

CharityComms Guide to Social Media for Charities

1

CharityComms

Inspiring Communications at the Heart of Charities



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PART ONE GETTING STARTED

Welcome to the CharityComms Guide to Social Media for Charities.

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube have become part of our daily lives, and have created a whole new method of communication. We discover breaking news on Twitter, we video chat with relatives in different time zones, and watch one minute video clips that have been viewed by millions of others across the globe.

Increasing numbers of corporations, news channels and even local pubs are utilising the power of social media to promote themselves. But how? And why? And what can charities do to make sure they are not left behind?

CharityComms has put this guide together to help the thousands of charities in the UK who are aware of social media, but aren't sure what it can do for them. The Guide is split into two parts: Part One is aimed at those just getting started, with Part Two written for charities who are actively using social media but want to know how to get the best out of the different channels.

This guide will take you through it all from the very basics of registering on the sites through to converting online conversations into offline action and evaluating your activity. We set out the steps you can take to transform your organisation's social media communications.

Social media enables charities to build relationships and go about cost-effective campaigning. We'll show you how to engage with your current supporters, reach out to find new ones and create

your organisation's personality to match its voice.

There's heaps of information on the web covering the best use of social media, so part of this guide's aim is to do the hard work for you of trawling the net and bringing together the articles, tools and sites that contain the most useful information for charities.

Communications – and particularly social media – is a constantly evolving discipline, so if you find other sources of information that would be helpful to charities, or spot great examples – including your own – of charities using social media effectively, do let us know so we can continuously update the guide.

We hope you find it useful.

Vicky Browning, Director, CharityComms
@CharityComms
www.charitycomms.org.uk

Matt Collins
@charitychap
www.charitychap.com

CharityComms is the professional membership body for charity communicators. Find out more and access great content, events, best practice and networking opportunities at www.charitycomms.org.uk

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 **Twitter's format invites questions, discussions and debates and makes it ideal for discussing issues relevant to your charity's work**

What are social networking sites?

Social networking sites are online services or websites that build or reflect a network of people and organisations who share common interests.

This can cover anything from a group of friends who want to share information on what they're up to, photos and videos (as Facebook does) through to professional industry networks sharing best practice and building contacts (like LinkedIn).

Social networking as a concept has been around as long as the internet itself, and has truly taken off in the last eight years. Facebook launched in 2004, and has since become the largest social networking site in the world, boasting over 750 million users worldwide. Over half of these users log in once a day, meaning Facebook is familiar to millions who wouldn't even normally use the term social network.

What do the social networking sites do?

Social networking sites have a variety of different functions, depending what you're most interested in.

Twitter



Twitter asks its users to regularly publish short updates about what they're doing or thinking. Its users answer the question in less than 140 characters (known as a 'tweet') which is published online. They can also use tweets to link to websites and news that they find interesting, and have online conversations by replying to other people's tweets.

The tweets of people you "follow", which could include many of the world's most prominent politicians, celebrities and organisations appear in a chronological list known as your timeline. From there, you can reply to tweets, follow links that others have tweeted to interesting news and share your own thoughts.

The bite-sized conversation format of the site invites questions, discussions and debate. This makes it ideal for discussing issues relevant to your charity's work with other charities, your supporters and other stakeholders.

People posting on Twitter can also categorise their tweets in simple ways. This makes it easy to locate people who are discussing issues that your charity may be interested in, and lets you build a relationship with them so that they can become a supporter.

Facebook



Facebook allows you to share your life online with your real life friends. Once you have 'added' someone you already know on Facebook, and they accept your request, they will be able to see all the photos, videos and status updates you have shared and posted on your public profile.

Facebook Pages also allow you to create a profile for your organisation, and allow people to "like" it. This allows them to see updates from your organisation and view its content, as if it was their "friend".

This provides much the same function as your website in that

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you can share news, photos and videos with your supporters. Since there are over 750 million people regularly on Facebook however, being on Facebook is a bit like setting up a stall at a busy conference instead of putting it up on an empty street; going where so many of your supporters are will make you much more visible and accessible to them than your website might.

The multimedia nature of Facebook means it is ideal for hosting the broadest range of content on your organisation's work.

YouTube



YouTube is a video sharing site, where users can record videos of themselves, things they have seen or scripted movies, and upload them for the world to see.

For your charity, this can be short films advertising your organisation's work that you can share with a worldwide audience. You can also embed these videos so they can be seen from your own website or sites like Facebook.

YouTube is a massive worldwide community of 490 million users. Posting short videos of your organisation's work in creative, funny or moving ways can communicate your mission and boost your brand in a uniquely engaging and accessible way.

LinkedIn



LinkedIn is a professional social network. Users post the responsibilities of their current and past jobs, like an online CV. They then connect with people they have worked with as colleagues or done business with, to create an online network of professional contacts.

Groups are also a large part of LinkedIn. Those with similar professional interests in particular types of industries and topics join in groups and discuss issues relevant to the area. Charities can also register their organisation as a workplace so that their staff and volunteers can attach themselves to it officially on the site.

LinkedIn is a burgeoning site for charities, and the groups feature is perfect for finding new people who can support your work. Join groups relevant to your charity's cause, whether that's children, environmental camping, or animals, and join in the existing discussions.

Others Google+



Google's latest attempt at creating a serious contender for the social networking heavyweights of Facebook and Twitter. At the time of writing, Google+ had just launched brand pages. These are for organisations who want a presence on Google's social network, and operate similarly to Facebook's Pages.

