



## American Museum Membership Conference: *Maximizing your Museum's Digital Fundraising Program*

November 8, 2017



**Here with you today:**

**David Saunders, Director of Membership**  
*National Museum of the American Indian*

**John Perell, Director of Direct Response & Shared Services**  
*Friends of the Smithsonian*

**Elizabeth J. Wilson, Assistant Director of Advancement**  
*National Air and Space Museum*

**Kevin Thomas, Senior Manager for Prospect Development**  
*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

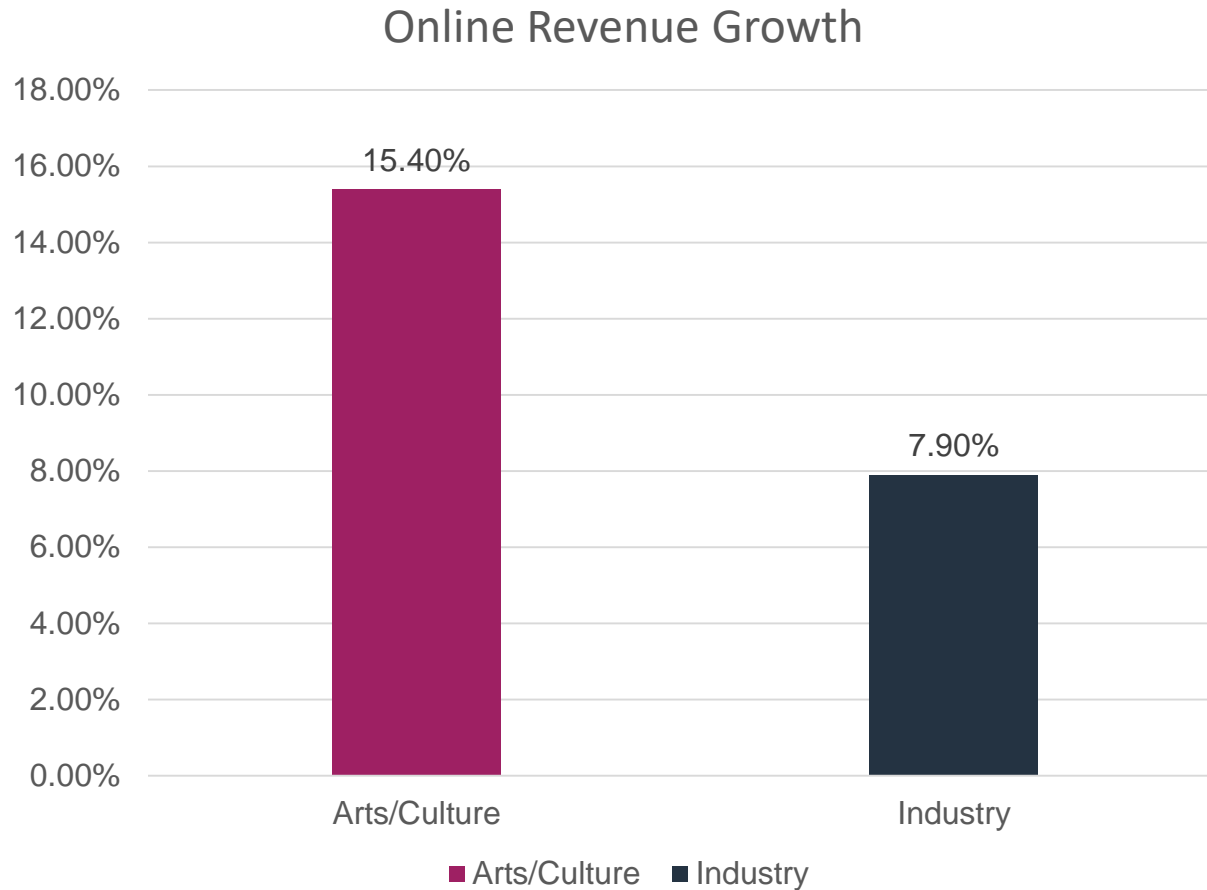
## Takeaways from today's session:

Sure-fire online strategies can grow your program's revenue and level of engagement.

How to integrate online and direct mail channels for the maximum effect.

Actual case studies that cover creative development, testing, and key metrics.

# Online Giving: The arts and culture sector saw better-than-industry year over year growth in 2016.



Source: Blackbaud's 2016 Charitable Giving Report

# Individual Giving Trends – The more channels a member gives in, the higher their retention and income/member.

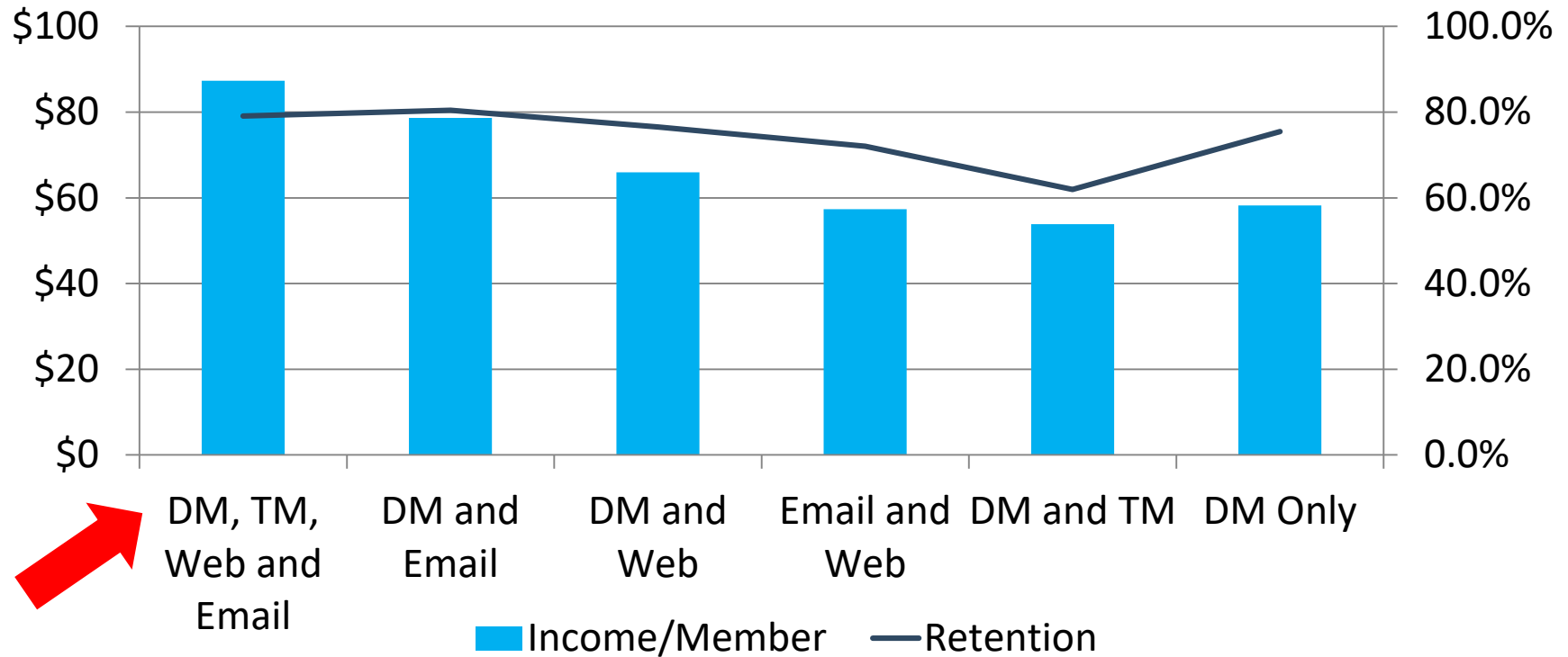
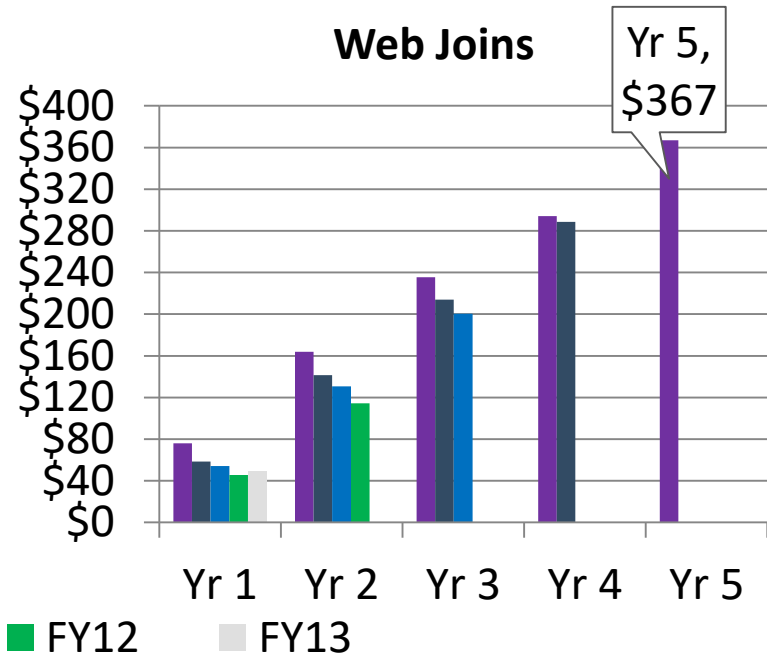
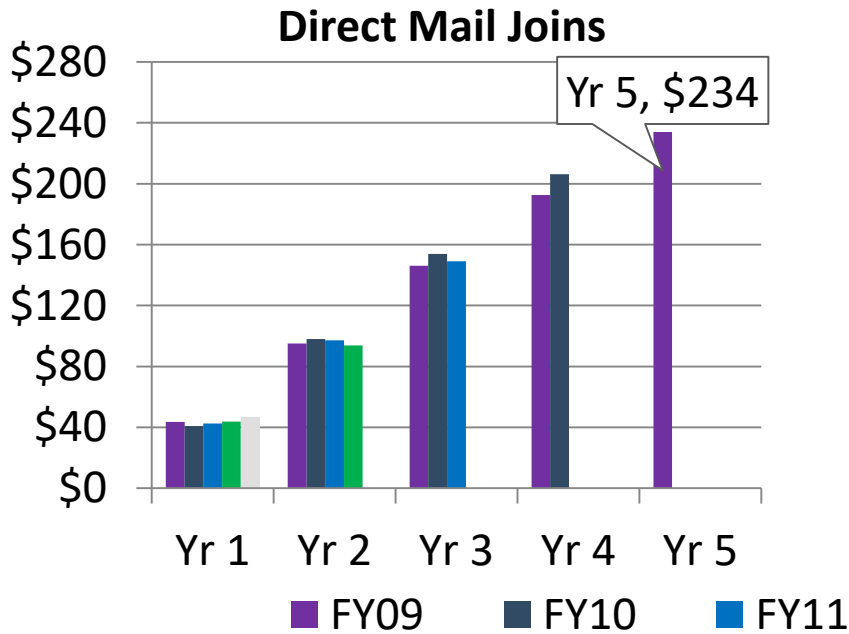
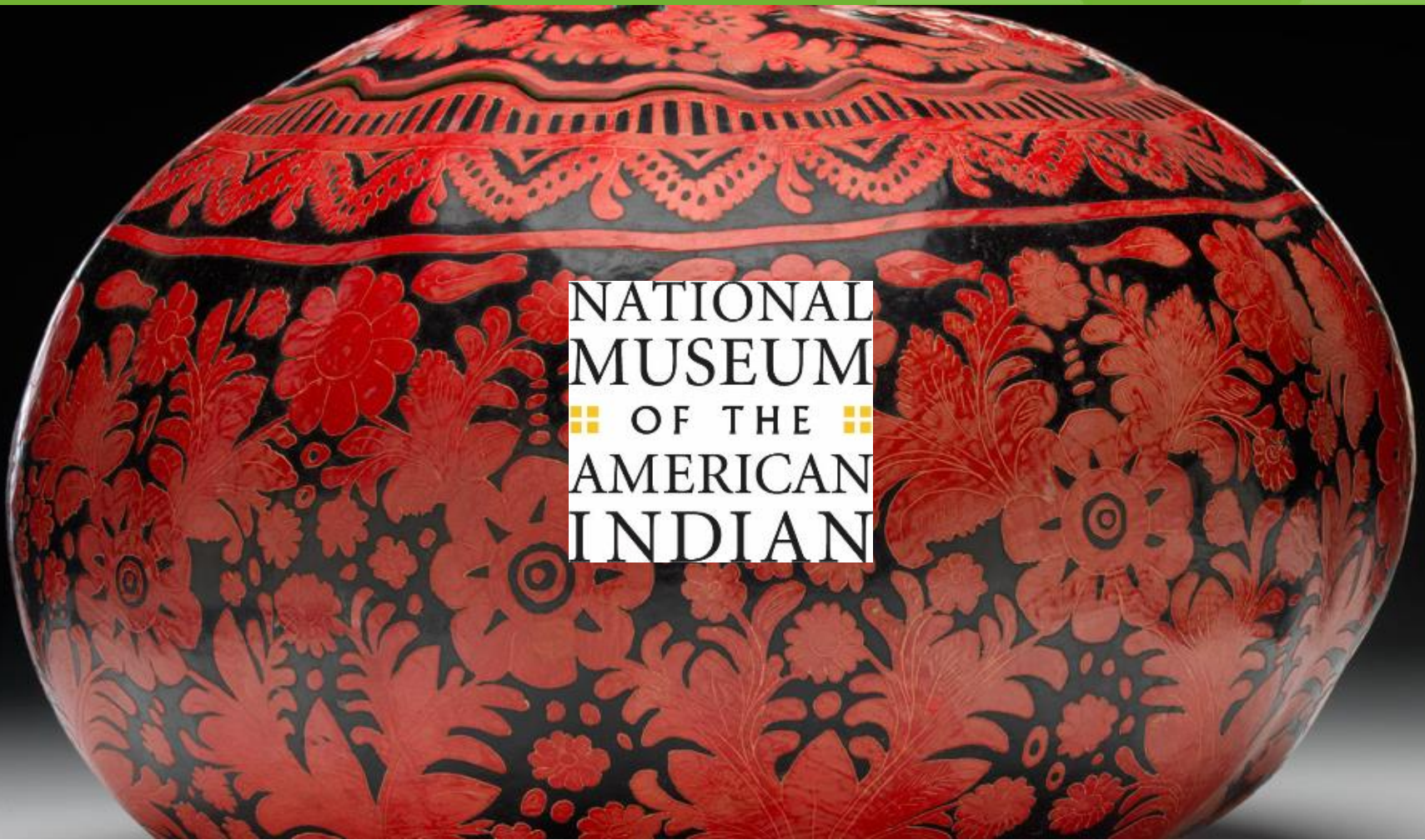


