

# GCAP eCampaigning Recommendations

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## 1 Summary

Campaigning online is one of GCAP's weaknesses due to the lack of a clear commitment to public engagement and the lack of people with the expertise to implement and manage it. Like many campaigns, it comes as an afterthought and thus is often devoid of a compelling approach. However if GCAP is willing to commit to campaigning online, it can attract supporters from around the world and help build up support for national coalitions where those supporters live.

To be effective, the various GCAP audiences' needs must be met by the web and email (and mobile if appropriate) activities. The two audiences for whom the most effort is required is national coalitions (and their members) and the general public. Using the Internet wisely to meet their needs requires an active strategy to get each timely and relevant messages using:

- Home page
- Action and Update Emails
- Campaigning Actions
- Content Sharing (Syndication)
- Data Sharing
- Supporter Re-engagement
- Social Networking Sites

It will also take an experienced use of these to ensure GCAP's investment is spent in areas that generate the best results for the GCAP globally and nationally.

## 2 Scope

Identify recommend on:

1. How to make the GCAP web site, email communications and other interactive media activities more effective for each audience
2. How GCAP should be using interactive media for campaigning
3. How GCAP should use news feeds to, from and between Whiteband.org and GCAP national coalition sites
4. How existing whiteband.org 'supporters' can be re-engaged on the site and with the campaign

## 3 Recommendations

### 3.1 Audiences

GCAP's primary online audiences are:

- GCAP national coalitions and their member organisations
- General public around the world
- Journalists
- Policy makers

Of these, journalists and policy makers will be served as long as the site is kept updated with not only news, but with policy positions and papers. For key time, press packs can also be produced.

The online campaigning needs of GCAP national coalition and their members are:

1. A global overview of what is happening around the world
2. Communication to input, coordinate and collaborate on GCAP initiatives
3. Exposure of national / regional content
4. Shared content others can use and repurpose for national initiatives
5. Use of tools that they wouldn't otherwise have use of like the eCampaigning Tool

At present only needs #1, 2 and sometimes 3 are being met although this could still improve.

The online campaigning needs of the general public from the GCAP site are:

1. An overview of what is happening with the campaign globally and nationally
2. An idea on what they can do to support and contribute to the campaign
3. Regular updates and new actions they can take to stay informed and involved. Ideally the actions are relevant to them (e.g. national targets) or compelling (e.g. solidarity actions).
4. Ways to get involved globally, nationally or locally either online or offline
5. Ways to connect and engage with others who also support the campaign (i.e. coalition organisations staff, events, other supporters)

Of these needs, only #1 is being served right now – and even that isn't happening very well in a popular (vs. policy) language.

### **3.2 Home Page**

The whiteband.org home page is premium space that all national coalitions and working groups want to get exposure on. However this craving to get on the home page has led to a lot of content irrelevant to many of the audiences being put up. A clear strategy for what is put on the homepage needs to be produced and adhered to regardless of the harassing from specific internal interest groups.

However it is technically feasible to have a homepage that displays content relevant to the region where a visitor is from. This technology uses a visitor's 'IP' address and 'Geo-IP' technology to identify the country (and often the city) where they are. Using this, key content from the region or the country could be displayed only to people from that country – and global content displayed to those without content for their country or region.

This would depend on having national coalition content added regularly so that there is at least current content from each region and country content would override that if it exists.

### **3.3 Action and Update Emails**

Email is the most critical tool in repeatedly mobilising people and getting them to mobilise their own networks. Ideally, a regular email plan would consist of one single-ask action email every 1-2 months and one regular update email every 1-2 months with chaser emails and ad-hoc emails in between as necessary. Without a good email plan, campaigning online will likely be ineffective.

To succeed, the following needs to be in place:

1. Support in email management from someone experienced
2. Email plans and localised content for each region/national coalition will ensure the emails are more relevant to the region and country.
3. An emails system with integrated tracking, unsubscribe tool, bounce handling, etc.

### **3.4 Campaigning Actions**

Campaigning actions are the essence of campaigning online. They not only extend the reach of more traditional forms of campaigning, they also make new approaches possible and result in new supporters joining each time one is run. They are most successful when they are run in coordination with other forms of campaigning such as lobbying, media, events and face-to-face activities.

To succeed, the following needs to be in place:

1. Support in e-campaigning (global actions and action emails) from someone experienced
2. Give access to whiteband.org to national coalition editors to add national content to the site – including campaigning actions
3. Enable national coalitions to set-up campaigning actions on the whiteband.org site that can be embedded in existing national coalition sites.
4. Promote appropriate national coalition campaigning actions in between global actions to maintain momentum
5. Connecting people with others ‘near’ them to attempt to get their online activity converted into offline activity as well

Furthermore, the functionality to enable mobile phone users to receive and complete campaigning actions should be added to ensure supporters in countries with high mobile phone but low Internet usage can participate. Options for managing the cost of sending communications and the capabilities of most mobile phones in each country need to be explored.

