

Personal Word-of-Mouth, TV Still Inform Cause Engagement Most Among Generation Y

Family, Friends and TV programs trump blogs and social networking as the main sources of information about causes and social issues for Americans age 18-29

Washington, D.C. (June 13, 2011) — Despite the growing popularity of social media as means of engaging with causes today, younger Americans still look to personal communication with friends and family as well as traditional media when learning about and telling others about causes. New findings from the *Dynamics of Cause Engagement* study show that while Generation Y is significantly more likely than its older counterparts to utilize social media to learn about causes, more than 4 in 10 Americans age 18-29 still get their information from family (48%), friends (46%) and TV (45%). The survey was conducted among adults age 18 and over in late 2010 by Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication and Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, and explored overall trends in cause involvement and the roles of a variety of activities and tools in fostering engagement with social issues.

Offline Exchange Still Vital

Face-to-face, offline conversations appear to still be the way information about causes is most often relayed among Americans of all generations, according to survey data. **Nearly two-thirds of Americans (62%) report that being told in person is the way they are typically informed of causes and social issues in which others want them to be involved.** Even among generations Y (ages 18 to 29) and X (ages 30 to 45), who are significantly more likely than older generations to report being sent messages or invitations via social media or text messaging, more than half (56% and 59%, respectively) report this face-to-face engagement.

Social Media: Beliefs vs. Actions

Americans are in agreement that they can make a difference by supporting causes; however, they disagree in their perception of the extent to which social media can help accomplish this. When it comes to showing support for causes, generations X and Y subscribe more readily than Baby Boomers (ages 46 to 60) and the Silent Generation (age 61 and over) to the beliefs that social networking sites like Facebook help increase visibility for causes and help them get the word out about causes more

easily. Generations X and Y also are significantly more likely to report that they would support a cause online rather than offline (36% and 37%, respectively).

However, social media continues to remain relatively low on the list of ways Americans—younger generations included—typically support causes. While Generation Y is more likely than older generations to make use of promotional social media tools (e.g., blogs, icons on social profiles, and cause groups) these still rank below more historically prominent types of engagement (e.g., donating, talking to others about social issues, volunteering and signing a petition).

Different Drivers of Online Cause Fatigue

Social media users or not, study findings across all generations point to the potential for online cause overload. More than 7 in 10 report that emails about causes sometimes feel like spam. The Silent Generation—who are significantly more likely than younger generations to be told about causes by email—also are significantly more likely to say they receive too many emails about causes (55%). Generations X and Y are significantly more likely to believe that everybody “likes” causes on Facebook and that it doesn't really mean anything.

Shared Support for Social Issues

Americans of all ages are generally in agreement about the causes in which they are most involved, with supporting our troops and feeding the hungry at the top of the list. Health-related issues, such as heart disease and diabetes, garner stronger involvement from Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation, while global warming ranks slightly higher among generations X and Y.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2011, **Generation Y believes that gay marriage will be the most prominent cause (28%),** followed closely by supporting our troops, bullying and global warming (26% each). Older Americans (Generation X, Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation) are in agreement that supporting our troops will remain most prominent (31%, 39% and 50%, respectively).

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About the Survey

Ogilvy PR and Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication developed the study with the objectives of showcasing trends in cause involvement and evaluating the role of a variety of activities in fostering engagement. An online survey was conducted by TNS Global among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Americans ages 18 and over. The survey was fielded November 30 to December 22, 2010, and has a margin of error of +/-2.2% at the 95% confidence level. Throughout this report, an asterisk '**' next to a number indicates a significant difference from the corresponding audience at the 95% level of confidence.

Generation Definitions:

- Gen Y (Ages 18 to 29)
- Gen X (Ages 30 to 45)
- Baby Boomers (Ages 46 to 60)
- Silent Gen (Age over 60)

Additional key findings will be released:

June 30 – Cause Involvement and Behavior Change

Key Findings

Cause Beliefs

More than younger and older generations, Generation X believes that supporting causes provides a sense of purpose and meaning in life and enhances the feeling of belonging to a community. Generation X is also the most concerned about family involvement in causes, with the youngest generation surveyed (Gen Y) having the greatest involvement growing up.

Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent Gen	Strongly/Somewhat Agree
69%	79%	77%	78%	I believe everyone can make a difference by supporting causes
69%	80%	77%	76%	Supporting a cause can give you a sense of purpose and meaning in your life
69%	78%	73%	73%	Supporting causes makes me feel good about myself
58%	68%	64%	62%	Supporting causes makes me feel like I am part of a community
48%	55%	48%	43%	It is important to me that my family is involved in causes
41%	36%	36%	31%	I was actively involved in supporting causes when I was growing up

Top 5 Sources of Information

While family and friends are shared sources of information across generations, older generations are more likely to use traditional media sources such as TV & print media and younger Americans are more likely to utilize social media tools.

Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent Gen
Family (48%)	TV program or news story (56%)	TV program or news story (70%*)	TV program or news story (70%*)
Friends (46%)	Friends (47%)	Newspaper articles (56%)	Newspaper articles (65%*)
TV program or news story (45%)	Family (45%)	Friends (45%)	Friends (45%)
Website (38%)	Website (43%)	Family (45%)	Family (38%)
Social networks (32%*)/ Newspaper articles (32%)	Newspaper articles (41%)	Website (36%)	Magazine Article (37%*)
Social Media NET (35%*)	Social Media NET (30%*)	Social Media NET (21%)	Social Media NET (13%)

Social Media NET includes blogs and social networking sites

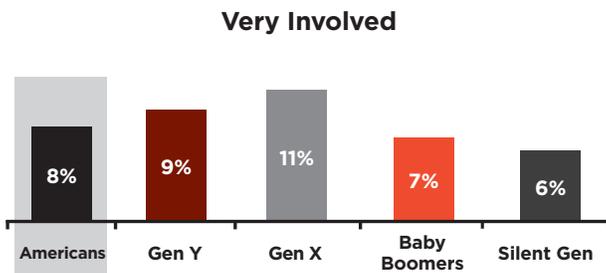
Ways People Tell Others about Causes

Across generations, in-person conversation is the most typical way people tell others about causes. Younger generations are more likely to be engaged through social networks and text messaging than older generations.

In which of the following ways do people typically tell you about social issues and causes they want you to get involved with?	Baby Boomers			
	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent Gen
Tell me in person	56%	59%	65%	63%
Forward me an email about a cause	29%	41%	41%	49%*
Tell me over the phone	24%	29%	35%*	38%*
Write me a personal email	19%	33%	28%	33%
Send me information about a website to visit	24%	29%	27%	30%
Invite me to join a cause on Facebook or another online social networking site	26%	26%	19%	14%
Send me a message on Facebook or other online social networking site to add the cause logo or icon (like a ribbon) to my Facebook page or blog	23%*	23%*	14%	12%
Tell me via text message	14%*	11%*	7%	3%
Tell me via instant message (e.g., AIM, Google Chat)	7%	8%	4%	3%

Cause Involvement

More than one in ten Americans who belong to Generation X report being very involved with causes; this figure is significantly lower among Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation.



Top Six Ways of Being Most Often Involved

The most often means of cause involvement across all generations remain the more historically prominent types of engagement (e.g., donating, talking to others about the cause and learning more about the issues). Social media seems to play a greater role in cause engagement for the younger generations than for the older generations.

	Baby Boomers			
	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent Gen
Donating money	27%	39%	44%	50%*
Talking to others about it	31%	31%	33%	37%
Donating clothing, rewards points, hair or other personal items	14%	22%	25%	31%
Learning more about the issue and its impact	15%	19%	21%	26%*
Signing a petition for the cause	15%	17%	19%	24%*
Volunteering time (i.e., help-lines, soup kitchens, mentoring, cleaning)	15%	17%	19%	16%
Social Media NET	21%	18%	14%	8%

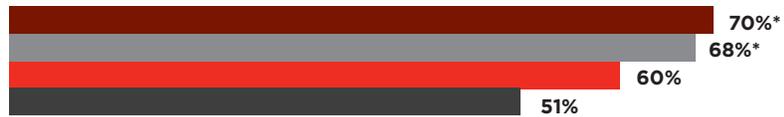
Social media NET includes social media promotional activities (e.g., joining a cause group, posting a logo to a social profile or contributing to a blog).

