

MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

You've Got Mail:
An Analysis of Direct Mail and Direct Email Fundraising Letters

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, online fundraising (e-philanthropy) has grown to become a critical component of charitable fundraising in the Western world. The rapid development and proliferation of e-philanthropy means the need to critically investigate digital spaces as distinct communicative entities has now become necessary. Research in the field has revealed that digital documents differ from their hardcopy equivalents in terms of how they are consumed, since readers' expectations vary when reading online vs. offline documents. The following research paper explores the direct mail fundraising letters and email appeal campaigns of three non-profit organizations operating in Toronto, Canada. Using Karen A. Schriver's model for Document Design and Vijay Bhatia and Thomas A. Upton's seven-move discourse structure for the direct mail letter genre, the goal of this MRP is to compare and contrast the traditional direct mail letter to its digital counterpart in order to identify the differences between the written rhetorical and visual document design strategy applied to each medium. A comparison between the printed and digital formats of the direct mail letters will hopefully provide a better understanding of how the traditional direct mail fundraising letter should be tailored for successful online consumption.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last twenty years the Western world has witnessed the rise of computer-mediated communication technology as the dominant form for contact among individuals and businesses. This shift towards a virtual and instantaneous method of interaction means that the need to critically analyze and observe digital spaces as distinct communicative entities is now necessary. In the case of fundraising in particular, Internet based fundraising (e-philanthropy) is a relatively new phenomenon with very few tried and true methods for success. Understandably, this is one of the reasons why charities have been slow to cultivate online strategies for fundraising. The volatile and unpredictable nature of the Internet can be unforgiving, so many institutions are hesitant to invest resources for the development of an online presence. However, as more and more non-profit organizations are beginning to enjoy a notable level of virtual success, philanthropic associations of every kind must now adopt a well-defined, strategic approach for online communications in order to remain current and profitable in an increasingly competitive environment (Perlstein, 2011).

The purpose of this Major Research Paper (MRP) is to analyze direct mail fundraising letters and their email counterparts. The study's focus is on the document design strategy, as well as the written rhetorical strategy of the direct mail letter and it will identify the differences and similarities in the letter's print and digital formats. The direct mail fundraising letters are taken from three non-profit organizations operating in Toronto, Canada each representing a different sector. Mid-Toronto Community Services is a small community services agency; St. Michael's Hospital Foundation is a mid-sized hospital foundation; and Ryerson University is a large Canadian university. An analysis of the appeal letters from these three diverse non-profit organizations will hopefully

provide a revealing exploration of how the characteristics of email might alter the content and document design strategy of the traditional direct mail letter.

From a fundraising perspective, the web's ability to rapidly and economically distribute documents and information to a large number of recipients simultaneously is a practical and appealing strategy for non-profit organizations looking to harness the Internet to promote and fundraise for their causes. However, in the process of adapting their fundraising material for the Internet, many charities have found that they must take into consideration the fact that digital documents are not the same as their printed equivalents and should not be treated as such. Scholars concerned with the visual design of digital spaces (Schrivver, 1997; Zappen, 2005; Warnick, 2002; Worley, 1996; Wysocki, 1998) argue that the technological medium utilized must be taken into account; this is because the computer screen stimulates readers visually in different ways than printed documents (Zappen, 2005). Consequently, the document design and written rhetorical structure of a fundraising letter must incorporate these differences into its content and configuration in order to convey its message successfully. Yet the differences that exist in the print and digital versions of the fundraising appeal letter, in terms of document design and written rhetorical strategy, have not been well documented or discussed thus far. As a result, the aim of this research paper is to examine how the characteristics of email might alter the content and document design strategy of the traditional fundraising direct mail letter for online consumption.

The analysis for this study is conducted using 'Document Design' principles as its main theoretical framework. Theories and prevailing practices acquired from 'Fundraising Discourse' are also closely explored in order to explain the rationale behind how the linguistic and visual structure of information presented in direct mail letters is designed specifically to serve the needs of the fundraising appeal (Bhatia, 1998; Upton,

2002). Finally, in addition to gaining insight into some of the document design practices essential for effective fundraising letters, it is important to understand how technology has come to serve specific rhetorical functions and how the culture of digital spaces is now guided by its own rhetoric (Zappen, 2005). The following research examines new online fundraising techniques and how they differ from their more traditional, print based origins by focusing on the strategies utilized by three non-profit organizations of varying sizes in their direct mail letters and email appeal (e-appeal) fundraising campaigns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Fundraising discourse is described by experts in the field as representing one of the most dynamic forms of language use (Bhatia, 1998). This is because in order to achieve their communicative function, fundraising appeals must employ a 'seven-move' discourse structure that is both highly regulated yet extremely creative at the same time. In essence, fundraising appeals are acts of promotion and persuasion – they are designed to promote a worthy cause by persuading individuals to look beyond their own self-interests and contribute toward a greater good (Goering et al., 2011; Bhatia 1998). One of the longest standing, most commonly used tools for fundraising is the direct mail letter. Warwick (2000: 166) states that as a fundraising method, the direct mail letter is “the single biggest means used by non-profits to recruit new donors,” and notes that, “research repeatedly confirms, the majority of first time gifts to charity are made by mail.” Others have agreed, claiming that direct mail letters are the most important fundraising instruments for non-profit organizations because they can reach the widest range of prospective donors (Abelen et al., 1993). Yet direct mail campaigns can also typically yield low response rates since recipients tend to see them as advertising materials to be thrown away without consideration (Bekkers & Crutzen, 2007). Thus, the most difficult task for philanthropic agencies is to attract the attention of the potential donor enough to read the document and then take action by making a donation. The ability to elicit a successful response from a prospective donor has led to several studies and theories on the linguistic and visual document design strategy of the direct mail letter.

Early research from a variety of disciplinary perspectives like marketing (Berger & Smith, 1997; Diamond & Gooding-Williams, 2002), communication studies (Hoeken & Hustinx, 2007), economics (List & Lucking-Reiley, 2002; Eckel & Grossman, 2008), and

psychology (Weyant & Smith, 1987) have strived to identify the key factors leading to the success of an appeal letter. At the same time, research elsewhere has focused on specific types of persuasive strategies that can help increase the chances of success, such as including a suggested donation amount, personalizing the letter with the multiple use of the prospective donor's name throughout the solicitation letter, and designing the letter in a visual way to capture the attention of the potential donor (Goering et al., 2011). Other researchers in the field have attempted to identify even more precise visual and linguistic features that might affect fundraising communication through the study of fundraising discourse (Bhatia, 1998; Conner, 1997), special attention paid to social context (Bazerman, 1997; Myers, 1997), and the consideration of cultural differences (Conner & Wagner, 1998; Graves, 1997). Although not all of these ideas have been individually examined or proven successful, they contribute to our understanding of the fundraising letter and have since developed into a strict written rhetorical structure referred to by Vijay Bhatia as the direct mail letter genre (Bhatia, 1998).

The direct mail fundraising letter is a targeted appeal devised to encourage potential donors to make a donation to a specific cause through the use of a relatively simple 'six-move' discourse structure. This discourse structure is based on the notion that fundraising is primarily an act of persuasion, which has a great deal in common with acts of promotion and promotional materials, like sales letters or letters of application (Bhatia, 1993). The six-move discourse structure operates as follows: (1) establish credentials; (2) introduce the cause; (3) offer incentives; (4) enclose brochures; (5) solicit support; and (6) express gratitude (Bhatia, 1998). Yet Bhatia argues that in practice, only four of these moves (minus offer incentives and enclose brochures) are used often and this is because strategically, they are able to display a wide range of linguistic resources, which allows for a great deal of versatility within a relatively strict genre (Bhatia, 1998).

Bhatia (1998) describes these four moves as the most commonly used tactics in the language of fundraising:

1. **Establishing credentials** can be achieved through a number of strategies: incorporating celebrity endorsement, referring to community needs, referencing mission statements, evoking an image of trustees, invoking frameworks of consciousness, and appealing for community involvement (103).
2. **Introducing the cause** consists of several stages: introducing the cause, describing the cause, indicating the value of the cause, indicating the potential value of solicited support, and establishing a track record (103-104).
3. **Soliciting support** is the main communicative purpose of the letter. It can be accomplished through direct appeals ("Please help us fight hunger today by making a donation"), extended appeals ("Our ability to offer a lifeline depends in large part on the generosity of a caring community and once again, we turn to you for assistance"), and appeals with incentives ("You can make your donation a tribute gift in honour of someone special") (104).
4. **Expressing gratitude** can be accomplished by either giving thanks for past or anticipated support, reaffirming mission statements, and by soliciting a response to the appeal (104).

Several years later, in an attempt to address some of Bhatia's shortcomings and build on his initial findings, Thomas Upton (2002) found that some of the moves first outlined by Bhatia are capable of either standing alone or can be embedded within other moves. For example, in the phrase "Please fill out the enclosed card to send in your tax-deductible contribution to help support the boys and girls at Camp X," the primary function is to solicit support, though the phrase also draws attention to an enclosure ("enclosed card") and offers an incentive ("tax-deductible contribution"), thereby combining several moves together (Upton, 2002: 72). Completely missing from Bhatia's six-move discourse is a final move added by Upton, namely, 'Conclude with

pleasantries,' which he describes as polite comments found at the end of the letter like, "I hope you have a nice day" to bring the letter to a pleasant close (2002: 73). This move also includes the ending salutation (Upton, 2002). All of the factors listed above have been tested as individual and combined strategies over the years; however, researchers have yet to fully explore the interaction between the linguistic strategy and the document design strategy of the direct mail letter.

Another key aspect of direct mail letters for experts working in the field of fundraising is the application of specific linguistic elements related to language choice and grammatical construction. Over the years, fundraisers working with direct mail have offered detailed advice on practically every kind of linguistic approach available. For example, clear, engaging and personal language is considered the most effective and compelling. The word 'you' should be applied as frequently as possible alongside powerful words, colloquialisms and even familiar phrases like clichés (Goering et al., 2011: 233). Similes and metaphors should be avoided, as well as technical language, adjectives, first person plural, abbreviations and foreign phrases (233). In terms of grammar, writers are cautioned to steer away from the use of semicolons and passive voice (233). Conversely, sentences beginning with a conjunctive and contractions are considered appropriate (233). But most importantly, although conventional insights do not offer specific advice concerning the use of language and grammar in fundraising letters, linguistically the notion noted is that they should be written at a moderately low readability grade level¹ (233). Finally, the majority of examples found on effective fundraising letters employ the use of relatively short sentences and paragraphs (233).

Elements related to visual design are equally important to the persuasive strategy of the direct mail letter. Popular suggestions include the use of highlighting techniques to

¹ See Glossary section under 'Readability Level.'

² An affordance is a quality of an object, or an environment, which allows an individual to perform an action.

draw attention to important points within unbroken text by combining boldface fonts together with underlining in order to point out benefits. Additional recommendations include the incorporation of a postscript (P.S.) and sometimes a post postscript (P.P.S.), as well as the frequent use of either numbered or bulleted lists (Goering et al., 2011; Smith, 1996; Wheildon, 2005). A few studies have even focused on the visual design of the envelope and the most effective way to capture the initial attention of the potential donor quickly. Researchers claim that the recipient's reaction to the look of the envelope may influence whether or not it is opened. One study conducted on an 'attractiveness hypothesis' by Diamond and Gooding-Williams surveyed 166 homeless shelter donors who received different visual copies of the same fundraising package (2002). Results indicated that recipients were more likely to open the envelope when it was rated as being more attractive. Furthermore, once opened, the copy, graphics and design of the appeal all impacted whether or not the respondent eventually donated. Diamond and Gooding-Williams' study found that their 'attractiveness hypothesis' proved the importance of design in pleasing, arousing and grabbing the attention of the potential donor – similar to that of an advertising appeal (2002). However, their findings did not specifically indicate what qualifies as an attractive design.

In an attempt to answer this question, a new field termed 'Document Design' emerged at the end of the last century in order to explore how the strategic use of good writing combined with good visual design could improve the effectiveness a document. In her book Dynamics of Document Design, leading expert Karen A. Schriver describes document design as a "field concerned with creating texts (broadly defined) that integrate words and pictures in ways that help people to achieve their specific goals" (1997: 10). Here, she makes the argument that the organization and format of a document play just as important a role as the language. Schriver goes on to state more

specifically that document design is “the act of bringing together prose, graphics (including illustration and photography), and typography for the purposes of instruction, information, or persuasion” (Schrivers, 1997: 10-11). In the same vein, those who champion the rhetorical approach encourage document designers to constantly consider the reading patterns of the audience throughout the design process. While documents should always meet the requirements and desires of their clients, design activity must be driven by envisioning the reader as an active participant and a major stakeholder. In other words, skill and knowledge in document design involves “judging ‘what works’ by assessing documents in the context of their use by the people expected to use them” (Schrivers, 1997: 11).

Direct mail letters are a primary example of the use of rhetorical persuasion in document design. With so many texts available for reading, practitioners have been intent on identifying the reasons why people choose to read certain texts and not others (Schrivers, 1997; Rosenquist, 2012). Researchers argue that the first decision people make when presented with a document is whether or not to read it based on what it looks like (Schrivers, 1997). Unlike other documents that are necessary to read, there is almost no immediate benefit to a potential donor to read a direct mail letter. This means that the contents of the letter and the visual design must work twice as hard to capture the attention of the reader. For this reason, the rhetorical tradition stresses the need to pay specific attention to the goals of the audience and the “complex relationship between the communicator, the audience, the words, the pictures and the context of the document” (Schrivers, 1997: 18). Similarly, newer ideas advanced by document design make clear that the design and layout of a document should no longer be trivialized or disregarded as an afterthought to the content. Visual design was once assumed to be the act of simply dressing up or polishing a package without much thought placed on the

layout, while the 'designer' was often relegated to a supportive role, tasked with placing the carefully crafted message into a template for some added sizzle (Schriver, 1997). Nowadays, the study and application of document design principles have come to play a fundamental role in the rhetorical strategy of the direct mail letter and e-appeal.

More recently, the boundaries of document design have expanded beyond printed documents to include computers, consumer electronics and technologies for multimedia. No longer constrained by linear formats, designers are now able to integrate animated images, digital sound and hyperlinks into documents that allow readers a heightened, hands-on experience when engaging with online documents. The look and feel of today's web-based documents convey a notably different sensation than traditional print media. Experts claim that this is because the computer screen influences not only the written message but also how the receiver's brain receives the message through visual display (Andrews & Dryud, 1996). A computer screen and a printed piece of paper are distinct mediums of display, which means that while the wording could be identical, the medium changes the physiology of the content (Andrews & Dryud, 1996). According to Andrews and Dryud, "computer technology forces an alternative way of seeing – and thinking – than does print. Electronic technology requires that we abandon, to the extent possible, the linear, sequential modes of thought engendered by print and adopt a more global 'simultaneous' awareness" (1996, 129). The rapid advancement of computer-mediated technologies and the vast number of ways in which they can be utilized and consumed have raised questions related to the nature of reading online.

