

Arizona State University

**JUS 497/591:
Social Enterprises:
Innovation, Justice, and
Community
Development**

Enhancing www.socialeconomyaz.org through Social Media Tools

**Social Economy
Arizona**



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Dedication

We would like to thank Ruvi and Alt^I for their great technical and creative support for this project, which allowed us to reach our goals and objectives. We wish them luck in their future endeavors and hope they continue to inspire innovation and creativity for future projects and entrepreneurs.

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INTRODUCTION

The Alt[^]I innovation project was undertaken as a component of the course *Social Enterprises: Innovation, Justice, and Community Development* offered by the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University (ASU). The course consisted of two significant components. The first component was in a classroom setting where the empirical and theoretical perspectives of the social economy were in weekly seminars. The lecture portion of the class introduced students to the importance of participation in the social economy and the power of inclusion when connecting development to economic models, social justice policies, and sustainable development.

The second component of the course embedded teams of three to four students within one of four social enterprises in the greater phoenix area to apply concepts learned in the classroom to strengthening existing organizations. The teams, comprised of students as well as both a faculty and community-based mentor, were given six weeks to work directly with the organizations that the group was assigned. Within that time-frame teams were to analyze the organizations by making observations to identify areas of improvement or opportunities in order to develop and promote specific innovation projects. The student contributors working on adding social media tools to <http://socialeconomyaz.org> (SEAZ) consisted of Jeff Calleja, Nicholas Friend, and Olga Lykhvar. The group of students worked in collaboration with The Arizona State University Applied Learning Technologies Institute (Alt[^]I) which is committed to the advancement of education through strategic partnerships in research, collaboration and action (Applied Learning Technologies Institute, n.d.). Each student team was assigned a mentor from the host organization to assist in the logistical needs of the project. The Alt[^]I innovation project was mentored by Dr. Vanna Gonzales and Alt[^]I Director, Ruvi Wijesuriya.

The innovation project undertaken by the Alt[^]I team was focused on improving the use and functionality of the SEAZ website. The website was initially developed by Dr. Gonzales in partnership with Alt[^]I to generate greater awareness and information regarding the development of the social economy of Arizona, with a particular emphasis on the Phoenix metropolitan area. After discussing the initial goals and objectives of the website with Dr. Gonzales and Mr. Wijesuriya, the student team decided to create, develop, and incorporate the following social media tools: interactive videos, a Facebook fan page, a YouTube account, and a web-based interactive discussion forum. These social media outlets were selected for their ability to help position the SEAZ website as an innovative hub (web portal) that provides a collaborative space for academics, entrepreneurs, volunteers, and local community members to share their ideas and thoughts about the emerging social economy.

The emergence of the social media has not only drastically affected how people search and access information, it has altered how we communicate and learn from each other. The social media tools developed through this project were chosen because they are free, popular, and are effective methods for connecting supporters and interested parties (Huso, 2009; Kasavana, Nusair, & Teodosic, 2010). They both actively and passively connect visitors to the website, convey information in an efficient, interactive way superior to a plain text, and introduce visitors to other persons and organizations engaged in similar efforts.

Though the SEAZ website focuses on connecting a variety of constituents to support networks locally, the social economy extends well beyond the greater Phoenix area. The student team members decided to use this to their advantage and incorporate useful video content from a variety of sources like videos created by other student groups from the course, local community-based organizations, well known contributors within the broader community of scholars and

practitioners engaged in the development of the social economy, and lectures from professors and leaders in fields related to the social economy. These videos were also used to develop visual content for the SEAZ website and improved the aesthetic appeal. The website will help generate increased exposure to the innovative practices and ideas relevant to the development of the social economy. The result will introduce those already familiar with the social economy to less experienced members and will allow them to form connections at the local level and globally. Additionally, inclusion of the videos will increase the number of ways that the website will appear in search engines vastly improving the potential to increase visitors to the SEAZ website by enhancing the visibility and accessibility of a broad variety of content (Weller, 2010).

The team also created a Facebook fan page to promote the SEAZ website. The fan page outlines the goals and mission of the SEAZ website, notifies visitors with the most current updates, and allows for two-way communication with the fans. Similar to YouTube, the Facebook fan page is free of charge and contributes to further exposure of SEAZ's efforts to interested people and organizations by connecting videos and information via the Favorites and Related sections of these pages. Lastly, an interactive discussion forum was developed via Mingle Forum to provide an area for visitors to discuss a wide variety of topics related to the social economy in Arizona. This forum serves primarily as a tool for people to share ideas, find collaborative partners, and promote social economy efforts in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The following report describes in greater detail the group's vision of the SEAZ website, the specific design and implementation of each tool within the SEAZ website, the key challenges experienced in undertaking this process, and the key goals in developing and utilizing these tools in the future.

SECTION ONE: VISIONING

The SEAZ website was developed as an educational portal designed to raise awareness about the concept, theory, and history of social economy and to promote the social economy in the Phoenix metropolitan area. The key concepts of social innovation, economic justice, and collective welfare are core to the message that the SEAZ website promotes. SEAZ is website dedicate to increasing awareness and promoting development of the social economy concept, presents a strong mission statement, and has established objectives to create a community network for groups to access resources relating to the local social economy. The development of the social economy is important during this economic crisis as we evaluate alternative solutions that promote community empowerment, democratic participation, and strengthen vulnerable communities by facilitating communication and networking between local entities in to create sustainable economic growth (Amin, Cameron, & Hudson, 2003). The SEAZ website has the potential to introduce the benefits of the social economy can offer while simultaneously providing a network for members of the social economy community to exchange ideas on how to continue this development.

