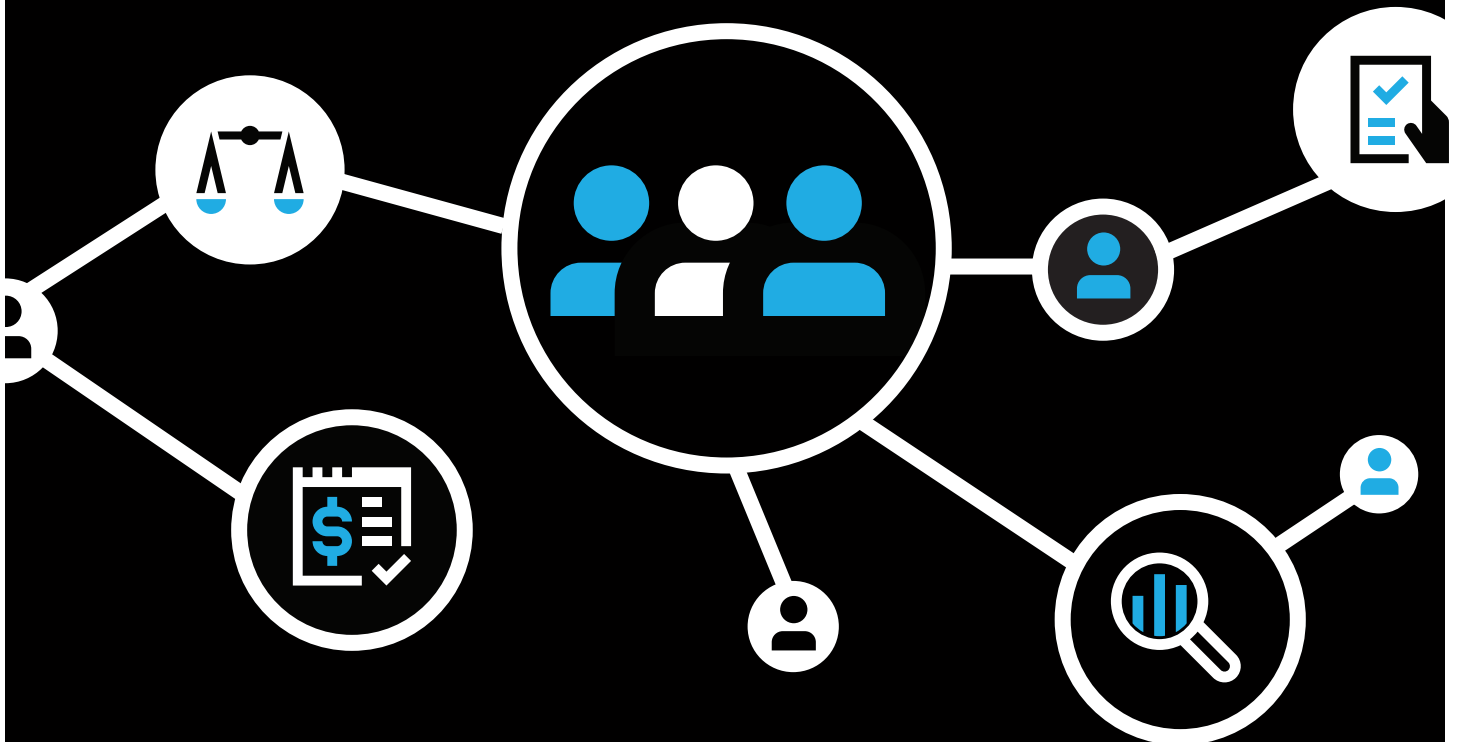


2021 Online Giving Analysis and Strategic Considerations for 2022

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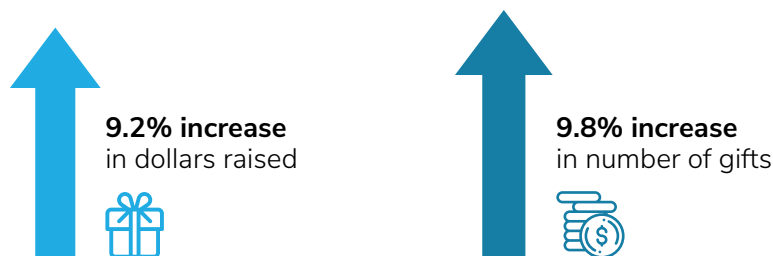
Each year, Anthology analyzes data from its advancement clients to identify the latest trends in online giving, uncover strategic insights, and share success stories to help institutions refine online giving and engagement strategies.

