

Web 2.0 and Social Media

Business in a Connected World

Dr. David Sachs; Roger McHaney



Web 2.0

ROGER W. MCHANNEY, DAVID SACHS

**WEB 2.0 AND
SOCIAL MEDIA**
BUSINESS IN A
CONNECTED WORLD

Web 2.0 and Social Media: Business in a Connected World

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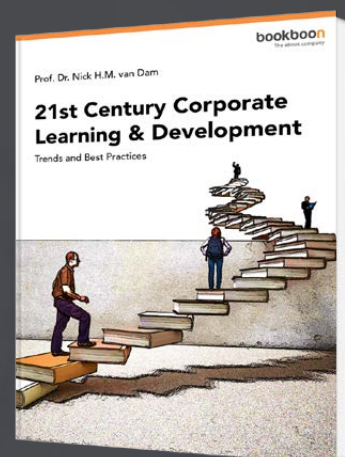
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1 INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media has taken the world by storm. More than a billion people use applications such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram as their primary means to link with friends, relatives, and increasingly, businesses. Social media is popular because it facilitates the practice of social networking and is based on the premise that people are profoundly communal and have a need to interact using voice, gesture, and written language. Natural human inclinations help make social media enticing and fun to use. Social media supports a variety of interaction in digital environments by making it possible for users to supply, aggregate, filter, and consume information in various forms.¹ Not only do people seek social outlets for daily life, they rely on social cues in business activities such as decision making, planning, and communication. New technologies and a willingness to interact online make it possible to move the inherent social nature of humans onto new digital platforms.

For a long time, many people equated social media with Facebook but it has become so much more. Facebook does facilitate the creation and use of *social networks* but so do many other systems. And many of these do so in fast, effective ways.² Numerous online social networks manifest in the form of virtual space where a community of people share information about themselves and their interests. These networks can be public or restricted to a circle of friends. People access their social networks by posting messages asynchronously or by using chat tools to talk or message in real time. Social media users can leave multimedia messages (images, pictures, songs, videos, or animations) on *walls*. Members create online profiles with biographical information, pictures of themselves, current status, hobbies, interests, and other information. Recent examples of social media have begun to incorporate more real time communication methods including live video streaming. Other examples of social media applications include Instagram, Periscope, LinkedIn (a favorite of business users), Twitter, Vine, TinyChat and Reddit.

Social media also works at various levels with different degrees of complexity and services. For instance, social media includes *instant messaging* (IM) and *texting*. Not long ago, the preferred Internet-based communication method was email. Today, many business users rely heavily on real time communication which includes social cues in the form of emoticons and avatars. IM'ing and texting allow people to communicate in real-time or if a user is offline, messages can queue and wait until the recipient is available. IM providers have added features such as group chats, voice, video, file transfers, and other capabilities to enrich communication. Examples of IM systems include Microsoft Instant Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, Facebook Messenger, and others. Texting systems often are embedded with mobile smart phone devices and offer features specific to that piece of hardware. For instance, Apple offers its iMessage system to make texting on iPhones, iPads, and other platforms easy (See Figure 1.1).

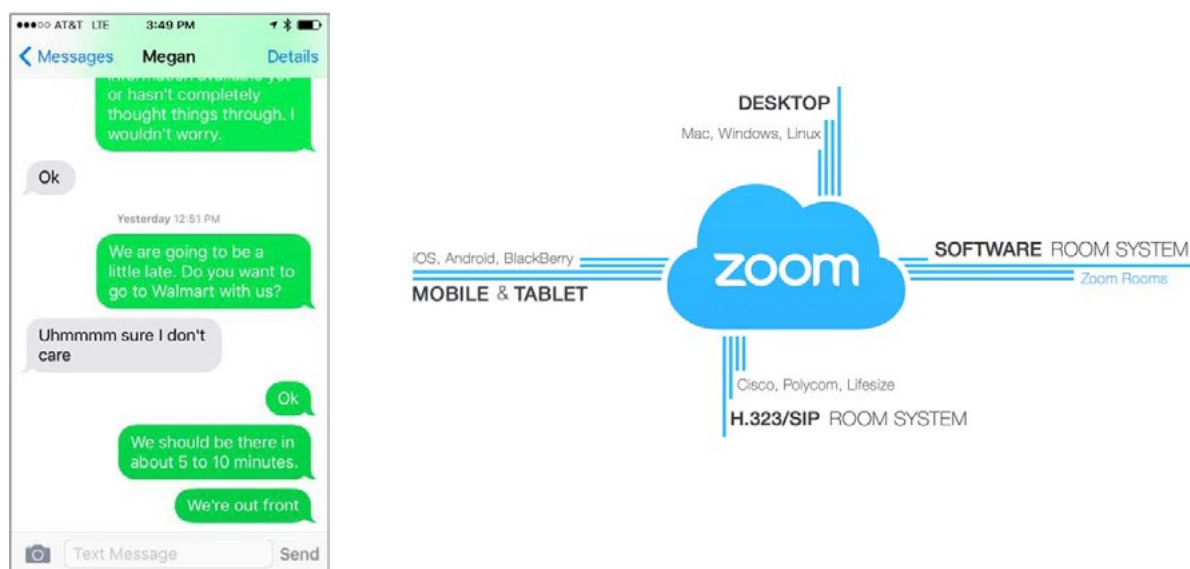


Figure 1.1 iMessage App from Apple and Zoom.us

Audio and video conferencing capabilities add a level of richness to the IM interface. Services such as Yahoo Messenger and Microsoft Instant Messenger use both audio and video to enhance communication capability. Web video conferencing and messaging range from personal video chats to chat rooms displaying multiple videos. Skype is a popular web video conferencing tool that enables free Web conversations as well as connecting to mobile phones and landlines. Skype also permits file transfer, text messaging and more features. In the business world, Cisco's WebEx, Zoom.us (Figure 1.1) and other similar products are often used for video or audio conference users.

