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CARING CAPITAL WEBSITES

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Ronald E. Anderson

CARING CAPITAL WEBSITES

'Caring capital' is that subset of social capital characterized by caregiving, charity and compassion when these actions are given out of a concern for the welfare of others. The relationship between caring and various forms of capital has scarcely been noticed by social scientists, either theoretically or empirically. After reviewing the concepts of caring and capital, 77 websites related to caring capital were analyzed to explore these types of questions: How large, influential and effective is the care-oriented sector of the web? How is it best to categorize the diversity of websites promoting caring capital? What social or interactive and user-generated opportunities are offered by these web sites? What implications for the future do these web organizations have? While we cannot offer any definitive answer to the question of the potential of the Internet for facilitating caring capital, this study's glimpse of the web finds only minimal charitable activity compared to the huge need for greater compassionate caring at both individual and organizational levels.

Keywords social networking; social movements; social media; organizational studies; cyberculture; community informatics

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Caring capital

Just as the essence of social capital is valued, networks of interpersonal and institutional relationships, caring capital should be defined as those networked social relationships that consist of actions intended to improve the welfare of the other(s). Actions that are seen as based only on expectations of present rewards or future reciprocation would not contribute to caring capital. Caring capital typically involves diverse types of giving of care not dependent upon formal exchanges of goods or services. For this reason, caring capital tends to be described in words like compassionate, caregiving, generous, kind, altruistic, charitable, and humanitarian.

Putnam (2000) introduced the distinction between bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding capital refers to the maintenance of active relationships typical of close friends and families, whereas bridging capital defines weaker

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ties that link highly bonded groups together. In this report, a third type of social capital is identified, caring capital. While caring capital is more likely to be associated with bonding capital, it can also co-occur in bridging capital as well. The main point is that caring as an attribute of relationships of all types is so important to the maintenance and survival of social systems, that it should be distinguished and measured separately as caring capital.

'Civil society', which is broader than the concept of caring capital, benefits from caring or charitable acts, because caring often fosters reciprocal relationships, which may reinforce social capital of the bonding variety, which in turn builds social solidarity. It would seem, but deserves empirical testing, that the building of mutual caring relationships tends to create a culture of greater social responsibility, particularly among children. If this proposition has empirical validity, it would explain how caring capital reinforces civil society.

Salvati (2008) in *Altruism and Social Capital* sees the two concepts as distinct. S/he argues that pro-social behavior builds social capital. In contrast, our approach is to view such altruistic actions as evidence of one type of social capital, namely caring capital. Johansson *et al*. (2012) note how caring can be a drain on social capital. While this may on occasion be true, it seems more useful to recognize that acts of caring solidify and expand other types of social capital. In fact, Arrow (1999) saw social capital as the unintended consequence of social networking without required reciprocity, in other words, social capital in general thrives from caring capital.

None of the major contemporary social capital theorists (Bourdieu 1983; Coleman 1988; Putnam 1995, 2000) recognize the phenomena of caring networks. However, research on communes, intentional communities, and even 'real utopian communities' shows how networks emerge from the diffusion of caring (Wright 2010). Undoubtedly, a variety of social mechanisms, including contagion strengthen such networks. Spontaneous, informal caregivers may communicate a sense of trust as well as an underlying moral framework for caring behaviors.

Bookman (2004) points out how discussions of social capital have neglected the contribution of women to social capital, trust, and solidarity. The concept of caring capital is much less vulnerable to this omission because the sociology of caring is very well informed by the literature on the sociology of gender (Wuthnow 1991; Oliner & Oliner 1995; Berking 1999; Glenn 2010).

Compassion and caring tend to be associated with suffering as illustrated by the common definition of caring that explicitly includes a desire to alleviate suffering. At the core of caring institutions are individuals and organizations that seek to reduce or eliminate major human suffering. Major suffering generally has a physical aspect, namely pain due to torture, serious illness, hunger, thirst, lack of oxygen, or major injury caused by other sources. Mental suffering, as in serious depression or shock due to major trauma, also is generally considered major suffering. Such conditions of major suffering interfere with the

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emergence and sustainability of social capital. Thus, caring capital plays an important role in sustaining social capital within networks of all kinds.

Social capital and the web

The World Wide Web, which colloquially is referred to as the 'web' or the 'Internet' can be considered a society in the classic sociological sense: a group of people with defined roles and relationships with separate identities and cultures. As such, social capital plays a major role in the web. A variety of studies have found that involvement in the web may increase peoples' engagement with community and civic life. Quan-Haase *et al*. (2002) found that the integration of Internet activities with everyday life augments and geographically disperses social capital. Hampton and Wellman (2002) found that web society activities increased contact and support with members of distant social networks. However, they did not clarify the nature of the 'support' enhanced, so it is not known if this encompassed caring capital.