The SEAZ website is aiming its content towards several types of visitors who will find the information and advice it offers both educational and useful. One of these groups include students attending ASU who are the studying social economy and concepts related to it; these students, who come from a variety of departments spread across multiple campuses, will find a large amount of information related both to the theoretical foundation and practical applications of the principles of social enterprises. Additionally there are services for students to utilize for finding funding like grants and scholarships, support services, and educational programs pertaining to the social economy. Another group includes members of the community who

might be interested in exploring opportunities that social economy offers in order to improve local communities. Instead of relying on the common, tedious method of combing through the local directories to locate information, users can use the SEAZ website to quickly locate information. Yet another group includes entrepreneurs who are willing to start a social enterprise, but currently lack the resources and support to do so.

The SEAZ website ultimately aims to educate user about the social economy and provide them with the resources necessary to further develop and promote their social economy efforts. Information and links about specialized sectors are provided for visitors to narrow their search for particular topics. There are directories for social enterprises for users to find services that they can use, thus promoting growth within the social economy, or for learning more about the types of organizations in existence. A valuable resource is the availability of centralized content that informs visitors on how to form a social enterprise.

Although all the information on the SEAZ website is useful, prior to Spring 2011, the site only provided static information. Our team introduced interactive elements into the SEAZ website in order to promote conversation and idea sharing between the members of the previously mentioned groups. Through the development and establishment of the social media tools, the SEAZ website increases its potential to become a powerful community network and portal for visitors to use for networking and accessing valuable information relating to local social economy (Blakeman & Brown, 2010). The subsequent benefit of opening the website platform and allowing user-modified content such as blog posts and comments will be the increased exposure to the search engines crawlers and achieving critical mass of visitors, which will allow the website to improve its ratings on the search engine results.

Contrary to the majority of the websites on the Internet, the SEAZ website was originally conceived as a dynamic ongoing project that will be further developed and modified based on the three conditions: Internet visibility, visitor feedback, and main purpose. Internet visibility is becoming the main issue for local websites like SEAZ because of the dominance of mega-popular websites attract the vast majority of visitors on a daily basis (Blakeman & Brown, 2010). To assist with gaining relevance over larger websites that offer broad topics, the SEAZ website will promote its niche by integrating social media tools like Facebook and YouTube that are designed to broadcast specific messages. The SEAZ website should also collect and monitor user feedback to improve the navigation on the website as well as useful links to supporting websites. Additionally, monitoring user feedback and site usage will ensure that the SEAZ website is achieving its goals.

Currently, the website aims to establish an interactive portal that will help support the local social economy by providing resources to visitors interested in social enterprises, cooperatives, community organizations, and social entrepreneurs. Introducing the social economy to people and educating them about potential benefits and partnerships is important, but it is only the beginning. Through the portal visitors can look for answers to their questions about organizational structures of social enterprises and find official regulatory links if they need additional information. By providing information on governance, financing, and marketing visitors can avoid wasting hours searching for incorrect or partial information because SEAZ can provide the information or can forward the visitor to a more relevant source.

By implementing social media tools, the website can build a strong collective community. Social media tools will enable the website to provide a platform for announcing and promoting workshops, conferences, and events. Internships and news from community partners

could be announced through the website increasing visibility for all involved. The integration of social media will draw visitors to the website and as more people discover the site, a community identity will develop. The project undertaken by this team incorporates different aspects of social media to promote awareness and encourage networking of information in order to expand these areas of the website and promote the goals of the social economy. With the incorporation of the social media tools proposed, it would greatly enhance the mission and goals of the SEAZ by increasing networking, collaboration, and knowledge transfers within the local social economic community with the potential of expanding into the national and international realms. The social media tools will help link various forms of communication together to establish the SEAZ website as a credible source for communities to access. The social media tools were added to the SEAZ website to promote the overall innovation of the website and create change necessary for new shifts, the goal is to create different methods of reaching the local Phoenix community (Drucker, 1985).

SECTION TWO: SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Below is a detailed description of the three specific projects that were developed to enhance the SEAZ website. Each student team member was responsible for identifying a need on the SEAZ website, developing a solution, and implementing the project into the SEAZ website. Though separate, the team members continued to communicate with each and the mentors throughout the project.

Videos

Research demonstrates that adding visual images, graphics and video-based imagery plays an important role in learning new content and becoming engaged while on a website

(David & Glore, 2010). Currently the SEAZ website contains information in text form, which may not appeal to all visitors especially those who need quick access to content and receive more information in a shorter time frame (Weller, 2010). Immediate access to information is critical in today's fast-paced world and receiving information via video is quickly replacing traditional means such as text articles (Huso, 2009). Videos were chosen for inclusion into sections within the SEAZ website to create an interactive method of receiving information.

The first benefit of incorporating video into sections of the SEAZ website is that videos illustrate points in a personal manner, and personal experiences related to creating a social enterprise are useful to those that are considering the endeavor. By incorporating the stories of individuals using social enterprises in Arizona and organizations that provide methods of involvement in the social economy, the SEAZ website inspires these groups to share personalized stories and contributes to constructing the attitudes towards the social economy concept (Huso, 2009; Katzeff & Ware, 2007).

The second benefit is that video provides a dynamic experience to the visitor and will keep visitors on the SEAZ website for extended periods of time (Weller, 2010). Because the videos are incorporated into the existing content as a compliment, visitors will benefit greatly by using both resources. The videos and articles enhance each other; they are intended to be combined as complete resource more so than providing alternatives methods of content delivery. Simply posting video on the SEAZ website may not be effective; however, posting it with content will provide users with the opportunity to use the media effectively and facilitate greater learning of content (Maniar, 2008).

