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## **Older people drive online giving boom**

Tech-savvy pensioners are driving a boom in online giving, with churches and the arts the major beneficiaries.

According to research from *JustGiving*, internet giving to religious causes has increased by 128% over the last five years, while culture and arts donations have trebled.<sup>1</sup>

Older donors, by far the most generous in Britain<sup>2</sup>, have led this trend and are choosing the inbox over the collection box in ever larger numbers, despite a marked decline in church attendance.<sup>3</sup>

Direct religious web donations by the over-60s outstripped those of any other age-group, nearly trebling over the period.<sup>4</sup>

And direct online donations to culture and arts organisations by the over-60s increased more than fivefold<sup>5</sup> – more than twice the rate of younger groups.<sup>6</sup>

A spike in internet usage among older people is helping to drive the move online<sup>7</sup>, as has encouragement from beneficiaries like churches and museums, who are wising up to the tax benefits of online giving and are encouraging their supporters to log-on.

The uplift in online religious giving has also been greatly assisted by Britain's 2.4 million Muslims<sup>8</sup> with the Islamic practice of *Zakat* generating close to £1 million in online donations in 2010 and 2011 respectively - more than other major giving landmarks like Gary Barlow's Jubilee single or the Diamond Jubilee.

Donations for this year's *Zakat* – happening at the moment and running until mid-August – are also expected to exceed last year's figure.

Likewise, there was a major spike in giving to religious charities following the Pakistan floods of 2010/2011.

And harnessing the Internet to rally the faithful has now become a priority for many religious groups.

For instance, the church St Michael and All Angels in West London has so far raised over £40,000 online through JustGiving to pay for its Organ & Parish Rooms Project by singing every single hymn in the New English Hymnal without a break.

Muslims have also used online donation portals to fund costs for Dawah Day 2012 – during which Muslims travel to London with the mission to invite non-Muslims to Islam.

Commenting on the findings, Rr Revd Stephen Lowe, retired Church of England bishop for urban life and faith said: *“To keep up with their congregations, churches and faith groups need to catch up on modern methods of charitable giving beyond the plate and Direct Debit. People want the ability to respond immediately to need in a world which is increasingly cashless, which is why so many of them are now giving online.”*

Anne-Marie Huby, MD of JustGiving said: *“As the huge rise in online religious giving shows, digital giving is now reaching older and more traditional segments of the giving public. It shows the nation is wising up to the power of technology to make giving easier and more tax efficient.”*

**-ends-**

For more information please contact:

Mark Lowe or Chris Blackwood at Third City – 020 3174 1023

[mark@thirdcity.co.uk](mailto:mark@thirdcity.co.uk) / [chris@thirdcity.co.uk](mailto:chris@thirdcity.co.uk)

Rosalind Holley at JustGiving – 020 7076 0955

[Rosalind@justgiving.com](mailto:Rosalind@justgiving.com)

#### **FOOTNOTES**

1. JustGiving internal donor data. From 2007 to 2011 donations to religious charities rose by 128% and donations to Arts & Culture causes rose by 210%.

2. JustGiving commissioned ICM to run a nationally representative poll of 2,031 UK adults, of whom 702 were 55 and over. All respondents were asked how much they had donated to charity in the past 12 months. The national average was £135, while 55-64 year olds gave £157 and 65+ gave £182
3. Figures from Church of England: 6% of the UK population attend church regularly, average age 51. In 1980 regular attendance stood at 11% with the average age of 37. It is predicted that by 2020, attendance will be around 4% with the average age being 56
4. 171% rise in direct donations to religious causes by the over 60s over the last five years (JG donation data).
5. 459% rise in direct donations to arts & culture causes by the over 60s over the last five years (JG donation data).
6. The above figure is twice the rate of increase seen in donors in the under 60s age group.
7. Ofcom: Adult Media and Attitudes Report, March 2012, growth in internet (household) usage since 2005: (whole population: 54%; 55-64 63%; 65+ 86%)
8. Labour Force Survey estimate, the total number of Muslims in GB in 2008 was 2,422,000