

Finding Excuses to Decline the Ask

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Abstract

A growing body of empirical evidence documents a reluctance to give. Individuals avoid donation asks, and when asked, give less by viewing factors – such as ambiguity or risk – in a self-serving manner. This paper considers an environment where the ask is not avoided and factors that may be viewed self-servingly are neither introduced nor highlighted. Instead, this paper explores whether less prosocial behavior may result from the mere expectation of the ask, or opportunity for individuals to find their own excuses. Our field experiment supports this extension of self-serving or excuse-driven choices: prosocial behavior reduces by 22% when an upcoming ask is expected. Additional results document heterogeneity in such excuse-driven behavior and ways to counter it with information on why to give.

Keywords: charitable giving, prosocial behavior, self-serving biases, excuses

JEL codes: D64, C93

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1 Introduction

One need not look far to see evidence of charitable acts. Volunteerism and giving in local communities are common. Social media campaigns, such as #GivingTuesday, highlight giving opportunities online. Giving USA recently reported the highest level of (inflation-adjusted) charitable giving in their 60-year history: \$358.38 billion in 2014. Over 70% of this giving comes from individuals, as opposed to foundations, bequests, or corporations. While about one-third of donations benefit religious organizations, other popular causes range from education to the environment and animals (Giving USA Foundation, 2015).

The prevalence of giving may naturally lead individuals to expect to be asked to give. Perhaps the best evidence of such an expectation is the avoidance of the ask. Individuals walk in a direction away from solicitors (Andreoni, Rao and Trachtman, 2016; Trachtman et al., 2015), do not answer their door for fundraisers (DellaVigna, List and Malmendier, 2012), opt-out of future mail campaign solicitations (Kamdar et al., 2015), and avoid tasks that earn them money if a donation request is known to follow (Lin, Schaumberg and Reich, 2016).¹

Expecting the ask may allow for more than avoidance behavior; it may facilitate the development of excuses not to give even if the ask is not avoided. Therein lies the central contribution of this paper: in an environment where the ask is not avoided, we test whether the mere expectation of the ask, or opportunity to find and develop excuses, results in less prosocial behavior.

Our consideration of this excuse-driven mechanism departs from related literature in two ways. First, while avoidance of the ask literature may reflect excuse-driven behavior, it may instead reflect a dislike of the ask itself due to factors such as social pressure or empathetic triggers.² These potential factors are not relevant in our setting where the ask is not avoided. Second, prior literature documents self-serving or excuse-driven behavior by showing how responses to certain factors – such as ambiguity (Haisley and Weber, 2010), risk (Exley, Forthcoming), and charity performance metrics (Exley, 2015) – alter when self-serving motivations are more or less relevant.³ In neither highlighting nor introducing factors that may be viewed self-servingly, this paper tests the boundaries of when self-serving or excuse-driven behavior may arise.⁴

¹Relatedly, individuals desire to avoid others knowing about giving opportunities (Dana, Cain and Dawes, 2006; Broberg, Ellingsen and Johannesson, 2007; Lazear, Malmendier and Weber, 2012) and benefit from avoiding prosocial decisions via delegation (Hamman, Loewenstein and Weber, 2010; Coffman, 2011; Bartling and Fischbacher, 2012). Miller and Monin (2016) more broadly discusses how individuals seek to avoid “moral tests.”

²In addition to Andreoni, Rao and Trachtman (2016) and DellaVigna, List and Malmendier (2012) proposing these reasons, other work documents how the effectiveness of the ask relates to social pressures (Castillo, Petrie and Wardell, 2015, 2014; Meer, 2011) and empathetic triggers (Andreoni and Rao, 2011).

³Similarly, Konow (2000), Andreoni and Sanchez (2014) and Di Tella et al. (2015) document how individuals alter their subsequent behavior or their beliefs when doing so may justify more selfish actions on their behalf.

⁴Other factors that may be viewed self-servingly could include situations where the outcome may rely on chance or others’ decisions (Dana, Weber and Kuang, 2007; Andreoni and Bernheim, 2009; Linardi and McConnell, 2011; Falk and Szech, 2013), the use of donations may be undesirable (Fong and Oberholzer-Gee, 2011; Li et al., 2015; Gneezy, Keenan and Gneezy, 2014; Batista, Silverman and Yang, 2015), or the performance metrics are poor (Yörük, 2016; Brown, Meer and Williams, 2014; Gneezy, Keenan and Gneezy, 2014; Meer, 2014).

In particular, we implement a field experiment in a novel setting where the ask is not avoided, but is either announced and “expected” or a surprise and “unexpected.” Many environments are not conducive to such a design. Imminent donation asks – such as when individuals receive fundraising mail or are approached by solicitors – are likely recognized as such and do not allow for unexpected asks. Future donation asks may or may not be expected, but when they are expected, they often encourage individuals to find ways to avoid the ask.

We therefore embed our field experiment as part of an online voting contest specifically crafted to meet our design constraints. Via a three-step voting registration process for a favorite animal rescue group, individuals are unlikely to expect an ask when they begin the first step, the expectation of an ask is manipulated in the second step, and the ask itself follows in the third step. Strong treatment effects and attrition of only 1% validate this design choice. The use of an online voting contest also maintains the benefits of a natural environment where individuals are not directly informed of, and likely remain unaware of, the on-going research.⁵

More specifically, upon arriving at the contest webpage, individuals learn that they must complete a three-step registration process for their vote to count. Individuals select their favorite animal group in the first step, and decide whether to click-through to the donation page of their favorite animal group in the third step. Individuals provide information on how they know their favorite animal group in the second step and view any messages related to their randomly assigned treatment group. There are six treatment groups arising from two conditions.

Our first condition addresses our central question by varying the expectation of the ask. When the ask is expected, the second step mentions the upcoming donation ask by stating *“Do you love [group name]? Register your vote in the next step, and if you want to, donate to them!”* When the ask is unexpected, the second step does not mention the upcoming donation ask by instead stating *“Do you love [group name]? Register your vote in the next step!”*

Our second condition investigates which policies may help charities to counteract any negative impact from individuals expecting the ask. We compare the effectiveness of providing no information, unavoidable information and avoidable information on “why to give” in the second step. When provided, the information features an adoption story about a rescued dog to keep in line with industry practice.

Our contest yielded approximately six-thousand participants with various levels of prior support for the animal groups. When no information is provided, we find that the mere expectation of the ask causes click-through rates to fall by 22%. That is, the introduction of factors that are often viewed self-servingly are not needed for apparent excuse-driven behavior to follow; individuals appear readily able to find their own excuses when given the opportunity to do so.