While the 2020 calendar year was unlike any other, in a lot of ways the same can be said for the 2021 calendar year as the impact of the pandemic continued throughout the year. There continues to be uncertainty about when we will reach the new normal. While much of the focus was on student emergency funds or pandemic-related support in 2020, this shifted a bit in 2021, returning to broader areas of focus for many institutions.

To help inform solicitation strategies for 2022, Anthology analyzed online giving trends in 2021, as giving online continues to grow in importance for donors. Now in its seventh year of conducting this analysis, Anthology reviewed online giving data from 202 higher education institutions for the 2020 and 2021 calendar years.

Online Giving to Higher Education Institutions Increased by 9% in 2021

Each year of the analysis, higher education institutions have seen an increase in online giving, including in 2021. Dollars raised grew by 9%, a slight decrease from 10% in 2019 and 2020 — a 32% increase in dollars raised online compared to 2018 for the identified group of institutions.



As seen above, the number of online gifts increased by an even higher amount at nearly 10% year-over-year, following a 6% increase in 2020. With the large increase in the number of donations and dollars raised online, there was a slight decrease in the average gift to \$413 from \$415 in 2020.

Public vs. Private Institution Online Giving Analysis for 2021 compared to 2020

Institution Type	Number of Institutions	Change in Dollars Raised	Change in Number of Gifts	Average Gift Size	Change in Average Gift Size YOY
Four-Year Public	86	10.2%	10.5%	\$346	-0.2%
Four-Year Private	116	8.7%	9.4%	\$462	-0.6%

In 2021, the difference between four-year public and four-year private institutions was less than in previous years, with public institutions continuing to see higher increases in dollars raised and in the number of donations compared to private institutions for the fourth consecutive year. For four-year public institutions, the over 10% increase in the number of donations follows a year in which donations grew by 16%, again showing strong year-over-year growth. Private institutions, on the other hand, saw an improvement of nearly 10% in the number of donations compared to 2020, during which the number of online donations remained nearly flat compared to 2019. The average gift for private institutions continues to be 33% higher at \$462 when compared to public institutions at \$346 in 2021.

Given the continued growth in online giving, institutions should ensure that online giving is as seamless and easy as possible.

Online Giving Best Practices

Constituents are accustomed to easy and fast online transactions in today's world. Below are some quick tips to make sure that your online giving experience meets donor expectations:

- *Make reaching the online giving form as easy as possible.* Ideally, there would be a 'Give' or 'Give Now' link on the .edu homepage that leads right to the giving form. The link also should not be in the footer or in a navigation menu, as that increases the time it takes to find the link. There also should be a prominent giving link on the alumni website, as well as any giving-related pages – and those links should direct to the giving form, rather than to pages providing more information about giving.
- *Start with the donation amount.* Donors have a sense of how much they want to give when they reach a giving form. Get them to commit to that amount at the top of the form and then collect the other details.

- *Include donation options on the form.* This makes it easier for donors to select the amount they would like to give and/or the fund they would like to support. It also allows institutions to highlight key funds, such as unrestricted giving (note: if your institution still refers to annual giving or unrestricted giving on the donation form, change the language to be more institution-specific, i.e., the Institution Y Fund as it is more easily understood and is more impact-focused).
- *Provide payment options.* Make sure donors have different ways to make a gift, including using PayPal, Apple Pay, and other digital wallets. These are becoming increasingly popular payment methods. Also, offer options so that donors can easily choose to make a recurring donation.
- *Review fields on the form.* The more fields, the longer the form, and the longer the form, the less likely donors are to complete the form. Bring a large team together and discuss the fields on the form to see if all of them serve a purpose and if the information is being used. A review should be done annually at a minimum.
- *Use the data you have.* Make it easy for donors to complete the form, especially if they reach the form from an email they received. At that point, you know who they are, so pre-populate their information on the form so that they only need to select how much to give and add their credit card.

Many of these are quick adjustments that can be made to the giving experience to increase the likelihood of potential donors taking the next step of making a gift.

Days of Giving and Gamification

In 2020, Days of Giving were not as prevalent among higher education institutions, largely due to the impact of the pandemic. The most recent year was much more similar to 2019 when it came to the prevalence of Days of Giving. These continue to be a great way to encourage donors to support the institution, whether part of a larger event, such as Giving Tuesday or a stand-alone Day of Giving at another time during the year.

Whether it's through a map that fills in, leaderboards by an athletic team, school, or college, or progress toward goal indicator, highlighting progress throughout a Day of Giving is more important each year to attract donors and highlight the impact that they are having. In a society where we are inundated

with messages each and every day, interactive elements for Days of Giving can make the difference in reaching and exceeding goals.