This study focused on caring-oriented, charitable organizations with a web presence. It includes charitable organizations that maintain a website that promotes caring, especially for those who suffer or are likely to suffer. These organizations build caring capital in that their activities directly or indirectly improve the welfare of the people served. Each website organization thus possesses a level of caring capital indicating its level of service to users, members, and other beneficiaries.

In addition, each website has links and other relationships with other websites that may improve or extend their caring capital. While we are interested in each website's caring capital, a major portion of this paper examines the network of relationships among several websites that already have established themselves as 'caring capital websites'. We seek to discover to what extent networking among caring capital websites extends their capacity and builds even greater caring capital.

Research questions

The remainder of the paper addresses the following research questions: What are the major types of websites devoted primarily to caring and what is the network structure of these caring sector websites? To what extent does the humanitarian or charitable sector of the web contribute to caring capital, and what might the future promise in this regard?

Caring capital organizations and websites

The purpose of this study was to determine the size, influence, and structure of the sector of the web which focused upon the content of caring capital. Social

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media sites like LinkedIn and Facebook may generate huge amounts of caring capital, but such sites are outside the scope of this study, which concentrates upon those sites whose primary purpose is to promote caring or caring capital. Once this sector has been described in detail, it may be possible to analyze implications about the future of caring-oriented organizations, if not caring capital, on the Internet.

Table 1 contains a non-random sample of 77 caring-oriented websites. The sample was constructed by first searching for any website domain names that included the words care, caring, compassion, or compassionate. The remaining websites were added either because they were frequently mentioned in the initial list of websites or seemed highly relevant to the notion of caring capital, e.g. altruists.org. In Table 1, each website has been assigned a sector category along with additional information on that site. These descriptors will be discussed in later sections.

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Sampling websites oriented to caring capital

The United States alone has over 1.2 million charitable non-profits as of 2011, which are recognized by the Federal Internal Revenue Service as 501c3 entities exempting them from income tax. This category includes mostly churches, many political organizations, and many health services companies. When those are removed, still many hundreds of thousands of philanthropic organizations remain. The majority of these organizations have websites.

Many non-profit organizations, e.g. healthcare organizations, function effectively as for-profits, attempting to maximize revenues by sacrificing the quality of care and paying their executives huge salaries and bonuses. In addition, many non-profit charities advocate for the environment, animal welfare and other causes that only indirectly serve the well-being of contemporary human beings. When the charitable organizations not directly concerned with immediate human welfare are dropped out, the following four categories seem most helpful to structuring the organizational space of non-profit charities: (1) brokerages, linking resource donors and needy recipients; (2) civil society, especially human rights and social justice; (3) education and caregiving; and (4) relief and development.

The major taxonomies of charities and nonprofits are the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities and the international classification of nonprofit organizations. The categories of civil society, education, and relief/development coincide well with these institutional taxonomy categories of social welfare, education, and international charity except that in these taxonomies, education does not explicitly cover caregiving. Also, neither of these taxonomies has a brokerage category because the importance of this function has greatly expanded with the web's capacity for both reviewing organizations and establishing linkages.

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TABLE 1 Caring web sites with address, sector, features, and statistics ($N = 77$).

Organization	*Site address*	*Sector*	*User-generated*	*Site features*	*Google-indexed pages in 1,000s*	*Facebook 'likes'*
Alternative Energy	www.alternative-energy-news.info	Civil Society, Environment	C,F	D,E	48,500.0	6,459
Altruists International	altruists.org	Education, Caregiving	C,F	E,M	519.0	
Amer. Inst. Of Philanthropy	charitywatch.org	Brokerage, Accountability		M	10.2	10
Amnesty International	amnestyinternational.org	Civil Society, Human Rights		D,E,M,N,V	21,200	164,513
BetterPlace.org	betterplace.org	Relief & Development	C,F,S	D,E,M,N,V	19,600.0	5,488
CARE (also Care USA)	Care.org	Relief & Development	C,F,S	D,E,M,N,V	41,600.0	22,268
Caregiving.com	caregiving.org	Education, Caregiving	C,F	D,E	9,320.0	
Caring Capital Corporation	www.caringcapital.com	Education, Caregiving			1.0	
CaringBridge	caringbridge.org	Civil Society	C	D,M	272.0	

