

Surviving and Thriving with Social Media

A Social Media Primer for Printers



Facebook..... www.facebook.com



LinkedIn www.linkedin.com



Twitter..... www.twitter.com



Foursquare..... www.foursquare.com



YouTube www.youtube.com



Blogs www.blog-connection.com

Surviving and Thriving with Social Media

If you opened this primer and are reading it, you are either already participating in the world of social media and looking to learn more or see how you stack up, or you are interested in getting started. Either way, congratulations.



Social media is not a gimmick or a fad. It is here to stay, although its face changes almost daily. This primer presents a snapshot of the world of social media, identifies the leading players, provides guidelines for business use of various social media venues, and provides ideas for getting started—or expanding your presence in the social media world.

What is Social Media?

Social media is media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques¹. Social media is designed to make it easy to create and disseminate user-created content, and in fact, transforms users from content consumers (think broadcast television or printed publications) to content creators.

There is even a trade show for social media, BlogWorld, held in Las Vegas in 2010—describes itself as “The World’s Largest Social Media Business Conference.”

Why Social Media? Why Me?

Even if you choose not to participate actively in the social media world, you should educate yourself about it. Because your customers are using it and talking about it, you should be able to participate intelligently and credibly in those discussions. Once you understand

how it all works—and it is not difficult and it does not need to be time-consuming—you will be in a better position to determine how participation in selected social media venues can help your business.

In addition, as you evolve your business to meet today’s market realities, there are many opportunities for you to help your customers better leverage social media in their marketing and customer communications efforts. Social media is increasingly becoming part and parcel of an integrated communications strategy for many businesses. Being conversant in a range of alternative media, including popular social media venues, will increase your value as a business partner and ultimately bring you more business.

Popular Social Media Venues

There are a wide range of social media venues. We describe the most popular here. When you come across others that you think are relevant to your business or that of your customers, investigate them as well.



Facebook

According to online information source Wikipedia², Facebook, founded in February of 2004 from a Harvard University dorm room, is a social networking website that is operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. Users can add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. Additionally, users can join networks organized by city, workplace, and school or college. The website’s name stems from the colloquial name of books given at the start of the academic year by

Facebook Facts

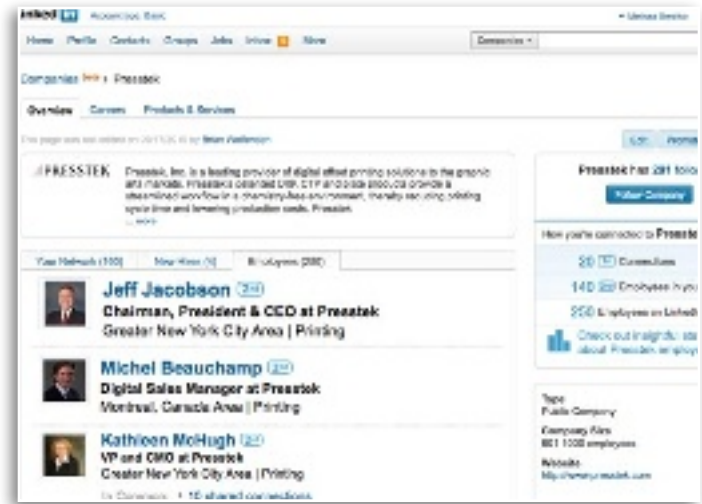


- More than 500 million active users as of September 2010 (this grew from 150 million in January of 2009)
- More than 150 million active users currently accessing Facebook through their mobile devices
- 50% of active users log on to Facebook in any given day
- People spend over 700 billion minutes per month on Facebook and more than 30 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photo albums, etc.) are shared each month
- Average user is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events
- More than 35 million users update their status each day
- More than 55 million status updates posted each day
- More than 3.5 million events created each month
- More than 700,000 local businesses have active pages on Facebook
- Pages have created more than 5.3 billion fans

Although these facts and figures change daily, they are worth reviewing. Simply Google "Facebook Facts and Statistics" to get current data.

university administrations with the intention of helping students to get to know each other better. While Facebook may have started as a college/university phenomenon, the majority of Facebook users today are outside of colleges and universities.