Chart above represents members who gave at least four gifts.

# Individual Giving Trends – Web joins usually have much higher member value than direct mail joins.



# Case Studies



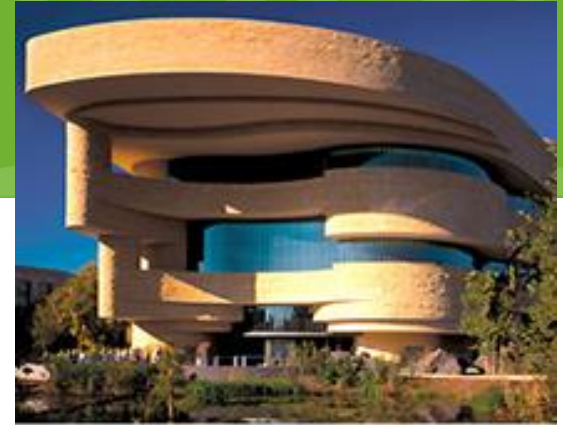
NATIONAL  
MUSEUM  
OF THE  
AMERICAN  
INDIAN



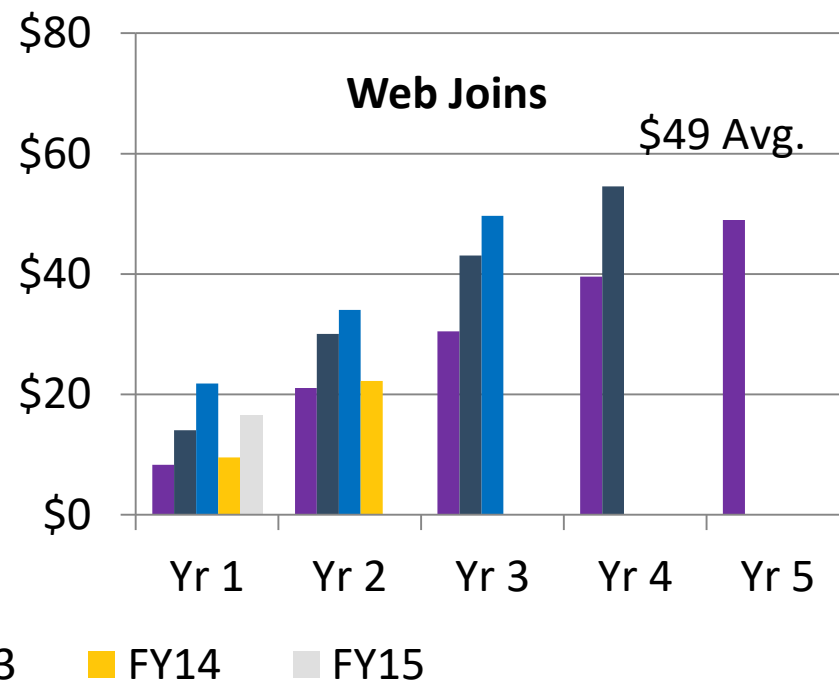
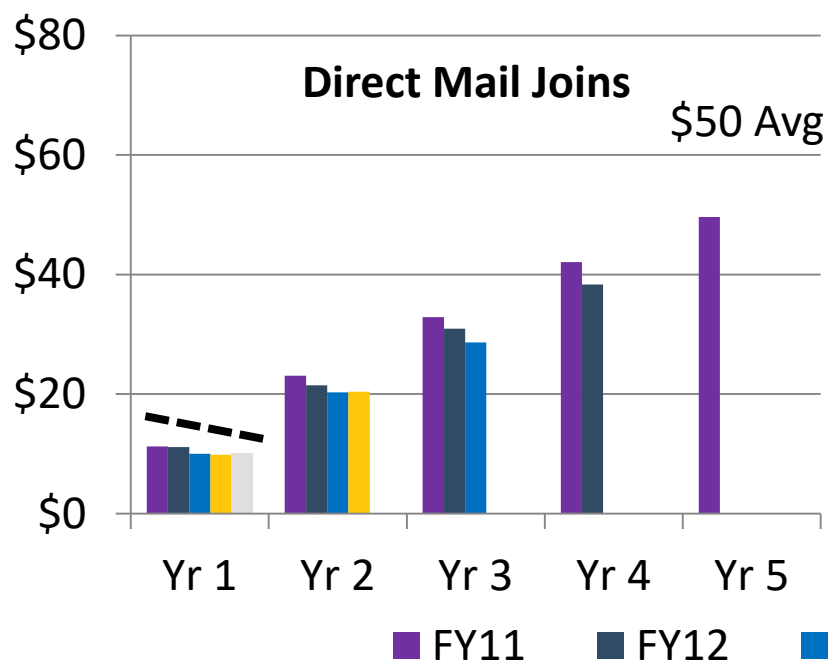
# Situational Analysis:

Members and revenue increased dramatically through the opening of the museum in 2004, and then experienced a sharp decline.