Scholarship in rhetoric and composition has emphasized the significance of visual rhetoric for some years now; however, it is the digital revolution that has brought to the forefront questions regarding the importance of the use of visual strategies in digital media environments. Early developers of hypertextual writing and multimedia, as

well as scholars who study the effect electronic media technologies have on readers and writers are now concerned with how visual rhetoric can be used for meaning and persuasion in online environments (Hocks, 2003). Research in digital writing conducted by theorists like James Porter, Patricia Sullivan, Edward Tufte and Barbara Mirel has demonstrated that rhetorical decisions impact the visual design of an online document (Hocks, 2003). They argue that since the appearance of hypertext and interactive new media, digital writing environments tend to make it difficult to separate words from visuals or they privilege one form over the other (Hocks, 2003). Consequently, the impact electronic devices have had on the culture of communication is such that the reader is no longer confined by physical pages and linear writing. The computer screen has established a new pattern for reading and information presentation (Tapia, 2003).

In her essay 'Monitoring Order,' Anne Wysocki provides an important overview of the continuities between print design and web page design, stressing the need for designers to be sensitive to the historical and cultural specificity of the document in use (Wysocki, 1998; Hocks, 2003). Wysocki explains that because the web has inherited the book page design, it has embedded within it cultural assumptions that come from the history of printed texts (Wysocki, 1998). Yet, at the same time, the webpage is not a printed page and as a result, a direct transfer of a text from print to computer screen requires a reexamination of the audience for the purpose of the document. Studies have shown that information presented on screen must be more concise than the printed equivalent because the screen allows for less space in a single viewing (Worley, 1996). The webpage has the option to scroll, but reading habits have revealed that people tend to search specifically for the information they are looking for and once found they will close the window even if the page contains more information (Worley, 1996). Using evidence from their own reading habits and taking into consideration the constraints of

the computer screen, document designers have now altered their online rhetorical strategy by reorganizing information into succinct, screen sized chunks by linking topics rather than using the traditional, sequential presentation of information that can be found in paper copy (Worley, 1996).

Through trial and error, experts in digital document design have also discovered visual design elements that may appear attractive on paper, such as headings with decorative rules, shadow boxes and oversized text, typically do not translate well to the computer screen (Worley, 1996). Highlighted, bolded or coloured text on a printed page draws attention to specific content but on a webpage is better used to indicate links to related subject matter. What has become clear from these findings is that the readability of a document can be influenced by its medium. In other words, basic graphic design rules and principles should not be ignored in web design, but at the same time, should be applied with both the affordances² and constraints, as well as the cultural understandings of the technology in mind. For instance, readers often experience difficulty with the legibility of type on a computer screen, which tends to slow them down in their effort to interpret text (Schrivver, 1997). In fact, studies conducted on writers and editors have revealed that reading online can take people anywhere from 20-40% longer than reading text on paper. Writers and editors of online documents also report that they are more likely to experience fatigue and eye strain when proofreading online and have a higher tendency to miss errors (Schrivver, 1997). These findings have led to further inquiry into how to improve the readability of online documents for readers.

² An affordance is a quality of an object, or an environment, which allows an individual to perform an action.

The role of document design in online texts has initiated several studies testing a number of variables such as screen resolution, the antialiasing³ of fonts, and leading and spacing in order to understand how digital texts differ from their printed counterparts. Based on their findings, document designers have outlined some critical aspects acquired from conventional visual design theory that also affect the design of online documents. These include typography and space (Schriver, 1997; Vance, 1996), typography based on rhetorical appropriateness (Schriver, 1997; Hocks, 2003), and Gestalt principles for visual design (Schriver, 1997; Moore & Fitz, 1993). The strategic use of these elements is said to influence how readers perceive, organize and remember content. In the case of direct mail fundraising letters, the rhetorical role that the document design structure plays in its ability to effectively engage readers by drawing attention to specific content and helping them to interpret its meaning, can be the difference between a successful letter and one that is cast aside and ignored (Schriver, 1997).

The literature so far has revealed that by focusing on good document design and taking into consideration whether or not a document is hardcopy or electronic, the chances of acquiring funds are improved. For modern day fundraisers the transition to online fundraising is rooted in the desire to use new media and new technology to amplify fundraising efforts and generate impact. According to Bog et al., in most respects fundraising campaigns on the Internet are similar to traditional fundraising campaigns (2012). Addressees are selected, the aim of the campaign is explained, a target is set and either a reward or a form of recognition is offered. However, they argue that there is one notable exception – the dynamic aspect of Internet technology allows for continual

³ In computer graphics, antialiasing is a software technique for diminishing jaggies – stairstep-like lines in text that should be smooth.

and inexpensive feedback on the progress of the campaign (Bog et al., 2012). Laura Gurak, a key analyst working in the field of digital rhetoric states that this ability for feedback is shaped by four basic characteristics of digital media that can operate as either affordances or constraints for online documents: speed, reach, anonymity and interactivity (Zappen, 2005). The speed at which email can reach contacts encourages an oral and casual style but can also lead to redundant and repetitive postings (30-33). Reach allows for communication among multiple participants using an array of media but does not include the benefits of gatekeeping ⁴ (33-37). Anonymity inspires experimentation and originality of content from the sender of the email but problematizes notions of authorship and ownership (38-43). And interactivity permits closer access to a wider range of people with increased opportunities for discussion but also escalates opportunities for intrusions upon personal privacy (44-46). Clearly, studies have shown that all of these aspects of digital technology must be taken into account in the rhetorical strategy of the e-appeal if it is to be successful. Today's donors are more sophisticated than ever, which means that effective fundraisers must now persuade and solicit them in an increasingly targeted way.

Charitable giving in the 21st century has grown and evolved from its traditional origins of tithing for religious purposes and baking bread for the poor into a multi-faceted, multi-million dollar industry. Non-profit organizations nowadays range from churches, educational institutions, performing arts organizations, medical and health care providers, to charities that focus on addressing societal problems like hunger, homelessness, animal abuse and environmental rights. People continue to donate for many different reasons to many different causes and with the competition for donor

⁴ Gatekeeping is the process through which information is filtered for dissemination, whether for publication, broadcasting, the Internet or some other mode of communication. This process determines not only which information is selected, but also what the content and nature of the messages, such as news, will be.

dollars on the rise, fundraising practices have had to progress and evolve in an effort to remain current and prosperous. According to fundraising experts, this transformation in fundraising is due to four main paradigm shifts that have occurred over the last few decades: (1) the shift from methodology driven fundraising to donor driven fundraising; (2) the shift from homogenous audiences to niche audiences; (3) the shift in the generation of prospects from those born before the Second World War to those born post-War; and (4) the shift from mass communication to one-on-one communication (Nichols, 2003). These four key paradigm shifts in particular mean that many of the once tried and true methods for fundraising are no longer producing the same results. Thus, the need to reposition fundraising for this new century is upon us.

In Canada, the number of non-profit organizations and charities actively fundraising is on the rise, growing in number from 35,113 in 1974 to well over 100,000 agencies today (Nichols, 2003). Due to the proliferation of NGO's and international relief organizations throughout the Western world, as well as the growth of Internet based fundraising, the battle for donor dollars is no longer limited to the country of origin or by geographical boundaries. Technological advancements with the potential for wider and faster information dissemination also allow for a whole new set of communication vehicles available for fundraising pursuits. Even newer mediums such as mobile phones, online video, text messaging and social media have all been successfully utilized for raising money (Perlstein, 2011). Meanwhile, the shift towards niche audiences with different communication styles and preferences requires more specific marketing strategies. No longer are donor demographics such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, profession, attitude, values and lifestyle the only variables taken into consideration when crafting a fundraising message. More important is how these demographics prefer to receive their communication. A clear progression over time has

shown that direct mail is the predominate communication vehicle of choice for pre-Second World War audiences, while baby boomers respond better to telephone and video, and younger audiences gravitate toward online giving and to a lesser degree, street appeals⁵ (Nichols, 2003).

These findings indicate that in order to capture the attention of potential donors, non-profit agencies must be able to appeal to donors quickly, effectively and in their preferred manner. Furthermore, donors also expect organizations to communicate with them in the most efficient and economical way possible (Nichols, 2003). With so many options available for networking with donors, their communication preferences have become increasingly diversified and today's donors do not hesitate to make their preferences known. They are clear about informing charities on when to contact them, how often and in what way (Nichols, 2003). Subsequently, research shows that a targeted appeal has a much higher chance for success, as opposed to mass marketing and cold calling techniques. According to Bhatia, the most effective fundraising method, in terms of return on investment for every dollar spent, is to foster a relationship with donors through rapport, language and perspective (Bhatia, 1998).

A final related aspect of fundraising involves the delicate balance between marketing and the appropriate use of fundraising dollars. Registered charities are expected to fully disclose their operating costs and are held accountable by their members⁶ and donors for how their dollars are spent. Evidence collected from past campaigns has revealed that the use of full colour pictures in fundraising letters yields lower donations than those without graphics and that this is due to donors' aversion against high fundraising costs. This is also one other reason for the move toward online

⁵ See Glossary section under 'Street Appeal.'

⁶ See Glossary section under 'Membership.'

fundraising since colourful digital graphics do not amount to increases in fundraising costs since they are not printed (Bekkers & Crutzen, 2007). Quite obviously, existing literature has indicated that success in today's fundraising environment means non-profit organizations must now be able to stretch their dollars as much as possible, while remaining up-to-date through the design and development of thought-provoking and targeted campaigns that are not wasteful or excessive.

METHODOLOGY

The three organizations explored in this research paper are all considered groundbreakers in their field in terms of e-philanthropy. They are among the first non-profit associations to develop a targeted online fundraising approach using email to solicit donations. Nonetheless, success in online fundraising remains inconsistent for these organizations and they continue to test different approaches with each new campaign as a result. Thus, the aim of this study is to analyze the fundraising strategy employed by three diverse organizations in their print vs. digital direct mail letter campaigns using Karen Schriver's model for 'Document Design,' in order to better understand how readers' expectations differ between online and offline documents and how this expectation might influence their consumption of digital documents. The research focus of this study will therefore seek to examine the following questions:

1. In what way is the written rhetorical structure and design strategy of the direct mail fundraising letter altered when applied to online media, specifically email?
2. How do writing practices change in digital environments?
3. What are some best practices and effective techniques for writing and visual design when fundraising using email?

Data collection for this research paper consists of a set of direct mail letters and e-appeal samples from two fundraising campaigns taken from each of the three non-profit organizations, for a total of six campaigns. In order to ensure there is a representative sample of direct mail letters and e-appeals, the three organizations have been purposely selected to exemplify a different division within the not-for-profit sector. By including appeal samples from organizations that have diverse goals and missions, this study is able to gain a richer and more extensive understanding of the strategies and approaches pursued by an assortment of non-profit organizations when fundraising

using email. The print version of the direct mail letter is directly compared to its digital counterpart from the same campaign, in order to identify the exact variation between the two types of documents. In addition, the analysis incorporates two campaigns from each of the three organizations in order to explore the extent to which the subject matter, type of appeal, or timing of the letter may or may not affect its document design structure. The variety in organizations and campaigns selected will allow for a detailed examination of how email technology influences the rhetorical structure of the direct mail letter.

Mid-Toronto Community Services (MTCS) is a small community services charity located in downtown Toronto, Canada. Mid-Toronto describes itself as “a not-for-profit organization that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of seniors and adults living with disabilities or illness by providing programs and services to promote healthy and independent living” (MTCS, 2012). Mid-Toronto acquires the majority of its donations through special events, newsletters, direct mail campaigns and a few major gift donations granted by charitable foundations (MTCS Annual Report, 2011).

St. Michael’s Hospital Foundation (SMHF) is a charitable, fundraising organization raising funds in support of St. Michael’s Hospital, a mid-sized hospital operating in the heart of downtown Toronto, Canada. St. Michael’s Hospital has traditionally positioned itself within the Greater Toronto Area as ‘Toronto’s Urban Angel,’ a Catholic faith based hospital dedicated to improving and supporting the needs of the city’s less fortunate (SMHF, 2012). In addition to providing care for Toronto’s most marginalized populations, St. Michael’s Hospital is a leader in medical education and research and is internationally recognized for its expertise in critical care and trauma, heart disease, neurosurgery, diabetes, cancer and care for the homeless (SMHF Annual Report, 2011).

Ryerson University, a large university also located in downtown Toronto, Canada, refers to itself as “Canada’s leader in innovative, career-focused education and a university clearly on the move. It is a distinctly urban university with a focus on innovation and entrepreneurship. Ryerson has a mission to serve societal need and a long-standing commitment to engaging its community” (Ryerson University, 2012). Ryerson’s fundraising priorities focus on providing students with the opportunity to receive the best and most comprehensive education available regardless of their financial circumstances by offering student awards, bursaries and scholarships (Ryerson University, 2012).

Once the three non-profit organizations were chosen and all of the direct mail samples were collected, they were first identified for how accurately they fall within the direct mail genre according to Bhatia and Upton’s ‘seven-move’ discourse structure. As stated by Bhatia, in order for a fundraising letter to be considered a direct mail letter it must contain six-moves in its discourse with a final move added by Upton. According to the table of ‘Revised move features of non-profit direct mail fundraising letters’ published by Upton (2002: 73) each move must incorporate the following:

1. **Get attention:** comments intended to get the readers’ attention. This may include pleasantries or comments made before the initial greeting.
2. **Introduce the cause and/or establish credentials of organization:** indicates what the problem or need is or what the organization does to address the problem or need. In this move the general problem/need is indicated, the specific problem/need is highlighted, successes of past organization efforts are highlighted and the goals of future organization efforts are outlined.
3. **Solicit response:** the reader is asked to respond in one of two ways
 - a. Financial: stating the benefit of support to the need/problem, asking for a pledge/donation, reminding of past support to encourage future support; and/or

- b. **Other:** contact organization to volunteer/ask questions/give comments.
- 4. **Offer incentives:** indicates the benefit of the gift to the donor. The incentive can be either tangible (e.g. a mug) or intangible (e.g. a feeling of accomplishment).
- 5. **Reference insert:** marks any reference to material included that is beyond the letter itself, such as a brochure, pledge form or return envelope.
- 6. **Express gratitude:** any comments of thanks for past financial/other support or current/future financial support.
- 7. **Conclude with pleasantries:** polite comments at the end of the letter and the ending salutation.

After these components were identified in all twelve samples, a set of detailed operational definitions were applied to each sample in order to further categorize them according to elements, which Goering et al. list as standards for 'Fundraising Discourse.'

The linguistic components listed below as general characteristics that define fundraising appeal letters were taken from popular literature offering advice on the approved language choice and grammatical construction of a direct mail letter. In addition, these components were also chosen based on clear patterns that repeat throughout the direct mail letter genre. The components analyzed under linguistic approach include the use of clear, engaging and personal language, the word 'you' applied as frequently as possible, and the use of powerful words combined with colloquialisms and clichés. The avoidance of similes, metaphors, technical language, adjectives, first person plural, abbreviations and foreign phrases were identified and studied with equal significance. Most importantly, the samples were examined for the use of short sentences and paragraphs and language written at a relatively low readability level. In terms of visual design, the components analyzed under visual

approach include the use of highlighting key text with boldface fonts and underlining, the use of a postscript and post postscript, and the presence or absence of numbered or bulleted lists. Once all of these factors were identified in all twelve samples, each letter was then analyzed for the application of essential principles for good 'Document Design.'