The average user spends more than 55 minutes per day on Facebook, becomes a fan of two pages per month, is invited to three events per month and is a member of 12 groups. About 70% of Facebook users are outside of the United States.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is an interconnected network of professionals and has more than 75 million members in over 200 countries and territories around the world, with about half of the members being outside the U.S. The company claims that a new member joins LinkedIn approximately every second. It is worth noting that according to LinkedIn, executives from all Fortune 500 companies are LinkedIn members.

LinkedIn allows registered users to maintain a list of contact details of people they know and trust in business. This builds up a contact network, and allows users to see connections of their connections (called second-degree connections). This can be utilized to gain introductions through a mutual, trusted friend. Users can also recommend other users, and these recommendations can be leveraged for various purposes. Users can find, be introduced to and collaborate with qualified professionals they need to work with to accomplish their goals.

LinkedIn also allows users to research companies with which they may be interested in working. When typing the name of a given company in the search box, statistics about the company are provided, as well as employees of that company registered with LinkedIn and their relationship (if any) to your network.



According to QuantCast, LinkedIn is visited by nearly 50 million people monthly worldwide (21 million U.S.).



Twitter

Wikipedia describes Twitter, created in 2006, as a free social networking and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters (including spaces) displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Ever since late 2009, users can follow lists of authors instead of following individual authors. All users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications. While the service itself costs nothing to use, accessing it through SMS may incur phone service provider fees.



Although historically Twitter has closely guarded its usage statistics, the company has recently stated publicly that it is seeing about 50 million tweets per day. Mashable, the Social Media

Guide, estimates there will be 26 million Twitter users by the end of 2010. Even so, Twitter remains just a fraction of the size of Facebook, who counts more than 500 million active users, more than half of which they claim login at least once daily. In terms of the number of "tweets," GigaTweet has a real-time counter online that reflected more than 10 billion tweets to date as of this writing.

Foursquare

Foursquare is one of an emerging class of location-based services. It is a mobile application that makes cities easier to use and more interesting to explore. It is a friend-finder, a social city guide and a game that challenges users to experience new things and rewards them for doing so. Foursquare lets users "check in" to a place when they're there, tell friends where they are and track the history of where they've been and who they've been there with.

While Foursquare is still relatively small (3 million users worldwide), as of August 2010 there were about 15,000 venues experimenting with special offers through the service.

As growth in mobile use continues with devices such as the Apple iPhone and iPad, Android phones and other GPS-enabled devices gaining popularity, marketers will increasingly look to location-based marketing for improved results. Experimenting with sites like Foursquare and Yelp, another location-based social media venue, will give you insight into the possibilities these emerging services present.





YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing web site, currently owned by Google. Users can upload video to share, companies can establish "YouTube Channels." Founded in May of 2005, YouTube has partnership deals with content providers including major TV networks, music companies, etc. YouTube videos often "go viral," meaning people watch them, find them interesting, educational or amusing, and forward the link to friends. Many printers may remember the video posted by Warren Werbitt of Pazazz Printing entitled "Printing's Alive." As of this writing, it has had nearly 215,000 views since it was posted three years ago. Pazazz Printing has six videos posted, including a TNT news report about its green initiatives.