You can post basic information about your charity, such as the ever-important one sentence summary of what you do, photos of your organisation at work, and status updates.

Google+ has the added advantage of sharing content by Circles - groups of people that you have segmented according to who they are. This allows for targeting - you can share different messages with different groups of people, according to what they would be most interested in.

 **Being on Facebook is a bit like setting up a stall at a busy conference instead of putting it up on an empty street**

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Hangouts is another feature of Google+ that sets it apart from the competition. Hangouts lets you hold casual video conferences with supporters that anyone in your circles can join in. You could hold Q&A sessions with donors to let them know how their money is being spent, which would help make them feel a closer link with your charity and its work.

Read more about Google+ and how charities can use it on [Reason Digital's excellent blog](#) or [Google's own guide](#).

Bebo



At one time the most popular social networking site website for children and young people, but user numbers are in serious decline, and there are rumours of its impending closure.

Myspace



The first real social networking site, now used primarily by musicians and some young people.

Vimeo



Like YouTube, Vimeo is a video sharing site that boasts improved video quality and ownership settings, but also a much smaller audience.

Foursquare

[foursquare](#) Users “check in” to locations using GPS technology on their smartphones to share their location with others online, with some organisations offering rewards and discounts to users who check in to their shops and offices.

If there are individuals within your charity who already use social media in their personal lives, let them hit the ground running

Resources

Once you have a few ideas about where your online audience is to be found, and have decided to take the plunge by engaging with them online, you can put some of the foundations in place for your upcoming social media activities.

People

Who will be in charge of your social media feeds? Is this something that will sit with your communications department, your CEO, or even a volunteer?

There is no one answer to this. Ultimately you will have to decide what is best for your organisation. If there are individuals within your charity who already use social media in their personal lives, let them hit the ground running and give them the responsibility. Or, if your CEO is at the heart of everything external facing, it may be worth training them up in social media use (if they are not already familiar with it) and letting everything come from them.

Individual or representative?

Most charities have social media feeds that bear the organisation's name. It may be updated by different people at different times, but will always represent the organisation. Many will state who is physically updating at any one time by signing off their initials at the end of an update or naming the most frequent tweeters in the charity in the organisation bio (the descriptive paragraph you set up which explains briefly who you are and what you do). This lends personality to the organisation, and helps users connect to the brand in a personable way.

Those individuals may also state their job at your organisation

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in their own bios. Again, this can create more personality and engagement with the organisation, although those individuals must be aware that what they post is often public to anyone on the web. So they should avoid posting anything inappropriate that could adversely affect the organisation's reputation.

Time

Decide how much time your organisation should devote to social networking.

Like networking offline, the potential time investment is limitless. You could spend 5 min per day sharing only the most important pieces of news for your charity, or spend your whole day searching for potential supporters and followers, and engaging with them.

How high a priority you want such networking to be in your organisation will determine how much time to devote.

Support

Ensure that this project, like any other of significance, has support from your senior management, and indeed the whole organisation if possible. Ensure they are least aware and at best fully supportive of this deployment of resources. CharityComms has five key things to tell your boss which you can tailor to your own charity's audience and share with senior management and trustees to help convince them of the value of social media to your organisation.

Social media policies

Should you go so far as to implement a social media policy within

your organisation? Again, this depends. Most of your staff and volunteers are likely to have social media presences on at least one of the websites detailed above. They may publicise their link to your organisation, and should be aware of what your organisation is doing in this area. Whether or not you do this via a formal policy, ensure your employees know your stance on:

Confidentiality - what information on the organisation's work can they share? Make sure that only information that is publicly available is shared on any social media channels.

Appropriate material - employees should be careful not to post inappropriate material that may reflect badly on them or the organisation.

Venting - while everyone may have bad days at work, ranting about your boss on social media channels can have disciplinary consequences if colleagues are likely to see it.

Organisations' social media policies can range from the simple – “Don't say anything you wouldn't want your mother to hear” or “Only write things you'd be happy to see on a billboard” – to much more complex. One key suggestion is to empower your audience – whether it's staff or volunteers - with what they can do, not what they can't do. This can include very straightforward advice such as DO be honest. DO use appropriate privacy settings. DO share content that is publicly available.

 **More tips on writing your first social media policy can be found at <http://www.nten.org/blog/2010/02/17/tips-writing-your-first-social-media-policy>**

 **Use social media policies to empower your audience – whether it's staff or volunteers - with what they can do, not what they can't**

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 **And here's a list of 61 social media policies from different organisations, including the BBC and the American Red Cross: <http://davefleet.com/2010/07/57-social-media-policy-examples-resources/#socialmediapolicy>**

Measurement

Having decided the aims of your social media activity, you should also establish a means of measuring their success. How you measure success will depend entirely on what you hope to achieve and ways that can be measured.

If you want to expand the number of your supporters, you may decide that the number of likes on Facebook, subscribers on YouTube, or followers on Twitter may be measurement enough (more on measurement tools in Part 2).

If you want to increase the amount of engagement you have with your current supporters, the number of comments on your Facebook posts, conversations you have on twitter, or comments your YouTube videos receive may be a more appropriate measurement tool.

It may be that conversion is most important. You may engage with someone on Twitter or have conversations with them on Facebook, but unless they become a volunteer or make a donation, you may not consider the engagement successful.

Do I have to do all this?

As recently as 2004, there was no such thing as Facebook. Poking, adding and tagging all had different meanings. Both

Twitter and YouTube were glints in their creators' eyes, and charities relied on their websites, press coverage and good old fashioned word of mouth to spread their messages.