Providing unavoidable information proves to be an effective way to counteract this drop; click-

⁵Most individuals have voted in an online contest or poll before (Google Consumer survey, Oct. 2015, n=500) and over a quarter have done so to help a charity or others (Google Consumer survey, Oct. 2015, n=500).

through rates do not differ when the ask is expected or unexpected. One potential explanation is that viewing information on why to give, prior to the ask, limits individuals' ability to develop excuses.⁶ While a promising finding for charities that often bundle donation requests with information on why to give, this strategy is sensitive to how the information is delivered.

When the information on why to give is avoidable, the click-through rates again fall – this time by 15% – when the ask is expected. That is, individuals acquire information in a manner that allows them to maintain excuses not to click-through when the ask is expected. While selection prohibits the identification of how information acquisition leads to reduced click-throughs, additional evidence is suggestive. First, in line with individuals avoiding information to maintain “moral wiggle room” (Dana, Weber and Kuang, 2007; Bartling, Engl and Weber, 2014; Grossman, 2014), 22% of individuals view the information when the ask is unexpected but only 17% do so when the ask is expected. Second, viewing time behavior is consistent with the possibility that individuals spend time deliberating over the information to find excuses not to give. Among individuals who view the information and do not click-through, their viewing time is longer when the ask is expected compared to when it is unexpected. The opposite pattern emerges among individuals who view the information and click-through, while no changes are observed when the information is instead unavoidable. As discussed later, these findings relate to the growing literature on response time (Rand, Greene and Nowak, 2012; Tinghög et al., 2013; Recalde, Riedl and Vesterlund, 2014; Krajbich et al., 2015; Kessler, Kivimaki and Niederle, 2015).

Finally, we note that there is likely a spectrum of individuals ranging from those who are never prosocial to those who are always prosocial. Although not relevant for either extreme, excuses are likely more relevant for those closer to the never-prosocial side. Indeed, Exley (Forthcoming) documents more excuse-driven responses to risk among those who give less when there is no risk and Karlan and Wood (2014) find more adverse responses to aid effectiveness information among smaller previous donors.⁷ With our treatment effects being largely driven by new as opposed to previous supporters of the involved animal groups, our results add support to excuse-driven behavior being more likely among those less inclined towards prosocial behavior.⁸ An additional driver of this heterogeneity may relate to how prior interactions with the animal groups influence the attention paid to the treatment manipulations (Bordalo, Gennaioli and Shleifer, 2015).

⁶A similar explanation may relate to Klinowski (2015) finding a stronger impact of information on a past donor when it is provided before, but not after, individuals state their extensive margin giving decision.

⁷Similar findings exist in the voting literature: Gerber and Rogers (2009) observe that messages about low-voter-turnout, relative to high-voter-turnout, are most counterproductive among infrequent voters.

⁸Heterogeneous findings by prior prosocial behavior has also been documented in relation to other mechanisms, such as in responsiveness to natural disasters (Lilley and Slonim, 2016), financial incentives (Niesse-Ruenzi, Weber and Becker, 2014; Lacetera, Macis and Slonim, 2014), social image concerns (Exley, 2016), and self-image concerns (Gneezy et al., 2012).

2 Design

The following subsections detail the three-step voting registration process for the online contest. Section 3 will turn to the procedure for and data from recruitment and participation.

2.1 First Step - Vote for favorite group

For the first step (see Figure 1), an individual votes for her favorite animal group and provides her first name, last name, email address and zip code. She also confirms her eligibility by agreeing to the terms-of-use and stating that she is 18 years or older, resides in the US and will only vote once. An individual only views information that this contest is related to a research study if she chooses to click on the terms-of-use hyperlink, and in the 4% of cases where this occurs, note that this hyperlink click precedes the treatment variations shown in the second step.

Figure 1: Screen shot of first step of the voting contest



The screenshot shows the first step of a three-step voting process. At the top is a green banner with the text "VOTE TO GIVE WAGS & DOLLARS" and "The Bay Area Animal Groups Contest". Below the banner, it says "Step 1 out of 3". The main heading is "I would like to vote for:". There are two columns of radio buttons, each with four blacked-out group names. Below this is the heading "So we can count your vote, please carefully provide:". There are three input fields for "First Name", "Last Name", and "Zip code". Below that is the heading "So we can email you a confirmation, please provide your email address:" followed by an email input field. The next heading is "Do you agree to only vote once?" with a radio button for "Yes". The final heading is "Are you at least 18 years old, live in the United States, and agree to the Terms of Use of this contest (shown [here](#))?" with a radio button for "Yes".

2.2 Second Step - Indicate relationship to favorite group and presented with any materials related to treatment group

In the second step, the top portion of the page requests information on how the voter knows her favorite group – e.g. whether she has adopted from them, attended one of their events, donated money to them, used their services, volunteered for them, worked as a staff member, never interacted with them, and/or interacted in some other way.

The bottom portion of the page displays any information related to the treatment group. The six treatments vary on two dimensions: whether the upcoming ask is mentioned or not, and whether information on why to give is not provided, is unavoidable, or is avoidable.

Figure 2 displays the first two “No Information” treatments, which only vary by whether the short message at the bottom highlights the upcoming donation request. That is:

No Information-Unexpected Ask Treatment: “Do you love [group name]? Register your vote in the next step!”

No Information-Expected Ask Treatment: “Do you love [group name]? Register your vote in the next step, and if you want to, donate to them!”

