

# Doors Open Days

*get into buildings!*

## Social Media Guides



### Quick Guide to Social Media

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This guide is a short introduction to the main types of social media which may be useful for your organisation. The guide will briefly explain each platform and the best way to use it. Please refer to the individual social media guides for more in depth explanations of each platform. Topics covered:

- [Twitter](#)
- [Facebook](#)
- [Hootsuite](#)
- [Wordpress](#)
- [Pinterest](#)
- [General Social Media Tips](#)
- [Social Media and Volunteers](#)

# Twitter

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Twitter (<http://www.twitter.com>) is a social media platform designed to encourage short, regular updates and the sharing of information. The main features of Twitter are:

- **Tweets** – these are your updates (must be 140 characters or less) and include information, links or pictures.
- **Retweets** – also known as RTs, these are other users' tweets which you can "retweet" onto your timeline so your followers can see them. Other users can also retweet your tweets
- **Favourites** – you can favourite other users' tweets which contain important information which you may want to refer to at another time. Other users can also favourite your tweets.
- **Hashtags** – these are useful when tweeting about a certain topic e.g. #doorsopendays or #DOD13 – this allows you (or anyone else who searches for the hashtag) to see all tweets which have been tagged with it.

Twitter is great for reaching a large audience. As well as your own followers being able to read your tweets, if your tweet is retweeted, it will also be read by many people who do not already follow you. It is also great for interacting with your followers as you can reply to tweets, as well as retweeting or favouriting them.

Quick tips to make the most of Twitter:

- Follow relevant users (e.g. other similar organisations, local businesses etc.) who will be tweeting about things which may be of interest to you and your followers. Check your timeline regularly to keep up-to-date with relevant news.
- Create a hashtag for your organisation or event (e.g. Doors Open Day 2013 used the hashtag #DOD13). Encourage your followers to use the hashtag – this will allow you to easily see what people have to say about your event.
- Keep it short. You only have 140 characters to use, so make sure tweets are to the point and contain all the relevant information. Add in a link to your website or blog where users can read more information about the topic you're tweeting about.
- Use 'calls to action' – encourage your followers to 'do' something in your tweets e.g. subscribe to your mailing list, visit your website, enter your competition; or ask questions which followers can answer e.g. "what did you think of...", "which of our... will you be visiting" etc.

## Facebook

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Facebook (<http://facebook.com>) is a great social media platform for slightly longer updates, and lends itself well to using photographs. The main features of Facebook are:

- **Status Update** – this is where you add in your updates and information (must be 2000 characters or less). Can also include pictures and links.
- **Add Photos/Video** – you can add photos to your status updates, or you can create photo albums which contain lots of photos from one event/one topic etc.
- **Like** – users can “like” your updates to show that they have enjoyed it or found it useful. You can also “like” comments left on your page, or the updates of others in your timeline.
- **Share** – users can share your updates on their own page so their own friends and followers can see your updates too. You can also share other users’ updates on your own page.
- **Comment** – users can leave comments on your updates to discuss the topic further or ask questions. You can reply within the comment “thread”, or send users a private message if necessary.

Facebook is great for communicating with your followers, as leaving comments and having “conversations” is really easy. Although there is a character limit, it is much larger than Twitter so you are able to go into more detail about topics, or include extra information.

Quick tips to make the most of Facebook:

- If you can, include photos within your status updates. This makes your updates much more eye-catching and users are more likely to notice and “like” updates. Make sure you own the photographs or include the correct copyright information.
- Include links where users can read more information about the topic. Although you can have longer updates, it is still a good idea to direct users towards your website where they can find out more.
- Engage with users by asking questions and encouraging users to share their views/experiences, replying to comments and providing users with answers/information when asked for it.
- Use ‘calls to action’ – as detailed in the Twitter section, ask users to ‘do’ something to encourage interaction.