More than ever, businesses use social media as a means of locating, understanding, connecting to, and interacting with their customers. Marketing managers move beyond placing ads in relevant venues and now view close to real-time discussions that praise or criticize their products and services. Posts and conversations on social media sites have become valuable sources of data. New data analytics tools and techniques have emerged to help businesses understand existing customers and locate potentially new customers. Emerging technologies focus on identifying customer sentiment toward particular brands or products, which help in business planning. In some industries, analysts use special data analytics tools to monitor conversations, tweets and posts on social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. These tools sort through massive amounts of data using complex algorithms to monitor and decode words, opinions, rants, and even emoticons. The results can help provide insight into consumer mindsets about company offerings and more general feelings toward the economy and political environments.

Social media is multifaceted and has many overlaps in both form and function. A basic premise of social media is to enable the posting of content with the intent of encouraging interaction. Social media users disseminate and publish text, audio, video, art, cartoons, documents, books and other media using Web 2.0 concepts.³ Individuals have the ability to publish and distribute materials in ways that were only available to large organizations just a few years ago. Social media promotes knowledge sharing, the democratization of information, and allows those with digital technology capabilities to become content producers rather than just consumers.

Social media quickly has expanded and now encompasses many aspects of daily life and business. This book will examine this expansion and will focus on newer forms of social media, particularly areas relevant to businesses and organizations. To create a better understanding, we will examine how social media has disrupted many institutions relied on by society and updated them into new forms. Services and goods such as newspapers, magazines, radio programs, record albums, telephones, and television have been reimagined and recreated in digital form with an added benefit: a layer of social interaction.

1.1 SOCIAL MEDIA ORIGINS IN WEB 2.0

To understand social media, it is important to understand its origins. A key to that is reviewing the concept of Web 2.0. To some, the term Web 2.0 might suggest that a new version of the World Wide Web is running on a vast network of powerful computers somewhere. In actuality, this is far from the truth. Web 2.0 is a term coined during the *O'Reilly Media Web 2.0 Conference* in late 2004 used to describe applications that allow people to participate in information creation, digital resource sharing, webpage design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web. Examples of Web 2.0 applications overlap heavily with social media and include Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, WordPress, Wikipedia, and Blogger. Put simply, Web 2.0 sites allow users to collaborate with each other in social settings. It has been called the read/write Web. Users can create and share content in virtual communities set up by software developers according to the purpose of the site. Since Web 2.0 does not refer to updates to technical specification but rather in how people use the Web, this term has been publically challenged by World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee. He feels the term is a *piece of jargon* because the Web is operating in the way he had originally envisioned. He called the Web *a collaborative medium, a place where we all meet and read and write*.⁴

No matter if we call it Web 2.0 or not, the World Wide Web has been changed dramatically. New material is being created and posted by people from all across the globe. Not too long ago, websites were created by specialists from universities or businesses and could be viewed by other people but not used to communicate. In the same way that traditional radio and television were set up as one broadcaster reaching many people, so was the World Wide Web. Today, however, everyday people are recreating the Web with their posts on Facebook, their photos on Flickr, their videos on YouTube, their blogs on Tumblr, their tweets on Twitter, and their sense of what news is important on Digg, Reddit and even mainstream media sites. The Web has become an extension of our daily lives and that is important to business and the way people will interact in the future. The Web has become a many to many communication channel. This is the essence of Web 2.0. The following section describe how social media came about through understanding a general history of the Internet and the World Wide Web.

One of the most significant services using the Internet is a collection of interconnected documents organized into human-readable computer screens called webpages. A collection of webpages forms a website. The benefit of websites captured the general public's enthusiastic attention shortly after its invention⁸ and all forms of information began to appear in easy-to-access online formats. Initially, websites were informational and static, and comprised little more than a collection of linked pages usually containing text and images. Later, videos and digital assets such as flash animation were added to the mix. Websites became more sophisticated and could be hosted on one or more Web servers. These servers were often tied to database management systems and application servers, and were accessible through Internet addresses known as Uniform Resource Locators (URLs). The collective whole of public websites became known as the World Wide Web (See Figure 1.3).

A dark blue advertisement for Rand Merchant Bank. The background features a large, faint, stylized lion's head. In the center, the text "YOU THINK. YOU CAN WORK AT RMB" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. In the top right corner, there is a white box containing the Rand Merchant Bank logo (a lion holding a key), the text "RAND MERCHANT BANK", "A division of FirstRand Bank Limited", and the slogan "Traditional values. Innovative ideas." data-bbox="138 534 900 832"/>

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The transmitted material is received by the client application, which could be a Web browser, mobile device, application program or other software. It will interpret the HTML markup language instructions and render the page into the desired form. For Web browsers, this means a human readable version on a display terminal. The arriving material may also take the form of other digital artifacts that result in animation, audio or video outputs.

1.3 WEB 2.0 IN CONTEXT

As mentioned previously, the term Web 2.0 is used to describe a social way of using Internet technologies. Web 2.0 doesn't refer to a technical update of underlying software or hardware platforms specifically but rather to changes in the way the Web is used and created by businesses, universities, society, organizations, and individuals. Web 2.0 can be viewed as four major, interrelated components: (1) social media, (2) filtering and recommendations, (3) content sharing, and (4) Web applications. Most components of Web 2.0 share certain common characteristics and overlap in significant ways. Professor Andrew McAfee of Harvard Business School suggests the use of an acronym, SLATES, to describe these commonalities¹⁰ as shown in Table 1.1.