Videos were found using search engines and visiting university websites that offer programs of study related to the social economy, particularly those in Canada as they have

extensive programs relating to social economy. After a list of videos was comprised by searching YouTube and Vimeo for key words such as social enterprise, social innovation, and social economy (see Appendix A), each video was reviewed and descriptions about the videos were written to provide summaries for visitors watching. The SEAZ website was first analyzed in order to determine where the videos would be placed to maximize video effectiveness. Videos defining concepts, describing examples of social enterprises, and videos explaining how to utilize theories correctly were embedded into sections. Aesthetics and design were strongly considered when deciding where to embed videos. Consideration was also given to creating new pages needed. In collaboration with the faculty mentor it was concluded that creating new pages would be in the best interest of organizing videos to ensure that videos for each area was in a central location.

Working closely with the faculty mentor, videos explaining the terms social economy and social enterprises, examples of social enterprises and marketing, as well as how to start a cooperative were reviewed and added to supplement pages that had been previously populated with text. On the home page, which introduces users to the term social economy, a video by Sherida Ryan Director of the Social Economy Centre at the University of Toronto explains the benefits of a social economy. Two research lectures were added providing viewers longer videos to view and gather information about social enterprises with various viewpoints. The first video is lead by Mark Cabaj, who is the Founding Principal of Tamarack Institute and Director of Vibrant Communities. The video discusses characteristics of community resilience such as demonstrating resilience in the case of continuous changes, self-organizing and self-correction, social capital, and social innovation. After the lecture there is a panel consisting of Melissa Blake (Mayor of Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo), Diane Shannon (Director of United Way),

and Ron Quintal (President of Fort McKay Métis Nation). The next lecture video is led by Ha-Joon Chang, economist specializing in development economics, and Milford Bateman, professor at University of Juraj. The video summarizes micro-financing and provides a different perspective that although micro-financing is mobilizing the poor communities, it is not benefiting society as a whole.

Three videos are displayed under the section describing social enterprises. The first video is a short animation created by the Social Enterprise Coalition explaining the basics of social enterprise and the benefits it provides to the local community. The next video is also an animation created by a group of Portland State University students describing terms related to the social enterprise. The last video under social enterprises features Ed Mayo, Secretary General of Co-operatives UK, a trade association for UK cooperatives. Here Ed describes what a cooperative is and terms related to cooperatives. This video will help viewers understand how cooperatives operate in general.

In the area providing specialized support three sections were populated with video; the sections include food and urban agriculture, fair trade and social and health services. The videos added provide viewers with examples and/or mini “case studies” in the specialized sectors that are a success. Examples of videos from around the world were also added to showcase the success in other countries and show what social enterprises in other countries look like. In the funding for social enterprises section videos were added to introduce viewers to sources of funding and different ideas related to finances. For example, Rethink Impact provides a streamline process for applying for grants and assists organizations in evaluating funding options and best opportunities to choose.

The addition of these videos to the SEAZ website should be considered a part of a broader aim to advance key objectives. The first objective that will be advanced is the facilitation of information exchange between Arizona State University faculty, students and, community members who are involved in efforts related to the social economy. This will be accomplished by embedding video lectures conducted by faculty, class innovation projects led by students, and featured local social enterprises. Each of the groups can access each other's content via SEAZ website. Second, raising awareness about concepts and theories and developing the local social economy identity is a key that will be advanced through the exploration of various points of view on social economy and the introduction of working definitions. The third objective to meet is connecting local organizations and individuals to both national and international organizations with the same mission and goals. This will be completed by featuring organizations in the specialized support for particular sectors section that operate social enterprises in various locations and within different sectors.

Facebook and YouTube

Facebook is a popular social media tool used by millions of users around the world with over one billion daily page views, by using this social media tool SEAZ will increase opportunities for visibility and create a powerful community linking capability (Blakeman & Brown, 2010; Kasavana, Nusair & Teodosic, 2010). Another social media tool selected for the project was YouTube, which has over 20 million visitors every month who watch over 100 million clips a day (Cardew, 2006). YouTube was also selected for its unique application of uploading, sharing videos and embedding into the SEAZ website to allow users with similar interests to learn new information and create a community knowledge base (Cardew, 2006). Utilizing this application will also allow groups in *the Social Enterprises: Innovation, Justice,*

and Community Development class working on other projects to share their videos and experiences to provide different examples of Arizona social enterprises. Although Facebook and YouTube are both unique in their application and design, using them together in a collaborative effort can enhance the SEAZ website's goal of "connecting individuals and groups in the Southwest to a national and international network of community groups, organizations, and institutions interested in the development and consolidation of the social economy" (SEAZ).

During the projects conception, Facebook and Twitter were selected as the social media tools to be used; however, there were a couple of reasons that the development of Twitter was canceled. One is due to the time constraints of the project and the dedicated attention needed for updating Twitter regularly, Twitter's main function of providing fast updates and quick information would be underutilized and its effectiveness diminished. Another reason is that Facebook and Twitter essentially accomplish the same task, although on different levels, which would create a redundancy of information.

