

NGOs and the internet:

an analysis of NGO web presence

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Research area

- ▶ An analysis of the websites and social media of Australian aid and development NGOs, and what this web presence is devoted to; soliciting donations, encouraging action, or raising awareness of global issues

Research Questions

1. Is the web presence used mainly for soliciting donations, encouraging action, or raising awareness?
2. Are there any correlations between the use of various media platforms?
3. Do particular characteristics of NGOs explain their use of the internet?

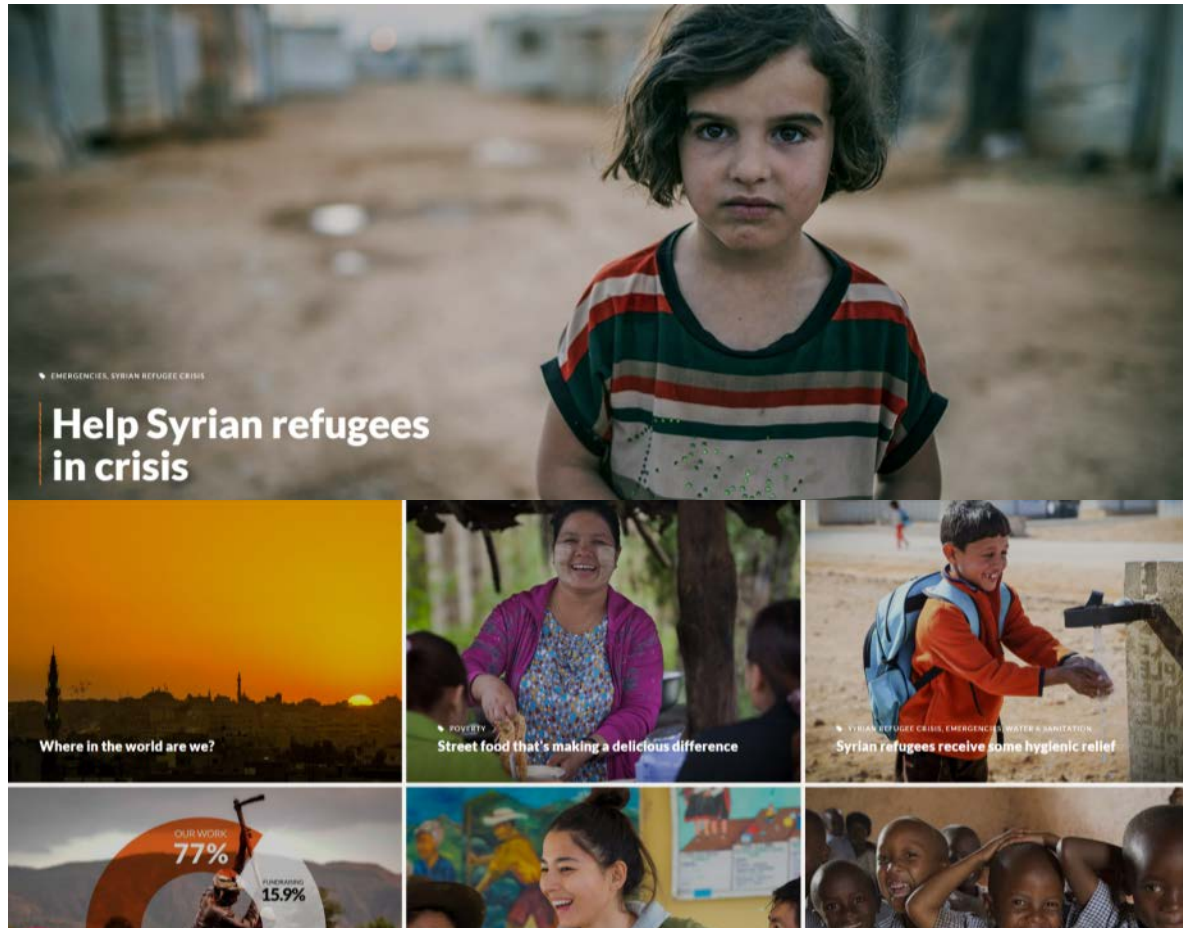
Methodology

- ▶ Four variables: donate, take action, awareness, other
- ▶ Descriptive statistics and regression analysis
- ▶ Website front pages and 'get involved' pages, Facebook and Twitter