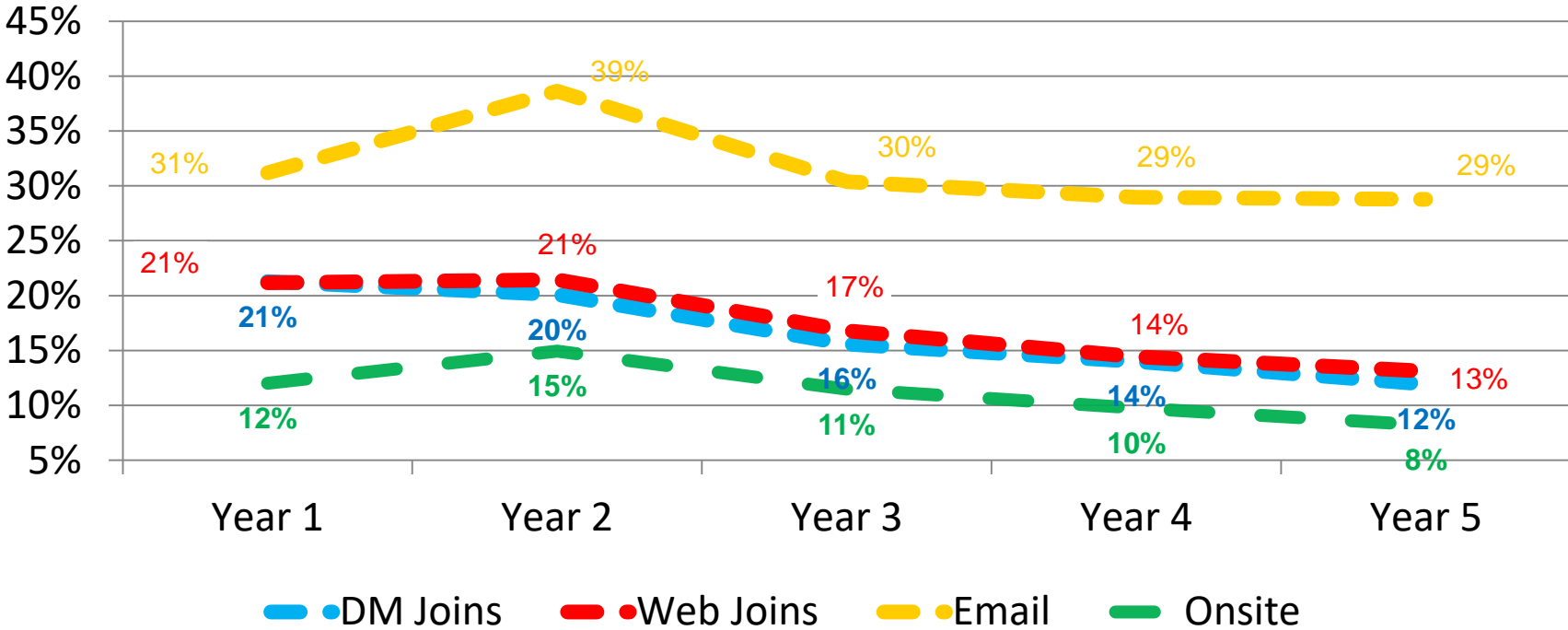
**NMAI has been hard at work to stabilize the program since this time, with online outreach as a key part of that strategy.**



# Average Donor Value by Channel and Join Year



# Average Donor Retention by Join Channel



# Successful Strategies Used to Drive NMAI Online Revenue

# eAcquisition List-Building Efforts: Online Petition Campaign Focused on Stereotypes

- ✓ The inaugural campaign collected 6,376 email addresses and 9,597 signatures in two days.
- ✓ A 3-effort Welcome Series acquired 8 new members with a \$46.88 average gift.
- ✓ In addition, 60 people in this group have joined through DM acquisition, raising \$3,175 (42% of the petition cost).
- ✓ Immediate conversion rate is low, but pool of leads for future eAcquisition campaigns expanded.

✓ Thanks for signing. You might like this sponsored petition:

**Change the Racist Name of Washington's Football Team** Skip

It's time to eliminate racial discrimination from professional sports. You can help make it happen by urging NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to force the owners of the Washington Redskins to change their team's racist name. Sign the petition today! Read more

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN Sponsored by **National Museum of the American Indian**

Keep me updated on this campaign and others from National Museum of the American Indian

**WELCOME**

Dear Will,

I want to thank you for expressing interest in the National Museum of the American Indian (NMI) by signing our petition urging NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell to change the offensive name of Washington's football team.

The Museum works to dispel the harmful stereotypes and myths surrounding Native American history and culture. You saw the change that most Americans think of Indian was created by non-Indians, and it bears little or no resemblance to the truth. As a result, Indians are today seen as caricatures that range from the merely inaccurate to the racist and degrading.

Our mission is to ensure that everyone knows the real story of how the people who first inhabited our hemisphere helped to shape our country — a story that we all share.

In partnership with tribes throughout the Americas, NMI works to promote a understanding of American history, share the vibrancy and variety of contemporary culture, and secure the social justice for historical people. We do this through:

- Thought-provoking exhibitions that make the past and present Native world visible
- Contributions from Native artists, dancers, musicians, scholars and others entertain and inspire 1.7 million Museum visitors each year.
- More than \$60,000,000 preserve items and artifacts in our collection.
- Educational materials that take the Museum audience into classrooms that I urge you to explore all that the Museum has to offer by connecting with us at [social media](#).

Thank you again for your interest in the National Museum of the American Indian.

**Share Your Thought**

Help combat misconceptions about Native Communities

Dear Will,

Here at the National Museum of the American Indian, we work to correct stereotypes and educate through interactive exhibits and hands-on experiences. The education resources we create are a team effort through our staff and the support of our visitors.


And you can help! **Share Your Thought** on the National Museum of the American Indian petition for a name change to our website ([www.nmni.gov/petition](#)) — more than 10,000 signatures have been added to our petition so far!

The seven questions on this short survey are relevant and thought-provoking. Please do not miss the Museum's chance to hear your voice!

- **Confirm historical inaccuracies about Native people, and share a real contribution of real American Indians who have changed our world.**
- **Convey the vibrancy and diversity of Indian culture — it gets past us — to help all Americans understand its relevance to their lives today.**
- **Help put an end to harmful Native American stereotypes and ensure justice for Indigenous people.**

Don't miss this opportunity to make your voice heard. [Please complete this 5-minute survey.](#)

Thank you for taking a few moments to share your thoughts!

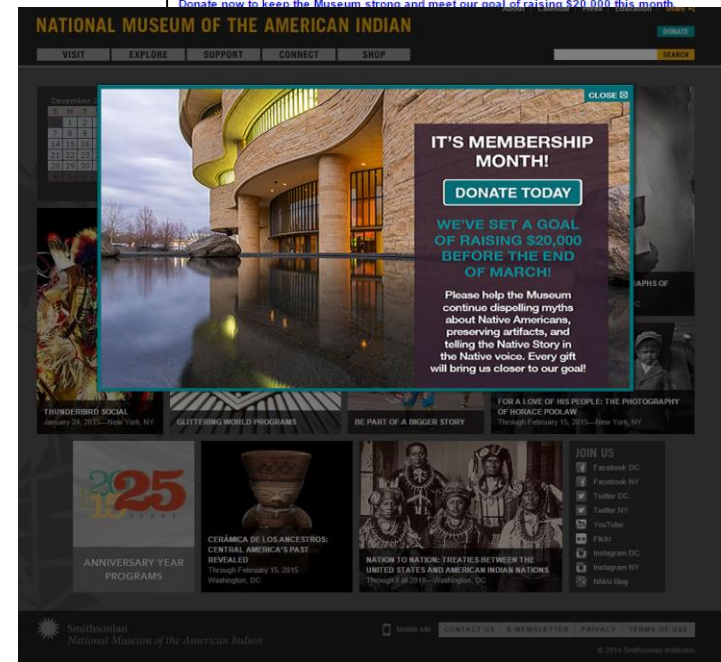
Sincerely,  
  
Kevin Gover (Pawnee)  
Director

U.S. For an excellent overview of the Museum's mission and vision, I urge you to visit [our website](#) and please feel free to share it with your family and friends.

Member Services | 900 Constitution Ave. | 202-633-6895 | 1-800-838-6895

# Membership Month Campaign: Raises more revenue each year

- ✓ **1<sup>st</sup> of the Month** – Kick off campaign highlighting goals and end of month deadline
- ✓ **Mid-Month** – Update on progress, reminder of deadline
- ✓ **Beginning of Last week of Month** – Increased urgency – close to goal and impact of support
- ✓ **2<sup>nd</sup> to Last Day of Month** – Campaign ends tomorrow – reiterate goal and importance of support
- ✓ **Last Day of Month** – Final chance to give and be a part of Membership Month. About 25% of the campaign's revenue typically comes in on this effort.



# Integrated eRenewals

- ✓ Copy and art for correspond with direct mail.
- ✓ Tailored to effort and expiration date > doubled eRenewal revenue!
- ✓ 8-effort series helps drive online gifts but also serves as a reminder for the direct mail notices.
- ✓ 12% of renewal revenue comes from online renewals (email and web).

The image shows two versions of a membership renewal notice for the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). The top version is a direct mail notice, and the bottom version is an email notice. Both notices feature the NMAI logo, a header with the text "RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!", and a call to action "RENEW NOW". The email notice is personalized with the member's name, Robert Malgieri, and the expiration date, June 1, 2016. The email notice also includes a "HURRY!" banner and a "RENEW NOW" button. The direct mail notice includes a "STAY A PART OF NMAI" banner and a "RENEW NOW" button. The email notice also includes a "HURRY! YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES THU., DECEMBER 1ST" banner and a "RENEW NOW" button.

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN**

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

Dear ,

**STAY A PART OF NMAI**

**Member Name:** Robert Malgieri

**Membership Expires:** Jun 1, 2016

**RENEW NOW**

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN**

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!**

Dear Robert,

**Your Membership in the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) expires on December 1st.**

Simply put, our young institution cannot afford to lose you.

[Renew now before your NMAI Membership expires.](#)

With your help, the Museum has already come so far in helping Americans and people around the world see the full picture of Native American life.