Since Facebook allows users to join networks and connect to each other based on similar interests around the world (Eastman Kodak Company, 2009) it is a valuable tool in not only promoting the social economy in Arizona but also to develop collaborative networks for people to connect, collaborate, learn, and share information. Facebook allows for real-time updates and for followers to easily obtain information and stay current on events. The SEAZ Facebook was created as a fan page so that future administrators can easily access the page. Facebook provides a list of categories to create a fan page based on the Facebook user's preference. The SEAZ page was set up as a non-profit organization based on the goals of the website and the types of organizations who might be interested in what the page has to offer. Facebook does allow users

to change this category at any time as well as any applications or information shared on the website.

Applications are an important part of the Facebook website as it allows for both unique customization and enhancement to give followers the information they are looking for. The basic information of the SEAZ page gives the description, mission, and link to the website itself to give any user a brief overview of the websites purpose (see Appendix F). Basic applications that were added to the page included photos, links, and events. Advanced applications can be added based on the user's preference with a YouTube application added on the SEAZ fan page in order to connect it to the SEAZ YouTube account.

Photo albums were set up for the *Social Enterprises: Innovation, Justice, and Community Development* course specifically for individual projects and related trips the class took. This allows followers of the page to not only gain a visual experience of the seeing the different class projects but also see the types of social economic development taking place in Arizona. The links application sorts any links to websites, videos, blogs, etc. posted on the main page and allows followers to quickly browse for the link of their choice. This application gives the followers a brief description of the media link posted in order for them to seek the information they want while also increasing the awareness of other resources. The current links available are for the SEAZ community partners as well as to information in the research and resources sections on the SEAZ website. Events allow the administrator to post any upcoming events with the time, date, and description, which can be extremely useful to give followers information on upcoming local events.

Administration is another important part of Facebook as it controls the content and information of the page as well as gives specific permissions for followers on what they can and

cannot do. The manage permissions section for the page allows the administrator to control restrictions, posting ability, as well as moderate content. The SEAZ's current permissions do not allow users to post with a strong profanity block list in place. This is to prevent inappropriate language or content to be posted when more permissions become available to users based on the administrator's discretion. A moderator list can have additional words or phrases added as necessary, but both of these tools allow for an automated filter to make administration simpler. More administrators can be added to the website as the content and network grows allowing for more efficient moderation. Seeking out other pages with similar interests and goals is also important goal for administrators to expand the network to find both local and national organizations that can create more exposure for the SEAZ fan page. Currently there are a few local and regional pages that the SEAZ page has added to its network with an important task in the future is for administrators to keep expanding it.

YouTube is a valuable tool in creating a greater visibility of the social economy in Arizona through videos uploaded and shared by a community who is interested in the development of it. The SEAZ YouTube account was created with the SEAZ Gmail account to simplify transitions between student groups as the project continues. YouTube has channels that allow for a customized interface to give viewers pertinent information along with opportunity to network with other channels of similar interests. While the setup to show basic information and goals of the channel is similar to Facebook, several features are different.

Modules are similar to the applications in Facebook as they allow customization of what information users can access when they visit the channel. The modules selected include allowing viewers to comment on videos, showing subscribers of the SEAZ channel, and showing the channels that the SEAZ has subscribed to, events, as well as showing recent channel activity.

These represent a majority of the choices of modules available and were selected to enhance the channel and extend its networking capability. Out of these, the Subscription category is extremely important in establishing a network of channels with similar interests in order to share ideas and information. By searching on YouTube for videos pertaining to your interests you are able to locate users whose channels are populated with several videos relating to the same subject. Becoming a subscriber to other channels allows SEAZ to share videos to with other subscribers and create a collaborative video sharing effort in exchanging information. Currently SEAZ is subscribed to the ASU, IRC, and Alt^I channels with the intent of searching for more channels with similar interests and sharing videos from these subscribed channels. The SEAZ channel will have original uploads from class project videos, which will give a much more detailed description of what the channel entails. These will be categorized in a personalized Class Project playlist under the Uploaded video section of the SEAZ channel.

Currently there are only videos added under the Favorites video section. The videos under this section were videos that were researched and already added to the SEAZ website. This collaboration increases visibility of the website's resources by having two social media tools providing visual information to visitors. As mentioned before, when original videos become available to upload from the class project they will be added to their own Class Project section for viewing. In order for these videos and the channel itself to gain visibility, key words need to be tagged for YouTube subscribers to be able to locate them. Currently key words like social economy, Arizona economy, local economy, cooperatives, and social change are tagged for viewers to locate the current content available. As more content is added to the channel, more key words need to be established in order to give the channel more exposure. Similar to Facebook, it is important for future administrators to continuously add new videos posted by

subscriptions to the Favorites video section, upload original content to the Uploads video section, as well as create more key words for current content in order to continuously expand the network to promote the goals of the social economy.

Facebook and YouTube are both effective social media tools for organizations to network with others who share similar interests in order to promote their mission and goals. Both of these also work in an effective collaboration by allowing those with Facebook and YouTube accounts to connect them for simultaneous information updates for their respective followers and subscribers (Huso, 2009). As new resources, events, and other information on the SEAZ website become available, these social media tools will be used as communication tools to disseminate information.

Discussion Board Forum

An online discussion board forum (also known as discussion board or forum) is a dedicated Internet application that facilitates discussion among an online Internet community.

Unlike messaging applications that are designed around real time chat, discussion forums allow a user (poster) to post a comment that other people can reply to over time. The comment is created in what is named a “thread” and available for others to read and respond to the original comment and follow up comments. The discussion board has specific categories (see Appendix B) that are created by the forum administrator and threads are created by users under appropriate categories.

