Social Media Guide

2012
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Introduction

What is Social Media?

Social Media is sometimes referred to as Web 2.0 – effectively the next generation of the world wide web. While the web was always intended to be interactive, in its first decade most sites tended to be one-way – functioning mostly as a billboard to communicate a message to passersby. With the advent of Web 2.0, developers found ways to build applications and other functions into web sites and we moved away from the billboard toward a model more resembling a two-way street.

In social media, you don’t just put content out there for people to consume; you put content out for people to participate in. This participation can take the form of leaving a comment, adding a reply with a link to another page or resource, marking your content with feedback (thumbs-up, “Like”), or sharing your content across their own social networks.

This last part is perhaps the crux of social media - your audience grows because (as the old commercial put it) “they tell two friends, and they tell two friends, and so on, and so on”. It provides a pathway by which people who might not normally be exposed to your content get exposed and the reach of your message extends into new areas.

Social Media encompasses:

- internet forums (sometimes called electronic bulletin boards)
- weblogs (“blogs”)
- microblogging (Twitter, Posterous, Tumblr)
- wiki’s (Wikipedia)
- podcasts
- multimedia content (photos, video)
- social bookmarking/sharing

Engaging in social media usually involves registering with web sites that drive the applications that make all this “sharing” possible. The big ones are:
In this guide, we will take a look at a few aspects of social media and at how some of the more popular sites work.

Why use social media?

Social media can potentially extend your reach. Why use it? Well, for one it can extend your reach for free. It is essentially another set of tools for reaching out to your community, soliciting feedback, building membership, raising funds, and raising awareness.

Perhaps most importantly, social media is ubiquitous – it is everywhere. Even if you personally have never indulged in social media, there is an entire generation who has never known a world without it. To them it is not a fringe thing but central to the way in which they communicate, receive and process information, and make sense of the world. If you want whatever information you have to be a part of the conversation, it behooves you to make some effort to add your voice where it has the greatest chance of being heard.

The average 16-24 year old spends 70 hours a week in front of 3 screens (TV, computer, tablet/mobile phone); sometimes simultaneously…

– webinar Social Media & Technology: American Youth and Sexual Health – A Funders’ Briefing 1/19/2012 (recording and materials available for download)
Social Media Advantages:
• no cost (or little cost)
  • real-time
  • broadcast-to-feedback = the complete loop

Social Media Disadvantages:
• the message is created in collaboration - can feel like you’re losing control
  • inherent risk
  • learning curve for those not of the connected generation(s)

Social Media and Violence Intervention and Prevention

Does social media really belong in the world of sexual assault and violence prevention? See above – since there is a generation who gets most of their information via the web, accessing it from laptops, tablet computers, and smart phones – if this is a generation we want to a) know about services they can access should they need help and b) get information to counter-act the dominant stories of a rape culture in order to get people thinking differently and promote social change (hint: we DO!), then it should be considered central to, not peripheral to, your agency’s over-all mission.

Social media is essentially:

  • public relations
  • customer service
  • collaboration
  • networking
  • “customer” or client acquisition

… all rolled into one.

Most of what one can read about social media on the web usually relates to business models – businesses are being encouraged to use it to reach customers to grow their business and increase their profits. Non-profits working to promote social change are not necessarily operating with this purpose in mind, but if in place of “customers” we think about the clients we serve there are some useful parallels.
On the intervention side, social media can be intimidating, and raises safety concerns. We do not want to conduct advocacy via social media. However, social media might be the primary conduit through which many victims learn about services available – it can be the point of first contact. From there, the agency and client can meet face-to-face and ensure the safety, confidentiality, and first-person support which is critical to a survivor's recovery.

On the prevention side, from an agency perspective, social media can be a valuable tool for raising awareness of the work that you are doing and establishing relationships with allied organizations and the surrounding community.

This booklet is, quite obviously, too small to go in depth on all of these various web sites or services. The following chapters will hopefully give you enough of a general understanding to make “jumping in” easier (and dare I say: fun!). In addition, WCASA has produced some podcasts on many of the topics discussed here; be sure to check out our YouTube channel (http://www.youtube.com/user/WCASAVPCC).

If you have additional questions, in addition to consulting Google & Co., you are welcome to contact WCASA Staff:

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http://twitter.com/wcasa_vpcc  
(608) 284-5492
Further Reading:


Boston Magazine series on Social Media: http://blogs.bostonmagazine.com/boston_daily/category/round-table/


Nancy Lublin: Texting that saves lives - TED Talk: http://www.ted.com/talks/nancy_lublin_texting_that_saves_lives.html
Safety

“buyer beware…”

Every user needs to be mindful of privacy issues when using the world wide web, especially when using social media. But, for people who work in the violence intervention and prevention arena there are some additional considerations. Some are obvious, others not so. Most will not be discussed in this manual since we will be making this available electronically, and we do not want to make it that much easier for those who might want to do harm to others to use technology to do so.

