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HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA IN CAMPAIGNING



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1. WHAT ARE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media are online platforms that allow people to create, modify and share ideas, information and content in virtual networks and communities. They rely on 'user-generated' content, that is, social media just refers to the means of exchanging and sharing and users populate those with their own content for their own purposes.

They differ from 'traditional media' in many aspects including reach, frequency, quality, immediacy and permanence with a key positive feature of further democratizing the internet.

2. MAJOR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR CAMPAIGNERS

This table provides information on how some of the most popular platforms are often used by campaigners. Facebook and Twitter are discussed in detail in sections 5 and 6 below.

About	Useful to...
<p>Facebook www.facebook.com</p> <p>Facebook is the most popular social media platform. 65% of the UK online population as active users, including 95% of 16-20 year olds and 74% of 21-24 year olds (YouGov poll). So, as a means to reach a large number of people, particularly young people, Facebook can be invaluable to campaigners.</p>	<p>Share news, updates, images</p> <p>Ask questions, start conversations</p> <p>Create a personality for your campaign</p>
<p>Twitter www.twitter.com</p> <p>Twitter has been used effectively by activists since it was launched in 2006. More than a fifth of the UK online population uses Twitter. As with Facebook, Twitter users tend to be young with 68% of users under 35.</p> <p>Twitter is a democratic, conversational or 'micro-blogging' form of e-communication and is fantastic for sharing information, petitions and news, starting conversations and for reporting on events. Importantly, contact on Twitter is public so it's a great way to directly and 'publicly' address individuals, companies and organisations to build pressure on your targets during a campaign. Politicians, celebrities, public figures, journalists, businesses, charities and lots of other activists can be found on Twitter, all of whom can be contacted directly.</p>	<p>Build your profile</p> <p>Mobilise online action</p> <p>Contact individual targets directly and publicly</p> <p>Share instant news and comment</p>

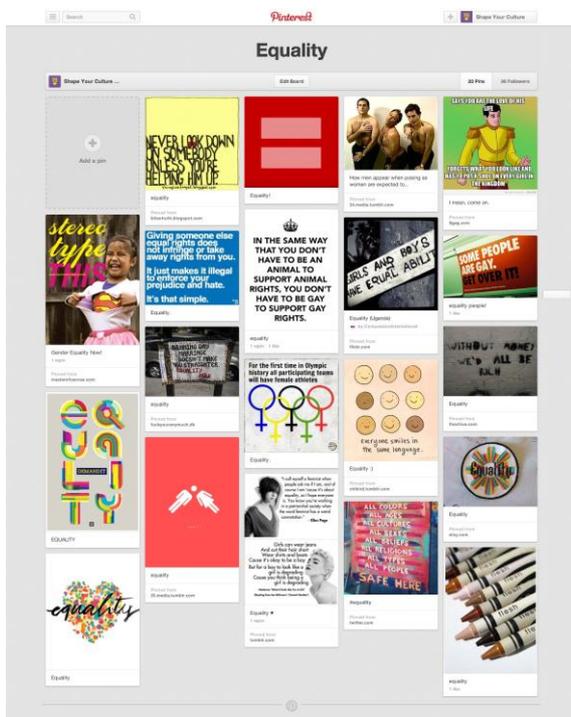
<p>Free Websites</p> <p>There are several free website builders available, three of the most popular and easy to use include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moonfruit www.moonfruit.com • Weebly www.weebly.com • Wix www.wix.com <p>These require no knowledge of html or web development, have step-by-step instructions and are fully customizable with your own text and images, there are also options to add shop pages in case you want to fundraise by selling items such as T-shirts or badges etc.</p> <p>The free versions will mean that your web address contains the platform's name in it. For example if your website name is 'femactivism' it will appear as: www.femactivism.moonfruit.com / www.femactivism.weebly.com / www.femactivism.wix.com</p> <p>If you're not keen on having the web company's name in your web address you can purchase a domain name from the provider or if you have already purchased your domain you can forward it to the free web page so that when someone types in www.femactivism.com they are taken to your site.</p>	<p>Create an online home for your campaign and action hub</p>
<p>Blogs</p> <p>If you have the necessary time, a blog is an effective tool for any campaign. Sharing strong, original content is a valuable way to establish your campaign's importance and standpoint.</p> <p>Three of the main blogging platforms are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blogspot www.blogger.com • Wordpress www.wordpress.com • Tumblr www.tumblr.com <p>All are easy to use and have limited custom features including image galleries and social media buttons to make it easier for your readers to like and share your posts. These blog platforms also have the option of multiple pages, so mimicking the appearance and function of a website. The only difference is that the URL will feature the blog name unless you've you have changed it as above.</p>	<p>Host an online diary or opinion pieces</p> <p>Showcase your campaign's progress and feature other voices you want to profile, e.g. personal testimonies</p>
<p>Flickr www.flickr.com</p> <p>Flickr is an image and video hosting site. Users create accounts (with Yahoo) and upload images and videos to a photostream. It's a convenient way to share and store images for a team to all access. Each image uploaded has its own URL so it can be shared. It's also possible to connect with other Flickr users.</p> <p>If you need an image to accompany a blog piece or for your website you can do an advanced search on Flickr for images that are under a Creative Commons license, for example by using http://compfight.com/. These are</p>	<p>Share and store images</p> <p>Source Creative Commons images</p>