## Hootsuite

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Hootsuite (<http://hootsuite.com>) is a useful tool which allows you to organise and manage various social media accounts in one place. It is mostly useful for Twitter and Facebook, and allows you to schedule posts in advance. The main features of Hootsuite are:

- **Streams** – you can add “streams” which show your activity on each social media platform. You can add streams for a variety of accounts, but the ones most likely to be needed are the Twitter Stream and the Facebook Stream.
- **Writing Posts** – you can write posts for various social networks without having to log in to each individual website. You can write your update within Hootsuite, choose which platforms to post it on, and publish the update immediately.
- **Scheduling Posts** – if you want to schedule posts throughout the day, or schedule in updates for the evenings or weekends when you’re not in the office, you can write posts on Hootsuite and then schedule them to be published at a certain time and date.
- **Shortening Links** – the link shortening tool takes your link (e.g. to your website) and condenses it into a shorter version. This is useful for staying within character counts.

Hootsuite is great for organising your social media output, rather than being a social network itself. You do not have followers on Hootsuite and cannot post updates to Hootsuite – the updates go directly to Twitter/Facebook. The scheduling feature of Hootsuite is particularly useful, especially when you have many updates which need to be published by a certain date (e.g. if you are promoting an event which only takes place on one particular day).

Quick tips to make the most of Hootsuite:

- Think about when your followers would be most likely to check social media, and schedule your updates accordingly. If you are trying to target a certain group (e.g. families, young adults, children etc.) think about when would be the best time to reach them.
- Think about character limits. Hootsuite allows you to post the exact same message on multiple social networks – but it’s often a good idea to tailor each update individually so you can add in extra information/photos where the character limit allows. Use the link shortener too.

## Wordpress

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Wordpress (<http://wordpress.com>) is a blogging platform which allows you to publish regular blog posts (a bit like news articles). The main features of Wordpress are:

- **Blog Posts** – you can write posts which expand on the topics you are talking about on social media, or include other news, updates and information. Blog posts can include other media, such as photographs and videos, as well as text.
- **Comments** – users can leave comments on your blog posts to discuss the topics brought up within the post. You can also reply to comments, and leave comments on other users' posts.
- **Subscribe** – users can subscribe to your blog, either using their Wordpress account or just their email address, and receive a notification any time you upload a new blog post.
- **Labels** – you can add labels to posts to make it easy for users to search for all your posts on a certain topic. This also makes it easier for people to find your blog posts through search engines like Google.
- **Pages** – as well as your blog posts (which are organised like a newsfeed, with the newest posts appearing at the top), you can also add stand-alone pages e.g. About (giving extra information about your organisation, with links to your website/social media etc.) or Contact (giving information about how to get in touch via email/social media etc.)

Wordpress is easy to use and is great for putting across information or sharing photos which may not have a place on your main website. Sharing details about events your organisation has held, or behind-the-scenes “sneak preview” type posts are great for engaging with your followers and encouraging them to share their experiences too.

Quick tips to make the most of Wordpress:

- Keep posts fairly short so they are quick and easy to read, but make sure you add in enough information to make them interesting – around 400-800 words is usually a good length.
- Include as many photos as you can to make posts appealing and fun to read. Make sure to add in copyright information where appropriate.
- Keep the tone of your blog posts quite chatty and informal, but professional and upholding the values of your organisation. Blogs are intended to be more like a conversation rather than a formal news article.
- Remember to update your social media channels when you write a new blog post, and include the link and a short sentence about the article. Although there is a Subscribe function, many people prefer to keep up to date with blogs through Twitter/Facebook.

# Pinterest

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Pinterest (<http://pinterest.com>) is an online “pin board” for sharing photographs and links to interesting articles or websites. The main features of Pinterest are:

- **Boards** – you can create your own pin boards to group together photos and links about a certain topic. Anything pinned to these boards will be visible to all your followers.
- **Pins** – these are the photos themselves. You can upload your own pins (either from a photo on your computer, or by pinning directly from another web page), or you can repin other users’ pins. Other users can also repin your pins.
- **Likes** – you can “like” a pin which is of interest, but you don’t want it to appear on any of your boards. Other users can also “like” your pins.
- **Comments** – users can leave comments on your pins. You can also leave comments on other pins.
- **Home Feed** – this shows all the pins of users you follow (and your own pins) in chronological order. You can also use the search bar to find pins about a certain topic.

