Social networks in non-profit organizations

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to define the communication, communication process, the concept of social networks and non-profit organizations, with special emphasis on how non-profit organizations use social networks for their work. Social networks are a form of everyday private or business communication. There are different types of social networks, and some of the most popular are: Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok. The goal of public relations is to provide the organization with an environment in which it will function best and where it will have the opportunity to build its reputation. In the second part of the paper, research methodology is to give through a comparative analysis of the use of social networks as a communication tool in the interpersonal communication of non-profit organizations with users. A descriptive analysis was conducted between ten non-profit organizations in the Republic of Croatia. Conducted analysis has shown that non-profit organizations use social networks in their daily work, for communication, but also for transparency of their work. In further research it would be advisable to detect who are stakeholders in such communication process and what is their opinion or suggestions for non-profit organization.

Keywords: Internet, public relations, non-profit organizations, social networks
JEL: L30, M30

Socialna (družbena) omrežja v neprofitnih organizacijah

Povzetek: Namen prispevka je opredeliti komunikacijo, komunikacijski proces, pojem družbenih omrežij in neprofitnih organizacij, s posebnim poudarkom na načinu, na katerega neprofitne organizacije uporabljajo družbena omrežja za svoje delo. Socialna omrežja predstavljajo obliko vsakdanje zasebne ali poslovne komunikacije. Obstajajo različne vrste družbenih omrežij, med najbolj priljubljenimi pa so: Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, Instagram, YouTube in TikTok. Cilj odnosov z javnostmi je zagotoviti organizaciji okolje, v katerem bo optimalno delovala in kjer bo imela možnost za gradnjo svojega ugleda. V drugem delu prispevka je raziskovalna metodologija podana s primerjalno analizo uporabe družbenih omrežij kot komunikacijskega orodja v medčloveškem komuniciranju neprofitnih organizacij z uporabniki. Opisna ali deskriptivna analiza je bila izvedena med desetimi neprofitnimi organizacijami v Republiki Hrvaški. Opravljena analiza je pokazala, da neprofitne organizacije uporabljajo družbena omrežja pri svojem vsakodnevnem delu, za namene komunikacije, pa tudi za transparentnost svojega dela. V nadaljnji raziskavi bi bilo priporočljivo ugotoviti, kdo predstavlja interesno skupino v tovrstnem komunikacijskem procesu in kakšna so mnenja oziroma predlogi deležnikov za neprofitno organizacijo.

Ključne besede: Internet/svetovni splet, odnosi z javnostmi, neprofitne organizacije, socialna (družabna/ družbena) omrežja

Introduction

The topic of this paper is the usage of social networks in non-profit organizations. Communication is the process of transmission of information (message) between the sender and the receiver, in which there is the possibility of noise and misunderstanding, and the lack of feedback. For the purpose of this paper a research was conducted based on ten non-profit organizations in Republic of Croatia. a comparative analysis of the use of social networks as a communication tool in the interpersonal communication of non-profit organizations with users. The aim of the research was to find out what kind of communication is on social networks with non-profit stakeholders.

1 Communication and public relations

According to Vidak (2019) the need for communication among people has existed since ancient times. If a person wanted to announce some news, express their attitudes and feelings or simply make contact with others, they had to develop certain communication skills to do so. Whether it is verbal or non-verbal interaction, communication has been and remains immensely important to today's modern and increasingly globalized society. The only difference is that there are more people today than before, so communication which is much faster, cheaper and more efficient is required, regardless of the distance between the interlocutors. Owing to the development of technology and the emergence of the Internet, there is a new form of communication, electronic communication, which does not only make communication extremely fast and reliable, but also free of charge for every user.

There is a lot of features of communication, for the needs of this paper it will be presented the one by author Kathleen K. Reardon (1998). She states that in order to avoid errors in defining communication as an expression, six basic features of human communication need to be specified, as this provides a better understanding of the communication itself. The first feature that she states is that people communicate for many different reasons, they communicate for fun, but equally for the sake of impressing others, showing cordiality and friendship, getting some information, convincing someone etc. Communication enables us to convey information about ourselves, our intellectual, emotional and social characteristics. Another feature is that communication results in both intended and unintended effects, because no matter what and how one says or does it, it may not be understood as intended, the absence of a reaction can be understood as the same message. The third feature points out reciprocality of communication, referring to the non-verbal or verbal response of participants in the communication process. The fourth feature states that communication involves at least two people, who are affected unequally by one another; people communicate with each other. The fifth feature states that communication has happened even when it is unsuccessful, regardless of whether communicators have achieved their goals or not. The last feature specifies that communication involves the use of symbols that are contained in words and in many of our gestures.

