

Social Media 101

Twitter is a micro-blogging platform (140-280 characters) that allows you to link to content on the web, collect comments in real time, and reach a wide audience. Social media is a critical and dynamic part of today's communications ecology. World leaders, policymakers, organizations, government agencies, thought leaders from every field, and everyday people are using the multitude of social media platforms on a daily basis.

For professional endeavors, social media complements traditional media and should be an integral part of any strategic communications plan. However, not every platform is right for every organization or for every communications objective. Consider carefully which platform will best reach your intended audience and serve as the best vehicle for your message. Here's a quick overview of four major platforms and how they're best utilized:

Use Facebook to:	Use LinkedIn to:	Use YouTube to:	Use Twitter to:
<p>Connect with a broad audience, particularly consumers who may be interested in your issue.</p> <p>Post photos of staff, events, etc. to give followers a visual representation of your organization.</p> <p>Post comments on current activities, upcoming events, and other timely information.</p> <p>Link to current articles to demonstrate knowledge of the field and introduce your work to colleagues.</p> <p>Create or join groups of other professionals.</p> <p>Build a volunteer or fan base by tapping into the vast network of Facebook users.</p>	<p>Connect with other colleagues, peers, and thought leaders in your field.</p> <p>Create an easily accessible profile page.</p> <p>Raise awareness of your organization by sharing insights and ideas through discussions within various groups.</p> <p>Pose a question to a group and get instant feedback.</p>	<p>Create a channel for your organization to house videos.</p> <p>Post a video of a special event, conference to share with those who could not attend.</p> <p>Post a video of a training session you wish others to emulate.</p> <p>Share a link to your videos on other social networking sites.</p> <p>Broadcast training or events live.</p>	<p>Listen to & monitor your audience/the field via a custom newsfeed.</p> <p>Research topics & events.</p> <p>Build relationships with others in and around your field.</p> <p>Establish your thought leadership.</p>

Blogs: Creating a More Public Voice

Use blogs to:

- Create another outlet to communicate about your issue or your organization and share a distinctive point of view, news, or updates.
- Provide analysis and insights.
- Update your community about a recent event or ask for volunteers to participate in an upcoming event.
- Comment on other blogs to share your thoughts or opinion to gain exposure as a thought leader in your field.
- Include a blogroll (list of other blogs) on your own blog. These blogs may include your blog on theirs, and help attract new viewers.