There will be other training venues or technical assistance made available, and you can contact WCASA with questions.

Safety and privacy are very tricky because each site or service has their own privacy guidelines; to complicate things further, they change them frequently (see: Facebook).

In basic terms, the safest approach is to accept that anything you post online could, at some point, be read by any other member of the public. Do not post anything private.

Linkages

Think of it this way; if you own a car, you lock your car at night, and generally hope it does not get stolen. But, you avoid leaving valuable stuff in there unattended just in case. While the car does need some personal information (presumably your registration and insurance info is in the glove compartment), it would not be wise to leave a suitcase full of cash, or your house keys in there so that if someone were to steal your car they also have your money and access to your home.

So it is with social media; it is not only about what personal info you post (“hey, I’m going on vacation and leaving my cat alone to guard my house for seven
days”) but how that info can be linked to you – sometimes across various services. For instance, posting on Facebook that you are leaving your house unattended is not a bad thing; but, if you have your full name as your username a quick Google search can give someone your address and popping that in Google Maps can yield a map of your location.

For best results, post your pics and vacation memories after you have returned home – and perhaps make sure that geo-tagging abilities on the camera app on your smartphone (default settings that tag your photos with GPS coordinates) are turned off before you go on vacation (you can visit I Can Stalk You at http://icanstalku.com/; the site looks closed in that they are no longer posting personal info - which they did to demonstrate just how easy it is; select How on the site’s menu and scroll down to Disabling Your Phone for more info).
What this means for agencies like yours is to encourage people to connect and access resources through social media, but to advise them to refrain from revealing too much information about themselves. It is not an easy thing - it requires balance and being very mindful of what you put where.

### Passwords

A few words about Passwords. To use many websites these days you have to create an account and register with the site. As part of the registration process you will be selecting a password. It is important for the protection of any personal information you share with the site (even if that is just your email address) that you select a secure password, keep it in a safe place, and not share it with others.

A secure password is one that is not a common word. It can not be found in the dictionary, nor is it a piece of information unique to you which someone else might know or be able to gather (say, from reading your Facebook page), such as your pet’s name, license plate number, etc.

It is best to use a combination of letters and numbers. The easiest way to arrive at a secure, and somewhat memorable password is to pick a sentence and then transmogrify the first letters into an acronym, about eight-plus characters long, changing at least two or three characters to numbers or symbols. For instance, you could choose:

“Today is the first day of the rest of my life.”
which becomes:

T1std0trom1

Now, that may seem complicated. “How,” you may ask, “can I possibly remember that jumble of letters password. Except, you are not remembering the jumble of letters; you are remembering the sentence and the “encryption key”, which in this case is the substitution of certain letters for numbers.

It’s actually easy once you make the habit of it.

Another suggestion, if money will allow, is to purchase a password management application, such as 1Password (https://agilebits.com/), or LastPass (https://lastpass.com/); these are both cross-platform (Mac, Windows, or Linux) applications; 1Password will cost you $50; LastPass is free at the base level, but there is a Premium level with more functionality at $1/month. There is also an open source (free!) app called KeePass (http://keepass.info/) on the Windows platform.

More password resources:

Passfault – check the “crackability” of a password: https://passfault.appspot.com/password_strength.html


Austin College - How to Select a Password: http://its.austincollege.edu/how-to-select-a-password/


What you don’t know about passwords might hurt you (MacWorld): http://www.macworld.com/article/2014039/what-you-don-t-know-about-passwords-might-hurt-you.html

Further Reading:

PCADV / PCAR resource for Advocates – Assisting Survivors with Personal Privacy Management: [http://pubs.pcadv.net/clr/TechPrivacy_Booklet.pdf](http://pubs.pcadv.net/clr/TechPrivacy_Booklet.pdf)


Funders Concerned About AIDS – Social Media & Technology: American Youth and Sexual Health – a webinar; audio recording and slides (PDF) available on this page: [http://www.fcaaids.org/OurWork/FunderBriefings/SocialMediaTechnologyYouthSexualHealth/tabid/279/Default.aspx](http://www.fcaaids.org/OurWork/FunderBriefings/SocialMediaTechnologyYouthSexualHealth/tabid/279/Default.aspx)


ABine - Do Not Track browser plugin: [http://www.macworld.com/article/165494/2012/02/browser_add_on_stops_google_and_others_from_tracking_you_online.html](http://www.macworld.com/article/165494/2012/02/browser_add_on_stops_google_and_others_from_tracking_you_online.html) | direct link to plugin: [http://www.abine.com/dntdetail.php](http://www.abine.com/dntdetail.php)

Terms of Service | Didn’t Read: [http://tos-dr.info/](http://tos-dr.info/) | site that labels and rates website terms & privacy policies
Have a Plan…

Of course, your agency will get the most out of social media if you approach it in a mindful way: have a plan up front.

