

<u>IBM BPM Solutions</u>	<u>Now Is A Great Time to Switch and Save</u>
<u>Time and Attendance Software Directory</u>	<u>Autodesk Inventor: Revolutionizing Digital Prototyping</u>
<u>Network Performance Monitoring Software</u>	<u>Applicant Tracking Software Directory</u>
<u>Document Management Services</u>	<u>Small Business Online Contact Management Software</u>



Semantic Tools Helps Grassroots.org Grow

By SemanticWeb.com on Oct 06, 2009 12:16 PM

Jennifer Zaino
SemanticWeb.com Contributor

Non-profit Grassroots.org has a big mission, which is getting a boost from semantic tools: Adopting 10,000 non-profit members and providing them each with \$10,000 on average in services per year at no charge.

It's a mission that's going to take a hefty helping of volunteers eager to contribute their skills to groups ranging from the Youth Sports Alliance of Grand Rapids Michigan to The Foundation for the Arts in Vale to the SnoGlobe Equality Alliance in Washington State.

Grassroots.org, a 501C3 organization, provides its members with more than a dozen free services, such as web hosting or VoIP solutions, often with the help of businesses in these industries, and also helps manage their services projects. Two of the services it offers -- web design and graphic design -- are heavily volunteer-driven. To find volunteers with such expertise, Grassroots.org relies on a number of methods, from word-of-mouth to Idealist.org to Craigslist -- and most it recently turned to semantic web-based matchmaking service [Bintro](#).

The organization has been around since 2001, but it's grown significantly in the last year from serving 680 non-profits to more than 2,000, says Shane Hankins, the executive director for Grassroots.org. "We're adding 35 new organizations a week, and with that we need to recruit a lot of volunteers," he says.

He credits the uptick in non-profits' membership to having a better marketing plan and also to the economy. "With the economic issues facing everyone, non-profits are seeking better and cheaper solutions, so we're a fit there," he says. "Also I think there's a general trend where more people are interested in volunteering, which benefits us on the supply side. And tools like Bintro help facilitate that."

As a non-profit organization, Grassroots.org has some of the same challenges around most effectively utilizing its resources as do the clients it serves. Bintro helps there, because someone doesn't have to constantly go onto the site and repost the same listing in order for its volunteer opportunities to remain at the top of the heap, which is the traditional way most placement sites work.

"Once you post it it's an ongoing process," Hankins says. "We still get referrals from some things we posted months ago, which is wonderful." Equally important, those matches have all been relevant ones -- which is key as in these instances Grassroots is seeking volunteers who are performing professional services that require specific skills.

"Every person we have gotten through Bintro is at least worth having a conversation with," he says. "You're not just posting something and anyone can contact you - the semantic tools have been valuable for creating matches that are based on whether there is a real connection. So you don't get spam or irrelevant connections."

Those connections account not only for skill sets but also or interests that are also included as part of the posted profiles, so that it's easier to match up, for example, a graphics designer who wants to help kids with an organization that specializes in mentorship programs for children.

The Voice of Semantic Web Business

Semantic Web in Your Inbox

[Mobile Version](#)

[RSS Feed](#)

Business Analytics and Optimization for the Intelligent Enterprise

According to a recent IBM survey of 225 business executives, one out of every three is making major decisions with incomplete or untrustworthy information. [Learn more.](#)
[Download the study here](#)

Interested in [advertising on Semantic Web?](#)

Semantic Web Staff

Managing Editor:
Chris Nerney

Contributors:
Jennifer Zaino
Ron Miller

• [Email Us](#)

Topics

- [About Us - Modules](#)
- [Exclusives](#)
- [Features](#)
- [Insight](#)
- [Main](#)
- [News](#)

Links

- [Bnode](#)
- [Buzz's Blog](#)
- [RDFa](#)

Now On mediabistro.com

JOB LISTINGS

Featured Listings

- [General Assignment Reporter](#)
Boise State Radio
Boise, ID
- [Senior Marketing Manager- Regional](#)
Custom House, A Western Union Company
Montvale, NJ
- [Director, Texas Program in Sports & Media](#)
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX

See all jobs
Post a risk-free job listing for \$279

Bintró's Charities and Volunteering category utilizes very specific data sets to increase the relevance of matches in that area, and CEO Richard Stanton says the company is continuing to refine its ontologies to make the services more beneficial to users in the non-profit sector. It's seen more traction in the non-profit category in the last month and a half, he notes.

"A lot of our users have come in for job purposes and then they look at the charity and volunteer area and decide to do that, too," he says. "There are a lot of customers doing multiple postings in the system, looking for opportunities in general."

So far Grassroots.org has gotten nearly 60 matches from the initial couple of needs postings it has done, which resulted in actual volunteer recruitments, Hankins says. He notes the organization is considering expanding using Bintró for other volunteer opportunities, potentially marketing assistance, more specific graphic design roles, or even financial or legal aid, depending on the requests they get from members. "Any sort of business function you have for an SMB you have for a non-profit, and it's something they always look for assistance with, especially on the strategic side," he says.

Grassroots.org also recently added Bintró to its list of tools recommended to members to directly utilize. "We always use these tools first to see if it works and has value," Hankins says. "We have an integrity issue with members and won't recommend something just because it sounds good."

[Semantic Metadata](#)

[Semantic Focus](#)

[The Semantic Abyss](#)

[Thinking Clearly](#)

[W3C Semantic Web Activity News](#)

[ZDNet's The Semantic Blog](#)

Archives



[October 2009](#)

[September 2009](#)

[August 2009](#)

[July 2009](#)

[more...](#)

[Exclusives](#), [Features](#), [News](#)  [Comment Now!](#)  [Share](#) **2** [retweet](#)

DISQUS COMMENTS

Add New Comment

Required: Please login below to comment..

-  [DISQUS](#)
-  [Connect](#)

Type your comment here.


Name	Website (optional)
Email	Subscribe to all comments by email ▼

- [Subscribe to all comments by email](#)
- [Do not subscribe to comments](#)

Post as Guest

[You must log into your Disqus Profile in order to post comments.](#)

Showing 0 comments

Sort by [Newest first](#)  [Unsubscribe](#)  [Subscribe by RSS](#)

new on mediabistro.com

How to Write an Arts and Culture Review



Learn everything you need to know to write a smart, publishable review of music, film, books, theater or any other arts and culture topic.

Watch the video

Email This Post

Fill out the following information and click on the Send button in order to send this post, **Semantic Tools Helps Grassroots.org Grow**, to a friend.

Friend's name

Friend's email address

Your name

Your email address

Note to your friend (optional, max 200 Characters)

Read more on Semantic Web >

WebMediaBrands.



Search:

[WebMediaBrands Corporate Info](#)
Copyright 2009 WebMediaBrands Inc. All Rights Reserved.
[Legal Notices](#), [Licensing](#), [Reprints](#), [Permissions](#), [Privacy Policy](#).
[Advertise](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Shopping](#) | [E-mail Offers](#)