**HURRY! YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES**

**THU., DECEMBER 1ST**

**RENEW NOW**

National Mall in  
the Museum's walls so that  
and diversity of Native





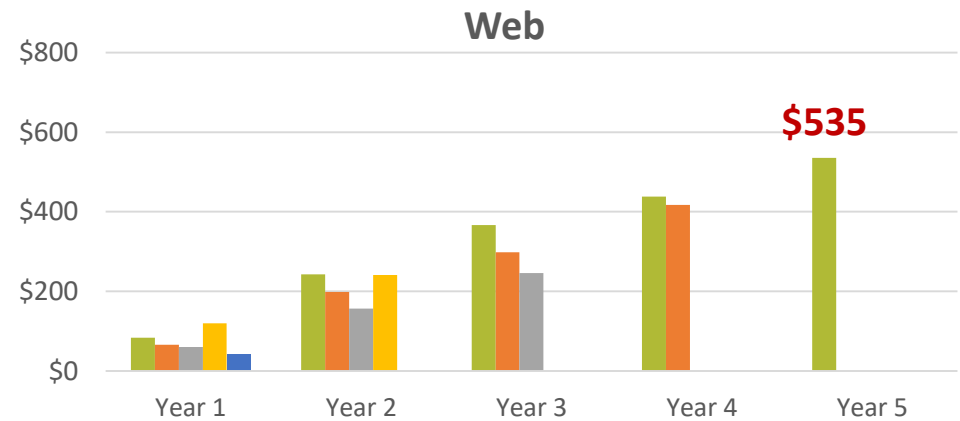
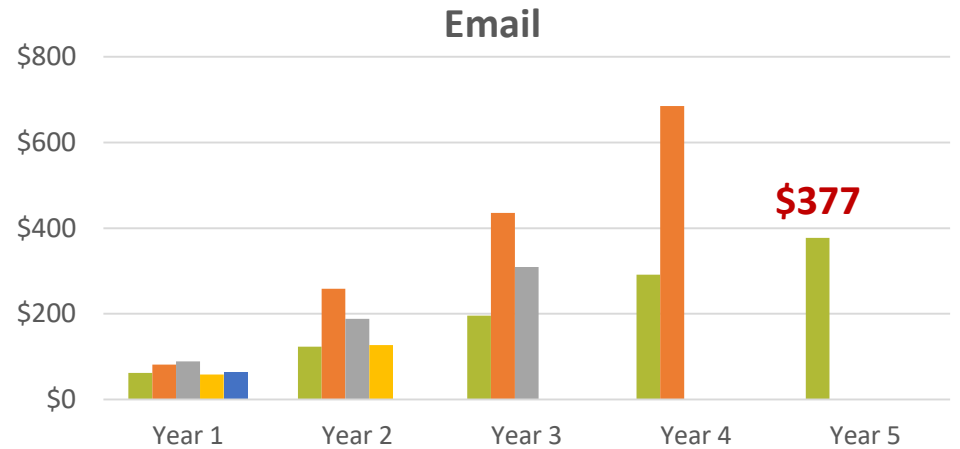
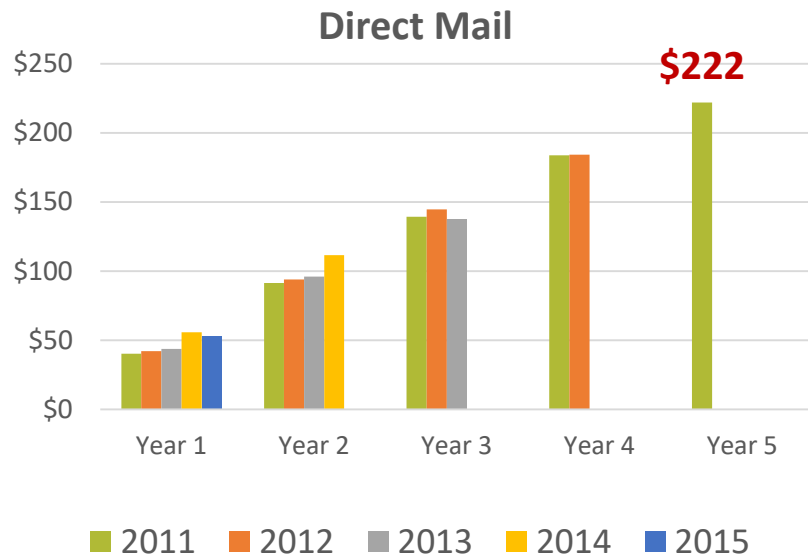
# Situational Analysis:

After years of file and revenue growth, revenue and file size had been on a slow decline from 2007 until 2014.

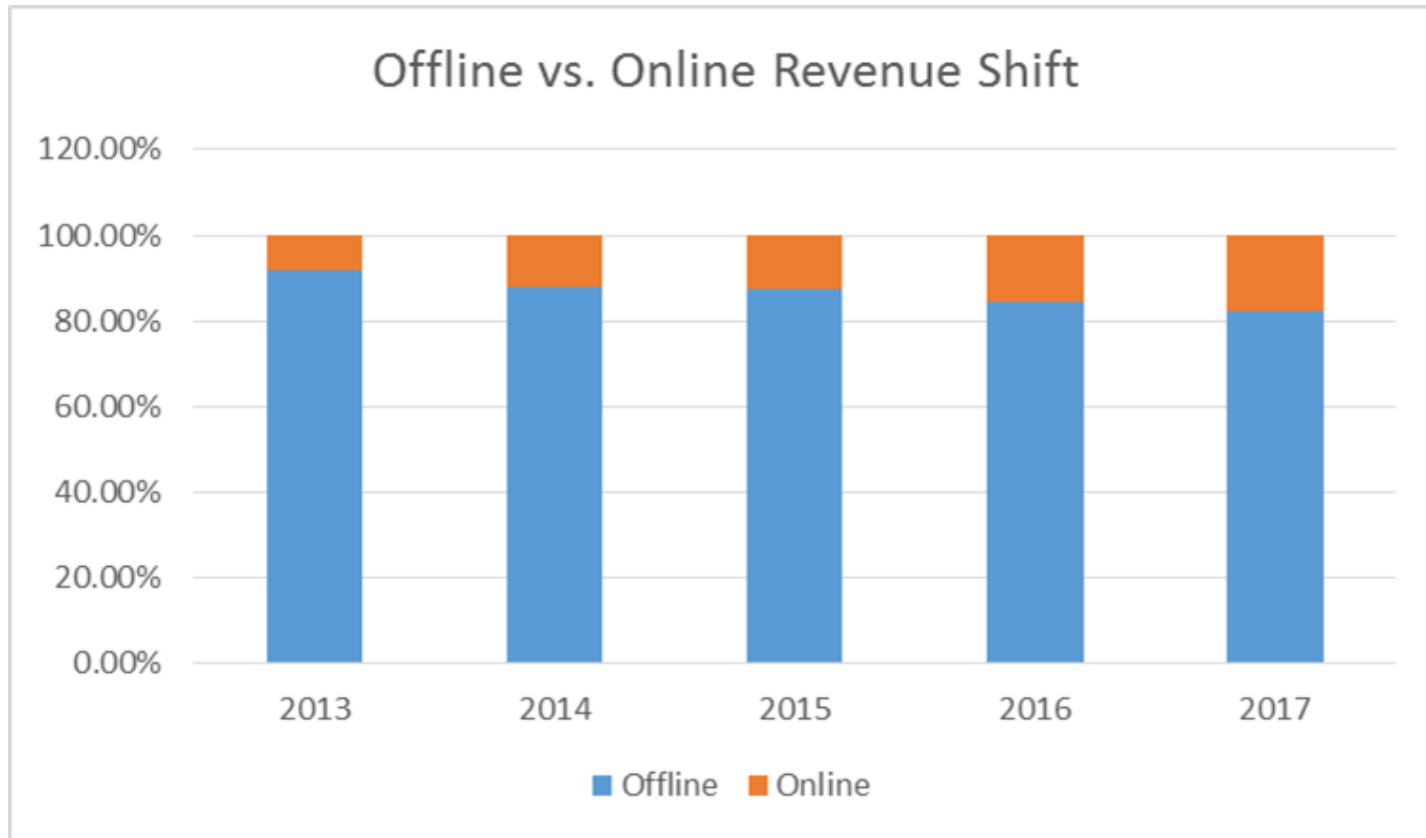
**To meet higher revenue demands in 2015 and beyond, the *Friends* program needed to return to a revenue and file growth scenario – and online fundraising was a key part of that growth.**



# Members who join online have higher value than direct mail joins.



# Revenue Shift: Higher percentage from Online



# Successful Strategies Used to Drive Friends Email Sign Ups and Online Revenue

# Select Your Smithsonian Story: 9/12-9/25 (2 weeks)

- ✓ Over 3,500 people selected their “story”
- ✓ Over 1,000 responses to the “did you learn something new” question on the landing page
- ✓ 5% of names collected during the campaign have become donors
- ✓ FYE campaign revenue raised **11%** more than the previous year
- ✓ September revenue increased **18.9%** over the previous year, with a **3.5%** increase in transactions

The image shows a composite of two screenshots from the Smithsonian website. The top screenshot is the landing page for 'Chapter 1: Your Smithsonian Story'. It features a quote by Liz Cottrell: "We exist on this planet by permission of volcanoes." Below the quote, it says "Dear Ms. Perell, Welcome to chapter one of your personalized Smithsonian adventure!" and "Join Liz Cottrell, Geologist at the National Museum of Natural History, as she shares her amazing volcano expedition stories and learn why volcanoes are essential to human life on Earth:". A video player shows a volcano eruption. To the right, there are two selection options: "Native Art Curator" and "Volcano Hunter".

The bottom screenshot is a feedback form titled "We'd love to hear from you!". It asks "What did you think?" and "How likely would you be to recommend this video to a friend?". Below this is a 5-point Likert scale with the number 5 highlighted. The form also includes a text box for "Share your thoughts with us! Did you learn something new?", a "Your information" section with fields for "Your Email Address (Required)", "Your First Name", "Your Last Name", and "Your ZIP Code", and a "Submit" button.

# Think you know Smithsonian?

Choose whether you think a story is true or false to get started.

TRUE or FALSE?



After chasing wild owls out of the Castle, the Smithsonian decided to train owls bred in captivity to live in the tower and hunt rodents.

TRUE »

FALSE »



The Smithsonian's First Secretary was one of President Abraham Lincoln's most trusted advisors – so trusted that Lincoln asked him to help develop a Confederate invasion warning system in the Smithsonian Castle.