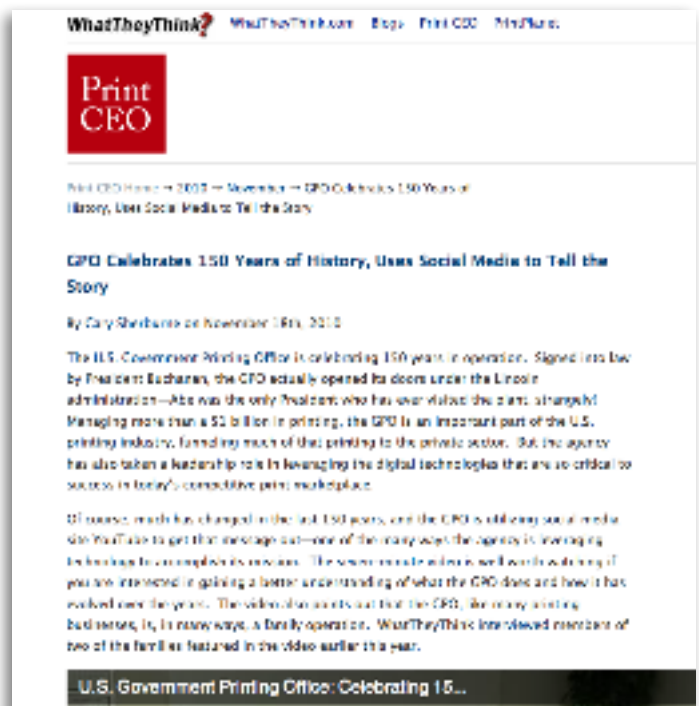


People are watching 2 billion videos a day on YouTube and uploading hundreds of thousands of videos daily. In fact, every minute, 24 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube. It can be a powerful marketing platform if used correctly.

Blogs

Blog is a contraction of the term web log. A blog is a web site that is generally maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or videos, according to Wikipedia. There are also corporate blogs in addition to personal blogs, and most news outlets these days also have blogs, often with entries written by their leading columnists or commentators. Blogs are an excellent means of getting a discussion going. While it requires an authorized author to start a discussion track, anyone can post comments to a blog entry, and in the "blogosphere," or universe of blog readers and users, people typically are not shy about sharing their opinions on whatever topic is being discussed.

Technorati has issued an annual State of the Blogosphere study each year since 2004. In its 2009 report (its most recent as of this writing), the company indicates that a minority of bloggers are making money from their blogs, either by hosting advertising on their sites or by using their blogs to drive speaking engagements and traditional media assignments. Fourteen percent of those who have monetized their blogging are corporates. The company has indexed more than 133 million blogs. Universal McCann reports that 77% of internet users read blogs.



Applications to Manage your Social Media Experience

It can be tiresome to have to individually visit each social network site to get updates and see what is happening, as well as to post individual updates. There are tools that can help!

You can link Twitter to LinkedIn and Facebook, so that if you post a tweet, it will automatically update your status on Facebook and LinkedIn, making it easy to keep all three venues looking active. You will, of course, want to post to each individually from time to time to keep information new and fresh on each individual site.

Another application that is quite useful if you use Microsoft Outlook for email is Xobni. This Outlook plug-in allows you to quickly search through Outlook, but it also displays profiles from Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter, including photos and contact information in an easy user interface. So for example, when you click on an email from an individual, their profile will pop up next to the email, including a photo, making even email feel a little more personal.

Another benefit of monitoring the world of social media is to see what people are saying about you. TweetDeck is an integrated application that can show what's going on with Twitter, Facebook, MySpace (which we haven't discussed here, but is a social media site similar to Facebook) and LinkedIn. You have a consolidated view of all of it and can post right from a single interface. In fact, you can select one or more accounts (i.e., Twitter and Facebook) to update simultaneously. If Twitter is not chosen, you are not restricted to the 140 character limit. TweetDeck also shows direct messages people may have sent you as well as postings in which you are mentioned. This is a slick, free application that gives you a single window into most of the social media world. TweetDeck also has one other nice feature: If you want to include a Web URL in a tweet, it often must be shortened in order to stay within the 140 character limit by using a free service such as TinyURL or bit.ly.

TweetDeck

A personal real-time browser, connecting you with your contacts across Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Foursquare, and more.

Download for free at www.tweetdeck.com



With TweetDeck there is an option to automatically shorten the URL, saving a step in the posting process.

TweetDeck is available as a standalone application as well as a plug-in for the Google Chrome browser. HootSuite, another monitoring application, is web-based only, meaning you access it through your browser. It also allows you to link to Facebook and LinkedIn, but only allows you to see one network at a time. It also has a feature to shorten URLs, but is not quite as elegant as TweetDeck.

Another option is Seismic Look. This application only monitors Twitter, but you can set it up to monitor multiple Twitter accounts. For example, you may have a Twitter account for you personally and for your business that you want to keep track of.