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TABLE 1 Continued

Organization	*Site address*	*Sector*	*User-generated*	*Site features*	*Google-indexed pages in 1,000s*	*Facebook 'likes'*
CaringCap	caringcap.com	Education, Caregiving			1.2	
Caritas Internationalis	Claritas.org	Civil Society		D,M	6,120.0	147,886
Center for Compassion & Altruism Research and Education	ccare.stanford.edu	Education, Caregiving	F	D,E	10.3	
Center for Contemplative Mind in Society	contemplativemind.org	Education, Caregiving			124	1,596
Center for International Humanitarian Cooperation (CIHC)	www.cihc.org/	Relief & Development	C,F,S		49.5	1,098
Center for Victims of Torture (CVT)	cvt.org	Civil Society, Human Rights		D,N,V	3,790	13
CharacterCounts.org	Charactercounts.org	Education, Ethics		D,M,N,V	52.1	
CharityNavigator	charitynavigator.org	Brokerage, Accountability		B,D,E	177.0	767
Charter for Compassion	charterforcompassion.org	Education, Caregiving	C,F	E,D,M	14.3	47,446
Common Good	commongood.org	Civil Society		D,V	3,580.0	1
Compassion and Choices	www.compassionandchoices.org/	Education, Caregiving		B,D,M,V	3,280.0	905

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Compassion Bloggers	www.compassionbloggers.com	Education, Caregiving	C	B	6.1	
Compassion in Politics Blog	compassioninpolitics.wordpress.com	Education, Caregiving	C	B	114.0	
Compassion In World Farming	www.ciwf.org.uk	Civil Society, Animals		D,V	70.0	14,178
Compassion International	compassion.com	Relief & Development	C,F	D,M,V	21,000.0	85,286
Compassion Lab	www.compassionlab.com	Education, Caregiving		N	2.1	
Compassion Movement	compassonmovement.org	Education, Caregiving	B,C,D,SN	D,E,M,V	1.4	256
Compassion Space	CompassionSpace.com	Education, Caregiving	C,D,SN	D,N	1.8	
Compassionate Action Network	compassionateactionnetwork.com	Education, Caregiving	C,F	E,M,N,V	102.0	144
Compassionate Citizen Program	compassionatecitizen.com	Education, Caregiving		M,N	7.3	
Compassionate Friends	www.compassionatefriends.org	Education, Caregiving		D,N	13.4	18,978
Compassionate Kids	CompassionateKids.com	Education, Caregiving		D,N	49.4	
Compassionate Life	compassionatelife.com	Education, Caregiving		E	182.0	222

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TABLE 1 Continued

Organization	*Site address*	*Sector*	*User-generated*	*Site features*	*Google-indexed pages in 1,000s*	*Facebook 'likes'*
Compassionate Mind Foundation	CompassionateMind.co.uk	Education, Caregiving			154.0	
Compassionate Societies	compassionatesocieties.org	Education, Caregiving	B,C,F,S	D,M	3.0	649
Do Something.org	doSomething.org	Brokerage, Volunteers, Youth	C	B,D,E,V	764.0	1,212
Doctors Without Borders	dwb.org	Relief & Development		D,E,N,V	2,340.0	1,031
Environmental Defense Fund	www.edf.org	Civil Society, Environment		B,D	2,180	38,089
Ethics World.org	ethicsWorld.org	Education, Ethics		N	539	46,000
Food for the Poor	http://www.foodforthepoor.org	Relief & Development	C,F	B,D,E,V	967.0	
Global Humanitarian Adventures	www.gogha.org/	Relief & Development		D,V	1,260.0	668
GlobalExchange (GS)	www.globalexchange.org	Civil Society, Social Justice		B,D,M,E,V	45.5	2,323
Greater Good Science Center	greatergood.berkeley.edu/	Education, Caring		B	482	2,542
Green Peace	www.greenpeace.org	Civil Society, Environment	C	B,D,N,V	2,840.0	26,285

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Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI)	habitat.org	Civil Society, Environment	C,SN	B,D,E,V	3,960.0	13,738
Headwaters Foundation for Justice	www.headwatersfoundation.org	Civil Society, Social Justice		D,E	21	
Hearts In Motion	heartsinmotion.org	Relief & Volunteering		D,V	297.0	280
HumanRightsWatch (HRW)	www.hrw.org	Civil Society, Human Rights		D,E,N	6,520.0	78,504
Hunger Project	www.thp.org/	Civil Society, Social Justice		D,N,V	9,830.0	5,216
Institute for Research on Unlimited Love	www.unlimitedloveinstitute.org	Education, Caregiving		D,N	4.9	
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	icrc.org	Relief & Development		D,N	372.0	12,685
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims	http://www.irct.org/	Civil Society, Human Rights		D,E,N	282	1,335
International Volunteer HQ	www.volunteerhq.org	Brokerage		B,V	721.0	
iSpot Compassion	ispotcompassion.org/	Education, Caregiving	C,F		5.7	672
Jumo	jumo.com	Brokerage		D,M,N,V	9,480.0	20,033
Kickstarter	kickstarter.com	Brokerage		B.D,M	3,730.0	32,760
Mind and Life.org	mindandlife.org	Education, Caregiving Mindfulness		D,E	84,500	