Pinterest is a great visual-based, rather than text-based, social network so is good to use if you often post photos on your website, blog or other social media pages.

Quick tips for making the most of Pinterest:

- Follow some relevant users, like similar organisations to yourself or local businesses and groups. It is likely they will post content which is of interest to your followers, so you’ll be able to repin some of their pins.
- Make sure to create some boards which are specific to your organisation, as well as some more general ones related to your interests. It’s a good idea to have a mix of pins – both your own pictures (which link back to your website/blog) and other relevant pins posted by other users.
- Whenever you upload new content (with pictures) to your website/blog, make sure to pin it to one of your boards so your followers can share the links and read more. e.g. DOD created a board called “Doors Open Days Blog” and every time a new blog post was uploaded, the photos from the post were pinned to this board.
- Make sure to add links to any pins you upload, so users can read more information about the photos.

## General Social Media Tips

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- Keep updates short and snappy. Social media is intended to be quick and easy to read, so make sure you get all the important information across without adding in too much unnecessary information. Always include a link (where possible) to your website or blog where users can read more information if they wish.
- Encourage users to interact by asking questions or getting them to “do” something e.g. visiting your website. Updates which are just statements do get information across, but they don’t allow much room for discussion or users being able to share their experiences/opinions.
- Keep up a relatively informal and chatty tone, but make sure all updates remain relevant and professional. You should come across as friendly and approachable, but still be able to provide correct information and uphold the values of your organisation.
- Download the mobile apps for your social media networks so you can check or update your accounts on the go if necessary. All platforms mentioned in this guide have apps available for both Apple and Android. Take advantage of these apps to post photos whilst you’re at an event or update your followers with news as it is happening.
- Update regularly and don’t be afraid to repeat the same information a couple of times to make sure as many people as possible have seen it. Think about the best time of day to reach certain groups of people, and try to schedule in your updates accordingly.
- Try to respond to questions or comments as soon as possible. It’s not possible to check social media 24 hours a day, but try to respond within a day if you can – especially if the question is about an upcoming event or a competition with a specific deadline etc.

## Social Media and Volunteers

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- Working with social media is usually a very fun and rewarding job, but it can be very time consuming so getting volunteers to help out can be a great idea.
- As social media work is all done online, much of the work can be done remotely. Make sure you come up with a strategy with your volunteers at the beginning, then most of their work can be done out of the office. Ensure you check in regularly, either by email, phone or in person, to make sure everything is going as planned.
- Whether working with volunteers or not, coming up with a social media strategy is a very good idea – especially in the lead up to a particular event or busy season. Set out the different social media platforms you want to use, what kind of information you want to get across, how you plan on making the most of social media and what your main goals are. This will give both you and your volunteers a clear idea of what is expected.
- Create social media schedules to keep track of what needs to be published and when. This way, you can ensure all your networks are updated regularly and all the information you need to get across is being published – and you can schedule updates in advance to make the most of your time. Make sure to check off the schedule once updates have been published or scheduled, so you/your volunteers know what still needs to be done.
- Rather than setting your volunteers specific hours (e.g. 9am-5pm one day per week), agree on an approximate number of hours that can be spread throughout the week. The nature of social media means that it often only takes 10 minutes at a time to write an update or reply to a comment, but you may have to do it 5 or 6 times throughout the day, rather than sitting down for an hour in the morning and getting it all out of the way. Being flexible is definitely a plus when working with social media – but if your volunteers are unable to commit their time like this, make sure to schedule in regular updates throughout the week which will keep things going whilst they are away.