Internet communication in the context of advertising began in America in 1994, and the advantages of such communication with consumers are reflected in: "24-hour availability of information at any location, users are identified and targeted, communication with consumers is based on an equal relationship and principles of reciprocity" (Mlivić Budeš, 2011).

Internet communication also includes communication through social networks, which are considered to be the most popular global communication phenomenon because they use

universal communication tools and techniques that incorporate common interest of groups of people (Grbavac i Grbavac, 2014).

There are a lot of definition of public relations, but for purpose of this paper there will be two of them, made by associations. Public relations is a decision-making management practice tasked with building relationships and interests between organisations and their publics based on the delivery of information through trusted and ethical communication methods (IPRA, 2022). Public Relations is about reputation - the result of what you do, what you say and what others say about you, public Relations is the discipline which looks after reputation, with the aim of earning understanding and support and influencing opinion and behaviour. It is the planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its publics (CIPR, 2022). "In order for us to impose ourselves on the market, and to order for the market to recognize and acknowledge us, if we want to attract our customers, create new business arrangements, it is inevitably to resort to public relations" (KaGita Akademija).

2 Social networks: definition, history

Social media is a phenomenon, not the sum of the term's parts. Grammarians everywhere are quick to jump on those who fail to treat "social" as an adjective qualifying the plural noun "media," but the phrase—when applied to social network sites and microblogs and other Web 2.0 creations— doesn't simply refer to the wide array of media that enable sociality. It doesn't even refer to the subset of digital media that support computer-mediated communication. Instead, it refers to a set of tools, practices, and ideologies that emerged after the dot-com crash by a network of technologists primarily located in the Bay Area. As a buzzword, "social media" was far from being precise, but it still set the context and shaped the contours of a phenomenon rooted in the social, technical, and business dynamics of what would become Web 2.0. (Boyd, 2015:1).

When connections are created, a large horizon of possibilities is opened, such connections can become partnerships, exchanges, friendship, affections, new values and forms of coexistence, knowledge creation, learning, support, dialogues, participation, mobilization, strength politics, achievements amongst others (Oliviera et al., 2021 according Castells, 2005). Systems, structures, organizational designs, characterized by a large number and diversity of elements are always considered networks when a conducting wire keeps them connected. Although dispersed, these networks can envisage some connections between them. In the industrial society, the work processes were well represented by the metaphor of the machine (or the mechanism), now the design of networks takes on a preponderant place in the imagination of post-industrial society (Oliviera et al., 2021 according Benko & Lipietz, 1994).

Also, according to Boyd (2015), as social network sites evolved and the social graph became the basis for information access, social media emerged as the new paradigm for connecting to information, people, and ideas. Co-constructed by developers and early adopters, social media reflects the values and norms of a narrow section of the network of users who embrace the tools. As social media—and its adjacent technologies—has matured, it has given rise to new business models, technologies, and social critiques. While once viewed as a set of technologies built in resistance to the ugliness of the dot-com era, social media is now intertwined with neoliberal capitalism and data surveillance, prompting both excitement and horror among those watching from afar. Over the last decade, social media has gone from being a dream of Silicon Valley technologists to a central part of contemporary digital life around the world. The most famous brands—Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and so on—associated with social media have worked their way into everyday life. While these tools are

not the first genre of technology designed to enable social interaction, they have been taken up around the globe at an unprecedented speed, revealing the extraordinary nature of the social media phenomenon. For this reason alone, it is imperative to analyze the phenomenon of social media.