TRUE »

FALSE »

## THINK YOU KNOW YOUR SMITHSONIAN?

Send a bit of Smithsonian trivia to your friends & family!

**YOU'RE RIGHT – THE SMITHSONIAN DID TRAIN OWLS BRED IN CAPTIVITY TO LIVE IN THE CASTLE AND HUNT RODENTS!**

Though today it holds a visitor's center, exhibit space and offices, the Smithsonian Castle once contained residential spaces and was home to the institution's first Secretary, Joseph Henry – and a family of barn owls that took roost in the building's lofty towers in the late 19th century.

The Smithsonian welcomed these uninvited guests as research subjects, and ornithologists collected eggs and pellets to study the owls' habits. But by 1950s, the owls had outstayed their welcome and their droppings caused the floor of one tower to collapse. They were put out and the windows were barred.

But in 1971, Secretary S. Dillon Ripley decided to reinstate the tower's winged residents, believing owls could hunt rats attracted by the garbage cans recently placed on the Mall. Barn owls were trained at the Smithsonian's National Zoo to breed in captivity and hunt prey. In 1977, a pair of owls named "Increase" and "Diffusion" – for language found in the Smithsonian's mission – were placed in the northwest tower. Though the duo hatched three young owlets that spring, they soon flew the coop. The towers have been uninhabited since.

Thanks to support from people like you, the Smithsonian has been preserving America's history and sharing the stories, ideals and indomitable, innovative spirit that unite all Americans for more than 170 years. And in that time, we've collected some unique stories of our own! Now you can be a part of those stories by sharing uniquely Smithsonian trivia with your friends and family!

Select a Topic

Owls in the Castle

[Read the Story »](#)

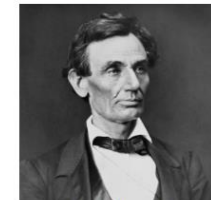


Owls in the Castle



Lincoln in the Tower

[Read the Story »](#)



Lincoln in the Tower



# 24 Hour Campaign

- ✓ Three emails over the course of the day
  - Email 1 - cultivation (with ask on landing page)
  - Email 2 – appeal with countdown timer
  - Email 3 – lift note over email 2 with “last chance” language
- ✓ Brought in just under \$20k
  - 100% lift over previous year
- ✓ 262 donors total to the campaign
  - 93% lift over previous year
  - 40% of donors were first-time donors
- ✓ Included a monthly giving ask
  - 15 donors (6% of gifts) started monthly gifts
  - Total of \$1,921 in sustaining gifts

Dear Kelly,

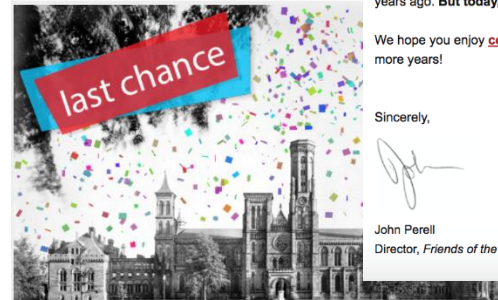
There are just a few hours remaining of Smiths birthday. Unfortunately, we're **still short of a fundraising goal**. We're asking supporters lik reach \$25,000 by **midnight tonight**.

[Will you step up and help close the gap in our 171st birthday?](#)

The Smithsonian relies on you to preserve our story, conduct groundbreaking research, share exhibitions with the world and so much more. [celebrate the Smithsonian's birthday with gift by midnight tonight.](#)

Thanks as always for your support!

--John



Dear Kelly,

On this day 171 years ago, the Smithsonian was born. To celebrate this important moment in history, **we've set a 24-hour fundraising goal of \$25,00**. And we're asking our most treasured supporters – curious, caring folks like you – to help meet this goal and keep the Smithsonian alive and thriving for future generations.

**Won't you join us in celebrating the Smithsonian's birthday and all that this remarkable American Institution gives to the world by making your tax-deductible gift by midnight tonight?**

**Smithsonian**

Help celebrate the Smithsonian's 171st Birthday!

Goal: \$25,000

Deadline: **Midnight Tonight**

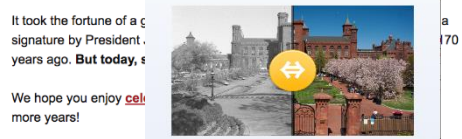
**00 00 00**  
HOURS MINUTES SECONDS

Name: Kelly Mart  
Email: martinetk

**Smithsonian Over the Years**

Birthdays Donor \$

In honor of the Smithsonian's birthday, take a look at some views from around the Institution over the course of its 171-year history!



It took the fortune of a g signature by President . years ago. **But today, s**

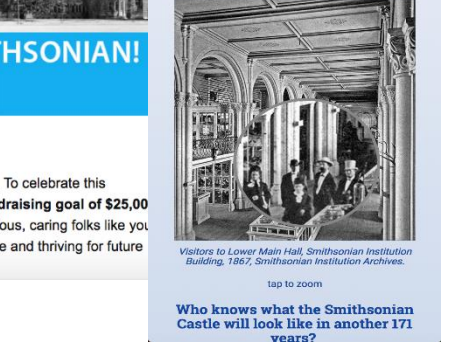
We hope you enjoy **cel** more years!

Sincerely,



John Perell  
Director, Friends of the S

The main floor of the Smithsonian Castle now serves as the Institution's visitor center, but it originally housed research offices, exhibit halls, chemical laboratories, storage areas for specimens and more.



Visitors to Lower Main Hall, Smithsonian Institution Building, 1867, Smithsonian Institution Archives.

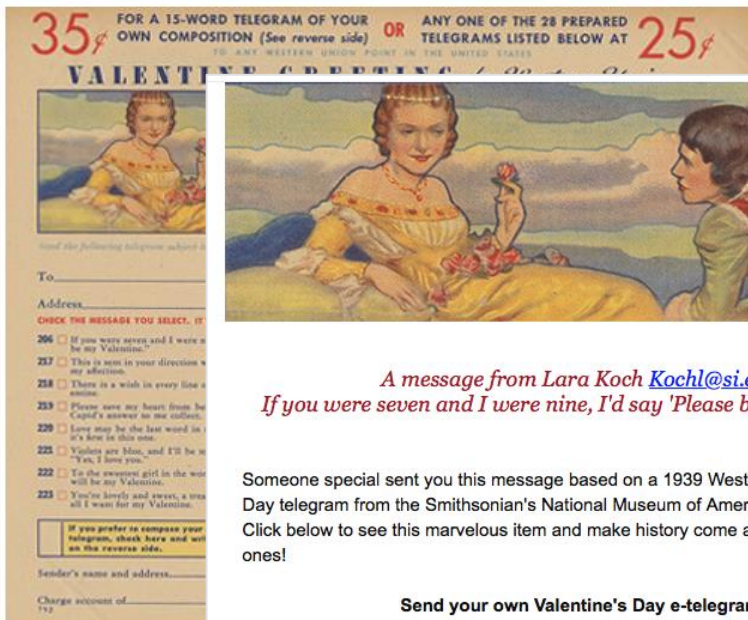
tap to zoom

Who knows what the Smithsonian Castle will look like in another 171 years?

# Online cultivation is a good compliment to fundraising AND still raises money because donors are engaged.

Wishing you a very Happy Valentine's Day from all of us at the Smithsonian!

While today you might be sending heart emojis in text messages to your loved ones, in 1939 you could send a personalized Valentine's Day telegram through the Western Union Telegraph Company for just 25¢! Check out this beautiful example from the Archives Center at the National Museum of American History:



*A message from Lara Koch [Kochl@si.edu](mailto:Kochl@si.edu).  
If you were seven and I were nine, I'd say 'Please be my Valentine.'*

Someone special sent you this message based on a 1939 Western Union Valentine's Day telegram from the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History archives. Click below to see this marvelous item and make history come alive for your loved ones!

Send your own Valentine's Day e-telegram!

**GET  
STARTED**

Some messages never go from 1939 to family and friends.

- "There is a wish in every line of this modern valentine."
- "You're lovely and sweet, a treasure divine. You're all I want for my Valentine."

- ✓ 26% open rate
- ✓ 14% of senders were new to file
- ✓ 5.9% conversion rate on a (VERY PASSIVE) donation form.
- ✓ 60% were first time donors!