Perceptions of Online Involvement

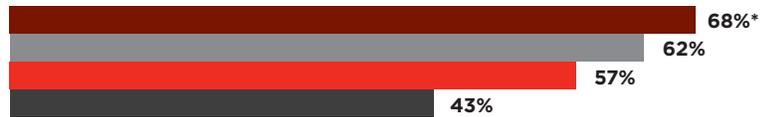
Younger generations are more likely to believe in the power of social networking sites to increase the visibility of causes and to help get the word out about social issues.

Strongly/Somewhat Agree

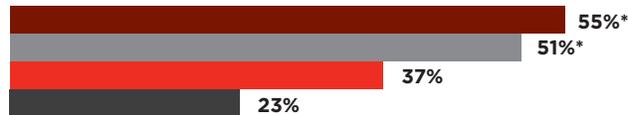
Online social networking sites, like Facebook, increase the visibility of social causes and issues



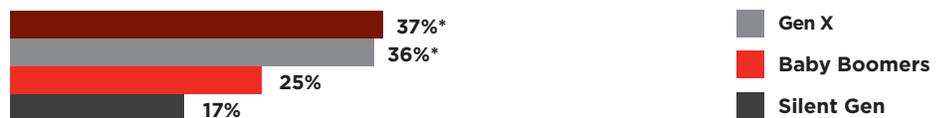
Online social networking sites, like Facebook, allow people to support causes more easily



I feel like I can help get the word out about a social issue or cause through online social networks, like Facebook, Twitter and blogs



I am more likely to support a cause online than offline



Cause Fatigue

The belief that emails about causes can sometimes feel like spam is shared across generations, and the silent generation has a stronger belief that they currently receive too many emails about causes. The younger generations are more likely to think that "liking" causes on Facebook doesn't mean anything.

Strongly/Somewhat Agree

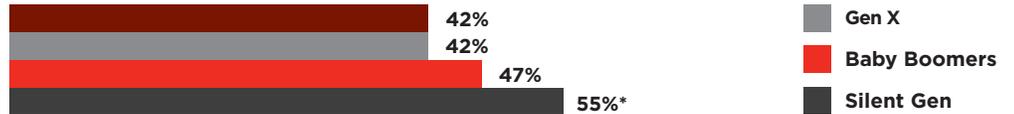
Emails about causes sometimes feel like spam