| SLATES Category | Description | Examples |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Search | Finding information through keyword search. | Google – Searches keywords and other webpage features Reddit – Searches tags added by webpage users |
| Links | Connects information into a meaningful ecosystem using the model of the Web and provides low-barrier social tools. | Adding Friends in Facebook Bookmarking websites in browsers |
| Authoring | The ability to create and update content leads to the collaborative work of multiple authors. | Users create entries, edit and extend existing entries. They also undo and redo each other's work. Bloggers create posts and comments on the work of others |

| SLATES Category | Description | Examples |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Tags | Users categorize content by adding their own descriptive tags which are short, one or two word descriptions. Tags facilitate searching based on what website users, rather than developers, believe the sites represent. Collections of tags created by multiple users are called folksonomies (short for folk taxonomies). | <p>Tagging photos in Facebook with friends' names</p> <p>Creating descriptive tags in StumbleUpon to alert other users of material on a particular webpage</p> |
| Extensions | Extension software provides additional capabilities to Web browsers and allows more than just HTML documents to be used. Essentially makes the Web an application platform as well as a document server. | <p>Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash player, ActiveX, Oracle Java, and QuickTime are all extensions</p> |



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| SLATES Category | Description | Examples |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Signals | Syndication technology enables material to be broadcast to multiple websites and to notify consumers when new material appears. | RSS feeds on CNN.com notify users of new breaking news. RSS feed capability built into blogs permits new entries to be read in an application like NetVibes |

Table 1.1 SLATES: Common Characteristics of Web 2.0 Components

Linda Stone, a former Microsoft executive and visionary thinker, indirectly demonstrates the development of Web 2.0 by looking at the evolution of technology in a new way. She suggests that technologies have pulled back the shroud on our private lives and moved closer to the individual. She describes how computing technologies first were available to only large companies and organizations due to cost and the need for engineering expertise. Personal computers moved information processing to the desktop giving power to knowledge workers in their everyday jobs. Mobile devices and the Web moved power to the individual and their daily social lives – both in and out of the workplace. This allowed collaboration, sharing, and interaction to reshape the World Wide Web into Web 2.0. Finally, Stone suggests that technologies will eventually be integrated with our physical being. She says, *Intimate Layer* computing will result in devices that monitor our brain waves, examine our sleep patterns, and clock our heart rates and then use that information to better our lives. We are already seeing these types of advances in many areas. Table 1.2 summarizes.¹¹

| Layer | Era | Key Characteristics |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Public | Mainframe Computers (1945–1965) | Power of information was controlled by a select few individuals such as corporate managers. |
| Personal | The Personal Computer (1965–1985) | Power of information moved to the desktop so knowledge workers could control data, words, and images. |
| Private | Mobile Devices (1985–2005) | Power of information moved to the individual so anyone with a network connection and computing platform could control data, words, video, and images. |
| Intimate | Self-Technologies (2005–2025?) | Power of information will be intimately connected to the individual's physical presence and integrated with networked computing platforms. |

Table 1.2 Technology Evolution Creating Environment for Web 2.0

Since we have already introduced social media, the following sections will provide an overview of the other three general components: content sharing, filtering/recommendations, and Web applications before we begin talking about specific uses of social media in business.

1.3.1 CONTENT SHARING

Content sharing using Web 2.0 ideas has grown in importance and acceptance in the business world and in many other areas. Businesses get their message into the world by sharing their material, often at low or no cost to the consumer. At the same time they are finding innovative ways to leverage existing content that has been developed by others and licensed with *Creative Commons* attribution.¹²

Content sharing has a great deal of overlap and integration with social media and some Websites like YouTube can be classified as social media primarily focused on video sharing. Other forms of content sharing important to business include sites that promote text, photos, videos, multimedia, e-books, business presentations and all sorts of other artifacts that are created and then made freely available. Sometimes the material is posted as a means of gaining recognition in particular areas. Consultants and business services may take this approach when trying to connect with potential clients and establishing expertise in a particular area. Occasionally the material is posted simply because the developer wants to perform a service to their particular area of interest. Frequently, material such as videos and photos, are posted because people want to share their experiences with friends and online social communities. In any case, the vast abundance of shared, free information is staggering and can have a profound impact on business operations.

Video, photo, and other media sharing services are among the most popular sites on the Web and have quickly gained large audiences of both business and individual users. From a business perspective, many advantages can be gained from sharing material and using free, existing material. Businesses can save time, money and resources by using existing images, templates, and training material. By sharing internally developed material, publicity and name recognition can be increased. Of course, the use of material from sharing sites must be carefully reviewed to ensure quality and suitability for use.

Most sites provide settings that enable media to be used according to rules regulating privacy and ownership. In most cases, an item is made public or remains private so that only invited guests possessing a password may view the material. Some sharing sites stipulate that all images are public domain and may be used in any way. Others are strict about usage. It is important for the business to determine their level of comfort with sharing and the potential for an organization to harvest the picture for their commercial use before agreeing to the terms of service.¹

Another area of content sharing includes social publishing. Sites such as Scribd, SlideShare and TidyForms, target the exchange of the written word and provide online books, articles, presentations, PDF files, textbooks, business forms, and other documents. Scribd has been called the Netflix of the written word and reports that more than 1 billion pages of material have been uploaded and shared on its website. Over 60 million people visit Scribd each month and form an active community of social publishers and readers.¹³ Scribd has a vision of “turn[ing] everyone into a publisher and creat[ing] the best possible reading experience on the Web and mobile platforms.”¹⁴ Scribd offers both Web and mobile interfaces. Scribd also sells commercial works of fiction and nonfiction in text and audio formats. Readers’ ratings help ensure that the best items are the easiest to find (See Figure 1.4).