images in the public domain which can be used for free under certain conditions, usually crediting the photographer in question and linking back to their Flickr page.

Pinterest www.pinterest.com

Pinterest is a virtual pinboard site. Users install a 'Pin It' button in their browser bookmark bar and can then 'pin' images, videos and links to their 'boards' as one might on a cork board.

Users can create any number of boards which can be themed. This may be useful for collecting resources or evidence from websites, supporting documentation, inspirational images or quotes. As with most other such sites users can connect with each other, 'like' and re-pin each other's content.



Collect and share photos, videos and other content on a pinboard format
Build a 'scrapbook' for your campaign

Soundcloud www.soundcloud.com

Audioboo www.audioboo.fm

Sharing audio content is a quick and effective way of being creative with limited resources. If you have a digital recording device – most mobile phones have this function – then you have the means to produce interviews, audio blogs and other relevant audio content.

Audio players from both Soundcloud and Audioboo platforms can be embedded in Facebook pages and users can connect with other users. Interviews, reports, speeches, performances or blogs can be uploaded virtually as soon as they've been recorded, cutting out the need for traditional media organisations to deliver messages to a broad audience.

If posting audio clips on Facebook, try to include an image with the post where possible, as with text posts, this will make people more likely to listen to the content.

Share audio

<p>Youtube www.youtube.com</p> <p>Vimeo www.vimeo.com</p> <p>YouTube and Vimeo are free video hosting sites from which uploaded videos can be easily shared via social media. YouTube is the second most popular social media platform after Facebook. Other users can subscribe to your channel and anyone can share them if you set them to be public.</p> <p>Vimeo is used by many people interested in film making. Vimeo's more creative and professional slant is great for activists who want to get into using film and there are free tutorials on making better films, telling stories, making trailers and managing with a tiny film crew.</p>	<p>Share video</p>
<p>Bambuser www.bamuser.com</p> <p>Bambuser is a platform for live streaming video content to a global audience. It allows you to film and upload quickly and easily for free and connect to the network of users.</p> <p>The popularity of online mobile video devices means that live streaming has become possible for many activists. It can enable those engaged in direct action to show what's happening in the moment. Activists can create their own breaking news stores, without editing or another's bias.</p> <p>Bambuser has the function for comment and discussion and broadcasts can be public or private and shared via other social media accounts.</p>	<p>Live-stream video</p>
<p>Tweetdeck www.tweetdeck.com</p> <p>Tweetdeck enables users to manage their Facebook and Twitter accounts from one platform. It is a very useful way of keeping an eye on both platforms without having to switch tabs or log in and out of the applications. Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent for tracking real-time responses to and interactions with important events, news stories, TV programmes, crises and celebrations because it allows users to create columns to track a hashtag. • Allows users to schedule tweets. This can be invaluable to ensure that tweets go out at times when it may be difficult to access Twitter, for example, during a direct action. 	<p>Streamline social media activity</p>
<p>Hootsuite www.hootsuite.com</p> <p>You can connect to and interact with virtually all social media accounts in one place with Hootsuite. If you are using a few and want to view them all in the same place, this is a powerful tool. It's not overly complex to navigate once you're familiar – it can take time to get used to having so much information all streaming in one place!</p> <p>The main 3 social media networks on Hootsuite are: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.</p> <p>Secondary networks are: Google+, Foursquare, Wordpress, Myspace, Mixi.</p>	<p>Streamline social media activity</p>