Why develop a social media plan?

- establish clear guidelines
- identify response protocol
- create consistent, coordinated presence
- protect - data, staff time, agency reputation
- have a plan for crisis situations

What sort of things do you have to plan for?

Who?

Who is going to do the posting? Will there be one designated person to upkeep the agency presence on social media? Or will it be a group? What are the pluses and minuses? If your agency runs a crisis line (see below) you already know most of the answers to this – having just one person as point means having to scramble if that person is out, sick, delayed, or leaves the agency. So, perhaps forming a sub-committee of staff, making sure they are trained, and setting some agency guidelines and procedures, is a better course of action.

How (often)?

How often should information be posted? Once a day? At least once a week? As it happens? This can be tricky. Generally, participants in social media crave timely content; on the other hand, you can go overboard (and risk turning people away) if you are constantly posting. There is a balance to be made here - between putting up one or two things a week, with the expectation of more if there is a time-sensitive event (such as a highly visible case in the news, or legislation at either the state or federal level).
Responding to Victims

Those who have been doing violence prevention/intervention work for any length of time know that once people know what you do for a living (or as a volunteer), many will start to tell you their stories. The same is true on social media – it is only a matter of time before you will hear from survivors; of course, this is a good thing!

Yet, it is important to note – social media can be a great way for people to connect to services, but it is not necessarily the arena where they should be getting those services. Just as we caution survivors about telling their stories – there’s a time after some healing where they feel strong enough to tell it without reliving it – if we see a survivor putting personal details or acting out in a comment to a Facebook post we may want to step in and ensure that she/he is connecting to appropriate support, advise them about the public nature of their comments, etc.

In this regard, social media responses may need to be approached in the same manner as triaging crisis line calls; not everything posted will be of that nature, but if you form a team to manage social media at least one of those folks should be trained in responding to folks in crisis.

Responding to Perpetrators

Likewise, if you are opening up your blog or Facebook page or Twitter stream to the public, it is highly likely at some point that someone will post something offensive. In some cases, you will have the option to delete comments; though if you choose to exercise this ability, have a policy in place and available for the public. It should explain the guidelines. And be prepared to post that you pulled the comment and explain why.
Some online services may have “official” channels for response – for example, reporting the user for inappropriate conduct, which could give leverage for getting the user banned from the service if his/her behavior warrants it.

The “hive mind”…

Another approach is to let the community respond. In many instances, someone posting something blatantly offensive or attacking will be met with several follow up comments by other members of the “peanut gallery” responding. In this sense, it is not always necessary to immediately jump in to defend your post or someone else’s comment; you can allow what’s called a “community correction”. Consider this among your options if something offensive is posted before immediately pulling the comment.

The alternative to this is to have closed networks – disallowing comments on blog posts or Facebook wall posts, or having a Twitter stream that is invite only.
Further Reading:


Facebook

As of December of 2012, Facebook has approximately 973 million users. If it were a country, it would be the third largest nation on Earth.

Facebook began in 2004 as a collegiate bulletin board for Ivy leaguers. It expanded into high schools, and for the first four years of its existence was mostly a teen-through early twenties social playground. Around 2007, it started to gain a wider audience, and especially a more adult audience – quickly becoming the go-to place for reconnecting with old high school and college classmates.

It is also a place where companies vie for your attention with ads and app’s (applications), and businesses and agencies put up store-fronts to announce events, products, specials, or anything that will raise awareness and potentially raise revenue (or donations).
Signing up…

To use Facebook, you must sign up, which involves creating a free account and establishing a username and password. Facebook requires you to use your “birth name”; in other words, you need to be you. Even if you are using Facebook to represent your agency, you will need to be an individual user to create and/or edit content on a Page (see Pages below).

When you sign-up, as part of its privacy protection Facebook will send a confirmation email to the account you list; you will need to click on the link in the email they send you to verify your identity.