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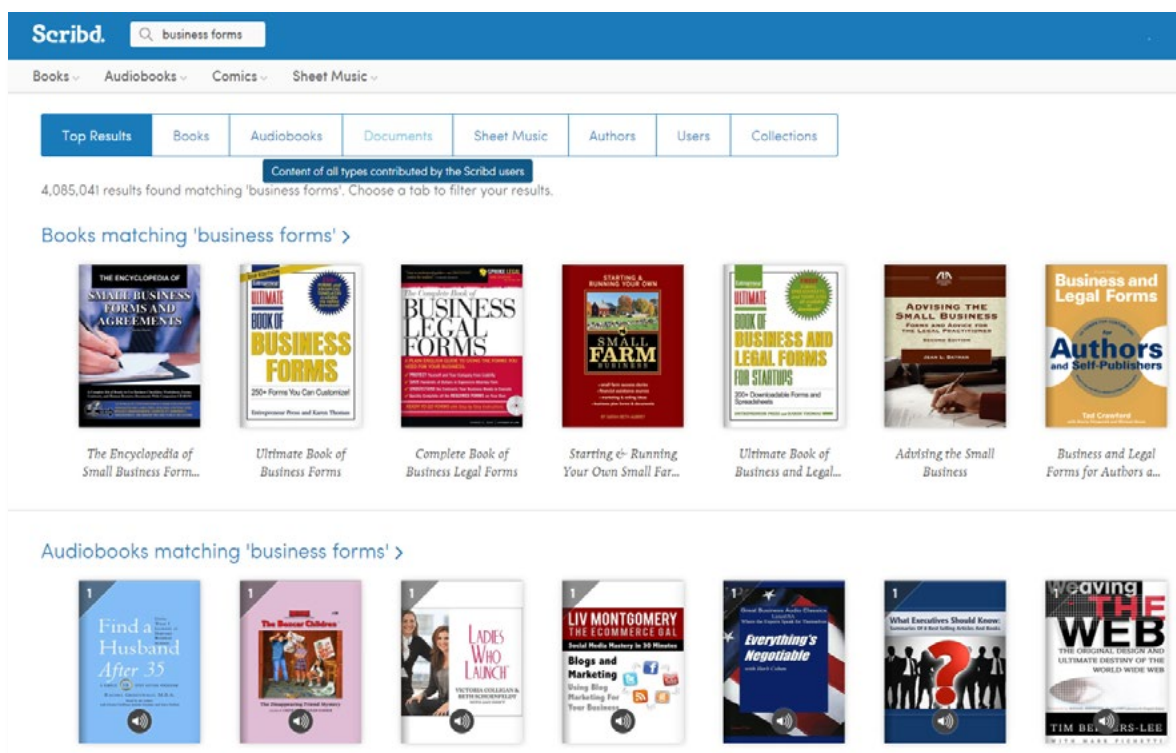


Figure 1.4 Scribd Interface

In general, content sharing has redefined the way individuals and businesses look at information creation and use. A number of new business models have emerged and these models enhance the way businesses reach out to existing and new customers. Businesses can provide free content with links back to their websites or they can use high quality documents and media that have been developed by others and made available online. New forms of copyright protection and management are emerging. This will be explored in greater detail in a subsequent chapter where more forms of content sharing are reviewed.

1.3.2 FILTERING/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Web 2.0 concepts of interacting, sharing and collaborating have made it possible for individuals to develop recommendations and provide their opinions on almost all online content. This ‘grassroots’ filtering process has an enormous impact on consumer behavior in many ways. First, it creates a new level of information that replaces expert opinions once limited to powerful individuals with access to the press. For instance, not long ago, newspaper editors decided which stories would become their headlines and which stories would be given low priority or not even run. That still happens to some extent but social news and commentary websites such as [Google News](#), [Digg Top News](#), Reddit, Delicious and others promote the readers’ highly rated stories who discover and ultimately determine the importance of various articles. Online stores find that product reviews written by customers often are given more credibility than reviews created by marketing specialists. ‘Likes’ on Facebook and other social networks drive incredible amounts of online traffic to particular Websites. See Figure 1.5 for an example of social news filtered by customer ratings.



Figure 1.5 Reddit News Allows Users to Determine Top Stories

The collected wisdom of multiple people often provides unanticipated social structures. This means new ways of viewing and using information becomes possible. Social bookmarking and tagging are two important tools that permit the culture of “filtering and recommending” to thrive within Web 2.0 websites.

Social bookmarking relies on a user community to create a self-organizing reference system based on the perceptions of the group. The idea works this way: (1) a community member locates a website they wish to remember; (2) they bookmark the page so returning to it is easier; (3) software adds the individual bookmark to a database; (4) the database shares the collected bookmarks with the entire group. A system such as this allows a user community to share and categorize large numbers of bookmarks and create an index of helpful websites. Instead of sites being grouped according to computer algorithms developed by Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, and others, these sites reflect the collective wisdom of people using the Web. Sites can be ranked based on the number of bookmarks, by the latest activity or other criteria. Users contribute their knowledge but have no idea what overall pattern will result.

From an individual perspective, social bookmarking is valuable because it provides a way to store collections of bookmarks that are not tied to a specific computer. By logging into the social bookmarking website, users can access their favorite pages from any computer with an Internet connection. From a group perspective, social bookmarking provides a way to democratize the Web and shift power from computing organizations to individual users. Helpful pages are selected by people that need to use the pages and therefore the bookmarks should represent higher quality content (See Table 1.6).



The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. To the right, there are two smaller circular images: one showing three children looking at a book together, and another showing a group of children working at computers in a classroom. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'e-learning for kids' consisting of a grid of colorful squares. At the bottom right, a green oval contains a list of achievements. Below the main image, there is a text block providing information about the organization.

e-learning for kids

- The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education
- Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12
- 15 Million Children Reached

About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFKI. An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.







| Site | Web Address | Description |
|---|---|--|
|  | http://digg.com/ | Digg allows people to discover and share content from anywhere on the Web. Users can bookmark sites from the biggest online destinations to the most obscure blog. Digg ranks the results as voted on by our community. |
|  | http://www.stumbleupon.com | Based on user interest profiles, StumbleUpon suggests Web pages, videos, photos and more. Users provide 'Like' or 'Dislike' recommendations to drive future content choices. |
|  | http://www.reddit.com/ | Reddit tracks what's new and popular on the Web using votes from users. Users can bump up or down deciding what's good (↑) and what's junk (↓). |
|  | http://www.buzzfeed.com | BuzzFeed is essentially social bookmarking for pop culture items. They suggest marking an outrageous video about to go viral, obscure subculture breaking into the mainstream, Hollywood gossip and so forth. This site focuses on movies, music, and products that are on the rise. |
|  | http://www.delicious.com/ | One of the original social bookmarking sites, Delicious helps users find material on the Web and collect it for easy sharing. |
|  | http://www.diigo.com/ | Diigo started as a popular social bookmarking site but now offers Web annotation and collaborative research services together with collecting capability for screenshots, pictures, notes, and more. Also offers mobile platform support. |

