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RAISING WOMEN'S VOICES: AN ONLINE GUIDE FOR CAMPAIGNING FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

Campaigning for women's rights in a digital age



WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media can be used in so many ways, and can seem a bit daunting in the beginning. It's important to clarify WHY you want to use it, because this will inform HOW you use it.

- build a relationship with your supporters
- fundraise
- influence conversations
- communicate key messages
- raise awareness
- respond to views and news
- monitor opinion
- influence decision makers

SOME STATS:



: 850 million users



: 500 million users



: 90 million users



: 55 million sites



: 1 hour of video uploaded every second



: 46.2 million blogs

THINGS TO CONSIDER

It's best to start by considering how you already use social media and for what purpose, who you want to reach and with what kind of message. Maybe you haven't thought yet about your purpose. Now would be a good time to start.

Platforms

What platforms do you use?

A platform refers to a specific social networking site; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google+ are all referred to as platforms.

It is helpful to narrow down what you want to use each platform for i.e. what are you trying to achieve, be it; fundraising, awareness raising, responding to news and views, leveraging support, or influencing decision makers.

We will cover the potential purposes of different platforms later (pages 5-8).

Audience

Furthermore it's important to know who you want to reach. Who you want to reach is your audience. It could be that you want to use Facebook to connect with service users and start conversations with them, while Twitter serves the purpose of responding to the views of decision makers and trying to raise their awareness. In these two instances you have different audiences, different messages and different purposes.

Message

It is important to analyse your own organisation and what message your organisation wants to convey. These will become tailored, depending upon the audience and different outcomes. However, the core of your message should remain the same.

Content

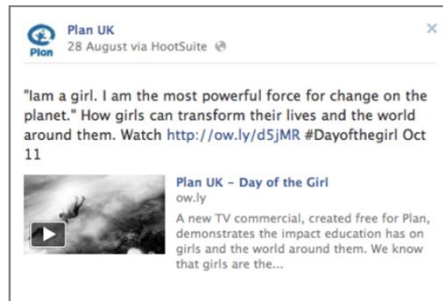
The type of messages you want to convey and who your audience is will define the type of content you post – which we will also come onto later (page 4).

- What platforms do you use?
- Who is your audience?
- For what purpose? What are you trying to achieve?
- What messages is your organisation trying to convey?
- What content do you use to convey those messages?

In answering these questions and clearly documenting them, you are creating a strategy, which you can continually return to for clarity when using social media. It forms the basis for your social media strategy.

CONTENT

Have a clear message



You have established the main messages that your organisation wants to convey. Make sure that in every post/tweet/ YouTube video etc. your message is clear. Don't forget that the way in which this message is conveyed may change depending on the audience you're trying to reach.

Below are some general guidelines to posting content:

Link the message to your cause or organisation

It is important that you not only convey your message but that you let your audience know how your organisation itself is involved. This will make the clear link between that message and your organisation, raising your profile. For example, 'find out how we're helping refugees from Syria' makes a very clear link between issue and organisation for the World Food Program (below)



Use a call to action

You have defined your organisation's purpose for using social media. With this knowledge each post/tweet/ YouTube video etc. can have a call to action to help you achieve that purpose. Whether you are asking people to share information so you can raise awareness, or you are asking for donations, it is important to be clear in what you want your audience to do with the information you are giving them.



Consider the 'user journey'

You know how it is, you're searching for something on the internet and you see a link which tells you it's exactly what you're looking for. So, you click, only to find that it's not what it said it was. On that basis, you leave the website in frustration. It's exactly the same for your audience, if they have to look too hard to find the information they need, they'll get irritated. Make sure that you make it easy for them to complete your call to action. The more they have to search around, the more likely you are to lose them.

Your aim should be to direct people to your organisation's website so make sure that every social media platform is consistently providing a clear link to the website.

TWITTER: YOUR NEWS FEED

Twitter is like an aggregate source of everything happening on the web – including news and opinion. Unlike Facebook and YouTube, evidence shows that people using Twitter don't seem to mind many posts per day, i.e. it's okay to tweet as often as you like. On this basis, you could use it as the mouthpiece – or newsfeed of your organisation.

Due to the open nature of Twitter, it is possible to interact with politicians, other decision makers and media representatives.

YOU CAN USE IT AS THE MOUTH
PIECE OF YOUR
ORGANISATION...IT'S OKAY TO
TWEET AS OFTEN AS YOU LIKE

Thus, it can be used to target high profile individuals who you might want to engage with and influence.

You should start by following relevant individuals and promoting and engaging with them by re-tweeting them, where their content is consistent with your messaging. To discover other users with similar interests, and to help introduce yourself to other users, you could click on relevant hashtags and you could also explore user directories.

To make Twitter easier to use, you could try using Tweetdeck – it gives you flexibility in customising who you follow and the topics you're interested in.