Figure 2: No Information Unexpected Ask (left) and Expected Ask (right) treatments

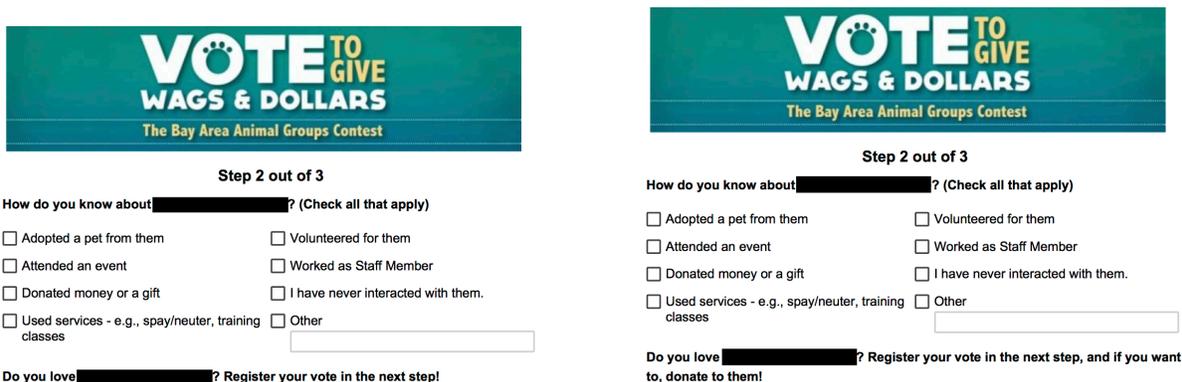


Figure 3 displays the two “Unavoidable Information” treatments, which add in information on why an individual might want to donate to her favorite animal group. This information takes the form of a real adoption story of a dog rescued by her favorite group. Depending on her favorite group, the adoption story always features one large photograph or two small photographs, along with 140-170 words describing how the dog was rescued. The adoption story follows the message that varies the expectation of the ask. That is:

Unavoidable Information-Unexpected Ask Treatment: “Do you love [group name]? Read ‘[dog name]’s Story’ below about a pup they saved, and register your vote in the next step!”

Unavoidable Information-Expected Ask Treatment: “Do you love [group name]? Read ‘[dog name]’s Story’ below about a pup they saved, register your vote in the next step, and if you want to, donate to them!”

Figure 3: Unavoidable Information Unexpected Ask (left) and Expected Ask (right) treatments



Step 2 out of 3

How do you know about [redacted]? (Check all that apply)

Adopted a pet from them Volunteered for them
 Attended an event Worked as Staff Member
 Donated money or a gift I have never interacted with them.
 Used services - e.g., spay/neuter, training classes Other

Do you love [redacted]? Read "Pico's Story" below about a pup they saved, and register your vote in the next step!

Pico's Story

Pico was picked up by [redacted] after someone reported seeing **him kicked in the face**. He was a teeny tiny thing, weighing in just under 1 lb, with open wounds covering his sweet face.



Before



After

[redacted] picked him up before he got to the shelter, and although he looked horrible, the vet assured us his injuries were purely cosmetic.

With good food, LOVE and attention **he healed up completely and thrived in his foster home** with two little girls and a couple of cats!

This goofy and playful survivor, who captures the hearts of everyone he meets, was adopted by an amazing family. He is now living the life he deserves: **in a family that will love him forever!**



Step 2 out of 3

How do you know about [redacted]? (Check all that apply)

Adopted a pet from them Volunteered for them
 Attended an event Worked as Staff Member
 Donated money or a gift I have never interacted with them.
 Used services - e.g., spay/neuter, training classes Other

Do you love [redacted]? Read "Pico's Story" below about a pup they saved, register your vote in the next step, and if you want to, donate to them!

Pico's Story

Pico was picked up by [redacted] after someone reported seeing **him kicked in the face**. He was a teeny tiny thing, weighing in just under 1 lb, with open wounds covering his sweet face.



Before



After

[redacted] picked him up before he got to the shelter, and although he looked horrible, the vet assured us his injuries were purely cosmetic.

With good food, LOVE and attention **he healed up completely and thrived in his foster home** with two little girls and a couple of cats!

This goofy and playful survivor, who captures the hearts of everyone he meets, was adopted by an amazing family. He is now living the life he deserves: **in a family that will love him forever!**

Figure 4 displays the final two “Avoidable Information” treatments. An individual can click the bar at the bottom of the page to reveal the information or not click to avoid the information. This bar follows the message that varies the expectation of the ask. That is:

Avoidable Information-Unexpected Ask Treatment: “Do you love [group name]? Click to read ‘[dog name]’s Story’ below about a pup they saved, and register your vote in the next step!”

Avoidable Information-Expected Ask Treatment: “Do you love [group name]? Click to read ‘[dog name]’s Story’ below about a pup they saved, register your vote in the next step, and if you want to, donate to them!”

Figure 4: Avoidable Information Unexpected Ask (left) and Expected Ask (right) treatments

Step 2 out of 3

How do you know about [redacted]? (Check all that apply)

Adopted a pet from them Volunteered for them

Attended an event Worked as Staff Member

Donated money or a gift I have never interacted with them.

Used services - e.g., spay/neuter, training classes Other

Do you love [redacted]? Click below to read "Pico's Story" about a pup they saved, and register your vote in the next step!

Click here for Pico's Story

Step 2 out of 3

How do you know about [redacted]? (Check all that apply)

Adopted a pet from them Volunteered for them

Attended an event Worked as Staff Member

Donated money or a gift I have never interacted with them.

Used services - e.g., spay/neuter, training classes Other

Do you love [redacted]? Click below to read "Pico's Story" about a pup they saved, register your vote in the next step, and if you want to, donate to them!

Click Here for Pico's Story

2.3 Third Step - Choose whether to click-through to donation page of favorite group

As shown in Figure 5, during the third and final step, an individual must decide whether to click-through to her favorite group's donation page. To ensure an individual makes an active decision about clicking-through, notice that she must indicate this decision before clicking on the "register my vote" button. After clicking this button, a screen appears confirming the vote has been registered and a confirmation email is sent. If the voter chooses to click-through to the donation page of her favorite animal group, she is automatically redirected to that page.

Figure 5: Screen shots of third step of the voting contest

Step 3 out of 3

Click the "Register My Vote" Button below to make sure your vote counts! After doing this, would you like to show your support for [redacted] by being redirected to their website and learning how to donate to them? We hope so!