The three main categories outlined by Schriver as fundamental components in 'Document Design' are typography and space, typography based on rhetorical appropriateness, and Gestalt principles for visual design. More specifically, according to Schriver's model, the set of characteristics that define typography and spacing include type and space working together to enhance the legibility of a document through the strategic use of typeface, leading, line length, typographical cues and justification. The rhetorical appropriateness of typography was analyzed according to Schriver's description of "the relationship between the typeface, the purpose of the document, its genre, the situation, and the audience's needs, desires, and purposes" (1997: 283). Here the focus moves beyond the aesthetic functions of type to a consideration of typographic decisions that are sensitive to the document's situation. In other words, how rhetorically appropriate typography aids the designer in setting the mood, personality and tone of the document. Finally, the samples were examined for the application of Gestalt principles in order to "create spatial arrangements that lead readers to see the text in particular ways" (Schriver, 1997: 303). Schriver states this is important because spatial cues allow the creator of the document to group text and images in such a way as to reinforce or mute the message of a text. This can be done through the use of blank space, the arrangement of rows and columns, and the juxtaposition of words and graphics so that certain text elements "pop out" (Schriver, 1997: 303).

Lastly, once the features of document design were identified as either present or absent among the twelve samples, each e-appeal was then categorized based on a set

of patterns and elements stated as necessary for the successful navigation of online documents by Worley, Gurak and Zappen. Good design principles for online documents include much shorter and concise text allowing for a single viewing; the use of hyperlinks, graphics or interactive media; and consideration taken for the affordances and constraints of the technology including speed, reach, anonymity and interactivity. The e-appeal samples were observed specifically for the differences in their communication style and visual design, based on their adaptation from hardcopy to digital format and then further examined for whether or not these changes were necessary and successful in terms of meeting the document's communicative purpose and goal. The results for this MRP's study of Mid-Toronto Community Services, St. Michael's Hospital Foundation and Ryerson University's direct mail fundraising campaigns are discussed in the analysis and interpretation section of this research paper.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, each of the direct mail letters and emails in the sample collection are examined and reviewed in detail using theories and concepts taken from (1) Bhatia and Upton's 'seven-move' discourse structure for the direct mail letter genre; (2) Goering's compilation of linguistic and visual features in 'Fundraising Discourse;' and (3) Schriver's model for 'Document Design.' Also integrated within the analysis and comparison of the printed and digital appeal letters are Worley, Gurak and Zappen's design principles for online documents. All twelve samples included in the collection can be found in the Appendices of this MRP.

Seven-Move Discourse Structure for the Direct Mail Letter

Printed Appeals

The sample collection was first analyzed for the presence of the 'seven-move' discourse structure for direct mail letters initially outlined by Bhatia and then further developed by Upton. The first set of samples from St. Michael's Hospital Foundation clearly make use of six of the seven moves and do so in the exact order laid out by Bhatia and Upton. Sample A begins with a bolded and centered paragraph at the very top to capture the attention of the reader: *"John came into our Emergency complaining of kidney stones...moments later he collapsed and was near death!"* The letter then continues with the description of John's harrowing journey in the Emergency room and at almost exactly mid-point in the page, the cause and credentials of the organization are introduced: *"As a nurse who has worked in St. Michael's Emergency for 22 years, I can tell you this was not a normal emergency."* The first page concludes with a solicitation paragraph starting with the recipient's name and ends with the request to make a financial donation. The second page of Sample A contains an offer of incentive at the

very top: *“As an Urban Angel supporter, you’ve helped St. Michael’s develop programs like Code STEMI and Code Stroke,”* and then approximately half way through the page a reference insert is indicated: *“I hope the attached Urban Angel Supporter Card demonstrates how much we value your compassion.”* Gratitude is expressed in the last paragraph of the letter: *“With your continued support, we can make it happen. Thank you so much for supporting innovation and excellence in health care.”* There is no concluding pleasantry at the end of Sample A other than a brief *“With sincere thanks.”*

Noted upon initial analysis were many instances displaying the level of creativity and versatility present in the direct mail genre. Sample A’s letter for example, closely follows the seven-move discourse structure, but at the same time, is also able to feature several of the moves repeating in a varying manner throughout the letter. The postscript in Sample A is a prime illustration of Upton’s description of several moves capable of either standing alone or embedded within one another. In Sample A’s case, the postscript functions primarily to solicit support (*“to continue supporting St. Michael’s”*), but it also draws attention to an insert (*“simply complete the enclosed reply form”*), and even has two offers of incentives (*“you can choose to make your donation in tribute of someone special”* and *“receive your tax receipt immediately”*).

Another interesting move combination, which includes an offer of incentive, reference insert, solicitation and expression of gratitude, is found in the paragraph written about the Urban Angel Supporter Card. Here, the primary purpose of the paragraph is to offer an incentive – the ability to carry around the Urban Angel Supporter Card proudly – but simultaneously it is able to amalgamate four moves into two simple sentences. Finally, in terms of an expression of gratitude, six distinct versions were identified on both the first and second page of the letter: (1) *“he survived thanks to you;”* (2) *“it’s because of you we are constantly finding ways to make things work better and*

faster;” (3) “John had you, one of his Urban Angel’s by his side;” (4) “thank you so much for supporting innovation and excellence in health care;” (5) “with sincere thanks;” and (6) “thank you for your support.” The dynamic yet simple use of language in Sample A’s letter exhibits strategically, the vast number of unique expressions of gratitude that can be built into a relatively short, two page letter.

The two direct mail samples taken from each of the organizations demonstrate a high tendency to more or less, repeat the same general layout for the majority of the fundraising letters regardless of the type of appeal or time of year, though a few subtle but key variations were noted in some of the direct mail samples. As discussed in detail above using Sample A, the printed direct mail letters from St. Michael’s Hospital employ the seven-move discourse structure almost exactly as outlined by Bhatia and Upton. Sample A was a letter mailed at the beginning of 2012 and is coded as a renewal letter, the main purpose of which is to appeal to donors who have made at least one previous donation to continue their support. Sample B was launched in December 2011 during the holiday season when prospective donors are found to be most likely to make a charitable donation. Both samples begin with an attention-grabbing introduction, move quickly into establishing the credentials of the Hospital and conclude the first page with the solicitation appeal. Both offer multiple incentives, make at least one reference to an insert and repeatedly express their gratitude toward the donor, whether it is for a past or future gift. Sample B also concludes with the pleasantry *“We wish you the very best for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.”*

The two samples from Ryerson University utilize almost all of the moves in the seven-move discourse structure as well, but do so with a somewhat uncommon approach. Most prominent in the samples taken from Ryerson University is first, an unusual document design structure for a printed appeal letter; second, the inclusion of

the reference insert at the bottom of the letter rather than as a separate document; and third, the complete absence of the last move, 'Conclude with pleasantries.' Sample C was launched in April 2011 and Sample D in September 2010. Both are renewal campaigns as is indicated by the same solicitation sentence in Sample C and Sample D *"Thank you for your most recent donation of <\$> on <date>."*

Mid-Toronto Community Services' two samples are also good examples of Bhatia and Upton's seven-move discourse structure. In Sample E, six of the seven moves are present and are presented in the letter in the exact order outlined by Bhatia and Upton. Sample F takes a similar approach to Sample E as both do not include an attention-grabbing move, but Sample F shifts the order of the moves slightly by placing move 6, 'Express gratitude' right at the beginning of the letter in the second paragraph. Sample E, which was mailed during the holiday season was coded as a new prospect campaign, while Sample F was mailed in February 2010 as a renewal appeal. Further analysis reveals that the type of campaign or communicative function each letter represents influences the discourse structure of the letter to a degree, as can be seen in Sample E. Sample E is the only letter in the entire collection that is coded as a new prospect appeal. This type of letter is significant insofar as it must work harder to capture the attention of the reader by persuading him or her to make a donation to a new and possibly unfamiliar cause. In the case of Sample E there are four marked differences as a result. First, the letter makes extremely clear the reasons triggering Ella's critical need for financial aid: *"Ella only receives \$1,200 a month from her pension and she has no savings. She pays \$900 for her rent, which leaves only \$300 to survive each month. And she is faced with paying \$3,810 in rent arrears."* Second, the letter outlines exactly how the donation will be put to use: *"It will pay for: fumigation services, extreme cleaning, beds, couches, chairs, bedding, clothing and laundering."* Third, the solicitation appeal

paragraph is located on the second page instead of the first. Fourth, other than one indirect sentence expressing gratitude: *"Remember any amount you are able to give is much appreciated and will go directly to helping people in need like Ella,"* move 6, 'Express gratitude' is completely missing from this sample letter.

The results from Upton's corpus analysis on direct mail letters, which evaluated data from 242 letters and 71 organizations, were aligned with the results of this research paper in terms of the application of the seven-move discourse structure. According to Upton, the most common move in direct mail letters is move 3, 'Solicit response' (2002). Since the main communicative function of a fundraising letter is to persuade donors to make a financial contribution to a cause these findings are not surprising. In fact, Upton's outcomes showed that 97% of the letters analyzed in his study featured move 3 more than once (2002). This is also true for all six samples examined in this study, with Sample E employing move 3 up to five times.

The second most common move was move 2, 'Introduce the cause and/or establish credentials of organization,' which also appears in all six samples analyzed in this study. Move 2 in particular, is another good instance of the variety and creativity active in fundraising discourse. As a hospital Foundation, St. Michael's focuses on exceptional patient stories and affective and credibility based rhetorical appeals as a way to establish its credentials. In contrast, an educational institution such as Ryerson University uses language that is much more focused on rational and credibility appeals. Meanwhile, Mid-Toronto's mission to help the elderly and adults with disabilities leads them to make affective and rational appeals. Finally, move 1, 'Get attention' and move 7, 'Conclude with pleasantries' appear to be icing-on-the-cake moves that are drawn upon when desired but by no means considered necessary (Upton, 2002). This is also illustrated in the sample collection taken from St. Michael's Hospital, Ryerson University

and Mid-Toronto. Of the three organizations, St. Michael's was the only one to employ what can be considered a direct statement to grab the reader's attention: "*Mrs. Sample, imagine you are in the fight for your life...*" Lastly, only two out of the six samples actually conclude with a pleasantry in addition to an ending salutation.

E-appeals

Though Upton's description of the direct mail letter genre was designed specifically with the traditional printed letter format in mind, each of the e-appeal samples were nevertheless examined for the presence of the seven-move discourse structure. The first noticeable distinction was that all of the emails from St. Michael's Hospital and Ryerson University's campaigns were quite a bit shorter in length than their hardcopy equivalents and as a result, did not include as many moves. Sample G is only six paragraphs long and one page in length. Moreover, Sample G begins with the sentence "*Recently you received a letter telling the amazing story of a patient named John,*" indicating that the email is operating as a follow-up appeal to a hardcopy letter mailed earlier. The writer makes the assumption that the recipient has already received a hardcopy letter but has yet to make a donation. In the email's condensed version the attention-grabbing move is missing as is the move introducing the cause and establishing the credentials of the organization. Move 6, 'Express gratitude' occurs mid-way through the email's body, out of order, while move 3, 'Solicit response' still appears multiple times in various parts of the email. There are also three offers of incentives, with a key offer ("*receive a tax receipt immediately*") explicitly taking advantage of the speed and reach made possible by email. Since the appeal is in digital format, move 5, 'Reference insert' can be attributed to the three hyperlinks directing readers to the donation webpage and finally, move 7 is a short, concluding salutation.

Sample H, the second e-appeal taken from St. Michael's Hospital, is even shorter in length than Sample G. At four paragraphs long, Sample H works in reverse order than Sample G beginning with a paragraph informing readers that they are about to receive a letter in the mail. Encompassed within the four paragraphs is a hyperlink directing readers to Rameza's story, a brief solicitation, an offer of incentive and an expression of gratitude. The solicitation appeal, offer of incentive and expression of gratitude are all contained within the postscript. Ryerson University's e-appeal samples are by far the shortest in length of the sample collection and can be observed in a single viewing, without having to scroll down in order to see the entire document. Sample I begins with a brief, attention-grabbing sentence followed by a short introduction to the cause and then concludes with a quick solicitation request. Sample J is similar in length, but functions as a follow-up email to the hardcopy letter mailed previously. The premise of the appeal is to urge readers to make a donation if they have yet to do so. The two e-appeals from Mid-Toronto on the other hand, are the most similar to their printed counterparts. Sample K is shortened quite a bit to fit into a single viewing but still contains six of the seven discourse moves, as is the case with the original appeal letter. Lastly, Sample L is by far the longest of all the e-appeals at almost exactly the same length as its printed version. As is indicated by the introduction sentence, Sample L is a follow-up email to a hardcopy letter mailed the month before. The only major difference between the print and digital formats is that, as a follow-up email, Sample L does not reference Mrs. Chow's story, which is featured in the original letter.

Linguistic and Visual Elements of the Fundraising Letter

Printed Appeals – Linguistic Elements

Once the samples in this study were identified as falling within the genre of direct mail letters, each sample was then scanned for the use of specific linguistic elements related to the language choice and grammatical construction of a fundraising letter. First and foremost was the application of the word ‘you’ as frequently as possible. This could be stated in several forms such as *you*, *your*, and *thank you*, in a conjunction like *you’ll* or *you’ve*, or by direct use of the recipient’s name (not included in the salutation or address information sections). The word ‘you’ is applied abundantly within the sample collection (see Figure 1).

Sample	Number of Times
A	30
B	37
C	11
D	19
E	12
F	15

Figure 1: The word ‘you’

Next, a variety of clichés are plainly in use: *“For a young woman on the brink of death;”* *“fuels the passions of students;”* and *“I feel ready to take on the world.”* Colloquialisms are plentiful throughout all of the direct mail letters: *“He was in the right place at the right time;”* *“Rameza got sick again;”* *“It all started when I was 12 years old;”* and *“But it hasn’t been easy.”* And most importantly, both positive and negative powerful words abound: *deteriorating*, *clutching*, *epic battle*, *complete organ failure*, *state-of-the-art*, *life saving*, *ravaged*, *acclaimed*, *infested*, *survival*, *daunting*, and *heartbreaking*.

Alternatively, both Ryerson and Mid-Toronto's letters avoid similes and metaphors; however, several metaphors can be found in the samples taken from St. Michael's Hospital. Sample B in particular, is a holiday campaign featuring a candle theme, which is quite prevalently referenced throughout the letter in the form of analogies: *"a glimmer of hope remained;" "helping to light the way from the moment she arrived;"* and *"thank you for lighting the way."* In addition to the candle analogy, there is also the Urban Angel theme, which repeats throughout all of St. Michael's letters: *"you become like an angel to countless people in the community"* and *"John had you, one of his Urban Angels by his side."* Unfortunately, the scope of this paper is unable to consider studies conducted on the impact of the use of metaphors in fundraising letters, although this analysis seems to indicate the Foundation's liberal use of metaphors is mostly limited to their themed holiday campaigns. The other abstentions referenced in critical literature such as the avoidance of technical language, adjectives, first person plural, abbreviations and foreign phrases are all observed in the sample collection. Finally, all six samples are structured and formatted with fairly short sentences and paragraphs using colloquial language written at a relatively low readability grade level.