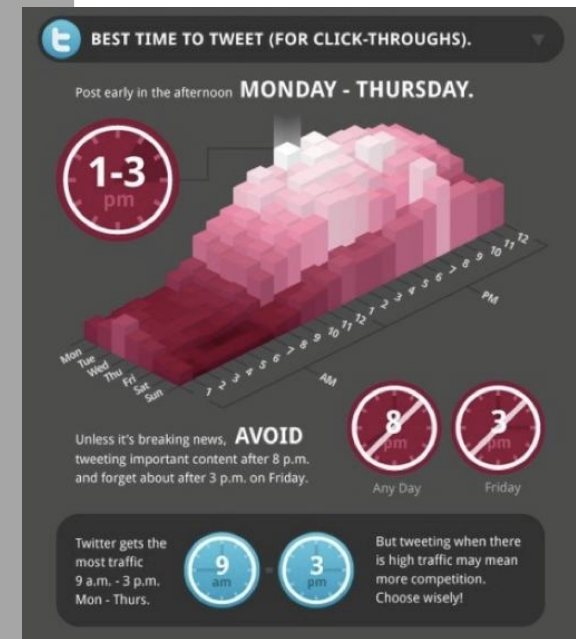
Don't forget, when tweeting, what your objective is with each tweet: if you're trying to raise awareness of your work then you should try to drive traffic to the relevant pages of your website, if you're trying to fundraise then you should try to drive traffic to your JustGiving page.

You can enhance your messaging to certain audiences by segmenting your followers into lists. In doing so, you can organise by topic and/or by type of person (service user, decision maker, funder etc). This will help you to make your tweets more specific and targeted.

Don't forget your call to action so that people have a reason to engage with your tweets.

OTHER RESOURCES:

- Tweetdeck:
<http://tweetdeck.com>
- Hashtags:
<http://bit.ly/maEPoU>
- Twitter lists:
<http://bit.ly/mwAK6W>
- Twitpic:
<http://twitpic.com>
- Bit.ly:
<https://bitly.com/shorten/>
- Directories:
<http://justtweetit.com>
<http://wefollow.com>
<http://www.twellow.com>
- Best time to tweet:
<http://www.tweriod.com>



Facebook: Your heart

Facebook is about celebrating your fans, your organisation, and the things that bring them closer together. While engagement is important on all social media platforms, Facebook provides much greater opportunities for conversation with your supporters. You should focus on finding relevant and exciting ways to engage with fans.

Avoid multiple posts in one day and instead focus on using rich media (photos and videos) where possible as this tends to engage people more, and getting conversations started by asking questions.

Tailoring your cover page is the best way to clearly present your organisation. Be selective when choosing your cover photo and create a clear, concise description of your organisation. Be thoughtful about the apps, events, maps and polls that are displayed on this page. Remember to keep your central message in mind when designing your page.

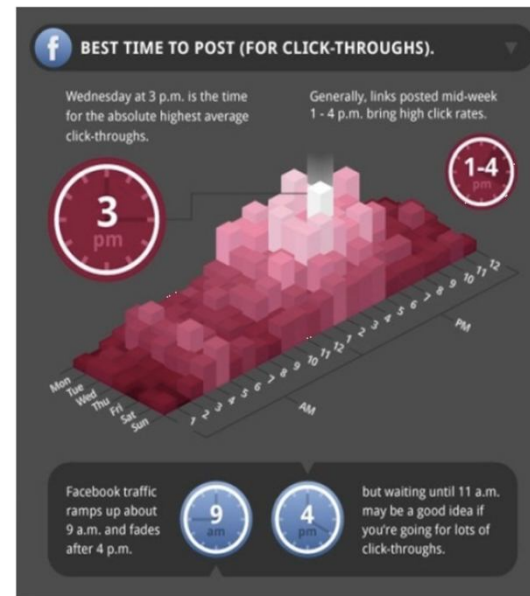
You can pin your best posts to keep them at the top of your timeline for seven days. You can also create milestone events which raise awareness of your organisations' history and past successes.

Use your Activity log to organise your timeline and ensure that it is representing your message as clearly as possible. You can highlight the best of your own, or your fans posts, and hide any out of date or negative posts.

You can use Facebook Insights to see which posts people engaged with most, this will help you to plan future activity.

To find out more about Facebook Insights go to: <http://on.mash.to/T06XQc>

Again, the aim should be to drive traffic to your website, so that people can learn about who you are and what you do. You must not forget to consider the user journey – so that you link Facebook users through to relevant website pages.



Facebook checklist

- Avoid multiple posts
- Choose a great cover photo
- Provide a punchy description
- Feature your most important apps
- Pin important posts to drive the most traffic to them
- Highlight any great historical posts by you or your fans
- Hide or delete out of date or negative posts
- Create milestones to show the history of your organisation

Blogging: Your thoughts

Blogging can be used to present your organisation's views in a less formal context. You can share the story of your organisation, providing information about your achievements, and publicise your current events and activities.

Keeping a regular blog can be very helpful in providing space for you to hone your organisation's message. Each blog entry provides practice for explaining this message and other aspects of your organisations as clearly and concisely as possible.

Furthermore, where possible, you can write engaging blog articles about relevant and topical issues to engage users and establish your organisation as a leader in your space.