Smithsonian  
*National Air and Space Museum*

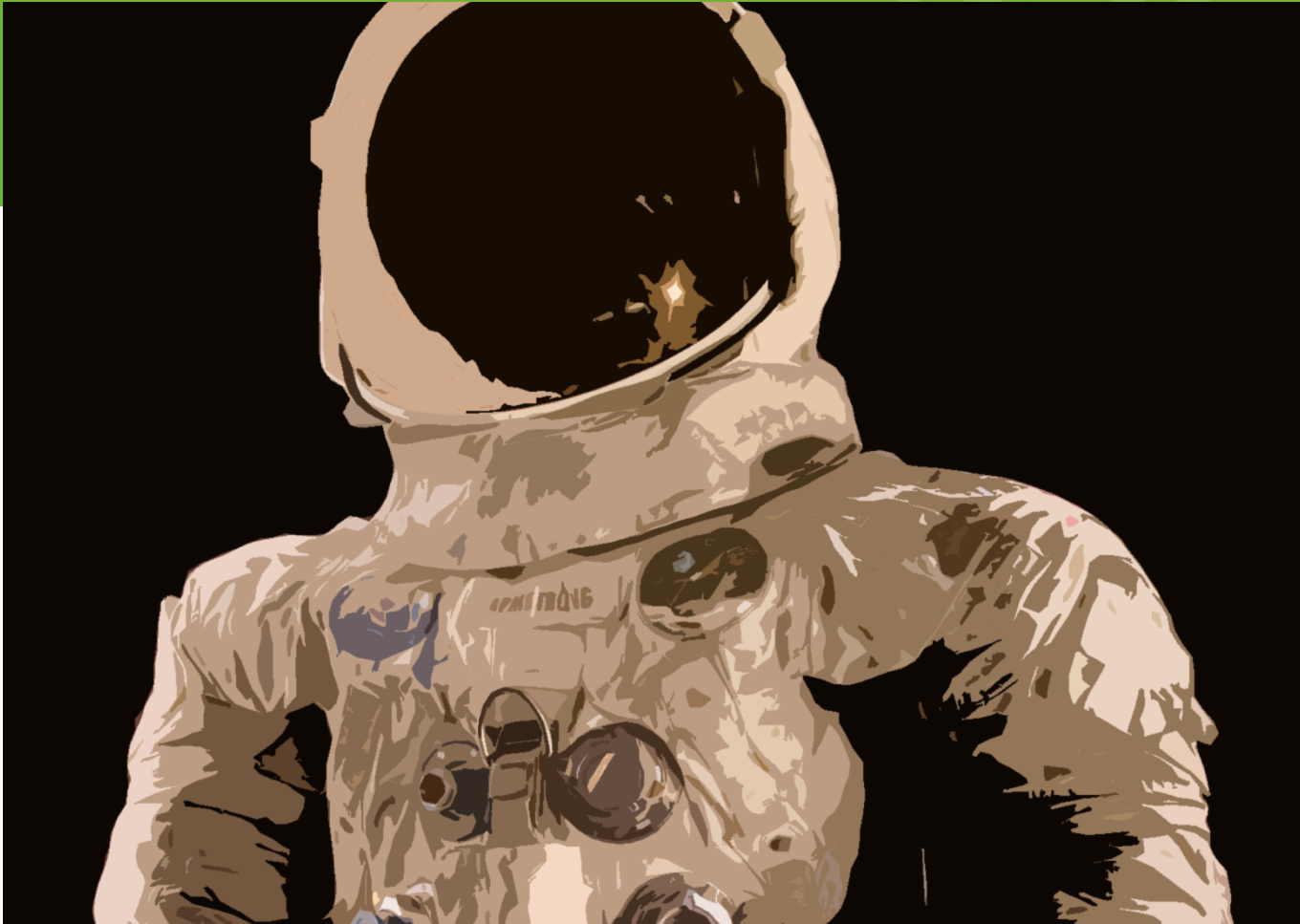
# Situational Analysis:

Program was looking to integrate **online best practices** into its strategy.

As an added challenge, the program experienced a very **successful Kickstarter campaign** in Summer 2015 that required rapid adjustments as response took off.



# Successful Strategies Used to Drive NASM Online Revenue



## National Air and Space Museum and Kickstarter:

A Campaign to Conserve Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 Spacesuit

# What is a Kickstarter Campaign?

**Kickstarter is a global fundraising platform that helps bring creative projects to life.**

- ✓ Project creators set a fundraising goal
- ✓ Offer rewards for gift amounts ranging from \$1 to \$10,000
- ✓ 30 day campaign uses video, e-mail, social media platforms, and media outreach to gain attention
- ✓ Projects must reach their funding goals to receive any money
- ✓ Opportunity to reach a new and diverse audience

# The Project: Conserve the Armstrong Spacesuit

Project aimed to raise funds to conserve, digitize and display Neil Armstrong's Apollo 11 spacesuit



Project Goal: \$500,000

# “Reboot the Suit” Campaign: Advance Planning

## Partners and Collaborators:

- ✓ Kickstarter
- ✓ SI Office of Advancement
- ✓ NASM Board of Directors
- ✓ Smithsonian Enterprises
- ✓ SI Digitization Team
- ✓ Astronauts
- ✓ Celebrities
- ✓ NASA
- ✓ Existing Donors



# “Reboot the Suit” Campaign: Advance Planning

Planning and implementation require significant staff time and resources!

## Advance Prep Work:

- ✓ create video messages announcing and promoting the campaign
- ✓ create a schedule for email and social media messaging
- ✓ conduct media outreach
- ✓ Secure matching gifts
- ✓ create rewards and plan fulfillment





# “Reboot the Suit” Campaign: Advance Planning

## Need to be nimble once campaign starts to:

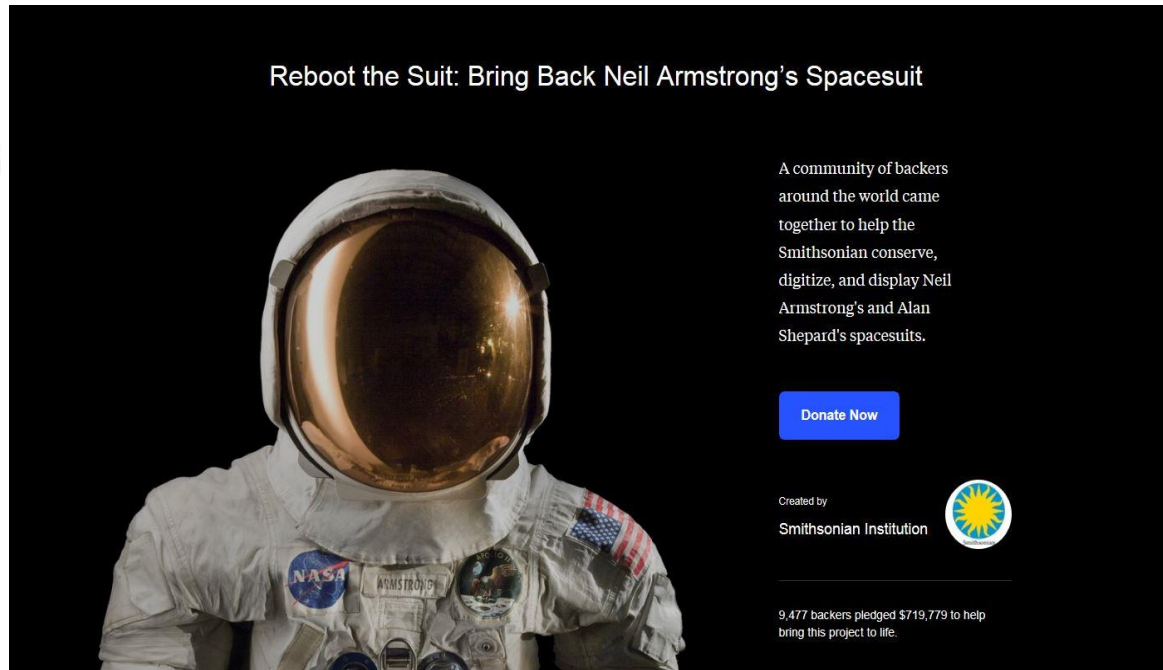
- ✓ time messaging as major milestones are reached
- ✓ set new stretch goals
- ✓ encouraging participation if donations are lagging



# Campaign Launched!

Appeared in outlets such as: New York Times, Washington Post, Huffington Post, US News & World Report, LA Times

National TV coverage from: NBC, CBS, ABC and Fox



Total circulation: 1,891,307,583

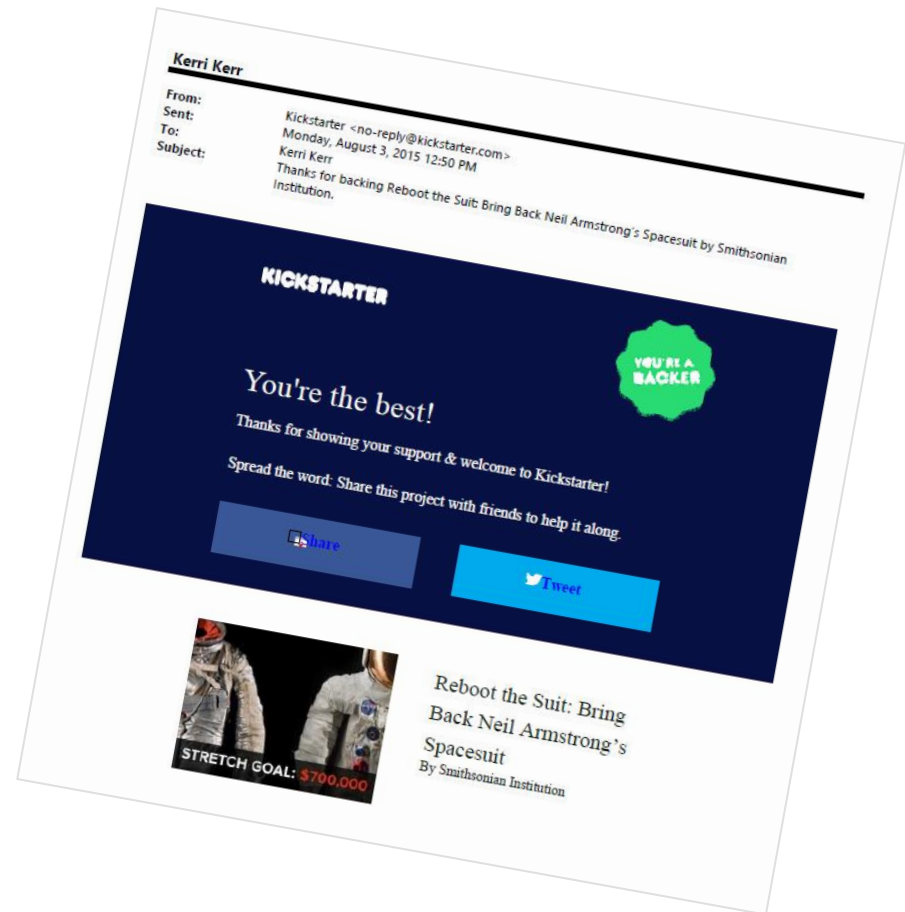
812 media hits in the first week of campaign

- ✓ Original goal to reach \$500,000 was achieved in Day 5
- ✓ Stretch goal of \$700,000 was added in Day 8
- ✓ 9,477 responses, almost all new donors to NASM

# Now what?

Work continues once goal is reached:

- ✓ Fulfill rewards
- ✓ Provide regular project updates
- ✓ Conserve and digitize the spacesuit
- ✓ Convert supporters into ongoing NASM donors



# Converting Kickstarter Supporters to NASM Membership

## Post-campaign engagement

- ✓ Kickstarter Outreach
  - Several update emails per week during campaign
  - Monthly emails after end of campaign
  
- ✓ NASM Outreach
  - Donors under \$99
  - \$100+ Donors who were given complementary NASM memberships

