A Guide to finding the right
Online Donation Platform
November 2019

APOLLO
FUNDRAISING

When it comes to taking donations online, charities have an ever-increasing choice of platforms and service providers. While it can be tempting to make the decision solely on price there are a number of factors that organisations need to consider. In this free resource we set out some of the questions you should consider when deciding which online donation platform is right for you, and review ten platforms currently on the market.

Questions to consider when choosing an online donation platform

What's the experience like for supporters?
Ultimately, it is your supporters who will be using the donation platform and their experience matters the most. If the experience is bad there is less chance of them completing their donation or choosing to give again. You need to check what the experience is for your supporters from start to finish. How easy is it to use? How many clicks or pages do you have to go through to make a donation? What barriers are there? How does it feel at each stage of the donation process (including the thank you)? This probably means identifying other charities using that platform and making small donations to see what it is like.

Can it take overseas donations?
Some organisations have large numbers of followers and supporters overseas. This means your website might need to be able to take donations from other countries in other currencies. Not all platforms are able to provide this. If you have a large number of visitors or supporters overseas you should check whether your potential provider can do this.

Can it process regular donations as well as one-off gifts?
If someone has the desire to make a donation to you you might be able to compel them to set up a regular gift. Some donation platforms can enable donors to easily set up regular donations.

Can you run multiple campaigns at the same time?
There might be times when you need to have multiple live campaigns at the same time. For example, you might want to have a donation page for general/core funds and then separate pages for specific projects or appeals. Or your organisation might operate a number of sites and wish to have separate campaign pages for each.

Can you brand the donation page? If not, is the platform trusted by your supporters?
Trust plays a big part in whether people complete a financial transaction on your website. When your supporter reaches your donation page they want to be sure that they can trust that it is legitimate – especially if they have been taken away from your website. Being able to brand the page with your logo, images and brand colours can help with this trust.

Beyond this, some platforms have strong brands that your supporters will be familiar with. Using a platform with strong brand recognition can also help mitigate the risk that supporters will not complete their donation through lack of trust.

Beyond branding, how much of the donation pages can you customise? How easy is it to customise?
A lot of platforms offer you a standard form or template. This means that the extent to which you can customise your page will change platform to platform – in the way you present your fundraising message, in the options available on the donation form and in the messages supporters receive when they complete their donation. Restrictive word counts, formats that prioritise promoting the platform over the charity and donation forms that don't enable you to reflect best practice can all have a negative impact on your fundraising. Having the ability to customise as much of the process as possible enables you to tell your story and engage your supporters in the most appropriate way for you.

How easy is it to administer and download information?
You will need to be able to download information about donations in order to thank people for their gift and to build the relationship with them going forward. Some platforms will send you an email as soon as someone makes a donation to enable you to thank them promptly. Some will enable you to download the data in a format that can be easily imported onto your database. You need to decide what data and information you need and how and when you need it so that you can ensure your online donation platform can provide it. It can also be worth phoning organisations currently using the platform to get their opinions on how easy it is to use from an administrative perspective.

What is the financial risk, and is it good value for money?
Some platforms charge a monthly fee while others take a percentage of any donations made through the platform. You need to consider what level of financial risk you are prepared to take, and what you are going to get for your money. While it can be tempting to go for a completely free platform it is worth remembering that the money you pay is used to develop the site, test new developments and ensure it is reliable. You might find that the compromise for using a free site is less customisation, functionality and reliability and a poorer experience for your supporters. This could end up costing you more in the long run.

Ten online donation platforms currently being used by museums

(All information taken from suppliers' websites and correct as of 6th November 2019)

Platform	User Experience – for Charity? For Donor?	Cost?	Multiple Funds?	Monthly Gifts?	Overseas?	Charity only?
TotalGiving https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/ *Used by:* ⊚ *Friends of Ipswich Museums* ⊚ *Friends of Horsham Museum and Art Gallery*	Charities can customise their donation page with images and logos to help boost trust of supporters landing on the page. TotalGiving can claim GiftAid on behalf of charities if required. One of TotalGiving's USPs is that donations are paid directly to the charity, rather than being held by TotalGiving. While TotalGiving try and make it as easy as possible for charities to customise their pages themselves (through a Charity Dashboard) there is also a high level of support available to charities.	None	Yes	Yes	Yes – 137 currencies currently accepted	Available to Registered charities, exempt charities and CASCs