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TABLE 1 Continued

Organization	*Site address*	*Sector*	*User-generated*	*Site features*	*Google-indexed pages in 1,000s*	*Facebook 'likes'*
Mindful Living with Awareness and Compassion	mindful.org/	Education, Caregiving Mindfulness	C	B,M,N	30,500	
Mindfulness and Justice	mindfulnessandjustice.org	Education, Caring, Mindfulness		D,E,N	312	
Mindfulness Now	www.mindfulnessnow.org	Education, Caring, Mindfulness		N	1.2	13
Network for Good	networkforgood.org	Brokerage		D,N,V	42.4	2,115
No Community Left Behind	nocommunityleftbehind.ca	Civil Society, Human Rights	C	N	25.4	69
Oxfam international	oxfam.org	Relief & Development		B,D,M,N,V	451.0	95
Parents of Murdered Children, Inc.	pomcca.tripod.com	Civil Society		D,M,V	1,180.0	164
Peace Action	www.peace-action.org	Civil Society		D,E,M,N,V	309.0	2,851
Project Homeless Connect	www.projecthomelessconnect.com	Civil Society	C,F	D,V	10.1	299
Public Good Project	publicgood.org	Civil Society, Human Rights		B,N	24.1	
Random Acts of Kindness Found	http://randomkindacts.com	Education, Caregiving	B		0.5	23,012
Razoo	razoo.com	Brokerage	S	B,D,M,V	87.0	3,221

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ReliefWeb	reliefweb.int	Relief & Development		D,E,N,V	1,180.0	
School for Compassionate Action	schoolforcompassionateaction.org	Education, Caregiving	B,C	E	319.0	324
Self-Compassion.org	Self-Compassion.org	Education, Caregiving		E	3,380.0	
Tearfund	tearfund.org	Relief & Development	C	D,E,V	178.0	2,979
Tifie Humanitarian	tifie.org	Relief & Development		B,D,V	84.0	696
UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	ochaonline.un.org	Relief & Development		D,M,N,V	2,290.0	7
UNICEF	unicef.org	Relief & Development	C,F	D,E	1,870.0	713,040
VolunteerMatch.org	volunteerMatch.org	Brokerage	B,C	B,D,M,N,V	315.0	964
Web of Compassion	webofcompassion.org	Relief & Development		D,E,V	4.7	115
				Total	467,113	3,131,443

Note: Key to best web sites codes. User made content: B, user-generated blogs on website; C, comments solicited on website; F, forums or discussion groups on website; S, social network on website. Site managed interactions: B, site managed blogs; D, donations; E, events organized and listed on website; M, membership; N, network of subsidiary organizations; V, volunteers solicited on website.

These four sectors apply equally to websites and non-web organizations. This congruence may be a consequence of many websites being structured as promotional activities of the charitable organization rather than a unique organization designed just for the Internet.

Activity statistics

Table 2 supplies statistics on each of the four types of caring-oriented websites. The second column, following the sector name, contains simply the number of such sites in the sample of 77 sites. The next column contains the sum of Google-indexed pages in 1,000s to the sites in each sector. The fourth column contains the total times, the Facebook pages for the site had received a 'like' response, that is, the total number of times the 'like' buttons for the page had been clicked. The fifth column gives the median number of types of user-generated content for each site, and the last column gives the median number of interactive features for the sites in each category. All of the statistics in this table are based upon the site-level information in Table 1. At the end of Table 1 is a key that defines the letters used as codes to represent the user-generated content and the site interactive features.

The Google 'total indexed pages' for each website is the number of pages that Google had found and linked with the website domain name. This count shown is the number of search results if one searches for the main site address (URL) of any site. The estimates in Tables 1 and 2 were obtained by entering the main (home) page address (URL) for each site into the Google search field and recording the number of 'results' given by the Google search engine immediately following the search box. This statistic gives a rough estimate of the presence of the site on the web in terms of embeddedness, size, and number of links from other sites. It serves as a rough measure of the potential influence of the site within the web.

TABLE 2 Sector comparison statistics.

Site sectors	*Total sites*	*Google-indexed pages*	*Facebook 'likes'*	*Median user-generated content*	*Median interactive features*
Brokerage	9	15,327,000	61,082	1	3
Civil Society	20	106,666,000	501,923	1	3
Education & Caregiving	32	17,492,000	142,759	2	3
Relief & Development	16	93,543,000	845,736	3	4
Grand total	77	467,113,000	3,131,443		

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The number of times that the site's Facebook page, if any, had been 'liked' by Facebook members is a measure of site popularity. Its usefulness is limited because quite a few sites do not have Facebook pages at all. Furthermore, to 'like' a page simply requires clicking the 'thumbs-up' or 'like' button, and websites can solicit members and users to give the page or cause a boost by clicking on the button more than one time. Scanning the last two columns in Table 1 reveals little correlation between the total Google-indexed pages and the Facebook likings. Both sets of statistics were recorded in July 2011, and could be very different in even a few weeks. Next, the websites in each of the four sectors are summarized.

