

INNOVATION TRENDS REPORT: CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING

PART FOUR IN OUR ONGOING SERIES ON MACRO TRENDS SHAPING GLOBAL SOCIETY



SOCIALIMPACT

We've entered the era of 'Conscious Crowdsourcing' – where unprecedented connectivity, technical agility and demand for solutions to pressing global challenges have given rise to new multidisciplinary and collaborative efforts by companies, foundations, nonprofits, governments and individuals to advance social progress.

In this Conscious Crowdsourcing report, the fourth in our Innovation Trends Report series, we explore how

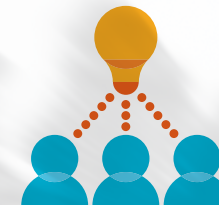
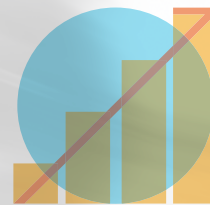
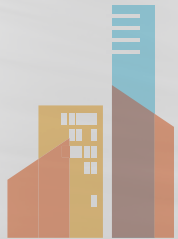
PURPOSE-DRIVEN ORGANIZATIONS CAN STRATEGICALLY ENGAGE, EQUIP AND EMPOWER LEADERS, RESEARCHERS, POLICYMAKERS AND GLOBAL CITIZENS TO RAISE AWARENESS OF AND CO-CREATE SOLUTIONS TO PRESSING ISSUES FROM CLIMATE CHANGE TO INEQUALITIES TO GLOBAL HEALTH AND BEYOND.

Similar to crowdfunding, which continues to effectively raise capital to support a cause or initiative from a broad base of supporters, crowdsourcing broadens the collective effort to source resources, especially intellectual capital, from multiple sources.

While born from a need to get people and organizations behind a particular policy shift or social cause, crowdsourcing is employed more and more by brands as they seek to better understand and manage their future in an interconnected global marketplace. The complexity of that future means that it is difficult for organizations to structure themselves (and their workforces) to meet new, different and shifting opportunities and demands. In response, organizations are drawing from specialist strengths – from legal services to artificial intelligence expertise – and the competencies of crowdsourced partners to help them manage that future more effectively.

INNOVATION TRENDS

This Conscious Crowdsourcing report is the fourth in a series of investigations into the key macro trends that are shaping how purpose-driven organizations affect positive social change. Stay tuned for our final report on the topic of Inclusive Global Economies, with insights on what it will take to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and ensure a more equitable, sustainable and prosperous future for people and the planet.



NETWORKED SMART CITIES

How we source and scale innovations to ensure cities (and communities) provide a vibrant, equitable, sustainable, livable environment for inhabitants.

ALWAYS-ON TRANSPARENCY

How forward-thinking organizations continually share failures, lessons and insider perspectives behind impact results.

PURPOSE-DRIVEN DATA

How we realize the potential for better data analysis and insights that inform solutions and advancements for society.

CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING

How organizations harness the expertise of those in the virtual network who are best equipped to solve a particular challenge.