Fast forward to the present, and social media is as much a part of charities' communications lexicon as "make a difference" and "putting the fun in fundraising". But what's the point of social media for charities? Lots of us still don't really understand the point of telling people what we're doing via status updates every five minutes. Many see it as a positively frivolous waste of time, distracting us from our real mission.

You could of course say no to all social networking sites, and simply decide not to play. More established offline communications and online via your organisation's website may be a sufficiently effective way to communicate.

The point of social networking sites for charities is however two-fold: building relationships, and cost-effective campaigning. As every article on social media will tell you, relationships are key. Whether it's with your fundraisers, key partners or volunteers, relationships are the most important tool you've got. And social media can help you build them.

What's more, social media has become an invaluable campaigning tool for charities, integrating closely with all their other communications. Clever uses so far include having Barbie and Ken argue to stop Mattel's involvement in deforestation, supporters of RNIB recording videos of the children's book they'd miss most if they lost their sight, and Make a Wish Foundation's biggest ever pass the parcel ([see this excellent presentation from](#)



Relationships are the most important tool you've got. Social media can help you build them

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Madeleine Sugden and Damien Clarkson for more examples).

Even if you only wanted to post the bare minimum number of updates to social networking sites, it is very much worth doing so. Statistically speaking, a large percentage of your supporters are already using social networking sites on a daily basis. So it makes sense for you to be where they are.

Audience

Before you go full steam ahead into social media, you first need to know who your audiences are and which channels will be most effective for you to use to reach them. This is as much an offline communications question as an online one.

Your audience for social media, like your off-line activities will divide into two categories – your current audience, and your potential audience.

Your current audience comprises the people already on your database, your e-mail list, funders and other supporters. Statistically, the vast majority of those people will be on Facebook at least once a week, while a smaller number will also use Twitter. Some may also watch videos on YouTube and have professional profiles on LinkedIn.

To establish where to focus your efforts, use a service like SurveyMonkey to poll your supporters about where they spend time online, and use the results to allocate resources.

Then ask where your potential audience is. Do you simply want more supporters like the ones you already have in terms of

demographic, socio economic status, and social activity? Or do you want to reach out to a different demographic to broaden your funding base or volunteer type? Some research on who uses the various social networking sites may help you decide where to focus your energy.

Where does your potential audience spend time when they go online? Do they use Facebook or Twitter to share their thoughts? Are they even online at all? These are vital questions to answer before deciding where to invest your time and energy most wisely.

Throughout these articles, I'll use the example of a charity that I'm a trustee for, Brixton St Vincent's Community Centre (@BSVCC). So for BSVCC, we're on social media to establish connections with other people and organisations in Brixton to ensure they know about us and our youth drama projects.



 **A large percentage of your supporters are already using social networking sites on a daily basis. So it makes sense for you to be where they are**



Always remember that social media is a conversation, not a broadcast

Decide what you want to say, and how you want to say it

Social media is not what you want to say, it's just the room that you say it in. So your charity needs to be clear what it stands for, and what difference it wants to make.

What is the one action you want your supporters to take, for example? And if your charity had a personality, what would it be? Maybe you are a research organisation and want to be seen as a serious authority on your particular topic. Perhaps your cause can be delivered with an engaging sense of humour, and you would like this to come through.

If your communications aims are unclear, this can be a long process. It can involve everyone in your organisation, from the senior management team to your volunteers. So ensure that you have buy-in from the right people in your organisation about what you're going to say before you take to the social media airwaves to broadcast it.

For more on establishing your mission and vision, have a look at this CharityComms presentation, [“Crystallising your Vision, Mission and Values”](#).

BSVCC try to keep a lighthearted tone in our social media. As a small, community based charity, our main message is that we have rooms to hire for community groups, so that we can fund our programmes with local young people, and advertising these programmes.

Plan your content

You wouldn't get up on stage to give a speech to a room full of people without some idea in your head of what you're going to talk about. The same applies in social media - while you may ad lib at times, you should have a good idea of what to say.

Always remember that social media is a conversation, not a broadcast. Your supporters want to stay up to date with your work - this may be the sole reason they follow your social network feeds. However, you should be careful not to “broadcast” too much, that is, only advertising your charity's events and requests for donations.

Instead, foster good relationships. Reply to those sharing

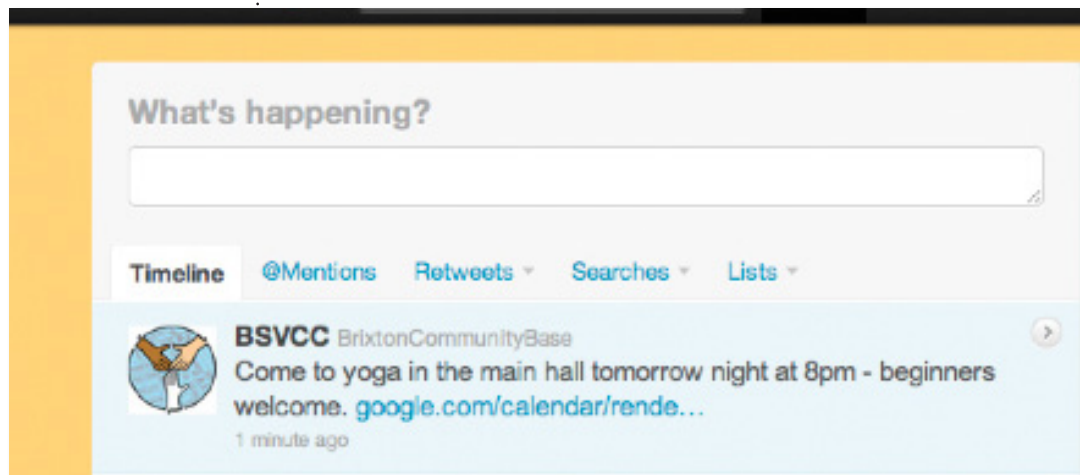
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 **Think about making a short film that summarises what you do - visitors are more likely to watch this than to read pages and pages of text**

information about topics your charity is interested in, strike up online conversations with key stakeholders you would like to influence, and be sure to respond to support or criticism you get to your own posts.

