

Social Media bite 3: Promoting your service, event or project through social media

Whether you are involved in a research project, a service for staff or student, or in organising a public event, social media can help you reach out to wider audiences and increase its impact.

The aim of this session is twofold:

1. to introduce social media tools (e.g. blogs, Facebook, Twitter) and practices that can help you promote your project, service or event;
2. to enable you to make effective use of these tools for your own purposes.

About your service, project or event

ACTIVITY - In pairs: 1) describe a project, service or event that you are involved in or familiar with, 2) how do people currently know about it?

7 ways to promote what you do on social media

1. Choose a social media name for your project, service or event

A good social media username is essential to establishing the identity of your project, service or event. So it is worth spending a bit of time picking a username that will help promote it and make it easier to be found.

A good social media username is:

- **relevant** to the name of your project, service or event;
- **short** - Twitter has a 15 character limit for usernames and only allows letters, numbers and the underscore (_), which should be avoided;
- **unique** - The more unique your Twitter name is, the easier it will be to find it;
- **memorable** - avoid random numbers and obscure acronyms;
- **consistent** across your social media accounts.

Examples:

Name	Blog / website URL	Twitter handle *	Facebook
LSE Impact of Social Sciences blog	blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences	@LSEImpactBlog	facebook.com/LSEImpactblog
Institute of Historical Research History Lab +	historylabplus.wordpress.com	@Historylabplus	facebook.com/Historylabplus
UCLA Art Sci Center	artsci.ucla.edu	@uclartsci	facebook.com/artscicenter

Wellcome Library	blog.wellcomelibrary.org	@WellcomeLibrary	facebook.com/Wellcome-Library
------------------	--	------------------	---

* If you manage a Twitter channel on behalf of a University organisation, make sure you read the **How to maintain a Twitter channel** page (www.bristol.ac.uk/style-guides/web/how/social/twitter/) before creating an account.

Tips:

- Use camel case (i.e. use compound words beginning each word with a capital letter, for example **@JohnJSmith** or **@HubSpot**) to make your Twitter handle easier to read. Twitter (and other services like Pinterest) is case insensitive so **@JohnJSmith** and **@johnjsmith** are the same.
- Use lowercase in your URLs. For example use **@JohnJSmith** as your Twitter handle, but use **johnjsmith** in URLs: e.g. twitter.com/johnjsmith (Twitter), www.facebook.com/johnjsmith (Facebook) and johnjsmith.wordpress.com (blog)
- If appropriate use an acronym, for example **@BristolEBI** for Elizabeth Blackwell Institute.

ACTIVITY - In pairs, discuss the above examples and see how they measure against the 5 criteria (i.e. relevant, short, unique, memorable, consistent). Can you suggest improvements?

2. Be clear about your goals and target audience(s)

Your goal(s):

Once you've decided on your social media identity, ask yourself the following questions:

1. **What do I/we want to gain from social media interaction?** For example:
 - We would like more people to use our service.
 - We would like to engage with users of our service.
 - We would like to make people aware of the benefits of our project.
2. **What is it you want your audience to know?** For example:
 - We want users of our service to receive useful information about the service.
 - We want people interested in what we do to be kept informed of the project's impact.
 - We want event attendees to be kept informed and connect with each other ahead of the event.

Your audience(s):

Who are the people you want to reach out to?

These are obviously the users of your service, event attendees and people with a direct interest in your project (e.g. peers, participants), but there may also other interested parties, such as prospective users and attendees, media, funders, etc.

ACTIVITY - Individually: 1) identify one or two goals for your project, service or event, 2) identify 2 or 3 key audiences for it.

3. Create a Facebook page

A Facebook page is a great way to create a web presence for your project, service or event. It is quick to set up, free and interactive.

ACTIVITY - Have a look at some of the following Facebook pages. Check their 'About' page and make a note of the type of content they share.

- facebook.com/bristolmun14

- facebook.com/Historylabplus
- www.facebook.com/MarineConservationInstitute
- facebook.com/LSEImpactblog
- www.bristol.ac.uk/connect/directory/facebook/ (for a full list of Bristol Facebook pages)

Check the following guides to help you get started:

- [How to create a Facebook page for your conference or event](https://goo.gl/ToDyPX) (goo.gl/ToDyPX)
- [How to create a Facebook business page in 5 easy steps](https://goo.gl/yscnm) (goo.gl/yscnm)
- [PROJECT: Build your own Facebook page](https://goo.gl/iXewF1) (goo.gl/iXewF1)

4. Create a Twitter account and/or a hashtag

Twitter should be at the core of your social media efforts for promoting your project, service or event. It is very versatile and as such you can use it for many different purposes.

ACTIVITY - Have a look at some of the following Twitter accounts. Make a note of the type of content they share.

- twitter.com/Historylabplus
- twitter.com/vischina
- www.bristol.ac.uk/connect/directory/twitter/ (for a full list of Bristol Twitter accounts).
- For an event, create a #hashtag, i.e. a keyword that will enable anyone with an interest in your event to connect with like-minded people. For example, go to Twitter and search for [#iwmw16](https://twitter.com/search?q=%23iwmw16) (twitter.com/search?q=%23iwmw16), see how it compares with twitter.com/iwmw.

To get started with Twitter, read the excellent LSE Public Policy Group guide for academics and researchers, [Using Twitter in university research, teaching and impact activities](https://goo.gl/Sg6ST) (goo.gl/Sg6ST).

5. Start a blog

Blogs are a great way to keep people up to date about your project or service. They are also a good way to add extra value for your target audience, for example by giving away free tips or tutorials.

ACTIVITY - Have a look at some of the following blogs. Make a note of the type of content they share.

- blogs.lse.ac.uk
- visualisingchina.net/blog/
- www.bristol.ac.uk/connect/directory/blogs/ (for a full list of Bristol blogs)

The best platform for creating a blog is wordpress.com.

6. Use EventBrite to manage your events

If you organise a ticketed event and want people to register for it online, then EventBrite (www.eventbrite.co.uk) is a great way to manage your bookings. In addition it provides tools to promote your event if you wish and to take payments. Last but not least, it is FREE to use for free events!

See www.eventbrite.co.uk/how-it-works/ for further information.

7. Create a YouTube channel, Flickr, Instagram and/or Pinterest account

Finally, if your project, service or event is high on visuals it is worth considering video hosting services like YouTube (www.youtube.com) and Vimeo (www.vimeo.com), and image hosting Flickr (www.flickr.com), Instagram (www.instagram.com) and Pinterest (www.pinterest.com).

ACTIVITY - Have a look at some of the links below and make a note of how they are being used to support the project, service or event.

- Pinterest: pinterest.com/TxWRI and pinterest.com/lereview
- Flickr: www.flickr.com/groups/artsci and www.flickr.com/groups/photoethnography
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/amnh and www.instagram.com/usgs
- YouTube/Vimeo: youtube.com/user/ACCISUoB and vimeo.com/groups/anthropology

Further information

A list of links related to this Social Media bite is available at goo.gl/RGu7TY