COMPARING INFORMATION TRANSFER PROCESS FOR FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAMS IN OHIO AND PENNSYLVANIA

Thesis

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By

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ABSTRACT

Vital farmland in the United States is lost every day to commercial and residential development. Between 1950 and 2000, Ohio lost more than 6.9 million acres of farmland, representing nearly one-fourth of Ohio’s land (Office of Farmland Preservation, Ohio Department of Agriculture, May 2011). Statistics like this show how important farmland preservation programs are becoming to the agricultural industry.

As farmland preservation programs become more and more significant it is important to understand how local land trusts are communicating with the public. Through a website content analysis, we begin to develop an understanding of what types of information are available on farmland preservation programs to the public. From the information gathered and learned in this study, additional research can then be done to determine effectiveness of those communication materials and public support of programs for farmland preservation programming. While technology in the agricultural industry has enabled farmers to stay ahead of the loss of land, if the United States continues to lose land at these rates, those technological advances will not always be able to continue producing more products on less land.

A content analysis was conducted on the websites of 16 local land trusts. Eight land trusts in Ohio and eight land trusts in Pennsylvania were chosen for the study to evaluate their websites. Through a content analysis, each website was reviewed to determine what information was readily available to its viewers. Also, the reviewers
evaluated what tactics were present on each website to determine which route of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) the audience would take when using the website.

Results from the study show that Pennsylvania land trusts seem to be further along in website development than land trusts in Ohio. A few of the items measured were: use of professional web designer, links to state and federal programs, types of news releases, last update. Also the tactics that were measured were: credibility, outside support, visual appearance, forcefulness of text, and usability. Through these tactics the more prominent route of the ELM was determined.
Dedicated to my parents, family and friends who have supported me and provided continuous encouragement through this journey.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had a tremendous amount of support from my adviser, Dr. Gary Straquadine and committee member Dr. Graham Cochran, who have guided me through my research and offered guidance throughout. A special thanks to Dr. Emily Rhoades-Buck for years of mentorship. I greatly appreciate all of their assistance throughout this process. They have each provided me with the knowledge and information necessary to be successful in my research.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Quantitative content analysis is the most commonly used method of inquiry among communication researchers. Effective communication strategies by non-profit organizations, like land trusts, can be very important to their success or failure. An understanding of how such information is distributed and utilized by the public can be useful to communicators who support the efforts of land trusts. Assessing information presented by land trusts, for example, can help those organizations compare and evaluate themselves by known standards and provide basis for improvement. Successful messaging by land trusts will promote their purpose.

Background

Farmland preservation programs began throughout the United States in the 1970’s and were developed to protect farmland as different environmental and economic issues developed. Issues such as food security in the 1960-70s plagued the United States followed by the issue of urban sprawl in the 1990s. During the 1990s, concerns about farmland preservation focused on agricultural viability as agricultural land decreased at alarming rates in Midwest states, like Ohio, and throughout the country.

Between 1950 and 2000, Ohio lost more than 6.9 million acres of farmland, representing nearly one-fourth of Ohio’s land (Office of Farmland Preservation, Ohio Department of Agriculture, May 2011). Ohio is losing farmland at a much faster rate than other states. It ranks second in the nation for the amount of prime agricultural land
converted to development but only 31st in the nation for numeric population growth (Office of Farmland Preservation, Ohio Department of Agriculture, May 2011). This leads to a disparity between the rate of farmland conversion and population growth in Ohio, making farmland preservation an important alternative in states like Ohio.

Figure 1.1 Acres of Farmland Converted To Developed Land
The farmland preservation programs developed have ranged from educational sessions for farmers and landowners about the tools available for farmland preservation (i.e. tax credits and other financial/non-financial incentives) to statewide conservation easement purchase programs to protect essential farmland (Land Trust Alliance, April 2011). Information assimilation in the farmland preservation movement is vitally important to its continued success. Effective communication practices can advance the mission of a land trust to keep viable farmlands in production.

**History of Farmland Preservation Programs**

Farmland preservation programs take many forms. Programs range from local land trusts to large state-wide programs to multi-state and national programs, both public and private. The overall goal is to protect important farmland and other environmentally sensitive lands. These goals include conservation easements (sold and donated), agricultural security areas, and educational programs. Most farmland preservation organizations have land easement programs that can either be purchased or donated to protect the land in perpetuity from being developed for residential or commercial purposes. While higher producing cropping systems have allowed agriculture to remain viable in Ohio and around the country, with continued land loss the United States may reach a point of decreased agricultural output. The results will have a negative effect on food prices, food availability, and many other economic factors that the agricultural industry touches (American Farmland Trust, June 2011).
The Ohio Department of Agriculture’s Farmland Preservation Program has grown significantly over the past 10 years. The ballot initiative, Clean Ohio Funds, financially supports the program in order to protect farmland and other rejuvenation projects throughout Ohio (Office of Farmland Preservation, Ohio Department of Agriculture, April 2011).