Table 1.6 Popular Social Bookmarking and Related Sites

Tags (also called hashtags when prefaced with ‘#’) are closely related to social bookmarking and are often used as a key component of these sites. Tags are essentially descriptive keywords assigned by people to help identify the content of a resource on the Web. This resource can be a webpage, image, blog entry, video, or anything else. These keywords are meant to make it easier to find a resource again or to better describe a page for future searches. Tags are informally assigned by a viewer or item ‘owner’. As more users contribute their tags, a collection grows. This collection is known as a folksonomy.

Tagging is one of the major underlying tools that have enabled Web 2.0 to become driven by individuals and their collaborative perspectives. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 in this chapter both illustrate the use of tag clouds generated by how often words occur. The more often a tag set developed by a user contains common words, the larger that word becomes in the cloud. Cloud tags can be generated on the Website called Wordle.net (see Figure 1.7).

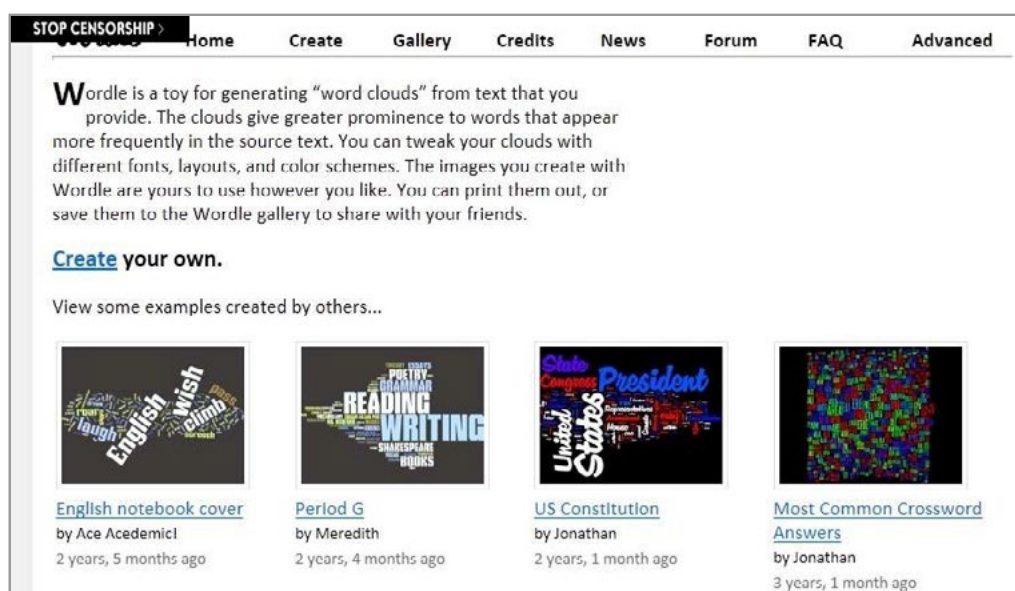


Figure 1.7 Wordle.net Homepage

Tagging is not limited to just virtual applications. In fact, tagging has been used by owners of mobile devices to describe real world geographic locations, features, and other objects. As early as 2009, Sekai Camera of Japan offered technology that used the iPhone camera to overlay tags and information onto real world objects. Other users could look through their camera and see icons pop up to describe buildings, stores, sightseeing spots or objects.¹⁵ Another example is a sound sharing platform system called Freesound that uses a tagging convention.¹⁶

Although in its infancy, this technology (or others like it) promises to create an augmented reality that provides a vast number of new business opportunities. Marketing, advertising, information services, and other applications will thrive in an environment where virtual information is readily available to people in close physical proximity.

The underlying technology driving this use of tagging results when mobile devices take pictures and read bar codes that are linked to geospatial databases. GPS coordinates are attached to a database of tags that describe the real world objects. Museums, conference halls, parks, businesses and other entities are exploring these ideas to virtualize the real world. Some believe this could eventually form the basis for recreating the physical world in cyberspace and in metaverses¹ Several technical issues remain. For instance, cameras don't have embedded compasses so they don't know which direction they are being pointed at when tags are retrieved. Users need to intervene and select from a number of different tag sets to rectify this problem.



Brain power

By 2020, wind could provide one-tenth of our planet's electricity needs. Already today, SKF's innovative know-how is crucial to running a large proportion of the world's wind turbines.

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Social bookmarking and tagging provide a basic technology that help filter and classify a portion of the Web's vast information. Drawbacks do exist. Sometimes tags are misspelled or inaccurate. Information can be wrongly classified. For many systems, there are no tagging standards and language issues can be a barrier. Tags can have different structures with some being plural and others singular, and so forth. However, even with these problems, the social Web is being built by people for people.

1.3.3 WEB APPLICATIONS

Another aspect of Web 2.0 is the amazing proliferation of easy-to-use, low-cost tools called apps. Whether for business, pleasure, or individual productivity, hundreds of thousands of cross-platform applications are readily available for nearly every imaginable use. Business users can visit the Apple or Android App store and find tools to help accomplish tasks using mobile devices. The general premise is that these Web applications are conveniently available over networks and can be easily discovered and downloaded by users. The Apple App Store and the Android Store provide a mechanism to accomplish this for mobile devices. Their infrastructure helps drive down distribution and maintenance costs. Apps are also available from other sources (typically websites) and may not always be focused on mobile devices. Many apps rely on cloud storage as a way to enhance mobility and data sharing.

