



HOW SHOULD YOUR ORGANIZATION APPROACH SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social networks can be great platforms for getting your message out into the world, cultivating a supportive community, staying on top of breaking news and issues, and building a name for yourself. But maintaining an account takes time and energy, and if poorly maintained, it can work against you. That's why on the onset, you should keep a few things in mind:

- What **audience** are you trying to reach?
- What **outcomes** do you hope to achieve with social media?
- What type of **content** will you make?
- How do you want to be **perceived**?
- What is the **minimum commitment** you can make for maintaining your digital presence?

Once you've settled on these guiding questions, bring this minimal commitment into practice and build from there.

WHAT SOCIAL NETWORKS SHOULD YOU BE ON?

There is no answer that fits every group, which is why it's important to establish clear answers to the questions in the previous section. Considerations per-site include:

- Is our **audience** on this site?
- Does this platform's features or userbase help us to achieve the **outcomes** we want?
- Is this where our **audience** would look for this type of **content**?
- Will using (or not using) this site affect how our organization is **perceived**?
- Is this platform, or content it features, easy enough to use that we can consistently meet our **minimum commitment**?

Some platforms will clearly have the most users and influence, and make sense to prioritize if you're trying to bring attention to your cause. However if you're speaking to a more niche audience, supporting smaller platforms can help cut through the noise of bigger social media. If you find your organization needs to support several platforms, consider a social media management tool so that while efforts are focused on your primary platforms, you can still reach a wider audience. You can also look at statistics after some amount of use to see where people are responding, on which platforms, and at which times, to continue to align your work to enhance your impact.

Note: Using bad platforms for good.

As a digital rights advocate, you'll have strong opinions on the practices of a given social platform. For advocacy however, you might be stuck using these sites to reach the right people who are in that “[walled garden](#).” Rather than abandoning the audience, consider crossing this wall by committing to also supporting the same content on a more ethical alternative.

WHO SHOULD BE DOING SOCIAL MEDIA FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION?

The day-to-day practice should ideally be shared and delegated among multiple members of the team, but this can make your presence inconsistent. That is why it is a good idea to identify a single person to maintain accounts—not necessarily to create all of the content themselves, but to make sure it stays active and maintains a similar tone. An erratic or inactive social media presence can negatively reflect on your organization and undermine your advocacy efforts.

Regularly checking in on your group's work is another important role for the social media maintainer. Setting clear expectations for a shared voice, what gets posted, and when will help the group delegate the work. These reviews can look at site metrics (“views,” “shares,” etc) to determine what has the biggest impact and should be replicated. With practice, you'll be more prepared to implement an internal review process to catch any mistakes or off-message posts.

DEFAMATION, LIABILITY, AND CENSORSHIP

As your social media strategy takes shape, the people responsible for posting should be cautious about how what you say online can be used to censor your work or even land you in legal trouble.

On the more practical end, [DMCA](#) takedown requests on most platforms can be used to censor even lawful [fair use](#) of copyrighted works. Such takedowns can be used strategically by opposition, and are detrimental to your more time-sensitive work. While it is important to not be dissuaded from practicing this right, it is a strategic concern your social media team will need to prepare for.

Similarly, each platform has its own sets of rules and methods of moderation you need to familiarize yourself with. Even lawful content may result in deleted posts, shadowbans, and account deactivation.

More severely, content online that can be construed as defamatory may result in litigation. Clear satire and negative opinions are protected, but making even subtly untrue factual claims which damages the reputation of an individual or organization may be the foundation of a lawsuit. If you are making or repeating negative factual allegations against an individual or an entity, consider having a lawyer review your posts before you publish them.

If you are ever unfairly censored or threatened with legal liability for your work online, you can reach out to EFF for support at info@eff.org.

PREPARING FOR TROLLS AND CRITICISM

Similar to setting your [community guidelines](#), it is a good idea to put together a plan for how your organization will handle the most vile people you'll meet online. Discussing when you report or block users, and when you delete responses to your work, will eliminate some of the ambiguity and hesitation if you ever face a wave of negative responses. Be mindful about who is managing negative comments. Often having comments read by someone other than the author is a good idea, as is trading off comment moderation duty among members when applicable.

If your work is stirring a major negative reaction, the best thing to do is not post. It can feel urgent, but such attention is often short lived, and at the very least you will have time to calm down and craft a measured response if necessary.

7 TIPS FOR BETTER MICROBLOGGING (“TWEETS”)

While X, formerly Twitter, had been a crucial tool for online advocacy, there are now many competing micro-blogging sites available—such as Bluesky and Mastodon—often drawing different audiences. Fortunately this advice applies to most of these sites, and with minimal editing for site-specific conventions, the same posts can be shared across multiple services. Even for very different sites, much of this advice still applies.

1. Handles and hashtags

Important: Be careful about conventions around "@" mentions. Sites will often interpret a post starting with a mention as a less public direct message, so it is best to use handles after another character, often a period.

Example: Viewable to all of your followers and the general public.

.@EFF on the new Indiana digital locks legislation [link]

Generally using "@" to direct tweets at a particular user can be useful to get the attention of a particular company or elected official, and make sure they see your message. Tagging allies can also encourage them to amplify or respond to the message.