You have some ability to change your name, or limit the visibility of your name to your first name only, and or to provide a Username – which can be a handy way for folks to easily find you (this username becomes part of your Facebook page’s URL, or web address) – via the Account Settings, available by selecting the “triangle” next to the Home button in the upper-right corner of Facebook’s title bar.
You are also prompted to post a profile picture; you can pick almost anything you like, and you can change it anytime you want, but note that this picture will appear on your Timeline page (see below) and as a small thumbnail next to everything you post on your or anyone else’s Wall (see below).

Posting

The bread and butter of Facebook is in the sharing, liking, friending and general intermingling (virtually) along with everyone else on Facebook.

The Wall

Your home page is effectively your wall, also known as the News Feed. Posts from anyone you designate as a friend or any cause or business which you indicate you are a fan of appear here in a long, regularly updating list (Facebook uses AJAX; no, not the scrubbing cleanser, but asynchronous javascript and xml – basically web code that allows content on a page to be re-loaded and updated without having to re-load the whole page itself).

As you read posts by your friends, notice that each post contains text links that allow you to “Like”, “Comment”, or “Share”:

- **Like** – will add your name under the post and indicate that you “like this”
- **Comment** – will add a text field where you can write a text comment which will appear under the posting
- **Share** – will prompt you to add a comment (if you like) and then post the item on your wall

You can also post to your wall from this page; at the top you will see a little note-like icon with “update status” and a text field declaring “What’s on your mind?” You can simply put down what’s on your mind, if you like; you can also post links to other web pages (copy and paste the URL or web address from your browser’s address bar) and add comments about the article/page (ie: why you like it or how outrageous you find it, etc.).
Note that in posts and shared posts, you have the ability to designate some privacy settings for what you write – whether it is public, viewable only by your friends, etc.

Tagging

You can also tag friends or businesses in posts. This involves typing their name in; for instance, if I wanted to make a comment about my friend Bryan, I could start typing capitol B, r, y - and Facebook would immediately begin completion-matching anyone in my friends or fan list that matches those letters; I would then select Bryan from the list, and his name would be added to the post, as a highlighted link (Note: it will automatically plunk in their whole name; you can delete their last name if you want and the text of their first name will still remain linked to their profile).

Scheduling

In May of 2012, Facebook added the ability to write a post and schedule posting to your wall at some point in the future. The interface is clunky – it requires you to select a year (!), month, day, hour, and minute (!). As you select these, the “Post” button will switch to a “Schedule” button.
Timeline

If you click on your name – either in the Facebook title bar, or on the top, right of your Wall, it will take you to your Timeline, which is a running, chronological account of everything you post on Facebook – and indeed beyond (you can add milestone events in your life even if they happened long before Facebook appeared on the scene). You will note that in addition to your profile picture, there is a space for a large photo called the “cover”. This, also can be most anything, and can be swapped out whenever you like, but should be something personal to you or that speaks to your unique personality.

As of this writing, the Timeline is a new feature, and much maligned by long-time Facebook users. Your mileage may vary.

Pages

As mentioned before, you need to be logged in as an individual to use Facebook. But, once there, you might be doing business on behalf of your agency, and your agency has a presence on Facebook via Pages.

You create a page by visiting: https://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php
You select the type of page – for our purposes, as a non-profit advocacy agency you will want to select Company, Organization, or Institution; if you wanted to do more of an awareness-raising project, you could select Cause or Community. Creating a page is otherwise not that much different from creating your user account - you fill in pertinent information and provide a profile picture - which can be your logo or anything you like.

As with your personal account, your organization’s page will appear with its own Timeline. However, on your org’s Timeline, you will have an additional button - Admin Panel; select this, and your main page content will slide down and a panel will appear with recent activity, comments, a graph of this activity over time (called “insights”).

You will also see a Manage button at the top. Selecting it presents you with several options, the first of which is an “Edit Page” button; this will take you to the Settings page for your Page. Here, along with tweaking settings for permissions, info, and pictures, you will see “Manage Admins” along the left-hand side. This is where you can add people to the list of Admins - those that have privileges to make changes to the page’s settings. Note that you can only select among people that are already on Facebook, so your agency will have to identify who those people should be and they will need to create Facebook accounts.

In addition, at the bottom of the Manage button list you will see an option to “Use Facebook As...” with the name of your organization page. Select this, and effectively you “become” your organization; from that point forward, if you visit a page and Like something or post a comment, it will appear as if it is being done by your organization, rather than you as an individual. You can revert back to using Facebook as YOU any time you like by visiting the same menu item.
**Events**

Organizations or groups with pages can post Events. These are posted via the Events app, which your page probably has – you will see Events on the right under your page name listed with Photos, Likes, etc.

