



# USING SOCIAL MEDIA

## SOCIAL MEDIA – SOME USEFUL INFORMATION TO GET GOING.

Although using social media can seem daunting, one of the biggest hurdles to overcome is knowing which sites to visit and their audiences. Below is an overview and tips on some of the most common ways of connecting with online audiences, though it is by no means a comprehensive list. With all of these sites, the best way to get started is to visit them yourself and explore how it can work for you.

### Useful Platforms

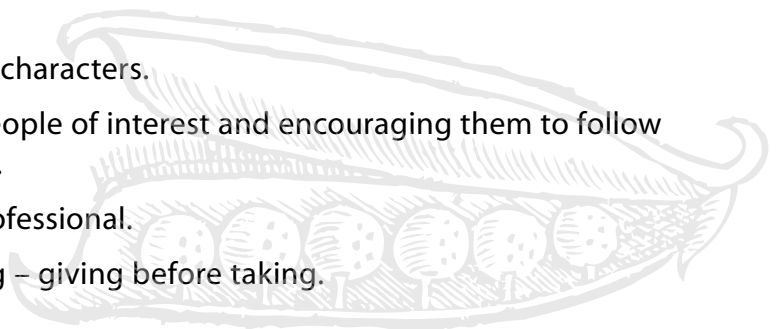
 [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)

Twitter allows anyone to read, write and share messages of up to 140 characters. The messages – called tweets – are public, and can be read by anyone. Twitter users can subscribe to receive your messages by following your account, which will then add your messages to their timeline – a real-time feed of all the accounts that they subscribe to.

With over a million active users and 250,000,000 tweets per day that are accessible anywhere, Twitter is a powerful, real-time way of communicating with current and potential customers. It is a way of quickly sharing information, gathering market intelligence and insights, and building relationships with people who care about your enterprise and what you're doing. The Media Trust ([www.mediatrust.org](http://www.mediatrust.org)) has examples of using Twitter on their 'Newsnet' website, and a good way to start is just by searching for an enterprise of your choice and seeing how they use Twitter to engage with their stakeholders.

### Main features are:

- Short messages – 140 characters.
- Based on following people of interest and encouraging them to follow you by being relevant.
- Mixture of fun and professional.
- Emphasis is on sharing – giving before taking.





- Generally adult users.
- Has a bit of a language of its own.
- Mobile & lots of tools available to help.

**facebook**

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

Facebook has 845 million monthly active users, with 483 million daily active users on average. It is currently free to use, allowing individuals not only to connect with each other across the world, but to share their 'likes' and personal preferences.

Facebook is an easy and powerful way of connecting with a wide online community by sharing information about your enterprise – from uploading photos and general information to special offers or just letting people know you exist! It lets you create a page for your enterprise, which in turn allows you to let several people be 'admins' who have the ability to edit the page – this means that your page is more likely to be updated frequently, making it interesting for people to read and ensuring all the information is up to date, thus encouraging people to revisit often.

Through this page, you can create events and invite all your friends or people who have 'liked' your page to the event. The best way to get started on Facebook, as with all social media, is to visit the page yourself and explore the various options available.

#### **Main features are:**

- Based around individuals but we can add other types:
  - Pages – business, charity, bands and other groups
  - Groups – 'members only' which means lower volume of people liking your pages but they are likely to be 'warmer' contacts and you can contact them directly.
- Personal bulletin board.
- Conversations and discussions.
- Photos and videos.
- The valued currency is 'likes'.
- Mobile access.
- Lots of help.



## You Tube [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

YouTube and other video sharing sites (like Vimeo) are extremely powerful ways of telling your unique story. The rise in citizen journalism and advancements in technology now mean that wherever you are you can record short videos and upload them onto the internet using just a mobile phone; far from being put off by films that are not studio quality, amateur videos give the film an added authenticity and add to its power.

You can have a look at some of the films Making Local Food Work has produced to give you an idea of how to tell the story of your community food enterprise online at [www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/films](http://www.makinglocalfoodwork.co.uk/films)

### Main features are:

- World's largest video source.
- Huge fun.
- Can share pretty much everything you do in 15 minute videos.
- Search by category, general, TV shows etc.
- Create channels to represent your interests or business.
- Currency is 'subscribers'.
- Mobile access.

## flickr™ [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)

- Online photo album that you can share with friends or the whole world.
- Now includes video.
- Individual or organisation accounts.
- Mobile access.
- Photos and videos.



A bonus for tourism and destinations...



