

# from uh-oh to 2.0:

a beginner's guide  
to social media



part two of a two-part guide



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The**Bridge**Group

# best foot forward



Welcome to part two of our beginner's guide to social media. This looks at six of the most popular social networks in the UK, and how you can use these tools as part of your overall marketing and communications strategy.

On the journey, we'll take a look at other organisations' experiences and lessons learned, so hopefully you won't have to learn the hard way.

If you've just wandered in here needing a basic understanding of the subject, you might like to head over to [part one](#) first. That will give you an idea of what you're letting yourself in for, and some questions to ask yourself before you dive in.

But that's just our advice, if you'd rather ignore it then keep calm and carry on...

## Stats life

Let's take a look at some of the UK's most prominent social media sites, and how people are spending their time on line these days.

### Leading UK Sectors by April 2010 Share of Total UK Internet Time

Rank	Sector	April 2010 Share of Time	April 2007 Share of Time	Relative Change
1	Social networks/blogs	22.7%	8.8%	159%
2	E-mail	7.2%	6.5%	11%
3	Games	6.9%	5.9%	15%
4	Instant messaging	4.9%	14.2%	-66%
5	Classifieds/auctions	4.7%	5.0%	-6%
6	Portals	4.0%	3.7%	10%
7	Search	4.0%	4.1%	-3%
8	Software info/products	3.4%	5.3%	-36%
9	News	2.8%	1.5%	84%
-	Other	36.8%	42.2%	-13%

Source: UKOM

## best foot forward continued...



As you can see, social networking has massively increased over the last three years, to the detriment of other sectors. So it's important to think about how you can get a share of this action, when serving as the public face of your business or organisation.

But what about the specific social networking sites, are there any particular variances to report? Oh, yes...as Comscore's May 2009 report shows, Facebook, Twitter and Windows Live have zoomed upwards, whilst MySpace and Bebo usage has significantly decreased.

The message is clear - social networking is becoming a very popular online activity among all age groups. And a [report produced by Comscore](#) in 2009 found that it's particularly high for the 25-34 and 15-24 age groups; so if you're targeting people in these segments it makes sense to include social media in your marketing strategy.

### Top 10 social networking sites ranked by Total UK Unique visitors (000)\* May 2009 vs May 2008 Total UK, age 15+ home and work locations Source: Comscore World Metrix

Property	May 2008	May 2009	% change
Total UK internet audience	34,489	36,855	7
Social networking	27,118	29,444	9
Facebook.com	15,195	23,860	57
Bebo	11,895	8,546	-28
Windows Live profile	N/A	6,891	N/A
MySpace Sites	8,335	6,531	-22
Twitter.com	80	2,670	3,226
Digg.com	1,311	1,759	34
Friends Reunited Group	3,271	1,625	-50
Tagged.com	669	1,625	143
Deviantart.com	900	1,1453	61
Buzznet	939	1,370	46

# get tooled up



So how can you use some of the most popular tools and services to connect with people? The following pages are intended to give you some ideas, and things to watch out for.

Before you start - if your organisation hasn't got a watertight policy on use of social media, you really need to ask yourself the following questions first. Otherwise you could get caught up in all sorts of situations. If the worst happens you can always [contact us](#) to commission support, but we'd rather you didn't have a crisis in the first place!

## Question time

Some things you need to consider before you get knee-deep in social media...

- Why are we using social media?
- What are our specific objectives?
- Are there any technical issues that will prevent our objectives?
- Who will represent our business?
- How skilled is our team at using the different channels?
- How do we want to engage our target audiences?
- What are the risks for our business?
- What guidance or training have we issued to all staff on social media use?
- How will we deal with staff transgressions where these affect brand reputation?
- How far can we contain or manage the risks?
- How will we link social media into our overall communications plan?
- What measures will show us how well we're doing?

# introducing the rules



There are some basic rules that we'd recommend you follow, to keep you as safe as possible online and manage some of the risks involved in general social media use. If you know all of these already, please accept our apologies for stating the obvious, but you probably don't need this guide anyway!

