

# Future of Work Collection for Unions

## Digital Engagement for Organizing

An increased usage of digital tools by society and union members means heightened importance of leveraging digital communication tools to engage and organize members. The good news is digital communication tools have matured and with software-as-a-service models (SaaS) becoming more popular, unions can utilize cloud-based tools at a cost-effective monthly subscription price, access it anytime anywhere, and remove the overhead and headaches of managing servers and software upgrades within the organization.

As your union consider ramping up engagement and member organizing, here are the benefits and challenges for your consideration.



## Timely and Frequent Communication Builds Engagement

The first benefit is that unions can communicate to its member in a frequent and timely manner through digital communication tools, as the incremental cost for digital communication, such as emails and text messages, are very low. Through timely and more frequent communication, unions can keep members in the loop, build engagement, and cultivate advocates.

For example, in the beginning of a campaign, unions can communicate the cause and the plan around a campaign to gain buy in and demonstrate how the union is fighting for its members. Then there can be subsequent communication about how members can participate to ensure success (e.g., participating in an event, tell your story). Based on event registration, the union can also send follow up reminders and communicate what to expect closer to the time of an event to ensure success.



## Tailored Communication Improves Effectiveness

Another powerful attribute of digital communication tools is the ability to segment and personalize messaging. Depending on the location, job type, relationships, or even campaign engagement level of a member, union organizers can tailor the messaging to maximize relevance and get the optimal response from each member.

One of the common communication mistakes is sending too many irrelevant messages. According to Forbes, an average consumer sees 4,000 – 10,000 ads each day and that number is growing every year. In this environment, relevance is key. Organizations that bombard their audience risk being tuned out. So, while improving frequency and timeliness of communication is desirable, it should be coupled with relevant messaging based on each member's geographic, demographic, and psychographics.

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Through modern digital communication tools, segmentation can be done by filtering different fields from the membership database and saving different segments for future use. Furthermore, unions can create automated workflows and send out different communication based on how a member response. For example, if a member opened an email and registered to an event, the automated workflow could automatically send out an event registration confirmation message and send out a reminder a couple of days prior to the event. All of this can be present and without additional intervention from the organizer. As an alternate scenario, if a member did not open an email, the automated workflow can repeat the initial message a few days later.



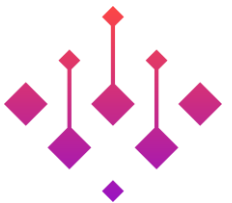
# Member Engagement Insights



Finally, digital communication tools can provide union organizers with timely insights on how different campaigns and messaging are performing and how different members are engaging with the union. With analytics dashboards, organizers can view the overall performance of a campaign based on a point in time and drill down to specific areas (e.g., by geography, by employer, by role, by messaging, by individual member) to inform decision making.



In the short term, such insights can help organizers identify opportunities, pivot organizing activities and focus on areas that require more efforts. In the long term, it can help the union build organizing best practices, identify influencers, and design more effective campaigns in the future.



