

Thinking Outside of the Box with Social Media: Handout & Resource Sheet

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Questions?

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In “Thinking Outside of the Box with Social Media,” we explored going beyond the basics of social media interaction to really make these tools a part of your church’s communications strategy. We discussed how to match social media outlets to your audience, while addressing some of the common obstacles we encounter as church communities in our communications efforts. Here, we outline a few basic social media how-to’s, as well as some recommended articles and online tools to help take your church’s online communications and interaction to the next level.

Basic How-To & FAQs

How to Create a Facebook Page

Visit [facebook.com/business/build](https://www.facebook.com/business/build) for detailed step-by-step instructions on how to set up a business Facebook page.

A few key things to remember:

- Pick an image for your profile picture and cover photo that people will associate with your church. It creates familiarity and allows users to easily connect your page with your church.
- In the “About” section, write a brief sentence about your church. You can include a mission statement or welcome message.
- On the “Set up” page you have the option to create a unique Facebook web address. Use your church name and city to make your page easier to find.
- Keep posts short and visual. Limit posts to 50-150 words and include photos and videos when applicable.

How to Start a Twitter Account

Visit twitter.com and click on the “Sign up” button. You will be taken to a page where you will select a username. Your username is what everyone will see when you make posts. It is important to keep your username. A good idea is to use the shortest form of your church name. For example: The Diocese of Virginia uses @TheDioceseVA. You will also be asked to enter a full name and password. Keep it simple in case you will have more than one person monitoring your twitter account. Once you have entered your name and password, Twitter will send you a confirmation e-mail to confirm your account. Once you receive the e-mail and click to confirm, you will have an official Twitter account.

Profile:

You can view your profile by visiting twitter.com/yourusernamehere. Click on your username in the top right-hand corner. You will see a drop-down menu and you will want to click on “Settings.” Here you can set your time-zone and choose how tweets appear to you. Next,

click on “Profile.” Here you will select your profile picture. An image of your church or a logo associated with your church would be appropriate. You will also want to set your location and add a description. Keep your description short and simple.

Make Connections:

Twitter is a place to make social connections. In addition to sending your first “tweet,” you will want advertise your twitter account to parishioners. Your Facebook page, website and/or blog are great places to let people know you have started a twitter account.

Tips for “tweeting”:

- To make your first tweet go to the Twitter home page and type your message in the “What’s happening?” field. Tweets must be 140 characters or less, so keep messages short and concise.
- To direct a tweet to someone, you type @ followed by the username. *Example:* @TheDioceseVA Loved the article you posted!
- If you see a tweet you want to share with your followers, you simply click on the link below it that will say, “retweet.” Followers will then see the tweet as being retweeted by you from another Twitter user.

What is the Difference Between Facebook and Google+?

Google+, much like Facebook, is a social networking site. The main difference is that Google+ has integrated a few social media platforms into one package. *Here are a few of their extra options:*

- Hangouts - You have the ability to chat with coworkers, family or friends using a webcam (optional) and mic.
- Streams – Customize your lists based on interest. For example: You can create different lists so that you filter what and when you see information.
- Search Engine Ranking – By typing in keywords in your profile, you have the ability to climb the search engine ranks with Google.
- Communities – These are interactive forums where you can chat with others who share similar interests.
- Personalized Search – Google+ suggests search results based on what content your contacts like.

Helpful Social Media Tools

Hootsuite

Hootsuite (hootsuite.com) is a dashboard designed to help you manage all of your social networking sites in one place. The free version allows you to manage up to 5 social profiles. For 50 to 100 or more there are package options available. With this interface you will have the ability to:

- Send and schedule tweets
- Monitor tweet mentions and sent tweets
- Post updates, add images and monitor feeds on Facebook
- Post directly to your organization's LinkedIn page
- Share, comments and view posts on Google+
- "Check-in" at locations with FourSquare
- Schedule and post content to WordPress
- Add additional social networking sites as needed including Tumblr, YouTube, Flickr, etc.

Tweetdeck

Tweetdeck (tweetdeck.com) is an app that helps the experienced Twitter user. It gives you the ability to arrange feeds, customize with filters, schedule tweets, monitor and manage an unlimited number of accounts, and receive notification alerts for new tweets.

If This Then That

If This, Then That (ifttt.com) is a tool that lets you create "formulas," or recipes, to link and automate different actions in your social media outlets. For example, you might create a formula that says, If I change my Facebook profile picture, then update my Twitter profile picture to match. They have a lot of existing recipes for you to choose from, too.

Edmodo

Edmodo (edmodo.com) is an online learning center where you can invite participants to interact with one another, take quizzes, organize schedules or join small groups. It's free, and would be a great addition to a Christian education forum for adults or kids.

Piktochart

Piktochart (piktochart.com) is a free utility that helps you create your own Infographics.

Recommended Reading

General Social Media Guidance

Pew Research Center Social Networking Use

<http://www.pewresearch.org/data-trend/media-and-technology/social-networking-use/>

Steve Fogg: 22 Common Mistakes Most Churches & Non-Profits Make on Social Media

<http://www.stevefogg.com/2013/08/08/churches-non-profits-social-media-mistakes/>

Steve Fogg: 17 Social Media Myths that you Must Do Everything to Avoid

http://www.stevefogg.com/2013/08/15/17-social-media-myths-that-you-must-do-everything-to-avoid/?utm_source=buffer&utm_campaign=Buffer&utm_content=buffera2967&utm_medium=twitter

Read the Spirit: Sorting Fact from Fiction in Church Growth & Social Media

<http://www.readthespirit.com/explore/sorting-fact-from-fiction-about-church-growth-social-media/>

Church Marketing Sucks: Let's Talk about the Social Media Gospel

<http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2013/07/lets-talk-about-the-social-media-gospel/>

Pastor David L. Hansen: 6 Objections to Online Church Communications

<http://revdavidh.blogspot.com/2013/08/6-Objections.html>

Church Marketing Sucks: Getting Started – Advice from Deanna Mingo, Digital Evangelist

<http://www.churchmarketingsucks.com/2013/07/getting-started-deanna-mingo/>

Platform-Specific Recommendations

Socialbrite: 12 Ways to Use Pinterest for your Nonprofit

<http://www.socialbrite.org/2012/01/31/12-ways-to-use-pinterest-for-your-nonprofit/>

Frogloop: Steal these 42 Creative Pinterest Ideas for Nonprofits

<http://www.frogloop.com/care2blog/2012/1/13/steal-these-42-creative-pinterest-ideas-for-nonprofits.html>

Faith Context: Four Ways Your Church Could Use Instagram

<http://faithcontext.com/four-ways-your-church-could-use-instagram/>

Faith Context: Eight iPhone Apps to Help You with your Church Instagram Account

<http://faithcontext.com/eight-iphone-apps-to-help-you-with-your-church-instagram-account/>

Social Media Today: 7 Pinterest Tips for Nonprofits

<http://socialmediatoday.com/kristen-curtiss/1680151/7-pinterest-tips-nonprofits>