Printed Appeals – Visual Elements

Since the visual design and physical structure of the direct mail letter hold equal importance to the linguistic features of a direct mail letter, specific visual elements were analyzed as either present or missing from the sample collection. Available literature suggests that a proper fundraising letter should include the use of highlighting techniques such as bolding and underlining text in order to draw attention to important points or to point out benefits (Goering et al., 2011). The strategic application of highlighting techniques is obvious in all six hardcopy letters. St. Michael's preference is

to bold short, attention-grabbing sentences and underline text only in key instances. Of the three organizations, Ryerson utilizes the highlighting technique the least, choosing only to bold the solicitation sentence and subtitles introducing subsections within the letter. Mid-Toronto makes the greatest use of this technique by often bolding, underlining and italicizing key words, sometimes even employing a combination of two or all three of the features in one sentence. Next, concerning the use of postscripts, Sample C is the only sample that does not include a postscript, while Sample A and Sample B both feature a postscript and a post postscript. The last visual feature mentioned by Goering et al. is the frequent use of either numbered or bulleted lists. These are completely missing from the samples taken from St. Michael's Hospital and Mid-Toronto but are present in Ryerson's fundraising letters. Bullet points are used in the section outlining how the potential donor's gift can '*make a difference*' and on the second page of Sample D where a list of alumni accomplishments are described. Lastly, of the six samples, Ryerson's letters are the only samples to incorporate full colour images other than logos into the heading of their letters (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Heading taken from Sample D

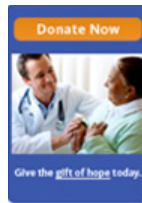
E-appeals – Linguistic Elements

Following the examination of the six direct mail letter samples, the six e-appeal samples were evaluated for the application of both the linguistic and visual treatments indicative of fundraising letters. Although much shorter in length than their printed counterparts the e-appeal samples feature a fair amount of the linguistic elements outlined for direct mail. In Sample G, the word 'you' is used 14 times, a wide variety of powerful words are integrated throughout the email and generally speaking, similes, metaphors, technical language and foreign phrases are avoided. The language itself remains approximately at the same readability level and in the same colloquially written manner as the hardcopy letter and is simply shortened to include only the most necessary components required to capture the attention of the reader. Likewise, the same linguistic features and avoidances can be found in the remainder of the e-appeal samples.

E-appeals – Visual Elements

Conversely, the visual design of the e-appeals is where there is a notable variation between the two formats. The most important differentiation is that the highlighting technique of underlining text is present in all six e-appeals only as an indication of a hyperlink. Bolded text is integrated into some of the samples sparingly and never in conjunction with an underline. None of the samples make use of bulleted or numbered lists but five out of the six email samples contain a postscript. Finally, the liberal use of full colour graphics is unmistakable in the email samples from St. Michael's Hospital and Ryerson University (see Figure 3).

Sample G



Sample H



Sample I & Sample J



Figure 3: Colour graphics and hyperlinks

Mid-Toronto's sample e-appeals do not include colour graphics or interactive links. This however, is attributed to the fact that the agency's smaller operating budget does not allow for the purchase of email marketing service programs that offer user-friendly, yet effective platforms for designing eye-catching emails capable of supporting graphics.

Document Design

Using Karen A. Schriver's model for 'Document Design,' the sample collection was analyzed for the application of the fundamental components for good document design: typography and space, typography based on rhetorical appropriateness and Gestalt principles for visual design. In her effort to define good document design, Schriver considers the role of design in a document and how it can help the reader identify important text and recognize its structure (1997: 251). Schriver defines the role of document design as the ability to understand how typographic and spatial cues can be employed to help readers get the 'big picture' or the communicative message of a document. She describes the 'big picture' as the ability "to see the text's hierarchy, the relation of parts to the whole, and the distinction between main ideas and details (whether on paper or online)" (1997: 251). Since people tend to skim through texts as they read, they scan the document in hopes that the vital parts will jump out at them. For document designers, the objective is to develop an information structure that will help

readers meet their goal for rapid access (Schriver, 1997). In the following section each of the three components will be broken down and discussed in detail in terms of their presentation and utilization in the fundraising letters devised by the three organizations in the sample collection.

Typography and Space – Typefaces

Typography and space is rooted in the concern for legibility (1997: 251). Legibility in turn, is the ease with which people can read text. The study of legibility is the investigation of “how shapes of letters (including numerals) enable people to read text quickly, effortlessly, and with understanding” (8). When it comes to typography, there are two basic styles of type: serif and sans serif. A *serif* is a line or curve that finishes off the end of a letterform. For the most part, serif fonts are considered to be more useful because “they help the reader’s eye distinguish individual letters and provide visual continuity across words” (255). Sans serif faces⁷ on the other hand, have “little variation in the stroke width of the letterform, providing a uniform, clean, modern appearance” (256). Another distinguishing feature of sans serif fonts is that they typically have better contrast between their plain and bolded letterforms thereby allowing for greater visual distinction among text. This in turn allows document designers the ability to signal the hierarchy of the text more easily. Finally, some designers now advocate using a combination of serif and sans serif faces together in the same document as they offer the best of both worlds – “the visually rich texture of the serif face (typically used for body text) and the sparse, uniform look of the sans serif (often for heading, captions, and marginalia)” (257).

⁷ Early printers set type using rectangular metal blocks each with a raised letterform on top. The raised letterform was called the *face* resulting in the term *typeface*. The *typeface* refers to the complete set of characters, punctuation and symbols that share a common design. Today the terms *font* and *typeface* (or *face*) are often used interchangeably.

A detailed analysis of the sample collection indicates the use of one typeface for the direct mail letters and an alternate typeface for the e-appeals in almost all of the samples, though none make use of a combination of serif and sans serif faces together in the same document. For the purposes of this analysis, only the typography in the main body text was studied – differences between the main body typeface and letterhead typeface for example, were not considered as a strategic use of typography and spacing in this case. In terms of the sample collection, both of the printed letters from St. Michael's Hospital are composed in a serif font, while the email appeals are composed in a sans serif font. Ryerson University's printed letters and emails all employ a sans serif font, while three of the four samples from Mid-Toronto apply the same sans serif typeface, with only Sample F applying a different sans serif typeface.

Typography and Space – Leading and Line Length, Typographic Cues and Justification

The other feature of typography and space mentioned by Schriver pertains to leading and line length. *Leading* is “the amount of vertical space between lines of type” (260). The amount of space in between lines can affect the legibility of a document because type can be hard to read without enough breathing space. Studies have indicated that one of the more common problems associated with poor document design is tight leading. Insufficient leading reduces a hardcopy page to a blurry shade of gray and on a computer screen it will give the text a vibrating and busy look (262). A general rule is that body text requires more leading, while headings require much less. This is because headings are easier to see and too much space around them can make the text look choppy, spread apart and even fragmented (262). The *line length* on the other hand, “is the distance between the left and right margin of the type. Line length is also called *measure* or *column width*” (262). Typically, longer lines of type need a larger point

size and more leading. When lines of type are too long (more than 70 characters), the tendency of readers to lose their place in the document more often is increased (263). Conversely, Schriver states that when lines are too short (roughly three words or less), “readers may find the text difficult because the visual display tends to break up the syntactic groupings of words, a cue which readers use to comprehend clusters of words” (Paterson & Tinker, 1940, 1942). As a result, lines on paper that are considered easy to read are about 40 to 70 characters long or around eight to twelve words per line, while shorter line lengths of about 40 to 60 characters are more desirable when designing for a computer screen (263).

The strategic use of typography and spacing in a document acts as a typographic cue for readers so that they can make distinctions among continuous and non-continuous text. Other typographic cues include (1) altering the size and slant of text elements; (2) shifting the position of the text by *outdenting*⁸; (3) bolding text; (4) capitalizing text; or (5) changing to a different typeface altogether (264). Experimenting with the interaction among these five typographic cues – size, position, weight, case and style – is the basis of good legibility.

A final consideration central to typography and space is the justification of text, which refers to the visual display of the left and right margin (269). To *justify* a text means to arrange the text so that it has vertical edges on both the left and right margin forming the shape of a box. Right-justified text (also called *ragged-right* text) is text aligned on the left margin with a ragged right margin. Left-justified text (also called *ragged-left* text) is text aligned along the right margin with a ragged left margin. Research by Campbell, Marchetti and Mewhort (1981) found that reading speed is increased significantly with right-justified text rather than with justified text because equal

⁸ To outdent is to indent negatively, to bring the text toward the margin rather than away from the margin.

horizontal spaces between words are easier to read than the large, unpredictable spaces between words, called rivers, that can be found in justified text (270). Hence, the concern by document designers is how to achieve text without rivers or excessive hyphenation. Consequently, each of the direct mail samples were assessed for the implementation of suitable line length and leading, as well as for the five typographic cues and for justification.

St. Michael's two printed letters use a 12-point, sans serif typeface with a line length upwards of 70 characters. There are no alterations in font size, no capitalization of text and no changes in typeface in either of the letters. However, there is a clear and abundant use of position cues and weight cues to draw attention to key points in the documents such as in the sentences *"Together we can save even more lives"* and *"Thanks to her Urban Angels and compassionate supporters like you, Rameza beat the odds."* All of the bolded texts in both hardcopy letters are spaced separately and distinctively (center aligned rather than left justified) from the rest of the document. Meanwhile, the e-appeal samples use a 12-point, sans serif typeface and shorter line lengths of approximately 50 characters. Once again, there are no changes in the size, case and style of the typeface and no outdenting due to the noticeably condensed version of the e-appeal letter. Sample G includes one bolded sentence soliciting support, while Sample F does not include any bolded text at all.

The two letters taken from Ryerson University are written with a smaller and condensed typeface when compared to the letters from St. Michael's Hospital. The line length in both printed samples is also much shorter than the average hardcopy letter. At about 16 characters per line the visual design of the letters features a strong departure from the traditional, sequential presentation of information usually found in a letter copy (Worley, 1996). Both Sample C and Sample D do not apply any changes to the size,

position or style of typography, but of all the samples they are the only ones to utilize capitalization to distinguish a heading from the rest of the text. Bolded text is also used to draw attention to the solicitation appeal sentence and to subheadings within the document. Similar to St. Michael's e-appeals, Ryerson's email samples are noticeably shorter in length. The font size is increased as a result and no longer appears as condensed. The picture at the top left hand corner, depicting the sender of the email in both Sample I and Sample J affects the positioning of the text giving the line length a larger variation, ranging anywhere between 10 characters to 17 characters per line. It is interesting to note that visually the email samples from Ryerson make use of a more traditional, sequential presentation of information than their printed equivalents. In terms of typographic cues, only a very small amount of bolded text is applied, otherwise no other cues are present.

Mid-Toronto's hardcopy letters feature two different san serif 12-point typefaces, both of which are fairly common. The two letters are printed on agency letterhead, which contains a column running down the right side of the page displaying the agency's contact information. Since the letterhead is visible only on the first page, the column shortens the line length of the body's text to about 65 characters per line in Sample E and 55 characters per line in Sample F, with the line length increasing to a little over 75 characters on the second page. As previously mentioned, both samples utilize a fair amount of bolding and some strategic positioning of text is apparent in Sample F to draw attention to a quote, but otherwise no other typographical cues are present. The same can be said about Mid-Toronto's two e-appeal samples. Unlike the emails from St. Michael's Hospital and Ryerson University, Mid-Toronto's emails are only slightly shorter than their hardcopy counterparts. Sample L for instance, is by far the longest of all the emails in this collection with a total of 500 words. The two emails are written in a 12-point

font where the only typographical cue in use is the bolding of key sentences in the text. Mid-Toronto's four samples are also the only samples in the collection to use justification instead of right-aligning the body of their text.

Typography Based on Rhetorical Appropriateness

The second main characteristic outlined by Schriver as a central component for good document design is typography based on rhetorical appropriateness. Here we move beyond concerns with the aesthetic function of type to consider the rhetorical role that typography plays in readers' engagement with and interpretation of content (284). For Schriver, "well-chosen typography helps to reveal the content and its structure, enabling readers to see the text in ways that help them to interpret its meaning" (284). Experienced designers will always take into consideration *what* is to be read, *why* it is to be read, *who* will read it, and *when* and *where* it will be read (284). Rhetorically appropriate typography contemplates how people engage with documents in particular situations and then makes decisions on typographic and spatial cues that are sensitive to those readers' needs. Thus, the main concern for today's designers is no longer legibility, but rather choosing the most appropriate typeface from a set of legible ones (287). An appropriate typeface will allow the designer to evoke a particular effect and atmosphere through type.

Analysis of the sample collection reveals that St. Michael's Hospital's hardcopy letters feature the greatest divergence from their email appeals in their application of rhetorically appropriate typography. Both of the printed letter samples taken from St. Michael's are written with the customary Times New Roman font, while the two email samples utilize a noticeably different sans serif font. The serif typeface is considered easier to read and more traditional, so perhaps in the case of the direct mail letters, the

Times New Roman font also works to suggest that the message contained in the letters is credible. In contrast, the emails written in a sans serif font give them a contemporary and youthful appearance. As well, the modification from one typeface to another by the document's designers can be attributed to the cultural understanding that the speed of email encourages a more oral and casual style of writing and prose than its printed equivalent even though the messaging stays the same (Zappen, 2005: 30-33). In contrast, Ryerson University's printed letters and emails both employ a sans serif font; however, the sans serif font in the hardcopy letters can be said to convey a more conventional and professional sentiment, especially when compared to the sans serif font used in their e-appeals. Lastly, Sample F is the only one of the four samples taken from Mid-Toronto to use Arial, while the other three samples use Calibri. Further analysis reveals that in Mid-Toronto's samples the differences between the two typefaces are insignificant and cannot be considered as a strategic use of rhetorically appropriate typography.

Gestalt Principles for Visual Design

The final characteristic outlined by Schriver as a vital consideration for good document design is the application of Gestalt principles for visual design. Through the tactical use of typographic cues and techniques, we have seen that designers are able to either reinforce or mute the message of a text. According to Schriver, the same results can be achieved through the spatial arrangement of text. Since its inception, Gestalt psychology has been primarily concerned with the study of perception. One of the earliest discoveries made by Gestalt psychologists was "that the way things look depends not just on the properties of their elementary parts, but also, and more importantly, on their organization" (303). Today, there are seven main Gestalt principles

that can be applied to visual design; however, due to the confines of this study, each individual principle will not be discussed in detail. Instead, this analysis considers Gestalt principles on a broader level as a valuable tool available to document designers to help them accomplish their rhetorical goals. These principles can be used to help guide the reader's focus of attention, emphasize certain groupings and organize sequences of content (326).

The application of Gestalt principles can be said to be rather subtle in direct mail letters, though arguably some are used more effectively and more often than others. The samples from Ryerson University display the most obvious instances of visually grouping text elements together in order to emphasize specific relationships in the content. The various methods by which these different groupings can be accentuated are through columns and rows, by varying the size of text and image elements, colour or contrast, shape or separation (309). Sample C and Sample D are good examples of the application of spatial groupings of related text. The main messaging of both letters is grouped together in the middle of the document with a ragged-right justification. Another section indicating how the donor's gift can '*make a difference*' is isolated from the main document through the use of a number of grouping techniques: (1) it is featured in a separate column; (2) the background of the column is visually displayed in a darker shade than the rest of the document; (3) the shaded background of the column forms a box around the content; and (4) related text elements within the box are further grouped together through bolded subheadings and bulleted points (see Figure 4).