A good rule of thumb is to broadcast about 20% of the time, and spend the rest of the time engaged in conversations. And if you want to keep them going, the only secret is to share interesting content and ask interesting questions.

While broadcast should not be the main part of your communications, it will certainly be a part of it. So to begin with, think about:



1. Your events

When are your charity's events, like fundraising runs or volunteer awards, taking place? Post these on your social media sites, with a link to your website, so followers can sign up to them.

At BSVCC, we have weekly repeating events, so we would be advertising these several times a day if we did them all! Instead, we schedule updates that promote our karate and yoga events one week, then youth theatre groups and Bling Ya Bike the next.

2. Your work in pictures

Facebook and YouTube are much more visual social networking sites than Twitter, so you'll need pictures and video of your work to go with the text. What will these images depict?

Gather the best images you have of your work. Think about making a short film that summarises what you do - visitors are much more likely to watch this than to read pages and pages of text. If there are any vulnerable clients in the pictures or videos, ensure you have the right permissions from the right people for this.

At BSVCC, we're planning to take photographs and videos of some of the classes in action. This will help potential users feel more comfortable coming along to a workshop, as they'll start to feel familiar with the centre before they've even come to it.

3. News from your area

This isn't news from your neighbours, rather links to other stories that you think your followers might find interesting.

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For example, BSVCC is based in Brixton, and has a drama slant to many of its projects. If this is what our current followers are interested in, we might start sharing things we noticed in Brixton one day or youth drama productions being done by other organisations.

Here's a tweet by Lambeth Archives about local primary school children making a film that we would happily share with our followers:



LambethArchives Lambeth Archives

A BIG congrats to Stockwell Primary kids who made this fab film about **Brixton** Market after visiting the archives stallstories.org.uk

2 hours ago

Registering

To register for Twitter, go to www.twitter.com and follow the sign up instructions.

Your username is the name you'll be known by on Twitter. When choosing one, remember that there is a character limit, so you may need to shorten your full charity name. If you have a recognisable acronym, like the RSPCA does, use that. If another organisation has a similar name, add a word to your username to differentiate yourself. Or you can add a word like "charity" or "UK" after your name.

To create a page on Facebook, visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php> and follow the step-by-step instructions. You

can use your full organisation name on Facebook.

If you have a Google account, you can use this to register for YouTube. If not, just go to www.google.com/accounts to register.

Choose an avatar

Your avatar is a small image representing you personally or as an organisation.

For most charities, this is simply your logo. Remember that your logo will appear very small on people's feeds, so you might want the most visual section of your logo as your avatar instead of your charity's name. Use www.picnik.com if you need a free programme that can crop your logo to the required section.

Some organisations use a photographed face or cartoonised face of their CEO as their avatar. Pete Cashmore of the technology website Mashable is one of the most famous examples of this. People react more positively to human faces than to logos, and while this approach is much less common, the human connection aspect means it has a big advantage.

 **People react more positively to human faces than to logos**



AmnestyInternational

@amnesty New York

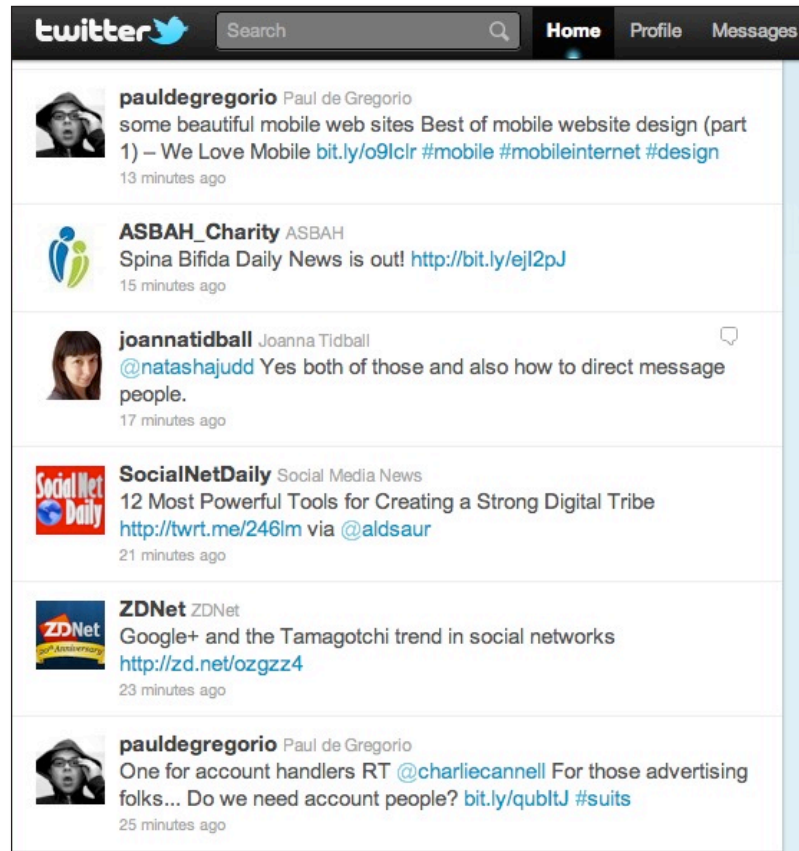
Welcome to the Official profile of Amnesty International USA. We tweet the latest #humanrights news and opportunities for you to make a difference!