There are two ways to preserve farmland. Agricultural easements can either be bought by the program (i.e. Ohio Farmland Preservation Program of the Ohio Department of Agriculture or a local land trust) or a land owner may wishes to donate their land to an agricultural easement. The program allows for the purchase of conservation easements on farmland throughout the state. The Office of Farmland Preservation purchases the conservation easements through a competitive process whereby the landowners apply through their county Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office (Ohio Department of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation, June 2011). In exchange for the easement, the land owners receive a one-time payment per acre to supplement the value of the land as its development rights are eliminated. In the case of donation, owners forego the financial benefit of having the organization purchase an easement on the land. The easement placed on the land protects it from being developed by any residential or commercial development in perpetuity. Those land owners who donate their land to an easement do not receive the payment but they still are protecting their land from residential or commercial development (Land Trust Alliance, May 2011).
For any easement on land, whether it be bought or donated, the land owners also can take advantage of tax rebates and incentives that are instituted due to devaluation of the land when placed into an easement. For many farmers and land owners, the tax incentive alone is worth placing an easement on their land. Such action could increase cash flow that can be challenging to access in the farming community.

Agricultural security areas are similar to easement purchase programs, but are on a short-term basis, rather than in perpetuity. To be included in an agricultural security area, there has to be a minimum of 500 contiguous acres of land, whether one or a group of land owners agree to the program. The agricultural security area is an agreement between the land owners and the township trustees and/or county commissioners to protect the land from any private or commercial development for a 10-year period. Agricultural security areas are then managed similar to a conservation easement, but are only required to do so for 10 years. At the completion of the 10 years, those agreements can be renewed if all parties are still in concurrence (Office of Farmland Preservation, Ohio Department of Agriculture, April 2011).

Along with these programs to protect farmland from development, there are other resources that support farmland preservation in their own ways. There are many types of educational programs across the country that offer information to anyone who want to learn how they can protect their land from development. The Office of Farmland Policy Innovation (FPI) at The Ohio State University offers a wide-range of services in this area. The FPI organizes a Farmland Preservation Summit every year to provide educational
sessions and updates on state-wide efforts for farmland preservation. Furthermore, county and regional land trusts are growing throughout Ohio and serve as another educational tool for communicating and educating communities about farmland preservation programs and opportunities. (Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts, May 2011)

**Farmland Preservation Background**

While farmland preservation programs have been around for 30 to 40 years, a review of the research literature shows little regarding marketing and communication materials of the programs. However, there are a few research-based and popular journal articles related specifically to farmland preservation programs.

The first article, *From Farmhouses to Townhouses*, was based on a study done in northwest New Jersey, in Hunterdon County. This is a rural, farm community where agriculture is the largest industry (Barbour, E.F., 1987). The evaluation conducted for the article focused on the idea of a farmland preservation program that would educate people on preserving farmland and information on their land to large real estate companies that wanted to build housing developments and other new construction.

At the time of the article, crop prices were at an all time low in the area and farmers were receiving offers from real estate developers to sell their land for a substantial profit. The other side to this scenario is that most small, family farm operations in the area, and around the country, care about the land they farm and don’t want to see prime farmland taken out of production by real estate development. The
article judged the effectiveness of leadership in the program as well as the overall program itself through a summative evaluation.

The evaluation used a survey that was handed out to participants during a break in the program being conducted for farmers to learn more about farmland preservation options. The overall conclusions stated positive results of the program, such as a better understanding of tax implications of selling the land, which was a focus of the program for educational purposes.

The second journal article that discussed farmland preservation programs from an evaluation viewpoint was, *The Michigan Farmland Preservation Program: An Evaluation* (Gardner, P.D., Frazier, D.N, 1979). Its purpose was to evaluate a state-wide program on farmland preservation in Michigan. The article detailed an income tax credit program in Michigan that had been in existence for five years at the time the article was published in 1979. The tax credit, combined with other restrictive agreements, was an attempt to retain viable farmland in Michigan, which provides farmers with relief from taxes and makes them less inclined to sell their land to commercial and residential developers. Five years after implementation, an evaluation of the effectiveness of preserving these agricultural lands was conducted as questions had been raised.

The evaluation was composed of a few different steps. Evaluators first looked at the land that was implemented into the plan to see what farmland was potentially being preserved. Following that, they identified the most urban and suburban areas in the state and those likely to see urban growth in the future. Combining these two components, the
researchers could determine if the farmland that is being preserved is close to these urban centers where you have a threat of having that prime farmland developed. The third step in the evaluation was to survey local government officials, township trustees, and farmers that were involved in the program to get an understanding of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, with the program.

The results of the evaluation indicated that, while land was being preserved in the program, much of that land was in rural areas of Michigan and wouldn’t see much commercial or residential development anyway. The implications and/or recommendations of this research was very valuable to program managers. The hope would be to target the areas just outside of the suburban and urban areas, which will likely see more development, to preserve some of those farmlands.