1. Click Events
2. Click Create Event
3. Fill in
   - Name
   - Details
   - Location
   - Date and Time

If you do not see Events listed as a favorite under your page name

1. Click the Admin Panel button (top, right)
2. Click Manage
3. Select Edit Page
4. On the left side column, select Apps
5. Click Go To App under the Events listing

**Privacy**

There is simply no way to cover the concerns about privacy related to Facebook in this guide. Facebook, though a very useful service, is infamous for changing user policy and privacy settings frequently – and frequently doing so without advanced notice – ie: creating a new feature which is by default turned “on” that exposes some aspect of the user’s information (see “Facebook yanks mobile location-tracking feature” on Macworld: [http://www.macworld.com/article/1167432/facebook_yanks_mobile_location_tracking_feature.html](http://www.macworld.com/article/1167432/facebook_yanks_mobile_location_tracking_feature.html)).

The best singular advice is “caveat emptor” – buyer beware! Be an informed consumer, take time to go through Facebook’s settings and Help files and adjust your settings so that your information is under your control and shared only under circumstances that you choose. Also, general advice:
1. do not share your Facebook password (and make sure it’s different than, for instance, your email or computer login)
2. log off if you share a computer with others
3. choose who you share with
4. avoid app’s (Facebook “apps” are web-based programs that link you to other services; they can sometimes have settings which allow them to publish on your timeline on your behalf)

Keep a watchful eye on Macworld or PCWorld to note significant news for Facebook, such as a change in privacy settings or policy. But avoid emails which raise an alarmist warning and require you to click on links in order to “fix” things; these are scam emails containing spam or phishing links (bogus web links set up simply to harvest your personal information).

Further Reading:

Facebook’s Help Center is your go-to place: https://www.facebook.com/help

Security on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/about/security

Facebook Finally Let’s Page Admins Schedule Posts, Have Different Roles: http://mashable.com/2012/05/31/facebook-page-schedule-posts/

On Facebook, think before you “Like”…
http://www.macworld.com/article/1166066/on_facebook_think_before_you_like.html


Facebook yanks mobile location-tracking feature (Macworld): http://www.macworld.com/article/1167432/facebook_yanks_mobile_location_tracking_feature.html

Comic: http://www.geekculture.com/joyoftech/joyarchives/1655.html
Twitter

Have something to say? Who doesn’t. Think you can say it in 140 characters or less? Then Twitter just might be for you!

Created in 2006, Twitter can be thought of as a mix between SMS texting, instant messaging, email, and blogging. Messages or posts are referred to as “tweets”. These can be used as an immediate means of communication (you can choose to link a Twitter account to a cell phone so that tweets are instantly “pushed” to your phone); or, you can use it to echo content on another site - tweeting a link to a post on your web site or Facebook page, or a picture you’ve just taken or discovered elsewhere on the web.

Signing up…

To use Twitter, as with Facebook or other services, you need to create a user account. It is free to use the service.
1. Go to [http://twitter.com](http://twitter.com)

2. Provide
   - your name
   - email
   - password

Create a username – note that this will become part of the URL, or web address for your Twitter stream; if you’re using Twitter in relation with your agency, you might want to identify yourself by title or role within the agency - for instance wcasa_vpcc. You will also link your profile with an email address; you will have the option whether or not to make this email address visible to others using Twitter.

When you create your profile, you have the option of making your account public or “protected” (ie: private). Public is the default setting – which means that anyone on Twitter can elect to Follow you (your tweets appear in their Twitter stream), and your tweets can show up in searches. Protected means that people must be approved by you before they can see your tweets.
Tweeting/Re-Tweeting/Direct Messaging

As with Facebook, the main activity on Twitter is posting tweets. What is a tweet? Well, it can be anything from what you are doing to links of interest (either your own content or someone else’s).

You can also re-tweet, which is simply passing along something cool or interesting that someone you follow has tweeted. If their tweet is below the 140 character threshold, you may even be able to add a note.

You can also send someone a Direct Message, or DM in Twitter parlance. A Direct Message goes just to the person you send it to, acting very much like email. You can only DM people you follow; likewise, you can only receive DM’s from folks who follow you, so you can see that having an account with protected posts can create a private communication schema.

Tags

Posts can contain tagged items – tags are simply pieces of your text that have a special character added to mark that word as a link. For instance, to mention another user, you type the @ symbol and then their username; this effectively makes their username an active link to their profile; followers who get your tweet will be able to click on the other person’s username and be redirected to that user’s profile.