Yes - I'd love to learn how to support [redacted]

No - I'd rather not

Register My Vote

3 Data

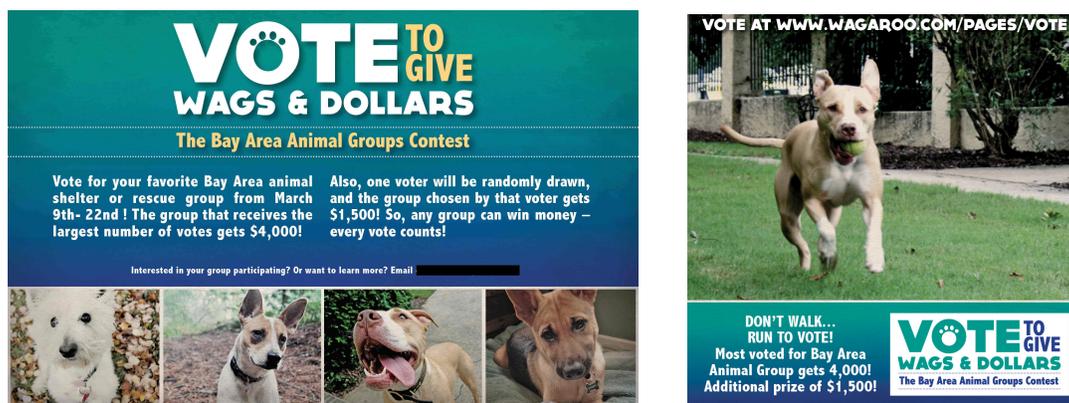
3.1 Participant Recruitment

From March 9th to 22nd of 2015, individuals could vote for one out of eight participating Bay Area animal groups.⁹ To encourage participation, the group with the most votes by the end of the contest won \$4,000. Additionally, one voter was chosen at random, and the group that individual voted for won \$1,500. This smaller prize provided an incentive for all individuals to register a vote, even if their favorite group was unlikely to win the larger prize.

The contest was hosted via a Qualtrics survey on the website of an organization that helps people find dogs for adoption (www.wagaroo.com) from animal shelters, rescue groups, or families needing to rehome their dogs. The hosting organization did not participate in the contest. Groups participating in this contest, however, had interacted with the hosting organization before, mostly by posting profiles of their dogs available for adoption on the hosting organization’s website. This relationship helped to ensure supporters of the participating groups about the legitimacy of the contest. The left panel of Figure 6 shows how the landing page for the contest appeared.

To facilitate voter recruitment, participating groups were provided with professionally designed promotional materials to use during the contest. The right panel of Figure 6 shows an example. Groups were free to use these materials as well as any of their own materials to promote this contest via outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, their own web page, and email lists.¹⁰

Figure 6: Voting Contest Landing Page (left) and Example Promotional Ad (right)



3.2 Participant Completion

Out of the 6,664 individuals who began the three-step voting registration process, only 4% did not complete all three steps. Excluding individuals with a duplicate name and/or email

⁹Random assignment to treatment groups was balanced across the 2 weeks of the contest, and our results are robust to only considering data from the first or second week.

¹⁰Our own monitoring suggests that most promotion took place on Facebook.

address reduces the rate of attrition to only 1% of the remaining 6,059 individuals who began the registration process.¹¹ The attrition rate remains constant across all treatment groups, and our results are not sensitive to excluding individuals on the basis of duplicate names and/or email addresses.¹² The analysis that follows therefore excludes all potential duplicates and focuses on the 5,976 unique and successfully cast votes, thus yielding 980 - 1,005 in each treatment group.

3.3 Description of the Data

For the 5,976 participants, we measured the amount of time participants spent on each step. While the median time spent on the first step (44-45 seconds) and last step (11 seconds) did not vary across treatments, the amount of time spent on the second step varied in the direction one would expect: 19-21 seconds when no information was provided, 26-27 seconds when the information was avoidable, and 31-32 seconds when the information was unavoidable.

Our data also consist of information directly inputted as part of the three-step voting registration. From participants' inputted names in the first step, computer code that predicts gender from a database of names indicates 83% of participants were female, 14% were male, and 4% were not known. From participants' answers about how they knew their favorite group in the second step, 26% have adopted a pet from them, 22% have donated money or a gift, 17% have attended an event, 15% have volunteered, 10% have used a service such as spay/neuter or training classes, and 1% have worked as a staff member. Appendix Table A.1 shows that the frequency of these interactions, as well as predicted gender, are not different across the treatment groups.

Participants' active decisions about whether to click-through to the donation page of their favorite animal group in the third step is our central outcome metric. Among voters who chose to click-through, subsequent donation decisions were only observed by the involved animal group. Data collection from the animal groups unfortunately resulted in noisy and non-standardized information. Even if we consider this data, the observed donation level of 1-2% leaves us underpowered to detect any significant differences across our treatment groups.¹³

Before turning to how click-through rates change in response to our treatment variations in the next section, it is useful to note that click-through rates, or targeted website traffic to donation pages, are highly valued metrics. For instance, in their survey paper on political campaigns, [Nickerson and Rogers \(2014\)](#) discuss how "data collected from online activities can be of particular value" as the barrier to entry is low and the tracking of micro-level behavior can facilitate predictions about levels of support and likelihood of subsequent actions. Given the increasing professionalism of the nonprofit sector ([Hwang and Powell, 2009](#)), it may therefore be

¹¹The reduced attrition rate may reflect some individuals starting to register a second vote but then quitting when they remembered that only one vote per person was allowed.

¹²This is important as it is indeed possible that some individuals shared the same name as another participant, or that more than one individual shared a particular email address, such as a family email address.

¹³Although noisy, it is interesting to note that rates conditional on being asked are typically around 2% for mail campaigns ([Huck and Rasul, 2011](#); [Karlan and List, 2007](#); [Karlan, List and Shafrir, 2011](#); [Eckel and Grossman, 2008](#)) and via social media ([Castillo, Petrie and Wardell, 2014, 2015](#)).

no surprise that a similar focus appears to be developing among nonprofit organizations. Out of the 84 nonprofit organizations (netting over \$400 million dollars) featured in the 2015 M+R Benchmarks Study, 76% paid for web marketing.¹⁴ This expenditure aligns with the potential high value of website traffic in terms of donations; the M+R Benchmarks Study reports an average of \$610 dollars in donations for every 1,000 website visitors compared to only an average of \$40 for every 1,000 fundraising emails sent.

As a baseline, it is therefore encouraging to note that we observe an average click-through rate to donation pages of 46%. This average compares favorably to available benchmarks about how often people click-through in response to emails.¹⁵ The M+R Benchmark Study reports a click-through rate of 0.48% from fundraising emails, with only 14% even being opened. MailChimp reports a click-through rate of 2.89% from large email campaigns initiated by nonprofit organizations, with only 25.45% of emails being opened.¹⁶ Silverpop reports that even the top-quartile of nonprofit organizations only have a click-through rate of 4.8% and opening rate of 27.3%.¹⁷

4 Results

4.1 Impact of Treatment Effects on Click-through Rates

In the No Information - Unexpected Ask treatment, voters are reminded to register their vote in the next step. The addition of 8 words that alert voters to upcoming donation ask in the No Information - Expected Ask treatment has a substantial impact. Figure 7 shows that the mere expectation of the ask, or opportunity to find and develop one's own excuses prior to the ask, causes click-through rates to significantly decrease from 51% to only 40%. Columns (1) and (2) of Table 1 confirm the significance of this drop via Probit regressions of the likelihood to click-through on expecting the ask, both when controls are not included and when controls are included for each voter's gender, day during contest that they voted, selected animal group, and ways in which they know their selected animal group. That is, excuse-driven behavior may arise even when factors that can be viewed self-servingly are not introduced or highlighted.