- Wherever you use social media, look for ways of linking content back to your website or team - give people calls to action that they can follow-up
- Be clear what tone of voice is appropriate for your brand, especially if you have a range of people representing you online
- Wherever possible, use social media to engage people in ways that will interest them, rather than trying to use it purely as a PR mechanism
- If actively using social media, expect to put a significant amount of time into it; posting once a month won't cut the mustard
- Think of social media as a customer service extension - you need to be ultra-responsive if anyone issues a grievance or complaint online as things move much more quickly online
- Posts are like weddings - once you've committed, it's for better or worse (and hopefully richer rather than poorer) - so deleting a few weeks later rarely works. If you've sinned on social media, chances are people will have the video, photos or screen grab to prove it, often minutes after the event
- At the risk of stating the obvious - if you're putting out a press release, make sure your social media timing is aligned with traditional PR. Pressing the send button too early could leave you without that hot exclusive, or having been published online before your missive hits general newsdesks
- Never try to control online discussions - social media has a life of its own, so don't ever kid yourself that you can control what happens on your page or profile
- If you get negative comments from third parties, don't get involved in a 'flame war'; stay positive and get your tactics sorted. [Mashable's guide on how to deal with negative feedback in social media](#) provides some useful tips to handle this
- Not participating in social media doesn't mean people aren't talking about you! So even if you're not directly engaging people, set up online alerts for your company name and keywords (Google Alerts as a basic, HootSuite or TweetDeck searches if you use them and Technorati if you have a blog)
- If your workplace prevents access to social media (or restricts access during working hours), don't presume employees are offline; mobiles are quick and easy to use. Be clear with them what is, and isn't acceptable behaviour on social media sites and in what circumstances you may intervene (for example, if someone berates a customer or your organisation online)

## introducing the rules **continued...**



- Provide training or advice to employees on social media privacy settings, so they avoid some social media no-nos; for example, **don't advertise your holiday online, don't criticise your employer on Facebook**, and so on...

Additionally we've outlined some extra rules and tips for different social media in the following pages, to help you make the most of the channels you use.

# Facebook



## Background:

- Founded 2004
- More than 500 million active users (Facebook, July 2010)
- The UK's number one social networking site (Hitwise, July 2010)
- The average user has around 130 friends on the site

## Use it to:

- Share thoughts, ideas, images, sound and video clips
- Share information in groups - new campaigns, common interest items, trends and events
- Publish topics that will interest your target audiences, rather than promote business (think engagement, not PR)
- Develop activities that people can do online - interactive games and quizzes are a good example

## Facebook rules:

- Set up a fan page, not a profile or group. Profiles are for individuals; pages are for businesses - you don't want to risk getting lots of friends and then being shut down on a technicality; and groups tend to work better for short-term dialogue
- If using a personal profile to set up business pages, consider whether it's appropriate for personal and professional contacts to have direct access to each other
- Whenever someone leaves a comment on your page, respond to it as quickly as you can - be ready with a message of thanks, an answer or encouraging comment
- If you've got team members who post 'interesting' content or belong to groups that conflict with your business values, don't encourage them to 'like' or comment on any pages you set up
- Encourage team members with profiles to review their privacy settings and posting groups - unless they and you are happy for strangers to see information about things like marital status, child's nicknames, holiday indulgences and online interests such as Farmville, political groups and the like
- Use Facebook Markup Language (FBML) to create a tailored welcome page, so you can control what people see when they arrive rather than them going direct to your wall
- Use the integrated events tool to tell people about forthcoming meet-ups, explain how they can book a place online and link to post-event content
- If you have a blog, set it to automatically feed to your Facebook page
- Search the list of groups and companies to identify and make connections which match your business objectives and key audiences

# Facebook continued...



- If appropriate for your business, consider targeted advertising (for example, within a particular radius of your head office or to people of a certain age or gender)

## That's the way to do it:

- Coventry City Council
- IKEA 'showroom'
- Red Bull
- Charity Water

## Lessons to learn from others:

- Teenage office worker sacked for moaning on Facebook about her 'totally boring' job
- Housing officer in Facebook 'Scouse' slur
- Greenpeace UK vs Nestle - Give the orang-utan a break
- Facebook and Twitter users 'could be targeted by burglars'

# Twitter



## Background:

- Founded 2006
- More than 100 million (Twitter, July 2010)
- The UK's third most popular social networking site and number two overall website (Hitwise, July 2010)
- Average person has 126 followers (The Guardian, June 2009)

## Use it to:

- Post and share breaking news stories
- Connect with, and keep track of, individuals who share common interests
- Share ideas, images, sound and video content
- Build 'buzz' about new product or campaign launches