Common business applications include: virtual office tools, database systems, webmail, graphics manipulation software, video and audio editors, accounting software, customer relationship management (CRM), sales force management, human resources, project management, electronic to-do lists, and countless others. This aspect of Web 2.0 will be described in subsequent chapters. Table 1.7 provides a list of top business apps recommended by PC Magazine and others.

| App | Icon | Description |
|------------------|---|--|
| Dragon Diction |  | Voice transcription software with the ability to share messages via e-mail, Facebook, and Twitter. |
| Dropbox for iPad |  | Free app enables offline file sharing between desktops, laptops, and mobile devices. |





| App | Icon | Description |
|-----------------|--|---|
| FileMaker Go |  | Allows users to access databases on the go without needing a laptop or PC. |
| iWork |  | This is really three apps: Keynote for presentations, Numbers for spreadsheets and Pages for word processing. These three apps give a user the ability to transform a mobile device into a personal productivity too. |
| Quickoffice Pro |  | Allows users to create, edit, access and share MS-Office files. |
| Twitter |  | This mobile microblogging tool allows a user to receive twitter updates and to send tweets to followers. |

Table 1.7 Sample of Useful Apps for Business

1.4 CONCLUSIONS

Emerging technologies and capabilities enabled by the Internet and the Web transformed business practices. We introduced the components of Web 2.0 including: (1) social media, (2) filtering and recommendations, (3) content sharing, and (4) Web applications. All these technologies have caused organizations to rethink the way they do business and connect with customers, employees and other stakeholders.

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the technologies we will explore in more detail throughout this book. As you will see, the business opportunities available to today are unprecedented. You are in a position to be part of a movement to redefine the future of business and launch new enterprises across the globe. It is an exciting time to enter the work force. The next chapter continues the discussion of Web 2.0 technologies looking specifically at blogging and related technologies.

2 BLOGGING FOR BUSINESS

Blogs were among the first applications to become associated with the transition from static Web pages to social media. In early forms, blogs commonly were used as online journals and had evolved from Usenet, bulletin board systems, and moderated newsgroups. In the mid-1990s more online journals began to appear. These journals were soon known as weblogs. This word eventually was shortened to 'blog' by Jorn Barger.¹⁷

In their original form, weblogs were not collaborative technologies. Instead, they gave an individual voice to a person wishing to place their thoughts and opinions into an unedited public space. This one-to-many communication tool soon was updated to allow readers to post comments and provide feedback. Since that time, the blog has become a place where material can be synthesized, mashed, and then opened to comments. Likes and dislikes can be noted. Video, audio, images and other media can be incorporated into blog entries. A variety of blogging tools, websites, and services have emerged in response. Well known sites include Blogger, WordPress, Tumblr, LiveJournal, and others. In 2015, according to blog expert, Greg Narayan, WordPress.com had 60 million users, WordPress.org had 56 million users and Tumblr had over 150 million users.

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Why should business pay attention to the blog? The widespread use of blogging technology alone is reason enough to consider the implications for connecting with potential customers, promoting products and developing a recognized business presence. A business blog can give an organization the opportunity to get its message out into the world in the way it desires. Business blogs can come from many sources within an organization including the CEO, a marketing executive, product development department, product support specialist, and others.

When reading a business blog, it is important to realize it has been developed to achieve a particular organizational goal. For instance, the Unbottled Blog by Coca-Cola has entries written by a team and often features executives talking about exciting new developments and issues that promote the company's image as environmentally conscious and socially responsible (See Figure 2.1). Walmart Corporation blogs about its corporate giving, support of community activities, and innovation (See Figure 2.2). Both of these examples are typical of larger corporations. They get their message out into the world without external editors, reviewers, or perspectives being interjected. They can control which reader comments are posted and which are not displayed.