Discussion boards create a virtual community where regular users get to know each other and engage in discussions on a variety of topics. This method of communication is popular among groups that focus on technology, video games, students, politics, religion, fan sites, current events (Rovai, 2007). These are not the only groups that benefit from discussion boards,

but the diversity of topics within the group make discussion boards a popular social media outlet for those who engage in diverse topics. Forums are an effective method of communication for a smaller community that will only post a handful of comments and are robust enough to support millions of daily posts as happens on the most popular discussion boards.

A standard forum structure has been implemented to present the chosen categories. There are nine parent categories with each including several child level (sublevels) topics. Four user groups have been created that allow for different levels of access to the discussion board. The most basic group is the unregistered users group. People who have not registered with the discussion board will be available to view basic categories, but will not be able to post any comments nor will they be able access more advanced features. Limiting the access of unregistered users will prevent spam from being posted and will discourage unscrupulous activity because few people will take the time to register, thus limiting anonymity, simply to post irrelevant material.

When a user registers with the discussion board they will be defaulted into the registered user group and will be granted access to the majority of forum content; however, they will neither have access nor be able to see the administrative and moderator categories. Registration is the mechanism for participation. Without registering, a visitor will only be able to act as a lurker, a user who is able to read and benefit from the content, but never contributes. After registering, users will then be able to ask questions of the community, respond to comments made by others, and most importantly will increase the number of participants within the virtual community.

The categories cover a wide breadth of topics ranging from general discussion about the social economy to university specific research. There are categories dedicated to the

identification, research, and available resources for cooperatives, social entrepreneurs, and social enterprises. While advising users that we do not offer legal advice and that they should consult professionals, we provide an area where users can discuss issues of governance, laws, and taxes. Community members can also share funding resources and discuss the process of obtaining funding. Additionally, an area is set aside for the three major universities of Arizona (ASU, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona) that is dedicated to research and teaching about the social economy and an area for discussing relevant literature.

A moderator group will be given additional control that will allow them to moderate (edit) content as needed. Moderators function as online police and can address issues as they occur. If a user comes across inappropriate content, they can click a button that will send a message to all moderators prompting attention. Moderators can then remove questionable content or edit posts as needed to remove specific information rather than entire posts.

Moderators need to be given access by administrators but they can be anybody deemed trustworthy of the position. The final user group is administrators (admin). Admin are responsible for the technical aspect of the discussion board. Permission settings, rules, backup operations, software upgrades, design changes, and any other structural concern are managed by administrators. Only a small number of people will have access to this group as the full control of the forum is placed in the hands of an administrator. In-depth videos detailing how to moderate and operate the discussion board have been included in the moderator and administrator areas. A moderator guide is included in the appendix of this report (see Appendix D & E).

When a user registers with the discussion board, the user will be prompted for his or her name and email address. Email addresses will be kept private to protect users from spam,

phishing schemes, and unsolicited contact. Email addresses are collected to ensure unique users, to restrict a single user from registering multiple times, and to track IP addresses to limit the occurrence of sock puppets. To restrict the registration of accounts for the purpose of spamming the discussion board incorporates Captcha software to verify that a live person is registering the account and not a computer. Spammers use computer programs that automatically register with websites and then spam users with messages and posts. Captcha is software that displays characters in a box and prompts users to re-enter the characters. Computer software cannot complete the process, so a successful response confirms that the registration was initiated by a person.

Once registration is completed, the user will be added by default to the registered user group and then will be able to enhance their profile with the use of avatars (pictures that represent the user) and by including links to their personal social media sites like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter. Users will then be able to participate in discussions with other community members.

The Mingle Forum, which serves as the chosen discussion board application for the SEAZ website, is plug-in available through WordPress. The decision to use Mingle Forum was based on several important factors. First, the reliability that comes from using a WordPress endorsed solution. Endorsement means that the developer is a legitimate source and produces quality applications. There is a higher likelihood that the developer will be available for an extended period of time, and if they were to cease to exist, they would pass the upkeep of the application to another qualified source. This provides access to technical support, regular improvements, and frequent updates to the application which will result in the forum software employing the most up to date trends. Use of this application also lessens the difficulty of

administration for future project members by simplifying the process to the click of a button. Mingle Forum was tested for stability, common security flaws, functionality, and data corruption and passed without any concerns. Mingle Forum was installed with confidence that it would be a viable solution that will only require limited technical experience to administrate going forward.

Currently, the application supports additional features that can be enabled easily if the need arises. One example is the ability to implement word censor that will automatically identify inappropriate language and remove it. At this time we have not enabled the feature, but can do so easily if deemed necessary later. The primary reason is that the feature is still considered emerging technology and so it still experiences flaws. For example the word damnify would appear as ****ify despite damnify being a legal term that means to cause damage, injury, or loss. It is important to promote participation on the site while limiting barriers to participation. Using censoring software has its merits, but it is not necessary to frustrate early users by having the words incorrectly censored. We also disabled the ability to embed photos and video to reduce the possibility of inappropriate content. Using Mingle Forum also allows for the discussion board to display within the WordPress website so that a single entity (Social Economy Arizona) is conveyed rather than two different entities, the SEAZ website and the discussion board.

The purpose of the website is to generate interaction that results in the formation of a virtual community that shares the common interest of the social economy. The vision is one of people coming together in a show of solidarity to educate and learn about the social economy and how lessons can lead to better socio-economic development locally. Members can lean on each other for support or find information that they need to succeed. Posts can be posted about upcoming events like the location of a farmer markets or relevant business seminars as a way of

free advertising. Participation in discussion will become a mechanism that enables frequent visits from members so that they are exposed to updates on the SEAZ website. Like other social media tools the discussion board is a stand-alone product, but becomes more useful and influential when it is coupled with other media outlets. The discussion board in conjunction with the other social media tools will increase visibility of the SEAZ website and increase the member base.