## Twitter rules:

- Make sure your profile reflects your brand, rather than leaving a default background and avatar (profile picture)
- Be clear about who you will follow (or not) - if you're looking to engage people with specific interests, give people a flavour of what you're about; and follow people that you know and/or find interesting in your areas of interest - don't wait for them to follow you first
- Think twice before protecting your profile - on Twitter, it suggests you're not open to engaging people
- Only block people as a last resort - for example, if they are tweeting dubious content, or seem to be spamming people
- Thank people who follow you but avoid automated messages unless there really is no option; it makes your brand feel less personal
- Don't follow generic shortened links unless you trust the source or recommendation
- Focus on your objectives and tweet original, appropriate content - ideally giving ideas, information or contacts that other people will find useful, or posting links to offers, applications or grant opportunities
- Be generous in answering questions, retweeting items that interest you and/or finding ways to help people
- If you've got any skeletons in the closet or difficult PR coming up, be cautious about launching a campaign that could be hijacked
- Monitor what people say about you - and respond to it quickly and professionally
- If you're short on time, batch-create and schedule tweets using tools like [HootSuite](#) or [TweetDeck](#)

# Twitter continued...



## That's the way to do it:

- Dell
- @amnestyuk vs @shelldotcom
- @Oxfamgb
- Whole Foods

## Lessons to learn from others:

- How BP failed social media 101
- How not to be a key online influencer
- How not to use Twitter, by Rentokil
- Artist sparks Twitter campaign against Paperchase over disputed design

# YouTube



## Background:

- Founded 2005, bought by Google in 2006
- More than 100 million users a month (cleancutmedia.com, February 2010)
- UK number two social networking site and number four overall website (Hitwise, July 2010)

## Use it to:

- Upload and share video clips for free
- Build 'buzz' for good causes
- Show specialist expertise in your line of work, through 'how to' videos and stories

## YouTube rules:

- Create your own channel and brand it so people can recognise your business
- Keep content brief - up to three minutes works, 10 doesn't
- Be clear who your target audience is and what you want them to do - be shocked into action? Laugh and post content to their friends? Or something else?

- Make your video interesting, funny or emotive - focus on offering something of use rather than trying to deliver a slick corporate DVD
- Be clear about your story and messages for any content you intend to upload
- If using presenters, make sure they're engaging and easy to understand; don't overload people with technical content
- Use the best camera and microphone you can get your hands on and at the very least, test the quality of your content before you upload it
- Decide whether you're going to accept feedback or not
- Set parameters for what is and isn't acceptable upfront but try not to police too heavily (or you may get flak)
- If you're allowing feedback, keep an eye on and respond to comments -and remove undesirable posts

- Give your videos titles, tags and descriptions so people can find your content online more easily
- Upload information fairly regularly, rather than in bulk
- Use embedded YouTube links on your website

## That's the way to do it:

- [Will it blend? - the iPad](#)
- [Pathways to housing](#)
- [Investing money in plain English](#)
- [Another night wasted](#)

## Lessons to learn from others:

- [United breaks guitars](#)
- [Domino's president responds to prank video](#)
- [Goldman's growing PR problem](#)
- [Is the HMRC tax video the most boring on YouTube?](#)

# LinkedIn



## Background:

- Founded 2003
- More than 70 million users, including one million company profiles (TechCrunch, June 2010); around four million UK users

## Use it to:

- Hook up with people you know, or want to know
- Increase your professional contacts through associates
- Share information with fellow industry professionals
- Get business referrals or endorsements
- Position yourself as an expert in particular niche areas
- Identify potential job opportunities

## LinkedIn rules:

- Make your profile as comprehensive as possible - it's your online CV, will feature highly on Google PageRank and future connections may depend on it, so go impress!
- Make sure you refer to any key specialisms, professional memberships or networks you belong to
- Use keywords as much as possible; they will help people find you through searches
- Link to your other channels (for example, a blog, your Twitter profile or SlideShare presentations) using in-site applications
- Use a good photograph of yourself, rather than an abstract avatar
- Import your email contacts or use the site search facility to look for people you already know and invite them to connect; avoid targeting distant acquaintances or new people as if they say they don't know you, it will count against you
- If someone doesn't accept your request to connect, forget about it or at least leave it a few months before following up
- Invite people you know well who aren't on LinkedIn to join and build your (and their) network, if you feel the medium will suit them and they're likely to respond
- Ask your strongest contacts for recommendations, if it feels comfortable
- Introduce contacts to each other where there is an obvious benefit
- Join industry groups where you can contribute ideas and expertise, and build potential connections
- Increase your visibility by starting new posts in groups where you want advice or input, or can offer ideas or experience from news stories
- Add value to groups where your skills and experience will benefit others, either by giving them useful guidance or helping them to avoid mistakes - but not overtly advertising your business

