NEW FORMS OF GIVING IN A DIGITAL AGE:
Powered by Technology, Creating Community

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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"Technology is democratizing our ability to make the world a better place, and social media are among the most powerful technological forces behind this phenomenon."

— Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen, Foreword to *Measuring the Networked Nonprofit* (2012)

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Women Give 2020 explores the intersection of gender, technology, and giving to better understand how men and women use tech for good. Technology has disrupted nearly every aspect of society, including philanthropy. Giving is increasingly taking place online. How we raise funds, learn about issues and causes, build movements, combine resources, and engage in community is changing rapidly. The Women's Philanthropy Institute's new research, *New Forms of Giving in a Digital Age: Powered by Technology, Creating Community*, finds that women give more gifts than men and contribute a greater proportion of dollars than men online, a pattern that is consistent with their offline behavior. The research study also raises broader questions around the definition of philanthropy, trust, and building community in the digital age.

The following discussion guide is designed to start conversations. For example:

- Allocate time at staff meetings to reflect on how your organization reaches donors online and offline as well as whom you may miss without a robust online presence.
- Reflect on your own giving patterns, how those patterns may have changed with the advent of technology, and whether technology is helping or hindering your ability to be strategic and intentional in giving.
- Analyze how your online presence (website, app, or platform) interfaces with AI, potential biases, and how it builds trust with users.

CLICK HERE » **Read the report**

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Share your experiences using this guide and help build a community around technology, gender, and giving.

View #ITechForGood, a 4-minute video that complements *Women Give 2020*. Share the link with friends and colleagues and join the conversation on social media using the hashtag

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RESEARCH THAT GROWS WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY

DISCOVER findings central to all four datasets used in the study.

1. Women give more gifts than men, and contribute a greater proportion of dollars than men.
2. Women give smaller gifts than men, and give to smaller charitable organizations than men.
3. Women's and girls' organizations receive substantially more support from women donors than from men donors

REFLECT and DISCUSS

1. How does the research resonate with your experiences?
2. How do you use technology to engage in philanthropy, including mobile giving? (Select all that apply.)
   a. I make gifts online.
   b. I find new nonprofits and causes to support online.
   c. I make gifts through social media fundraisers.
   d. I have started a fundraiser on social media or a crowdfunding site.
   e. I have supported a crowdfunding campaign for social good.
   f. Other _____
3. Based on your responses to the question above, what percentage of your giving occurs online vs. offline? Have these percentages shifted in recent years?
4. To what extent do the nonprofits you support offer online options? How important is the online option to you as a donor?
5. Trust is a core principle for the nonprofit sector. How do you think about building trust with platforms, apps, social media, websites, and crowdfunding sites? What differences exist in building trust online and offline?
6. Is online giving/technology creating new donors or simply moving existing donors to give online? What are your experiences? Is one crowding out the other?
7. Does your nonprofit collect demographic data, including gender, about your donors? Do more women than men give to your organization generally? Does this pattern hold true with your online efforts?

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Each of the following themes is specific to one or two *Women Give 2020* data partners and cannot easily be generalized to the field. Yet, each theme suggests some of the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of technology and philanthropy.

DISCOVER *Women Give 2020* Theme 4
Broadly defining philanthropy goes hand-in-hand with engaging diverse donors – and both appeal to women donors.

Research has consistently found that women give more donations than men on special days of giving such as GivingTuesday, and their greater number of donations mean women give a greater share of dollars than men. The GivingTuesday movement has emphasized more than money to account for cultural and social differences as it has expanded globally. In addition to using metrics of donations and dollars, GivingTuesday tracks other charitable behavior such as volunteering, donating something other than money, and talking to other donors about giving.

As society grapples with issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access, many people see technology as a pivotal opportunity to demystify and democratize philanthropy. To accomplish this goal, however, requires intentionality by nonprofits and donors alike. Expanding the definition of philanthropy to include time, talent, treasure, testimony, and ties may reach a more diverse community of donors, including women.

There are times when people yearn to be within community as the rise of identity-based giving circles demonstrates. What can we learn from groups that reach across community (using "bridging capital" – one example is the board of the Chicago Community Trust) and groups that work *within* community (using "bonding capital" — for example the six collective giving groups housed within the Trust)? A variety of bonding and bridging organizations contributes to a richer, more expansive understanding of how philanthropy operates across diverse communities. For more information about bridging and bonding capital in philanthropy, please refer to Gender and Giving Across Communities of Color, WPI's *Women Give 2019* report.

REFLECT and DISCUSS

1. At its Greek roots, *philanthropy* means "love of humanity." How do you define philanthropy?
2. Generally, metrics for online giving measure the amount given. What additional metrics can be added to determine whether platforms, apps, programs, and online giving broadly reach new donors, younger donors, women donors, and donors from diverse communities?
3. How does your nonprofit currently attract and engage women and donors from diverse communities?
4. How can a broader definition of philanthropy help you in your work offline and online?

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DISCOVER *Women Give 2020* Theme 5
Technology enables donors to give in the way they would like and to organizations that align with their values and interests; platforms can also support donors by identifying causes they might prefer and by building trust with donors.