Blogs can often be more problematic to locate. You can search for blogs by topic using Google's special blog search feature. Once you locate a blog you might be interested in, such as PrintCEO operated by WhatTheyThink or Printblogalooza on the Printing Impressions site, you can subscribe to be notified if anything new is posted. Another good site for keeping up with what's new in social media is Tamar Weinberg's Techipedia.com. Weinberg is the author of *The New Community Rules: Marketing on the Social Web*, an excellent and in-depth tutorial on all things social media.



Google blogs
Advanced search options at
www.blogsearch.google.com

Some of these tools can be accessed via the web without having to download a client application and/or can be optimized for mobile so you can keep in touch with what's going on while on the move.

Getting Started

The key to being successful with social media is consistency. Keep in mind that this is a real-time venue and updating things once a week or once a month may not send the right message to those who are "following" you. Over-updating can also be annoying. This requires having a plan in place that should encompass the reasons you want to participate in the



first place, what you hope to achieve for your business and how you will incorporate social media into the overall experience your customers have when they work with you. You should also designate one person in your organization that is responsible for overseeing your social media presence.

Lurking

As you are thinking about the questions above, dip your toes into the social media waters. Pick one of the social networks of your choice and download one of the applications mentioned above to monitor activity—or simply visit the individual sites. For businesses, LinkedIn is a great place to start. Once you are comfortable with LinkedIn, you can expand your presence to other venues.

On LinkedIn, look for groups with an affinity for what you do. There are a number of printing industry groups on LinkedIn. In fact, a search of groups using the keyword "printing" came up with 601 different groups. Join one or two that seem most aligned with your interests, and chime in when you feel comfortable doing so.

On Twitter, for example, you can specify topics of interest, see who is talking about them and what else they are talking about. If you find their comments of interest, you can "follow" them to get a feel for what goes on.

Keep an eye on the mentions your company or you individually may be receiving via Twitter. When you get notification that someone is "Following" you on Twitter, check out their profile and determine whether you want to follow them as well. You can turn these on and off at will, and can even block people from following you if you wish.

A Word of Caution

Especially on LinkedIn, be careful who you invite or accept into your network. LinkedIn is built upon a trusted network. You want to ensure that you only invite those you trust into your personal network, because they are likely to be leveraging you to get to others within your network.

Establishing a Company Profile

Whichever venues you choose to participate in, you should establish a company profile. For example, on Twitter, all of Presstek's tweets and our profile can be found at www.twitter.com/Presstek. There is a fair amount of flexibility in setting up the page, including the ability to prominently present your logo and company contact information. Individuals within your company can also set up their own accounts, but for strictly company-related information, it is best to use the company account.

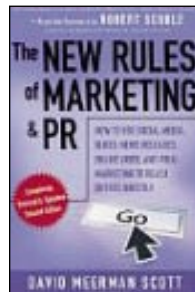
On LinkedIn, you can establish a company profile but accounts are for individuals. Search for Presstek under Companies, to see what your presence might end up looking like, including profiles for current and former employees, new employees that are in the LinkedIn network, and basic information about the company.

Facebook provides more flexibility for uploading photos and starting conversations. People can become a "Fan" of your company and follow postings that you make as well as add their own comments. It's a great place to feature customers, events and company news.

Follow Presstek on: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube



Top Three Must-Read Books on Marketing in the Age of Social Media



The New Rules of Marketing & PR

How to use Social Media, Blogs, News Releases, Online Video, and Viral Marketing to Reach Buyers Directly
David Meerman Scott



The New Community Rules

Marketing on the Social Web
Tamar Weinberg



Socialnomics

How social media transforms the way we live and do business
Erik Qualman

Do's and Don'ts

Do get started right away, even if it means setting up profiles and lurking for a while.

Do have a plan in place and assign responsibility to ensure that the plan is executed appropriately.

Do add value. Postings must be more than a sales or product pitch to keep people engaged.

Do ensure that you have guidelines in place that will protect your reputation.

Do include your various addresses (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube Channel, etc.) on all communications, including brochures, your web site, mailers, invoices, etc.

Don't build a presence and then fail to keep it current—at least one or two postings a week at a minimum!

