

## Introduction to Social Media

### What is Social Media?

Social media is web based **user generated content**. This means that you can put something onto a website that others can comment on, add information to and interact with. It differs from the original use of websites as they did not allow the user to alter the content of the site in any way. Old websites were like the Encyclopaedia Britannica, unchangeable except by experts. New media websites are like Wikipedia, within reason anyone, expert or otherwise, can alter the information portrayed. It can be very useful for promotion and marketing and best of all, it is usually free!

### What is Web 2.0?

The term "**Web 2.0**" is commonly associated with internet based applications and webs sites that allow interaction, sharing of information and collaboration between people.

### What is a Blog?

A blog, short for 'web log' is a type of website. They often contain information from an organization or individual on recent events, and are usually updated weekly or daily. These **regular entries** can be commented upon by visitors to the site. There are at least 50 million blogs out there, so if you are going to use one, make sure yours is interesting, useful and regularly updated. If you do not think you have the capacity for regular updates, just use your existing website. Other types of blog include audio blogs, known as 'podcasting' and photo blogs.

The most popular blogs are [www.blogger.com/](http://www.blogger.com/), [www.googleblog.blogspot.com](http://www.googleblog.blogspot.com) and [www.wordpress.com/](http://www.wordpress.com/) They all come with instructions on how to create and personalise your blog.

### What is Facebook?

Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)) is currently the most popular social networking website, with over 400 million users. It allows people to connect to others who they know to share messages, photos and information. They do this by firstly creating a '**profile**' and if you wish to set up a '**fan page**' for your organisation you will need to set up a profile first. You may not want to use the same profile for work and for your personal friends, so bear in mind you may want two profiles or your organisation may have it's own profile and fan page. A profile is your individual page that allows you to upload your picture and share information about yourself with others in your network. You create a network by searching for people by name or email address and then adding them as a **friend**. This allows them access to your profile.

You can post notes on your profile that are visible to your friends. Notes are similar to blog posts and can include thoughts and information, links to articles, websites, and videos. There are an array of applications you can add to your page that allow you to enhance your profile by adding various features such as an RSS feed and Twitter updates.

### How do I make a fan page for my organisation?

You can create Fan Pages to communicate with a wide variety of people, publicize an event, or rally people around a place, person or cause. Similar to a personal profile, a fan page has its own wall and allows you to provide fans with status updates, post events, photos and videos. You can email all the people who have become 'fans' at once and they can discuss your organisation and events in the discussion forums.

The Facebook fan page creator can be found here: <http://www.facebook.com/advertising/?pages> and you need to populate your page with an image and information about your organisation. Along with making your fan page interactive and informative it's important to give it some personality by making it look attractive.



Facebook allows you to upload a logo or photo for your fan page and also upload some images of your organization. Make sure you put all the events on there as well.

You could also create a group. These pages provide a forum for people to share information and members can upload photos, videos and information on events related to the group's issue or interests. You can also post events on your personal profile as well as fan pages and groups where you are an administrator.

Make sure your profile has the highest privacy settings, but for publicity check that your organisation fan page is open to all, and make sure you remove any unwanted posts on your 'wall' regularly to avoid any bad publicity.

### **What is Twitter?**

Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)) is a cross between text messaging and blogging, where users are prompted to answer the question, "What are you doing?" in 140 characters or less. To write is to **'tweet'**. A tweet is an under 140 character phrase, comment or link. You can set up Twitter feeds in the name of the organisation or as an individual, it needs to be updated very regularly.

Each individual or organization has their own username, which starts with an '@' sign, followed by their Twitter account name. For example, Opportunity Peterborough is displayed as @thefutureisyou

By clicking the word "Follow" under another user's name, you sign up to receive other people's updates. People who choose to follow your updates are your "Followers".

If you like what others are saying, you can re-Tweet their posts by adding the letters "RT" in front of their username and copying and pasting their Tweet into your status. For example, RT @thefutureisyou means you are re-tweeting something Opportunity Peterborough has already posted. You can also send hidden direct messages.

### **What is an RSS feed?**

RSS is short for Really Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary feed. It provides summaries of website content in a very simple format. It is available through an RSS feed reader, or through most browsers. It will show you what's new since the last time you checked the feed, without having to visit the website itself. You can add other website RSS feeds to your website to make sure your site is regularly updated (common examples of this include links to the BBC RSS feed on websites). If your site is updated regularly it will be higher up search engine ratings.

### **Wikipedia**

Wikipedia is a free encyclopedia built by lots of people in collaboration using wiki software. Firstly check if your organisation is on it, and if it is, check all the information is correct! If not, create a new entry and add it in.

### **Google Maps**

<http://maps.google.co.uk/>

Google Maps allows to add your organisation and information on it. Search for your address and then click on the 'add your business to Google Maps' link.

### **Google Grants**

<http://www.google.com/grants/>



Google Grants awards free Google AdWords advertising to select charitable organizations. You can apply at the above website. If successful you will get a free AdWords box for at least three months which will make sure your organisation is always at the top of relevant searches.

### **Further information**

There are many more examples of social media out there, make sure you create pages for your organisation on those you have the time to maintain, or the capacity. YouTube and Flickr (video and photo uploads respectively) can be excellent if you already have lots of videos and photos you do not mind sharing.

If you are a heritage site who would like further information on any of these or support in setting up some social media for your website, please contact [alice.kershaw@peterborough.gov.uk](mailto:alice.kershaw@peterborough.gov.uk) or call 01733 317 480

- Boomerang PR Blog (November 2009) Top tips for Social Media Marketing  
<http://www.boomerangpr.com/blog/social-media-marketing/top-tips-for-social-media-marketing/>
- This group is specifically aimed at Museums who use social media:  
<http://museum30.ning.com/group/engagingwithsocialmediainmuseums>
- YouTube Video on Cultural Heritage and Web 2.0  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zjg65cARfrI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zjg65cARfrI)