Brokerage sites

Among caring-oriented sites, there are two types of brokerage sites: donation brokers and volunteer brokers. Websites devoted to recruiting volunteers and matching them with organizations needing volunteers have existed for a number of years. Some are national in scope and others international. In the past 2 years, sites that match donors with charities have become more popular. One of the newest and biggest is Jumo, a site founded by a co-creator of Facebook. Non-profits can apply for listing and individuals can choose to give donations to any of them. In several months, Jumo reputedly raised $3.5 million. Like Jumo, the site Razoo is designed to make it easy for people to donate to important causes like the Red Cross. Razoo claims to have signed up a million charities and to have raised $42 million.

One of these broker sites, Do Something, is for teens exclusively, and claims to have motivated one million teens a year for 2 years into action of some kind. The site takes donations, but mostly helps find outlets for teens to participate in charitable causes.

Kickstarter is a broker site with a mission broader than charity. It gives a mechanism for individuals with creative projects (writing, artist, music, etc.) to solicit donations. It is closely affiliated with Amazon and the sponsored projects can be sold on Amazon. Charitable projects can be listed and project revenues donated to charitable causes.

Several sites listed as brokerage sites had more to do with accountability than lineages, although the ratings of charities can have a large effect on potential donations. The Charity Navigator and the American Institute for Philanthropy are two such organizations with large websites.

Civil society sites

Sites that contribute substantially to civil society tend to cluster together around two principal themes: human rights and social justice. As these two themes are

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used to justify each other, it is not surprising that some sites explicitly promote both. Some organizations promoting environmental causes were also included in this category because human rights is the basis of some environmental causes, and are likely to become even more so in the future. A few environmental and justice organizations were included primarily to demonstrate that they contribute to caring capital.

The site, Alterative Energy, is the most prominent site from the standpoint of Google's indexing. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch both excelled with Facebook ratings; it is not known if they campaigned for these ratings or obtained them through spontaneous popular support. Both have large organizations and websites, with a large number of supporters around the world.

Habitat for Humanity International did not get large ratings, but its member organizations in each of the Countries in which they operate have separate organizations and in many instances, separate websites. This site is a good example of what might be called coordinating sites, because like the Red Cross, the international organization tends to be small relative to the member organizations within many individual countries.

Claritas Internationalis is one of the most active organizational sites in this sector. This organization serves Catholics worldwide with a mission concentrating upon the reduction of poverty and inequality. Even though their work focuses on poverty, they also address climate change, HIV, and reconciliation issues. Claritas has 165 country-level organizations working in over 200 countries.

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Education and caregiving sites

Selection of websites concerned with building caring capital began with websites that focus on education or awareness of compassion and caring. While no preference was given to sites addressing informal caring as opposed to formal caring, most of these sites are informal in that they lack a large staff of employees and a formal organization dedicated to the reduction of suffering. Major exceptions to this pattern are Compassionate Action Network, which has many local, community-based humanitarian agencies, and Compassionate Friends, a grief consoling network with many local chapters.

Many of the websites in the education or caregiving sector are small, promoting a particular book or a specific theme of compassion, e.g. self-compassion. Without the resources of a large, formal organization, most of these caring and compassion-oriented websites lack web interaction, such as donate buttons or user-generated content such as discussion groups. This sector includes sites with broader educational objectives. For example, mindfulness and meditation sites were included, as were character and ethics education sites, because their purposes are primarily educational and closely related to compassionate caring.

None of the 32 sites in this category are very large nor have a large presence compared to the large relief and development or human rights organizations. The Charter for Compassion site received the most Facebook favorable ratings, which is consistent with the fact that over 75,000 people around the world have gone to the website and formally endorsed the Charter for Compassion.

Several caring education sites have internal social networks (Compassion Movement, Compassion Space, and Character.org) but none of these sites has achieved a large web presence. Instead, caring-oriented sites tend to rely on Facebook as a social networking adjunct to their main site. Several of the education sites are primarily blogs, namely Compassion in Politics Blog and Compassion Bloggers, which is an adjunct of the Compassion International site, which was placed in the Relief and Development sector.