Conversely, certain "@" mentions or hashtags may draw unwanted attention or harassment, so when discussing sensitive issues it is a good idea to check posts using these for bad behavior.

Hashtags can similarly draw more attention from a wider audience but, conversely, hashtags you establish can be difficult to gain traction. Using a hashtag that no one else does can make your movement appear smaller than it actually is.

2. Support allies

Finding groups doing similar work to yours, and lifting up their work, doesn't only further the cause but builds a network of support on the site. You have a few options to consider:

- **“Retweet,” or repost and share without comment:** This is the easiest and fastest way to share others' work. Even if you have a similar audience, it is likely to help further the reach since it will be lifted to the top of people's feeds. For sites driven by algorithmic curation, this also signals to the site to share the post with even more people. This is also a great way to show appreciation for positive comments on your work.
- **“Quote tweet,” or share with comment:** If an ally's message needs some additional context, or you want to qualify why you're sharing it, sharing with a comment will make sure you are showing support while sticking with the standards you set for yourself. It is also a great way to signal to your followers that they too should consider sharing and supporting the work being lifted.
- **New message:** Sometimes you'll want to promote an ally who does not have a post suitable for sharing on your feed. In those cases writing a new post tagging them directly (see above) or using a relevant hashtag can help. If you can, also link to their website or a relevant article so your audience knows where to find more.

3. Use threads to keep messages relevant

By replying to yourself and threading messages together, you can say a lot more and keep older posts relevant for longer. This can look like a timeline of events when they happen, a collection of similar stories, or one longer message which has multiple shots at gaining traction.

4. Take on an easily recognizable username

It can be issue-specific, or it can be named after your organization. Shorter and simpler is often better because, given character limits, it makes it easier for people to quote or mention you. Finally, see how the name sounds out loud so that it can easily be shared verbally.

5. Be timely

Respond to news around your work as it happens, and when possible be the first ones to break stories.

6. Prioritize visuals

Social media has shifted to prioritizing videos and graphics over plain text. Taking the extra time to find an appropriate photo or video record your message can help cut through the noise and reach a broader audience. Many sites will also provide a preview-image when sharing a URL, which has the added benefit of sharing more information on your work.

7. Be passionate and eloquent

Good tweets will reflect an opinion so that the audience not only understands an issue, but also understands your opinion on the topic. To that end, posts should not just look like a jumble of acronyms and hashtags. It is fine to say less if you can say it with eloquence.

6 TIPS FOR BETTER FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT

1. Choose a name that fits Facebook search.

Example:

Imagine your official group name is "Students for Digital Rights and the Public Domain" but everyone on campus calls you "DigiPub."

It doesn't make sense for your Facebook page to be "Students for Digital Rights and the Public Domain." Instead, consider choosing "DigiPub" or (perhaps better) "DigiPub: Students for Digital Rights and the Public Domain."

Note that it may be challenging to change a username for an organization on Facebook.

2. Be timely

The best way to have your Facebook post spread is to be the first to break the news to the public. If you can't be the first, offering your perspective or analysis to an event early can also help spread your message.

3. Post pictures and graphs

Followers are drawn to posts if there is media attached to it, so post lots of photos alongside text. When possible, include "Alt text" so that low-vision users can understand what the images are that you share, as well.

4. Positive framing

Try to put a positive spin on posts to make them more easily "Liked." For example, if you had a major loss in your campaign, explain your loss and then your commitment to continuing to fight or how your followers can take action.

5. Prompt a discussion

Facebook posts create a space for conversation, so ending the message in your post with a question is an effective way to spark engagement. Continue to engage when a discussion starts to most effectively keep up the momentum.

6. Use links

Facebook sometimes prioritizes posts that link out to respected sites. You may gain additional traction if you include (relevant) links to build from when you post to the site.

6 TIPS FOR SHORT VIDEOS

Social media has shifted considerably from text to short form video on platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. While each platform has its own algorithmic quirks, here are some tips for getting started on short form video.

1. Consistency

Short form video platforms rely on algorithmic curation more than their text equivalents. While videos are often more difficult to produce, finding a format you can do consistently is key to growing an audience.

2. Start with a bang

Viewers will make a snap judgment about whether they want to watch your video within the first second of watching it. Starting with a shocking statement, interesting question, or gripping visual will get viewers invested in the rest of the video.

3. Keep it short

Scrollers don't expect videos to be more than a few minutes, and having people complete or even loop the video will encourage the algorithm to share it. Edit out any long pauses or lulls, even at the very end of the video.

4. Keep it simple

Short form video often rewards more simple and genuine videos. Someone speaking passionately to the camera can often do better than a more scripted and highly produced piece, and the latter takes a lot more time and effort.

5. More is more

While a video about a major campaign milestone or announcement are clear video topics, think about how you can keep your work relevant with more frequent and smaller updates. Jumping on a trend, reacting to news, or responding to a comment are all potential ways to keep your presence on the site. Making it a habit to record more in general, like a visit to city council, will give you more footage to work with later.

6. Recycle where you can

Videos are more work than their text equivalent, so whenever you make a video elsewhere think about how you can adapt it for the platform. For example if you live-streamed an event or appeared on a local news program, cut together some of the best clips to upload as a post or series of posts.