

# Mark Your Calendar

## May 24 Free Storytelling Webinar

If you'd like to learn how to tell better stories and use them for advocacy, development, recruiting and more, you can sign up for a free one-hour webinar, "Storytelling: Your Most Powerful Communications Tool." This online class, which will run one time only from 11a-12n Pacific (2-3p EDT) on May 24th, is open to the first 125 who sign up at [www.readytalk.com/web-seminar-series](http://www.readytalk.com/web-seminar-series).

## June 1 Communications Training for Grantmakers

The Communications Leadership Institute is launching a year-long training program to help foundation program officers better evaluate and shape the communications strategies proposed by their grantees.

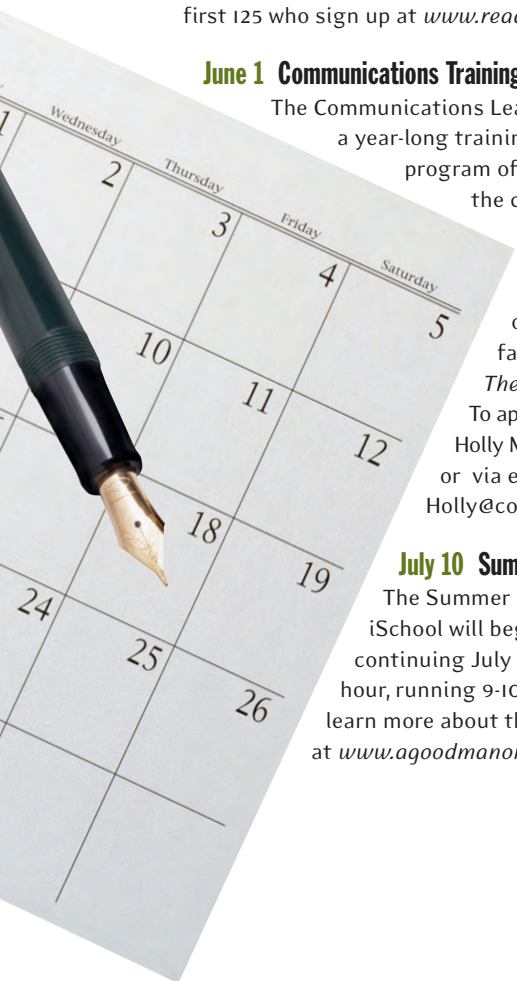
The "Strategic Communications Grantmaker Training" will be offered November 28-30 this fall and February 20-22, 2008.

*The nomination deadline is June 1.*

To apply or nominate a colleague, contact Holly Minch at (415) 495-4200 x210 or via email: [Holly@communicationsleadership.org](mailto:Holly@communicationsleadership.org).

## July 10 Summer School for Storytellers

The Summer 2007 session of Storytelling iSchool will begin on July 10th, with classes continuing July 17, 24, and 31st. Each class is one hour, running 9-10a Pacific (12n-1p EDT). You can learn more about the curriculum and register online at [www.agoodmanonline.com](http://www.agoodmanonline.com). ■



**Need help framing a message, chasing down polling numbers, or finding the best way to pitch a story? The web is loaded with excellent (and free) advice for public interest communicators... if you know where to look.**

The Internet, as any dummy in Congress can tell you, is a powerful series of tubes that has changed everything – at least, for those of us who enjoy watching Will Ferrell deal with his abusive landlord while we're simultaneously emailing money to Nigeria. Of course, there are reports that some people use the web for work, and in that regard, there's good news for non-profits everywhere: free and worthwhile resources abound.

Strategies; Bruce Trachtenberg at The Communications Network; and my associate, Colin Rowan, we present capsule summaries of seven sites worth visiting as well as URLs for six more you may want to investigate. After you've finished watching that panda sneezing on YouTube, of course.

# Good Sites for Good Causes



For this month's issue, I've listed some of my favorite bookmarks and also asked colleagues to share theirs. With the gracious assistance of Parker Blackman from Fenton Communications; Kristen Grimm, Holly Minch and Kendra Beach of Spitfire



**a goodman**

GOOD IDEAS FOR GOOD CAUSES

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Free-range thinking™ is a monthly newsletter for public interest groups, foundations, and progressive businesses that want to reach more people more effectively. For a free subscription, send your request to: [andy@agoodmanonline.com](mailto:andy@agoodmanonline.com) or call 323.464.3956. Back issues are available on the web at [www.agoodmanonline.com](http://www.agoodmanonline.com).

