



# The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

## Final Copy of Case Study

**YEAR:**  
*2012*

**STATUS:**  
*Laureate*

**Organization:**  
Network for Good

**Organization URL:**  
[www.NetworkforGood.org](http://www.NetworkforGood.org)

**Project Name:**  
Unleashing Generosity

**What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?**

We, as human beings, are inherently generous. Our brains are hard wired for altruism. So why is it so hard to get people to give to meet staggering global needs? People should constantly be giving if it's human nature. Here's the rub: to get people to act on their natural impulses, you have to ask them to help. Empathy isn't enough; you need opportunities all around to spur action. Technology makes that possible. As Network for Good sees it, we are in an era where we have an unprecedented opportunity to put the ability to do good at each person's fingertips, thanks to computers, tablets and mobile, and to change the giving landscape. We've successfully surrounded people with the chance to unleash their generosity whether it's donating when they read a news story online or giving with their mobile device. Network for Good created a donation processing platform that powers constant innovation in giving. Our donation processing engine and web services enable:

- Any developer to create an "app for good" and plug it into our platform. We measure our success by the number of innovations we've enabled: half a dozen leading social networks for social good, including Causes on Facebook.
- Any for-profit to incorporate giving into commerce. (e.g., Clinique, Warner Brothers, Capital One). We measure our success by the number we've launched: nine from Fortune 500 brands and \$34M in 2011 from all partnerships.
- Any nonprofit to tap into technology to raise money. We measure our success by the number of nonprofits we've reached and the dollars they've raised: 40,000 organizations and \$141.6M in 2011. In the past 3 years, when giving has dropped overall, we have powered double-digit growth each year in donations.

**Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.**

Our technology is a platform for donation processing and web services on which anyone can develop their website (and thus enable donations to be collected and distributed to nonprofits). We have created a suite of services on the platform (some through partnerships) that nonprofits and for-profits can use to drive dollars to good causes. The platform is innovative in that it: - Operates at scale, enabling a high volume of donations to over 1.2 million U.S. nonprofits, at any time, from multiple sources. - Is portable and can be integrated into a multitude of third-party websites and applications through web services. - Has a comprehensive functionality but is flexible to allow brands, developers, and nonprofits to innovate and create compelling giving campaigns and applications unique to their needs. - Provides an efficient and all-encompassing view of donation data for nonprofits to manage their portfolio of digital giving and effectively cultivate donors. Network for Good faced our biggest challenge when we tried to develop all innovations ourselves on a closed platform. Resources became stretched, and we could not expand upon existing technology fast enough to keep up with market demand. When we made the decision to open our platform and focus on being the backbone that enables innovation, rather than being the innovation generator ourselves, we became the ideal partner for those seeking to build new and innovative tools and online experiences. The approach has allowed AngelPoints, a Network for Good partner, to develop an employee giving program accepting both credit card donations and deductions from the employee's paycheck. And it has allowed Causes.com, another Network for Good partner, to create a Causes Gift Card that individuals can gift to their friends and family to spend as a donation online. We seek to power more innovations like these.

**Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.**

Network for Good has served over 60,000 nonprofits and drives well over \$100M to the sector each year, totaling over \$630M since inception in 2001. The platform directs donations to all causes, helping every issue in existence. Network for Good's 2009 data showed that human service organizations received 30% of the total amount donated through the platform in 2009, health-related organizations received 13%, nonprofits working on international issues received 12%, public benefit organizations including those focused on social action, community involvement, and capacity building received 13%, and animal and environment issue-related nonprofits received 10%. We are getting closer to ridding the world of diseases, lack of access to education, unwanted homelessness, and animal abuse. But, we realize that individuals and specific nonprofits working on their own cannot solve these problems alone. It takes a network of donors, nonprofits, and responsible companies to donate and work towards creating a better world. This is the premise of the Network for Good platform. Due to our highly optimized and scalable giving system, coupled with expertise and a respected reputation in the sector, we have become the giving partner of choice for Fortune 500 brands and cutting-edge application developers alike. Anyone can plug into the Network for Good platform and start advancing their cause. More than 10,000 organizations have already done so, and the reach of impact is far beyond what we can even imagine. We are just beginning to realize the potential of technology for social good. For example, since Causes on Facebook and Crowdrise have taken charitable giving viral, networks of committed supporters have proven that there is incredible power in social giving, especially following a humanitarian disaster.

**Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.**

In March of 2011, the infamous Tohoku earthquake shook Japan. The devastation was worse than many could imagine, and small nonprofits like the Japanese Cultural & Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) were thrust into the spotlight. Prior to the earthquake, JCCCNC had fewer than 20 members in its Cause on Facebook, the Northern Japan Earthquake Relief Fund. Even with such a small community, the organization mobilized to support relief. The organization's fund started going viral almost immediately after the earthquake, using Causes' social integration with Facebook, and supporters came rushing in. Within days, the nonprofit recruited more than 25,000 supporters and raised more than \$400,000 for relief. Their success demonstrates the power of communicating a focused goal -- to help Japan -- across networks to rally support in a time of need. The Network for Good platform allowed for JCCCNC to receive a high volume of funds efficiently to alleviate the effects of the disaster. It was crucial to get this money to the nonprofit quickly, and the platform's flexibility allowed for this sudden increase in donation flow. As donations came in, JCCCNC had easy access to all of their new donors' information, allowing them to reengage with their members as Japan moved towards rebuilding itself.