Scope

- ▶ Internationally-oriented Australian aid and development NGOs (or Australian branch of international NGOs)
- ▶ List of Australian aid and development NGOs obtained from ACFID (Australian Council for International Development)
- ▶ 5 largest non-ACFID NGOs added (Amnesty International, Catholic Missions, Compassion, MSF, Rotary Australia World Community Service)
- ▶ NGOs that spent over 25% of total revenue on domestic projects were excluded
- ▶ Data gathered in a 3-week period
- ▶ 39 NGOs, covering 92% of the Australian development sector's total revenue

Data gathering process



- ▶ Each 'panel' on a website was treated as one item, regardless of how much space it took up
- ▶ Difference in page style
 - ▶ Old fashioned one page
 - ▶ Newer scrolling page
- ▶ Suggested improvement: weight everything according to how much of the page it takes up

Categorising content

- ▶ End point: What is the NGO trying to achieve from having the item on their website or social media?
- ▶ Are they trying to solicit donations, encourage people to take action on issues, or raise awareness of issues? Or none of those?



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YEMEN: "I'D NEVER BEFORE SEEN THE LEVEL OF CASUALTIES I SAW IN SAADA."

 **Michael Seawright** | 28 JAN 2016

Many civilians continue to live in Saada, northern Yemen, despite almost daily airstrikes in the area. Michael Seawright from Auckland, New Zealand, was recently Project Coordinator for Médecins Sans Frontières projects in the war-torn region.



Take action



Amnesty International Australia shared Missy Higgins's video.

