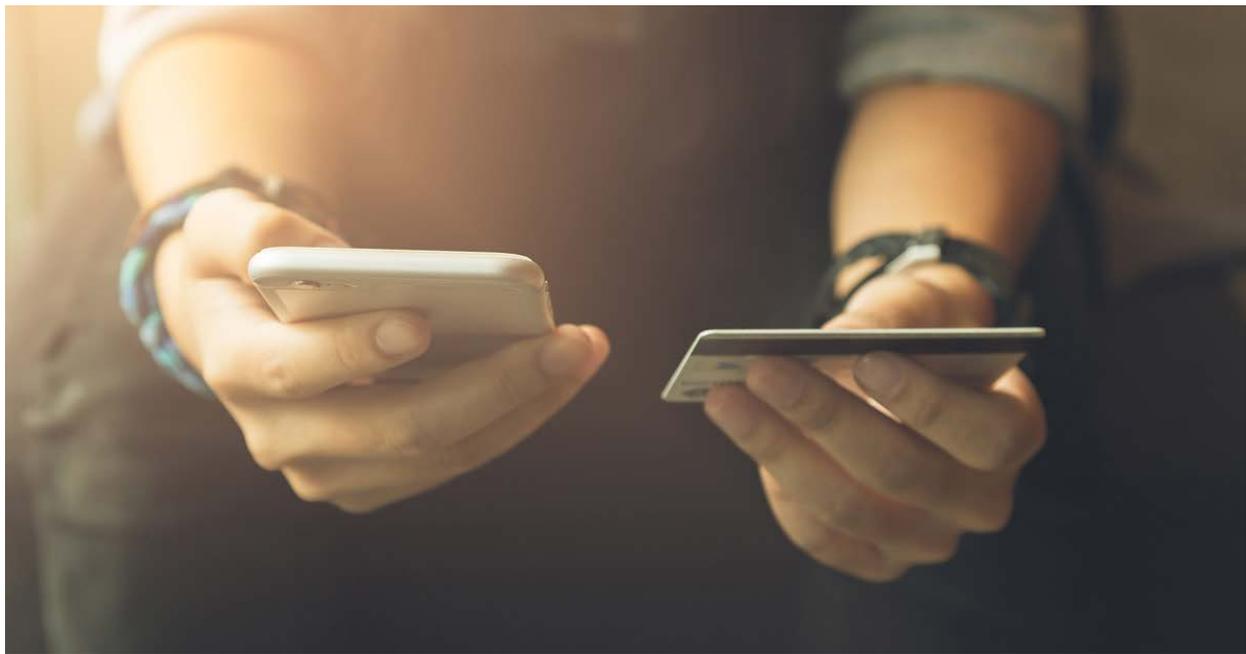


Online Giving is Popular with All Age Groups

BOB DITMER, MINISTRYTECH.COM, JANUARY 16, 2018



A new report on giving provides more evidence that churches need to be taking donations online.

Here's the good news. This year's [Annual Report on Philanthropy](#) from [Giving USA](#) shows that "religiously affiliated people are more likely to donate, whether to places of worship or other charitable organizations." Even as church attendance is decreasing, the rate of giving for those who attend church has not wavered.

And here is even better news. Technology has provided a way to make it easier for all generations to give to churches no matter what age group they fall into.

Preferences by Age Group

According to the [2013 Millennial Impact Report](#), 84 percent of surveyed Millennials donated or want to donate to a nonprofit via an online website. Eighty percent like it best when nonprofit websites are mobile-optimized.

Gen X'ers are much the same According to the 2013 study "[The Next Generation of American Giving](#)." This generation represents 20 percent of total giving in the U.S. Compared to

Millennials, more established Gen X donors are likelier to make a monetary gift to support a cause. They also give more frequently than other age groups.

This tech-savvy generation values donating and connecting with nonprofits online, especially through mobile devices. According to the 2013 study, nearly half (47 percent) of Gen X donors indicated they would consider donating through their mobile device. Social media is also an important engagement channel, with 47 percent of Gen X respondents following a nonprofit on social media.

Baby Boomers represent the top source of income for nonprofits. They sum up 34 percent of the nation's annual donor base, but they contribute 43 percent of all gifts made by individuals. While they still engage with nonprofits through direct mail, their online giving and social media use continue to spike. The study found that more Boomer donors now give online (42 percent) than via direct mail (40 percent), a switch from 2010 when more Boomers gave through the mail. With 77 percent of adults aged 50 to 64 using the Internet, this trend is likely to climb upward.

How Local Churches Are Using Online Giving

Jeff Christian, the Director of Communications and Marketing at Cornerstone Church in Chandler, Arizona says online giving is the primary way people give at his church.

He says it has enabled recurring giving, which he calls a game-changer for Cornerstone that has "levelized giving throughout the year." Thanks to recurring gifts there are fewer drastic downturns during typically low attendance periods because many of their members have committed to making donations via regular auto-drafts.

Cornerstone sees people donating digitally in three primary ways: 1) online recurring giving, 2) making one-time donations online, on their phones or via the church app and 3) through giving kiosks located in the church lobby.

John Alexander is the Executive Director of Brand Experience at Eagle Brook Church in Minnesota. In the past year, they transitioned to a platform called Pushpay that specializes in mobile giving. He says they typically see about 25-30% of their weekly come through mobile devices.

Alexander says the challenge is to resist the pressures of forcing attenders into a giving method that they're not ready to embrace.

"Although Eagle Brook's mobile giving percentages may seem lower than how the industry is trending, we don't focus heavily on promoting specific ways to give on our weekends. Rather than focusing on *how* to give, we always take the approach of explaining *why* it matters. On the weekends, we regularly talk about the value of living generously and then allow for attenders to choose the means of giving that fits best for them. For example, instead of focusing on having attenders text the word "EBC" to 77977 (which routes a person directly into mobile giving), we let them know that there are multiple ways to give at Eagle Brook. This approach allows for attenders to choose the option that works best for them, and we're confident that mobile giving will continue to naturally increase over time."

Whatever your donation strategy, online giving is growing in popularity with many churchgoers. Failing to provide them with a tool to fill that need is akin to expecting donations without passing the plate.