Most used third party apps: YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, Tumblr, Flickr, Mailchimp, Wordpress, Blogger, Vimeo, Storify.

Storify www.storify.com

Storify pulls together content from various places on the web and social media to create a story. This can be a powerful tool to help document the progress and discussion of various events or campaigns.

As with Pinterest, there is a Storify widget to drag onto your browser's bookmark bar and use it to add media to your 'story'. Storify connects with other social media platforms and generates links which can be shared via email.

Pull together social media activity

Skype www.skype.com

Google Hangout www.google.com/+learnmore/hangouts/

Skype and Google Hangout provide free conference calling and video meetings. Both platforms are easy to sign-up to and use. For Google Hangout you need to have a Google + account and it is hooked up to all the other Google resources: email, calendar, drive etc. Key features are:

- 10 people on a video conference
- File sharing and instant messaging
- Live streaming of a video call (Google Hang Out)

Organise virtual meet-ups

3. TOP TIPS

Be strategic!

Social media can quite quickly take up a lot of your time, it is imperative to be strategic when using them as part of a campaign. Key considerations for your use of social media are:

- **The time of day you post.** Note the times that posts/messages receive most attention and aim for those times.
- Decide **whether you will promote external initiatives** and what the criteria are to decide which ones to promote.
- Decide **what types of comments/responses you will respond back to**, for example only for points of clarity.
- Decide on **your delete policy** – will you closely monitor your social media platforms to delete trolls for example?
- Over time **stay aware of the range and diversity of issues you are communicating** about and stay conscious of what your overall social media profile tells people as well as each message individually.
- **Consider a rota for using social media** if you're working in a group on a campaign or before an event for example to ensure a high level of publicity.

Keep it in perspective

Social media can quite quickly take up a lot of your time and brain space. As anyone with an online profile knows, it's exciting to see people responding to your posts, especially with support and positivity, but take care to have breaks now and then. It's not possible to counter every negative remark or change the minds of those determined to oppose you (see 'Trolls' below) so remember to pick your battles and log off if need be!

Consistency is crucial

If you set up several social media profiles at once, make sure you can keep the ball in the air! It can be counterproductive to have numerous profiles lying dormant because you

no longer have the time to use them effectively – because it sends out a message of inactivity.

Some platforms are good to have set up and ready for if/when you need them, for example like YouTube for uploading short films of actions or events, but if you don't have someone who can write or update a blog regularly, for example, there's not much point having one until you do.

If you have members of your group who already use social media a lot then you already have a great resource. Even with limited time, if you plan and use social media strategically they can work wonders for your campaign or actions.