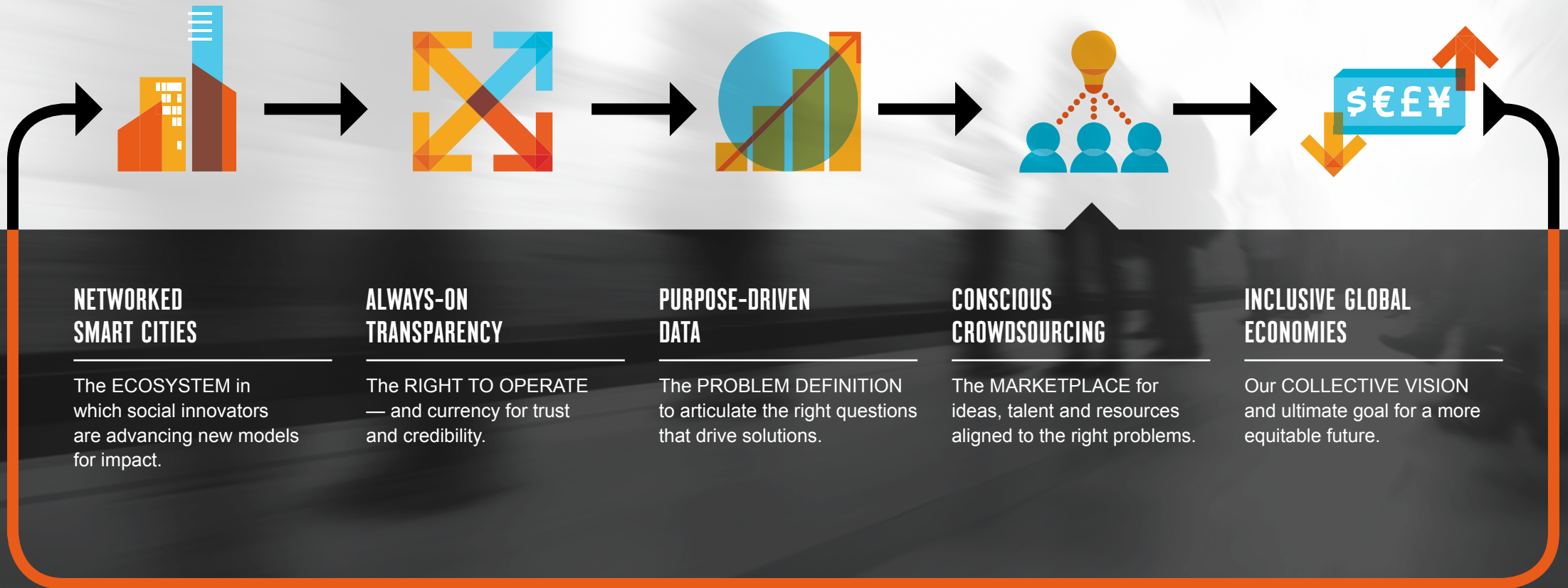
INCLUSIVE GLOBAL ECONOMIES

How we can overcome the consequences of the global wealth imbalance to ensure access to health, education and opportunity for all.

AN INTEGRATED VIEW OF SOCIAL IMPACT INNOVATION

“We designed our Innovation Trends Report series as an integrated approach to catalyzing smart and sustainable social impact. Each report builds on the last to demonstrate how innovators and leaders can apply the latest creative thinking and tools to accelerate solutions to complex social, economic and environmental issues.”

— PAUL MASSEY, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND GLOBAL LEAD, WEBER SHANDWICK SOCIAL IMPACT



SPOTLIGHT ON
CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING

CROWDSOURCING

(NOUN): the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community.¹

CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING

(NOUN): the practice of using crowdsourcing to generate awareness of, action for or solutions to pressing social and environmental challenges.²

FOOTNOTE: 1 Merriam-Webster Dictionary
2 Weber Shandwick

THE CONTEXT

It is by design that the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) include a goal specific to partnership. Goal 17 aims to “revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.” But more importantly, Goal 17 sets an aspiration for new models of collaboration that are inclusive, cross-border, multi-sectoral and designed to leverage the right ideas, talents and resources needed to get to the heart of the complex, multifaceted challenges we face as societies and a global community.

AS THE DIGITAL AGE CONTINUES TO CHANGE THE WAY WE CONNECT, LEARN, SHARE INFORMATION AND ORGANIZE FOR ACTION, WE ARE ENTERING A NEW ERA OF COLLECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.

“This is an era defined by diversity – of thought, perspective and approach – and inclusion, where the ability to contribute to collective learning and to influence the socio-political agenda is shared by us all,” says Paul Massey, Executive Vice President and Global Lead of Weber Shandwick’s Social Impact practice.

But when everyone has the power to bear witness, report on events, share ideas and stand up to be counted, how do we help the best ideas, knowledge and accurate data rise to the top? How do we equip leaders of change to organize efficiently and sustain collaboration across borders and languages and sectors? How do we facilitate virtual project coordination and transparent progress tracking? And how do we unite diverse voices into a targeted and effective message that will reach and engage those in a position to enact change?

These are the central questions we explore and begin to answer in the report that follows.

SLACKTIVIST (NOUN):

One who performs actions via the Internet in support of a political or social cause that are regarded as requiring little time or involvement.



CLICKTIVIST (NOUN):

One who uses social media and other online methods to promote a cause.



Contrary to stereotypes, Slacktivists have been shown to be:

2X

AS LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TIME

4X

AS LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO CONTACT POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

5X

AS LIKELY TO RECRUIT OTHERS TO SIGN PETITIONS FOR A CAUSE OR SOCIAL ISSUE

And more recently, researchers have found that while the majority of activist content is generated by a small group of highly-committed champions, the network beyond that core is more powerful for the spread of the activist message. This network effect is called ‘core-periphery dynamics,’ whereby the actions of just a few are made visible to millions of people, all over the world, who share content that helps a movement gain traction.

Slacktivism has given way to Clicktivism, where digital actions have the power to expand the reach and impact of real world activism. The key is to transform all that sharing from awareness to action to lasting impact. That’s where conscious crowdsourcing comes in.

Sources:

[Oxford Dictionary](#) | [PLOS ONE](#) | [Georgetown University](#)

THE OPPORTUNITY

Crowdsourcing as a tactic for sourcing new ideas and engaging people in co-creation is not new. And neither is crowdsourcing for social good. For example, since 1900 [The National Audubon Society](#) has organized people to do an annual count of all the birds in the Western Hemisphere. But over the past several decades, the practice of crowdsourcing has been deployed more and more often to benefit social and environmental causes. And so too, with the rise of social media, the pace of possibility for progress for these causes has grown exponentially greater.