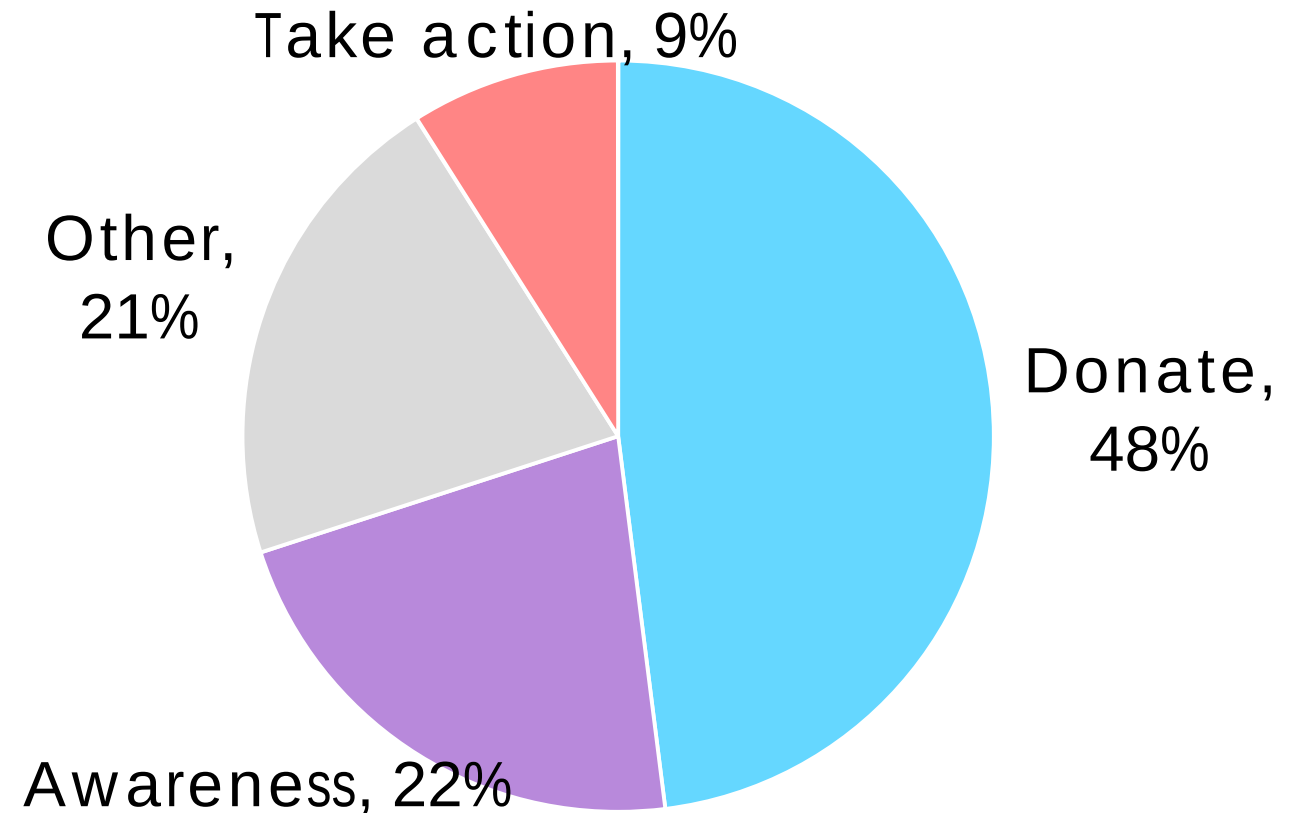
February 19 at 3:39pm · 🌐

This is profoundly moving. Thank you Missy Higgins. ❤️

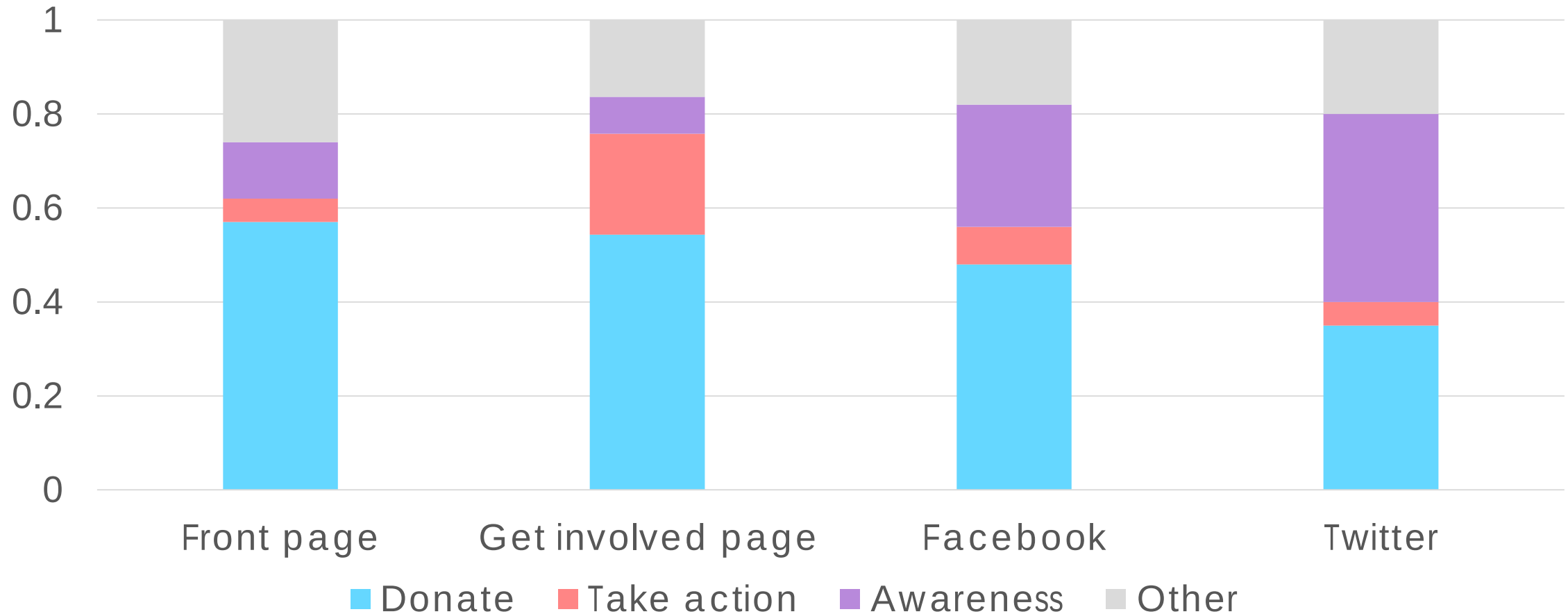
- 1) Watch. (And have tissues ready!)
- 2) Buy. Proceeds from the single go to our friends at Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)
- 3) Sign. Urge Malcolm Turnbull NOT to send 267 people seeking asylum, including small babies, back to unsafe conditions on Nauru>
<http://amn.st/6002BbxRC> #LetThemStay

So what is NGO web presence devoted to?