What makes social network sites unique is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). Social networks are used for various reasons, among which is not only communication, mainly with peers, but also the need for entertainment, information, learning and acquisition of new skills (Kosanović, D., Mandić, S., Mihić, J., Novak, M., Radić Bursać, S., 2021). Social networks and marketing are closely related, and their common advantages are reflected in: "word of mouth, two-way communication, relatively low campaign cost, fast feedback, in a short period of time needed to start communication with a specific target audience, increasing product or brand recognition, increasing web traffic on own pages, the successful launch of new products, and the creation and verification of ideas" (Tvornica snova).

The the first recognizable social network site launched in 1997. SixDegrees.com allowed users to create profiles, list their Friends and, beginning in 1998, surf the Friends lists. SixDegrees promoted itself as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to others. While SixDegrees attracted millions of users, it failed to become a sustainable business and, in 2000, the service closed. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features, but just till 2008 (Figure 1).
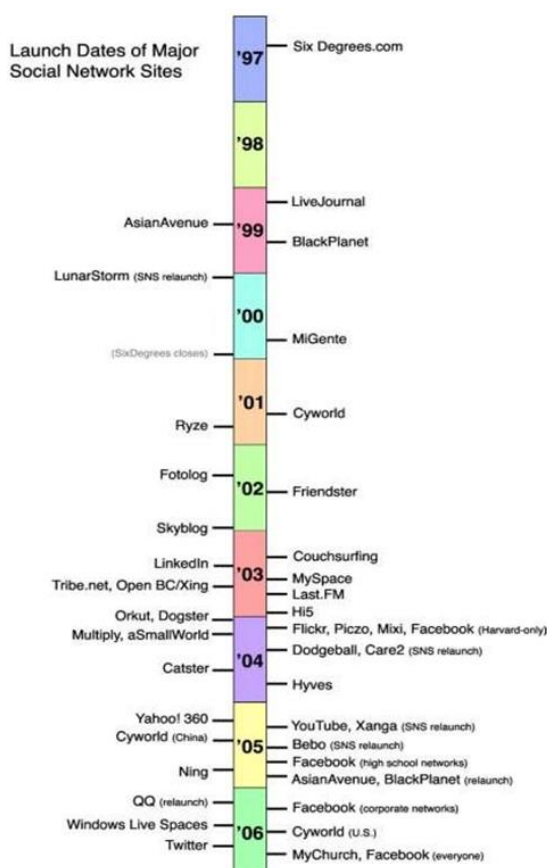

Figure 1. Timeline of the launch dates of many major SNSs and dates when community sites re-launched with SNS features;

Source: Boyd, M.D & Ellison, N.B. (2008). Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship, p.212

Today we have over 300 social networks worldwide, they are the most quickly growing industry. According to Voivonta & Avraamidou, Facebook is an online social networking site with more than 2 billion users where people can share personal information and photographs as well as to connect and communicate. More than 65% of people in the world are using Facebook (Figure 2).
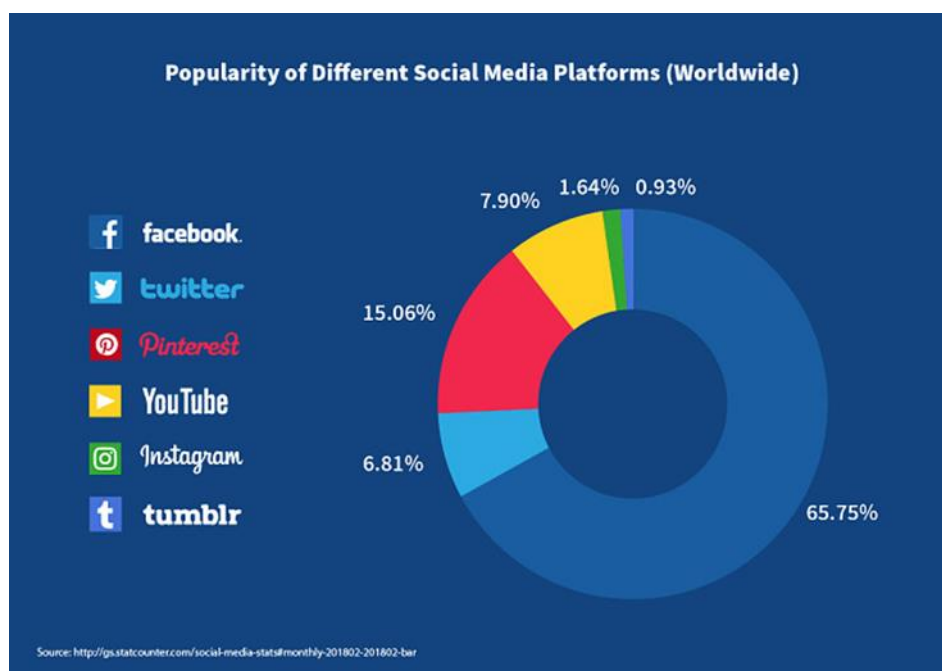