On one end of the spectrum, social media challenges with the aim of sparking broad-based participation and awareness, such as the [#IceBucketChallenge](#), demonstrate a mass of support by blitzing social media feeds with conversation about an issue or organization, thereby raising its profile and priority. On the other end are innovation challenges, such as the [XPRIZE](#), which catalyzes collective efforts to create new technologies or solutions that benefit humanity, or the [Global Challenges Foundation New Shape Prize](#), which is crowdsourcing ideas on new models of global cooperation capable of handling the most pressing threats to humanity.

WE NEED EFFORTS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING SPECTRUM—AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN—TO TACKLE THE ENORMOUS GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BEFORE US.

As we've seen recently, people are not waiting for governments and organizations to lead the way. Instead, they are making use of the incredible communications tools available to self-organize, make their voices heard and push for change. There are examples across the world: from the Arab Spring anti-government protests in the Middle East, to the 'Occupy Wall Street' response to the 2008 global recession, to the #LoveWins campaign for marriage equality, to the #BlackLivesMatter social justice movement in the United States, to the global People's Climate March in 2014, to the #RefugeesWelcome show of solidarity with refugees in Europe, to the global Women's March this past January.

Not all of these types of protest movements are successful in persuading the opposition, shifting policy or launching a solution. For every #IceBucketChallenge that catalyzes a health breakthrough, there are numerous other attempts to make a campaign 'go viral' that fail to catch on. And one could argue that too many crowdsourced movements might dilute the impact of each initiative, duplicate efforts, split fundraising or exhaust volunteer efforts.

THE OPPORTUNITY (CONTINUED...)

BUT AS THESE MOVEMENTS DEMONSTRATE, THERE IS AN ENORMOUS OPPORTUNITY TO CHANNEL THE PASSION, IDEAS AND ACTIONS OF MOBILIZED CITIZENS INTO ORGANIZED, EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT COLLABORATIONS AIMED AT CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING TANGIBLE SOLUTIONS.

The trick is to know how to sustain the energy of the moment across a lasting, coordinated initiative.

To deliver on the promise of conscious crowdsourcing, we need more than connectivity and technology and a commitment to purpose. We need the infrastructure of [Networked Smart Cities](#) and communities united by common values, combined with the practices of [Always-On Transparency](#) and smart failure, and access to [Purpose-Driven Data](#) all in service of collaborative, multi-sector efforts to solve social challenges. In our view, these are the fundamental pillars that support and fuel conscious crowdsourcing efforts.

REDEFINING THE GLOBAL AGENDA ONE MOVEMENT AT A TIME

From demonstrations to protests and marches to hashtags, social and political movements have generated awareness for important issues and impacted government outcomes. Here are just a few examples.



Arab Spring (2010)

Demonstrations and uprisings that began in Tunisia and spread throughout the Arab world as protestors called for better, more democratic governance. Protests led to a fundamental shift in the political environment in parts of the region and beyond.



'Occupy Wall Street' (2011)

A people-powered movement that began in Manhattan's Financial District, and spread globally and online, bringing income inequality and minimum wage to the forefront of the political discussion and spurring related social movements, such as [Fight for \\$15](#).



#BlackLivesMatter (2012)

An international movement founded in the U.S. in the aftermath of several high profile incidents of police brutality against African Americans. The movement seeks to broaden the conversation around systemic racism through sustained activism and a policy platform that outlines issues and solutions.



#LoveWins (2015)

A hashtag turned rallying cry for individuals, celebrities, organizations and brands celebrating the U.S. Supreme Court decision to legalize marriage for same-sex couples. President Barack Obama marked the day and sparked the conversation with a [tweet](#) using the hashtag [#lovewins](#).



Women's March (2017)

A movement that began on January 21, 2017, when millions of women raised their voices and marched on Washington D.C. and in over 670 sister marches around the world, to champion equality, diversity and inclusion and assert that women's rights are human rights. The movement is now organizing people and organizations to fight for progressive values, starting with an action platform for the first 100 days of the new U.S. Presidency.

THE CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING ROADMAP

This six-step Roadmap provides a starting point for purpose organizations across sectors to align their practices with best-in-class conscious crowdsourcing efforts for social change. We have focused this Roadmap, and the Action Plan on the next page, specifically on collaborative efforts for communications, as opposed to problem solving, but the principles are similar. In conscious crowdsourcing for problem solving, step one clarifies a problem to solve, step two recruits the people needed to shape the solution and steps three through six focus on the collaborative process to design, deploy and optimize the solution, with communications as one component of a holistic approach to change.



THE CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING ACTION PLAN FOR COMMUNICATIONS

This Action Plan, a companion to the Conscious Crowdsourcing Roadmap on the prior page, outlines specific tactics and considerations to inform a conscious crowdsourcing approach to purpose-driven communications. The plan prompts the steps communicators should undertake to create strategies that spark and sustain engagement with key stakeholders, achieve important milestones and ultimately keep learning and adapting in step with the crowd.