The researchers then examined land use closest to urban centers, such as Cleveland, Ohio. They compared land use of the farmland closest to the city and the farmland that is further away from the urban center. Ironically, the study showed that the number of farms had increased in the areas closer to the cities, even though land prices had increased, and the number of farms had decreased in the area further away from the city, as land prices had decreased in that area of the county.

Traditionally most would assume the opposite effect of urban sprawl on land use close to the urban centers of large cities. However this study showed the opposite. A possible explanation of this result, the article states, was that the farmers have adapted to being close to the city and have found a market for their products with local consumers.
The farmers further from the city had less opportunity with the local, urban consumers. Therefore farming has decreased in rural areas. This journal article shows a unique perspective to the agricultural industry and farmland preservation. The article relays that farmers and the agricultural industry are flexible and adapt to the needs of their surroundings to continue providing food and important commodities to the consumers.

This article suggests, perhaps, a different view of preserving important farmland. Most experts in farmland preservation tend to analyze land use plans and where there is potential for appropriate and important economic development, they will not focus their efforts on preserving those farmlands rather than on areas that are rich in agriculture and grounds that should remain in agriculture.

Statement of the Problem

Farmland is vital to the livelihood and economy of Ohio and the United States. Studies have shown that programs, which work to preserve farmland, have been successful, but little is known about the information land trusts use to communicate to the public. Analyzing the online resources available by local land trusts to the public and analyzing the content of those websites can provide this insight. Other programs supported by government agencies have shown that communication plays a significant role in advance purpose. Thus to continue further success in saving Ohio farmland, we must investigate the communication tools being used for these programs.
Significance

As technology has dramatically changed over the past two decades, it is hard to break away from the traditions our society has established. New and innovative technology based communication is in every direction we turn. It is the role of agricultural communicators to determine what is effective not just efficient in transferring ideas and disseminating information about implementation and practices of land trusts.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was thus to investigate information provided by the local land trusts on their websites to communicate to the public about the farmland preservation programs they have available. The research objectives that directed the study are as follows:

1. To investigate and describe the similarities and differences between the content local land trusts used on their websites for public viewing of information about farmland preservation.

2. Determine if the tactics used on the website changed the route of the audience in the persuasion outcome.
Limitations

One limitation of this study was the generalization of the sample used. The study was restricted to only Ohio and Pennsylvania land trusts in the sample; therefore the researcher cannot make inferences beyond the Ohio and Pennsylvania population for this study. Also, this study did not have the scope to determine what the best public relation or marketing practices are. It was only able to investigate what information is being provided by the farmland preservation programs in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Definition of Terms

The following were important terms in this study and thus deserve further clarification.

Clean Ohio Fund—restores, protects, and connects Ohio’s important natural and urban places by preserving green space and farmland, improving outdoor recreation, and by cleaning up brownfields to encourage redevelopment and revitalize communities (http://clean.ohio.gov/, April 2011).

Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP)—provides funding to assist landowners and communities in preserving Ohio’s farmland, a vital resource in Ohio’s agricultural industry (Ohio Department of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation, April 2011).

Farmland Preservation— is a joint effort by non-governmental organizations and local governments to set aside and protect examples of a region’s farmland for the use,
education, and enjoyment of future generations. It is often a part of regional planning and national historic preservation.

**Land Trust**- a private, nonprofit organization that, as all or part of its mission, actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, or by its stewardship of such land or easements.

**Perpetuity**- is an annuity that has no end.

**Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)**- is a dual process theory of how attitudes are formed and changed (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter presents the theories of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) theory as the theoretical foundation for this study.

Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) shows two different routes that subjects take during the act of persuasion; central or peripheral. As we gather marketing materials to investigate what materials land trusts are using for farmland preservation, we can determine what route would be taken by the subjects when viewing the materials on farmland preservation.

The elaboration likelihood model that was established in 1986 by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo (Severin/Tankard, 2001). ELM is the idea that in the process of persuasion there are two different routes to changing a person’s attitude; the central route and the peripheral route. The central route is used when the person is actively processing the information that they are given and in turn is persuaded by reasonable and logical information provided to them (Severin/Tankard, 2001). The peripheral route is used when the person receiving the information is not expending the energy to evaluate and process the information provided, but rather is guided by peripheral cues instead (Severin/Tankard, 2001).

The central route of ELM is said to have the more long-lasting effect since the person has a higher level of elaboration during the process of persuasion
(Severin/Tankard, 2001). Elaboration is defined as the extent to which a person carefully thinks about issue-relevant information (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986).

The peripheral route of ELM relies more heavily on a low degree of elaboration by the person. When in this route, a person’s level of persuasion will not depend on their own thoughtful consideration of the facts, but more on how the message is received (Severin/Tankard, 2001).

The level to which a person participates will determine which route they use in persuasion. There are two main factors that can influence the degree of elaboration that is used by a person. The first is the person’s motivation to engage in elaboration and, second, the person’s ability to engage in the elaboration (O’Keefe, 1990). The elaboration likelihood model brings together the many acts of persuasion into one model to better understand how it functions (Severin/Tankard, 2001).

