

HANDOUT

Beginners Guide to Social Media

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Before you get stuck in with the tools, it's always useful to ask yourself some questions:

- What do you want to achieve through social media?
- Who do you want to interact with?
- Where are the people you want to interact with?
- What makes your organization/campaign unique – try answering in 140 characters (that's the length of tweet)?
- Fill in the blanks: “We need number of people to achieve””

The tools you need to deploy will vary depending on the answers to these questions. But here is a list of freely available tools for you to consider:

1. **Be where people are – get a Facebook Fan Page.** facebook.com is the world's most popular website with 540 million regular users per day.
2. **Get a free website.** You can set one up for free using platforms like sites.google.com & wordpress.com & grassroots.org
3. **For more informal and personal content start a blog.** You can set one up for free from sites such as posterous.com & tumblr.com & blogger.com & wordpress.com & blogspot.com and others
4. **Pictures speak louder than words and don't need translation.** Make sure you use photos on your sites. An easy and free way to host and share photos and build a network is by getting an account on for example Flickr.com & picasaweb.google.com
5. **People love video!** In one month (December 2009) 178 million people watched 33.2 billion videos online. Make sure you use video on your sites. Free hosting sites with social networks include: youtube.com & vimeo.com
6. **A lot to say in a few words - start Tweeting.** twitter.com is a micro-blog site where you can share thoughts, promote content, interact and update your followers, all in 140 characters. To share photos via twitter you can use twitpic.com and to shorten and keep track of the URLs you share you can use bit.ly
7. **Confused already? posterous.com lets you autopost and update almost all your different social media and websites just by sending an e-mail.**

There's more...

8. **Over 4 billion people have a cell phone – text them.** frontlinesms.com offers free SMS bulk broadcasting tool.
9. **Create your own audio podcasts from your phone** and broadcast it online. Free services include: ipadio.com & drop.io & tumblr.com
10. **Be a citizen journalist.** Get an account at: demotix.com & ireport.com & citizenjournalismafrica.org
11. **You can host your own TV show/event LIVE.** All you need is a webcam, a microphone and an account at a site such as: livestream.com & vokle.com & ustream.tv
12. **Don't underestimate the power of e-mails and newsletters** to your supporters. Build your list and keep them updated. Free and easy to use software include mailchimp.com
13. **Help your online supporters get together in the real world.** Great social mobilizing tool at meetup.com/everywhere

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