	STEP 1	STEP 2	STEP 3
1 FOCUS	Define a clear issue or problem to address. Crowdsourcing only works when it is focused.	Identify where a crowdsourced process will have the most impact – and be honest about challenges.	Frame a call to action that will invite the types of people, ideas and dialogue you seek.
2 RECRUIT	Identify the expertise and perspectives needed to ensure a constructive crowdsourced process.	Map where to find the people who represent the expertise and perspectives needed.	Distribute invitations across the communities and channels that will reach the target participants.
3 FACILITATE	Set up a platform for collaboration (such as on Slack, Dropbox, Trello or Google apps).	Create a process and set of rules to guide collaboration and sharing and clarify roles and responsibilities.	Manage the collaboration with clear goals, activities, deadlines and accountability.
4 DESIGN	Identify an organizing principle or central truth to inform the campaign theme and approach.	Define who the campaign needs to reach and what the best channels are to reach those audiences.	Frame a content strategy and equip the crowd with messaging, content and tools to promote the campaign.
5 DEPLOY	Activate the campaign in a coordinated way, leveraging the campaign toolkit across partners.	Assign partners specific roles and responsibilities for ongoing communications.	Identify and track key themes and moments that can help amplify and contextualize the campaign.
6 EVOLVE	Analyze campaign data and metrics to optimize messages, messengers and content.	Equip additional messengers from the growing campaign community and elevate user-generated content.	Evolve the messengers, message and stories to track with how the issue is changing over time.

CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING
IN ACTION

“MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE HAVE THE SKILLS TO HELP, AND THEY’RE CURRENTLY NOT BEING UTILIZED. IF WE COULD BUILD A BRIDGE BETWEEN THESE COMMUNITIES, MORE PEOPLE COULD BE HELPED THAN WE EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.”

DAVID KEYES,
*Executive Director,
Advancing Human Rights*

BEYOND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: CORPORATE CROWDSOURCING

AN INTERVIEW WITH DREW O'BRIEN

Executive Vice President of Global Partnerships at Weber Shandwick

Q: Is conscious crowdsourcing a natural evolution of the public-private partnership model?

A: Public-private partnerships emerged for a number of reasons, but prominent among them was the confluence of diminished government spending and the rise of the global company. In many places around the world, there were new opportunities to align business strategies with public policy and social impact goals. When I was at the U.S. Department of State, we often referred to public-private partnerships as an “inexact science” – one that was always evolving and adapting and involving multiple sectors. Conscious crowdsourcing is truly part of that evolution, especially as purpose becomes a more central focus for the private sector.

Q: What do you see as the role corporations should play in a conscious crowdsourcing ecosystem?

A: The external portfolios of private companies – sustainability, social responsibility, philanthropy, partnerships, innovation – are constantly evolving and adapting to consumer needs, business goals and societal demands. There are different models and examples of success, but the companies who gain a leadership edge are the ones who are

out in front setting the example. Crowdsourcing – and opening up what have traditionally been internal processes – can expose vulnerabilities, of course, but given the complexity and magnitude of the challenges companies face today, we can only hope to discover lasting innovations through collaboration and co-creation. In fact, that is a recent focus of the 2016 edition of The Boston Consulting Group’s “[The Most Innovative Companies](#)” report, which explores how leading companies gain access to new ideas, capabilities and technologies from sources outside of the organization.

Q: What are the hallmarks of an effective purpose-driven corporate crowdsourcing initiative?

A: Key influencers who are either directing or associated with a purpose initiative are important for visibility reasons, but what is truly important is strength in numbers. Reid Hoffman, a Silicon Valley entrepreneur and angel investor – and the founder of LinkedIn – once remarked that “corporations, because they have the reach of millions of people, can make cause-based initiatives part of their web based platform.” Conscious crowdsourcing needs to be part of the operating system and core to the organization’s culture.

Q: Are there any companies doing a stand-out job in crowdsourcing awareness, action or solutions for social issues?

A: Recently, Unilever launched [The Unilever Foundry](#) to engage start-ups and innovators in product development and business model disruption across over 400 brands. Unilever Foundry IDEAS, an extension of the program, seeks to co-create sustainability solutions as part of its Sustainable Living Plan. And [Samasource](#), a social enterprise founded to connect people in developing countries to digital work, is a powerful example of new solutions emerging to embed crowdsourcing into business models. Samasource provides opportunities for low-income people by sourcing data projects from some of the world’s largest companies. They call it “impact sourcing,” which puts people on a long-term career path by providing essential digital and data services that companies need.

LESSONS ON MOBILIZING NETWORKS FOR ADVOCACY

BY ADAM SHORT

Associate Director of Health and Social Impact at Weber Shandwick EMEA

Technology has facilitated the mobilizing of civil society at a speed and scale unimaginable to leaders of change even a decade ago. Previously, movements were built over months and years through awareness raising and the dedicated leadership of a few key individuals. Today, movements can form within hours over large geographies, fuelled by a compelling story or fact and led not by a few but many.

