

Now we're talking - transforming digital volunteering communications

R N I B

See differently



Why digital tools?

R N I B

See differently



Gaining buy in

R N I B

See differently

- **Clear purpose**
- **Who the communication experts are in your organisation?**
- **How to get them on board and supportive – what's in it for them?**
- **What tools are already used in your organisation?**
- **Communicating well with volunteers can help support other areas of your organisation's work**

Why we wanted to use a mass mailing service

- **Can create plain text and HTML versions**
- **Can embed links, documents, email pop up links, images and action buttons**
- **Sends as a staggered send, removing risk of being blocked by email providers**
- **Ability to monitor open and click rates**
- **Ability to send adapted versions to different groups**
- **Already used it for our email marketing activity**
- **Mobile optimised**

Volunteer News

RNIB
See differently



Celebrating you this Volunteer's Week

Today marks the start of Volunteers' Week, the annual, week-long event where we celebrate and recognise volunteers across the UK. We want to say a special thanks to you for the difference you make through volunteering.

No matter how you share your time and skills with us, you make a positive impact to the lives of thousands of blind and partially sighted people. Without your support, energy, knowledge and enthusiasm, RNIB wouldn't be able to reach as many people as we do. This week is dedicated to celebrating volunteers and the impact each of you make and we've put together a special video to say thank you.

[Watch the video](#)

Iona's story



Iona is based in the very far North of Scotland, hundreds of miles from the people she helps each week. She's been volunteering for RNIB for the past 17 years, [find out how she does it](#).

Get connected

Sign up to Workplace. It's the easy way to connect with other volunteers and RNIB staff. Email us to [request your invite](#).

[Watch the Workplace video](#)

Volunteering hub

Our volunteering hub includes helpful guidance and resources to support you in your role as a volunteer.

[Visit the Volunteering hub](#)

Some insights

R N I B

See differently

- **Open rates have steadily risen from 30% to around 50%**
- **Click rates vary between 12-20%**
- **Sending from a named person helps with opening rates**
- **Changing the subject every time helps**
- **We get a lot of clicks for information on other ways to volunteer and our volunteering hub**
- **We're building up a stories library**

Our new Campaigning and Volunteering update

R N I B

See differently

- **GDPR gave us the opportunity to review our communication approach across RNIB**
- **Now have an additional monthly email channel**
- **Gives us the opportunity to share stories, volunteer role of the month, campaigning opportunities and successes**
- **Open rate is gradually increasing and is now at 27.5%**
- **Click rates lower as audience has increased, started at 13.7% now at 2.9%**

Campaigning and Volunteering

RNIB

See differently



Voting: know your rights

Local elections are happening across England and Northern Ireland on the 2 May. Everyone has the right to vote independently and in secret, so make sure you [know your rights](#) before heading to the polls.

Your polling station should have:

- Large print samples of the ballot paper for your reference, which aren't mistakenly stuck up as posters!
- A properly fitting tactile voting device to help you mark your vote
- Well trained staff who can support you in the polling station

You can share your voting experience with us, from your journey there to casting your vote, by tagging [@RNIB_Campaigns](#) on Twitter and using [#AccessibleVoting](#). Telling your story will raise awareness and help make voting accessible for everyone.

[More advice on voting and elections](#)

John's story: the benefits of digital inclusion



John uses his IT skills to raise awareness of the benefits of digital inclusion for blind and partially sighted people. [Read John's volunteering story.](#)

Curb pavement parking



The Transport Committee have launched an inquiry in to pavement parking, which can cause dangerous obstructions for people with sight loss. [Have your say on pavement parking.](#)

Make a difference: volunteer with RNIB

We have opportunities across the UK, from [bucket collections at Rod Stewart concerts](#), to event volunteers for [RNIB Double Dash](#).

[Search volunteer roles](#)

Dates for your diary: Campaigns training

We're offering a course of ten free training sessions on developing campaigning skills, working with MPs, and organising events.