We have taken steps to avoid the common mistakes that lead to forums launching from a position of disadvantage. Despite efforts taken by administrators, discussion board will sometimes fail to become popular. Following are some of the more common reasons that lead to discussion board failure. Forum developed without a clear purpose or strategy for attracting visitors. Limiting non-member access to the point that they do not know what they are registering for and do not follow through registration. Questions go unanswered when posted due to lack of participation or too few users. Lack of knowledgeable member base to sustain relevant discussions and poor moderation to limit off topic banter can be problematic. Creating too many forums also stunts growth because there are either too many discussions to follow or discussions become so spread out that they become diluted. These mistakes can be avoided by promoting intelligent content that is actively guided by a management team with a clear focus.

SECTION THREE: EVALUATION

The SEAZ website is an ongoing process that will add more benefit to the Phoenix social economy community as time passes and further projects are completed. The first stage of development resulted in the creation of the website and the proliferation of static content for users to browse. The use of static content made the website less interactive for visitors, but was a necessary step to provide the basic foundation for a project with larger long term goals. The

content initially provided information for social enterprises, social entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and other actors within the social economy to utilize for addressing questions surrounding governance, tax laws, legal questions, funding, and development. Additional information was provided for learning about marketing, media outlets, student resources, and network building.

The current collaboration represents the second stage of development, thus presenting several options for improving the functionality of the website. There were opportunities to continue adding static content that would have increased the value of the website, but after discussion with both the faculty mentor and technical advisor, the Alt^I student group decided that adding interactive elements to the website would be most beneficial. A strong message conveyed through the course readings was the importance and power of collective action, taken on by a group to solve issues through innovation (Ostrom, 2000). To develop this project, the idea of collective action was used to ensure collective participation and production of ideas among group members.

Networking has become an important gateway that leads to increased collective participation because it conditions people to open up and communicate with others. The Arizona economy is being strained due the pressures of recession and people are looking to other social and economic models to solve problems. Current economic difficulties provide a niche market for the SEAZ website to serve as a networking hub for social entrepreneurs to share ideas and build partnerships that will lead to innovation and socially conscious enterprises. Incorporating social media tools to enhance the SEAZ website became a clear pathway for connecting the spirit of the website and visitors of the website to form an interactive community.

Stages of Development

The project was implemented in a smooth manner largely because the student group worked well as a collaborative team and a cohesive unit. The team benefited from the combination of open mindedness, and a strong work ethic to outline goals with the confidence of achieving them. All members participated equally resulting in a truly collaborative effort. In the first stage of the project, research was conducted to identify areas of opportunity for incorporating social media tools. Individual analysis of the website was performed by each group member to identify methods for improving the website. Next, the group met with the faculty mentor and technical advisor to refine possible projects and determine upon an agreed project and timeline.

The group was exposed to a variety of social media tools during the initial research phase. It was apparent early on that using social media tools was a logical choice for increasing visibility, but that time limits made it important to choose the most beneficial and relevant tools, and to outline objectives that were to be realized within the context of a broader trajectory of development to be undertaken by future collaborators. Another area of discovery was realized when the group considered including video clips of scholars and entrepreneurs discussing aspects of the social economy. The decision to develop a Mingle Forum based discussion board further demonstrated the need for flexibility. While there are more robust discussion boards available, using a WordPress endorsed plug-in provided the easiest and most reliable forum for future administrators to operate. Copyrights and intellectual property rights needed to be followed, thus shaping subsequent decisions regarding sources, search strategies, and content development.

Finding videos to include in the SEAZ website became a tougher challenge than simply finding relevant content, the content found had to be free for public access. We needed to avoid videos

that were the Intellectual Property of other entities and needed to locate videos that were clearly designated as free for public use. It is also imperative that videos came from knowledgeable sources to maintain the credibility of the SEAZ website.

Researching the many social media options that are available led to the realization of many misconceptions that exist about websites and social media. Simply building a website and making it flashy will not increase visitors to the website (David & Glore, 2010). Visitors are discouraged by websites that use lengthy flashy intros as it delays the visitor finding the information they need. Websites that overuse graphics can make viewing the website difficult and slow to load. Poor use of website enhancements can demonstrate a designer's creativity, but can cause visitors to avoid the website because it is too difficult to use or unsightly to view.

To see an increase in activity requires a clearly defined strategy that is based on concrete goals and a larger vision. Working with the mentors provided the group with invaluable insight and access to the message that was intended to be delivered by the website. The combination of scholarly mentor and a technical mentor enabled the group to identify important aspects of the social economy and the ability to convey the concepts to more people within the Phoenix metropolitan area. The mentors were also helpful in assisting the group to understand the vision and future developments of SEAZ.

Advantages

For our project we were embedded as a team with Alt[^]I. Working with Alt[^]I provided us with two distinct advantages. The first advantage is that the organization is a social enterprise. Alt[^]I understood the purpose of each social media tool, was experienced in implementing them, and were fully dedicated to helping the student group succeed. "Alt[^]I brings together

accomplished programmers and instructional designers, engineers and educators, researchers and students, working in concert with strategic industry partners to incubate and apply sustainable innovation” (Applied Learning Technologies Institute, n.d.).