Below is the first model developed for the ELM theory showing both the central and peripheral routes that can be taken during a persuasion or attitude-shift. This model was developed in 1987 and shows the complex process of the model.
As you can see, this model is complex and detailed in nature. The process employs a dichotomy of “if statements” and a return loop. Below is a new model adapted in 2002 by Kenrick, Neuberg, and Cialdini to explain more clearly the two routes of persuasion.
In the image above it explains two routes for a message to be used for persuasion. In the top portion of the image, there is high motivation from the audience to receive and process the information given in the message. With a high motivation from the audience, allows for a greater chance of a lasting effect or change in behavior regarding the message received.

On the other hand, the bottom portion of the image shows a low motivation from the audience to acquire the information they receive. A low motivation from the audience leads to a superficial processing of the information received. This will result in a temporary change that can easily fade.

For example, someone who has a serious interest in preserving farmland would have a high motivation when given a message about the subject. In turn would more
likely listen and think about the message and make lasting changes than someone who has little or no interest in farmland preservation.

According to a study at the University of North Carolina, “Recent work to refine and adapt the ELM to digital media such as the Web has proven fruitful. An exploration of the fundamental tenants of the ELM, some criticisms, and recent refinements will help demonstrate its applicability to persuasion in digital media” (Duthler, 2001; Karsen & Korgaomkar, 2001; Singh & Dalal, 1999).

For this study we narrowed our view of the ELM to look specifically at the cues or tactics that were used while developing the websites. Examples found in literature for peripheral cues are physical appearance, body language, facial gestures, and tone of voice. However since we were evaluating websites instead of the audience we adapted those cues into Credibility, Outside Support, Visual Appearance, Forcefulness of Text and Usability. Definitions of each of these can be found in the Coding Book (Appendix B).
Summary

Throughout this chapter many theoretical and research studies have demonstrated the use of the elaboration likelihood model. The original, complex model has been adapted into an equally powerful but significantly simpler explanation. Awareness of the model will be foundational to the assessment of land trust websites. While expected attitude-shifts will not be part of this research, knowledge of the model is necessary to frame data interpreted from review of land trust websites in Ohio and Pennsylvania.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The methods for this applied research study are outlined in this chapter. This study was conducted using quantitative content analysis of the websites of local land trusts in Ohio and Pennsylvania focused on farmland preservation.

Problem Statement

Agriculture is the number one industry in Ohio’s economy. It adds over $98 billion to the state economy each year, making farmland vital to the livelihood and prosperity of Ohio (Ohio Department of Agriculture, July 2011). Attempts to protect this important asset have been successful through farmland preservation programs. However, there is little research on the communication and marketing tools used to promote the farmland preservation programs. Under the guide of the ELM, this study investigated the information being used for these programs selected websites. Such inquiry can be beneficial for future researchers to determine effectiveness of the information transfer.

Purpose and Objectives

The study aimed to investigate information provided by the local land trusts on their websites, using content analysis. The research objectives that directed the study were as follows:
1. To investigate and describe the similarities and differences between the content local land trusts used on their websites for public viewing of information about farmland preservation.

2. Determine if the tactics used on the website changed the route of the audience in the persuasion outcome.

**Research Design**

The research conducted was descriptive in nature and included a quantitative content analysis on the communication materials that are used by local land trusts in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

Content analysis is the most widely used research method in communications. In 2002, Kim Neuendorf described content analysis as “the primary message centered methodology” and cited studies such as Riffe and Freitag (1997) which “reported that in the field of mass communication research, content analysis has been the fastest-growing technique over the past 20 years or more” (Neuendorf, 2002). The number of content analyses published in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* increased from 6.3% of all articles in 1971 to 34.8% in 1995 (Riffe and Freitag, 1997). Fowler (as cited in Neuendorf, 2002) reported that by the mid-1980s over 84% of Masters degree level research methods courses in journalism in the United States included content analysis.
Population and Sample

The subjects for this study were chosen from local land trusts in Ohio and Pennsylvania. To determine the land trusts focused on farmland preservation in Ohio, the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts directory was used to identify the target population for the study. Similarly, the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association was used to identify the local land trusts focused on farmland preservation in Pennsylvania.

Key informants from the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts and the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association provided the eight land trusts from each state that were focused primarily on farmland preservation to use for the study. Jonathan Ferbrache, an expert in Ohio farmland preservation programs and a member of the steering committee for the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts, lent his expertise on the Ohio programs to pick the appropriate land trusts for the study. In addition, Nicole Faraguna, Director of Outreach for the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association, gave the top eight land trusts in Pennsylvania that were primarily focused on farmland preservation as opposed to other conservation practices, to use for the study.