[View the training details](#)



Working with our Digital team

R N I B

See differently

- **Key to supporting us with this**
 - **We've worked with the team to agree deadlines for copy and sign off**
 - **We ask for copy/article ideas well in advance**
 - **Our Digital team build the emails for us and provide us with reports**
 - **Our Digital team provided guidance on layout, item length and source images**
- 

What we've learnt from communication experts

R N I B

See differently

- **Strong subject line**
- **Short, concise copy**
- **Clear calls to action (where appropriate)**
- **Make your email stand out – images are a big help**
- **Mobile friendly**
- **Personalisation**
- **Keep testing and adapting approach**

Case study – Workplace by Facebook


R N I B

See differently

- **Charities can currently join for free**
- **Can create open and closed groups**
- **Great tool for informal news sharing and updates**
- **Can currently hide contact details**
- **Anyone who is on staff version of Workplace can post updates, documents, web links, create polls and share images**
- **Can tag key people who may have an interest in a post**
- **Creates cross team working and conversations**

Case study – Workplace by Facebook pilot

- **Contacted volunteer managers first**
- **Piloted twice to test two different approaches**
- **Pre evaluation about level of engagement, knowledge of organisation and ability to find out information**
- **Post evaluation looked at the same areas**
- **Guidance notes produced and code of conduct included**
- **Think about who can support with moderation and content**

 **Cass Kamara** shared a link
June 5 at 9:41 AM

From chance encounter to Connect Lead


It's volunteer story time!

Today we meet Jo Richardson, one of the Connect Lead volunteer in Scotland, about how a chance meeting led to her becoming a volunteer with RNIB.

Read on to find out about [Jo's road to volunteering](#)

How did you get involved in volunteering with RNIB? Share your stories using [#WhyIVolunteer](#).

[photo shows two paintbrushes on a paint palette]





RNIB ORG.UK

Jo Richardson's story

Jo talks about how a chance meeting led to her becoming a volunteer with...

You, Anne Crane, Lela Patterson, and 1 other Seen by 82

 Like  Comment

 **Anne Crane**
June 6 at 10:22 AM

Do you know about RNIB's Transcription service? Every month our volunteers give 1200 hours to processing talking book loans and delivering personal transcription requests into Braille, large print, music notation and tactile images!

Yesterday we thanked John for an amazing 10 years of volunteering with RNIB as a studio reader.

He has read a huge variety of material for us during this time and tackles every task with enthusiasm and a great sense of humour... [See More](#)



RNIB
See differently

In the last year, our 150 transcription service volunteers

- processed 750K Talking Books loans
- delivered 1,000 personal transcription requests in audio, braille, large print, music notation and tactile images

[#VolunteersWeek](#)

 **Anne Crane** shared a link.
June 4 at 9:50 AM

As part of our Volunteers Week celebrations, we'd love for you to take a listen to volunteer Jade King's interview on Connect Radio!

Here's the link:



You, Cass Kamara, Rosie Martin and 4 others 1 Comment Seen by 67

 Like  Comment

Christine Harrison
July 9, 2018

To help make the Technology Volunteer Forum useful and searchable, we suggest using the following hashtags when sharing posts:

- **#HiThere** Use this when you're a new volunteer, to introduce yourself!
- **#HelpNeeded** Use this when you have a question for other tech team members (volunteers or staff)
- **#HintsandTips** Use this if you would like to share a useful tip about a piece of equipment, app or programme

If you like, you could add the following regional hashtags to any of your posts according to where you are based, to connect with other volunteers or staff in the area: **#SouthWest #Wales #SouthEast #London #EastOfEngland #EastMidlands #WestMidlands #NorthWest #Yorkshire #NorthEast #Scotland #NorthernIreland**

This is your group and it would be great to develop a set of hashtags that make the content here useful for you. Perhaps you might like to adopt hashtags like **#android #iphone #apple #Synaptic #NVDA** so you can easily search technology types in this group. Do share your thoughts below so we can work towards a set of group recommendations.

You, Rosie Martin, Amy Stewart and 5 others 30 Comments Seen by 28

Like Comment

Helena Peiler shared a link.
April 3

Here's a little video from [Nikki Berry](#) sharing what she does in the sight loss counselling team.