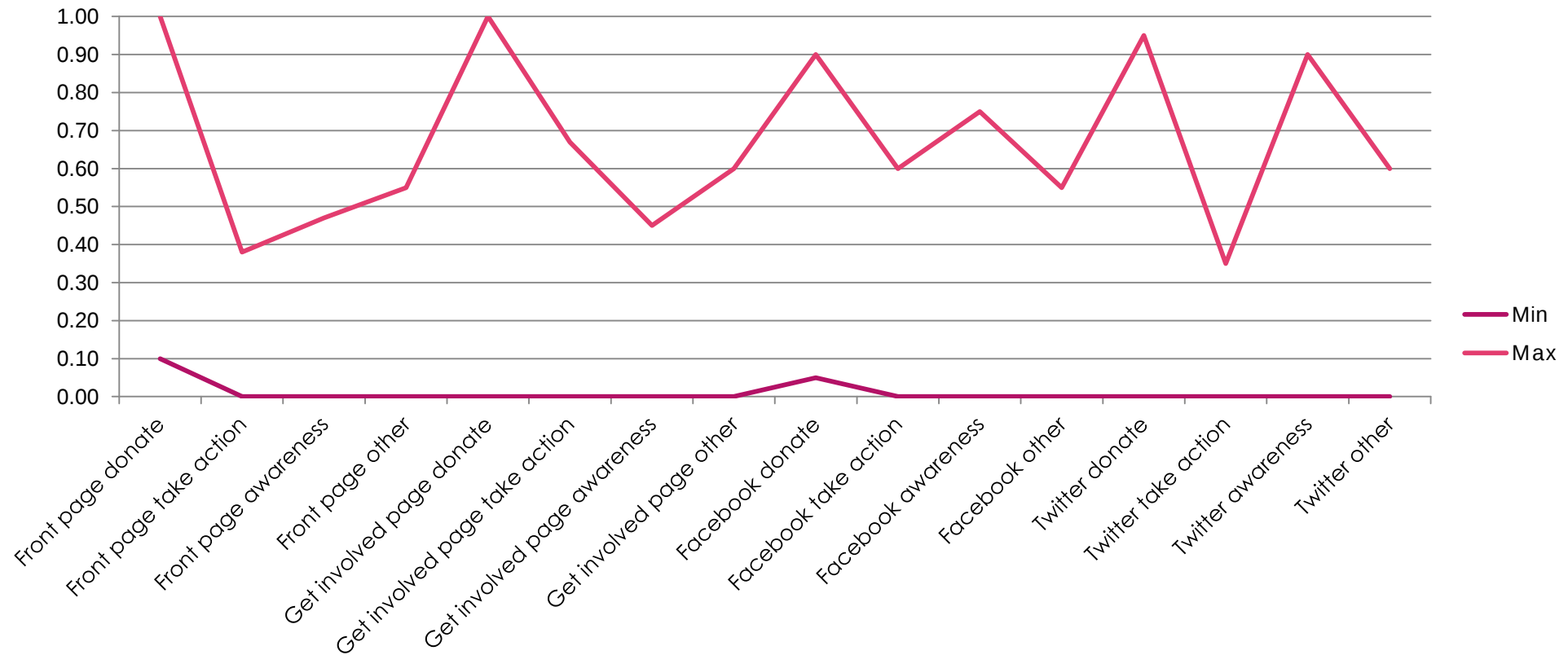
On average:



Web presence variation across pages



Minimums and maximums



Variation across NGOs

NGO	Average donate	Average take action	Average awareness
Compassion Australia	0.71	0.07	0.03
Amnesty International Australia	0.18	0.29	0.34
APHEDA	0.25	0.32	0.26