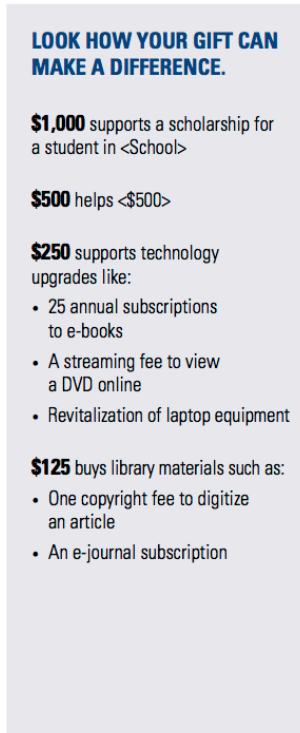


Figure 4: Gestalt grouping technique taken from Sample C

Since Ryerson's two hardcopy letters are the only samples in the collection to have their donation forms attached to their letters, it is worthwhile to discuss how their document designers have applied Gestalt principles to the design of the donation forms as well. In Sample C, the reader can visually distinguish the letter as grouped into three sections. At the top of the letter is the heading, which is separated from the body by a thickly, bolded line. The donation form at the bottom of the letter is also separated from the body by a dotted line. These lines have effectively organized the related content within the letter in such a way as to be easily discernible by the reader's eye. In addition to this, the donation form itself makes good use of spatial groupings by organizing content into two separate columns. Each of the groupings is further emphasized using bolded subheadings and bulleted lists. The credit card information portion is also

grouped together distinctly by its darker background, forming a box around the credit card information contained within it (see Figure 5).

YES, I want to help students make their mark!

please turn over to provide additional information >

How to give – three easy options

- Call 1-866-428-8881 or 416-979-5000, ext. 6516
- Go online to www.ryerson.ca/annualfund
- Fill out this form and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope

Please direct my gift to:

☐ the area of greatest need

☐ scholarships/student aid

☐ the Library

☐ Athletics

☐ <School>

<TITLE> <FIRST_NAME> <LAST_NAME>

<ADDR_1> <ADDR_2>

<CITY> <ST> <ZIP>

<ID> <Project #>

Contribution method

☐ **OPTION 1: Single contribution**

☐ Cheque / money order* or ☐ Credit card (fill out below)

☐ <M1> ☐ <M2> ☐ <M3> ☐ <M4> ☐ Other: \$ _____

☐ **OPTION 2: Authorized monthly contribution****

☐ Void cheque or ☐ Credit card (fill out below)

☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Credit card information: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Figure 5: Donation form taken from Sample C

Lastly, the second page of Sample C features a “*How to give – three easy options*” box located in the middle of the letter, surrounded by white space. The box is clearly outlined using lines to separate it from the rest of the document and make it ‘pop out.’ This incredibly simple box is a prime example of the application of a Gestalt grouping technique, as well as the strategic use of white space.

Findings and Interpretation

Detailed analysis of the twelve direct mail samples in this MRP has revealed a number of key findings. Most important is that the expectations of the audience must be considered first when designing a document. Understanding and recognizing the information a reader expects to take away from a document should form the foundation of the written and visual structure of the document. By bringing readers into the process, document designers increase the likelihood of creating instruction manuals that users can easily understand, donation forms that are simple to complete and webpages that

are straightforward for navigation. This in turn will increase the chances that the document will achieve the specific goal or function required by its designers. Of equal importance, results from the sample collection of this MRP have clearly illustrated that the written rhetorical and design strategy of the direct mail fundraising letter is altered when applied to online media based on the understanding that readers' expectations change when reading a hardcopy letter versus one received by email.

A direct comparison between the e-appeal samples and the hardcopy direct mail letters taken from St. Michael's Hospital Foundation, Ryerson University and Mid-Toronto Community Services demonstrate several notable adaptations when shifting from one type of media to another. The e-appeals are all much shorter in length than their printed letter equivalents. In fact, four out of the six e-appeals function as either a follow-up to a letter previously mailed or as a prelude for a letter about to be mailed. The use of hyperlinks in the emails directing readers to another webpage featuring the entire contents of the campaign's purpose also allow for a more concise email. This strategy is indicative of Wysocki's (1998) findings where she states that a direct transfer from print to computer screen requires a reexamination of the audience and purpose of the document. The emails have clearly been reduced in length to fit within a single viewing or screen sized chunk based on the cultural assumption that the email's audience operates at a different speed than those who read printed documents. People receive many emails daily, so document designers have less time and space to capture their attention. Furthermore, the purpose of the document has changed from a printed fundraising letter to a brief email, either introducing the particular campaign or reminding readers of the campaign's needs. Finally, the presence of hyperlinks and the departure from the traditional, sequential presentation of information in all of the e-appeal samples is another aspect of email, which separates it from its printed format.

With regards to the written rhetorical strategy of the email letters, several adjustments were noted. The prose utilized within the emails appears to be more casual, with less personalization. The reason for this alteration can be attributed to a number of specific cultural assumptions when using email. First is the shift in age of prospects from those born prior to the Second World War to those born post-War. The general demographic of email users will likely be younger in age and are also well aware of the affordances and constraints (speed, reach, anonymity and interactivity) of online documents and how they affect content. As previously stated by Gurak, speed encourages an oral, causal style, which is most evident in the salutation of the letter samples. The majority of the hardcopy letters include a formal salutation with a prefix (i.e. Mr. or Miss) followed by the surname. Alternatively, the emails tend to use either the first name of the recipient or in Mid-Toronto's case, "*Dear Friend of Mid-Toronto.*" Reach allows for communication among multiple participants, which explains the lack of personalization in the emails other than in the salutation. Other examples of a lack of personalization are evident since there are no suggested donation amounts included in any of the e-appeals and the option to "*unsubscribe from the list*" is offered. Anonymity problematizes notions of authorship, which is countered through assurances such as wording like "*secure donation page.*" And finally, opportunities for interactivity are clearly capitalized throughout the e-appeals through the inclusion of hyperlinks, large "*donate now*" buttons and repeated references made to "*just one click*" and "*receive a tax receipt immediately.*"

The visual rhetorical and document design strategy of the e-appeal is similarly revealing in terms of the differences between online and offline documents and how audiences consume them. The most important divergence between the two formats is the presence of colourful graphics integrated into the e-appeals. Fundraising researchers

have always been concerned with the visual design of fundraising letters and how to capture readers' attention without appearing wasteful or extravagant. Studies in advertising and visual design have quite obviously proved the significance of arousing and grabbing the attention of audiences through attractive design; however, when fundraising, attractive design must be balanced with concerns for donors' aversion to high fundraising costs. Since digital documents are not printed the inclusion of full colour graphics does not increase fundraising costs. As a result, the e-appeals from St. Michael's Hospital Foundation and Ryerson University feature colourful pictures and large graphics, but there is one significant divergence noted in the samples from Ryerson University. Ryerson's printed direct mail letters include a full colour picture banner at the top of both samples, a strategic move not traditionally found in hardcopy direct mail letters. The document layout of Ryerson's letters also diverges from the customary direct mail letter format by introducing columns into the main body and attaching the donation form to the bottom of the letter. As technologies advance and the costs associated with them decrease, only time will tell whether this strategy will be lucrative or not.

In terms of the three fundamental components for good document design, several key findings are important to discuss. The tactical application of typography and space, typography based on rhetorical appropriateness and Gestalt principles for visual design are all clearly in use in the sample collection. They work together to meet both the document designers' goals and the readers' expectations of the documents. In her description of document design, Schriver states that the strategic application of document design principles will set the mood, look and feel of the document (i.e. formal or informal, urgent or relaxed). This can be seen in the varying use of rhetorically appropriate typography in the sample collection. St. Michael's printed letters were written

in a formal and traditional serif typeface suggesting a more official letter, while the emails were written in a casual and contemporary sans serif typeface suggesting a more informal letter. The same can be said about Ryerson's use of sans serif fonts. The sans serif font in the hardcopy letters appears more 'businesslike' and formal than the sans serif font used in the email appeals. Once again, although the subject matter of the e-appeal remains the same as its printed counterpart, the oral and casual style of email must be taken into consideration when applying rhetorically appropriate typography.

Next, good document design makes the structure of the document apparent (i.e. hierarchy, relationships, clusters of related ideas) and it reveals what the writer feels is important (i.e. emphasis on certain words and pictures). All six hardcopy letters in the sample collection follow the conventional practices outlined for what the structure of a direct mail letter should look like. Sentences and paragraphs are grouped together and are kept short and concise. Plenty of typographical cues including altering the position, weight and case of the text are applied to create hierarchy, signal relationships and draw attention to important parts of the document. In Ryerson's case the additional use of bulleted points and Gestalt grouping techniques further emphasize clusters of related ideas. Conversely, the structure of the e-appeal samples differs from their printed equivalents in the use of typographical cues. Bolding and underlining can be found in the emails but are never used simultaneously. This is attributed to the general understanding that on a webpage, bolded and underlined text indicates links to related subject matter. The emails also feature short, concise sentences and paragraphs; however, their shortened length does not require the additional use of bulleted points or other grouping techniques.

Finally, a well thought-out document design encourages readers to scan and navigate the document in a specific way (i.e. top to bottom, left to right, column to

column) and it gives clues about the type of document or its genre (i.e. business letter or bus schedule, etc.). All twelve samples in this case are structured using the conventional written letter format. The hardcopies include the address information of the recipient at the top, as well as the date. They begin with a salutation to a specific individual, continue with the body of the letter and conclude with pleasantries alongside the signature of the person who wrote the letter. This type of structure indicates that the genre of the document is a personalized letter. The design of the samples also suggests one-on-one communication between the sender and the recipient and should be navigated in the same way as a traditional letter, from top to bottom beginning with the first page and then flipping over to the second page in the hardcopy letters and scrolling down for the emails. The email appeals do not include the address information for the recipient or the date of the email since traditionally these features are not found in emails.

Earlier on, when considering the different written rhetorical strategies applied to email appeal fundraising letters, the many ways in which writing practices change in digital environments were also discussed. The need for the contents of the letter to be compressed into a single viewing in the email format, means that the writer must 'get to the point' immediately. Culturally known practices associated with email also encourage a more oral and conversational written style. Moreover, the technological constraints of email do not allow for as many opportunities for personalization. This is apparent in the case where a suggested donation amount is not included in the e-appeals and the number of times the recipient's name is integrated into the email is reduced drastically. Alternatively, the affordances offered by email technology mean additional brochures and enclosures are not required and can be replaced by hyperlinks offering potential donors more convenient and instantaneous incentives for making a donation. However, the incredible reach and anonymity of email also means that document designers must

be sure to include assurances to their readers that donations made through the website are both secure and private and that readers have the option to unsubscribe from the email list or update their subscription preferences at a time convenient for them.

Finally, in an attempt to outline a few best practices and techniques in terms of the written rhetorical strategy of fundraising when using email, it is worthwhile to mention some writing practices that should *not* change in digital environments. Regardless of the medium, fundraising letters in general ought to feature the specific linguistic elements related to language choice and grammatical construction that define the direct mail letter genre. This means including the word 'you' as many times as possible and using clear, engaging and personal language in addition to powerful words, colloquialisms and clichés. Even in the more informal style of email similes, metaphors, technical language and foreign phrases should be avoided. As well, email's more casual and oratory style should never compromise the use of proper grammar. There is one notable exception however, sentences beginning with conjunctions and contractions are still considered useful in order to maintain a colloquial and casual style of prose. Most importantly, the short sentence and paragraph structure indicative of the direct mail letter should be maintained. Conclusions from this analysis also reveal that the most important moves in the seven-move discourse structure ('Solicit response,' 'Offer incentives,' and 'Express gratitude') can still be repeated numerous times throughout the shortened email and that postscripts and post postscripts are considered valuable in both printed and digitally produced fundraising letters.

With regards to some of the best practices and techniques exhibited for the visual design of the fundraising e-appeal, two important aspects must be taken into consideration. First, highlighting techniques must reflect the cultural assumptions embedded within the use of the technology. This means that a combination of bolded

and underlined text is an indication of a hyperlink. Text that does not take the reader to an alternate webpage should never be bolded and underlined together. Second, visual design elements that appear attractive on paper may not necessarily translate well to the computer screen. As a result, the screen resolution, screen size and the antialiasing of fonts should be tested when designing digital texts. Intricate visual designs and typefaces should be viewed in a variety of settings to ensure they are adaptable to diverse mediums of display including widescreen computer monitors, digitally enhanced computer monitors and even television monitors. The size and quality of graphics and pictures can appear pixelated or amateur if they are low quality and designed improperly. And lastly, the Internet provides a perfect forum for research on proven practices for visual design elements discovered and offered by authorities working in digital document design. Generally speaking, if experts in the field caution newer designers against the use of shadow boxes and oversized text for email headings, such practices should be avoided in the document design strategy of the e-appeal.

Three of the vital components discussed under document design and digital rhetoric were notably missing from Mid-Toronto's online strategy: the use of rhetorically appropriate typography, the use of colourful graphics, and a shorter, more concise email format. These marked differences could be attributed to several factors. Mid-Toronto is a significantly smaller organization compared to St. Michael's Hospital Foundation and Ryerson University and as a result must operate under greater budget constraints. With a larger pool of resources available, both St. Michael's Hospital and Ryerson University are able to either outsource their fundraising appeals to direct mail marketing companies that offer complete and specialized services for designing fundraising appeals, or in the case of their e-appeals, utilize email-marketing services that include templates and result tracking services. Email-marketing services in particular, have features that allow users

to integrate high-quality multimedia graphics and hyperlinks into the body of an email. In addition, a separate webpage designed specifically for the campaign means that the email does not need to include the entire contents of the campaign, the donation form or any supplemental materials, thereby decreasing the email's length.

Critical analysis of Mid-Toronto's online fundraising strategy clearly indicates the agency does not make use of email-marketing services. This could be due in part to several factors such as a lack of funding, a lack of human resources to maintain and keep track of online operations, an email contact list that is too small to warrant the costs associated with email-marketing services or a donor base that prefers to receive communications via traditional mail. Some of the key features offered by email-marketing programs include extensive template galleries, social media integration, email list management services and the option to test emails before they are sent out. These pre-designed email templates could be the reason why St. Michael's Hospital and Ryerson's emails are much shorter in length, include multi-media graphics and are written in a less traditional font. A lack of resources could also limit Mid-Toronto's ability to design specific webpages for each of their fundraising campaigns, thereby increasing the length of their emails. Nonetheless, results from this analysis have revealed that while there are no guaranteed successes when it comes to online fundraising, by combining theories and accepted practices offered by experts in the field together with an open mind, knowledge of one's donor base, and a willingness to experiment and take risks, the likelihood of success in email fundraising can be increased regardless of the size of the organization and its available resources.

CONCLUSION

The results derived from the examination of the direct mail letters and email appeals from St. Michael's Hospital Foundation, Ryerson University and Mid-Toronto Community Services have clearly demonstrated the significance of employing a precise, written rhetorical and document design strategy when crafting fundraising letters. Using Karen Schriver's model for good 'Document Design' and Bhatia and Upton's 'seven-move' discourse structure model for the direct mail letter genre, this MRP's analysis has revealed that an extremely targeted and well thought-out fundraising approach is utilized by the three fundraising organizations in their direct mail letter and email appeal campaigns. Furthermore, the presence of a targeted fundraising strategy and document design strategy confirms an initial belief that fundraising experts are well aware of the need to design their messaging based on its medium of display.