Several grief support sites were included here because their mission is caregiving for those suffering from grief. Some sites bring relief to those with severe illnesses. For example, Caring Bridge is a website designed to make it easier for those with major illnesses or those nearing the end of life to communicate with those concerned about their progress. While it might seem like direct human contact in these situations would be more consoling than communication via the Internet, Caring Bridge makes it easier for those whose illness is so severe that visitors produce extra stress. For those whose illnesses extends over a long period of time, the patient or the family can post progress messages, making it possible for sympathetic friends to share in the progress. Messages of compassion can sometimes be expressed electronically with a minimum of stress to a victim of severe illness.

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Relief and development sites

Relief organizations such as UNICEF, the Red Cross, and Oxfam have the largest visibility, perhaps because they have such a large presence in relief activities of highly visible disasters. Relief work is clearly a form of caring capital; however, all relief organizations appear also to be involved in support of development, so the category is labeled 'relief and development'.

The majority of relief and development aid is provided by only a handful of very large organizations, primarily the United Nations (including ReliefWeb, OCHA, and UNICEF) and the International Red Cross. Other large relief and development agencies, with large associated websites, include CARE, OXFAM, Better Place, and Compassion International. UNICEF has a huge number of favorable Facebook ratings which seem disproportional to their website elements. Quick scans down the list of the 15 relief and development sites listed in Table 1 reveals surprising diversity in terms of website elements and measures of web presence.

Social network structure of care-related sites

Essential to understanding caring capital sites on the web is the structure of their ties (links) to one another. To examine the compassionate caring network structure, first the 77 sites listed in Table 1 were reduced to the subset of 37 sites listed in Table 3. The reduction was made to delete the sites, such as the environmental sites, with only a secondary focus on caring and second to drop relatively inactive sites as evidenced by very few Google-indexed pages.

The list of 37 sites (Table 3) served as input to a web crawler, SocSciBot4, to identify the total outlinks (links to any other URL outside their own site) from each site to every other site within the subset of 37 sites. The total number of outlinks found is given in the second column of Table 3, and the third column gives the total Google-indexed pages in 1,000s for each site. The 20 sites in the upper half of Table 3 were then used as the basis for the network analysis, the results of which appear in Figure 1.

Out of the 37 core, caring sites, 17 sites did not have any links to or from any of the remaining sites, so they were not included in the social network graph of Figure 1. The next step was to manually inspect the list of outlinks of the 20 websites in order to construct a 20 by 20 network grid. Then, Netdraw was used to create the social network graph shown in Figure 1.

Ironically, the graph of the caring sites network appears in the shape of a fish with the Relief and Development sector on the upper left, closely followed by the Civil Society sector. The Brokerage sector is clustered at the lower left of the diagram and the remaining Education/Caregiving sector lies toward the tail on the right.

The thickness of the lines representing ties (links) between sites represents the quantity of ties. A very thin line represents from 1 to 5 links; 6–30 links are symbolized by a medium-width line. A thick line represents 31 or more links between any pair of sites.

The most striking finding was that websites focusing upon compassionate caring have a decentralized structure overall. Two nodes (ReliefWeb and GreaterGood) have a fair degree of centrality with at least seven ties each. Three nodes (Compassionate Societies, Charter for Compassion, and Charity Navigator) have five ties each. Otherwise, the links of a typical site are rather sparse with only one to three links each.

Several sites serve a betweenness function in that removal would destroy any connection between two other sites. For example, if ReliefWeb were removed, ICRC (International Red Cross) would have no link to UNICEF. The same is true for the role of Ethics World in tying together HRWatch and GreaterGood. CCARE plays a similar function. Isolates are surprisingly common in the social graph. Jumo, Compassionate Friends, and Compassionate Life are linked to the network by a single line to only one site.

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TABLE 3 Web indicators of 37 select sites promoting caring capital.

Selected caring websites with interlinks[a]	*Outlinks (from SocSciBot)*[b]	*Google-indexed pages*
AmnestyInternational	0	21,200,000
Caregiving	312	9,320,000
CCARE	544	10,000
CharityNavigator	11,531	177,000
CharterforCompassion	129	14,000
Compassion	790	21,000,000
CompassionateAction	1,106	102,000
CompassionateFriends	0	13,000
CompassionateLife	22	182,000
CompassionateSocieties	7,752	3,000
DoSomething	235	764,000
DoctorsWithoutBorders (DWB)	6,595	2,340,000
EthicsWorld	1,682	539,000
GreaterGood	16,334	482,000
HumanRightsWatch (HRW)	0	6,520,000
Int'l Committee of Red Cross (ICRC)	12	372,000
Jumo	282	9,480,000
Oxfam	1,168	451,000
Reliefweb	10,317	1,180,000
UNICEF	49	1,870,000
Subtotal	58,860	76,019,000
Sites without any interlinks		
CIHC (Humanitarian Coop)	0	
Betterplace	3	49,000
Care.org	1,672	19,600,000
CaringBridge	109	41,600,000
Claritas	4,017	272,000
CommonGood	563	6,120,000
CompassionandChoices	1	3,580,000
GglobalExchange	2,678	3,280,000
Gogha (Human Adventures)	85	45,000
Kickstarter	160	1,260,000
Peaceaction.org	629	3,730,000
ParentsofMurderedChildren	83	309,000
ProjectHomelessnessConnect.com	15	1,180,000
SchoolforCompassionateAction.org	1	10,000