RELEASING
children
FROM POVERTY
in Jesus' name

Sponsor a child

SCROLL DOWN
▼

COMPASSION CHILD SPONSORSHIP

IT WORKS



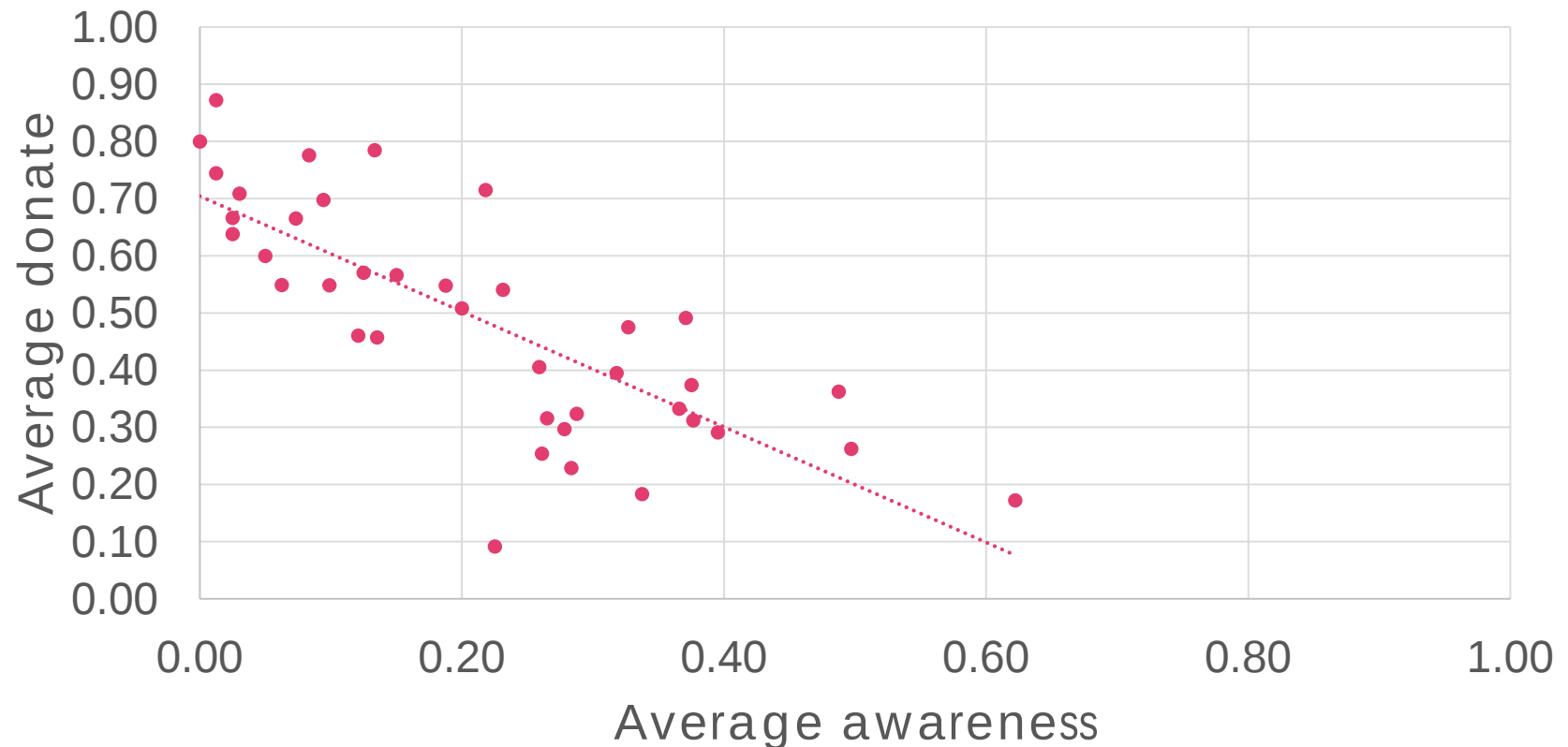
Compassion sponsored children are more likely to grow up to be employed, and leaders in their communities and churches.

Terms

- ▶ “Average donate” – average percentage of web presence devoted to soliciting donations
- ▶ “Front page awareness” – percentage of the website front page devoted to raising awareness

