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## **Introduction to Social Media**

This white paper is a gentle introduction to social media for people wanting to promote themselves or their business. For a more in-depth look at social media have a look at my Guide to Social Media Best Practice. I've collated this material from many sites over the internet. Check out [Mashable](#) for more.

## **What is Social Media?**

Social media are primarily Internet and mobile-based tools for people to share and discuss information. Social media integrates technology, telecommunications and social interaction; it uses words, pictures, videos and audio. It depends on the varied perspectives and "building" of shared meaning among communities, as people share their stories and experiences. Businesses also refer to social media as user-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media (CGM). Social media can help you reach more people in a more relevant way. Also, consider **anything** you put on the internet as public. There is a glossary at the end of this document.

## **Examples of social media software:**

### *Communication*

1. Blogs: [Blogger](#), [LiveJournal](#), [TypePad](#), [WordPress](#).
2. Micro-blogging: [Twitter](#), [Tumblr](#), [Posterous](#).
3. Social networking: [Facebook](#), [MySpace](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Forums](#), [Ning](#).
4. Events: [Upcoming](#), [Eventful](#), [Meetup.com](#)

### *Collaboration*

1. Wikis: [Wikimedia](#), [Wikia](#), PBworks, Wetpaint
2. Social bookmarking (or social tagging): [Delicious](#), [StumbleUpon](#), [Google Reader](#).
3. Social news: [Digg](#), Mixx, [Reddit](#), NowPublic



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## *Multimedia*

1. Photography and art sharing: [Flickr](#), Photobucket, [Picasa](#), SmugMug, Zoomr
2. Video sharing: [YouTube](#), Viddler, [Vimeo](#), sevenload, Zideo
3. Livecasting: Ustream.tv, Justin.tv, Stickam, [Skype](#), OpenCU
4. Music and audio sharing: [MySpace Music](#), The Hype Machine, [Last.fm](#), ccMixer.
5. Presentation sharing: [slideshare](#), scribd

## *Reviews and opinions*

1. Product reviews: epinions.com, MouthShut.com
2. Business reviews: Customer Lobby, yelp.com, Foursquare
3. Community Q&A: Yahoo! Answers, WikiAnswers, Askville, Google Answers

## **Tools commonly used by marketers:**

- Twitter 88% (Grown hugely in last couple of years)
- Facebook 87% (Grown hugely in last couple of years)
- LinkedIn 78% (small business mostly)
- Blogs 70% (shrunk in the last couple of years)
- You Tube / Vimo etc 46%
- Social Bookmarking 27%
- Forums 26%
- Digg, Reddit, StumbleUpon etc 22%
- Ning sites (an online platform for people to create their own social networks) 17%
- MySpace 11%
- FourSquare & location based networks
- Flickr, creative commons images.



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## 1. Why use Social Media?

- Where is everybody?

More and more people are using social media. According to Facebook they have more than 10 million active users. Apparently Twitter boasts roughly 18 million registered users. (Via <http://mashable.com/>)

- Free!

The combination of the quantity of users and no cost makes it a no-brainer.

- Generate exposure

Using social media builds your online presence, your brand and boosts exposure.

- Increased traffic

Social media points users to your website and your product.

- Building business partnerships

It's also a great place to network with your peers and keep up with industry news.

- Search engine rankings

Using social media makes your brand and product more visible to search engines.

- Build subscribers list

Direct marketing through email newsletters boosts sales hugely; make sure you suggest online visitors subscribe to your "free newsletter".

- Events management - Facebook events

A great tool to track numbers and let your authors invite their friends to launches.

- The "long tail" / niche marketing

It's the perfect vehicle to promote the myriad of niche products whose collective market share can rival the blockbusters.



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## 2. Common mistakes

- Not planning

Just like any promotional campaign you to draw up a marketing plan.

- Not branding

Branding should be clear, simple and consistent across all media.

- Broadcasting & not engaging with readers

Social media is **not** all about churning out press releases and ignoring customers.

- Spamming

Social media is not about clogging up people's feeds with flimsy dross.

- Blogging press releases

Blogs need to be much more than press releases.