The other tag is known in Twitter lingo as a “hashtag” because it uses the “hash” symbol, otherwise known as the pound sign: #. Placing the # in front of a word makes that word a searchable term. For instance, if you were tweeting about an event that is part of Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), you may conclude
the tweet by adding #saam. This would cause your tweet to appear in a stream of
tweets anytime someone searched for that term.

Linking

As mentioned before, your tweets can be an effective way of sharing links or
pointing followers toward other content - for instance, to view event details on the
event info page on your website.

However, you may have noticed that URL’s – the web addresses of web sites,
you usually see these in the address bar of your web browser – can be quite
long! And tweets only give you 140 characters. What’s a tweeter to do?

Luckily there are several “link-shortening” services out in the
web. Two of the more popular ones are Bit.ly (https://
bitly.com/) and
TinyURL (http://
tinyurl.com/). These
sites function much
the same way: you
copy the URL of the site you want to link to and then paste that URL in a form
field on the shortening service website, and click a button; the service produces a
dramatically shortened URL which can be copied and pasted back into the tweet.

These services essentially act as a relay service, redirecting traffic
from the shortened URL to the desired destination. In addition, many Twitter applications (see below) have URL shortening as a built-in option, so it can be a one-click process.

Lists

As you begin accumulating followers it can quickly become a chore to keep track of everyone. Luckily, you don’t have to scroll endlessly through the tweets of everyone you follow. You can organize folks into groups, which in Twitter are known as Lists.

You can create lists under the Following tab on your Twitter page (most third-party applications will allow you to create and manage lists as well). You can also select another user’s username and then select the “person” icon, which triggers a pop-up menu; from this menu you can do a number of things, including add/remove them from lists.

Applications

Twitter has what’s known as an API: Application Programming Interface. This is a fancy way of saying that the way in which messages are exchanged are coded in a way that third-party developers can write applications which can access and display your content. This means you can track Twitter through your computer desktop as well as from your tablet or smart phone.
Hootsuite is an example of an online application. Why would you want to use it? – isn’t that just the same as logging into Twitter in your browser? Well, no. Hootsuite - which is free to use at the basic level, allows you to monitor multiple Twitter accounts and multiple lists, searches, and streams for each of those accounts. In addition, Hootsuite allows you to schedule tweets – you compose the content, assign it to an account in which you want to post it, and then set the date and time you want the tweet to go out. This is especially handy when you have a series of events you may want to tweet about as during Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Further Reading:

Twitter Help - Basics
http://support.twitter.com/groups/31-twitter-basics

How to Deal with Twitter Overload (MacWorld): http://www.macworld.com/article/1165313/how_to_deal_with_twitter_overload.html
Google+

Google has become so intertwined in the fabric of our daily lives it seems to have been around forever. When it comes to social media, Google is actually a late comer – building on its popular search engine and adding applications, or buying up others (see: YouTube).

In June of 2011, Google launched Google+ (“Google Plus”), a social networking component which is analogous to Facebook and Twitter in terms of general use. Users create profiles and post items which appear in their “Stream”.

Signing up…

If you use any of the Google applications – Google Docs, Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Voice, etc. – then you already have a Google account and therefore have Google+. If you visit any Google pages, you should see your First Name and a “+” in the top, left corner. Click that, or visit: https://plus.google.com

If you do not have a Google account, create one by visiting: https://accounts.google.com/SignUp

It is free, and, as mentioned above, you gain the ability to use a variety of free online services.
Once in Google+ you will notice that the main activity is very much like Facebook; your “stream” is a running list of posted items by you or people you know or choose to follow. At the top of your stream is a form field (labeled “Share what’s new…”) and icon/buttons for adding Photos, Videos, or Links.

Circles

In Google+, you organize people into Circles. When you first login to Google+ you will have some default Circles – Friends, Family, Acquaintances; you can edit or delete these; creating and managing circles is pretty simple, done via a drag-n-drop interface: create a circle, search for a person, drag that person onto the circle’s icon.

Hangouts

If for no other reason, Hangouts could very well make using Google+ worth it for your agency. Hangouts are virtual places where people gather to have a conversation. Essentially, Hangouts allow you and nine other people to have a video chat session. For free.
While video chatting, you can also share your screen – in other words, show pictures, documents, or a presentation you have running on your computer to the other 9 participants – and, thanks to Google’s integration with YouTube you can watch YouTube videos together.

Recently, Google has rolled out additional functionality called Hangouts On Air. This allows you to broadcast your Hangout live to the entire world. In addition, Google records it and makes your broadcast available for later viewing. In this sense, Hangouts gives you the ability to host webinars and push them out to membership.