# All contributors sent 3-part Welcome Series

- ✓ \$100+ contributors asked for an additional gift
  - Received 2 gifts totaling \$135
- ✓ \$99 and under asked to join NASM membership
  - Received 6 gifts totaling \$350

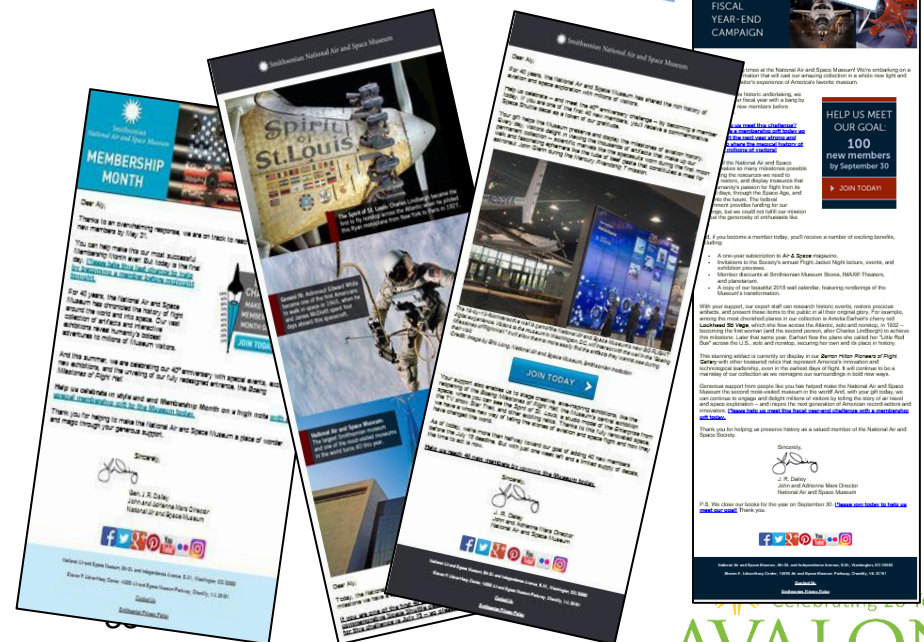


# Under \$100 Contributors

- ✓ Included in 3 direct mail acquisitions spanning FY16 and FY17
  - Received 6 gifts totaling over \$600



- ✓ Also included in corresponding email acquisitions, including Membership Month, Anniversary, Fiscal Year End, and Year-End Matching Gift campaigns
  - Received 93 gifts totaling over \$5,000



# \$100+ Complimentary Membership Recipients

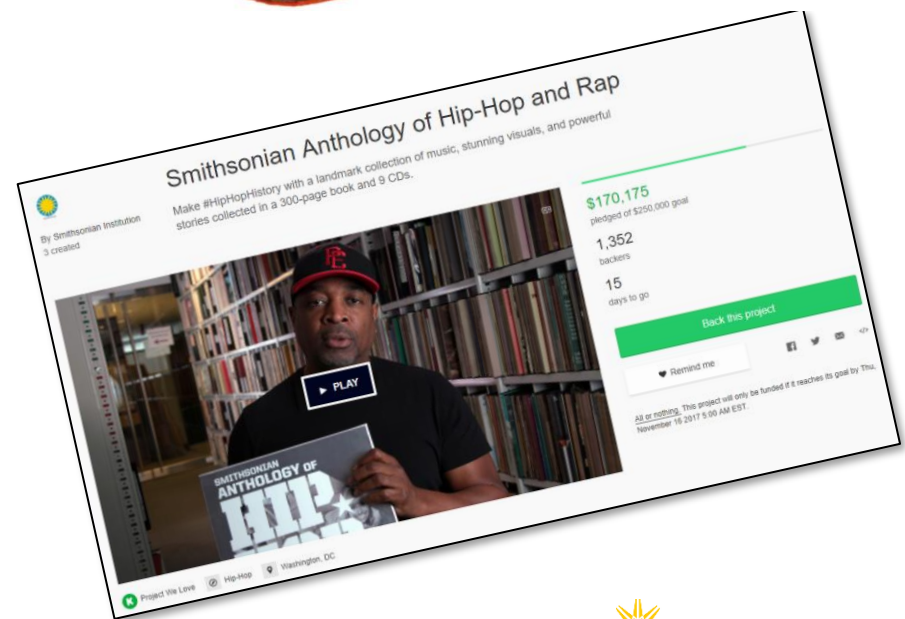
- ✓ Included in direct mail and email Calendar, Annual Fund, Year-End Matching Gift and Wall of Honor direct mail and email appeals
  - Received 41 gifts totaling over \$7,500



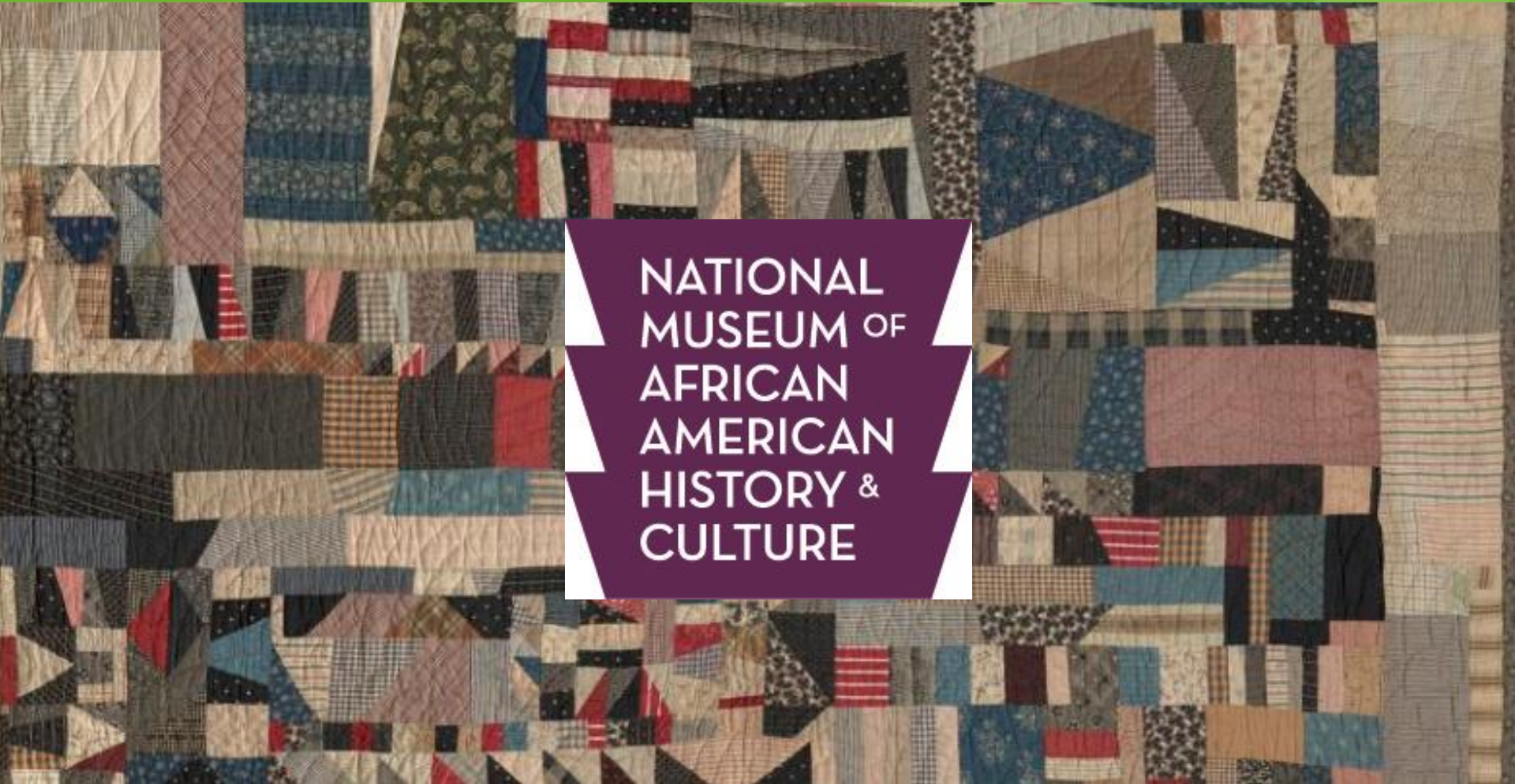
- ✓ Renewals
  - Sent 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> direct mail notices
  - Sent all eR0-eR5 notices
  - Received 66 gifts totaling over \$5,400

# Follow Up Lessons

- ✓ **Low-dollar backers** are largely only e-appeal responsive for specific projects
- ✓ This project created an **engaged audience for future outreach** like the 2019 Congressional Commemorative Coin for the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing (NASM is one of the receiving organizations for the surcharges)
- ✓ **Cross-over giving**: Smithsonian has since launched two other Kickstarter campaigns, #KeepThemRuby and #HipHopHistory
  - More than half of the donors to #KeepThemRuby had donated to #ReBootTheSuit.