### **3.5 Content Sharing (Syndication)**

With a growing range of national coalition sites, the role of whiteband.org to provide a global and regional perspective and resources is even more important. To achieve this, syndicated feeds of the content from each national coalition site should be collected by the whiteband.org site and re-distributed as global and regional feeds in the relevant languages – including global content from whiteband.org.

The advantage of syndicating and aggregating (collecting and re-syndicating) content is that not only can it appear in more places relatively quickly, but it can help promote other national coalition GCAP sites and the global site by directing people back to the original site on which the content originated. Thus the benefit is increased traffic and sites with constantly fresh content without needing it to be written. This doesn't

eliminate the need for writers/editors, but does focus their role on writing good content and on selecting the right content from feeds.

This was already intended for 2005, but never happened due to the non-implementation by the site managers, however the plan remains the same:

1. Enable it on whitebasnd.org site
2. Support national coalition sites in syndicating their content or use a service that converts normal web pages into syndicated feeds.
3. Provide a widget to easily integrate it into national coalition (or supporter) sites
4. Identify national coalition member organisations syndicated content (e.g. news, policy) that relates to GCAP and include selected items from those on the whiteband.org site and in separate feeds
5. Identify third party syndicated content (e.g. news) that relates to GCAP and include selected items from those on the whiteband.org site and in separate feeds

### **3.6 Supporter Re-engagement**

There are about 12,000 supporters who took campaigning actions on whiteband.org in 2005 and 2006 and wanted to get updates by email. There a further unknown number who signed-up to the email newsletter. These supporters have had almost no updates since the end of 2005 with the exception of the Stand Up action in 2006. This means many are no longer reachable and those that are reachable are likely to have forgotten about GCAP. Thus a plan needs to be made not only to re-engage these people (if possible), but also to ensure this communication gap doesn't occur again.

Any such plan should involved:

- Collecting together the data and removing anyone who unsubscribed
- Developing a communication and action plan
- Emailing people apologising for the lack of communication, giving people an outline of the online advocacy plan and asking for their input
- Using their input to refine the plan and then implementing it consistently to show commitment to supporters

### **3.7 Data Sharing**

In coalitions, the issue of data collection can often cripple inter-coalition on online actions since every organisations wants maximum number of new supporters for their efforts. The only solution that works for the campaign objectives, the member organisations and the supporters is one that ensures all data collected of people in countries where the national coalition wants (and is able to manage) supporter data is provided to those national coalitions. This requires a number of things:

1. The opt-in statement alludes to this data sharing
2. The privacy policy expands on the policy of this intention
3. The ability and willingness to provide this data to national coalitions
4. There is an agreement on what conditions a national coalition must fulfil to get the data – and they should be easily to achieve. At minimum they should be:
  - A basic plan of what they want to communicate and when
  - An agreement on abiding by the basic global privacy policy (i.e. only emailing those who opt-in, enabling people to opt-out at any time, not publishing the data, not selling/renting it, keeping it secure)

- The ability to send those communications

To facilitate this policy, the eCampaigning Tool could be improved to allow national coalitions to download supporters from their country at any time.

### **3.8 Social Networking Sites**

In the time since GCAP launched, online social networking tools have become highly successful. Many supporters and potential supporters are likely to use these sites, however they need a different approach than managing the whiteband.org site and email communications. Using them has the potential to attract a large number of new supporters to the campaign, however it also requires letting go of some control and supporting those leading the group on each social networking site.

Using social networking sites should be trialled once the basics of campaigning actions online are covered: regular email communications and online actions.

### **3.9 Local Mobilisation**

Campaigning is quite powerful when people mobilise and connect locally but in a coordinated way around the country or world. The relationship that GCAP and national coalitions develop with supporters online is the perfect opportunity for not only for mobilising supporters around GCAP actions, but also for deepening supporter's knowledge and commitment to the campaign issues and for attracting new supporters of the campaign.

GCAP can connect and mobilise people and groups online for activity locally online by developing online tools to help make these connections. These can allow:

- Existing local groups to attract new people by exposure online
- Supporters to organise new local groups where there is enough interest
- Local events can be announced or organised and attract attendees
- Local coalition member organisations can reach people in their area
- Groups / events can inform and engage participants in new ways
- Supporters can connect to each other

Local can mean anything from walking distance to a nation or cross-border area.

### **3.10 Reporting Tool**

Online activity can only be evaluated when analysis and reporting reveals what is working and what isn't. A tool like this would help GCAP monitor what is happening and where they should be spending more effort to improve the situation (or abandon a practice). The alternative to building a tool would be having someone dedicate one-third to one-half of their time to analysis and reporting, something that would likely cost more over the life-span of GCAP than developing a tool.

This reporting tool would need to be able to report on individual campaigning actions, groups of campaigning actions, campaigning actions across the GCAP network and other campaigning activity so that it was a tool for monitoring the full range of the campaign online.