## SOCIAL MEDIA DO'S AND DON'TS

### Do's

- Use the platforms and tools that best suit you and your audiences.
- Make social media a part of what you do... it's not an add-on.
- Update regularly – at least 15 mins a day.
- Listen and then talk – you earn the right to talk about your products and services by being RELEVANT to your audience.
- Remember that social media is a conversation so try to engage people – one-way communication (or broadcasting) doesn't work unless you are a celebrity!
- Link the platforms together wherever possible.
- Promote and support others (pay it forward) – even 'competitors' as this can portray you in a very cooperative light to your audiences.
- Respect the audience and be professional (if using for work).
- Stay apolitical if you are using the tools professionally.
- When using social media for business, remember you are representing the organisation, not yourself and use your organisations values to underpin your communications.
- Write for a U-certificate.
- Ensure you have permission to use images, videos etc.
- Ask for follows, likes, feedback and comments all the time.
- Use negative comments as an opportunity to learn something. You can ask the commenter for their help to put it right.
- Thank people and acknowledge comments and feedback.



## Don't's

- Don't expect social media to deliver bottom line returns immediately.
- Discuss business arrangements or opportunities.
- Assume responsibility for third party content – if it causes issues down the line, you don't want to be accountable.
- Offer paid-for advertisements or endorsements unless you have purchased the professional packages from the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter etc take a very dim view and can cancel your accounts!).
- Over-moderate – people will say negative things and unless they are really over the top, leave the comments up. It shows you are honest and genuinely concerned with your audience's views.
- Ignore negative feedback or comments.
- Stray off the path... stick to your objectives for using social media and don't get distracted.
- Just talk 'at' people.
- Use jargon if you can avoid it.
- Mix up personal and work or business accounts.

## I SPREAD YOUR IDEA BECAUSE...

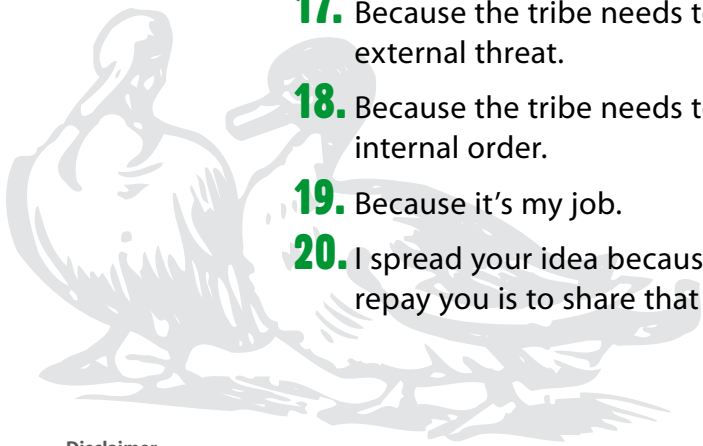
The most powerful aspect of social media is the number of people 'spreading the word' on your behalf – this is the free advertising people talk about. In order for people to do this for us, we need to think about why they might want to and what motivations we can give them to do so...

**Ideas spread when people choose to spread them. Here are some reasons why:**

1. I spread your idea because it makes me feel generous.
2. Because I feel smart alerting others to what I discovered.
3. Because I care about the outcome and want you (the creator of the idea) to succeed.
4. Because I have no choice. Every time I use your product, I spread the idea (Hotmail, iPad, a tattoo).
5. Because there's a financial benefit directly to me (Amazon affiliates, mlm).



6. Because it's funny and laughing alone is no fun.
7. Because I'm lonely and sharing an idea solves that problem, at least for a while.
8. Because I'm angry and I want to enlist others in my outrage (or in shutting you down).
9. Because both my friend and I will benefit if I share the idea (Groupon).
10. Because you asked me to, and it's hard to say no to you.
11. Because I can use the idea to introduce people to one another, and making a match is both fun in the short run and community-building.
12. Because your service works better if all my friends use it (email, Facebook).
13. Because if everyone knew this idea, I'd be happier.
14. Because your idea says something that I have trouble saying directly (AA, a blog post, a book).
15. Because I care about someone and this idea will make them happier or healthier.
16. Because it's fun to make another teen snicker about prurient stuff we're not supposed to see.
17. Because the tribe needs to know about this if we're going to avoid an external threat.
18. Because the tribe needs to know about this if we're going to maintain internal order.
19. Because it's my job.
20. I spread your idea because I'm in awe of your art and the only way I can repay you is to share that art with others.



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