NATIONAL  
MUSEUM OF  
AFRICAN  
AMERICAN  
HISTORY &  
CULTURE

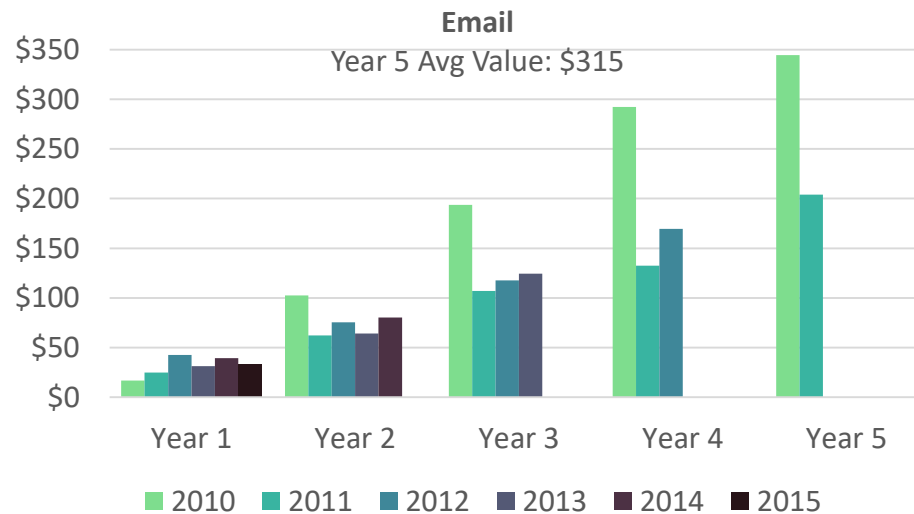
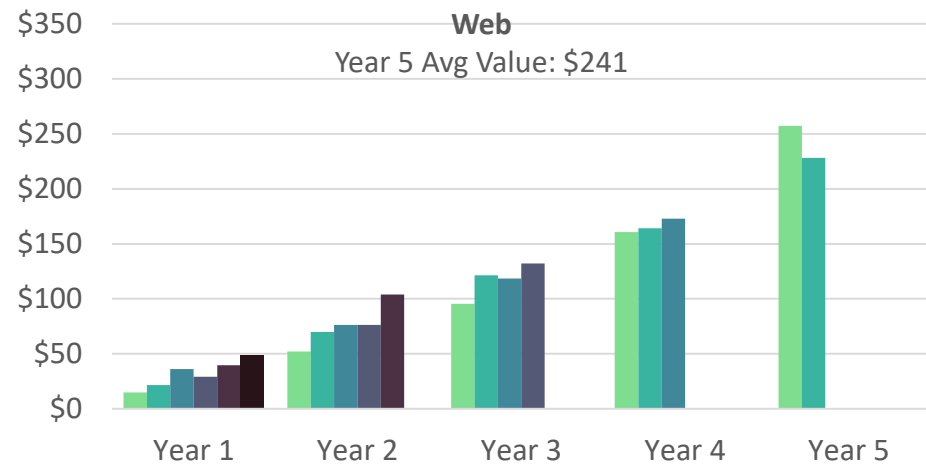
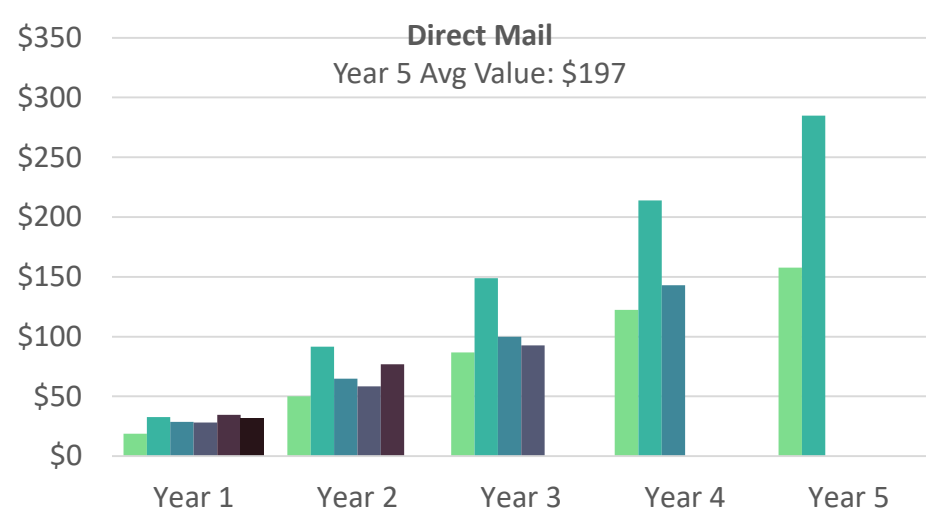
# Situational Analysis:

NMAAHC, the 19<sup>th</sup> Smithsonian Museum, opened on the National Mall on September 24, 2016.

**Maintaining a strong and stable base of membership support beyond 2016 is a priority for the new museum, and using a multi-channel strategy is critical to minimizing the drop-off in revenue and file size post-opening.**



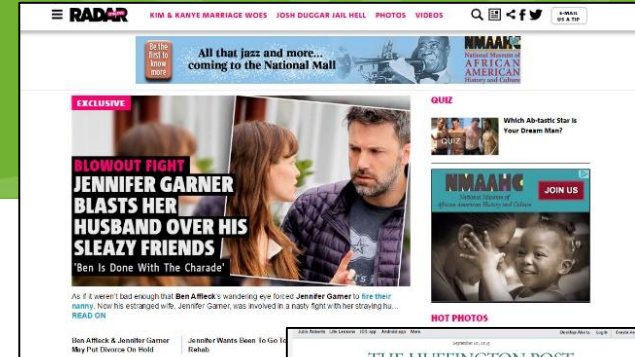
# Member value is strong, with email joins having the highest 5-year value. Direct mail joins reflect the highest join volume by far and a high value by industry standards.



# Successful Strategies Used to Drive NMAAHC Online Revenue

# eAcquisition List-Building: Online Advertising Campaign

- ✓ Online display ads targeted website visitors to the membership web pages and people in the DC area in August 2016 on Facebook and various websites
- ✓ 1,093 new people were added to the email list.
  - Within six months more than 15% had become Members and had a positive ROI.
- ✓ 1.4 million ad impressions
- ✓ Facebook conversion rates above industry standard.
- ✓ Paid advertisements had more reach than organic posts



# Interactive Welcome eSeries engages prospects within three weeks of securing an eMail address

✓ A 3-effort Welcome Series is sent to new member prospects, including outside list building efforts and organically acquired eSubscribers.

- **Effort #1:** sent as an auto-response to eSubscribers, including a video
- **Effort #2:** sent one week later, and includes a survey
- **Effort #3:** sent two weeks later, as an Acquisition effort



# Monthly Giving Invitation



The banner features the National Museum of African American History & Culture logo on the left, a central headline 'Join the North Star Society' with a starburst graphic, and a call-to-action box on the right. The main body of the email contains a personalized greeting, a paragraph about the museum's opening, and a paragraph about the importance of understanding African American history.

**NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & CULTURE**

**Join the**  
*North Star Society*

Dear Robert,

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opened in September on the National Mall and has already welcomed more than 750,000 visitors.

Men, women and children of all walks of life are being drawn by the deep desire to better understand African American history and our nation's tortured racial past.

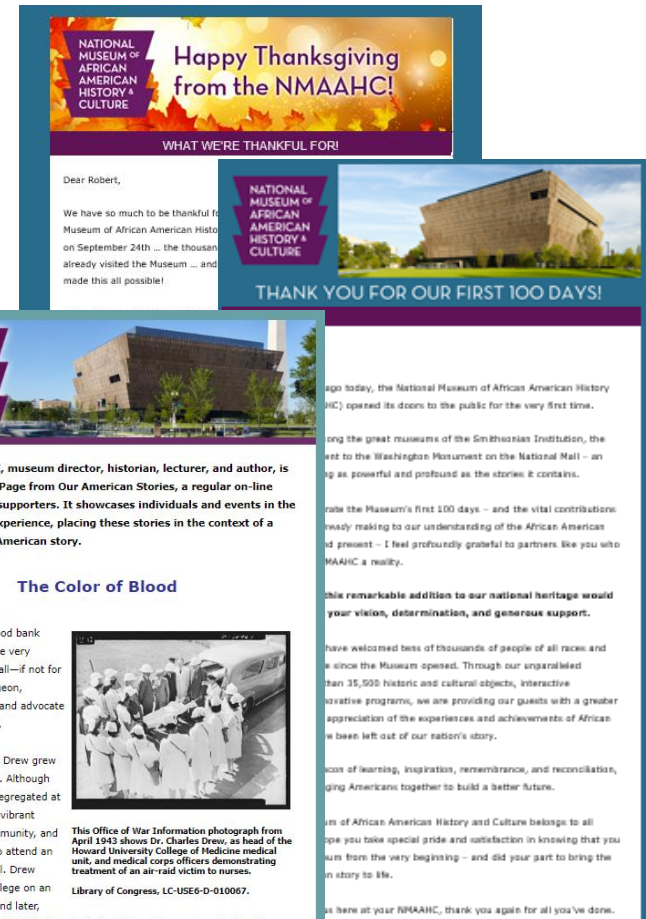
**For just \$8 a month, you can guide the National Museum of African American History and Culture forward.**

**Join Today >**

- ✓ Sent to non-donors and people who joined within the past 6 months.
- ✓ 269 NEW sustainers
- ✓ \$3,003 in revenue
- ✓ Response rate: 0.12%.
- ✓ A subsequent sustainer invitation added an additional 90 sustainers and \$1,408 in monthly revenue

# eCultivation efforts serve as engagement tools throughout the year

- ✓ **THANKSGIVING**: an email was sent on the day before Thanksgiving wishing people a happy holiday.
- ✓ **THANK YOU**: an email was sent in early January on the 100<sup>th</sup> day of the Museum being open thanking people for making the Museum a reality. It brought in \$4,315 in revenue.
- ✓ **CHARLES DREW**: an email was sent in August telling the story of Charles Drew who developed the nation's first blood bank.





# In Conclusion

- ✓ Members who give online are very valuable – make sure you’re maximizing your online opportunities!
  
- ✓ Consider new ways to grow your online list:
  - Petitions
  - Homepage overlays
  - Crowdfunding
  
- ✓ Once you have an email address, engage the warm prospect through a welcome series.
  
- ✓ Once they join, continue to engage through a variety of online and offline campaigns with the right mix of solicitations and cultivation.

# Questions?

# Maximizing Your Museum's Online Fundraising Program

## David Saunders

Director of Membership  
*National Museum of the American Indian*  
saundersdf@si.edu  
202-633-6602

## John Perell

Director of Direct Response &  
Shared Services  
*Friends of the Smithsonian*  
perellj@si.edu  
202-633-2027

## Elizabeth J. Wilson

Assistant Director of Office of  
Advancement  
*National Air and Space Museum*  
wilsonelj@si.edu  
202-633-2606

## Kevin Thomas

Senior Manager for Prospect Development  
*National Museum of African American  
History and Culture*  
[thomask2@si.edu](mailto:thomask2@si.edu)  
(202) 633-5009