Continued

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TABLE 3 Continued

Selected caring websites with interlinks[a]	*Outlinks (from SocSciBot)*[b]	*Google-indexed pages*
THP.org (Hunger Project)	7	319,000
VolunteerMatch.org	4	9,830,000
Subtotal	10,027	315,000
Grand total	68,887	91,499,000

[a]'Interlinks' refers to links within the subset of 37 sites selected for network analysis.
[b]SocSciBot4 web crawler provided a list of links from each of 37 sites to any other sites of any type found on web; these are called 'Outlinks' in this table. They provide a measure of content connectivity for each of the sites.

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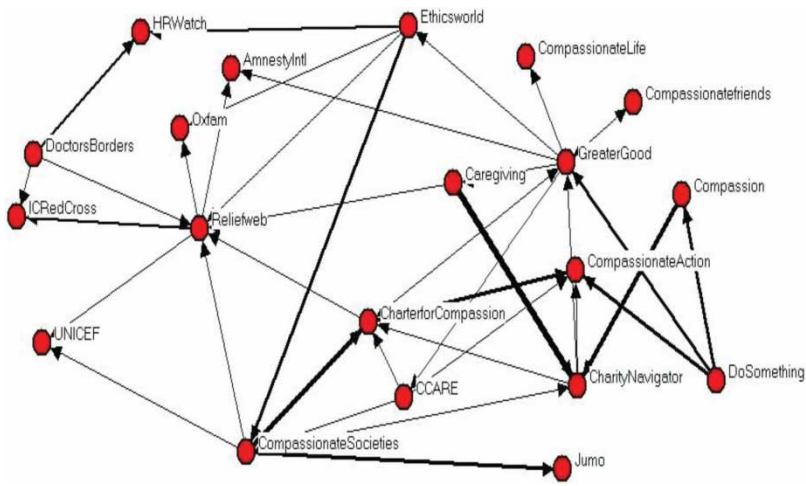

FIGURE 1 Social network graph of 20 caring capital websites.

Between each pair of sectors there are several links, which shows evidence of bridging, however, within the sector clusters, few close relationships are in evidence. This could be a consequence of competition among the sites devoted to similar causes. In any event, few partnerships appear to be in place among compassionate caring websites or their organizations. Greater collaboration among sites devoted to similar causes could make the system stronger and more effective.

This preliminary social network analysis shows that few site managers look to other sites for help and coordination. Few cooperative mechanisms are used such as Feed2Post, which is a web service that automatically or selectively posts blogs on a partner site.

Why do caring sites operate so independently? In many instances, the site may have developed without any awareness that other similar sites already exist. Perhaps many of these sites are still in a period of searching for their unique voice in cyberspace. One would think that the impact of the caring community would be much greater if the caring capital websites coordinated their activities and efforts.

Web and caring sector metrics

Like an organism, the web grows bigger continuously because more content is being added than deleted and the number of users grows rapidly. About 25 billion is the estimate given by experts who compare the numbers of indexed pages across major search engines. However, there are only about 131 million domains or websites, which means that the average website has almost 200 pages. As of 2011, there are well over two billion users of the Internet's web, which means about one-third of the world's total population. However, only one-fourth of these users read the web in the English language.

Of the web's 131 million websites, only seven percent use an 'org' domain type, which is by far the most common top-level domain type used by nonprofits. Commerce is clearly the dominant orientation and purpose of the web and even sites that appear to be about caring may have a business objective and obtain advertising revenues.

The 37 websites selected to represent the network of caring sectors all together had 167 million Google-indexed pages. When compared to the total number of Google-indexed pages, the caring sector only consists of one-half of one percent of the connected content on the web. This is not a large enough sector yet for surveys to start asking Internet users if they have used any of the compassionate caring sites.

Caring capital and online charities

Kanter and Fine (2010), in the book *The Networked Nonprofit*, describe the online charitable community in glowing optimism. To them, social media supercharges charities making them possible to raise huge sums from new sources of donors. One of the authors, Alison Fine, in the PBS NewsHour on January 2011, claimed that the new media democratize the business of charity and that already 10 percent of giving in the United States occurred on the web. A 2009 study by the Pew Internet and American Life center found that roughly 20 percent of Internet users in American claimed to have used the web for donations to charities. What is most remarkable is that all age and generation groups reported about the same level of online giving except for those over 74 years of age, for whom it was less common.