The second advantage of working with Alt^I was the tremendous amount of technical knowledge and experience they possessed and the accessibility the group had to professional staff. Their commitment to the success of the project and group was their business philosophy in practice. In addition to knowledge, Alt^I provided access to the most current computer systems and software applications. Access to current technology allowed the group to consider many of the popular Internet trends with confidence that the social media tools could successfully be implemented and were beneficial to the website.

Challenges

The first challenge the student group faced was during the creation of social media accounts. It became clear early on that a uniform registration process needed to be followed to maintain consistency with email addresses, user-names, and passwords. Logistically it was important that the individual projects were created in a way that would allow administrators to easily contribute and exit the projects efficiently. A primary email address was designated to centralize where requests for user-names and retrieval password resets could be sent. User-names and passwords were also cataloged and forwarded to the project mentors.

The second and biggest challenge the student team faced was designing a project that would increase visibility for the website without requiring the full-time effort of a regular administrator. The three individual projects were chosen carefully due to their ability to promote an interactive community that requires minimal administrative control. Working with the

mentors, Facebook, YouTube, discussion forum and videos were the social media tools chosen to enhance the SEAZ website. Each of the social media tools that were employed essentially enhances the functionality of the other tools and when used together will increase functionality and visibility of the website as a whole.

Though there were three individual projects being pursued, the group found it challenging, yet critical to maintain open communication with each other for support and to keep the group on track to complete the project in the allotted time. The team created a timeline and set goals to increase the successful implementation of the projects and to use as a checklist. An important goal was to create accountability by meeting regularly in person and online through the use of Google Docs to prepare our written documentation. Staying in touch through the use of email, both among ourselves and between the student team and mentors, kept all of us up to date on the status of other projects. Though miscommunications still occurred, difficulties were openly disclosed and solutions were worked on as a group.

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, significant progress has been made in generating and distributing information about the social economy as well as developing collaborative networks regionally, nationally and internationally (SEAZ). The key mission of the SEAZ website is to promote these objectives with a focus on Arizona, specifically the Phoenix community. It has developed as an educational tool to raise awareness about the concept, theory, and history of the social economy. This is done by facilitating the sharing of information and skills among students, community members, and entrepreneurs' who are interested in the development and consolidation of the social economy (SEAZ). More importantly, these groups work together to promote the social

economy in Arizona rooted in a commitment to social innovation, economic justice, and collective wellbeing (SEAZ).

In order to promote the SEAZ website and expand its visibility among the community, several social media tools were incorporated. The innovative potential of using these social media tools can significantly advance the mission and goals of the SEAZ of establishing networks, collaboration and knowledge transfers among those in the Southwest social economic community. These social medial tools allow the website to become more functional to those wanting to learn about the social economy and want to share their ideas with others about the development of the social economy and its future. While each social media tool used in this project is different in its overall function, when used collaboratively they become instrumental in promoting the future growth of the SEAZ website and its goals of growing the social economic development in Arizona.

The future of social media is dependent on the developing innovations and marketing tactics that businesses continue to use in order to increase the visibility of both their company and their goals. Social media has replaced the old way of networking in which people used to go out in the community and physically visit potential customers or clients to advertise (Melissa, 2010). Social media has now become an integral part of internet marketing, regardless of the type of business or goals, thereby enabling organizations to effectively control the flow of information, keep in touch with followers or clients, and track current information pertaining to their interests (Melissa, 2010). Future social media tools will become available as new innovative ways of networking and information exchange systems become needed to be keep up within an increasingly competitive marketplace operating within an dynamic society. As organizations of all types begin to expand their client and resource base, they must integrate

social medial tools in order to allow themselves to become more aware of and, more involved in, their target community and expanded networks. The social media tools integrated for the SEAZ website seek to accomplish these goals while maintaining its original mission and objectives of fusing social economic development objectives with broader issues relevant to economic justice, social inclusion and collective wellbeing. In the future, the SEAZ may utilize other social media tools to enhance the objectives of the website as it continues to develop and gain more support from the community.

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Appendix A
List of Videos Added to SEAZ Website

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dI6ChPnfyq0
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMOxfW5bLK8&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyxgbtGbers&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKyBRPq9k50
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ilCOgD-Wyw&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD6d8vnCp9I
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7u-HMmlkaAE&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTsZRBa-cTQ&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6wJuruKoN0
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy2nCHX36tI&feature=related
http://vimeo.com/11334531
http://vimeo.com/22385403
http://vimeo.com/22068741
http://vimeo.com/21949474
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Ee9lAl6HGA&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_Zu7Bc93e8&feature=related
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1tWCVUKH3as
http://vimeo.com/19725642
http://www.uctv.tv/search-details.aspx?showID=14514

Appendix B
Video Example on SEAZ Website



Home About Research Resources News ASU Course

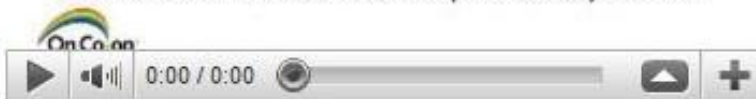
Starting a Cooperative

Two PowerPoint presentations that describes the basics of the cooperative structure, organization and governance as well as basic reasons for choosing a cooperative structure for the enterprise and difference between costumer (service) and producer cooperative structure.

Part 1

Why choose a co-op?