Details matter

Pay careful attention to when and what you write using social media. They may feel like informal and fun community platforms but social media are powerful tools and anything you say may be quoted back at you well into the future. Take note of:

- **Libel laws:** whatever you say online is effectively published so where necessary the word 'allegedly' can be very useful.
- **Off-the-cuff remarks:** social media by definition communicate user generated content and that can mean that information you read may not be verifiable. Take enough time to compose social media posts that you are happy to explain later if necessary. You can of course delete posts that have inaccuracies but they may have already been captured for eternity by others!
- **Over-saturation:** having a lively and active online presence can only help but posting too much can put people off. Try to avoid posting lots of things one after another. Platforms such as Tweetdeck or Hootsuite allow you to schedule updates if you have a number of things you'd like to share but not the time to return to it throughout the day.

- **International time zones** if you have international followers.
- **Switching accounts:** if you use Twitter/Facebook etc. for a personal and campaign account then make sure you're using the right one!

Trolls and staying safe

Like many online communities, feminist campaigns tend to attract trolls. Trolls are people who deliberately attempt to start arguments and upset people by posting inflammatory or off-topic messages aiming to disrupt discussion. Distinguishing between someone with a difference of opinion and a troll can be tricky at first but if your critic exhibits the following behavior you have yourself a troll:

- Becomes a regular feature
- Refuses to engage with anything but their own point
- Is disruptive and/or aggressive of otherwise civil discussion

Be prepared for opposition even if what you're working towards does not seem contentious to you. Any level of trolling can be shocking and hurtful if you're on the receiving end. Hateful comments in relation to feminist activity only reinforce the need for feminist campaigns! If you feel you need support to cope with online abuse you can call the Women's Aid national helpline on 0808 2000 247.

Reasoning with trolls beyond a certain point is usually pointless and it's easy to waste valuable time on trying to do so. Luckily, on Facebook you can hide people's posts or if someone becomes a serious problem most platforms allow a user to block or ban trouble-makers from the page.

Your Tone

Clarity and consistency are key when communicating a campaign message. Everyone who works on your social media needs to be very clear about the message and approach. You need to decide on your 'voice'. For example, The *No More Page Three* Campaign has been very successful with a friendly, personal and at times, humorous approach, they have been consistent in their dealings on social media, blogs and with the press. This style may not be appropriate for all campaigns.

'Going Viral'

It's difficult to predict what will resonate with the general public – it could be a shocking infographic or a man shouting at his dog... and you could spend valuable time trying to create something 'shocking and controversial' which might fall flat. There are things to make people more likely to share what you post:

- Use video
- Use images as well as text
- Be current
- Ask questions and for opinions

Responding to comments

Where possible if people contact you or show their support online it's great to respond, it will make people more likely to continue to take an interest and support or defend a campaign if they feel they've been listened to. There may come a time where your online profiles are inundated with more responses and comments than you can handle and if that's the case group messages thanking 'all our followers' or a blanket response if you get more than one comment about the same thing, may be the best policy.

4. ORIGINAL AND CREATIVE CONTENT

As more and more things vie for our attention on and offline so the more inventive campaigners need to be to attract attention.

Original Campaign Material

You don't need professionals to create content with impact, just a bit of time and imagination. When creating sharable content think about how you can make the aesthetic of your content resonate with your issue. For example, if you are protesting against X, then borrowing the aesthetic from the way X is advertised or from the brand can be an effective way to attract attention and amplify your message by borrowing the weight of an already familiar brand. This has been used to great effect by campaigners for some time and is referred to as culture jamming.

As another example, Turn Your Back on Page 3 started creating fake Page 3s with photos of people's backs and then asked others to contribute. This practice is great for encouraging active participation from supporters, everyone then feels they have a stake in and are part of the process of change.



Video

Whether you have a phone with a camera or 'state of the art' equipment, uploading video content is one of the easiest ways to communicate with followers and potential supporters via social media.

You could film part of a protest, interview someone or post your own vlog (video blog).

For examples, '[Those Pesky Dames](#)' have garnered a following by making use of video blogging to discuss feminist issues that affect them as young women. Their approach is straight forward, just talking to camera, and their frank discussions on issues that they are interested in and passionate about means their content speaks to many.