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In bleak contrast to Kanter and Fine's (2010) excitement over the new opportunities for charities on the web, Morozov (2011) offers an unusually thorough but negative view of the Internet in fund-raising. While his main thesis is that, the Internet is not so much a tool for democratizing the world as it is a weapon of authoritarian control; consistent with that overall perspective, he argues that the web does not augment normal charitable fund-raising so much as it makes giving more superficial and trivial with the potential to circumvent serious philanthropy.

Morozov (2011, p. 187) claims that 'Given how easily groups can form online, it is easy to mistake quantity for quality'. He argues that the web, especially Facebook, makes it so easy to form groups that group membership becomes meaningless and superficial. In this context, he points out, that people get rewarded for giving a few cents to charity, giving donors the false impression that they have fulfilled their civic duty. Morozov called these online donors 'slacktivists' because the act of giving a few dollars by pressing a button on one's mobile phone creates the illusion of impact and having fulfilled one's obligation for caring for the poor and suffering. If indeed this type of giving produces slacking off of activism such as volunteer work, letters to democratic leaders, and other actions toward real social change, it may be the most serious negative consequence of charitable living and giving on the web.

'Civic promiscuity' is the colorful label, Morozov (2011) gives those who binge in online giving to get a feeling of being important, when in fact the political impact produced is negligible. He described a concrete example, the Facebook cause, Saving the Children of Africa, which has 1.7 million members. However, the cause raised only $12,000, less than one hundredth of a penny per person. Morozov admonishes online donators to study the statements of activity on an online charity site. He argues that if the site claims only to raise money or awareness, that it probably should be avoided. On the other hand, sites that sponsor and engage people in social causes that make a difference in peoples' lives, can have great value.

The Web space for caring capital is miniscule (less than one-half of one percent) but rapidly growing. In the past 2 years, the number of sites on the topics of care and compassion has perhaps doubled, although most remain relatively small. Unfortunately, the caring sector of the web is growing in extremely fragmented directions. Few sites have partnerships or even links to other closely related sites. Several years ago, the caring communities were energized about starting social networking sites. Those hopes have been dampened by the rise of Facebook, which made specialty social networks somewhat superfluous. However, well-financed new sites like Jumo and Razoo suggest that the web's fund-raising capacity has just barely been tapped. Likewise, popular YouTube videos of floods, tsunamis, and earthquakes combined with campaigns on high-capacity websites like those of the Red Cross and UNICEF have proved that the web cannot be ignored as a vehicle for charitable fund-raising.

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Conclusions

Just as the social sciences have utilized the concept of social capital to guide an important research tradition, the concept of caring capital in the future can be used to define research priorities and focus research both off and on the web. The concept of caring capital has an advantage over social capital in that it directs our attention toward the common good and creating good societies. Research on communes, intentional communities, and other 'real utopian' communities' shows the importance of learning to take the welfare of others into account (Wright 2010). A culture of other-regarding is the foundation for building caring capital. Undoubtedly, a variety of social mechanisms, including trust and contagion, strengthen caring capital networks. Bellah *et al*. (1991) in the *The Good Society*, argued for pervasive acceptance of full commitment to the welfare of all, including future generations. As social scientists move toward better understandings of how to create good societies and 'real utopias" web researchers should attempt to explore these principles toward creating a 'Good Web' or at least to expand caring capital involving the Web.

The Web produces gigantic surprises like eBay, Facebook, Google, and Huffington Post. Who can predict whether a creative genius will construct a website that attracts billions of users to engage in caring behavior? Now, it is only a fantasy. However, sites like the Charter for Compassion, the brainchild of Armstrong (2011), provide a model of the potential of the web to promote the growth of caring capital. Although not on a blockbuster scale, the website has attracted large numbers of visitors, but more importantly has obtained almost 100,000 online endorsements of the 'Charter for Compassion'. The Charter was written offline by leaders of all major religious and spiritual traditions, taking into account large numbers of online suggestions. The Charter is demanding, and if people truly commit themselves to following the principles of the Charter, the amount of caring capital would grow exponentially. CharterforCompassion.org is a precursor to future social movements that utilize the web for positive social change.

Web work does not give the caregiver much opportunity for immediate human contact. People in need of care often need direct physical contact or physical products like food, so web-caring has a constrained role to play. The challenge is to identify ways in which face-to-face and online caring can be intertwined to enhance the accumulation of caring capital at not only the individual level but at the level of organizations of all sizes and types. Furthermore, the network analysis in this report has suggested, that overall caring capital can be enhanced by strengthening the ties among organizations and websites with similar goals in the delivery of care.

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