A newer dynamic in social movements and advocacy efforts is the role of corporate leaders. Historically, activism was the purview of the social sector to influence public policy and corporate behavior. Today, consumers look to CEOs to speak out on important societal issues and assert shared values. While CEOs and their companies must weigh the reputational pros and cons of aligning with social movements, in an era of heightened expectations of transparency, the risk of not being prepared to respond to issues is greater than ever.

In recent examples from the Arab Spring to the Women's March, we can identify three key lessons that communications and advocacy leaders (no matter their sector) should consider when thinking how to respond to emerging issues and mobilize networks to crowdsource support.

1 PREPARATION

Although you might not know when a movement will form, you can prepare on what issues you will be prepared to join. Take time to define which issues fit your positioning and strategy and set guidelines for how might you show up if these issues become central to popular mobilizing and the news cycle. Then ensure you have people and processes in place to track the engagement as it grows, know what would trigger or enable your joining and who has the authority to decide, and quickly.

2 AGILITY

Credibility and reputation can rest on speaking up at the right time. Join too late and it might seem like you are jumping on the bandwagon, join too early and you might not know what you are really endorsing. This is when preparation proves its value so you can move quickly to evaluate an emerging opportunity and mobilize your network of support. You must know when to share organic content emerging from the crowd that connects powerfully to the real lives and places where the issues are playing out, and when to add to the conversation by quickly and sensitively creating content that brings in your point of view and places you at the heart of the crowd.

3 ENDURANCE

While some mobilizing efforts can seem only as long as a news cycle, efforts can be sustained by embedding the energy and attention on the issues into the organization's longer-term communications and advocacy plans. This requires leaders who can adapt planning and be creative in how to find and deploy resources so the story, the issues and attention can be sustained and become part of your continuing work. Ultimately, any ongoing movement requires a balance of preparation and action empowered by strong and agile communications that evolve with the crowd.

CROWDSOURCING LEARNING & TRANSPARENCY

Early proponents of social networks exalted connectivity as the answer to full transparency. When everyone is a witness, content creator and validator (through the power of a ‘Like’ button or a comment field), the truth is bound to rise to the top. Except, as we explored in our [Purpose-Driven Data report](#), the internet is drowning in more data, information, opinions and content than has been created in almost all of human history.

How do we overcome this data and information overload, to understand the progress we are making as a global society?

THE ANSWER LIES IN RESPONSIBLE CROWDSOURCING EFFORTS GUIDED BY TRUSTED ORGANIZATIONS WITH STRONG, INCLUSIVE OPERATING PRINCIPLES THAT PROMOTE DIVERSE, QUALITY DATA AND FACTS THAT ARE ACCURATE AND VERIFIABLE.

When it comes to the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) agenda, there are several initiatives that are designed to monitor the contributions of individuals, social sector organizations, governments and companies and track progress against the SDG 2030 agenda.



The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a collection of governments from 75 countries committed to open government and transparency. The organizing body provides tools to help governments “promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.” And the OGP reports on progress through an independent mechanism and provides open source data. In response to the adoption of the SDGs by the UN, the OGP announced the [“Joint Declaration on Open Government for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”](#) and identified key SDG targets governments should address.



[Project Everyone](#), created by the filmmaker and Comic Relief founder Richard Curtis, aims to ensure that every person on the planet is aware of the SDGs by enabling a vast communications network with a unified message. The premise is simple: the more people that know about the Global Goals, the more people will work to ensure global leaders work to achieve them.

BY VICTORIA BAXTER

Senior Vice President and Americas Lead for Weber Shandwick’s Social Impact practice



The SDG Philanthropy Platform seeks to align philanthropic activity with the SDGs. On the website [SDGfunders](#), anyone can track funding against specific goals and find reports from a variety of sources on SDG progress. The collaboration is led by the Foundation Center, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, with support from more than a dozen global foundations.



United Nations
Global Compact

[The United Nations Global Compact](#), a voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to sustainability and UN principles, launched the [SDG Leadership through Reporting](#) effort to provide a framework for reporting on and tracking the private sector contribution to the SDG agenda. The effort is a joint initiative with [GRI](#), the Global Reporting Initiative, which is an independent organization that sets global sustainability reporting standards.

HOW CROWDSOURCING IS SHAPING JOURNALISM

The idea that everyday citizens can and should contribute to the information that shapes the news is not new, but it was greatly enabled by the advent of the internet and then further empowered by the rise of social media. Sometimes called 'citizen journalism,' crowdsourced journalism was originally conceived mainly as a check on mainstream media. However, in the wake of events such as the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Arab Spring protests and more recent social movements, crowdsourced journalism has become a staple of new media outlets and legacy outlets alike. And in between are new tools to enable crowdsourcing and real-time information to enhance journalism across the board.