My role in the sight loss counselling team

Hi I'm Nikki and today I'm sharing a little bit about **#WhatIDo** at RNIB in this video. Do comment below and let me know if you find it interesting or have any questions

What I Do - Nikki Berry (Senior Counsellor and Service Coordinator)
A short video with Nikki Berry talking about what she does at RNIB

Neil Graine, Craig Bowie and 1 other Seen by 24

Like Comment

#HelpNeeded Dolphin Guide: Visited a client at the weekend, to walk him through Guide.. mostly good, but when we got to Email, he had received an email with HTML in the body of the message, Guide didn't render the content, but instead just showed all the HTML! Is there something missing in the setup? If so, any ideas how I can set this up properly? I have sent a message to Dolphin tech' support, but posting here in case someone can get back to me quicker than Dolphin.

Madleen Mann 7 Comments Seen by 70

Like Comment

#HelpNeeded Hi, I recently visited a customer who has had a Samsung J3 with Synaptic installed since October, and he simply hasn't been able to get on with it. He is blind, and has CP, as a result his motor control and tactile sensitivity is very poor, so using a touchscreen is almost impossible. All he would like to be able to do is answer, make, and end telephone calls. Does anyone have any suggestions for how this can be done on an Android phone with voice only, and no use of touch screen or physical buttons?

Sorry if this is a silly question, but not played with phones much!

31 Comments Seen by 83

Like Comment

Some insights

R N I B

See differently

- **We have a small number of volunteers who were quite active fairly quickly**
- **Guidance notes on setting up accounts and posting types are essential**
- **A point of contact who is actively monitoring and responding to queries as they arise is essential**
- **Asking questions to direct groups of volunteers engages more**
- **Keeping volunteer managers up to date is vital**

Some insights

R N I B

See differently

- **Launched second pilot June 2018. 85 volunteers joined during three month pilot**
- **About 17 volunteers joining Groups each month since pilot ended**
- **Membership represents about 5% of our volunteers**
- **Most utilised where there's a clear purpose, serve a large number of volunteers who are 'remote'**
- **Less utilised where already had meaningful 'in person' connections with their team**

Some insights

R N I B

See differently

- **The best example is the Technology Volunteer Forum, they are located across the UK working remotely**
- **The forum serves for them to 'problem solve' technology issues between peers**
- **Groups benefit from engaged 'owners' and/or 'moderators' who nurture the group**

Key challenges

R N I B

See differently

- **How we get the message about Volunteer Groups to volunteers**
- **How we demonstrate the benefits of joining**
- **Technical challenges for people joining (including accessibility)**
- **Lack of staff engagement**

Working with our internal communications and other teams

R N I B

See differently

- **Gave us great insight and advice from their experiences with using Workplace for staff**
- **Helped with hints, tips and guidance materials**
- **They have links with the Workplace team and have been able to feedback our experiences**
- **Getting teams on board helps with getting volunteers engaged**



Things I wished I'd known before we started

R N I B

See differently

- **How much support was available from our in house digital and marketing colleagues**
 - **What good engagement levels look like – our news updates have done fairly well on this but it didn't feel like that when I received the initial reports!**
- 

Things to consider

- **Things evolved over time it would have been useful to focus on this more initially**
- **Have clear objectives and then think about which tool would be best to use**
- **Consider what tools can give you insight and data**
- **Think about the tools you already use in your organisation**
- **Don't forget your non-digital group and check if they have an email address**

Things to consider

- **Think about what's in it for the teams supporting you with this**
- **Test, adapt and test again**
- **Think about how you can ensure volunteers are using it safely**
- **Develop framework on what you communicate and when centrally so you don't overload people with information**
- **Engage volunteers in design and moderation**

Discussion

R N I B

See differently

- **How you can relate this to your own organisation?**
- **Who are the experts in your organisation?**
- **How could they help you explore how you communicate to volunteers?**
- **Do you have stories to share?**