Everybody "likes" causes on Facebook, it doesn't really mean anything



I get too many emails and messages about causes now



Top 5 Most Prominent Causes in 2011

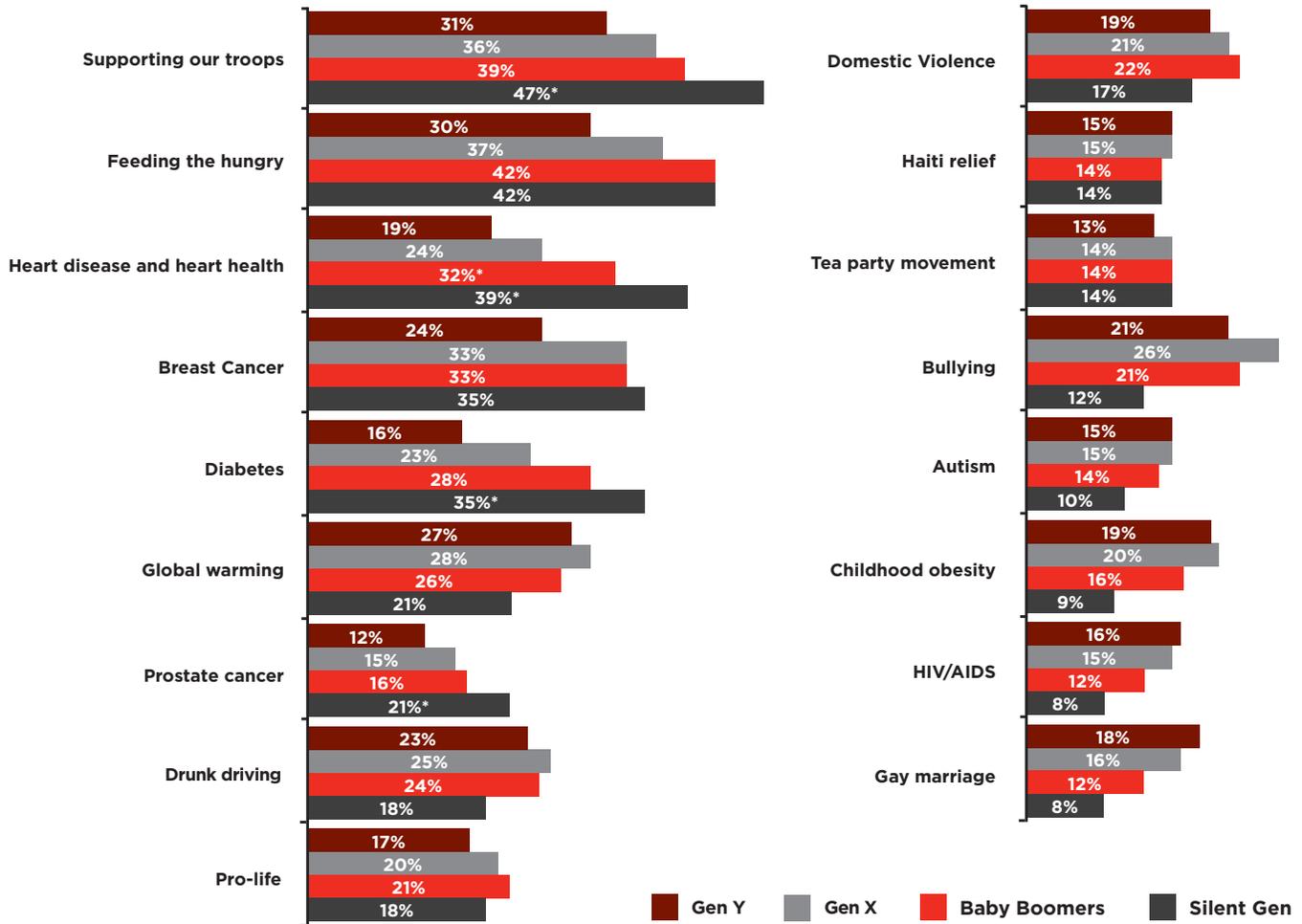
While older generations believe supporting our troops will remain the most prominent cause in 2011, Gen Y ranks gay marriage top among causes.

Gen Y	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Silent Gen
Gay marriage (28%)	Supporting our troops (31%)	Supporting our troops (39%)	Supporting our troops (50%*)
Supporting our troops (26%)	Bullying (28%)	Feeding the hungry (33%)	Feeding the hungry (38%*)
Bullying (26%)	Breast cancer (25%)	Bullying (30%)	Tea party movement (33%*)
Global warming (26%)	Global warming (24%)	Global warming (27%)	Childhood obesity (33%*)
Feeding the hungry (22%)	Childhood obesity (24%)	Tea party movement (25%)	Bullying (30%)



Involvement with Specific Causes

The different generations share higher involvement in supporting our troops and feeding the hungry. Older generations report being personally involved in health-related causes more so than younger generations.



About the Center for Social Impact Communication

Georgetown University's Center for Social Impact Communication (CSIC) is the nation's leading educational resource on social impact communication. Launched in 2008 and housed in the Master of Professional Studies program in Public Relations and Corporate Communications, CSIC aims to elevate the discipline by pioneering industry standards in responsible communication practices and by educating and inspiring the professionals who lead the way in creating positive social impact through their work. For more information, visit csic.georgetown.edu.

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Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide (Ogilvy PR) is a global, multidisciplinary communications leader operating in more than 80 markets. For more than two decades, Ogilvy PR has been at the forefront of social marketing—advancing personal and public health and safety and broader socially desirable goals via communications initiatives. We have developed numerous social marketing campaigns to successfully raise awareness, educate and prompt action regarding some of today's largest and most complex issues, ranging from cancer to cardiovascular health, substance abuse to homeland security, youth violence prevention to disaster preparedness, and much more.

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