CROWDSOURCING IN LEGACY MEDIA

For legacy outlets, the practice of crowdsourcing provides additional resources for fact-checking and verification, data and information access and investigative legwork. The [Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism](#) at the University of Oxford published a helpful analysis of crowdsourcing in investigative journalism with compelling examples from *The Guardian* in the U.K., *NPR* in the U.S., *Helsingin Sanomat* in Finland, among others. And we have a fairly current example of crowdsourced investigative journalism facilitated

by [David Fahrenthold of The Washington Post](#), who was investigating the charitable activity of the new President in the lead-up to the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

CROWDSOURCING TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

The media industry is supported by new technology efforts such as [Google's News Lab](#), which seeks to make the world's information universally organized and accessible and provide tools, data and programs designed to help news organizations. Similarly, the non-profit [Internews](#) aims to give communities the resources needed to produce quality, independent and verified news and information locally. Additionally, there are several open data corruption platforms, such as the [Central Commission for Discipline Inspection Website App](#) in China or [I Paid a Bribe](#) in India, that are helping journalists expose patterns of corruption.

PURE PLAY CROWDSOURCED NEWS

While every person with a camera phone and a social media profile is a potential citizen journalist, the true power of crowdsourced journalism lies in the ability to combine the immediacy of real-time, on the ground information (often shared through social networks) with a process to verify and fact check that information and ultimately analyze all aggregated information to uncover trends and insights that will inform the public.

BY KATE OLSEN

Senior Vice President and Global Thought Leadership Lead for Weber Shandwick's Social Impact practice

Several media enterprises seek to do just that. Here is a sample of notable crowdsourced news sites.



[Global Voices](#) is a largely volunteer community of people who curate, verify and translate news from the internet, from blogs, independent press and social media in 167 countries.



[Grasswire](#) uses an open newsroom (facilitated by a Slack channel) to source first-hand verified information crowdsourced from Twitter users in real-time.



[Newzulu International](#) is a network of over 100,000 citizen journalists, backed by a team of editors who validate submissions and license content across 7,000 newspapers, websites and magazines. Citizen journalists are compensated through licensing fees.



[ProPublica](#) was founded by a former editor of *The Wall Street Journal* and is a nonprofit newsroom that produces investigative journalism in the public interest. The platform collaborates with 139 publishing partners to distribute its news stories across media.

“AS I’VE CONDUCTED MY INTERVIEWS WITH CROWDSOURCING ENTREPRENEURS AND EXPERTS, IT’S CONSTANTLY HIT ME THAT YOUR ABILITY TO DO SOMETHING BIG AND BOLD IS REALLY A FUNCTION OF THE SIZE AND QUALITY OF YOUR CROWD.”

PETER DIAMANDIS,
*Founder and Chairman,
X Prize Foundation*

CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING TIMELINE

RISE OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (1990-2005)

1990s Privatization and ongoing reform in the early 1990s sparked a new role for key international and inter-governmental agencies such as The World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development (OECD) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to connect free market ideas to global development and foster public-private partnerships to achieve development aims. [SOURCE](#)

2000 World leaders adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). [SOURCE](#)

2001 USAID develops the Global Development Alliance to stimulate private sector investment in global development. [SOURCE](#)

2005 The UN Global Compact is launched as a voluntary consortium of companies strategically aligned with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and committed to advance societal goals. [SOURCE](#)

EMERGENCE OF THE NETWORKED CITIZEN (2006-2012)

2006 Twitter launches as a real-time social network embraced by social activists, following Facebook, the first mainstream social networking platform created in 2004. [SOURCE](#)

2007 The word 'wiki' is listed in the online Oxford English Dictionary, marking the importance of the rise of collaborative, co-created websites and databases, such as Wikileaks, during the 1990s and 2000s. [SOURCE](#)

2008 President Barack Obama leverages social networks to engage Millennial voters. His campaign has changed the way politicians engage with the public and drive voter turnout. [SOURCE](#)

2009 Target launches 'Bullseye Gives,' considered to be the inaugural crowdsourced philanthropy campaign, which asked Facebook fans to decide how to allocate \$3 million across ten charities. This was followed in 2010 by what is probably the most notable crowdsourced philanthropy campaign: [The Pepsi Refresh Project](#). Pepsi reallocated a \$20 million Super Bowl advertising budget to fund community projects across the United States. [SOURCE](#)

2010 Patrick Meier, Director of Crisis Mapping for the Ushahidi platform, a free and open source mapping technology, uses social media and SMS messages to crowdsource a map for Haiti earthquake victims, which was invaluable to route emergency response efforts. FEMA's Administrator Craig Fugate called the effort the "most comprehensive and up-to-date map available to the humanitarian community." [SOURCE](#)

2010 OpenIDEO launches with a first featured challenge in support of Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution. An offshoot of the product innovation firm IDEO, this platform encourages design thinking and collaboration to help solve the world's toughest problems. [SOURCE](#)