SETTING TIME ASIDE WEEKLY OR FORTNIGHTLY TO UPDATE YOUR BLOG IS AN EASY WAY TO REASSURE YOUR FOLLOWERS AND SUPPORTERS THAT YOUR ORGANISATION REMAINS ACTIVE AND DYNAMIC

Be sure to use Facebook and Twitter to link to your blog posts, they will send traffic to your blog site and start conversations.

There are blogging communities for almost all social issues. You could use your blog to interact with this community by providing space for guest appearances. Your aim should be to create an affiliate relationship with other bloggers so they will share your content and you theirs.

Blogs can also be very helpful for increasing awareness of your organisation or project by boosting your appearance in search engines. You can also create online tools for your blog, such as widgets, to drive traffic to your website and highlight specific campaigns.

Tumblr and WordPress remain the two main platforms for blogging:

tumblr

- 38,000 posts per minute

The main advantage of a tumblr blog is its 'sharability.'

Like Twitter, tumblr blog posts can be liked and re-posted by your followers, greatly increasing the amount of people likely to see each post. Tumblr blogs are also very simple to set up and can be visually dynamic.




WORDPRESS

- Manages 22% of new websites

A blog through WordPress is more complicated and technical to set up but the end result can be much more impressive.

You can create an entirely new site and will have your own URL. WordPress also provides a greater variety of plug-ins designed to increase search engine optimization.

Other social media platforms



Google+

to be relevant for corporate organisations at this moment in time. However, it is easy enough to create an organisational page and add your information. Your profile picture is split across 5 images, which can be coordinated (go to www.gpluspic.com/banner for more information). For now, you could create a Google+ page so that

FOR MANY SMALL ORGANISATIONS, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER IS ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT...THEY WON'T GAIN ENOUGH FROM OTHER PLATFORMS TO WARRANT THE TIME AND EFFORT THEY WILL EXPEND

presence, and users are aware of who you are. If you want to start using it productively, you should start by creating posts – make sure that you have a well populated page before you market it out to people. The key to Google+ is sharing rich content – this means photos and videos. You should then segment your followers into circles based on their interests, so that you can push content to them accordingly.



Where possible it is a great idea to try to create your own video content. This can be difficult for small organisations in terms of resource, expertise and capacity. However, videos are really useful for engaging your audience. If you do have video content, you can create a YouTube account for your organisation.

This 'channel' can be specifically branded (see the channel for the World Food Programme below). Users will be able to browse all of your videos and you can create specific playlists about different topics/issues. You can also create a widget to enable users to donate and you can link to your other social media platforms.



Influencing decision-makers

Online campaigning extends beyond the use of social media platforms. There are a number of online resources that can be used in order to effectively campaign and influence policy makers:

E-petitions

E-petitions can be created online and submitted to the government once they raise 100,000 signatures. Creating an e-petition might be one activity taken as a part of a wider campaign strategy which seeks to create legislative change.

- HM Government e-petition website allows you to submit and sign petitions: epetitions.direct.gov.uk/

- 38 Degrees website is an online platform which brings people together to support campaigns. They share petitions with over one million members and help raise the critical mass of signatures to lobby government.

www.38degrees.org.uk/

Engaging in government consultations

Consultations are a great way to increase your organisation's political lobbying activities. Central government departments host consultations to gather members of the public's views on new government policy proposals and obtain broader information on particular policy topics.

Proposed changes to government consultation guidelines have suggested that future consultations will soon be predominantly hosted online.

Visit the websites of individual government departments to view their current consultations.

Learn more about the work of Parliament

- They Work for You offers comprehensive information regarding political interests and voting patterns of politicians and can help keep you up to date with the work of your local MP.

www.theyworkforyou.com/

- The Parliament website tells you everything you need to know about what's happening in parliament.

www.parliament.co.uk

It includes information on;

- The work of Select Committees, <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/>

- Free parliamentary training, <http://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/outreach-and-training/>

- New publications and reports, www.parliament.uk/business/publications/

- Whats happening in Parliament that month, <http://services.parliament.uk/calendar/>

Logistics

Managing your social media activities

- Assign the overseeing of all social media activities to one person but delegate individual activities to others, so that no one person has too much added to their workload
- Harness the talents of other staff members for creating content. Ask for input in writing blog posts, providing quotes

or comments, creating infographics or sharing pictures and videos

- Create a plan of action and stick to it; decide how often you will post or comment on each social media platform, and on which topics or issues

- Follow or interact with relevant organisations and individuals in order to stay in touch with topical issues and content, and engage with them by re-tweeting

Frequently refer to your social media strategy. Use this as a guideline when making decisions about which platform to use and to remind you of your intended audience, content and message

- Create your own content where possible, but ensure you at least share the activities or updates of others

- Always consider the user journey and keep in mind who your audience is and what your organisational messages are

- Make sure that every social media platform provides a valid link to your organisation's website

Further Tips

- Download apps for each social media platform onto your phone so you can update in real time



- Consider recruiting an intern or volunteer for a period who you can delegate social media tasks to. University students are digitally literate and in need of experience

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE TO
ENQUIRE ABOUT ONE-TO-ONE SUPPORT, PLEASE CONTACT
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