The study consisted of evaluating the website’s content from all land trusts in Ohio and a sample of land trusts in Pennsylvania that participate in farmland preservation. For each state, eight land trusts were chosen to be evaluated for the study. A total of sixteen websites were reviewed, see Table 3.1 for a complete list of land trusts used for this study.
Instrumentation

The instrument used for this research study was quantitative content analysis. Each land trusts website was reviewed and the communication materials were systematically assigned according to the rules outlined in the coding sheet (see Appendix A) and coding book (see Appendix B). The researchers coded each land trusts website using the coding sheet provided to determine what content is available on each site.

Data Collection

The data collected for this study was conducted in January, 2013. The data was collected by the researchers, coded as described above and then analyzed for similarities and differences among the land trusts. Eight land trusts in Ohio and eight land trusts in Pennsylvania were used for this study.

The eight land trusts in Ohio, represent the land trusts that are primarily focused on farmland preservation in the state, and were determined with the expertise of Jonathan Ferbrache from the Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts. The eight land trusts in Pennsylvania represent the top eight land trusts in the state that are primarily focused on farmland preservation, as determined by Nichole Faraguna, Director of Outreach for the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association.
Table 3.1 – List of Land Trusts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ohio Land Trusts</th>
<th>Pennsylvania Land Trusts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcome Measures**

Validity of the data was addressed by using all land trusts in Ohio that provide farmland preservation programming to be as extensive as possible. Additionally Pennsylvania land trusts that provide farmland preservation programming was also included to balance the Ohio land trust list. The top eight land trusts in Pennsylvania that are primarily focused on farmland preservation were determined by expert, Nichole Faraguna, Director of Outreach for the Pennsylvania Land Trust Association. Eight land
trusts were chosen in Pennsylvania to give an equal number of websites for each state to be reviewed and analyzed.

Reliability of the results will be determined with a second coder during the data collection. Using a coder reliability assessment, Dr. Buck also coded each of the land trusts to establish that the coding results are the same and to optimize inter-rater reliability. In addition, a frame was established for the coders to remain equal in their assessments of each website. It was determined that each coder would not go further than three levels deep into each website (Rössler, 2000).

Data Analysis

The data collected from each land trusts websites were coded and compared to determine similarities and differences among each other. Several comparisons were made in the data analysis. Primarily, comparisons of the Ohio land trusts to the Pennsylvania land trusts, to determine if there are certain similarities or differences between the states as a whole group.
Summary

This chapter sought to describe the methods employed in conducting this research study. This study utilized a content analysis of websites. A sample of 16 land trusts were selected in Ohio and Pennsylvania through a key informant of farmland preservation programs in both Ohio and Pennsylvania. Data collected for this study were analyzed using quantitative descriptive statistics as well as open-coding for qualitative data.
Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate the information provided by local land trusts in Ohio and Pennsylvania on their websites, using content analysis. Describing this information will provide a base for what information is available to the public on local farmland preservation programs. Furthermore, additional research could be done to expand on other potential opportunities for marketing or information transfer to the public about farmland preservation.

The objectives of the study are listed below with the results pertaining to each objective.
Objective 1: To investigate and describe the similarities and differences between the content local land trusts used on their websites for public viewing of information about farmland preservation.

The first similarity discovered in the research findings were that the majority of the land trusts in both states were using social media for their organizations. As indicated in Table 4.1, six of the eight Ohio land trusts, are using Facebook as a social media tool. The Western Reserve Land Conservancy, in Ohio, is also using Twitter and LinkedIn in their social media.

In Pennsylvania, seven of the eight Pennsylvania land trusts are using social media as a tool. Of those, six of them are using Facebook, three of them have blogs and one of them is using Twitter.
Table 4.1 Social Media Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts:</th>
<th>State:</th>
<th>Social Media:</th>
<th>Type:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>FB, Tw, LinkedIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook, Blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook, Twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Blog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook, Blog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another comparison made between the Ohio and Pennsylvania land trusts is the difference between links to state and federal programming for farmland preservation. As presented in Table 4, more of Ohio’s land trusts had links to their state and federal programs than Pennsylvania did.

Table 4.2 State and Federal Links

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts:</th>
<th>State:</th>
<th>Links to State Resources</th>
<th>Links to Federal Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A third assessment of the data, shows a comparison of land trusts that use professional web designers versus those that do not. As you can see in Table 4.3, seven of the eight land trusts in Pennsylvania use a professional web designer and only five of the eight in Ohio do.

Table 4.3 Professional Web Designer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts:</th>
<th>State:</th>
<th>Prof Web Designer:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A forth comparison made from the data collected are the types of online publications found on each website. During data collection it was discovered that all 16 websites had some form of online publication. Table 4.4 provides a breakdown of the kind of publications found on each site.

While each website has some form of online publication, it shows that the Pennsylvania land trusts have more news releases and stories, while Ohio land trusts tend to have more newsletter type of publications.