2011 Social networks were crucial in organizing a core group of activists who initiated anti-government protests in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Bahrain, known as the Arab Spring. Digital and mobile channels were also critical in documenting the movement and spreading news around the world. [SOURCE](#)

ERA OF CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING (2012 AND BEYOND)

2012 Crowdsourcing Week is founded as a convener "committed to help organizations transition into a more open, connected, and socially productive society." [SOURCE](#)

2013 William D. Eggers and Paul Macmillan adopt the term 'solution economy' to describe multidisciplinary approaches that engage businesses, governments, philanthropists and social enterprises in holistic problem solving for social progress. [SOURCE](#)

2015 The UN General Assembly adopts the Sustainable Development Goals, engaging governments, foundations, nonprofits, corporations and citizens alike in the development agenda. Goal 17 identifies the role cross-sector partnerships will play in achieving the 2030 targets. [SOURCE](#)

2017 The Women's March, which started as a Facebook post in response to U.S. Presidential Election, inspired millions of people to march for human rights in events all around the world and on six continents on January 21, 2017. It was followed a week later by the 43rd annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. and several cities across the U.S. The Women's March effort is likely to become a case study in how community activists can organize and mobilize with 21st Century crowdsourcing tools and know-how. [SOURCE](#)

CONSCIOUS CROWDSOURCING PLATFORMS

From collaboration, to activism, to fundraising, people are leveraging technology to connect, communicate and take action for social change.

ACTIVISM

change.org

Change.org: Deemed the “world’s platform for social change,” Change.org enables individuals and organizations to be changemakers by starting petitions and campaigns, mobilizing supporters and collaborating with decision makers on solutions to social challenges.



Movements.org: An initiative that seeks to crowdsource human rights by connecting “dissidents in closed societies with individuals around the world with skills to help.”



MoveOn: A platform organizing grassroots leaders focused on advocacy, education and progressive policy campaigns to boost progressive social change efforts in politics.

COLLABORATION



100,000 Opportunities Initiative: The largest employer-led coalition focused on hiring opportunity youth in the United States. It is led by FSG and the Aspen Institute’s Forum for Community Solutions and is supported by many of the country’s youth and opportunity-focused nonprofit organizations, local governments and participating funders.

THE B TEAM

The B Team: A nonprofit initiative formed by a global group of business leaders committed to developing a ‘Plan B’ to ensure business becomes a driving force for social, environmental and economic benefit.



NewCo: An initiative to use events, media and partnerships to connect the companies, people and practices that are creating positive and sustainable business models.

openIDEO

OpenIDEO: A global community that uses design thinking and collaboration to solve complex social challenges.

WE MEAN BUSINESS

We Mean Business: A coalition of organizations working with thousands of the world’s most influential businesses and investors to create economic opportunities that help solve climate change.

FUNDRAISING



Crowdrise: This fundraising platform helps individuals, nonprofits, brands and celebrities creatively raise money through social networks to support positive social missions. Crowdrise has raised money for over 1.5 million causes through celebrity, corporate and media partnerships.



IndieGoGo: A flexible crowdfunding platform designed to support creative entrepreneurial ventures from concept to market.

KICKSTARTER

Kickstarter: A global crowdfunding platform founded on creativity and the support of creative individuals. Since its launch in 2009, over \$2.9 billion have been pledged to projects.

LEARN MORE

📌 [Weber Shandwick's "The Company behind the Brand II: In Goodness We Trust"](#), a research report released with KRC Research, found that today's consumers are increasingly expecting companies to deliver well-being to their lives while closely watching how companies behave. The report provides a guidance for leaders who want to know how to do business in an environment where consumers are not just purchasing their products or services on their own merits, but who are also shopping by company reputation, accountability and trustworthiness.

📌 [Weber Shandwick's "The Dawn of CEO Activism"](#), a research report released with KRC Research, explores the awareness of and attitudes toward CEOs speaking out on important societal issues and provides 12 guidelines for companies and their leaders to consider when speaking out on hot-button issues.

📌 [99designs](#) is an online design crowdsourcing start-up founded in Australia in 2008 that allows clients from around the world to submit design briefs (logos, websites, graphics) via a contest that is shared with a community of more than one million designers. Clients give feedback on submitted designs, choose a winner and receive the rights to the design upon payment to the designer. The initiative [99nonprofits](#) provides free crowdsourced design support for NGOs and 99designs pays the designers the same amount they would earn for a traditional contest.

📌 [Access Accelerated](#) was launched in January of 2017 by 22 biopharmaceutical companies, working in partnership with the World Bank Group and Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). It is a global initiative to advance access to prevention and care for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the developing world. Access Accelerated invests in on-the-ground health infrastructure and measurement systems, working towards a shared mission to accelerate progress towards the SDG target to reduce premature deaths from NCDs by one third by 2030.