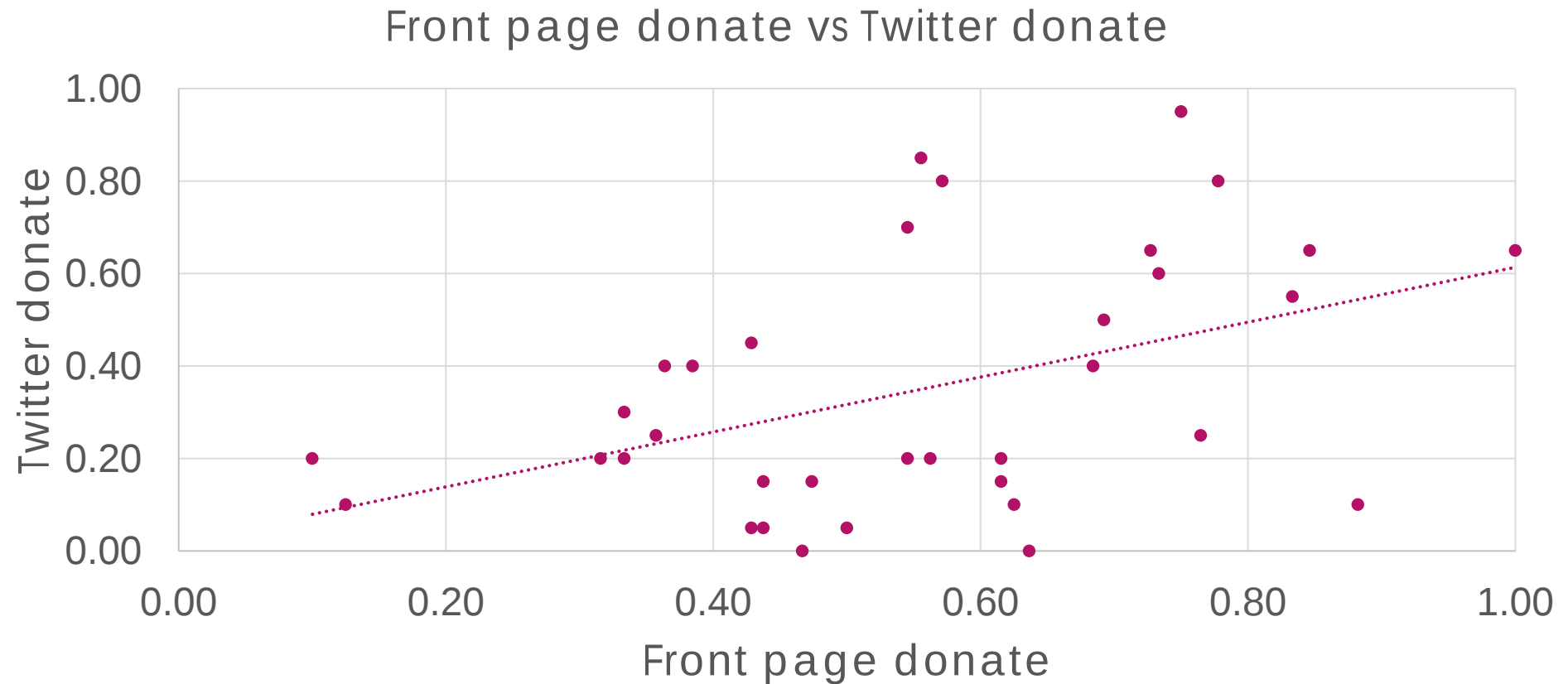
Average awareness vs average donate

- ▶ NGOs using more web space to solicit donations less likely to raise awareness or encourage action on issues
- ▶ Donation-hungry NGOs have to decide between using the rest of their web presence to awareness or take action



Web presence correlations

- More front page space devoted to soliciting donations = more Twitter and Facebook posts devoted to this end



Web presence correlations

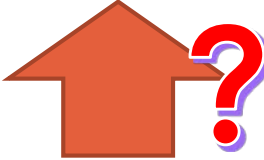
- ▶ More front page space devoted to encouraging action = more get involved page/Facebook posts devoted to this end
- ▶ More front page space devoted to raising awareness = more Twitter and Facebook posts devoted to this end
- ▶ More Twitter posts devoted to a particular aim = more Facebook posts devoted to the same end

Non-internet correlations

- ▶ Proportion of total revenue from private donations
- ▶ **Proportion of total revenue from DFAT funding**
- ▶ Proportion of total expenditure spent on fundraising
- ▶ Proportion of total expenditure spent on community education
- ▶ Religiosity

1% increase in proportion of total revenue from DFAT funding equals:

Average donate  0.31%

Average take action  0.09%

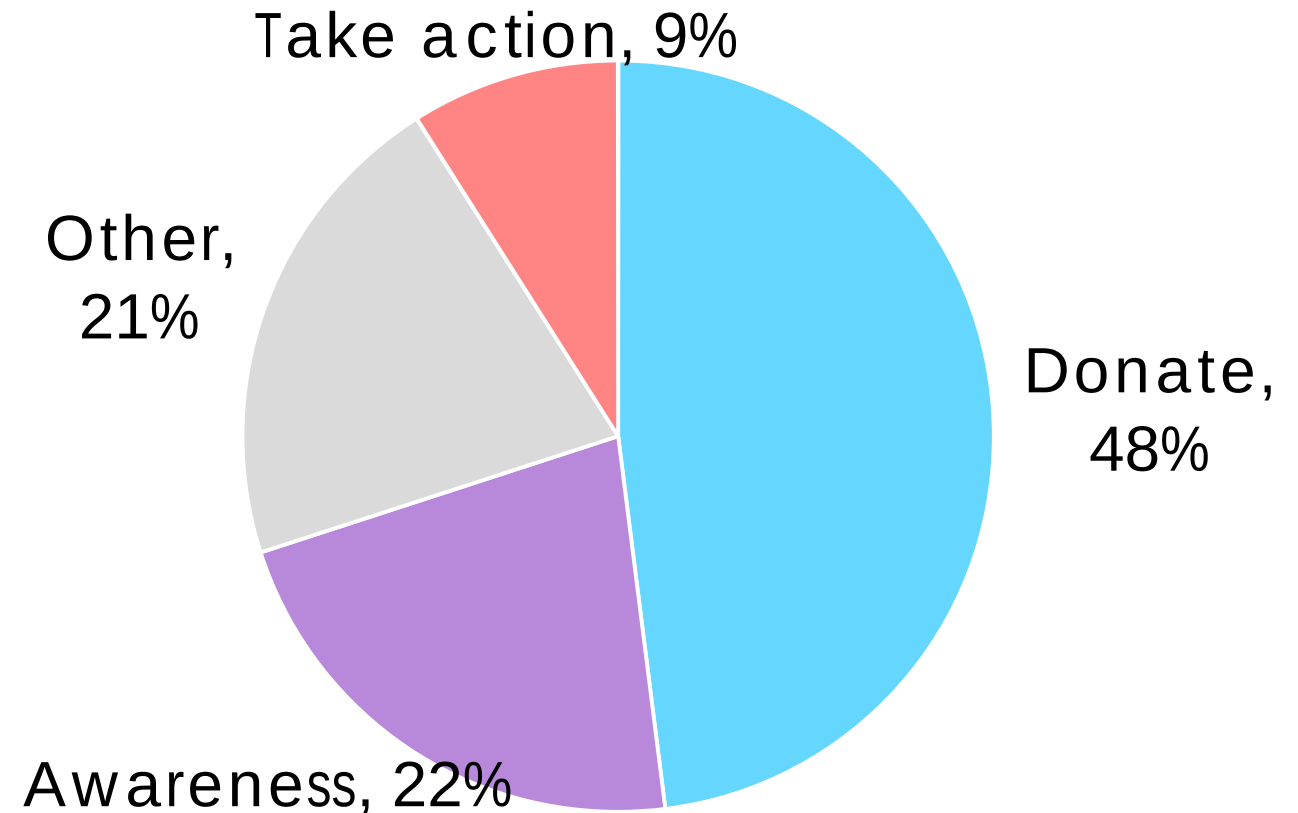
Average awareness  0.22%

Conclusion

- ▶ A number of correlations between media platforms, e.g. NGOs who use the front page of their websites mostly to solicit donations also use Facebook and Twitter mainly for this reason
- ▶ All platforms except Twitter are used primarily to solicit donations
- ▶ Twitter is used mainly to raise awareness about issues
- ▶ More revenue from DFAT funding = more web presence devoted to take action and awareness

Take-away point

- ▶ On average, NGO web presence:
 - ▶ 48% donate
 - ▶ 9% take action
 - ▶ 22% awareness



Synopsis

This research analyses the websites and social media of Australian aid and development NGOs, and to what this web presence is devoted; soliciting donations, encouraging action or raising awareness of global issues. It then explores correlations between the uses for various media platforms as well as correlations between internet and non-internet characteristics of NGOs. The websites and social media pages of the largest 39 NGOs were analysed through content and regression analysis. It was found that 48% of the web presence of NGOs is devoted, on average, to soliciting donations, 9% to encouraging action and 22% to raising awareness. There are also correlations between different media platforms; NGOs who use the front page of their websites mainly for a particular purpose use social media to the same ends. Those who use the website front page to encourage action on issues also use Facebook for this reason. A key finding of this research is that particular non-internet characteristics of NGOs are associated with the way in which NGO web presence is used. One such characteristic is revenue from DFAT funding: an increased proportion of total revenue from DFAT funding does not silence NGOs on encouraging action on issues, and appears to be associated with greater awareness raising activity. This research is significant as the web presence of Australia's aid NGOs has never been analysed in a quantifiable way. This is also the first time that such data has been used to examine what non-internet characteristics influence the web presence of NGOs.