# LinkedIn continued...



- Create a company profile which conveys your core business messages, and encourage colleagues to link to it
- If running conferences or networks, add them through the searchable LinkedIn events feature

## That's the way to do it:

- Guy Kawasaki
- Su Butcher
- Chris Brogan - write your LinkedIn profile for your future

## Lessons to learn from others:

- How to change the world: LinkedIn profile extreme makeover, Guy Kawasaki
- Never hire job hoppers. Never. They make terrible employees
- Extreme LinkedIn profile makeover - Fernando Aramburu

# Flickr



- Founded 2004, bought by Yahoo! in 2005
- More than four billion images uploaded
- UK number nine entertainment website (Hitwise, July 2010)

## Use it to:

- Highlight issues or campaigns through film and photography
- Encourage people to campaign about an issue through creativity
- Showcase artistic or creative achievements
- Show stunning buildings, landscapes or places that you use for business
- Capture and comment on events and special occasions

## Flickr rules:

- Create your profile with a Yahoo! account - if you're going to use Flickr seriously open a Pro account (a small annual fee gives you unlimited photo and video uploads, storage and collections and HD video playback)

- Whilst you can upload from email, phone, web or a desktop app, the Web Uploader feature is probably your best bet if this is all new
- If you want to be taken seriously, take and upload content that will inspire, interest or shock people - the whole point of Flickr is to create 'interestingness' so 500 pictures of big groups or a video of an open-plan office is unlikely to get you views or feedback
- Make sure that all your shots of people (even incidental subjects) have model release forms - the last thing you need is accusations of infringing someone's privacy, and photographing children or vulnerable people is a minefield
- Upload your shots and get organising; you need to sort shots into sets of a subject (for example, Birmingham). If you've got a Pro account, you can sort your sets into collections - it becomes like a folder structure

- Make sure you give all your content 'tags' (labels) - it will make them easier for people to find; these might typically include your organisation name, where content was taken, what equipment you used, the theme, name of the collection or set and other words that people might associate with the image/video
- If there are particular elements of any images that you want to highlight to key audiences, use the 'add notes' feature to create a box on the picture and include some text
- Use Flickr's embed feature to post slideshows on your website or blog
- If you use collections, use the collection mosaic feature on your website to show off your most compelling images
- You can connect with people you know, or whose work you admire - by inviting them to become a contact on the site; then you'll get automatic updates of their work and be able to see what they're doing

# Flickr continued...



- Join Flickr groups that your content feels relevant to - there are loads of different groups out there covering everything from illustration, to insects, to invasions (at the time of writing there were 476 groups on invasions alone!)
- Create interactive campaigns - upload images and a story, then ask people to upload their own content/make comments on the theme - encourage people to be inspired

## That's the way to do it:

- [4am project](#)
- [Luce Foundation Center for American Art](#)
- [RSPB Love Nature](#)
- [Shelter Housebling](#)

## Lessons to learn from others:

- [London dot gov, Flickr and the trouble with crowds](#)
- [BBC uses copyright image from Flickr for News 24](#)
- [FlickrMail - mea culpa, it will never happen again](#)

# Ning



- Founded 2003, bought by News Corporation in 2005
- 45 million registered users and more than 2.3 million networks
- Started charging for network setup from 2010 (from \$19.95 a year) and alternatives like SocialGo which still offer a free service may become more popular

## Use it to:

- Share thoughts, ideas, images, sound and video clips with a niche audience
- Share information in groups - new campaigns, common interest items, trends and events
- Encourage prompted and unprompted forum discussions
- Create your own private social network
- Generate in-site blogs