Free resources

There are free online resources for creating visuals, for example:

- *Images*: Downloadable application for image manipulation, similar to Photoshop but free! <http://www.gimp.org/>. You can source royalty free or creative commons images to use from Flickr and search form images here <http://compfight.com/>
- *Text*: A range of interesting fonts, but check the license terms as not all are free for public use <http://www.dafont.com/>
- *Film*: Vimeo has online tutorials for aspiring film-makers www.vimeo.com

If you want to know how to do something, Google it, chances are there's a kind techy soul who has written a blog on it, made a YouTube video on it, or answered the same question on a forum.

Strike a chord – the personal is political

People are more likely to support something where they see the relevance to their own lives. Where possible explain the relevance your campaign might have in people's lives or how the issue at hand impacts on society as a whole.

For example, *The Everyday Sexism Project* based their online discussion explicitly on how sexism directly affects women's lives in a way that talk of 'glass ceilings' and 'women in Fortune 500 boardrooms' cannot. The project has so far gathered 47,039 followers on Twitter in one year and considerable column inches in the media.

5. IN FOCUS: FACEBOOK

Setting up

You have three options when setting up to use Facebook as a campaigner: pages, causes and groups.

Pages

A page is basically a website within Facebook with all the crucial information about who you are, what you do and how to contact you outside Facebook, as well as the capacity to share content, create events, receive messages and view the statics around your reach and demographic of followers, all of which go toward developing and promoting your group and its networks.

Causes

A Cause is for organising around specific campaigns or actions, so a group with a page can also run causes within Facebook. On the surface it's difficult to tell what the differences are between a Page and a Cause – mainly, a cause is easier to set-up as it requires the user to input less information, most likely because if successful, a cause is hopefully temporary.

Groups

A group is set up for people to organise or discuss around a specific topic, they can be public, private or secret.

- Public: Anyone can view group and anyone can join.
- Private: Anyone can view group but invite only.
- Secret: Only members can view and invite only.

You need to have a personal Facebook Profile to create a group and need to set this up through the settings on your profile home sidebar. If your interest is discussion-based around a single topic a group is very useful and has fewer custom features to worry about. If you wish to organise around a difficult topic or a topic that you anticipate

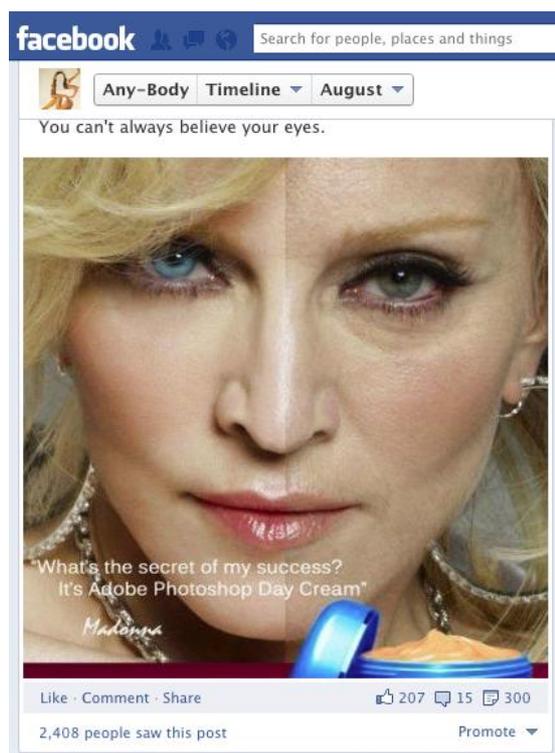
might attract negativity then a group's privacy settings are also very useful.

Insights

Facebook pages have a great feature in the admin panel called 'Insights', here you can see statistics about your followers, their responses to your posts and the overall reach (virality) of your content, which can be viewed online or downloaded as a spreadsheet.