<http://www.amnestyusa.org>

+ Follow



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 **Twitter has real power in communicating with supporters in an accessible and authentic way**

Using Twitter



Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service, enabling its users to send and read messages called tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the user's profile page and in the streams of anyone who chooses to follow them.

The popularity of Twitter worldwide has made it a site where up to the second updates from breaking news stories are possible, and it has real power in communicating with supporters in an accessible and authentic way.

You can find a comprehensive list of Twitter terms and their definitions at [Twitter's help pages](#). Here are a few of the most common.

Timeline: a real-time list of tweets from people you follow on Twitter.

Hashtag: the # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created organically by Twitter users as a way to categorize messages. For example, tweets about Libya can include the hashtag #libya, allowing anyone to click on the word, and see more tweets about Libya.

Mention: mentioning another user in your Tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a 'mention'. Also refers to Tweets in which your username was included.

Reply: a tweet posted in reply to another user's message, usually posted by clicking the 'reply' button next to their Tweet in your

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timeline. Always begins with @username.

Retweet (verb): the act of forwarding another user's Tweet to all of your followers, as KiezaDS has done in the first tweet shown opposite.

Who to follow

Following the tweets of other organisations is the first thing to do.

When you follow someone on Twitter, they will receive an email notifying them that you have begun to follow them. This is an important step - getting this email brings your organisation to their attention. They can then decide to follow you back, starting a new relationship between you.

Start by following people who you already know. You can find them by linking Twitter to your email client, by clicking on Who To Follow and then Find Friends. You can also simply search for someone's name in the search box on top of Twitter in order to find people.

Third Sector news and Guardian Voluntary Sector Network and of course CharityComms are great first accounts to follow if you're a UK charity.

Then you can use what is probably the most useful tool at your disposal - Twitter search.

Twitter Search allows you to look for terms contained in people's tweets. This is the equivalent of entering a crowded room, and being able to identify the people who are having the conversations you're most interested in immediately. You can then reply to what these people are saying, follow them and build a relationship with them.

For example, BSVCC is interested in building a local following. So we use Twitter search to find anyone whose tweets mention "Brixton":



 **A great first account to follow if you're a UK charity is CharityComms' Twitter feed**

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 Once you've followed a few different people and organisations, Twitter learns what you're interested in and creates automatic recommendations for you

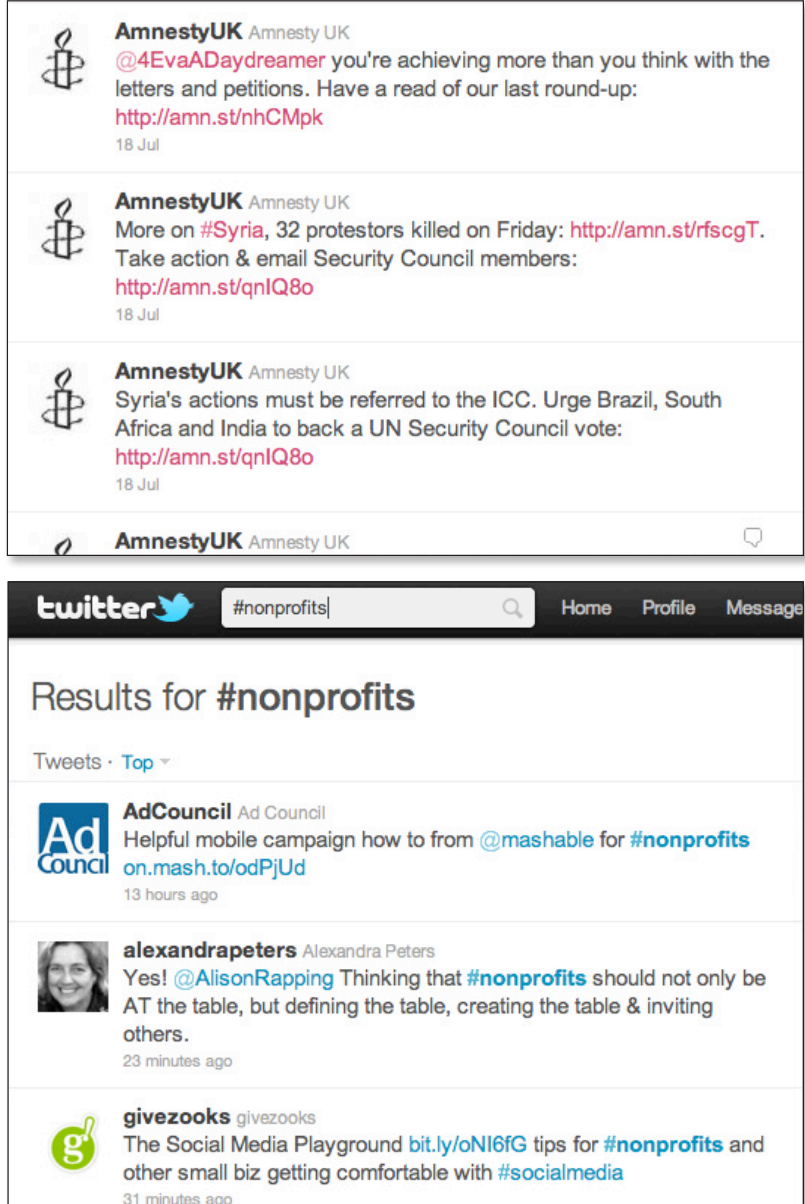
Give it a go.