- Not understanding SEO & Key words

Research, analyse, get specific, use them and be consistent.

- Expecting too much too soon

It doesn't happen over night...but it will happen!

- Automated follows and direct messages

These are bad etiquette; they put people off and feel spammy.

## 3. Top Tips

- Integrity – be true to your brand, let your brand be true

Don't try to make your brand something it is not, be honest.

- Find a tribe who **share your values**

Once you build up a following of true fans direct marketing is a breeze.

- Tone

Social media is informal but polite, don't swear, be friendly.

- Consistency

Keep your tone and delivery regular.





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- Substantive content

Obviously people won't come back if there is nothing interesting to see/read. Build up your reader's trust with great content.

- Community

The central concept of social media is community, don't forget that.

- Integration

Manage your time and the efficacy of campaigns by integrating all your social media.

Micro blogs and social networks such as Facebook and Twitter can help you connect with potential customers. For this strategy to work, your blog should serve as a central hub. The hub sends consumers to your respective social media profiles to build the connection and then back to make the sale. Social media needs to be integrated, you should have buttons for Twitter, Facebook etc on all your pages, this can help turn a one-time reader into a regular customer.

#### **4. Managing time**

- Plan, write drafts, be prepared. Don't need to spend all day tweeting!
- Set up delayed tweets and blog posts. Prepare lots in one chunk of time.

#### **5. Helpful Tools & Measuring Return on Investment (ROI)**

- [Hootsuite](#) & [Tweetdeck](#)
- FaceBook & Twitter Lists
- [Google analytics](#) & [Stat Counter](#)
- [Twitter Karma](#)



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## **6. Seven Stages of Social Media integration**

- **Observe**

Take some time to just look around and assess things. Think about how you can best use social media. Use Google alerts, twitter search etc to track the use of your key words. Get to know how it all works.

- **Set the stage**

Create official presences across the networks you plan to use. Start to build your followers, monitor mentions. Get a feel for the effects of presence and participation.

- **Strategic communication**

Set up goals and objectives. Focus on strategic communication rather than aimless broadcasting.

- **Persona across all media**

Social media gives companies personality, which helps you know what your customers want. Know what persona you want to project.

- **Community**

This is an investment in the cultivation of affinity, interaction, advocacy, and loyalty. It is earned through shared experiences.

- **Evolve**

Listening and responding needs to lead to improvement and adaptation.

- **Measure**

Without an understanding of the volume, locations and nature of online interactions the true impact we are having is impossible to assess.



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## **Glossary**

### **BLOG**

A blog (a contraction of the term “Web log”) is a Web site, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. “Blog” can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog. There are many different types of blogs, differing not only in the type of content, but also in the way that content is delivered or written. There are also Blog search engines – [Bloglines](#), Blogscope and [Technorati](#).

### **CMS**

A content management system (CMS) is a computer application used to create, edit, manage, search and publish various kinds of digital media and electronic text.  
E.g.: Drupal.

### **CREATIVE COMMONS**

A non-profit organization devoted to expanding the range of creative work available for others legally to build upon and share. The intention is to avoid the problems that current copyright laws create for the sharing of information. The project provides several free licenses that copyright holders can use when releasing their works on the Web.

### **Digital Rights Management, DRM**

Any of several technologies used by publishers to control access to and usage of digital data (such as software, music, movies) and hardware. The term is often confused with copy protection and technical protection measures. These two terms refer to technologies that control or restrict the use of digital media content on electronic devices with such technologies installed, acting as components of a DRM design.



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## **DOMAIN**

The main purpose of a domain name is to provide symbolic representations, i.e., recognizable names, to mostly numerically addressed Internet resources. This abstraction allows any resource (e.g., website) to be moved to a different physical location in the address topology of the network, globally or locally in an intranet, in effect changing the IP address. This translation from domain names to IP addresses (and vice versa) is accomplished with the global facilities of Domain Name System (DNS).

## **FOLKSONOMY**

Folksonomy (also known as collaborative tagging, social classification, social indexing, and social tagging) is the practice and method of collaboratively creating and managing tags to annotate and categorize content. Folksonomy describes the bottom-up classification systems that emerge from social tagging. In contrast to traditional subject indexing, metadata is generated not only by experts but also by creators and consumers of the content. Usually, freely chosen keywords are used instead of a controlled vocabulary. Folksonomy (from folk + taxonomy) is a user-generated taxonomy.