Table 4.4 Online Publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Releases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Articles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters/Magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Newsletters/Booklet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Reports/Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Release/News Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Stories/Newsletters/Reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective 2: Determine if the tactics used on the website changed the route of the audience in the persuasion outcome.

Five tactics support the ELM theory: credibility, outside support, visual appearance, forcefulness of text, and usability. These tactics were measured during data collection to determine the more prominent route. Below is the analysis of the tactics that make up the ELM theory.

Table 4.5 shows the relationship of the land trusts that used a professional web designer with the credibility, visual appearance and usability of each site. In most cases, the results show those land trusts that used a professional web designer for their sites, show an increase in all three of the tactics measured; credibility, visual appearance and usability.

These results indicate with the use of a professional web designer, a more prominent central route, rather than peripheral. Those land trusts that did not use a professional web designer show a more prominent peripheral route in their tactics.
Table 4.5 Professional Web Designers and Credibility, Visual Appearance and Usability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts:</th>
<th>State:</th>
<th>Prof Web Designer:</th>
<th>Credibility:</th>
<th>Visual Appearance:</th>
<th>Usability:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6 presents the relationship between the latest update to each website and the tactics of credibility and visual appearance. The results indicate those websites that have been updated more recently seem to have higher credibility and visual appearance. Again those with higher credibility and visual appearance are tactics that indicate a more central route, rather than a peripheral route.

Table 4.6 Website Update and Credibility and Visual Appearance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts:</th>
<th>State:</th>
<th>Updated:</th>
<th>Credibility:</th>
<th>Visual Appearance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Summer 2012</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Nov-12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>11/14/2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>1/3/2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>12/14/2012</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>8/6/2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>12/18/2012</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Jan-13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another sample of data compares the type of online publications used with the credibility of the website. In Table 4.7, the data shows the websites with news releases tend to have a higher credibility in most cases. Pennsylvania, in general shows a higher credibility, and as discussed above, Pennsylvania also focused more on news releases than Ohio did on their websites.

Table 4.7 Online Publications and Credibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Trusts:</th>
<th>State:</th>
<th>Type:</th>
<th>Credibility:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black Swamp Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Releases</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licking Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield Land Preservation Association</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Articles</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killbuck Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Land Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Valley Conservation Trust</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Central Ohio Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve Land Conservancy</td>
<td>OH</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters/Magazine</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm &amp; Natural Lands Trust of York Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Newsletters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre County Farmland Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservancy of Adams Co.</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Newsletters/Booklet</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willistown Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Newsletters</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Conservancy</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Releases/Reports/Studies</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French &amp; Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Release/News Stories</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Lands Trust</td>
<td>PA</td>
<td>News Stories/Newsletters/Reports</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

In summary, overall Pennsylvania land trusts appear to be further along than Ohio land trusts in their website content. Pennsylvania land trusts, on average, use more professional web designers, have more news releases, and use many different types of social media.

One area that Ohio land trusts reference more than Pennsylvania land trusts is the use of state and federal resources. Nearly all Ohio land trusts had links to their state and federal program websites, while only half of Pennsylvania land trusts provided those links.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Conclusions

This study provides a solid base of information of the content provided on local land trusts websites. The information in this study can serve as a beginning point in understand what information is first and foremost available to the general public.

Many studies could be upon the results of this study. For example, studies on public awareness of farmland preservation programs are important to the overall success of the programs. Also, studies on the support of such programs could provide farmland preservation practitioners and communicators, beneficial information to increase their presence in the community.
Objective 1: To investigate and describe the similarities and differences between the content local land trusts used on their websites for public viewing of information about farmland preservation.

From the data collected, Pennsylvania appears to be ahead of Ohio in the development of website content. This is most likely because Pennsylvania land trusts in general have been established for a longer period of time than Ohio.

Many of Ohio’s land trusts got their start around 2000 when the Clean Ohio Fund was approved by tax payers to provide state funding for farmland preservation. Through that process, many local land trusts were begun to aid the local communities in their farmland preservation efforts.
Objective 2: Determine if the tactics used on the website changed the route of the audience in the persuasion outcome.

The tactics of the study can help determine the route of the ELM theory that is most prominent in the given information on the websites. In general, the results of the Pennsylvania land trusts show a more prominent central route to their viewers. While Ohio land trusts, in contrast, show a more prominent peripheral route.

The five ELM tactics measured for this study were: Credibility, Outside Support, Visual Appearance, Forcefulness of Text, and Usability. All of these tactics help determine which route is more prominent in the content analysis of each website. More detailed descriptions of each tactic are in the Coding Book found in Appendix B.

Throughout this process of this study, it was determined that the models that have been produced for the ELM theory, are not conducive to a website content analysis study like this. In Figure 2.2 of the Adapted ELM Model, it helps simplify the idea of the ELM theory. However, for this study we assume that the audience already has a high motivation and ability to think about the message, therefore we looked at the tactics that may affect the audiences processing and furthermore their persuasion outcome.