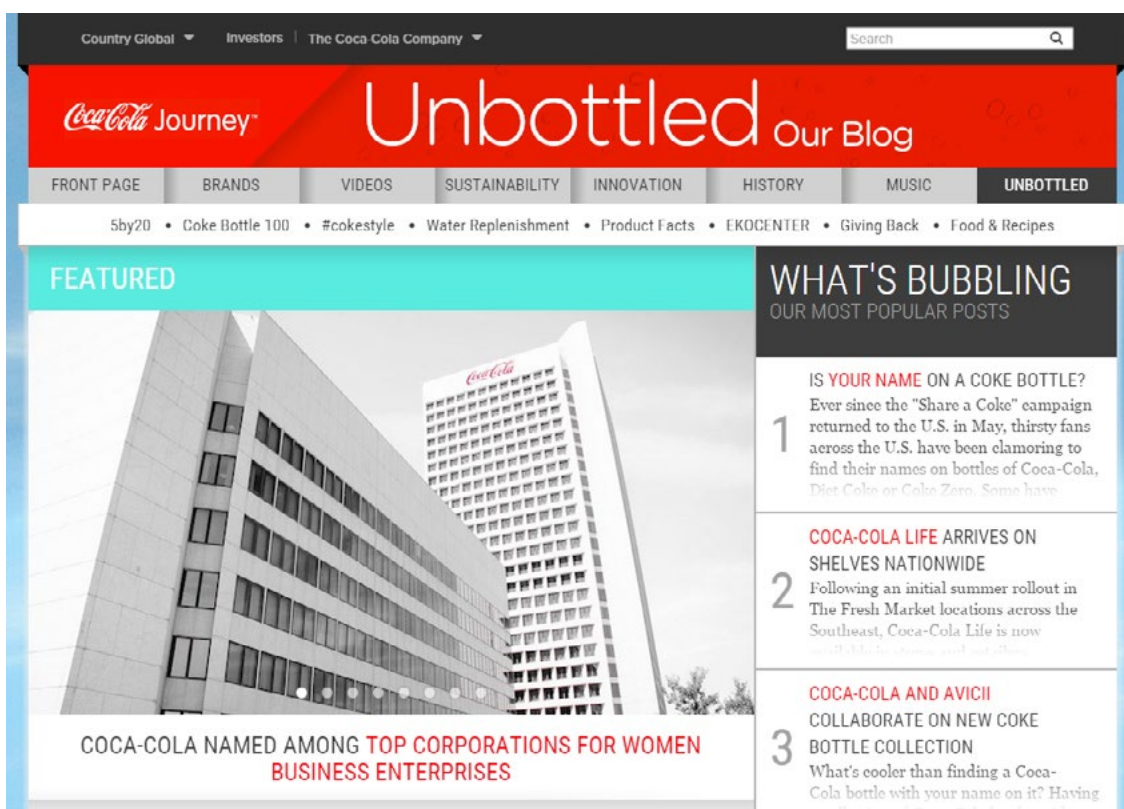


Figure 2.1 Unbottled Coca-Cola Blog

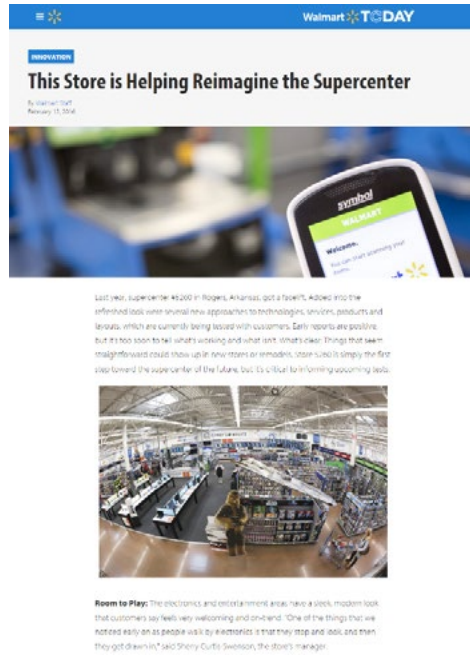


Figure 2.2 Walmart Corporate

Small businesses can also use blogs to further their organizational missions. Often, startup companies use blogs as low cost advertising. They also may be hoping to become better known through social media, social networking connections, and viral marketing. For instance, the Goodman Jones Chartered Accountants blog from London provides advice and information about trends of interest to individuals or companies that might require their services. This blog seeks to enhance the reputation and give a public voice to the firm (See Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.3 Small Business Blog from Goodman Jones

2.1 VOICE AND PERSONALITY

Effective use of blogs in a business setting requires understanding several key attributes. Among these are: voice, frequency, style, features and passion. Each attribute represents a component of an overall personality for the blog and will determine the types of audience that will find the blog useful or interesting.

Blogs can be written from many different perspectives. A blog's **voice** refers to the way the entries are presented and worded. For most blogs, this means a departure from a journalism type voice where facts and events are described and instead an aim to create an everyday conversation that makes the messages sound personal to the readers. Most blogs are not a collection of articles. Instead, readers expect to find specific opinions and a representation of the person doing the writing. When comparing blog entries to newspaper writing, it is helpful to think of the blogs being more similar to opinion columns and editorials than to headline articles. A blog's voice will embody the approach the writer takes for communication. Blogs often use humor, sarcasm, self-deprecation, irony, over-the-top seriousness, or other approaches to create a voice that captures the readers' attention.

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A second attribute of a blog's personality is the **frequency** with which articles are published. Remember, blogs are a form of technology that allows the writer's material to be instantly available to the public. Timely material can be published and a sense of immediacy may be expected of the blog. So, when a significant event occurs, it is helpful to update the blog right away. It is also helpful for the readers if the writer of the blog never allows more than a predetermined time to pass without adding an article. Depending on the audience and the goals for a blog, this might be a day, a week, or some other time frame. Most readers subscribe to their favorite blogs so updates automatically become available when the blogger publishes an entry. It can be a fine balance between too many entries and not enough. By monitoring the blog's traffic statistics, the blogger eventually can determine a good entry frequency approach.

Blog **style** also can be important to success and readership. A blog that looks amateurish will reflect on readers' perceptions of a business. Most blog hosting sites offer themes which are preformatted configurations. Themes may be free or they may be premium and cost money. Figure 2.4 shows example WordPress blog themes from the many thousands available.