- Economies of scale:** Bulk buying; sharing of cost and expenses; joint processing or branding
- Accountable & inclusive:** Open to everyone; ea member has equal y regardless of investmer local decision making
- Build stronger communities:** Most co-ops are community based - investment and surplus stay in the local community; collaboration
- Members' needs met:** may not always be ROI




Appendix C Forum Categories

General Category:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Discussion Events Off Topic Suggestions
Social Economy:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Social Economy in Greater Phoenix Area The Social Economy in Arizona The Social Economy in the United States The Social Economy in the World
Identity:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperatives Social Enterprises Social Entrepreneurs
Research:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperatives Social Enterprises Social Entrepreneurs
Resources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperatives Social Enterprises Social Entrepreneurs
Building A Social Enterprise:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance Legal Tax Stuff Getting Money/Funding Promotion Cooperatives
Research and Teaching:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arizona State University Northern Arizona University University of Arizona Centers and Graduate Programs Literature: Articles and Books Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy) Cooperatives
Moderators:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To Do List Future Projects Archived Threads
Administrative:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates/Maintenance Log Mingle Forum User Guides

Appendix D
Moderator Tool bar #1


Welcome jcallega Show/Hide Header


 Your last visit was: May 9, 2011, 20:49
Show new topics since your last visit
Edit your forum options
Edit Profile
Log out


Forum Home My Profile Search RSS-Feed Move Topic Undo Sticky Re-open




Forum » General Category » General Discussion » Welcome. Please Read First

Pages: [1] Subscribe RSS-Feed Undo Sticky Re-open

 **Author** **Topic: Welcome. Please Read First. TOPIC CLOSED**

jcallega
Administrator
Posts: 41


 **Welcome. Please Read First.**
on: May 7, 2011, 12:09

 Quote  Remove  Edit


Thank you for supporting SocialEconomyAZ.org. We have created this discussion board to create a virtual community for members to share and learn about the social economy. This is a collaborative effort and the more that members participate the more the website will grow.

Moderators will use three buttons in the top tool bar to moderate threads.

- **Move Topic:** If a thread is created in the incorrect area, a moderator can simply click the “Move Topic” to move the topic to the appropriate forum. After clicking, a drop down menu will appear that the moderator can chose where the thread should be relocated.
- **Sticky/Undo Sticky:** By pressing the “Sticky” button, a moderator can “pin” a thread at the top of a forum. This is a good tool to post important information for all to read. Clicking the “Undo Sticky” button will undo the pin and allow the thread to drop from the top of the page.
- **Close Topic/Re-Open:** A moderator can close a topic to further posts by clicking the “Close Topic” button. They can re-open the thread for comments by clicking the “Re-Open” button.

Appendix E
Moderator Tool bar #2


Welcome jcallega Show/Hide Header


 Your last visit was: May 9, 2011, 20:49
Show new topics since your last visit
Edit your forum options
Edit Profile
Log out


Forum Home My Profile Search RSS-Feed Move Topic Undo Sticky Re-open




Forum » General Category » General Discussion » Welcome. Please Read First.

Pages: [1] Subscribe RSS-Feed Undo Sticky Re-open

 Author Topic: Welcome. Please Read First. TOPIC CLOSED

jcallega
Administrator
Posts: 41


 **Welcome. Please Read First.**
on: May 7, 2011, 12:09

 Quote  Remove  Edit

Thank you for supporting SocialEconomyAZ.org. We have created this discussion board to create a virtual community for members to share and learn about the social economy. This is a collaborative effort and the more that members participate the more the website will grow.



Moderators will use two buttons in the bottom tool bar to moderate threads.

- **Remove:** Clicking the “Remove” button will allow a moderator to completely delete an inappropriate post.
- **Edit:** Clicking the “Edit” button will allow a moderator to re-enter the text area to makes changes to the post. Moderators can fix spelling errors, remove/change inappropriate words, or add additional content.

**Appendix F
Facebook Fan Page – Information Section**

facebook



-  Wall
-  **Info**
-  Photos
-  Links
-  Events
-  YouTube

About
The official page for Social Economy AZ

4

people like this

Likes See All



US Federation of Worker Cooperatives




The International Rescue Committee in Tucson




National Cooperative Business

SocialEconomyAZ

Non-Profit Organization








Basic Information

Founded	2010
About	The official page for Social Economy AZ
Description	Social Economy AZ is a new initiative designed by faculty within Arizona State University's School of Social Transformation (with support from the School Human Evolution and Social Change, the School of Social Work and the School of Public Affairs) to promote a conception of the social economy in Arizona (and the Southwest more generally) rooted in a commitment to social innovation, economic justice, and collective wellbeing.
Mission	As a focal point for the promotion of interdisciplinary research and... (read more)
Website	http://socialeconomyaz.org

Appendix G Facebook Fan Page – Wall

facebook
Search



Wall

- Info
- Photos
- Links
- Events
- YouTube


About

The official page for Social Economy AZ


4

people like this


Likes See All




**SkySong, The ASU
Scottsdale
Innovation Center**



**CASE (Central
Arizonans for a
Sustainable**







**alt^I Applied
Learning
Technologies**




**US Federation of
Worker
Cooperatives**

SocialEconomyAZ

Non-Profit Organization








Wall



SocialEconomyAZ

Alt^I is dedicated to the advancement of education through strategic partnerships in research, collaboration and action. The Institute brings together accomplished programmers and instructional designers, engineers and educators, researchers and students, working in concert with strategic industry partners to incubate and apply sustainable innovation.




**alt^I – Applied Learning Technologies Institute |
Applied Learning Technologies Institute**


alti.asu.edu

The new Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University has been added to the most popular selection of Apple's iTunes U after just a few short weeks in production.

📅 April 27 at 4:26pm · Like · Comment · Share



SocialEconomyAZ



The IRC in Phoenix

www.rescue.org

Founded in 1933, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps refugees to survive and rebuild their lives.