CAF Donate	A donation platform run by CAF (Charities Aid Foundation). CAF Donate is available to charities with a CAF Charity Dashboard. (It is free to apply for a Charity Dashboard). CAF Donate can claim GiftAid on behalf of charities if required. The platform offers basic branding of the donation page (including adding the charity logo and using the charities branding colours). While charities have to use the same donation form structure they can customise suggested donation amounts (including showing what each donation amount could achieve), campaign messaging and Thank You emails (although this has previously been limited to a small number of characters). This platform comes with a 'widget' that can be embedded in the charity's website, enabling people to make donations without leaving the charity's website.	One-off donations – 3.6% of total gift (incl. Gift Aid) Regular Gifts – 2% of the total gift (up to £5) + £1 for each new Direct Debit	Yes	Yes	No	Registered charities, exempt charities and unregistered charities

https://www.cafonline.org

Used by:
- ◎ *Royal Pavilion & Museums*
- ◎ *Museum of Military Intelligence*

Charity Checkout	Charity Checkout offers three different packages depending on what services you require. Each includes bespoke branding for your page, and a mobile-optimised donation page. They all also include Gift Aid processing (if required) and the ability to customise the Thank You email donors receive. Additional services are able through the more expensive packages, including the ability to sell tickets and memberships (All-in-One package).	Donations - £19.99 +VAT per month, or £199.99 +VAT per year, plus £49 set up fee, plus 0.5% +20p per transaction.	Yes (on Fundraising Pages and All-in-One package, but not Donation package)	Yes	No(?)	Registered charities, unregistered charities and social enterprises.
https://www.charitycheckout.co.uk/						
Used by:	Charity Checkout has a "Smart Text Giving" function where people can text a code to 88802 to receive a message with a direct link to your online giving page. (Although we are not sure how often this would actually be used in practice…). This is only available on the All-in-One package.	Fundraising Pages - £29.99 +VAT per month, or £299.99 per year, plus £49 set up fee, plus 0.5% +20p per transaction.				
◎ *Burgh House and Hampstead Museum*						
◎ *Roman Baths Foundation*	Charity Checkout has a maximum donation amount of £5,000, although larger donations can sometimes be processed on request.	All-in-One - £39.99 +VAT per month, or £399.99 +VAT per year, plus £49 setup fee, plus 0.5% +20p per transaction.				
	This platform includes the option for supporters to set up their own donation pages to your charity.					
	In November 2019 Charity Checkout announced it was dropping the 5% transaction fee on each donation. Instead, it will now ask donors if they would like to					

	make a voluntary contribution towards the running costs.					
Golden Giving https://www.goldengiving.com/home *Used by:* ◎ *Museum of Oxford* ◎ *British Schools Museum*	Golden Giving can be used for one-off and regular donations, contactless donations, events and tickets, individual campaigns and team fundraising appeals, memberships and raffles. Charities are able to customise aspects of the donations pages, although branding remains linked to Golden Giving. As part of the customisation you can ask questions of supporters after they have given a donation or completed a transaction. Supporters can also leave a message for your Wall – a feed of donations updates that potential supporters can see.	There is no cost information provided on their website. We understand there is no monthly fee but that the platform charges a % fee on each donation.	Yes	Yes	No(?)	"We support registered and unregistered charities, Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), Community Interest Companies (CIC), Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO), Community and Voluntary Services (CVS), schools, colleges, community-dance, - theatre and - cinema, religious institutions and other social organisations."

JustGiving https://www.justgiving.com/ *Used by:* ◎ *Norwich Castle* ◎ *British Museum*	JustGiving offers a range of services for charities, including donation pages, crowdfunding pages and the ability for individuals to set up their own campaigns to fundraise on your behalf. While the donation page template is quite fixed, organisations can add their logo, a header image, other supporting images and text about their cause and project. JustGiving is also a well-known brand. The donation page includes the ability for supporters to share the campaign on social media channels. The page also includes a wall where you can see recent donors, donation amounts and short messages from supporters. Charities can have multiple appeals or campaigns running at the same time. JustGiving pride themselves on the fact that the money they make through fees is used to constantly try and improve the system.	£15 per month (goes up to £39 per month if you raise more than £15,000 through the donation page each year. Also take standard payment processing fees, plus 5% service fee if you ask them to claim GiftAid on your behalf. They previously charged 5% on all donations but removed this in March 2019. They now ask donors if they would like to make an additional donation to support the platform.	Yes	Yes	Yes – 9 currencies listed, including Euros, US Dollars and Australian Dollars	Organisations need a registered charity number to join JustGiving.

Virgin Money Giving	Virgin Money Giving enables you to set up a fundraising page for your charity, along with campaigns for specific projects. You can then add a donation button to your website to take people to the donation page.	£150+VAT joining fee, then 2% platform fee plus 2.5% processing fee per donation.	Yes	Yes	No	You need a registered charity number to set up an account.
https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com *Used by:* ◎ *Holburne Museum* ◎ *Museum of Leathercraft*	The donation page is quite fixed in terms of how much you can customise. For example, the suggested donation amounts appear to be fixed and it doesn't look like you can say what each donation amount would achieve for your charity. "You can add your charity's logo and wording to your Virgin Money Giving page, and change the font size and colour of the text. You can also add photos and include links to other websites. If there isn't enough room on your main page for everything you want to say, you can add as many extra pages as you like."	Donors are also given the opportunity to cover the platform and processing fee to reduce the cost to the charity.				

| Wonderful

https://wonderful.org/

Used by:
◎ *The Cromwell Museum*
◎ *Museum of the Broads* | Wonderful enables charities to set up a main donation page, while also then enabling individuals to set up their own sponsorship campaigns for the charity.