Consider the model below as a new model of ELM, specifically for website content analysis, where the website is being evaluated rather than its audience.
The model above helps portray that the message or content and tactics are the potential change with persuasion rather than the motivation of the audience. This is a rearrangement of the previous models that enables us to evaluate the messages rather than the audience, especially when looking at websites.
Implications for Research

This study serves as a first step in collecting information about how local land trusts are transferring information to the public regarding farmland preservation. With little previous research or information, it was important to start at the beginning and collect this content information so that further research could take.

There are many areas to continue to explore for future reference, such as: analysis of other marketing materials that land trusts are distributing, educational programs they may perform, and public perceptions of farmland preservation programming by local land trusts. This study has shown a broad overview of information readily available to the public on farmland preservation. However, there could be improvements made on those materials and additional materials provided to reach more of the public.
Importance for Practitioners

As the need for farmland preservation programs increase, it is vitally important for agricultural communicators and educators to understand the purpose of the programs and effectively speak to the public and other constituents on the matter.

With the loss of farmland continually increasing, farmland preservation programs must have a sustained and stronger presence in our communities and states. As these programs continue to grow, the support and affect that agricultural communicators and educators can have on the programs, can be extremely helpful to increase awareness.

This study should begin to provide baseline information for agricultural communicators and educators of what information is currently available and where local land trusts could improve in certain areas of communication and web design.
Summary

This study only scratches the surface of potential data to collect on farmland preservation programs. Many more studies, like this, could be done for other states. However, more importantly, researchers can use the data collected in this research to expand into other areas of farmland preservation’s communication and marketing strategies.

The need for studies of public awareness and public support are vital to the success of farmland preservation. Also, marketing and communication techniques used by farmland preservation programs, could be helpful to smaller or new local land trusts, to grow their organizations and be successful in the communication of their programs.

Farmland preservation will continue to be very important in years to come. As loss of farmland continues and the U.S. and world populations grow, the need for land to feed our society will be ever growing. Fortunately, thus far, agricultural entities have survived and thrived in feeding the world by increasing technologies to improve yields and business strategies. However, at some point, if we continue to lose farmland at the rates we currently are, we will see a decline in food production, as technology will not be able to keep up with the continued land loss.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Office of Farmland Policy Innovation at The Ohio State University website.
http://cffpi.osu.edu/

Ohio Department of Agriculture, Office of Farmland Preservation website.
http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/FarmLand/FarmLand.aspx


OSU and county hope agricultural plan becomes a state model. Lancaster Eagle Gazette. Author: Jeff Baron. April 5, 2011.


APPENDIX A

CODING SHEET FOR DATA COLLECTION
CODING SHEET

Land Trust Web Analysis

Name of Land Trust:___________________________________________________

City/State: __________________________________________________________

Web address:_________________________________________________________

When the website was last updated: ________________________________

Have online publications:
❑ No  ❑ Yes

If yes, what kind: how many:
❑ News release ❑ Journals ❑ Reports ❑ Studies ❑ Laws

If news releases, do they:
❑ Inform/Announce ❑ Persuade ❑ Promote

Offer online databases:
❑ No  ❑ Yes  If so, on what:_________________

Have audio clips:
❑ No  ❑ Yes  how many:

If yes, what kind:

Have video clips:
❑ No  ❑ Yes  how many:

If yes, what kind:
Have restricted area requiring username and password to enter:
  □ No  □ Yes

Have option for automatic email updates, newsletters, or notifications:
  □ No  □ Yes  □ No  □ Yes  □ No  □ Yes

Have social media outlets:
  □ No  □ Yes

If yes, what kind:
  □ Facebook  □ Twitter  □ Blog  □ LinkedIn  □ Other
  Ex.________________________

Have bulletin/discussion board feature:
  □ No  □ Yes If yes, Number of posts in last 6 months____________________

Allows personalization of website:
  □ No  □ Yes How: ______________

Have App option:
  □ No  □ Yes What is app:________________________

Have reference page:
  □ No  □ Yes

Have interactive feature that allows visitors to pull specific information from databases available:
  □ No  □ Yes

Have report or summary feature:
  □ No  □ Yes
If so, what kind:
  □ Fiscal  □ Success  □ Easements  □ General

Have a map feature:
Have links to state resource programs:

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes

Have links to federal resource programs?

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes

Have a contribute feature:

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes

Have a membership feature:

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes

Have links to other websites:

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes

Have an archive feature:

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes

Have a contact us feature:

- [ ] No  [ ] Yes  Is it via:  [ ] form  or  [ ] email
Professional web designer:

☐ No  ☐ Yes

Level of Credibility of Website:

1 Not credible at all  2 has some facts  3 has several facts  4 good facts but not presented well  5 very credible

Level of Outside Support of Information (i.e. Sources):

1 No support  2 has some support  3 several outside support  4 most information supported by sources  5 all information supported

Strength of Visual Appearance:

1 Not visual at all  2 has some visual  3 some visual but not organized well  4 very visual but not organized well  5 very visual and organized

Forcefulness of Text (Tone):

1 Not forceful at all  2 some forceful text  3 forceful text and facts  4 most all text forceful  5 all text is forceful

Level of Usability:

1 Not organized at all  2 has some organization  3 organized but option heavy  4 very organized (easy to navigate)  5 fully organized and useable

Other features to note:

_____________________________________________________


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APPENDIX B

CODING BOOK FOR DATA COLLECTION
CODING BOOK

Name: [Enter name]

Eligible sites include: land trusts specifically working with farmland preservation in Ohio or Pennsylvania.