## **LONG TAIL**

A phrase coined by Chris Anderson, popularized in an article he wrote for Wired in October 2004. Anderson argued that products that are in low demand or have low sales volume can collectively make up a market share that rivals or exceeds the relatively few current bestsellers and blockbusters, if the store or distribution channel is large enough. Examples of such mega-stores include Amazon.com and Netflix. A former Amazon employee described the Long Tail as follows: "We sold more books today that didn't sell at all yesterday than we sold today of all the books that did sell yesterday."





### **META-DATA**

Data that describes other data; descriptive information about the context, quality, and condition or characteristics of the data. Used for tagging, cataloguing, archiving and finding assets.

### **OPEN CONTENT**

Any kind of creative work that is published in a format that explicitly allows the copying of the information. Technically, it is share-alike without any prohibitions; content is either in the public domain or under a license that offers open access.

### **OPEN SOURCE**

A program whose source code is available to the general public for use and/or modification from its original design, free of charge. Open source code is typically created as a collaborative effort.

### **PARTICIPATORY JOURNALISM / CITIZEN JOURNALISM**

The act of citizens "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information... The intent of this participation is to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires." (We Media: How Audiences are Shaping the Future of News and Information, Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis). It includes user comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photos or video footage captured from personal mobile cameras, local news written by residents of a community, independent news and information Web sites (such as the Drudge Report), full-fledged participatory news sites (OhMyNews), and collaborative and contributory media sites (Slashdot, Kuro5hin).



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## **PARTICIPATORY MEDIA**

Media such as blogs, wikis, RSS, tagging and social bookmarking, music-photo-video sharing, mashups, podcasts, and videoblogs that share three common, interrelated characteristics:

1. They function as many-to-many media, broadcasting and receiving text, images, audio, video, etc. to and from every other person.
2. Their value and power derives from the active participation of many people.
3. They create social networks that amplify information and communication to enable broader, faster, and lower cost coordination of activities.

## **PODCAST**

A podcast is a series of audio or video digital media files which is distributed over the Internet by syndicated download, through Web feeds, to portable media players and personal computers. Though the same content may also be made available by direct download or streaming, a podcast is distinguished from most other digital media formats by its ability to be syndicated, subscribed to, and downloaded automatically when new content is added. Like the term broadcast, podcast can refer either to the series of content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also called podcasting. The host or author of a podcast is often called a podcaster.

## **PUBLIC DOMAIN**

Knowledge and innovation (especially creative works such as writing, art, music, and inventions) which is freely available to the public, i.e., no person or legal entity can establish or maintain proprietary interests within a particular legal jurisdiction. This body of information and creativity is considered to be part of a common cultural and intellectual heritage, which, in general, anyone may use or exploit, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes. If an item is not in the public domain, this may be the result of a proprietary interest as represented by a copyright or patent; however, when a work's copyright or patent restrictions expire, it enters the public domain and may be used by anyone for any purpose.



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## **RSS**

RSS is a family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works-such as blog entries, news headlines, audio, and video-in a standardized format.

## **SOCIAL NETWORK**

A social network is a social structure made of nodes (which are generally individuals or organizations) that are tied by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as values, visions, ideas, financial exchange, friendship, kinship, dislike, conflict or trade. The resulting graph-based structures are often very complex.

## **SEARCH ENGINE**

A Web search engine is a tool designed to search for information on the World Wide Web. Information may consist of web pages, images, information and other types of files. Some search engines also mine data available in newsbooks, databases, or open directories. Unlike Web directories, which are maintained by human editors, search engines operate algorithmically or are a mixture of algorithmic and human input.

## **SEO**

Search engine optimization (SEO) is the process of improving the volume and quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via “natural” (“organic” or “algorithmic”) search results. Typically, the higher a site’s “page rank” (i.e, the earlier it comes in the search results list), the more visitors it will receive from the search engine. SEO can also target different kinds of search, including image search, local search, and industry-specific vertical search engines. As an Internet marketing strategy, SEO considers how search engines work and what people search for. Optimizing a website primarily involves editing its content and HTML coding to both increase its relevance to specific keywords and to remove barriers to the indexing activities of search engines.