📌 [CitySourced](#) is a start-up that provides an enterprise civic engagement software platform for cities, counties, government agencies, schools and utilities. It provides white-label mobile and web tools to help empower civic engagement, from giving residents ways to identify public safety and quality of life issues to messaging alerts about emergencies to sharing information across agencies and departments. The platform is currently reaching millions of citizens in cities across eight countries.

📌 [IC2030 Report: "Reimagining Global Health"](#) is a collaborative effort between PATH and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to crowdsource health solutions that help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals' health targets. The "Reimagining Global Health" report is the inaugural report of the PATH-led Innovation Countdown 2030 initiative and features 30 high-impact innovations to save lives and expert commentaries on the role of innovation in driving health impact.

📌 [The Noun Project](#) is an open source design platform that seeks to simplify visual communication by sourcing iconography from any designer, available for use via the Creative Commons. Together with Code for America, The Noun Project collaborates with organizations of all types, including nonprofits, to define the issues and concepts – from food waste to urban farming – that need to be translated into icons. Then designers are invited to share their illustrations that encapsulate those ideas.

📌 [Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance \(MITA\)](#) uses its patient-facing brand [Right Scan Right Time](#) to work with patient advocates around the U.S. to protect access to medical imaging services for Americans. The campaign deploys a multi-channel content marketing strategy to educate, engage and drive grassroots action for key policy issues. Activations are focused on generating letters and tweets to U.S. Senators that urge them to take action.

📌 [Stanford Crowd Research Collective](#) is an experimental initiative by professor and students at Stanford to explore the possibility of large scale research collaboration. One of Crowd Research's first projects involves a group of one thousand designers, engineers, crowd workers and crowd requesters from around the world who are building a self-governed crowdsourcing marketplace called [Daemo](#).

📌 [UN Volunteers](#) has an online platform that connects grassroots organizations, international NGOs, local governments, educational institutions and United Nations agencies with thousands of volunteers ready to help address development challenges by providing digital services such as translation, writing and editing, design, technology development and advocacy. This is similar to other virtual or micro volunteering services available through [Catchafire](#), [Skills for Change](#) and [VolunteerMatch](#).

📌 [Ushahidi](#) (Swahili for 'testimony') is a website created in 2008 in the aftermath of Kenya's disputed presidential election that collected and mapped eyewitness reports of violence sent in by email and text-message. Today, it is an open source software platform that develops tools to support emergency response, election monitoring and advocacy, and partners with leading foundations and organizations to increase access to information, empower citizens and protect marginalized communities.

📌 The [Vital Voices](#) Global Partnership's mission is to identify, invest in and bring visibility to extraordinary women around the world by unleashing their leadership potential to transform lives and accelerate peace and prosperity in their communities. Vital Voices has built a network of women changemakers who serve as multipliers and mentor other emerging women leaders in their communities.

Note: [Access Accelerated](#), [PATH](#), [The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#), [MITA](#) and [UN Volunteers](#) are [Weber Shandwick](#) clients. We work with [Vital Voices](#) through our partnership with [Bank of America](#).

CONTACT US TO EXPLORE SOCIAL IMPACT OPPORTUNITIES

PAUL MASSEY

Global Lead – Washington, D.C.
Executive Vice President
✉ pmassey@webershandwick.com
☎ +202 585 2799

VICTORIA BAXTER

Americas Lead – Washington, D.C.
Senior Vice President & Management
Supervisor
✉ vbaxter@webershandwick.com
☎ +202 585 2128

BRIAN TJUGUM

EMEA Lead – London
Global Director, Health Impact
✉ btjugum@webershandwick.com
☎ +44 20 7067 0610

IAN RUMSBY

APAC Lead – Sydney
Chair, Australia & Chief Strategy Officer
✉ ian.rumsby@webershandwick.com
☎ +61 2 9994 4475

KATE OLSEN

Thought Leadership Lead – Geneva
Senior Vice President
✉ kolsen@webershandwick.com
☎ +41 22 879 8525

social|IMPACT

The Innovation Trends Report series is brought to you by Weber Shandwick's Social Impact practice, an award-winning global team that builds engagement strategies for purpose-driven organizations. Our clients are change-agents drawn from across the private, public and social sectors that are focused on solving complex business and social issues. We created this resource to build awareness and fuel dialogue around the fast-growing Solution Economy—multidisciplinary and collaborative efforts to accelerate social progress. Contact us to learn more and explore ways we might work together. You can also read more about our work on our [Purpose Decoded](#) publication on Medium.



Impact.WeberShandwick.com



[@WSsocialimpact](https://twitter.com/WSsocialimpact)



[/WSsocialimpact](https://www.facebook.com/WSsocialimpact)



[/Company/Weber-Shandwick](https://www.linkedin.com/company/weber-shandwick)



[/WeberShandwickGlobal](https://www.youtube.com/WeberShandwickGlobal)



[/WeberShandwick](https://www.pinterest.com/WeberShandwick)



[/+WeberShandwick](https://plus.google.com/+WeberShandwick)