**Further Reading:**


Google On Air “learn more” page:

Make Google+ Hangouts your new meeting room: Get started with this simple (and free) video conferencing service (Macworld):
[http://www.macworld.com/article/1166883/make_google_hangouts_your_new_meeting_room.html](http://www.macworld.com/article/1166883/make_google_hangouts_your_new_meeting_room.html)

YouTube face blur tool:
[http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2012/07/face-blurring-when-footage-requires.html](http://youtube-global.blogspot.com/2012/07/face-blurring-when-footage-requires.html)
Blogging

Web blogging has grown from a fringe curiosity to mainstream activity over the past decade. For some people, using social media sites like Facebook or Twitter can act as a blog. For many agencies, having a web site is sufficient – and time-consuming in and of itself. But, it may still be worth exploring the possibility of having a web blog as part of your social media communications strategy.

How do web sites and web blogs differ? These days they really do not differ that much. This is because with the onset of open source web publishing tools, many people are using applications to drive their web sites, and most often these applications are built on, or have the ability to, create blogs. Fundamentally, the difference has to do with the concept of a web site being mostly static content vs. a blog being content one expects to be updated on a regular basis; a web site says “this is what do” where a web blog says “this is what we’re doing right now”.

Blogging Software (applications)

There are several applications which can be used for blogging. The most popular and well-known ones are Moveable Type, Drupal, and WordPress. These are free, open source blogging tools and dynamic content management systems (CMS). This basically means that the software takes on the task of managing files and appearance for you, and provides a (relatively) user friendly web-based interface from which people with little or no web coding skills can create and manage content.

WordPress is considered to be the most user-friendly. It also has the added bonus of having an online host - WordPress.com, where anyone can sign up and host a blog for free (the resulting URL will be http://username.wordpress.com/). To run them on your own domain, you will need to make sure that your ISP (internet service provider) supports the technology needed to drive the web blogging application you want to use; a growing number of ISP’s support the technology needed to drive WordPress or Drupal.
A quick shout-out to Dreamhost (http://www.dreamhost.com): not only do they support WordPress, but they have an automated, one-click installer which takes care of the heavy-lifting of getting WordPress up on your domain. In addition, Dreamhost has a commitment to non-profits, offering free hosting (for life!) to 501(c)(3) organizations.

With WordPress, most content is created as an “entry” - which is automatically tracked via date posted, thus the blogging aspect of the application. However, you can also create static pages, and even change the admin settings so that visitors arrive at a static page first, rather than the running list of blog posts; in this sense, you can use WordPress as a CMS for your whole website and have a blog component on the side.

WordPress allows the use of themes – files that control the appearance of your content. There are thousands of themes out there, some for purchase, but many available for free. This allows for easier and more frequent change in how your site looks.

Obviously, set-up and editing blog content falls outside the scope of this document; please contact WCASA with questions if your agency would like to pursue web site and or blog creation.

Further Reading


What Everyone Ought to Know About Creating Compelling Content: http://www.3rhinomedia.com/2012/05/21/dont-have-a-clue-on-how-to-create-compelling-content-22-ways-to-start/

CopyBlogger blog (useful hints/tips): http://www.copyblogger.com/blog/
**RSS**

**What is RSS?**

Though not its official definition, RSS is often said to stand for “really simple syndication”. More recently people have begun to refer to RSS simply as web feeds or feeds. Simply put, RSS is a method of publishing information about online content in a way that allows the quick review of that content.

In other words, RSS allows a news site to publish a list of articles on its site, along with synopses and links, which in turn an end user can use to review the site’s content and pick and choose which items to invest more time in to explore.

In this sense, RSS is not necessarily a social media or Web 2.0 technology; there is no “talking back” per se; but it is included here because it is part of the picture of how agencies can use technology to share and access information more readily.

**Aggregators**

Because RSS feeds use a particular format – generally they are in XML (extensible mark-up language, if you must know) – they need an application that can interpret and present the content. These are referred to as feed readers or aggregators, and are web-based or run on your desktop or mobile device, allowing you to read the feeds of many sites in one view.

You have probably seen the orange (sometimes blue) icon that looks evocative of a radio wave signal emanating from a dot? Yep, that’s an RSS feed. More often than not, you can click on that and it will launch your reader application (if you have one); or, you can right-click on it, copy the link and paste it in a web-based application.

Speaking of web-based applications, among the applications that you get for free with Google is an RSS Reader app: [http://www.google.com/reader/].
Google Reader, along with a lot of other apps, uses the word “Subscribe” for adding feeds, since you are literally subscribing to content that feed is sharing.