Once you have a certain following this will show you what times are best to post, what kind of content has the most impact and where your followers are from, this information is great for helping you hone your campaigning strategy. It may be that sharing articles from certain online newspapers garners a lot of responses or personal stories or video clips, keep an eye on what works and use to your advantage.

For example, when Any-Body UK shared an image of Madonna about photo-shopping, there was a very noticeable spike in the stats with 300 shares and 54 new followers in one day. Superstars and well-known people draw attention, so if there are stories linked to your cause that feature big names it can help draw attention to your issue.



News Feed

Your Newsfeed (home button at the top) is where you find posts from all the other pages you have followed or 'liked'. The more other pages you like the more content you'll have access to share.

Constructing posts

The main function of Facebook is interaction by posting content, sharing content and 'liking' and commenting on the posts of others so you need to give people a reason to respond.

- A key way to encourage interaction with your posts is to always have 'an ask'. Aim to bring in a mobilising dimension to each post, even if this is simply a 'click to show solidarity'.
- A useful way to structure the content of your posts is:
 - Paragraph 1: briefly explain what the

post is about

- Paragraph 2: explain the context briefly
- Paragraph 3. Call people to action
- Use @[page name] to link to other people's Facebook pages rather than direct people off Facebook where possible as this helps to increase your visibility across Facebook.
- Remember you can 'pin to top' and 'highlight' to double the width of posts.
- Try hooking people in to read a news-based post by using a punchy quote from the page

Images Grab Attention

People are much more likely to read something accompanied by an image. When linking to web pages you usually get the option to have a thumbnail image accompany it. If you're posting a status update where possible include an image to grab attention.

6. IN FOCUS: TWITTER

Setting up

Twitter guides you through the set-up. Make sure your profile says exactly who you are and use an interesting image or your logo as your profile picture. During set-up Twitter will require you to start following 15 other users, their suggestions are mainstream celebrities and performers, but there is a search facility where you can find users you really want to follow.

Your Twitter handle (name)

When choosing your Twitter handle (name) try to keep it short where possible, tweets are only 140 characters so it's best not to take up too many on your name.

Getting followers

To get Followers you need to start following others so people know you're there. To increase the chances of increasing your following:

- Tweet and share interesting and relevant content!
- Make sure you are following lots of individuals and organisations relevant to your cause.

You can use lists to streamline your news feed into lists to make sure you don't miss important news and tweets especially once you're following a lot of people, lists are found on your 'Me' page and help. Lists can be public or private, if public they are followable by other users.

Tweeting

It can be tricky to get started and know what to Tweet, have a look at what others are doing for some tips. Decide on a strategy that takes into account how much time you or your group have to tweet and what key issues you definitely want to get in on, and which you don't.

Top tips

- Promote external events and initiatives related to your issue on Twitter, both national and local.
- Rather than retweet, tweet from your own handle as much as possible.
- Ask everyone you follow to follow you
- Ensure you're following everyone relevant
- Tweet at people to get their specific attention, for example journalists before an event or action.
- To increase interaction ask questions, show emotions (use asterisk as prefix for an emotion/action, e.g. *cough / *sad

Conversations

To directly address another Twitter user you must put their full Twitter handle including the @ symbol into your Tweet for example: @femcause2013 great blog, thanks for sharing! #equality #feminism (NB. If you start a tweet with @ it will only appear in that users news feed rather than the newsfeed of everyone who follows you.) If you and another user are following each other you can send private direct messages.

Use hashtags (#, shift+3 on a Mac) as much as possible in your tweets on relevant words to get yourself into conversations. Hashtags followed by a word become links to a newsfeed made up of tweets containing that hashtag. This is excellent for following events, news stories, protests, campaigns and gaining an idea on public opinion around certain topics. For example, #prochoice #EndViolenceAgainstWomen #nomorepage3 #bodyconfidence.