Figure 2: Popularity of different social media platforms;

Source: Bennet, J. (2022): 23 zadivljujućih statistika o internetu i društvenim medijima u 2022

Started by Mark Zuckerberg, in early 2004, it was originally an online social networking site only for Harvard) which spread to other higher education institutions and opened to the public two years later. It is perhaps the most popular social networking site given that approximately half of the online population of the earth today has a Facebook account. The "moto" of the creators, Facebook, helps you connect and share with the people in your life, highlights the basic properties of the interface and content sharing that govern. Facebook has been criticized and blamed on issues relating to privacy and the political views of its founders. However, this website remains the most popular social networking site in several English-speaking countries and beyond. This paper is concerned with the educational value of Facebook and specifically how it can be used in teaching and learning. In what follows, we offer a discussion about Facebook's use in educational settings through analysis of related literature findings.

The second network that is mostly present is Instagram. Instagram is a free, online photo-sharing application and social network platform that was acquired by Facebook in 2012. Instagram allows users to edit and upload photos and short videos through a mobile app. Users can add a caption to each of their posts and use hashtags and location-based geotags to index these posts and make them searchable by other users within the app. Each post by a user appears on their followers' Instagram feeds and can also be viewed by the public when tagged using hashtags or geotags. Users also have the option of making their profile private so that only their followers can view their posts As with other social networking platforms, Instagram users can like, comment on and bookmark others' posts, as well as send private messages to their friends via the Instagram Direct feature. Photos can be shared on one or several other social media sites -- including Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr -- with a single click. Instagram is not only a tool for individuals, but also for businesses. The photo-sharing app offers companies the opportunity to start a free business account to promote their brand

and products. Companies with business accounts have access to free engagement and impression metrics. According to Instagram's website, more than 1 million advertisers worldwide use Instagram to share their stories and drive business results. Additionally, 60% of people say they discover new products through the app. (Holak, 2023)

Further, LinkedIn is a social network specifically designed for career and business professionals to connect. As of 2020, over 722 million professionals use LinkedIn to cultivate their careers and businesses.Unlike other social networks in which you might become "friends" with anyone and everyone, LinkedIn is about building strategic relationships. Thus, the number of connections is less important than the type of connections. In fact, LinkedIn stops showing your actual number of connections once you have 500 because it's about quality, not quantity. (Duermyer, 2022)

As can be seen from Figure 3, in Croatia, according to the research conducted in 2019, the most used social networks were FB, IG and Google+. Facebook is still convincingly the most present social network in Croatia. According to the BRANDpuls research, 64 percent of respondents use this social network, which is more than twice as many as the first follower of Instagram (31%), and in third place with the presence or absence of 28.6% is - 'nobody'. Namely, almost 19 percent of respondents do not use the Internet, and another 9.8% of Internet users are not on social networks. Twitter (10%), LinkedIn (9%) and Pinterest (8%) are more significantly present. Other social networks - Tumbir, Twitch, MySpace and Foursquare - together have less than five percent presence.

Figure 3: The presence of social networks in Croatia;

Source: Lidermedia (2023) https://lidermedia.hr/preporuceno/digitalno-oglasavanje-koje-drustvene-mreze-koristi-najvise-hrvatskih-surfera-27095