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## **SMART PHONE, SPHONE**

Any electronic handheld device that integrates the functionality of a mobile phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or other information appliance. This is often achieved by adding telephone functions to an existing PDA (PDA Phone) or putting "smart" capabilities, such as PDA functions, into a mobile phone. The applications can be developed by the manufacturer of the handheld device, by the operator, or by any other third-party software developer.

## **SOCIAL NETWORK**

A social structure made of individuals or organizations that are connected through various familiarities ranging from casual acquaintance to close familial bonds. In the Internet, social networking refers to a category of applications that connect friends, business partners, or other individuals together using a variety of tools. Examples of social networking sites include <http://www.Facebook.com>, <http://www.Linkedin.com>

## **TAGGING**

A tag is a non-hierarchical keyword or term assigned to a piece of information (such as an internet bookmark, digital image, or computer file). This kind of metadata helps describe an item and allows it to be found again by browsing or searching. Tags are chosen informally and personally by the item's creator or by its viewer, depending on the system. On a website in which many users tag many items, this collection of tags becomes a folksonomy.

## **USER GENERATED CONTENT**

On-line content that is produced by users of Web sites, as opposed to traditional media producers such as broadcasters and production companies. It reflects the democratization of media production through new technologies that are accessible and affordable. These include digital video, blogging, podcasting, mobile phone photography and wikis. Prominent examples of Web sites based on User Generated Content include Flickr, Friends Reunited, eBay, FourDocs and Wikipedia.





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## **URL**

In computing, a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) is a type of Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) that specifies where an identified resource is available and the mechanism for retrieving it. In popular language, a URL is also referred to as a Web address.

## **WEB 2.0**

A phrase coined by O'Reilly Media in 2004 to refer to a “second generation” of Internet-based services that let people collaborate and share information online in new ways such as social networking sites, wikis, communication tools, and folksonomies. It has become a popular, though ill-defined and often criticized, buzzword amongst the technical and marketing communities.

## **WEB FEED**

A web feed (or news feed) is a data format used for providing users with frequently updated content. Content distributors syndicate a web feed, thereby allowing users to subscribe to it. Making a collection of web feeds accessible in one spot is known as aggregation, which is performed by an Internet aggregator. A web feed is also sometimes referred to as a syndicated feed. Often the term RSS is used to refer to web feeds or web syndication in general, although not all feed formats are now RSS.

## **WIKI**

A type of Web site that allows visitors to easily add, remove, or otherwise edit and change content, sometimes without the need for registration. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for collaborative authoring. The term wiki can also refer to the collaborative software itself or to certain specific wiki sites, including online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.



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## **WIKIPEDIA**

A Web-based free-content multilingual encyclopaedia project that exists as a wiki, a Web site that allows any visitor to freely edit its content. Wikipedia is written collaboratively by volunteers, allowing most articles to be changed by almost anyone with access to the Web site. Currently Wikipedia has more than 5 million articles in many languages, including more than 1.3 million in the English-language version, and it has been ranked among the top 20 most visited sites. There has been controversy over Wikipedia's reliability and accuracy, with the site receiving criticism for its susceptibility to vandalism, uneven quality and inconsistency, systemic bias, and preference for consensus or popularity over credentials.

## **WORDPRESS**

WordPress is an open source blog publishing application. It features integrated link management; a search engine-friendly, clean permalink structure; the ability to assign nested, multiple categories to articles; multiple author capability; and support for tagging of posts and articles. Automatic filters that provide for proper formatting and styling of text in articles (for example, converting regular quotes to smart quotes) are also included. WordPress also supports the Trackback and Pingback standards for displaying links to other sites that have themselves linked to a post or article. Finally, WordPress has a rich plugin architecture which allows users and developers to extend its functionality beyond the features that come as part of the base install.

Via <http://www.creativemediafarm.com/information/glossary>

And <http://opencontent.wgbh.org/report/glossary.html>