Head to <http://search.twitter.com> and search for:

- the names of charities in same field - follow them and build relationships with them
- Other charities - see how well they use social media to combine promoting their events with conversation. To find Amnesty UK for example, simply Google "Amnesty Twitter" to find their feed. Click the Follow button to follow them.
- Hashtags - these are an important part of Twitter, and act as labels for people following a particular event or topic. When you put a # symbol before a word or several words combined, Twitter turns this into a link that can be clicked to find other tweets containing the hashtag. This allows you to join in the conversation about that topic and follow its participants to continue the conversation elsewhere. The example below is anyone who has mentioned "nonprofits" in their tweets, allowing me to reply to anything mentioning that term.

Once you have followed a few different people and organisations, Twitter learns what you're interested in and creates automatic recommendations for you. Click "Who to Follow" in Twitter for recommendations.

You can also find good people to follow by clicking on the followers list of the people that you already follow. This will show you who else is interested in the information that your followers tweet themselves.



The screenshot shows a Twitter search for the hashtag #nonprofits. The search results are displayed in a list format. The top result is from AmnestyUK, who has posted three tweets about Syria and human rights. The second result is from AdCouncil, who has posted a tweet about a helpful mobile campaign. The third result is from alexandrapeters, who has posted a tweet about the importance of nonprofits. The fourth result is from givezooks, who has posted a tweet about social media tips.

AmnestyUK Amnesty UK
@4EvaADaydreamer you're achieving more than you think with the letters and petitions. Have a read of our last round-up: <http://amn.st/nhCMpk>
18 Jul

AmnestyUK Amnesty UK
More on #Syria, 32 protestors killed on Friday: <http://amn.st/rfscgT>. Take action & email Security Council members: <http://amn.st/qnIQ8o>
18 Jul

AmnestyUK Amnesty UK
Syria's actions must be referred to the ICC. Urge Brazil, South Africa and India to back a UN Security Council vote: <http://amn.st/qnIQ8o>
18 Jul

AdCouncil Ad Council
Helpful mobile campaign how to from @mashable for #nonprofits on.mash.to/odPjUd
13 hours ago

alexandrapeters Alexandra Peters
Yes! @AlisonRapping Thinking that #nonprofits should not only be AT the table, but defining the table, creating the table & inviting others.
23 minutes ago

givezooks givezooks
The Social Media Playground bit.ly/oNI6fG tips for #nonprofits and other small biz getting comfortable with #socialmedia
31 minutes ago



You don't have to read and reply to all of the tweets. Simply see as many as you can when you can, and reply to them at the same time

When you click on someone's profile, click Followers on the right hand side to see a list of their followers and their short descriptions as well. If you think that someone sounds interesting, you can click the Follow button and you will automatically follow their tweets. They will also receive a notification that you have started to follow them, and again, this will bring them to your attention.

Keeping up to date

When you are following a certain number of people, it may be difficult to follow all of their tweets.

There are different ways of keeping up to date with tweets. First of all, you don't have to read all of the tweets and reply to them all. Simply see as many as you can when you can, and reply to them at the same time.

You can also divide your followers into lists, and only check the updates of the list that you are most interested in at that time as an animal charity, you may divide your supporters into supporters list, other charities, and people who are interested in animal welfare but aren't charities themselves. This will filter your feed to show only the people you put in the list, which can be useful if you don't want to read the tweets of every single person you follow.

To create a list in Twitter, simply go to lists, and click create a list. You'll be asked to name the list and in the next step you can select whose tweets you would like to be included in the list.

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Listen first

The best thing to do at the beginning is to listen. Just read the tweets of your followers, click on the links that they tweet and see what sort of things people say to each other. This will give you an idea of the sorts of things that people commonly tweet, the tone of voice that they use, and what sorts of stories and information they link to. From here, you can get a sense of what sort of topics your audience commonly discusses, which will help you when formulating your own content and tone of voice.

What's happening?

Timeline @Mentions Retweets Searches Lists

@BSVCC/arts-organisations [View list page →](#)

SLTheatre South London Theatre
Braved the elements at Lambeth #countryshow today. Stall went well. Loved the pigs&ducks&sheep&goats&rabbits & fire jumping dogs best tho!
16 Jul

SLTheatre South London Theatre
Look out for the @SLTheatre stall at the Lambeth #countryshow in Brockwell Park tomorrow & Sun. Come say hello & find out more!
15 Jul

SLTheatre South London Theatre
Look out for the @SLTheatre stall at the Lambeth #countryfair in Brockwell Park this Sat & Sun. Come say hello!
13 Jul

SLTheatre South London Theatre
AUDITIONS tonight, tomorrow and Sunday for Bryony Lavery's 'A Wedding Story' directed by @DaveHollander
southlondontheatre.co.uk/new/SL/index.p

 The more conversations you have, the more you will develop strong relationships

Have conversations

While this section is short, it is probably the most important aspect of social media.


As time goes on, you can get stuck into the most important bit - taking part in conversations.