Technology is ubiquitous in our lives; philanthropy has embraced it to encourage generosity and women use it more than men. In 2018, 64% of mobile donations came from women. Donors have many choices in how and to what organizations they give. To what extent does the ease of technology and the programming and algorithms embedded within it emphasize some causes over others? Does this emphasis create an uneven playing field, or level it by highlighting important causes? To what extent does implicit bias affect donors, potentially directing their gifts to a narrower range of causes or organizations? What risks come from using technology for philanthropy, and do the rewards balance those risks?

Trust is a critical factor across the nonprofit sector – the trust donors have with the nonprofits they support, and now the trust that develops between donors and the platforms with which they engage. How is trust assessed in the digital age?

Example from our data partner
GlobalGiving curates the causes and organizations that appear on its platform in two ways, via cause areas and via algorithms that provide more visibility to certain projects. The algorithms are based on the organization's engagement with donors such as posting updates and receiving donations. GlobalGiving has focused on women's and girls' causes since its beginning in 2003. Women are the majority of donors on the GlobalGiving platform. Is this because the initial emphasis on women's and girls' causes influenced the type of donors who visited the site?

REFLECT and DISCUSS

1. How often do you make charitable contributions online in the average month? This includes via website, mobile phone, or platform.
   a. Never
   b. 1-5 times
   c. 5-10 times
   d. 10-15 times
   e. More than 15 times
   f. Making gifts online is my preferred method for all my giving.

2. What tools do you use to research the nonprofits you support? (Select all that apply.)
   a. Nonprofit's website
   b. Charity watchdog or ratings website (e.g. Charity Navigator, GuideStar, BBB Wise Giving Alliance)
   c. Annual report
   d. Google search
   e. Social media
   f. Volunteering at the nonprofit
   g. Talking to nonprofit staff and board members
   h. I do not generally research the nonprofits I support

3. To what extent are you influenced by recommendations from online platforms or apps?

4. How might technology level the playing field for nonprofits and increase visibility for nonprofits that fly under the radar?

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DISCOVER *Women Give 2020* Theme 6
To appeal to women donors, platforms and organizations must build community online and continue to support in-person connections for donors.

In today's chaotic world, we are especially hungry for connection and community. Women have been intentional throughout history about creating community. In the modern era, women have created community to address big issues such as abolition, suffrage, temperance, and women's rights. The rise of the women's funding movement (beginning around 1972), Women Moving Millions (2006), the Tiffany Circle of the American Red Cross (2007), and the exponential growth of giving circles are prime examples of the ways women come together to solve the pressing problems of our time, through philanthropy.

What happens to the power of community in the digital age? How do we create community online? How does technology both empower and hinder community-building?

Example from our data partner
Givelify, an app for giving to congregations, and Growfund, a $0-minimum donor-advised fund for individuals and giving circles, have embraced more expansive definitions of community in the digital age.

The Givelify team considered the time-honored tradition of giving through the offering plate at the inception of their efforts. Initially, they printed and sent donation slips that donors placed on the offering plate to demonstrate they had given on the app. Demand for the slips waned as churches found creative ways to celebrate online giving such as asking donors to hold up their phones when the offering plate is passed to signify they gave online.

Givelify has expanded its definition of community to include people physically present at the church service as well as those who are sick at home, traveling, or otherwise unable to attend the service. Technology provides the opportunity to maintain contact with the church community. Moreover, Givelify recognized that younger generations are more likely to use an app for this purpose as they regularly use apps for everyday activities.

At Growfund, the online platform empowers and supports the giving circle community. The platform facilitates and enables event planning and management, online voting, communications among members, and knowledge sharing.

Givelify and Growfund build community online for different purposes and in different ways. These are two examples among many of how the social sector is leveraging technology to build community.

Read the full *Women Give 2020* report for more details and visit the Givelify and Growfund websites to learn more about these platforms.

REFLECT and DISCUSS

1. Does your nonprofit's approach to technology supplement existing fundraising strategies, or are the two distinct?
2. To what extent does being part of a community influence or inform how and why you give?
   a. Not a factor
   b. A little
   c. Moderate
   d. A factor
   e. A priority
3. How has your definition of community changed as a result of the digital transformation? Do you feel that social media fosters community or connection?
4. How important is in-person community-building to you?
5. Fundraising is about relationships and deepening engagements. What are the implications of "going digital" for community-building for you personally and for nonprofits?
6. Moving giving entirely online risks losing a sense of engagement. What new traditions have emerged or can be cultivated that take advantage of the ease of technology, but also combine it with this important sense of engagement?
7. What are the implications for nonprofits of knowing that women are more likely than men to engage online to make connections, to create community, and to give? What strategies have to shift to adjust to the new digital landscape?
8. What do we lose when we move giving online? What do we gain?

The Women's Philanthropy Institute has created this guide to prompt discussion about technology, gender, and giving and to encourage more intentional and deliberate strategies for incorporating it in your personal and professional lives. Please share the *Women Give 2020* report and the discussion guide widely. Together, we will amplify stories of #ITechForGood.