3 Non-profit organizations

A non-profit organization exists to ensure the general well-being of society, by using appropriate resources and the availability of appropriate physical goods and services. Non-profit organizations exist and operate to achieve general satisfaction in society as a whole, certain groups of people and individuals, and using various sources of funding (founders' funds, budget, donations, membership fees, etc.), human resources and relevant technologies, services they produce and provide, as well as certain material goods " (Meler, 2003: 92). Every non-profit organization must be registered in the Register of Non-Profit Organizations, which can be associations, federations, institutions, political parties, religious communities and all other legal entities whose primary goal of establishment and operation is not to make a profit. The activities of non-profit organizations are common in an area that cannot be organized on a market basis. They arise where the state and the market cannot meet the needs of society, and are most often driven by citizens. Although they can generate revenue and employ staff, such organizations have no purpose of providing earnings to the individual. The main goal of a non-profit organization is to carry out their real mission. Such goals are non-monetary, intangible, long-term, social and altruistic. Although they are called non-profit, such organizations are often engaged in activities that make money. This is necessary in order to raise funds to achieve organizational primary goals. If a non-profit organization makes a profit at the end of the business year, if the surplus of income over expenditures, it does not invest it in re-increase capital, nor distributes it to members of the organization, but uses this surplus to cover deficits from previous years or invests in various other charitable or humanitarian goals, depending on the activity in which the organization is engaged and in accordance with the mission of the organization. Non-profit organizations can be divided according to the criteria of the field of work or according to the criteria of ownership of the organization. If we take into account the field of work in which non-profit organizations operate, we can divide them into: educational, cultural, religious, political, health, charitable, protective and social. Taking into account the ownership of non-profit organizations, they are divided into: state (public, governmental) non-profit organizations and non-state (private, non-governmental) non-profit organizations. State non-profit organizations are classified as budget users and are mostly financed through the state budget, while non-state non-profit organizations are classified as other non-profit organizations and are mostly financed independently. Non-governmental non-profit organizations are funded mainly through membership fees, donations, sponsorships or the provision of various services. Although they are non-state, part of the funds of such an organization can be obtained from the state budget. A non-profit organization can be defined as a legal entity established for the purpose of achieving a certain public, general or common interest of individuals, groups of citizens or the wider community, with no emphasis on making a profit or acting on a market basis. Non-profit organizations / activities / activities can be classified into basic non-profit organizations (humanitarian organizations, religious organizations, scientific research organizations, educational organizations, health and social care, culture and arts, sports and recreation, political organizations and trade unions, movements, associations and ideas) and initially related non-profit organizations (state and state institutions) (Pavičić, 2003).

According to Gojević & Vidak (2020), non-profit organizations should not neglect the importance of having pages and profiles on social networks, which should always be updated, accurate, clear and verified. It is important to follow the trend in the emergence of social networks, what is current and what most people follow.

4 Methodology

In order to obtain the necessary data on the application of social networks in communication of non-profit organizations with stakeholders a primary research was conducted in the period from 10th to 25th of June 2022. The sample included ten non-profit organization. The sample was chosen based on what the authors of the paper follow on social networks for the reason that they can have the best possible access to the data needed for the research. Table 1 shows in which area these non-profit organizations are involve. For the purpose of obtaining the relevant data, Table 2 shows which social network non-profit organization is using, and also do they have official web page. The second part was descriptive analysis of available secondary information on social network Facebook, such as photo gallery, video-materials, communication with stakeholders etc. and a analysis was carried out in accordance with the proposed model (Table 3).

Table 1. Area of activity of chosen organizations

Name of non-profit organization	Area of their activity				
	Work with people with disabilities	Culture & arts	Animal protection & adoption	Education, Creativity, Work with young people	Human rights, health
Udruga Jaglac Orahovica	✓		✓		
Udruga za Down-sindrom Virovitičko-podravske županije	✓				
Udruga tjelesnih invalida VPŽ	✓				
ViKA- Virovitička Kulturna Alternativa		✓			
Kulturna udruga KReativa, EDukativa, Aktiva - KREDA				✓	
Udruga Korak dalje Daruvar	✓			✓	
Udruga Impress				✓	
Crveni križ Garešnica					✓
Udruga Qualitas				✓	
Udruga Sklonište dobrote			✓		

Source: authors

4.1 Results of research

Research results (Table 1) showed that all of ten non-profit organizations have profile on Facebook, two of them on YouTube, 5 of them have Instagram account, and just 4 of them official web page. None of them have accounts on TikTok or LinkedIn.