In the presence of unavoidable information on why to give, there is no longer a negative impact of expecting the ask. In the Unavoidable Information treatments, click-through rates remain at 47% regardless of whether the ask is expected or unexpected. Columns (3) and (4) of Table 1 show this null effect with and without controls. In pooling data from the No Information and Unavoidable Information treatments, columns (5) and (6) further show that providing unavoidable information counteracts the negative impact of expecting the ask.¹⁸

In considering the effectiveness of unavoidable information, several mechanisms may be rele-

¹⁴For details, please see <http://mrbenchmarks.com>.

¹⁵We are not aware of any benchmark of click-through rates from an online contest.

¹⁶See <http://mailchimp.com/resources/research/email-marketing-benchmarks>.

¹⁷See http://www.silverpop.com/Documents/Whitepapers/2013/WP_EmailMarketingMetricsBenchmarkStudy2013.pdf.

¹⁸ $Expected\ Ask + Expected\ Ask * Unavoidable\ Info = 0$ is not rejected ($p = 0.91$).

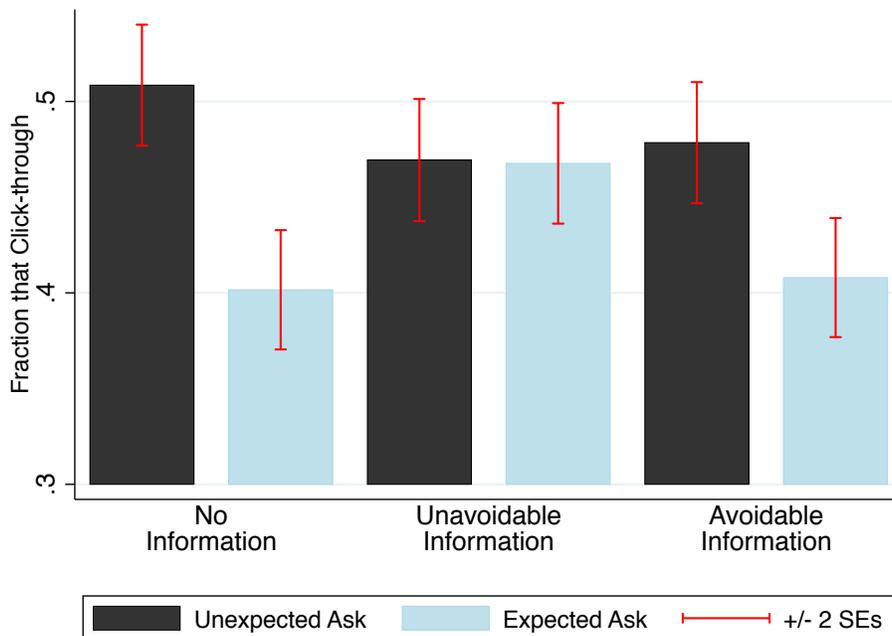
Table 1: Click-through regressions

Information:	Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of Click-through									
	None		Unavoidable		None or Unavoidable		Avoidable		None or Avoidable	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.00 (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)
<i>Unavoidable Info</i>					-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)				
<i>Expected Ask</i> <i>*Unavoidable Info</i>					0.11*** (0.03)	0.11*** (0.03)				
<i>Avoidable Info</i>									-0.03* (0.02)	-0.03* (0.02)
<i>Expected Ask</i> <i>*Avoidable Info</i>									0.04 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)
Controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	1989	1989	1984	1984	3973	3973	1998	1998	3987	3987
Click-through rates	0.46	0.46	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.45

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to click-through to the donation page of voted-for animal group. *Expected Ask*, *Unavoidable Info*, and *Avoidable Info* are indicators for when the ask is expected, the information provided is unavoidable, and the information provided is avoidable. *Expected Ask*Unavoidable Info* and *Expected Ask*Avoidable Info* are interaction variables of these indicators. Controls include indicators for each voter's gender, day that they voted during the contest, selected animal group, and ways in which they knew their selected animal group.

vant. On one hand, unavoidable information may increase the difficulty with finding excuses or counter the desire to find excuses in the first place.¹⁹ This possibility could explain why, relative to no information, unavoidable information increases click-through rates when the ask is expected (and excuses may be relevant) but has no significant impact when the ask is unexpected. On the other hand, unavoidable information may cause individuals to expect the ask even absent an explicit mention of it. If expectations do not differ across the Unavoidable Information treatments, equal click-through rates could then follow. Even in this case though, the higher click-through rates in the Unavoidable Information treatments relative to the No Information - Expected Ask treatment would imply an additional mechanism related to the effectiveness of unavoidable information when the ask is expected. Other possibilities, such as the potential for ceiling effects in the fraction of individuals ever willing to click-through, remain possible as well.²⁰

Figure 7: Clicks-through rates



The effectiveness of information does not persist, however, when it is avoidable. More closely mirroring the No Information treatments, expecting the ask in the Avoidable Information treatments causes a significant reduction from 48% to 41%. Columns (7) and (8) of Table 1 confirm this 7 percentage point decrease with and without controls. In pooling data from the No Information and Avoidable Information treatments, columns (9) and (10) also show that providing

¹⁹A reduction in the salience of upcoming ask mention may directly decrease the focus on finding excuses.

²⁰Alternatively, different types of information may have been even more effective; for instance, results from [Levine and Kam \(2015\)](#) indicate that the focus on past success as opposed to future need may suggest that the organizations can succeed without further support.

avoidable information does not counteract the negative impact of expecting that ask.²¹ If anything, relative to no information, providing avoidable information has a marginally significant and negative level effect. That is, individuals acquire information in a manner that allows them to find and maintain excuses to avoid prosocial behavior.