Several major transformations in fundraising have taken place over the past few decades shifting the emphasis from methodology driven fundraising to donor driven fundraising. This shift is evident in the present day fundraising approach of the three organizations analyzed in this study. At the very center of the written and visual design strategy utilized by these three organizations are the expectations of the potential donor – the readers of their documents. The samples in this collection have illustrated that each printed direct mail letter is personalized according to the specific preferences of the particular niche audience being addressed; while entire paragraphs featuring exact variables devised to attract target demographics are supplemented from letter to letter. But with new advancements in technology, these findings have also revealed that a targeted appeal letter is no longer enough. Non-profit organizations are now turning to online fundraising as a cheaper and more convenient method for reaching potential

donors. Email allows for the rapid, instantaneous and economic dissemination of information, all of which can contribute to efficient and effective fundraising. However, in spite of the desire for quick and easy communication the shift in preference from mass communication to one-on-one communication must not be forgotten. Audiences today are clear in their preferred method of contact and will not hesitate to voice their concerns and their discontent. Thus, fundraising in the 21st century is slowly moving away from more traditional methods for raising money in order to capitalize on the speed, reach and convenience the Internet has to offer.

A major limitation for this study was that the email samples in the collection could not be viewed in their original email formats. Instead, they were collected and analyzed as PDF copies. Consequently, the visual components that can be influenced and altered by the computer screen, such as the antialiasing of fonts and the distortion of graphics could not be tested or viewed using the samples in this MRP's collection. Similarly, the samples formatted as PDF copies also produced an additional limitation whereby the donation page and any hyperlinks leading to an alternate webpage featuring the campaign's story could not be viewed. In countering these limitations, future research in this area should move beyond an analysis of fundraising emails to explore the written and visual design strategy of the donation webpage, the campaign's webpage and other supplemental webpages alongside their email appeals. Future research could also include an analysis of direct mail letters and emails that run counter to traditional formats like Ryerson University's hardcopy letter samples. A detailed examination of which rhetorical strategies hold more weight than others in their ability to influence the success of a document's design would be beneficial. Finally, a complete analysis of the written rhetorical structure and document design of digital fundraising email appeals taken from all kinds of non-profit organizations with various goals and purposes, launched at

different times of year would contribute to and further enrich the evolving field of online fundraising.

According to Schriver, research on reading habits indicates that the effective navigation of complex documents is a learned skill. Over time, readers learn to understand the structure of complex documents by relying on familiar visual and verbal cues. Through the practice of reading a particular genre of document, readers learn the conventions of that genre and of the media in which that genre is usually presented. These learned conventions are also what guides designers in their strategy when creating new documents (375). Since the adaptation of direct mail letters to email is a relatively new and cutting-edge practice, it can be argued that there are no established conventions for the design of e-appeals as of yet. Past studies conducted on the attractiveness of a direct mail letter revealed the importance of a pleasing and arousing design to capture the attention of readers. Yet these findings did not specify what qualifies as attractive design and how design can be affected by its medium of display. Through the application of Schriver's document design principles, it has become clear that a visually appealing document is ultimately one that is easy to navigate but also meets the goals of both the designer and the reader quickly and effectively. By considering current conventions that have been established for email and for direct mail, this study has aimed to better understand how readers' expectations of existing document genres can be successfully applied to the new and emerging genre of online appeal letters.

APPENDICES

Sample Key

Type	Colour
You	Highlight Colour
Colloquialisms and Clichés	Highlight Colour
Powerful Words	Highlight Colour
Reference Insert and Offer of Incentive	Highlight Colour
Solicitation	Highlight Colour
Expression of Gratitude	Highlight Colour

SAMPLE A

Mr. John Sample
123 Any Street
Any Town, ON
M1M 1M1

Supporter Card

Renew **your** support for 2012 today!

Date

Dear Mr. Sample,

**John came into our Emergency complaining of kidney stones...
moments later he collapsed and was near death!**

John was pale and sweating, and he was **clutching his mid back**.

When I approached him he said he was having a kidney stone attack, but when he came up to the triage chair and I ask him routine questions about his history, he couldn't answer them. He seemed to be in a daze. His colour was **deteriorating rapidly**.

Suddenly he turned blue, collapsed and stopped breathing. I couldn't feel a pulse.

Code Blue was called and with the help of security I managed to pull him out of the chair and onto the floor to perform CPR. We were able to revive him and get him on a stretcher.

John didn't have kidney stones. He was having a heart attack.

As a nurse who has worked in St. Michael's Emergency for 22 years, I can tell **you** this was not a normal emergency.

Heart attack patients are usually brought in by medics. They don't usually walk in off the street and go into cardiac arrest while in triage. But that didn't matter. Within minutes, our medical staff called cardiology and they had John up to the catheterization lab where he could be accurately diagnosed and treated with **compassionate care**.

John was very lucky. **He was in right place at the right time** **He survived thanks to you.** Donor support helps us provide this **extraordinary** care to all our patients.

[Variable] Mr. Last Name, that's why we're reaching out to **you** today; our patients need **your** support. **Your** donation will help us purchase the equipment necessary to save lives like John's. Please consider renewing **your** support today. **Your** gift of XX, or whatever **you** can afford will make an **incredible difference** in the lives of so many people and their families.

SAMPLE A

As an Urban Angel supporter, you've helped St. Michael's develop programs like Code STEMI and Code Stroke. These programs train medics to follow a protocol giving stroke and heart attack patients immediate access to diagnostic tests and treatments. These programs are not only saving lives like John's – patients are recovering faster with fewer complications.

Together we can save even more lives.

Currently we have equipment needs which include 40 Spot Vital Sign machines (\$72,000), 15 Arrest Carts like the one used to save John's life (\$23,000) and 20 transport stretchers (\$100,000). With your help today we can make these urgent priority needs a reality.

Please give today. You are at the heart of every patient's care, right from the exceptional service we provide our patients in Emergency, to the research and technology that improves the health of countless patients in operating rooms, the ICU and at their bedside.

It's because of you we are constantly finding ways to make things work better and faster.

I'm happy to report that I saw John again a few months later and he is back on the road to recovery and doing well. He wanted to thank us for saving his life. But we weren't alone. John had you, one of his Urban Angels by his side.

I hope the attached Urban Angel Supporter Card demonstrates how much we value your compassion and what it means to countless patients in Toronto and across the province. Please carry it proudly and take a moment to send your 2012 gift today.

Every patient at St. Michael's should have an experience as positive as John's. With your continued support, we can make it happen. Thank you so much for supporting innovation and excellence in health care.

With sincere thanks,

Deidre Babula
Registered Nurse, Emergency
St. Michael's Hospital

P.S. To continue supporting St. Michael's, simply complete the enclosed reply form. You can choose to make your donation in tribute of someone special and they'll receive a thoughtful tribute card in the mail on your behalf (see back of reply form). To make a gift and receive your tax receipt immediately, visit stmichaelsfoundation.com/renew. When you make your donation online you can send an electronic greeting card instantly to the person you are honouring.

P.P.S. Thank you for your support. Please take a look at the enclosed insert that highlights some of the successes you've made possible for patients at St. Michael's Hospital.

SAMPLE B

Mrs. Joan Sample
123 Any Street
Any town, ON
M1M 1M1

Mrs. Sample, imagine you are in the fight for your life...

Date

Dear Mrs. Sample,

Imagine your lungs quickly filling with water. You can't breathe. You can't speak.

For one brave young woman, she didn't have to imagine this. She was in an epic battle for her life, right here at St. Michael's Hospital. Doctors called her "The Miracle of St. Mike's."

At age 24, Rameza was struck by a major lupus flare-up. With her lungs quickly filling with water, she needed a ventilator immediately. St. Michael's Hospital was the only place this kind of specialized care was available.

For a young woman on the brink of death, the ventilator wasn't enough. After spending months unconscious in the Intensive Care Unit, Rameza went into complete organ failure. She needed every piece of equipment available to keep her alive.

She was only 24 years old and not expected to make it through the night.

Her parents felt helpless as they watched their daughter slowly slipping away. But as long as she was under the care of angels that night, a glimmer of hope remained.

Against all odds, Rameza pulled through. She was alive, but it was only a matter of time before her kidneys would completely fail. Her Urban Angels, Dr. Rachel Shupak and Dr. Kamel, developed a treatment plan to keep her kidneys functioning as long as possible. "My doctors were second parents to me," she says. "They saw me as a whole person. They knew I was young and I wanted more than just to live – I wanted quality of life."

YOU were right there for Rameza, Mr. Sample, helping to light the way from the moment she arrived at St. Michael's.

[VARIABLE] From the state-of-the-art medical equipment, advanced surgical care, intensive care and the incredible expertise of the staff – your ongoing support is what makes the life-saving difference in miracle stories like Rameza's. That is why we are reaching out to you today. Your gift of XX, XX or whatever you can afford will help us maintain the level of care our patients deserve. Please make your donation today and know you'll be lighting the way for so many people like Rameza.

SAMPLE B

During Christmas of 2009, Rameza got sick again.

Her kidneys and lungs were ravaged with infection. Buying time on dialysis was no longer an option for Rameza. *"I had given up. I couldn't do it anymore."* Her only hope for a full recovery was a kidney transplant. When the subject of transplant came up, a donor immediately stepped forward.

It was Rameza's own mother. As fate would have it, Rameza's mom was one of the best matches the transplant team had ever seen. But the procedure wasn't without risks. *"I was so worried about my mom. Even though I needed a kidney more than anything, I couldn't go through with it if she wouldn't be fine."*

Thanks to the medical expertise of the St. Michael's transplant team and the caring support of people like you, Rameza's operation was a complete success, for both mother and daughter.

"Almost immediately, my skin brightened up, my energy returned and I felt like a new person. I couldn't believe it – I had my life back! It was the most beautiful gift."

Today, Rameza is 32 years old and living every moment to its fullest. *"Since my transplant, I've graduated with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. I got married and bought a house. Dr. Shupak and her team even attended my wedding."*

Thanks to her Urban Angels and compassionate supporters like you, Rameza beat the odds.

Rameza truly is the Miracle of St. Mike's – thanks to people like you. By helping our Hospital enhance patient care and purchase new equipment with your special holiday gift today, you become an angel to countless people in your community. You'll give hope to families when it seems like there is none. And you'll be forever cherished by those whose lives you've helped save.

Thank you in advance for supporting our hospital today. We wish you the very best for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

With all my very best,

Alayne Metrick, FAHP
President
St. Michael's Hospital Foundation

P.S. Thank you for lighting the way for Rameza when she needed you most. To continue supporting St. Michael's Hospital, simply complete the enclosed reply form. You can make your donation a tribute gift in honour of someone special (see back of reply form) – perhaps a family member, friend or doctor or nurse who made a difference in your life. They will receive a tribute card in the mail informing them of your thoughtfulness.

P.P.S. **Instant Tax Receipt:** To make a gift and receive your tax receipt immediately, visit stmichaelsfoundation.com/light. Once you make your donation online you can send an electronic greeting card to the person you are honouring and they will receive your e-card instantly!

SAMPLE C

“Ryerson has helped me make my mark in the business world and I know this is just the beginning.”

Andrea Belvedere
Business Management '10

<TITLE> <FIRST_NAME> <LAST_NAME>
<ADDR_1> <ADDR_2>
<CITY> <ST> <ZIP>

**RYERSON
UNIVERSITY**

Everyone Makes a Mark

Dear <FIRST_NAME>,

Your regular investment to Ryerson's Annual Fund **fuels the passions** of students.

My **passion** is entrepreneurship. As a recent graduate of the Ted Rogers School of Management and recipient of a Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award in the Future Leaders category, I feel ready to **take on the world**.

But I couldn't have done it without my peers, the faculty and you. My professors gave me a great deal of encouragement and I also won an Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship project management bursary and an award of merit for my contributions to student life.

Bursaries and awards provide **vital** assistance and **affirmation** to students like me. Your **contributions to the Annual Fund** make bursaries and awards possible.

With this support and encouragement, I was able to take on some exciting opportunities during my undergraduate degree. For example, I served as vice-president, business development and co-founder of the Ryerson Entrepreneur Institute (REI), president of Students in Free Enterprise Ryerson (SIFE), and co-founder and director of Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship Canada (SAGE).

Under my leadership, both REI and SIFE together grew to include 100 volunteers and 30 employees, and created more than \$20-million in new economic opportunities. Through SAGE, I helped high school students turn their business ideas into reality.

I couldn't have done any of this without alumni support.

Thank you for your most recent donation of <\$> on <date>. Your continuous support is needed for new and innovative programs, and the ever-growing need for student financial aid. **Please make a gift today. Your donation of <M1>, <M2>, <M3>, <M4> or whatever amount you choose, may be designated to support <School>, awards and bursaries, the library fund or the area of greatest need.**

LOOK HOW YOUR GIFT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

\$1,000 supports a scholarship for a student in <School>

\$500 helps <\$500>

\$250 supports technology upgrades like:

- 25 annual subscriptions to e-books
- A streaming fee to view a DVD online
- Revitalization of laptop equipment

\$125 buys library materials such as:

- One copyright fee to digitize an article
- An e-journal subscription

YES, I want to help students make their mark!

please turn over to provide additional information >

How to give – three easy options

- Call 1-866-428-8881 or 416-979-5000, ext. 6516
- Go online to www.ryerson.ca/annualfund
- Fill out this form and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope

Please direct my gift to:

- ☐ the area of greatest need ☐ scholarships/student aid
☐ the Library ☐ Athletics
☐ <School>

<TITLE> <FIRST_NAME> <LAST_NAME>
<ADDR_1> <ADDR_2>
<CITY> <ST> <ZIP>

<ID> <Project #>

Contribution method

OPTION 1: Single contribution

- ☐ Cheque / money order* or ☐ Credit card (fill out below)
☐ <M1> ☐ <M2> ☐ <M3> ☐ <M4> ☐ Other: \$ _____

OPTION 2: Authorized monthly contribution**

- ☐ Void cheque or ☐ Credit card (fill out below)
☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Credit card information: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card number: _____/_____/_____

Expiry date: _____/_____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

* Please make cheques and money orders payable to Ryerson University.

** By selecting this option, I authorize Ryerson University to withdraw the above amount from my credit card/bank account on the 12th day of every month. I may change or cancel my monthly contribution at any time.
Canada Revenue Agency Registration Number 119130283R0001. Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3. Please note: An official charitable tax receipt will be issued for gifts of \$20 or more.

SAMPLE C

Your gift is far reaching and will continue to have an impact long after students graduate.

Just look at how these alumni are making their mark:

Mentoring disadvantaged youth—Kwesi Johnson, Child and Youth Care '09, has been mentoring youth since he was 12. He started by volunteering at a basketball camp, and continues to work with young people. Kwesi received the province-wide Lincoln Alexander Award for his work at eliminating discrimination.

Reporting from war zones—It's incredibly challenging to report from a war zone, and yet Globe and Mail reporter Graeme Smith, Journalism, managed to do an incredible job. His acclaimed series Talking to the Taliban captured an Emmy in the New Approaches to News and Documentary category.