On #GivingTuesday 2021, a record-breaking \$2.7 billion was raised in one day from 35 million donors, an increase of 6% in donors compared to 2020¹. Customers using the Anthology Encompass platform raised in excess of \$9.8 million from over 37,000 donations made on Giving Tuesday. More than 21 million emails were sent through the Encompass platform in 24 hours, showing how important email communications are in bringing donors to the site and encouraging them to give to the institution during Giving Tuesday.

Engagement and Giving

As research has regularly shown, alumni and potential donors who engage with the university in ways other than giving are more likely to make a gift. During the pandemic, much of what had been in-person engagement has shifted to virtual engagement (virtual events, meetings, etc.). As a result, new alumni are engaging with the institution, whether because event participation is now a possibility due to the move to virtual, or there is a higher interest in engagement due to the pandemic. Institutions should continue to offer virtual programming, even as in-person events return to engagement offerings and strategies. Universities should review individuals who attended events during the pandemic and focus on soliciting them for support. If the ability exists to ask for a donation during the event registration process, as in Anthology Encompass, this should be added to all registration forms – even to those events for which there is no cost.

The focus of a [nationwide survey of recent alumni](#) (individuals who graduated in 2012 through 2021), conducted by Anthology in June 2021, was on engagement as well as giving. Of the over 1,000 respondents, those who participated in a student organization, athletics, or Greek Life while on campus were more likely to engage as alumni. Nearly 8 in 10 had engaged with their alma mater in the last twelve months, compared to fewer than 5 in 10 of those who did not participate in a student organization while a student. When looking at giving among this population, the difference was even higher. Alumni who were involved as students were nearly four times more likely to have made a gift this year than those who were not engaged as students². Therefore, universities should identify ways to capture engagement data throughout a learner's time at the institution, and that information should be shared with the advancement office as quickly as possible. Advancement offices should then consider opportunities to build engagement among this population and also identify the group of alumni who were involved as students as a different solicitation segment.

¹<https://www.givingtuesday.org/blog/millions-of-people-come-together-to-celebrate-generosity-share-kindness-and-drive-record-breaking-giving-on-givingtuesday-2021/>

²<https://www.anthology.com/paper/recent-alumni-interest-involvement-and-opportunity>

2022 Trends

As we look ahead to this next year and consider the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, advancement teams and higher education must continue to remain agile.

What can we expect in 2022?

- *Continued growth in online giving*
Constituents have become increasingly used to giving online across all demographic groups, and the pandemic has only accelerated that interest.
- *Further growth in digital wallet usage*
The expectation of mobile payment availability will continue to grow as more of the population moves to mobile giving.
- *Growth of gamification*
Leaderboards and similar competitions were beginning to be used beyond Days of Giving prior to the pandemic for end-of-year or end-of-fiscal-year campaigns, challenges between classes, etc. This practice will again increase in 2022 as additional ways to encourage participation.
- *Increased segmentation to further personalize the giving experience*
Data has always been a key element of any solicitation strategy. In 2022, look for institutions to focus even more on segmentation so that asks seem increasingly personal. Given the data that institutions have on graduates and potential donors, including past designations supported, involvement on campus, and more, there are many options to increase segmentation.

For more information about giving and engagement solutions with Anthology, please [contact our team](#). Current Anthology clients should reach out to their Client Experience Manager for more information about maximizing efforts with Anthology's Advancement Solutions.

About the Analysis

Anthology compared educational fundraising activity of clients between calendar years 2020 and 2021. Institutions included in the analysis used the Encompass platform for online giving transactions throughout the 2020 and 2021 calendar years. This data set included 202 four-year, public and private higher education institutions across the United States.

About the Author

Mirko Widenhorn, Ed.D., joined the Anthology team in July of 2013, bringing more than 11 years of higher education experience, and currently serves as senior director of engagement strategy. At Anthology, he works closely with clients on engagement scoring and related opportunities. Prior to joining the company, he served as the director of alumni relations and annual giving at Wilkes University. Mirko is a Drew University graduate and recently completed his Ed.D. in higher education administration at Wilkes University, focusing on whether giving differs based on participation in different types of alumni programming.

About Anthology

Anthology offers the largest EdTech ecosystem on a global scale, supporting over 150 million users in 80 countries. The company's mission is to provide dynamic, data-informed experiences to the global education community so that learners and educators can achieve their goals.

Through over 60 SaaS products and services, Anthology advances learning in partnership with K-12, higher education, business and government institutions. Tapping into this unmatched portfolio of solutions, only Anthology can leverage data from across the EdTech ecosystem to create intelligent experiences that lead to better outcomes.

Learn more about our mission at www.anthology.com.

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