4.2 Heterogeneous Examination of Impact of Treatment Effects on Click-through Rates

Charities often consider how to target fundraising appeals towards new versus previous supporters, and prior literature confirms that responsiveness to various factors, such as image concerns or financial incentives, vary across these two groups. To consider the potential for heterogeneous effects by the level of prior support, we therefore turn to the gathered information on how voters know their favorite animal group. We classify 54% of voters as *previous supporters* as they have previously adopted from, donated to, volunteered for, attended an event of, used services of, or been a staff member for their favorite animal group. The remaining 46% of *new supporters* include anyone who has not engaged in those forms of previous support; they have never interacted with their favorite animal group or have only interacted in some other way. Other ways largely involve small interactions, and in particular, liking the group on Facebook.

Table 2 displays the main click-through regression results separately for new supporters and old supporters. As shown across the columns, our results support the possibility that new supporters are more excuse-driven than previous supporters. Among new supporters, expecting the ask causes click-through rates to significantly drop by 15-16 percentage points. Among previous supporters, expecting the ask causes click-through rates to only drop by 7 percentage points and this drop is not statistically significant.

New supporters also appear more responsive to the provision of information. Providing unavoidable information to new supporters, although it has a significant negative level effect, effectively counteracts the negative impact of expecting the ask.²² Providing avoidable information to new supporters, although it has a similar significant negative level effect, does not fully counteract the negative impact of expecting the ask.²³ Neither the provision of unavoidable nor avoidable information, however, influences the click-through rates of previous supporters.²⁴

Appendix Tables A.2 and A.3 present similar patterns of results when separately considering the different types of support - i.e., comparing non-adopters to adopters, non-donors to donors, non-attendees of events to attendees of events, non-volunteers to volunteers, and non-users of services to users of services. As in Exley (Forthcoming), differential evidence for excuse-driven behavior by gender is not observed (see Appendix Tables A.4).

²¹ $Expected\ Ask + Expected\ Ask * Avoidable\ Info = 0$ is rejected ($p = 0.0004$).

²² $Expected\ Ask + Expected\ Ask * Unavoidable\ Info = 0$ is not rejected ($p = 0.80$).

²³ $Expected\ Ask + Expected\ Ask * Unavoidable\ Info = 0$ is rejected ($p = 0.02$).

²⁴ This may result from previous supporters being more familiar with the available information on how their favorite group rescues dogs.

Table 2: By type of supporter, click-through regressions

Information: Supporters:	Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of Click-through							
	None or Unavoidable				None or Avoidable			
	New		Previous		New		Previous	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.16*** (0.02)	-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.15*** (0.02)	-0.16*** (0.01)	-0.07 (0.05)	-0.06 (0.05)
<i>Unavoidable Info</i>	-0.09*** (0.02)	-0.08*** (0.02)	0.00 (0.04)	-0.00 (0.04)				
<i>Expected Ask</i> * <i>Unavoidable Info</i>	0.15*** (0.02)	0.14*** (0.02)	0.07 (0.06)	0.07 (0.05)				
<i>Avoidable Info</i>					-0.06*** (0.02)	-0.07*** (0.02)	-0.00 (0.03)	0.00 (0.03)
<i>Expected Ask</i> * <i>Avoidable Info</i>					0.09** (0.04)	0.09*** (0.03)	-0.01 (0.04)	-0.01 (0.04)
Controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	1799	1799	2174	2174	1810	1810	2177	2177
Click-through rates	0.44	0.44	0.48	0.48	0.44	0.44	0.45	0.45

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results in the first panel are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to click-through to the donation page of voted-for animal group. *Expected Ask*, *Unavoidable Info*, and *Avoidable Info* are indicators for when the ask is expected, the information provided is unavoidable, and the information provided is avoidable. *Expected Ask*Unavoidable Info* and *Expected Ask*Avoidable Info* are interaction variables of these indicators. Controls include indicators for each voter's gender, day that they voted during the contest, selected animal group, and ways in which they knew their selected animal group.

4.3 Relationship between Treatment Effects and Information Acquisition

Although not relevant in the No Information and Unavoidable Information treatments, information acquisition choices in the Avoidable Information treatments are such that individuals more readily avoid prosocial behavior when the ask is expected. While we cannot identify how individuals' information acquisition influences the negative impact of the ask, this section considers suggestive evidence related to both extensive margin decisions about whether to reveal the information and intensive margin decisions about how to consider the information when revealed. As before, the results are stronger among new supporters than previous supporters. This section therefore presents results separately for these groups (see Appendix Tables A.5 and A.6 for similar overall findings).

The moral wiggle room literature suggests a prominent role of individuals' extensive margin

decisions. If information avoidance is broadly desired in this setting, then it may exist both when the ask is expected and unexpected. If information avoidance relates to a particular desire to maintain excuses or “wobble room” to justify less prosocial behavior, then it should be more likely when the ask is expected. Our results support both possibilities. Information avoidance is common when the ask is unexpected: only 18% of new supporters and 25% of previous supporters reveal the information. Even so, information avoidance is more likely when the ask is instead expected: only 13% of new supporters and 21% of previous supporters reveal the information. While the first four columns of Table 3 confirm the significance of these drops, note that new supporters are relatively more responsive. Expecting the ask causes information revelation to decrease by 28% for new supporters but only by 16% for previous supporters.

Table 3: By type of supporter, viewing behavior regressions

Supporters:	Probit of Reveal Information				OLS of Time Viewing Information			
	New		Previous		New		Previous	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.02)	-1.14 (0.95)	-1.07 (1.01)	-2.56 (1.61)	-2.88 (1.73)
Constant					4.48*** (0.60)	5.44* (2.35)	7.51*** (1.75)	4.58 (2.51)
Controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	923	916	1075	1075	923	923	1075	1075
Reveal rates	0.15	0.15	0.23	0.23				
Average times					4 seconds	4 seconds	6 seconds	6 seconds

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results in the first panel are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to reveal the information. The results in the second panel are from OLS regressions of seconds spent viewing the information in the Avoidable Information treatments, which equals 0 if the information is not revealed. If the information is revealed, we define the time spent viewing the information as the amount of seconds that elapses between participants clicking to reveal it and their final click on the page to continue to the next step (or in rare cases, their click to close the story after choosing to reveal it). *Expected Ask* is an indicator for the Expected Ask treatments. Controls include indicators for each voter’s gender, day that they voted during the contest, selected animal group, and ways in which they knew their selected animal group. Data include the observations from the Avoidable Information treatments.