When someone tweets something interesting or something you'd like to comment on, simply click Reply within the tweet, and enter your reply. Hopefully, a few people will reply back and you can begin conversations on the topics of most interest to you and your organisation.

The more conversations you have, the more you will develop strong relationships. Think about the world offline - if you talk to someone from a particular organisation or industry again and again, you will eventually develop a good rapport. Once this happens, you will naturally want to collaborate on joint projects, support them in their work and crucially, they will want to support you in yours.

Have conversations again and again. You will develop strong relationships with supporters old and new, supporters who will help you achieve your charity's mission.

PART ONE GETTING STARTED

 **Your supporters are the people who can help to achieve your mission, so ask for their opinion on everything from what colour your new website should be, to what campaign you should do next**

Using Facebook



Facebook has many similarities and even more differences to Twitter. Both are based on simple status updates that allow you to share links to stories and videos that your charity finds interesting, and wants to share with supporters.

The main differences between Facebook and Twitter are how embedded multimedia is in Facebook (see below) and how often you should update your status. Roughly one status update per day is usually enough for Facebook, whereas two or three (not including replies to other updates) or even more would be perfectly acceptable on Twitter.

The other main difference between Facebook and Twitter is how you attract more fans. You can follow as many new people as you like on Twitter, and bring your charity to their attention. With Facebook, people have to come to you - they may find out about your charity because their friend shared one of your stories, click a Like button on your website, or because you sent them a link to your Facebook page by email. This makes Facebook a more word-of-mouth platform than Twitter.

Facebook has far more users than Twitter (750 million compared to 200 million), and while most of your staff and volunteers probably have a Facebook account, not everyone will be so familiar with Twitter. Hence the need to have an established presence on Facebook.

The main activity in Facebook is updating your Status. Simply type what you're doing, thinking or a link you want to share in

the "What's on your mind?" box to share it with anyone who likes your page. They can then comment on your status, you can comment back, and start a conversation.

Conversation

Once you have set up your Facebook page, anyone who "likes" your page will see your status updates in their news feed, and be able to comment on them.

This is a great way to have conversations with your supporters, wherever they are in the world. They are the people who can help to achieve your mission, so ask for their opinion on everything from what colour your new website should be, to what campaign you should do next. Reply to their comments, and help them feel close to your organisation.

Multimedia

Facebook has a number of other features that make it stand out from other social networking sites. Each lets you enrich your profile, and give supporters deeper insights into your work.

Upload photos of your work. You can organise photos of your work into albums so that people can get a good visual impression of what you do. Upload photos of your client group (if you have the appropriate permissions), your fundraisers, events or staff. How to do it: click on Photos on the left hand menu, then Upload Photos.

Embed the videos you have posted on your YouTube account. Those short videos of your supporters, staff or clients talking about the difference your organisation has made for them can be

PART ONE GETTING STARTED

 **You don't have to buy expensive recording equipment or hire an external agency to record your videos: you need nothing more than a Flip video camera and basic editing software to produce engaging video content**

shared to those who see your Facebook updates. These can also be posted within the Facebook stream either recorded within Facebook or linked to on YouTube.

How to do it: click on Wall on the left hand menu, then next to Share in the middle click on Video, where you can upload from your computer or even record directly.

You can add a huge variety of apps to your Facebook page. One of the best is Polls. It allows you to easily canvas opinion from your supporters on a huge number of issues.

For example, Save the Children's USA branch recently asked supporters "What's the best term to describe funds we use for overall programs and administrative costs? 1. Open Fund 2. General Fund 3. Global Action Fund 4. Unrestricted Funds." Supporters voted overwhelmingly for Global Action Fund, and that became the term used for extremely successful fundraising.

How to do it: visit [Facebook's Polls page](#) and follow the instructions

Using YouTube



When you visit a website that has a big block of text on the left, or a short video featuring actual people on the right, which one would you prefer to use?

Most people will go for the video every time. People like engaging with people, and that is why YouTube has become the second largest search engine on the web after Google. Every day, millions of people are searching for and uploading videos of everything from juggling tutorials and pop song covers, to animated shorts and funny mini-films.

Video is a huge opportunity for to present your organisation's work in a similarly creative way, and YouTube is the place for it. You can make cartoons that explain your work lightheartedly, create a case story, or make a campaign video. See these [seven great charity campaign videos](#) for inspiration.

How to make videos

You don't have to buy expensive recording equipment or hire an external agency to record your videos. Of course it's an option, but these days you need nothing more than a Flip video camera and basic editing software like [iMovie](#) for the Mac to produce engaging video content.

The video might be as simple as interviews with clients and staff, with suitably uplifting music in the background. You could get really creative, and make an animation that tells the story of one of your service users or your work generally.

Here are some basics to create great videos:

- **Use an external microphone** - if your camera allows it, attach an external microphone and place it near the person speaking to get much better audio quality.
- **Prepare what you'll say** - when speaking on camera, know what you're going to say first. Don't be afraid to do as many takes as you need - the footage will last, so it's worth getting right!
- **Go somewhere quiet** - film somewhere where you can avoid any background noise that will make it hard to hear the person speaking.
- **Get a clear background** - if you have a pop-up stand you can use as a backdrop, put this behind the person speaking during

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the interview. Or have an uncluttered background, so that the viewer's eye is drawn to the speaker.

- **Film head and shoulders** - when speaking on camera, only the head and shoulders should be visible so that the person takes up the majority of the screen.