Developing online businesses—Chris Nguyen and Lee Liu, Information Technology Management '05 and '06, created one successful business and then started another. Chris and Lee were part of the team that founded JobLoft.com and then sold it. Now the two are starting a new venture, TeamSave.com, with the help of Ryerson's Digital Media Zone.

Contributing to the well-being of First Nations communities—Shylo Summers, Public Policy and Administration (MA) '07, is making a difference in First Nations communities. The Ojibway-Cree woman became a policy advisor at the Ontario Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs after graduation and now works in Hydro One's First Nations and Métis Relations department, consulting with First Nations.

Creating sustainable buildings—Jennifer Stites, Architectural Science '05, chose a great place to land after getting her degrees from Ryerson and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. She is a green development manager for a real estate development company in Hawaii. Jennifer has helped her employer earn recognition as the "greenest developer" in the state of Hawaii and the Golf, Inc. Green Award.

Please make a gift to Ryerson's Annual Fund today. Your support will help Ryerson students make their mark now, and long after they graduate.

Sincerely,

Andrea Belvedere

Business Management '10

How to give – three easy options

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- Go online to www.ryerson.ca/annualfund
- Fill out this form and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope

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Additional information

Permission

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- ☐ I would like the following name recognized: _____
- ☐ I prefer to give anonymously. I do NOT permit Ryerson to include my name in such lists.

Alumni information – Help us stay connected!

Email: _____

- ☐ I have a spouse or life partner who is a Ryerson alumnus as well.

Name: _____

Program: _____ Year: _____

Employer gift-matching program (my employer will match my gift)

Business title: _____

Company: _____

Business address: _____

Business telephone: _____

Email: _____

Planned gifts

- ☐ I am interested in including Ryerson University in my will/estate plan. Please send me an information package.

Thank you for your support.

SAMPLE D

“There is no better way to make your mark than by helping others make theirs.”

Kwesi Johnson
Child and Youth Care '09



<TITLE> <FIRST_NAME> <LAST_NAME>
<ADDR_1> <ADDR_2>
<CITY> <ST> <ZIP>

**RYERSON
UNIVERSITY**

Everyone Makes a Mark

Dear <FIRST_NAME>,

Alumni like you are helping Ryerson students make their mark.

Thanks to your annual support, many students like me are able to use our Ryerson education to help others. I'm using mine to make a real difference in the lives of troubled youth.

It all started when I was 12 years old growing up in a tough Toronto neighbourhood. A youth worker would shoot hoops with us kids and talk about respect and avoiding gang life. He changed my life and inspired me to change the lives of others! So I volunteered at a basketball camp and haven't looked back. To this day the kids I mentor keep me engaged and I want to continue giving back to them.

Ryerson's Child and Youth Care program was the perfect fit for me. My undergraduate degree has helped me round out my work and volunteer experience with new knowledge and skills. I received tremendous encouragement at Ryerson for my community work, and was even awarded the Ryerson Gold Medal for my academic achievements and contributions to community and university life. I also received the Lincoln M. Alexander Award for my leadership in eliminating racial discrimination.

Ryerson not only gave me new skills, it also stoked my interest in furthering my education. Today, I'm pursuing a master's degree in Sociology in Education.

It is because of your support that students like me are able to pursue our goals and dreams. And I believe that there is no better way to make your mark than by helping others make theirs. Ryerson students succeed in the real world and you have been helping them get there thanks to the regular support you give to Ryerson's Annual Fund.

Thank you for your most recent donation of <\$> on <date>. Your continuous support is needed for new and improved facilities, and the ever-growing need for student financial aid. Please make a gift today. Your donation of <M1>, <M2> <M3> <M4> or whatever amount you choose, may be designated to support the <School>, awards and bursaries, the library fund or the area of greatest need.

LOOK HOW YOUR GIFT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

\$1,000 supports a scholarship for a student in the <School>

\$500 helps <\$500>

\$250 supports technology upgrades like:

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please turn over to provide additional information >

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☐ Library ☐ Athletics
☐ <School>

<TITLE> <FIRST_NAME> <LAST_NAME>
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<CITY> <ST> <ZIP>

<ID>

Contribution method

OPTION 1: Single contribution

☐ Cheque / money order OR ☐ Credit card (fill out below)

☐ <M1> ☐ <M2> ☐ <M3> ☐ <M4> ☐ Other: \$ _____

OPTION 2: Authorized monthly contribution**

☐ Void cheque OR ☐ Credit card (fill out below)

☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ Other: \$ _____

Credit card information: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express

Card number: _____ / _____ / _____ / _____

Expiry date: _____ / _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

* Please make cheques and money orders payable to Ryerson University.

** By selecting this option, I authorize Ryerson University to withdraw the above amount from my credit card/bank account on the 12th day of every month. I may change or cancel my monthly contribution at any time.
Canada Revenue Agency Registration Number 119130393R0001. Ryerson University, 350 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5B 2K3. Please note: An official charitable tax receipt will be issued for gifts of \$20 or more.

SAMPLE D

The impact of **you** giving is far reaching. Everywhere **you** look, Ryerson students are making their mark:

- **Andrea Belvedere is leading the future of business in Canada.** She has served as president of Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) at Ryerson, helped create the Ryerson Entrepreneur Institute, and co-founded Students for the Advancement of Global Entrepreneurship Canada. A recent graduate of the Ted Rogers School of Business Management, Andrea has received one of Canada's Most **Powerful** Women: Top 100 Awards in the Future Leaders category.
- **Kirill Cheiko, Reuben Fernandes, Charles Gilmour and Pawel Kita are providing solutions to clean drinking water.** These fourth-year chemical engineering students designed an advanced wastewater treatment system to remove pharmaceuticals in our drinking water. For their ingenuity, they won the Social Awareness Award at the 2010 Ontario Engineering Competition.
- **Anne-Marie Lesperance is championing local and global causes.** The Occupational and Public Health student has helped out with Haiti relief, promoted a food drive, volunteered for school functions and helped raise money for social events. Her efforts have **garnered** her Ryerson's Dennis Mock Award and her program's Sophe Spirit Award.
- **Adam Carlucci and Ryan Kent are utilizing mobile technology on campus to make life easier for students.** The two fourth-year New Media students helped design a smartphone web application called Ryerson mobile. The application lets users navigate the campus, find contact information, access timetables, and much more.
- **Idil Omar is engaging in student life through advocacy and volunteer work.** The third-year Arts and Contemporary Studies student has run for Ryerson University's Senate, sits as a director on the Ryerson Students' Union Board of Directors and handles public relations for the East African Students Toronto at Ryerson group. She was recognized for her volunteerism with the Marie-Joseph Angellique award celebrating strong black Canadian women.

Ryerson students aren't just **fulfilling** their own dreams; they're also making **positive** changes in the world and in all of our lives. But they need **your** help to reach their **full** potential. **Your** gift today will support their dreams and invest in a better future for **all of us**. Please send **your** gift in today.

Thank you.



Sincerely,
Kwesi Johnson
Child and Youth Care '09

P.S. **You** can learn more about my story and how others are **making their mark** by visiting www.ryerson.ca/marks

How to give – three easy options

- Call 1-866-428-8881 or 416-979-5000, ext. 6516
- Go online to www.ryerson.ca/annuallfund
- Fill out this form and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope

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- ☐ I have a spouse or life partner who is a Ryerson alumnus as well.

Name: _____

Program: _____ Year: _____

Employer gift-matching program (my employer will match my gift)

Business title: _____

Company: _____

Business address: _____

Business telephone: _____

Email: _____

Planned gifts

- ☐ I am interested in including Ryerson University in my will/estate plan. Please send me an information package.

Thank you for your support.

November 25, 2011

«Prefix» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Address1» «AddressLine2»
«City1», «StateOrProvince1» «Postal_Code»

Dear «Salutation»,

During this happy season of giving, joy and gratitude, many of us take the opportunity to reflect on what is most important in life. I expect for most of us family, friends, home and health come to mind.

Sadly, it's a much different story for some of the most vulnerable people in our society who are focused only on day to day survival. People like Ella who without the support of Mid-Toronto would be living on the streets today.

Ella is a client of our Case Management Program. **She is a 67 year old visually impaired woman who was facing eviction from her apartment for non-payment of rent.** Her rent issues stemmed from a roommate who had been financially and emotionally abusing her.

To make matters even worse, Ella's apartment was badly infested with bed bugs and was extremely cluttered.

Fortunately Ella connected with the **Case Management Program** at Mid-Toronto through one of our volunteers.

But it hasn't been easy. It took many weeks of painstaking work to establish trust with Ella given the abuse she had suffered. When she finally agreed to let us help, it was then we realized the severity of her situation.

So that she wouldn't be evicted and homeless, our staff advocated on her behalf at Landlord and Tenant Board hearings to work out a payment plan for the rent arrears. We also connected her with a family doctor and our other community support programs.

Once the rent arrears had been dealt with, Ella was faced with the daunting task of cleaning up her apartment, having it fumigated and buying all new furniture and other necessities.

Mid-Toronto Community Services is a not-for-profit organization that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of people and adults living with disabilities or illness by providing programs and services to promote healthy and independent living.

Registered Charitable
Organization Number
11904 0467 RR0001

www.midtoronto.com
admin@midtoronto.com

mailing address
192 Carlton Street
Toronto • Ontario
M5A 2K8
t. 416.962.9449
f. 416.962.5541

adult day centre
188 Carlton Street
Toronto • Ontario
M5A 2K8
t. 416.962.9449
f. 416.975.4485

Honorary Board

Jim Balsillie
Research in Motion

Richard Gwyn
Columnist

Barbara Hall
Chief Commissioner, Ontario
Human Rights Commission

Louise Pitre-Matheson
Singer & Actress

Clayton Ruby
Criminal & Civil
Liberties Lawyer

Barbara Stymiest
Chair of the Board
Research in Motion

Mark Tewksbury
Olympic Gold Medalist
Swimming

OCSA
Ontario Community
Support Association



United Way

SAMPLE E

Ella only receives \$1,200 a month from her pension and she has no savings. She pays \$900 for her rent which leaves only \$300 to survive each month. And she is faced with paying \$3,810 in rent arrears.

The costs to de-clutter and fumigate her apartment are staggering at an estimated \$900. Plus she has to get a new bed, couch, bedding, clothes as well as arranging for delivery of the furniture items.

Sadly, funding assistance for this need is extremely limited with strict eligibility criteria. It represents a huge gap in services and with her rent arrears looming, Ella desperately needs help.

That is why I am writing to you today. I do hope you'll join me in ensuring people like Ella do not become part of the City's forgotten by establishing an **'Emergency Fund'** to help those in need. Your gift of «Array» or another amount you are able to give would go a long way in helping those who are less fortunate, alone and vulnerable.

This **'Emergency Fund'** will be used to help people like Ella. **It will pay for: fumigation services, extreme cleaning, beds, couches, chairs, bedding, clothing and laundering.**

Unfortunately, Ella's story is all too common in our community. There are many people just like her who are facing complex issues of abuse, neglect, hunger, poverty, homelessness and physical/mental health problems. **And if we don't do something to help they will fall through the cracks.**

You can help make a real difference to Ella and others in similar situations during this holiday season and beyond by supporting this **'Emergency Fund'**.

Please help us do more by giving as generously as you can today.

Since it is the giving season, why not consider making a gift in tribute of someone you love? We'll send them a card telling them of the difference you're making for someone in need.

Just complete the coupon and send it in the enclosed envelope today.

Remember any amount you are able to give is much appreciated and will go directly to helping people in need like Ella.

I wish you and your loved ones the very best of this holiday season.

Sincerely,



Roisin Gantley

PS By joining our monthly giving program 'Bringing Care Home' you can make a difference all year long. It easy to join...just fill out the back of the giving coupon and mail it in.

March 8, 2010

«Prefix» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
«Address1» «AddressLine2»
«City1», «StateOrProvince1» «Postal_Code»

Dear «Prefix» «Last_Name»,

I hope that 2010 has been a good year for you so far. It's that time of year again when we ask our dedicated donors, as well as those who are new to our organization, to support Mid-Toronto Community Services.

For those of you who gave in 2009, please know that your support was absolutely essential to the work of our agency — thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

As some of you may know, last year we had to put a waiting list into place for our Meals on Wheels program. This was a heartbreaking decision for our organization but unfortunately, one that had to be made.

And it is still necessary to have a waiting list in place due to the increasing demand for Meals on Wheels.

Although we gratefully receive funding from government sources, this funding does not cover the cost of food for the program. So we charge nominal fees for our meals. But most of the people we help are not able to afford these fees so we either partially or fully subsidize them.

Our organization is at the point where we are not able to keep up with the demand for subsidies. This is why we continue to actively fundraise and this is why I am writing to you today.

I hope that you will consider making a donation of «Gift_Array» or another amount you are able to give. Your gift would make a difference in the lives of those who need our help. Any amount will help so don't worry about the size of your gift.

You'll be making a difference for people like Mrs. Chow. Everyday, Mrs. Chow looks forward to receiving her hot meal and also to the comfort of seeing her favourite volunteers. Mrs. Chow is virtually alone in the world now. Her husband passed away several years ago and her children live across the country. She does have friends but they are elderly themselves and dealing with their own health issues.

Mid-Toronto Community Services is a not-for-profit organization that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of people and adults living with disabilities or illness by providing programs and services to promote healthy and independent living.

Registered Charitable
Organization Number
11904 0467 RR0001

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Honorary Board

Jim Balsillie
Research in Motion

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Columnist

Barbara Hall
Chief Commissioner, Ontario
Human Rights Commission

Louise Pitre-Matheson
Singer & Actress

Clayton Ruby
Criminal & Civil
Liberties Lawyer

Barbara Stymiest
Chair of the Board
Research in Motion

Mark Tewksbury
Olympic Gold Medalist
Swimming

OCSA
Ontario Community
Support Association



United Way

SAMPLE F

Mrs. Chow is 89 years old and is very frail — she suffers from heart disease and diabetes. She is not able to get around very easily so the hot meal delivered to her door everyday at noon is a lifeline to her.

And she has said herself that almost more important than the food is seeing the friendly volunteers who really care about how she's doing.

In fact, about a year ago, when Mrs. Chow suffered a heart attack, it was our volunteers who came to her aid and got her the help she needed.

Mrs. Chow has said "Without this program, I wouldn't be able to stay in my own home close by to my friends and all that is familiar to me. It truly is a god send."

There are many people out there, just like Mrs. Chow who need our help.

Please help us make sure they are not alone and forgotten.

All you need to do is make a gift today either through the mail by sending it in the enclosed business reply envelope or by visiting our secure website at www.midtoronto.com.

Remember if we all work together to tackle a big problem, it can and it will make a difference.

As Margaret Mead once said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

And even though Mid-Toronto Community Services is indeed a 'small' organization, the people who dedicate their time, money or both to us are a group that is making a real difference for those in need.

Thank you so much for your belief in the work of Mid-Toronto Community Services.

Sincerely,



Kaarina Luoma
Executive Director

P.S. An excellent and effective way to give is through our Bringing Care Home Club, which is our monthly giving program. For as little as \$10 a month, you'll be providing 2 hot nutritious meals to someone in need. Just complete the back of your giving coupon & send it to today.

SAMPLE G

St. Michael's
Foundation

Inspired Care.
Inspiring Science.