The self-serving literature suggests a role for the intensive margin viewing decisions. Individuals may view the same information in a more self-serving manner when they may profit from doing so. Unlike the extensive margin viewing decisions though, there is no clear measure of individuals’ intensive margin viewing decisions. In focusing on one observable measure – the amount of time individuals spend viewing the information – the last four columns of Table 3 show that viewing time is not significantly different when the ask is expected or unexpected. However, conditional on revealing the information, Table 4 demonstrates that viewing time behavior may be more nuanced. As this conditioning introduces selection concerns, the following

two descriptive findings, while interesting, remain suggestive at best.

Among individuals who choose to reveal the information when the ask is unexpected (see first column of Table 4), both new supporters and previous supporters who click-through spend more time viewing the information than their counterparts who do not click-through. This pattern is consistent with the possibility that those who enjoy reading dog adoption stories are also the ones who are more likely to support the organization and thus click-through.²⁵ A similar pattern, however, does not emerge when the ask is expected (see second column of Table 4). In this case, the ones spending more time on the story are those who do not click-through.

A closer examination of what may contribute to this shift in viewing time behavior is interesting. Expecting the ask correlates with less viewing time among new and previous supporters who click-through. This faster viewing time is more pronounced for previous supporters who spend 13 fewer seconds when the ask is expected (36 versus 23 seconds) than the new supporters who spend 7 fewer seconds when the ask is expected (28 versus 21 seconds). By contrast, expecting the ask correlates with more viewing time among new and previous supporters who do not click-through. This slower viewing time is more pronounced for new supporters who spend 10 more seconds when the ask is expected (22 versus 32 seconds) than previous supporters spend 2 more seconds when the ask is expected (22 versus 24 seconds).

A large literature (see [Zaki and Mitchell \(2013\)](#) for a review or [Rand, Greene and Nowak \(2012\)](#) for an example) documents empirical patterns consistent with prosocial tendencies being intuitive and fast while selfish choices are deliberate and slow. In considering the change in viewing time behavior when the ask is expected or self-serving motives are more relevant, our evidence is consistent with generous types (those who click-through) making their decisions more quickly and selfish types (those who do not click through) dwelling on their decisions for longer. The generous-fast finding seems particularly relevant for previous supporters while the selfish-slow finding seems particularly relevant among new supporters, thus further adding to the suggestive evidence that new supporters are more likely excuse-driven than previous supporters.

Our heterogeneous finding also relates to the literature that considers how confounds may influence the relationship between decision time and prosocial tendencies. For instance, the relationship may depend on the selection of individuals ([Tinghög et al., 2013](#)), the complexity of the environment ([Recalde, Riedl and Vesterlund, 2014](#)), or the strength of preferences over the available choice set ([Krajbich et al., 2015](#)). Indeed, [Kessler, Kivimaki and Niederle \(2015\)](#) show that more time corresponds with reduced giving when the benefits of giving are low but increased giving if the benefits of giving are high.

²⁵Note this possibility is further supported by a similar pattern emerging in the Unavoidable Information treatments (see Appendix Tables [A.7](#) and [A.8](#)).

Table 4: By type of supporter, average time individuals spend viewing information when it is avoidable but chosen to be revealed

Ask:	Unexpected	Expected
New Supporters		
(a) If clicked-through	28	21
(b) If did not click-through	22	32
Observations	86	58
Previous Supporters		
(a) If clicked-through	36	23
(b) If did not click-through	22	24
Observations	129	117

We define the time participants spend viewing the information in the Avoidable Information treatments as the amount of seconds that elapses between participants clicking to reveal it and their final click on the page to continue to the next step (or in rare cases, their click to close the information after choosing to reveal it). Similar findings result if one instead defines the time participants spend viewing the information as the amount of seconds that elapses between their first click on the page (presumably from answering the question about how they know their favorite animal group) and their final click on that page to continue to the next step.

5 Conclusion

In a large field experiment using an online voting contest, we vary whether an upcoming donation ask is announced and expected or a surprise and (more) unexpected. We document a 22% reduction in prosocial behavior when individuals know an ask is coming and, thus, have the opportunity to find and develop excuses prior to facing the ask. This finding supports the extension of excuse-driven behavior to situations that do not introduce or highlight factors that are often viewed self-servingly. That is, excuse-driven behavior may be more general and can lead to substantial declines in prosocial behavior when there is a mere anticipation of an ask.

The negative impact of the ask persists when individuals can (and do) avoid information on why to give. Expecting the ask no longer has a negative effect, however, when information is unavoidable. These findings reinforce why nonprofit organizations, often constrained by situations where the ask is expected, may aggressively share unavoidable information on why to give with potential donors. Our heterogeneous effects also provide insight into how nonprofit organizations may benefit from strategically targeting new versus previous supporters, as new supporters drive our observed evidence for excuse-driven behavior.

We view two avenues for future work as particularly promising. First, while excuses are not relevant among individuals who are always or never prosocial, both empirically and theoretically considering the full distribution of excuse-driven types may help to unify the literature and generate more apt policy recommendations. Second, given the various nuances in prosocial decisions, a feasible strategy for documenting excuse-driven behavior may involve manipulating the expectation of the ask.

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Appendixes

(Not for Publication)

A Tables

Table A.1: Fraction of participants who have interacted with voted-for group in following ways

Information	Any	None		Unavoidable		Avoidable	
		yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
Expected Ask							
Adopter	0.26	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.23	0.28	0.24
Donor	0.22	0.24	0.21	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.21
Attendee of Event	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.16	0.18	0.16
Volunteer	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.14	0.13	0.16	0.13
User of Services	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.10
Staff	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01
Interacted in Other Way	0.44	0.43	0.42	0.44	0.43	0.43	0.46
Have Never Interacted	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.08	0.07	0.07
Previous Supporter	0.54	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.53	0.55	0.52
New Supporter	0.46	0.45	0.44	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.48
Female	0.83	0.85	0.82	0.83	0.82	0.82	0.84
Male	0.14	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.14
Gender Unknown	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.02
Observations	5976	991	1001	1005	980	1000	999

The first eight rows indicate the frequency with which the shown answers were provided in response to how a participant knew the animal shelter for which they voted. A previous supporter is any individual who indicated that they were an adopter, donor, volunteer, attendee of event, user of services or staff. A new supporter is anyone who did not indicate one of the aforementioned ways of knowing the animal group for which they voted. Computer code that predicts gender from names was used to classify participants as female or male, or unknown gender.

