



Social Websites and Collaborative Tools - (A handy crib sheet)

'**Social media**' is the term commonly given to websites and online tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests. Social media involves building communities or networks, encouraging participation and engagement. It is sometimes also **Web 2.0, New Media** or referred to as **Social Networking**. Collaboration and participation is positively encouraged - unlike older websites where content was shown on static pages with no ability to interact.

As an organisation it's important not to rush into the use of particular social media tool or website just because others are, but to consider how its use complements your message and existing ways of working and communicating. Once this is clear each tool should be considered for its suitability. Many of the tools can be linked together and importantly link back to your main website, so whatever type of networking people prefer, they find you!

The tools are grouped into ten broad categories, summarised below; words in **BOLD** are example tools, search online to find out more. Most are **FREE** or have free versions.

1. Audio Sharing. A **podcast** is a news feed with a media sound file attached that can be picked up by a feed reader for listening on a PC, MP3 player or iPod at your convenience. Specialist recording equipment or a mobile phone can be used to record and then upload to websites such as **Audioboo** or **Odeo**. Editing can take place using free **Audacity** software. Using **Ipadio** to record a podcast from a mobile phone also produces a transcription.

2. Blog (weB log). Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject, cause or issue; others function as personal online diaries with entries displayed in reverse chronological order. A typical blog includes images, and links to other blogs and media. Popular blogging tools include **Wordpress, Blogger** and **Weebly. Tumblr** or **Posterous** generate a blog from short media snippets. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-blogging>)

3. Video Sharing. Websites such as **YouTube, Vimeo** or **BlipTV**. Upload and share videos from a digital camera or mobile phone. They can be included on your own website and **tagged** for sharing and searching by visitors. Conversations develop from comments about video content or message. **Livestream, Ustream, Qik** or **Twitcasting** can be used to create a live video stream from an event (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-Video>)

4. Microblogging (Twitter). A social networking service where users to send up to 140 character "updates" to followers. It is ideal for keeping in touch with networks of like-minded people, feeding information from events, canvassing a peer group about a topic or just having conversations. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/Twitter-for-support-orgs>)

5. RSS and Feed readers. RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is just a technical way content is formatted ready for a **feed reader** or **news feed** program (such as **Google Reader**) to pick-up and deliver to your reader, your browser favourites or as an email in your inbox. Feeds are delivered automatically to be picked up and read at leisure without you having to visit each website individually. **RSS** feeds are often denoted on websites with an orange RSS symbol. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/RSS-Support-orgs>).

To be instantly notified by e-mail when your organisation or a particular keyword is mentioned you can set up a **Google Alert**. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-alerts>)



6. Photo Sharing (Flickr). An online photo storage website which also includes tagging and commenting so photos taken by many people but **tagged** with the same terms can be viewed in a single pool. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-flickr>). Also see **Google Picasa**.

7. Social Networking. Websites such as **Facebook**, **Google+**, **LinkedIn** or **MySpace**. These community websites link people who share interests and activities or who like to explore the interests and activities of others. They provide various ways for users to interact, such as chat, messaging, email, photos, video, file sharing, discussion groups, blogging and more. **Bebo** and **Friendster** are similar appealing to a younger audience.

Using **Ning**, **Grou.ps**, **Wackwall** or **SocialGo** you can create your own social network, but check as there are charges to use all features and some premium content.

Social networking can also be based on the GPS position of a mobile device. Rewards are given for frequent visits on sites such as **Foursquare**, **Gowalla** or **Facebook Places**.

8. Social Bookmarking. Websites such as **Del.icio.us**, **Diigo** or **Digg**. These are a way to access bookmarks you save or that others have **tagged** and saved about a subject that interests you. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-bookmarking>)

When content is **tagged** (which can be with a **hashtag** in Twitter, or by **keywords** in other social networking sites) it makes searching and aggregating content much simpler. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-tagging>) **Bit.ly** is used to shorten long web links and allows you to see how often a link has been clicked. **QR (Quick Response)** bar codes on posters and fliers can be scanned with a smartphone giving direct access to a website.

9. Social Collaboration and Productivity Tools. Software such as **Huddle** or **Yammer** enable a dispersed group of people to work collaboratively towards shared aims. Work on documents or presentations can also be done on **Google Docs** or **DropBox**, all being instantly notified of changes. **Toms Planner** is useful for planning activities and producing Gantt charts and **Mailchimp** is a powerful email newsletter and marketing website.

Events and meeting administration are easy to organise using **Doodle** to plan a time and **Eventbrite** to manage bookings and handle ticketing or **Lanyrd** geared around Twitter. Use **CoverItLive** for live streaming and interaction and **ScreenR** or **Jing** to produce webcasts, a great way to share short screen based video tutorials or event speeches.

Other applications enable you to share in discussions and meetings on-line (**WebEx** or **Tokbox**), hold audio or video conferences (**Skype** or **ooVoo**), share slide presentations (**Slideshare**) or share printed format documents (**Scribd**, **Issuu** or **myebook**).

10. Wiki. Websites such as **Wikispaces**, **Wikidot** or **Wetpaint** allow users to easily create, edit, and link pages together. **Twiki** can be used to build collaborative community websites or allow a dispersed group to work collaboratively on building documents. Perhaps the most popular example is **Wikipedia**. (More Info: <http://bit.ly/One-page-wiki>)

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