The platform's main USP is that it is completely free. Wonderful raise sponsorship money to keep the website free, which ensures that every penny donated through the website goes to the charity.

The website offers only basic customisation (charity number, header image, logo and "About Us" information). The donation page is quite fixed in terms of how much you can customise. For example, the suggested donation amounts appear to be fixed and it doesn't look like you can say what each donation amount would achieve for your charity.

The charity homepage includes a running total of how much has been donated, and opportunities to share the page through social media channels.

NB: Wonderful has currently stopped registering new charities on its platform but intends to reopen this in the near future. | None | No (only although individual fundraisers could set up multiple pages | No | No | Only registered charities? |

PayPal for Charities	PayPal offers three different options for charities to take donations:	1.4% + 20p for donations through PayPal	No	Yes	No	"Any UK charity with a confirmed charity account with PayPal can enrol with us. You'll need to meet PayPal's requirements, including registering with a UK charity regulator.
https://www.paypal.com/uk/webapps/mpp/not-for-profit *Used by:* ◎ *Saxmundham Museum* ◎ *Vagina Museum*	1. A 'Donate Now' button that can easily be embedded into organisation's website, taking donors to an external page 2. 'PayPal checkout' which enables charities to embed the payment page within their own website. 3. PayPal Giving Fund, which enables people to donate through PayPal, eBay and "other online platforms". In this case, the donation is made to PayPal and then regranted to your charity The donation page available through the Giving Fund provides limited options to customise, with just a small text box to include information about your organisation. The donation levels are also pre-set, with no option for showing what donations of each level will achieve.	None for PayPal Giving Fund				Once enrolled, you'll be able to take part in eBay for Charity, Humble Bundle and other giving programmes and campaigns powered by PayPal Giving Fund.

Givey	Givey promote themselves as "serving the 95% of forgotten small charities".	None. Rather than charge the charity, Givey adds a 5% fee to donors using the platform.	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Registered charities, CICs, CASCs and "similar organisations".
https://www.givey.com	Givey provides organisations with a piece of code that can be embedded in their website, creating a button that links directly to the donation page. This can be customised with text and images.					
Used by: ◎ Nairn Museum	As well as setting up a page for your charity, Givey provides the option for charities to set up specific projects. There is also the option for individuals to set up fundraising campaigns on your behalf.					
	The Givey page enables you to customise the header with an image of the charity, and also provides a text box for you to "tell your story". However, the structure is fixed so there is limited flexibility here. Similarly, the donation page can be customised with your logo but you are unable to change the suggested donation amounts (set to £10, £25, £50 and £100, with £25 pre-selected) or to show what donations of each level will achieve.					
	The donation page also shows how many donations have been received, and the total value of the donations. There is also a panel on the donation page which shows each donor and how much they donated (with the option to be anonymous).					

Local Giving	Your Local Giving page provides the option to upload multiple images of your organisation. There is then a text box to communicate your Case for Support. This follows a set structure, with headings including: "why the community needs us", "our impact on the community" and "volunteers needed". On the homepage you can set three donation levels and show what tangible impact gifts of that size would have. The donation is made to the LocalGiving Foundation and then regranted to the organisation. Supporter data is only provided to the charity if the donor opts in to this. Payments can be made by card or via a PayPal account.	£80 +VAT (£96 per year) In addition, each donation is subject to a 5% fee, plus card payment processing fee, starting from 1% + 10p for UK debit cards, up to 2.9% + 20p for American Express. A 5% fee is deducted from any GiftAid claimed by Local Giving on your behalf.	No	Yes	No	Groups eligible to join Localgiving include unregistered groups, registered charities, CASCs, CICs, CIOs. In order to be eligible for Localgiving we ask that your group: - Operates on local / regional community initiatives and is not a national or international charity - Has a UK bank account in the name of your group - Has charitable aims that are not solely for the advancement of religion

Local Giving

https://www.localgiving.org

Used by:
- *The Norris Museum*
- *The Holburne Museum*

What is stopping you from taking your fundraising to the next level?

Unsure about the steps you need to take? Worried that your team doesn't have the skills or knowledge they need to be successful? Nervous about putting your plan into action?

We all need a helping hand from time to time. Apollo Fundraising can provide the support you need to achieve your fundraising goals.

We can help you *find your direction* – we've helped arts organisations write their first fundraising strategy, planned large-scale capital appeals and reviewed the strategies of successful teams looking to take their fundraising to the next level.

We can help you *improve your skills* – we've trained arts fundraisers, volunteers, board members and senior managers. We've provided training on topics such as making the ask, making the most of digital technology and setting up individual giving schemes.

We can help you *build your confidence* – we've coached theatres on approaching major donors, mentored visual arts organisations on launching crowdfunding campaigns and supported museums to put their fundraising plans into action.

Need a helping hand? Contact us today to see how we can support you!

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