Table A.2: By interaction types, click-through regressions when information is not provided or unavoidable

Information: Interaction:	Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of Click-through None or Unavoidable									
	Adopter		Donor		Attendee of Event		Volunteer		User of Services	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.12*** (0.02)	-0.11** (0.05)	-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.12*** (0.03)	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.09* (0.05)	-0.11*** (0.03)
<i>Unavoidable Info</i>	-0.02 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.06)	-0.05* (0.03)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.02 (0.08)	-0.04* (0.03)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.03)
<i>Expected Ask</i> <i>*Unavoidable Info</i>	0.10** (0.04)	0.11*** (0.04)	0.08 (0.07)	0.12*** (0.03)	0.01 (0.09)	0.12*** (0.03)	0.05 (0.12)	0.11*** (0.02)	0.19*** (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)
Observations	1062	2911	901	3072	669	3304	581	3392	388	3585
Controls	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Click-though rates	0.46	0.46	0.53	0.44	0.50	0.45	0.48	0.46	0.50	0.46

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to click-through to the donation page of voted-for animal group. *Expected Ask* and *Unavoidable Info* are indicators for when the ask is expected and the information provided is unavoidable. *Expected Ask*Unavoidable Info* is the interaction of these indicators.

Table A.3: By interaction types, click-through regressions when information is not provided or avoidable

Information: Interaction:	Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of Click-through None or Avoidable									
	Adopter		Donor		Attendee of Event		Volunteer		User of Services	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.12*** (0.02)	-0.11** (0.05)	-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.05 (0.06)	-0.12*** (0.03)	-0.08 (0.08)	-0.11*** (0.02)	-0.09* (0.05)	-0.11*** (0.03)
<i>Avoidable Info</i>	-0.01 (0.03)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.03)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.04* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.03** (0.01)	-0.00 (0.04)	-0.03 (0.02)
<i>Expected Ask</i> <i>*Avoidable Info</i>	-0.04 (0.05)	0.07** (0.03)	-0.03 (0.06)	0.06* (0.03)	-0.05 (0.07)	0.05** (0.02)	0.00 (0.04)	0.04 (0.03)	-0.07 (0.06)	0.05* (0.03)
Observations	1071	2916	885	3102	679	3308	594	3393	406	3581
Controls	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	no
Click-though rates	0.43	0.46	0.51	0.43	0.51	0.44	0.46	0.45	0.44	0.45

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to click-through to the donation page of voted-for animal group. *Expected Ask* and *Avoidable Info* are indicators for when the ask is expected and the information provided is avoidable. *Expected Ask*Avoidable Info* is the interaction of these indicators.

Table A.4: By gender, click-through regressions

Information: Gender:	Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of Click-through							
	None or Unavoidable				None or Avoidable			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.09* (0.05)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.08** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.11*** (0.03)
<i>Unavoidable Info</i>	0.00 (0.05)	-0.00 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04* (0.02)				
<i>Expected Ask</i> <i>*Unavoidable Info</i>	0.13 (0.09)	0.15* (0.08)	0.10*** (0.03)	0.10*** (0.03)				
<i>Avoidable Info</i>					0.04 (0.05)	0.05 (0.05)	-0.04** (0.02)	-0.04** (0.02)
<i>Expected Ask</i> <i>*Avoidable Info</i>					-0.01 (0.07)	0.01 (0.06)	0.04 (0.03)	0.04 (0.03)
Controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	541	541	3301	3301	544	544	3321	3321
Click-through rates	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results in the first panel are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to click-through to the donation page of voted-for animal group. *Expected Ask*, *Unavoidable Info*, and *Avoidable Info* are indicators for when the ask is expected, the information provided is unavoidable, and the information provided is avoidable. *Expected Ask*Unavoidable Info* and *Expected Ask*Avoidable Info* are interaction variables of these indicators. Controls include indicators for each individual's day that they voted during the contest, selected animal group, and ways in which they knew their selected animal group.

Table A.5: Viewing behavior regressions when information is avoidable

	Probit of		OLS of Time	
	Reveal Information		Viewing Information	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>Expected Ask</i>	-0.04*** (0.01)	-0.04*** (0.01)	-1.83 (0.97)	-1.96* (0.99)
Constant			6.06*** (0.98)	4.61* (2.18)
Controls	no	yes	no	yes
Observations	1998	1998	1998	1998
Reveal rates	0.19	0.19		
Average times			5 seconds	5 seconds

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$. Standard errors are clustered at the voted-for animal group level and shown in parentheses. The results in the first panel are from Probit regressions (marginal effects shown) of likelihood to reveal the information. The results in the second panel are from OLS regressions of seconds spent viewing the information in the Avoidable Information treatments, which equals 0 if the story is not revealed. If the story is revealed, we define the time spent viewing the information as the amount of seconds that elapses between participants clicking to reveal it and their final click on the page to continue to the next step (or in rare cases, their click to close the information after choosing to reveal it). *Expected Ask* is an indicator for the Expected Ask treatments. Controls include indicators for voter's gender, day that they voted during the contest, selected animal group, and ways in which they knew their selected animal group. Data include the observations from the Avoidable Information treatments.

Table A.6: Average time individuals spend viewing information when it is avoidable but chosen to be revealed

Ask:	Unexpected	Expected
(a) If click-through	33	22
(b) If do not click-through	22	26
Observations	215	175

We define the time participants spend viewing the information as the amount of seconds that elapses between participants clicking to reveal it and their final click on the page to continue to the next step (or in rare cases, their click to close the information after choosing to reveal it). Similar findings result if one instead defines the time participants spend viewing the information as the amount of seconds that elapses between their first click on the page (presumably from answering the question about how they know their favorite animal group) and their final click on that page to continue to the next step.

Table A.7: Average time individuals spend viewing information when it is unavoidable

Ask:	Unexpected	Expected
(a) If click-through	32	30
(b) If do not click-through	26	25
Observations	980	1005

We define the time participants spend viewing the information in the Unavoidable Information treatments as the amount of seconds that elapses between their first click on the page (presumably from answering the question about how they know their favorite animal group) and the final click on that page to continue to the next step.

Table A.8: By type of supporter, average time individuals spend viewing information when it is unavoidable

Ask:	Unexpected	Expected
New Supporters		
(a) If click-through	32	31
(b) If do not click-through	30	27
Observations	458	455
Previous Supporters		
(a) If click-through	32	29
(b) If do not click-through	21	24
Observations	522	550

We define the time participants spend viewing the information in the Unavoidable Information treatments as the amount of seconds that elapses between their first click on the page (presumably from answering the question about how they know their favorite animal group) and the final click on that page to continue to the next step.