*Free-range thinking™ is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Lori Matsumoto.*

► **PollingReport.com**

([www.pollingreport.com](http://www.pollingreport.com))

Have you ever had to search for current polling data to support a point you were about to make? There's an excellent chance the data you seek is right here. Want to know how the public feels about gun control in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings? An Associated Press-Ipsos poll conducted on April 17 is here. Curious where your issue falls among the list of top national priorities? Recent polls by CNN, NBC, and CBS are available for your review. PollingReport.com is an invaluable resource, especially when you don't have the time or resources to generate the numbers yourself.

**The Rowan Report**

([rowcom.blogspot.com](http://rowcom.blogspot.com))

Touting itself as "Best practices, tips and success stories about communicating in

the non-profit industry," this site offers sound advice from a *goodman* associate Colin Rowan, a veteran public interest communicator who also draws on experience in the for-profit world. Rowan knows precisely what it takes to translate complex data into compelling stories, chase down reporters, and design watchable PowerPoint presentations, and what he doesn't know, he provides links to. Rowan's blog has plenty of excellent content, and the entry for April 11 ("Presentation example, the good and the bad" which shows before and after PowerPoints on the same subject) is particularly illuminating.

**Smart Chart 2.0**

([www.smartchart.org](http://www.smartchart.org))

Spitfire Strategies' "Smart Chart" is simply one of the best tools available online for public interest communicators. This step-by-step process helps users plan

campaigns by presenting questions in the order they should be considered, from identifying a clear goal, to focusing on the right audience, to choosing the best tactics. And when you're finished making your chart, visit Spitfire's main site, [www.spitfirestrategies.com](http://www.spitfirestrategies.com) and check out "Spitfire Recommends." This link will connect you to Spitfire's take on "the best research, articles or resources for improving your communications savvy."

**Sociable Media**

([www.sociablemedia.com](http://www.sociablemedia.com))

Cliff Atkinson, author of *Beyond Bullet Points*, is one of the top PowerPoint designers around, and his site is loaded with first-rate

advice, examples and discussion about the art and craft of building a powerful presentation. On the home page, follow the "Resources" link to Cliff's blog for some of the most informative content, including Cliff's free webinar, "The First Five Slides."

**The SPIN Project**

([www.spinproject.org](http://www.spinproject.org))

SPIN is all about building the communications capacity of nonprofits, and their website plays a substantial role in that mission. There are several tutorials that can take you through the basics (e.g., "Identifying Your Target Audience," "Developing Relationships with Reporters," etc.), along with links to other useful sites, a communications consultant directory, even a job board.

**The Communications Network**

([www.comnetwork.org](http://www.comnetwork.org))

The Communications Network was formed to help foundations and other philanthropies communicate more effectively, but the resources on this site can benefit nonprofits as well. There are free webinars, links to publications, and one of my favorite web-based tools, "The Jargon Finder," which can help you avoid the abstract language many of us default to (see: *capacity*, *modality*, and *leverage*, just to name a few) when we write proposals, reports, and other so-called professional publications.

**Green Media Toolshed**

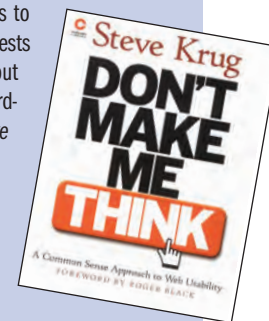
([www.greenmediatoolshed.org](http://www.greenmediatoolshed.org))

Here's another website offering value beyond the organization's mission. Created to "strengthen the communications infrastructure of the environmental movement," GMT has resources to help public interest

**Good Sites for Good Causes**

**How User-Friendly is Your Site?**

When visitors arrive at your home page, can they easily find what they want, or do they become confused and frustrated? Few organizations have the resources to conduct formal usability tests to answer this question, but there is a handy and affordable short cut. *Don't Make Me Think: A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability* costs \$35 in paperback and is worth its weight in gold. Author Steve Krug, the guru of web usability, writes with deep experience and a very wry sense of humor, and his book may help you see your site as first-time users do. Whether that turns out to be reassuring or terrifying, it's something you should know.



communicators of all stripes. Marty Kearns, GMT's executive director, thinks big about how we can all use the net in new and more powerful ways: click on "The future belongs to the Curious" on GMT's home page to get a taste of Kearns' provocative ideas.

And if I had more space, I'd tell you about: [www.seachangestrategies.com](http://www.seachangestrategies.com)  
[www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com](http://www.nonprofitmarketingblog.com)  
[www.fenton.com](http://www.fenton.com) (follow the "Resources" link to "Best Practices")  
[www.continuousprogress.org](http://www.continuousprogress.org)  
[www.techsoup.org](http://www.techsoup.org)  
[www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)

Happy surfing to all! ■