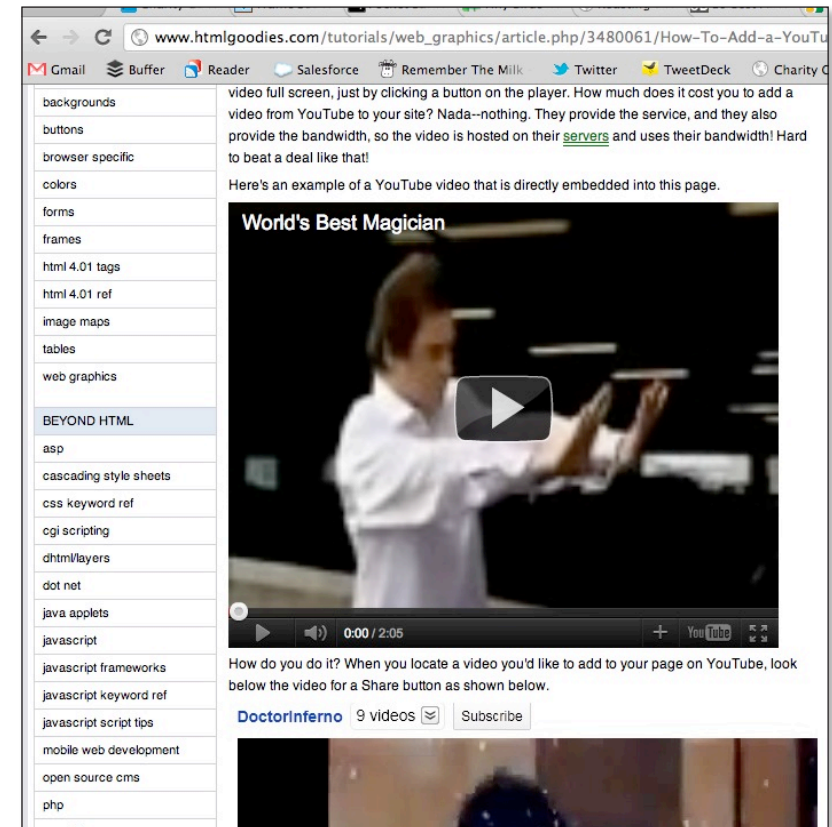
Once you have your footage, it's a case of spending time either teaching yourself to use one of the many [free online video editing packages](#) out there, or recruiting a volunteer or staff member with the requisite knowledge of packages like iMovie. The editing process should select the very best footage, the dialogue that tugs on the heartstrings and urges viewers to take action.

YouTube runs a non-profit programme dedicated to charities, and here's their advice for creating great videos:

- **Reach Out.** Post videos that get YouTube viewers talking, and then stay in the conversation with comments and video responses.
- **Partner Up.** Find other organisations on YouTube who complement your mission, and work together to promote each other.
- **Keep It Fresh.** Put up new videos regularly and keep them short – ideally under 5 minutes.
- **Spread Your Message.** Share links and the embed code for your videos with supporters so they can help get the word out.
- **Be Genuine.** We have a wide demographic, so high view counts come from content that's compelling, rather than what's 'hip'.

Uploading your video

Once your video is edited and finished, you're ready to upload it



to YouTube. Just follow [these simple instructions](#) to upload your video.

Embedding your videos

You can host your videos on YouTube and allow users to actually view them on your own blog or website.

This process is called embedding, and once your videos are uploaded onto YouTube, [this tutorial](#) will show you how to do it.

Select the very best footage, the dialogue that tugs on the heartstrings and urges viewers to take action

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This guide aims to get your charity's social media adventure up and running. We've covered the main social networks available to you, the relative advantages and disadvantages of each and how to go about establishing a presence on them. If your organisation covers the basics outlined above, you'll not only be able to expand your supporter base, but you can also compete with far larger charities for a slice of the digital PR pie.

TO DOWNLOAD
PART TWO OF
THIS GUIDE
CLICK HERE

Here's a summary of dos and don'ts from this chapter:

Do...

...decide your communications aims

Make sure you know what your organisation's communications aims are. Social media is simply a vehicle for your message, not the message itself.

...allocate resources

Make sure you have enough time to devote to engaging with social media. There is an investment to be done before the rewards are reaped!

...learn about your audience

Think about where your current and potential supporters spend time online, or better yet, do some research on it. This will tell you which sites to focus your efforts on.

....decide what you're going to say

Establish what elements of your organisation's work you are going to promote, whether that's your fundraising events, political communications or news. Plan your content as far ahead as possible.

Don't

...do it just because everyone else is

Just because everyone else is using social media, doesn't mean you have to! You could use it just to advertise your charity's events, or opt out altogether.

...speak too soon

If you're new to social media, it's best to spend some time watching how others use it and learning from them before adding your own content.

...just broadcast

While it's important to share your news and upcoming events, the best social media users don't just use it to broadcast their organisation's news. Talk to your supporters about what's important to them, respond to their questions and talk about other issues altogether.

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CharityComms is the professional membership body for charity communicators, led by the sector for the sector. We aim to improve the standard of communications and champion its role in the sector. We seek to represent, support, inspire, connect and inform our members and the wider charity communications community.

CharityComms caters for a range of communications skills within charities and non-profits. This includes internal communications, publications, media relations, marketing, digital and social media, campaigning, public affairs and policy.

Our services include events, best practice guides and research, career development – including mentoring – and online resources including www.charitycomms.org.uk and www.askcharity.org.uk.

For more information visit www.charitycomms.org.uk or for membership enquiries email lally@charitycomms.org.uk

Download Part 2 of the CharityComms Guide to Social Media [here](#)