1. Click the Subscribe button
2. paste in the URL of the feed
3. Click add

When viewing an RSS feed, you will see a list of whatever content they have published; feeds typically have Title, Author, a Brief Synopsis of the story, and a Link to the full story content on the site of the hosting entity. Clicking on the entry in the RSS list will expand down the synopsis; clicking on the Title will open the article in another browser tab or window; clicking the entry header again will collapse the entry back into the list.

Google Reader has the extra added benefit that you can generate a feed based on a Google search. To do this, you have to use Google’s Alert app: http://www.google.com/alerts

1. put in your search terms; example: sexual assault, WI
2. choose whether you want to limit results to news services or blogs or everything
3. choose how often search results are updated
4. under “Deliver to” choose Feed
5. Click Create Alert
Another added benefit, several desktop and mobile applications are built to synchronize with Google Reader, meaning you can subscribe to feeds once and then track them across multiple devices.

A few desktop applications:
FeedDemon (Windows) free
http://www.feeddemon.com/

NetNewsWire (Mac, iPod/iPhone/iPad) free [ad supported]
http://netnewswireapp.com/

Reeder (Mac, iPod/iPhone/iPad) $9.99
http://reederapp.com/

Making The Paper

Creating your own RSS feed requires a bit of coding beyond the scope of this document. However, most web blogging software and services have RSS built in; this includes Twitter and Facebook.

In addition, there are services which can basically compile items from a variety of RSS feeds and compile them into your own, personalized, electronic newspaper. One example is Paper.li; this free service allows you to select feeds from a variety of sources, and then it will generate an electronic newsletter with the headlines and summaries and links to the referenced pieces. You can view an example of this paper in action:

http://paper.li/wcasa_vpcc/1306460028

Further Reading:

[for the very adventurous] How to create a (free) powerful media monitoring and measurement system with Google Reader, RSS, Google Alerts:
Fundraising
There is no sure-fire path to riches to be made through social media; if there were, I would be on my own, privately owned desert island, and not writing this guide!

Many agencies are curious about this aspect of the world wide web, for obvious reasons. To that end, it is worth mentioning a few thoughts about some of the options out there.

Crowdsourcing
The power of social media is in bringing the power of numbers – the load is easier to lift if we have more hands on deck. There are web sites that have sprung up to help the rest of us aspire to obtaining the kind of funding once reserved for high-tech start-ups and big corporations. Two of the more known ones are:

Kickstarter: http://www.kickstarter.com/
IndieGoGo: http://www.indiegogo.com/

The premise for both is relatively the same; you put together a campaign describing a project (the more clear and obtainable the goal, the higher the likelihood that you will attract willing investors), set a dollar goal and a timeline. People view your project and decide to make a contribution or not.

How is this different than “regular” fundraising? It’s in the numbers; rather than asking a dozen or so people to donate $1,000 toward your $15,000 goal, you have a potential audience of millions who could contribute $1, $5, etc. and you could meet or exceed your goal.

As with anything financial, your mileage may vary.
Glossary

• **Browser** – application used to access content on web servers; examples of browsers are:
  - Safari
  - Firefox
  - Chrome
  - Internet Explorer (IE)

• **Client** - refers to remote user or computer that accesses data from a server; when you are working on your desktop computer and accessing web sites, your computer is considered the client

• **CMS** – Content Management System - web based program which manages content of a web site and allows for easy editing of content

• **Content** – the text or images that go on pages of a web site

• **End User** - the person visiting a website or accessing content on a server

• **FTP** – File Transfer Protocol - standard language which allows web sites to and servers to move files around

• **Hashtag** – a kind of tag using the “#” symbol which marks a string of text as a searchable or linkable term

• **HTML** – Hyper Text Markup Language - the code that drives the world wide web; provides structure to data which makes up a web page, and allows for the linking between different bits of data across many servers; see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Html](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Html) for more info

• **Mention** – in Twitter or Facebook lingo, a mention is any time your name is highlighted as a link in a post (ie: your username appears with an “@” tag allowing users to click on it and arrive at your profile page); mentions are the currency, the status symbol, of the new virtual marketplace

• **Open Source** - software released for free, often developed by a community of developers who donate their time

• **Server** - computer which “serves” the requests of other computers; dedicated server machines host files for use by client machines
• **SEO** – Search Engine Optimization - the practice of improving search engine (Google, Bing) ranking of your web site content

• **Tag** – a special character which when added to a text stream marks part of that text as a link to other content, or to similar messages/posts containing that same word

• **URL** – Uniform Resource Locator - the non-numeric address of a web site which allows browsers to locate the site content on the server