Be an urban angel and
give the gift of hope today.



Dear {SALUTATION},

Recently you received a letter telling the amazing story of a patient named John.

As you may remember John walked into our Emergency thinking he was suffering from kidney stones, when in fact, he was having a heart attack and was near death.

Thanks to you, one of our valued Urban Angels, who helped provide our medical team with the right diagnostic tools and technology to diagnose heart attacks and save lives – John is alive and well today.

But we urgently need your **renewed support** today to provide this same level of exceptional medical care to all of our patients so that together we can save even more lives.

Donate Now



Give the gift of hope today.

You are at the heart of every patient's care. Whether it's the outstanding service we provide our patients in Emergency, to the research and technology that improves the health of patients in operating rooms, the ICU and at their bedside – we can't do it alone. **Please renew your support today and be an Urban Angel again for someone else whose life is counting on St. Michael's Hospital.**

With many thanks,

Deidre Babula,
Registered Nurse, Emergency Department
St. Michael's Hospital

P.S. If you've already sent your gift, thanks for your support. But if you haven't had a chance to respond, simply visit our **secure donation page** to donate today and receive a tax receipt immediately. You can choose to make your donation in tribute of someone special and they'll receive a thoughtful tribute card in the mail on your behalf or you can send them an electronic greeting card that they will receive instantly.

St. Michael's Foundation
30 Bond Street, Queen Wing, Room 1-025
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W8
Phone: 416-864-5000

Email: foundation@smh.ca
Website: www.stmichaelsfoundation.com
[Privacy Policy](#)
Charitable business #12296 3663 RR0001

This email was sent to {NAME}. {UNSUBSCRIBEHYPERLINK} {OPENEDEMAILMARKER}

SAMPLE G

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Thanks to you, one of our valued Urban Angels, who helped provide our medical team with the right diagnostic tools and technology to diagnose heart attacks and save lives – John is alive and well today.

But we urgently need your renewed support today to provide this same level of exceptional medical care to all of our patients so that together we can save even more lives.

You are at the heart of every patient's care. Whether it's the outstanding service we provide our patients in Emergency, to the research and technology that improves the health of patients in operating rooms, the ICU and at their bedside – we can't do it alone. **Please renew your support today and be an Urban Angel again for someone else whose life is counting on St. Michael's Hospital.**

With many thanks,

Deidre Babula,
Registered Nurse, Emergency Department
St. Michael's Hospital

P.S. If you've already sent your gift, thanks for your support. But if you haven't had a chance to respond, simply visit our [secure donation page](#) to donate today and receive a tax receipt immediately. You can choose to make your donation in tribute of someone special and they'll receive a thoughtful tribute card in the mail on your behalf or you can send them an [electronic greeting card](#) that they will receive instantly.



Help us light the way

St. Michael's Foundation
Inspired Care. Inspiring Science.

☒ [Forward to a Friend](#)

[Make a donation](#)

[Give In Memory](#)

[Give In Honour](#)



[Rameza](#) - "The Miracle of St. Michael's"

Dear <<First Name>>,

In the next few days, you will receive a special letter in the mail from us. In this letter, you'll be introduced to Rameza, a very special patient from St. Michael's Hospital whose story is truly inspiring.

She was only 24 years old and her condition was so dire it took some of the best equipment and care givers to keep her alive. She was on the brink of death and not expected to make it through the night. Thanks to Urban Angels like you, they now call her "The Miracle of St. Mike's."

You can learn more about this brave [young woman's epic battle for life](#) now on our website. I know you'll find Rameza's story as inspiring as I do.

Sincerely,

Alayne Metrick, FAHP
President
St. Michael's Hospital Foundation

P.S. To continue lighting the way for patients like Rameza, renew your support by [making a gift online](#) today and receive your tax receipt instantly! You can even donate in [honour of someone special](#) and they'll receive an ecard to show you care. Thank you for supporting St. Michael's.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) | [update subscription preferences](#)

SAMPLE H

From: St. Michael's Hospital Foundation

To: Mrs. Jane Sample

Subject: Thank you for helping to light the way

Dear <<First Name>>,

In the next few days, you will receive a special letter in the mail from us.

In this letter, you'll be introduced to Rameza, a very special patient from St. Michael's Hospital whose story is truly inspiring.

She was only 24 years old and her condition was so dire it took some of the best equipment and caregivers to keep her alive. She was on the brink of death and not expected to make it through the night. Thanks to her Urban Angels like you, they now call her "The Miracle of St. Mikes."

You can learn more about this brave young woman's epic battle for life now on our website. I know you'll find Rameza's story as inspiring as I do.

Sincerely,

Alayne Metrick, FAHP
President
St. Michael's Hospital Foundation

P.S. To continue lighting the way for patients like Rameza, renew your support by making a gift online today and receive your tax receipt instantly! You can even donate in honour of someone special and they'll receive an ecard to show you care. Thank you for supporting St. Michael's.


SAMPLE I

Untitled Document

Page 1 of 1

Sergio Chiodo - A Message from Andrea Belvedere

From: Ryerson University Annual Fund <annualfund@ryerson.ca>
To: Schiodo@gwemail.ryerson.ca; annualfund@ryerson.ca
Date: 4/7/2011 4:02 PM
Subject: A Message from Andrea Belvedere



Andrea Belvedere
Business Management '10


Dear Mr. Sergio Chiodo,

Your gifts to the Annual Fund fuel the passions of students.

My passion is entrepreneurship. As a recent graduate of the Ted Rogers School of Management and recipient of a Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Award in the Future Leaders category, I feel ready to take on the world. But I couldn't have done it without my peers, the faculty and **you**.


Bursaries and awards provide vital assistance and affirmation to students. Your ontributions to the Annual Fund make bursaries and awards possible. There is no better way to make your mark than helping others make theirs, please make your gift today.

Thank you,




Andrea Belvedere

p.s. Thanks to the support of alumni like you, everyone makes a mark at Ryerson. Check out more stories of student and faculty success here: www.ryerson.ca/marks



Click the give now button, or donate by [phone](#) or [mail](#)



RYERSON UNIVERSITY

Everyone Makes a Mark

If you would like to be removed from this campaign, please reply to this email with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject field.

SAMPLE I

Dear Mr. Sergio Chiodo,

Your gifts to the Annual Fund fuel the passions of students.

My passion is entrepreneurship. As a recent graduate of the Ted Rogers School of Management and recipients of a Canada's Most Power Women: Top 100 Award in the Future Leaders category, I feel ready to take on the world. But I couldn't have done it without my peers, the faculty and you.

Bursaries and awards provide vital assistance and affirmation to students. Your contributions to the Annual Fund make bursaries and awards possible. There is no better way to make your mark than helping other make theirs, please make your gift today.

Thank you,

Andrea Belvedere

p.s. Thanks to the support of alumni like you, everyone makes a mark at Ryerson. Check out more stories of student and faculty success here: www.ryerson.ca/marks

SAMPLE J

Untitled Document

Page 1 of 1

Sergio Chiodo - Make Your Mark

From: Ryerson University Annual Fund <annualfund@ryerson.ca>
To: annualfund@ryerson.ca; schiodo@ryerson.ca
Date: 9/22/2010 3:59 PM
Subject: Make Your Mark



Kwesi Johnson
Child and Youth Care, Graduate

Dear Mr. Egerton Ryerson,

I hope you received my letter in the mail recently. I was delighted to be able to tell you about myself and invite you to support Ryerson's annual fund.

If you've made your gift already, thank you very much. If you haven't had a chance yet, I urge you to consider making your gift today. Not only are many students struggling financially, they are also juggling multiple responsibilities. Your gift today will support their success as students.

Please make your gift now. There is no better way to make your mark than helping others make theirs.

Kwesi Johnson,

p.s. Thanks to the support of alumni like you, everyone make a mark at Ryerson. Check out more stories of student and faculty success here: www.ryerson.ca/marks



Click the give now
button, or donate
by [phone](#) or [mail](#)



Everyone Makes A Mark.

If you would like to be removed from this campaign, please reply to this email with the word "unsubscribe" in the subject field.

SAMPLE J

Dear Mr. Egerton Ryerson,

I hope you received my letter in the mail recently. I was delighted to be able to tell you about myself and invite you to support Ryerson's annual fund.

If you've made your gift already, thank you very much. If you haven't had a chance yet, I urge you to consider making your gift today. Not only are many students struggling financially, they are also juggling multiple responsibilities. Your gift today will support their success as students.

Please make your gift now. There is no better way to make your mark than helping others make theirs.

Kwesi Johnson,

p.s. Thanks to the support of alumni like you, everyone makes a mark at Ryerson. Check out more stories of student and faculty success here:
www.ryerson.ca/marks

SAMPLE K

Dear Friend of Mid-Toronto,

Ella, who lives on a senior's pension, finds it hard to trust people. The last time she did, they swindled her out of her rent money and she almost landed on the street, homeless.

By the time she sought help at Mid-Toronto, she was frightened and alone living in a filthy bed-bug infested room.

Ella's story is all too common in our community. There are many seniors just like her who are facing abuse, neglect, hunger, poverty, homelessness and physical/mental health concerns. And in the bustle of the Holiday season, it's easy for vulnerable individuals like Ella to fall through the cracks.

Mid-Toronto Community Services works hard to ensure no one is forgotten. The Emergency Fund established by our Case Management program is one way to make sure no one falls through the cracks this winter and all year long. Visit www.midtoronto.com to make a unique Holiday gift to our Emergency Fund. Just click on the 'donate now' button. It's a fast and simple way to make a really big difference.

Through our Case Management program we were able to advocate on Ella's behalf and get her a safe place to live. Through our Emergency Fund, we were able to help her buy a new bed-bug free mattress, a table and a couple of chairs.

Mid-Toronto's ability to make such a significant impact on Ella's life is the result of the generosity of people just like you. Please take this opportunity to visit www.midtoronto.com and with just one click, drastically change someone's life.

This Christmas we ask that you not forget folks like Ella, and make a gift for you or on behalf of a loved one, to our Emergency Fund.

With all the best in joy and health of the season,



Kaarina Luoma
Executive Director

SAMPLE L

Subject Line: Mid-Toronto Community Services Update

Dear Friend of Mid-Toronto,

It's been a couple of months since I last messaged you about the growing demand for our Meals on Wheels program.

First of all, I want to thank those of you who stepped up and donated to this program. Your help really did make a difference. Thanks to your generous support, we were able to provide meals to some of the seniors on our waitlist.

However, there is still more work to be done as we continue to have a wait list in place for this vital service.

The reason for the wait list is that Meals on Wheels has never been more in demand in our community. In 2009, we delivered 77,135 nutritious meals to frail and elderly people and still, we were unable to meet the rising need for food in this city.

The sad reality is that despite our accomplishments, there are still people in Toronto who lack the basic necessities of life. Many of these people struggle on a daily basis to feed themselves and most are forced to choose between paying rent or putting food on the table.

And right now, we are unable to help everyone who needs us due to the unprecedented need for our Meals on Wheels service.

But rest assured, we *are* doing everything we can to remove this waiting list. We are working with our funders, supporters, local organizations and community to make sure those on our waiting list are not forgotten.

And if you want, you can be an important part of the solution.

You may think the problem is too big and anything you could do wouldn't really make much of a difference. But if we all work together, we *can* and we *will* make a difference. **Please make a donation today of whatever amount you are able to afford and help a senior in need receive nutritious food.**

It only takes about \$30 a week to provide hot, nutritious meals each day to a senior in need. If everyone gives what they can, your contributions will go a long way in making sure someone who is isolated and vulnerable gets a nutritious meal and a 'check-in' from a friendly volunteer.

Please help us fight hunger today by making a contribution to our Meals on Wheels program.

SAMPLE L

You can make a **donation online** right now at www.midtoronto.com or **you** can mail it in by downloading our **online giving coupon** and then sending it in.

If **you** are interested in learning more about this important issue, please contact Laina Gibson at lgibson@midtoronto.com or 416-962-9449 ext. 234.

I can't thank **you** enough for your help in providing life's most **basic necessity** – food – to all of our neighbours in need.

Sincerely,

Kaarina Luoma
Executive Director

PS If **you** are interested in **making a gift that continues to give all year**, join our monthly giving program and for just \$10 a month, **you** can help people in need all year long.

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GLOSSARY

Annual Report: a yearly report of the financial and program status of an organization or institution.

Appeal Letter: a letter requesting a donation to a fundraising campaign.

Bequest: an act of bequeathing or something bequeathed.

Business-Reply Envelope (BRE) or Return Envelope: a self-addressed return envelope with postage paid by the receiving organization or institution.

Campaign: an organized effort to raise a specified amount of money for a particular purpose in a specified period of time.

Charitable Tax Receipt: in Canada contributions made to non-profit organizations qualify for an income tax credit. Although they are often called 'tax-deductible' they actually qualify for a non-refundable tax credit, not a deduction.

Foundation: an organization created from designated funds from which the income is distributed as grants to not-for-profit organizations or, in some cases, to people.

Major Gift: a significant donation to a not-for-profit organization, the amount required to qualify as a major gift being determined by the organization.

Membership: Canadian non-profit organizations and charities operate according to concepts of good governance. Good governance is how an organization is run to ensure accountability and to ensure that the interests of stakeholders are given proper consideration. One way to guarantee good governance is by establishing a membership.

Mission Statement: a statement about a societal need or value that an organization proposes to address.

Non-profit Organization: an organization that uses surplus revenues to achieve its goals rather than distributing them as profit or dividends.

Prospect: any potential donor whose linkages, giving ability and interests have been confirmed.

Readability Level: readability scales like Flesch Index, the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, the Fog Index, the Coleman-Liau Formula and the Lix Formula are indicators of the accessibility of a piece of writing. The Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level is used to measure readability by assigning a grade level based on the number of words per sentence and the number of syllables per word.

Registered Charity: an organization established and operated for charitable purposes and must devote its resources to charitable activities. Charities in Canada must be registered with the Charities Directorate of the Canada Revenue Agency. The charity

must be resident in Canada and cannot use its income to benefit its members. A charity also has to meet a public benefit test. To qualify under this test, an organization must show that

- Its activities and purposes provide a tangible benefit to the public
- Those people who are eligible for benefits are either the public as a whole, or a significant section of it, in that they are not a restricted group or one where members share a private connection, such as social clubs or professional associations with specific membership
- The charity's activities must be legal and must not be contrary to public policy

Rhetoric: the art of persuasion.

Street Appeal: is a type of fundraising appeal whereby individuals are approached on a public street by solicitors to make a donation to a cause.

Three Appeal Categories of Aristotle Persuasion:

1. Rational (logos) – arguments addressing the sensible, logical aspect of readers' minds, presenting facts and statistics and urging action by forecasting effects, consequence or ends.
2. Credibility (ethos) – portrays the writer and organization as trustworthy by providing information directly from the writer's experiences, thus establishing the writer's credibility.
3. Affective/Emotional (pathos) – compels the audience to show empathy by appealing to the audience's views and arousing emotions by addressing the reader's attitudinal and moral values.

Tribute, Tribute Card: a commemorative gift. A card that designates or acknowledges that a gift has been made to an organization in honour of or in memory of a named person.

Trustee: (1) a person or institution holding the legal title to property in a trust and having the responsibility for managing it; (2) a member of a governing board.