City/State: [Enter code for specific city, state]

Web Address: [web address]

When website was last updated: [date]

Has online publications: [0 no, 1 yes]

This category includes news releases, journals, reports, studies, laws, or constitutions. Often major reports are in PDF format. These would count as publications.

Laws indicate legal rules or guidelines set forth for farmland preservation.

If news releases are available which of the following categories does the news release belong to:

- Inform (data) or announce

- Persuade; Cause (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument.
- Promotion of organization; Further the progress of the organization; support or actively encourage.

Offers online databases: [0 no, 1 yes]

This can vary widely from statistics, charts, data to actual databases customized to retrieve specific information within the site. Telephone directories were not included as a database. Databases are often found in the statistics, information or publications sections of webpages.

Has audio clips: [0 no, 1 yes]

Any sound file whatsoever, whether it be in the form of a speech, radio show, or website welcome.

Has video clips [any video file]: [0 no, 1 yes]

Examples are news clips, organizational commercials, picture tours, website welcome, and YouTube videos. Could be a video clip or example of streaming video. PowerPoint presentations are not included as video clips.

Has restricted area requiring username and password to enter: [0 no, 1 yes]

This could be access to a subscription or membership area that is password protected. Areas that have a registration requirement for a password just for
information purposes (i.e., sending free email notifications or free subscriptions to the visitor) would not be considered a restricted section since the restriction is not for a general area of the website.

Has option for automatic email updates, newsletters, or notifications: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website gives the user the ability to sign up and register online in order to receive updates in such forms as newsletters, late-breaking news, and website notifications. These updates are then sent out to people who have registered to receive information or notifications.

Has option of social media outlets: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website gives the user the option to connect to the organizations social media pages such as Facebook, Twitter, or a blog.

Has bulletin/discussion board feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website has a bulletin or discussion board feature to allow guests to interact with each other and the organization.

Allows personalization of website (to tailor page to viewer interests): [0 no, 1 yes]

Can customize website to your particular interests.
Has an App option: [0 no, 1 yes]

This would include access to the website through a smartphone, iPad, or any kind of personal digital assistant (as opposed to computer access through the Internet).

Has a reference page: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website has a page that lists references used on the website for the organization.

Has an interactive feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website gives you the ability to put in parameters for information desired and results are given, such as a search engine.

Has report or summary feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website gives a summary of who has participated in farmland preservation with the organization.

Has a map feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website offers a map feature of the conservation easements held by the organization.

Has links to state resource programs: [0 no, 1 yes]
Links to Ohio Department of Agriculture or other state programs on farmland preservation.

Has links to federal resource programs: [0 no, 1 yes]

Links to U.S. Department of Agriculture or other federal programs on farmland preservation.

Has a Contribute feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website offers information on guests interested in financially contributing to the organization’s mission.

Has a membership feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website offers a place for those interested to take action such as memberships.

Has links to other websites: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website offers links to other sites related to farmland preservation and/or conservation easements.

Has an archive feature: [0 no, 1 yes]
The website offers an archive feature of older articles or other information related to the organization or farmland preservation.

Has a contact us feature: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website offers contact information for the organization to be reached.

Has professional web designer for site: [0 no, 1 yes]

The website was designed and maintained by a professional web designer.

Scale for 1-5 of below questions use this rubric:

1) No examples
2) 1-2 examples
3) 3-5 examples
4) 6-10 examples
5) Majority of site

Level of Credibility of website:

1 Not credible at all  2 has some facts  3 has several facts  4 good facts but not presented well  5 very credible

Level of Outside Support of Information (i.e. Sources):

1 No support  2 has some support  3 several outside support  4 most information supported by sources  5 all information supported
Strength of Visual Appearance:

Visual-supporting images and graphics to enhance the text on the website. Eye catching, interesting and helpful images or graphics such as charts of land loss, pictures of preserved farmland, etc.

1 Not visual at all  2 has some visual  3 some visual but not organized well  4 very visual but not organized well  5 very visual and organized

Forcefulness of Text (Tone):

Forcefulness-basic information vs persuasive text (tone).

1 Not forceful at all  2 some forceful text  3 forceful text and facts  4 most all text forceful  5 all text is forceful

Level of Usability:

1 Not organized at all  2 has some organization  3 organized but option heavy  4 very organized (easy to navigate)  5 Fully organized and usable

Other features to note: