E F A C E

For most of the past decade we have had the privilege of witnessing and participating in nonprofit organizations' adoption and use of social media tools such as e-mail, **blogs**, and Facebook. We feel honored to be a part of this unfolding narrative and contribute to the genesis of an entirely new field.

We have both spent our entire careers working in, for, and with nonprofit organizations. So we well understood nonprofit leaders' trepidation as social media use began to gain traction. Their hesitation was based on two assumptions. The first was that the tools were the latest faddish craze created by and for kids. The second was that by using social media and opening up one's organization to the Wild West of the Web and **social networks**, an organization would damage its reputation and ability to control its own destiny. Neither assumption is true.

Social media will not fade away. It will continue to grow and become even more ingrained in how we live and work. As the use of social media has grown, leaders' skepticism has shifted from resistance to concern that they are being left behind. The question for organizational leaders is no longer whether to embrace social media, but how to do it effectively.

As one nonprofit executive director recently told us, "I've been doing this work since the seventies and I'm not on Facebook yet, but [I] won't be relevant unless we move into this space. And we can't do that unless we use social media [and] be present on social networks. But I don't know where to begin." We have written this book to help her, and the millions of other staff people and board members of nonprofit organizations, make their way into this new, social world.

Since 2005, many older, venerable organizations—such as the American Red Cross, the Humane Society of the United States, the National Wildlife

Federation, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, and the American Cancer Society—have opened themselves up to the world through social media. These organizations are having conversations with large numbers of supporters (and detractors) while imaginatively using a variety of tools to enable more people's participation, more easily and inexpensively than ever before. The emergence of an enormous generation of young people—Gen Y, or Millennials—passionate about social causes is fueling the surge of interest in social change work. However, they are far less interested in supporting individual nonprofit organizations over time. The alternative for these digital natives is to use the social media toolkit on behalf of their causes outside of organizations as free agent activists. This presents a significant challenge for all organizations, but particularly for those still hesitating to embrace the culture of openness and connectedness that young people expect.

Nonprofit organizations face other difficulties as well. The plunging economic fortunes of the country have left many communities and nonprofit organizations struggling. Social problems such as hunger and illiteracy are too large and complex for any single organization to solve, yet the nonprofit sector is organized largely as stand-alone organizations. The gravitational pull of individual organizations to become bigger, more complex, and more risk averse puts them at odds with the simplicity and openness that powers social media.

We believe that one important way for organizations to overcome these barriers is to break out of their lonely silos and embrace social media. By doing so they become connected with a larger ecosystem of organizations and individuals eager to help. These Networked Nonprofits work *as* social networks, not just in them.

Of course, nothing is harder for people than changing how they think and behave. We know how tough it is to do something fundamentally different in our personal lives—to eat less chocolate, exercise more, stop yelling at the kids so much, or try out that new gadget. Now magnify this challenge to the level of an organization or community, and see how daunting it can appear.

The good news is the change doesn't have to jar you. Organizations can take the small steps that we outline in this book to start on the pathway to becoming more open and connected—a Networked Nonprofit.

And while the transition might not be easy or comfortable at first, everyone can do it. It just takes some practice, which is exactly what we have been doing for the last few years.

Beth started Beth's Blog in 2003 when many people were asking her the question, "What's a blog?" Today, it is one of the most popular and influential blogs for nonprofits. While writing this book, she was a visiting scholar at The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, where she studied the intersection of social media for external communications and network effectiveness. Over the six years she has written her blog, she has modeled public learning about how to use these tools, and helped shine a light on social media mavens and network weavers working in nonprofit trenches. She earned recognition from *BusinessWeek* magazine as one of the social media innovators of 2009.

In addition, in her capacity as a board member, Beth has volunteered her time to use social networks to support the work of the Sharing Foundation, an organization that takes care of children in Cambodia. Her accomplishments include being the first person ever to use Twitter for fundraising in 2007, winning the first Giving Challenge sponsored by the Case Foundation, and raising money to underwrite the college education of Leng Sopharath, an orphan from Kampong Speu orphanage, who started her senior year at Norton University as an accounting major. Beth also helped sponsor the first-ever blogging conference in Cambodia for three hundred Cambodian young people.

Since 2005, Allison has researched and written about nonprofit organizations' use of social media. She wrote *Momentum: Igniting Social Change in the Connected Age* (2006). Allison writes A. Fine Blog and hosts a monthly podcast for *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* on using social media for social change. She was one of the organizers of the Twitter Vote Report project just prior to the national election in 2008. The project enabled thousands of individuals to share their voting experiences, good and bad, with other people using their cell phones. This open source system was subsequently adopted for the presidential inauguration, as well as for use in elections in India and Iran.

Through our own experiences, and those of the hundreds of organizations and people we talk to online every day, we're learning how best to use social media tools for social change. We are finding and practicing ways to distribute work to enable more people to participate and shape it. We are learning how to communicate better, share ideas, give credit, and thank people for their efforts. And, naturally, we have made more than a few mistakes that we've shared with our networks as well.

We are in awe of the work that nonprofit staff, free agent activists, volunteers, donors, bloggers, and others do every day with such passion, energy, and

selflessness, all to help heal the world. Our aim with this book is to celebrate their efforts, build on them, and encourage hesitant nonprofit leaders to join them online.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

We would like to share a few thoughts with our readers about this book. It is focused largely on efforts within the United States. Amazing work is happening around the world, of course, but our experiences come from our work mainly with U.S.-based organizations, which shapes our views and the content of this book.

The book begins with an introductory chapter, “Introducing Networked Nonprofits,” which defines Networked Nonprofits and describes the social media revolution and the myths that have stopped too many nonprofit executives from engaging in it.

Chapter Two, “Nonprofit Challenges and Trends,” provides the context for the urgent need for nonprofit organizations to transition into being Networked Nonprofits. The book is then divided into two parts: Part One, “How to Become a Networked Nonprofit,” is focused on how organizations can become Networked Nonprofits, and Part Two, “What to Do as a Networked Nonprofit,” is focused on what being a Networked Nonprofit will help them achieve.

The first part, “How to Become a Networked Nonprofit,” encompassing Chapters Three through Seven, focuses on how organizations must operate to use social media successfully and effectively. Topics include Chapter Three, “Understanding Social Networks”; Chapter Four, “Creating a Social Culture”; Chapter Five, “Listening, Engaging, and Building Relationships”; Chapter Six, “Building Trust Through Transparency”; and Chapter Seven, “Making Nonprofit Organizations Simpler.”

The second part, “What to Do as a Networked Nonprofit,” describes the way organizations can work when structured this way. Chapter Eight, “Working with Crowds,” looks at working with large numbers of people outside the organization to spread out the work. Chapter Nine, “Learning Loops,” describes ways organizations can continuously monitor and improve their efforts involving social media. Chapter Ten, “From Friending to Funding,” focuses on turning friends into funders using social media. And Chapter Eleven, “Governing Through Networks,” outlines ways that organizations can use social media to reshape organizational governance.

Each chapter ends with Reflection Questions to help you start internal discussions about that chapter's topics. They are not intended to provide how-to steps for using specific social media tools, but we do list Additional Resources at the end of each chapter to facilitate that kind of learning. You can also reference the Glossary for definitions of social media tools mentioned in the book.

We encourage readers first to explore the ways that organizations have to structure themselves and the ways that their leadership should reorient themselves to their work and the world. However, we understand that some topics, such as working with crowds, are of particular interest; and readers should feel free to explore each chapter directly.

However, we ask for one thing in exchange: for organizational leaders anxious to jump to the *what* and *how* of social media, please practice using the tools yourselves. It's the only way to discover social media's power to change the way we think and work. We also hope you will trust the people within your organization to do the same, and encourage them to connect with the world in positive, creative ways.

April 2010

Beth Kanter
Los Altos, California

Allison H. Fine
Irvington, New York

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—B. K. and A. H. F.

THE AUTHORS

Beth Kanter is the author of *Beth's Blog: How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media* (<http://www.bethkanter.org>), one of the longest running and most popular blogs for nonprofits. Beth has authored chapters in several books, including *Managing Technology to Meet Your Mission: A Strategic Guide for Nonprofit Leaders*, edited by the Nonprofit Technology Network (Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons, 2009). A much-in-demand speaker and trainer at nonprofit conferences, she has been invited to present at some of the leading social media industry conferences, including O'Reilly's Graphing Social Patterns, Gnomedex, SWSX, Blogher, and Podcamp. In 2009, she was named by *Fast Company* magazine as one of the most influential women in technology and as one of *BusinessWeek's* "Voices of Innovation for Social Media." She is CEO of Zoetica (<http://www.zoeticamedia.com>) and is Visiting Scholar for Social Media and Nonprofits for The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. She lives with her husband, Walter, and two children, Harry and Sara, in California.

Allison H. Fine is the author of the award-winning book *Momentum: Igniting Social Change in the Connected Age* (Jossey-Bass/John Wiley & Sons, 2006). She is a senior fellow on the democracy team at Demos: A Network for Change and Action in New York City. In 2008, she published a paper on young people and activism commissioned by the Case Foundation called "Social Citizensbeta," and coedited a collection of essays, *Rebooting America: Ideas for Redesigning American Democracy for the Internet Age*, published by the Personal Democracy Forum (2008), about transformative ways to reinvent twenty-first-century democracy using new media tools. Allison hosts a monthly podcast for *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* called "Social Good" and writes her own blog, A. Fine Blog. She lives with her husband, Scott, and three sons, Max, Zack, and Jack, in the Hudson Valley of New York.