## Ning rules:

- Create a network - you can decide from the outset whether to make it publicly visible or private (by invitation only)
- Describe the network, by saying what it's about and who it's aimed at
- Make sure you add keywords to public networks - it will make them easier for people to find; these might typically include your organisation name, location(s) if relevant, and words people would type into a search box to find your content
- Choose a colour and theme from your network which is as close as possible to your brand - if you've got technical expertise or professional design support, create your own branded masthead
- Drag-and-drop items from the list of features (for example, events, blogs and photos) to get the look you want
- Once the network is as you want it, get inviting people - you can either import contacts from an address book or type their email addresses in manually. Invite people you know to begin with as they will help you to get things off to a flying start and you won't have to worry about surprises
- Explain to the first members what you're trying to achieve and how they can help you, this will set the standard for later members to join up and find their feet
- Welcome everyone who joins the network so they feel positive about their experience of your brand/campaign
- For public networks, make it as easy as possible to sign up - don't make people plough through providing information you don't need
- If feasible for your business, offer incentives to get people to join (or invite other people they know)

# Ning continued...



- Set parameters for acceptable behaviour on the network from day one, just keep it down-to-earth and have intervention as a last resort

Make sure that you're on the network fairly frequently, to support its development, answer questions and encourage participation

After an initial settling-in period, consider if moderation is needed for your network. Will you allow members to create events? Do you want to authorise blog posts before they appear? Will it be acceptable for members to adjust their page themes and layouts?

There needs to be a balance between protecting the network objectives and giving users enough ownership to buy into what you're doing

## **That's the way to do it:**

- [Hanover World](#)
- [The Expedition Republic](#)
- [My social actions](#)

## **Lessons to learn from others:**

- [Cyberstalker using my name and alias](#)
- [Regulars versus noobies](#)
- [Anonymous anger rampant on internet](#)

# putting it all together



## What you want to do

## Ways you could do this

## Ideas to measure it

## Channels you could use

Raise brand awareness

- Brand your social media content clearly
- Link lots of content back to your website/blog
- Make an effort to interact
- Publish interesting content
- Reply to queries quickly

- Extra traffic to your website or blog (new/repeat visitors)
- Time spent on site
- Number of direct links to key/referred pages
- 'Buzz' monitoring through alerts/mentions
- Extra followers/friends

**Blog** - post original content  
**Twitter** - linking back to blog  
**Facebook** - encourage group interaction and individual feedback on page  
**YouTube** - use branded channel and videos  
**Flickr** - post images, tags and comments  
**Ning** - use branded masthead and intervene with advice/moderation

Position yourself as an expert

- Be clear what others can learn from you
- Share information
- Give content away
- Chat with other experts

- New visitors to your site
- Number of replies
- Number of downloads
- Comments on your blog
- Reviews of content on other blogs
- 'Buzz' monitoring
- Extra followers/friends

**Blog** - post specialist content on your blog and comment on others  
**Twitter** - link back to blog/website  
**Facebook** - ask questions and build dialogue  
**LinkedIn** - connect with other experts in field and post to specialist groups  
**YouTube** - post 'how to' videos and case studies  
**Flickr** - post cool photos from events or technical achievements

# putting it all together



What you want to do	Ways you could do this	Ideas to measure it	Channels you could use
Highlight great customer service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Encourage pro-active customer feedback</li><li>■ Make an effort to interact with people</li><li>■ Respond quickly to queries or complaints</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Extra followers/friends</li><li>■ Number of replies</li><li>■ 'Buzz' monitoring</li><li>■ Comments, ratings and service endorsements</li></ul>	<p><b>Blog</b> - relate stories/feedback and actions taken</p> <p><b>Twitter/Facebook</b> - reply to comments online, encourage input and thank people when they interact</p>
Streamline operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Encourage queries and respond through social media, rather than callbacks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Number of queries</li><li>■ Number of replies</li><li>■ Number of mentions</li><li>■ Extra followers/friends</li><li>■ Offline reductions in call numbers/costs</li></ul>	<p><b>Twitter and Facebook</b> - give direct contact links and reply quickly to any enquiries; also retweet any compliments and add a message of thanks</p> <p><b>Ning</b> - include forum for handling particular types of enquiry</p>



# mark my words

If you want to boost your marketing or communications, we can help. The Bridge Group offers the following services:

- Website development
- Email marketing

- New media presentations
- Social media strategy.

For more information on these services, please contact The Bridge Group on 024 7656 0440. Or you can e-mail us at [marketing@bridge-group.co.uk](mailto:marketing@bridge-group.co.uk)

Concept House, 9 Orchard Court,  
Binley Business Park, Coventry CV3 2TQ

t: 024 7656 0440 f: 024 7656 0441

[www.bridge-group.co.uk](http://www.bridge-group.co.uk)



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