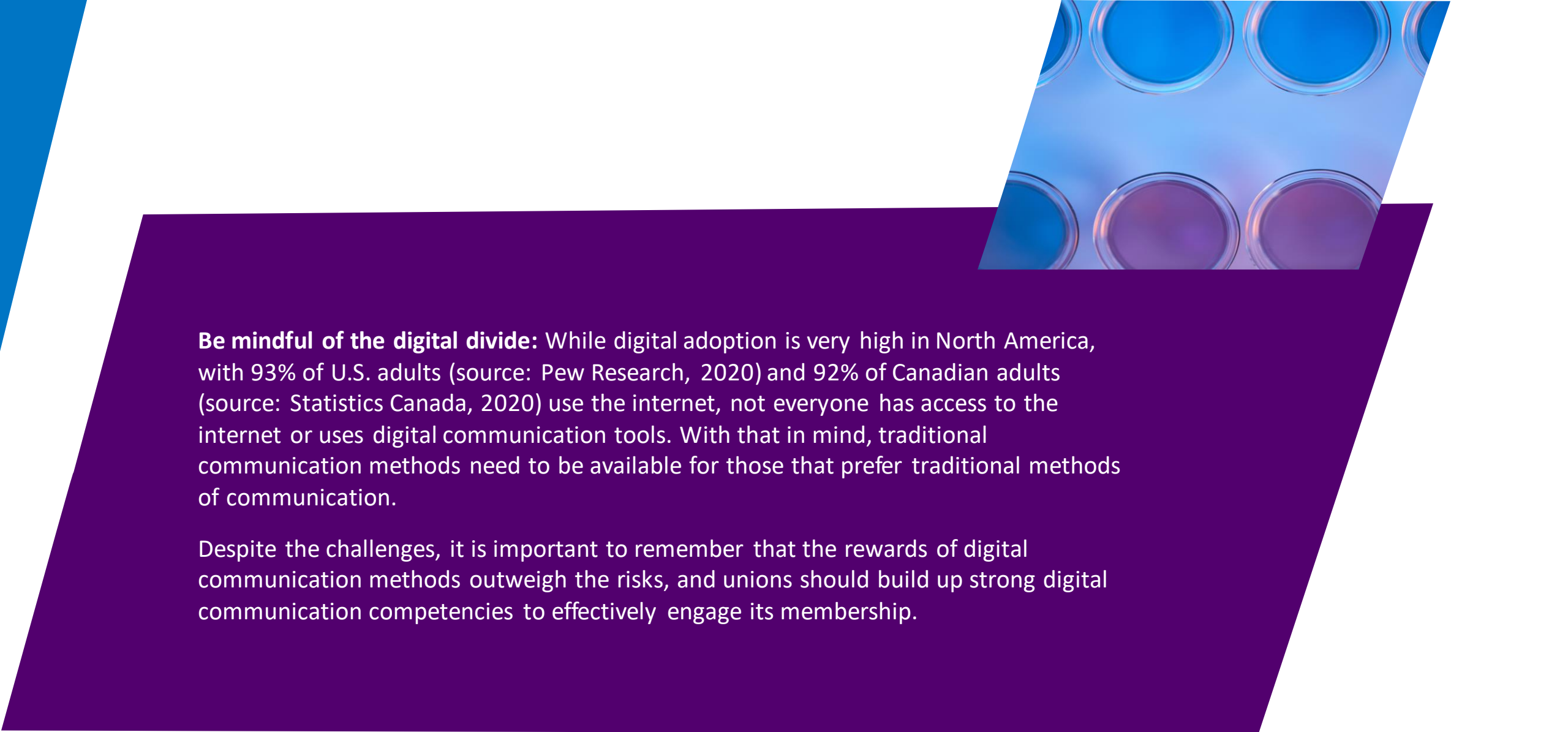
# The Challenges

While digital communication tools can enable unions in ways that traditional communication methods cannot, they come with challenges that unions need to be aware of as well. These challenges include:

**The lack of context:** One key benefit of face-to-face communication is the rich context that accompanies the messaging – the surrounding, the body language of the communicator, and the response of participants around you. Through digital communications – whether it is an email or text message broadcasted out or a members-only website, the member on the receiving end could be in a variety of context (e.g., just heard some great family news or in contrast just had a bad experience with an angry customer) which can affect how the member interprets a message. With face-to-face communication, the communicator can see the response of the recipients immediately and clarify on the spot. With broadcast-based messaging, the communicator wouldn't know until there are responses from recipients.

**Speed of dissemination:** A feature of communicating through digital communication tools is speed of disseminating messages. While instant dissemination is great and convenient, such attribute of digital communication can sometimes be a double-edged sword. Should a message be interpreted improperly and get shared out to various platforms widely and in a negative light, such as over social media, this can require damage control from unions.





**Be mindful of the digital divide:** While digital adoption is very high in North America, with 93% of U.S. adults (source: Pew Research, 2020) and 92% of Canadian adults (source: Statistics Canada, 2020) use the internet, not everyone has access to the internet or uses digital communication tools. With that in mind, traditional communication methods need to be available for those that prefer traditional methods of communication.

Despite the challenges, it is important to remember that the rewards of digital communication methods outweigh the risks, and unions should build up strong digital communication competencies to effectively engage its membership.







## Looking Ahead

In summary, digital communication tools are part of society's fabric today. It enables unions to achieve greater member engagement through more timely, frequent communication and with greater relevancy. Moreover, digital communication tools provide valuable insights for organizers on various campaigns, messaging, and how members respond to them in real-time. Such insights help unions better understand their members and build more effective organizing campaigns in the future.





## About Bursting Silver

Bursting Silver works with North America's leading associations, regulatory bodies, and unions. We specialize in digital transformation. Our unique ability is in finding the simplicity in the complex. We are nimble, responsive and client driven.

Want to learn more?

Contact us at:

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## About WeRise

WeRise is a software platform that enables unions to efficiently administer all aspects of their memberships and provides a platform for organizers to rally union members.

WeRise is 100% cloud-based with security, accessibility, and scalability built-in to future proof your operations. The solution has been architected to provide a cohesive software solution across all locals, while keeping local data segregated and secure.

With a powerful platform as a foundation, WeRise is multifaceted with the member information at its core. Clients can use the out-of-the-box capabilities as they are released and participate in product development plans through feedback or take a more direct role in specific engagements to expand the system to meet organizational goals.

Some key features include:

- ❖ Membership Data Management
- ❖ Dues Management
- ❖ Dashboard & Data Visualization
- ❖ Member List Segmentation
- ❖ Email/SMS Blast to Members