Table 2. Analysis of usage social networks and web of non-profit organization

Name of non-profit organization	SOCIAL NETWORK					Official web page
	Facebook	YouTube	Instagram	LinkedIn	TikToK	
Udruga Jaglac Orahovica	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓
Udruga za Down-sindrom Virovitičko-podravske županije	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Udruga tjelesnih invalida VPŽ	✓	-	-	-	-	-
ViKA- Virovitička Kulturna Alternativa	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Kulturna udruga KReativa, EDukativa, Aktiva - KREDA	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Udruga Korak dalje Daruvar	✓	-	-	-	-	✓
Udruga Impress	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓
Crveni križ Garešnica	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Udruga Qualitas	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Udruga Sklonište dobrote	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓

Source: authors

Table 2 carried out next data following the default components. Table 2 carried out next data following the default components. Facebook was chosen for analysis because, according to research conducted in Croatia (Figure 1), 68% of the population uses FB, while other networks are represented in a much lower percentage.

Number of followers/friends: 3 of them have less than 1000 followers, 5 is in range 1000 to 10000, just 1 has more than 10000 followers, and on 1 there is no visuable information. Components Section "about us" and photo gallery all of analyzed have, Additional information (web, e-mail, social network etc.) just 1 doesn't have, all others have it. Video materials 7 of 10 have it, and also the same data is for component Communication with friends/followers (replying to comments, putting emoticons). In the end, the last analyzed component was about update posts, 6 of them do it on daily base, 2 weekly and 2 monthly.

Table 3. Analysis of social network Facebook

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION	Number of followers/friends (as of June 2022)	Section "about us"	Additional information (web, e-mail, social network etc.)	Photo gallery	Video materials	Communication with friends/followers (replying to comments, putting emoticons)	Update posts		
							Daily	Weekly	Monthly
Udruga Jaglac Orahovica	1278	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Udruga za Down-sindrom Virovitičko-podravske županije	1082	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Udruga tjelesnih invalida VPŽ	Non-public visable information	✓	-	✓	-	-			✓
ViKA-Virovitička Kulturna Alternativa	2412	✓	✓	✓	✓	-		✓	
Kulturna udruga KReativa, EDukativa, Aktiva - KREDA	857	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Udruga Korak dalje Daruvar	1705	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Udruga Impress	6091	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Crveni križ Garešnica	649	✓	✓	✓	-	-		✓	
Udruga Qualitas	517	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓		
Udruga Sklonište dobrote	12172	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Source: authors

4.2 Discussion

This research results showed that non-profit organizations that were analyzed use regularly social media for communication with their stakeholders. However, there are no similar studies conducted in Croatia with which we could determine similarities or differences in terms of the results obtained. This research was conducted as a kind of descriptive analysis on a small sample of non-profit organizations, therefore it is essential for any future research to include a larger number of respondents as well as the possibility of obtaining results through a survey with several questions to which the non-profit organizations themselves will provide answers. Furthermore, the analysis of profiles on Facebook, as the most represented network in Croatia, found that the analyzed non-profit organizations use it regularly and that for some it is the only contact and form of information transfer about their work. Given that numerous possibilities are more ubiquitous, especially in the form of video content, it is certainly recommended that non-profit organizations increase the number of their followers by recording short films and clips so therefore they maybe should think about taking some short courses of how to use social media and it all benefits in their area of activity.

Conclusion

In today's time of social media, and thus communication on social networks, it is inevitable that every organization is present on at least one. The analysis found that all organizations have a profile on Facebook, which was to be expected given the fact that Facebook is the most popular network in the world, with over 65% of people using it. Certainly, there should be kept in mind the official website, as well as the profile on LinkedIn, because it is the world's largest professional network with more than 830 million members in more than 200 countries and territories worldwide an connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful. Also, none of analyzed organizations doesn't have TikTok, the platform that is a home for creative expression through videos that create a genuine, inspiring, and joyful experience. TikTok is the leading destination generated an estimated $4.6 billion revenue in 2021, a 142% increase year-on-year for short-form mobile video and it would be good in near future to think about using it to approach younger stakeholders. The aim was to found out what kind of communication do non-profit organization have with their stakeholders, and from research we can see that 70% of them does it on their profiles. Further research should be focused on new fields of social networks that are good for non-profit organizations.

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