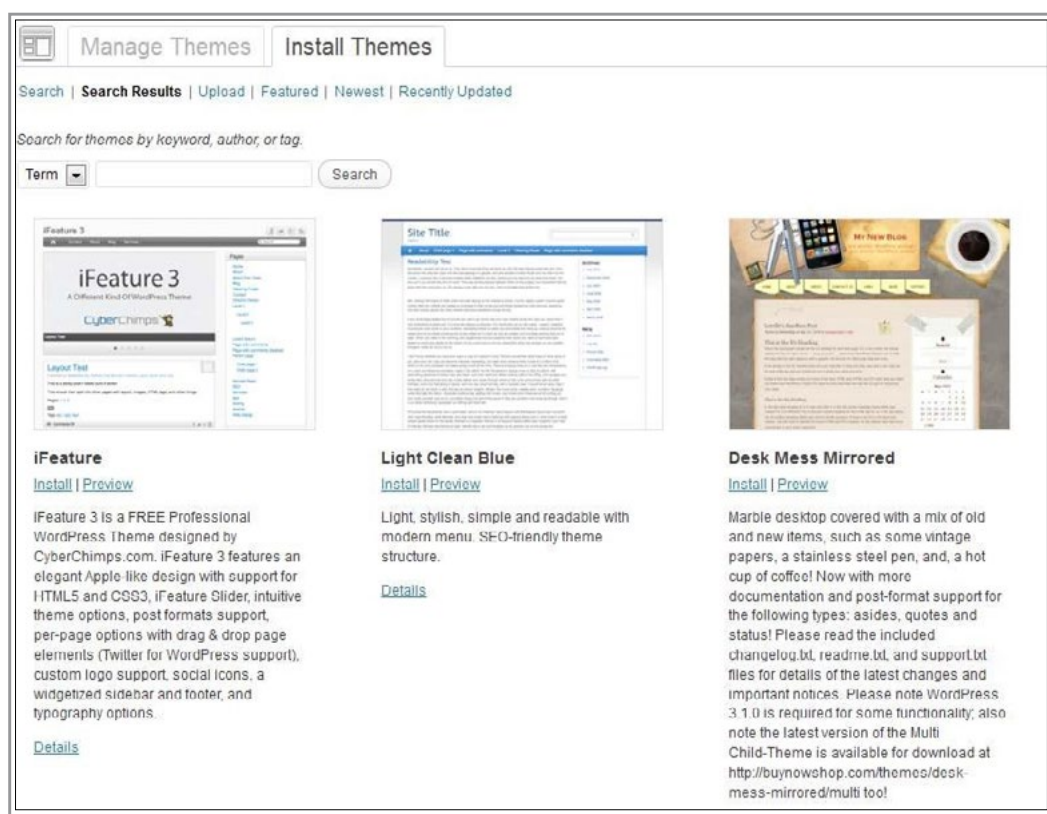

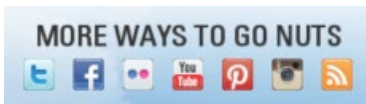




Figure 2.4 Example WordPress Blog Themes

In order to be successful, more than the blog appearance is important. Other features must be in place to ensure social and traditional Web searches easily can find published content and share it via syndication (covered in the RSS Feeds section of this book). In general, business blogs are fitted with mechanisms which enable search engine optimization (SEO), social media optimization (SMO), and, if desired, monetization. Monetization can be achieved directly through advertising revenue or indirectly through capture of potential customer leads. Blogs are often a key component of marketing campaigns and must be integrated with broader marketing strategies. Table 2.1 illustrates other blog features that businesses should consider.¹⁸

| Blog Feature | Explanation | Example |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>Name or Title of Blog</p> | <p>The name of a business blog is very important. It becomes both a brand and a recognizable entity attached to the business. Having a good title will enable a blog to stand out in a list of subscriptions and will provide a sense of purpose for the blog's goals.</p> |  <p>Southwest airlines say: "Our goal with the new Nuts About Southwest remains to give our visitors the opportunity to take a look inside Southwest Airlines and to interact with us." The name conveys fun and whimsy and they achieve their goal with this site. http://www.blogsouthwest.com/</p> |
| <p>Share Buttons</p> | <p>Social media and bookmarking are among the best mechanisms for blogs to gain recognition and find an audience. Adding share buttons makes it easy for existing readers to promote the site.</p> |  <p>The Nuts About Southwest blog provides a number of access buttons for sharing entries. Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram are all included near the top of the blog.</p>  <p>Each entry ends with a Luv, Tweet and Facebook button for sharing a particular entry. The ShareThis button brings up another set of potential sites for social media and bookmarking (See Figure 2.5).</p> |

| Blog Feature | Explanation | Example |
|---------------|---|---|
| Subscriptions | Blogs need to have subscription capability. Subscriptions automatically send new blog entries to the reader in their email or use RSS capability to load new entries into a blog reader. Potential subscribers need both options. |  <p>The Southwest blog invites readers to join the community which will create an email subscription and give the reader the ability to post comments under a pseudonym. It also provides an RSS button (the orange one above) that allows a subscription to be entered into blog aggregator software such as Gator or a dashboard such as NetVibes</p> |

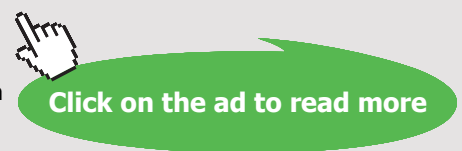
“I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons”



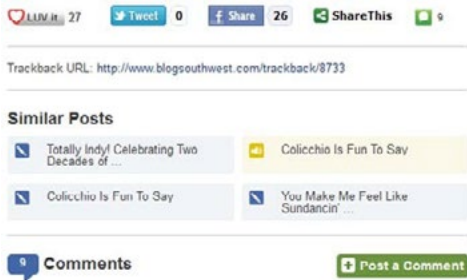
Jane, Chinese architect



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| Blog Feature | Explanation | Example |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| <p>Call to Action</p> | <p>In order to keep the interest of readers, blogs need to be more than just reporting content. This is particularly true for business blogs. Blogs need a call to action or at least need to be sure they are presenting actions being taken by the company to forward moral agenda. Customers can be invited to participate in a call to action graphic or text.</p> |  <p>This is an example graphic that can be added to a blog to promote a favored charity. Southwest often promotes charities this way.</p> |
| <p>Partnering with Social Media</p> | <p>Certain readers will prefer to use the blog via their social media accounts. It is important to give them this option.</p> |  <p>In the Southwest Blog, a Facebook Connect button has been added to allow the blog to be engaged through social media.</p> |
| <p>End of Post Actions</p> | <p>At the end of a blog post, readers should be given options regarding what to do next. This might entail leaving a comment, sharing the post, or reading additional, related material.</p> |  <p>Southwest’s blog provides a blog post reader with several options upon completion. They invite the reader to share the post via several choices. They allow the reader to ‘like’ the post. They provide a trackback URL for the reader’s use. They also list similar posts that might be of interest. Finally, they provide a quick way to leave a comment and allow the reader to view existing comments on the article.</p> |


| Blog Feature | Explanation | Example |
|--------------|---|--|
| Comments | Blogs can use comments to ignite discussions and drive traffic to their website. It also can be used as a metric to determine the interest in a blog. |  <p>Southwest’s blog has an active set of comments and discussions following most posts.</p> |

Table 2.1 Desirable Blog Features

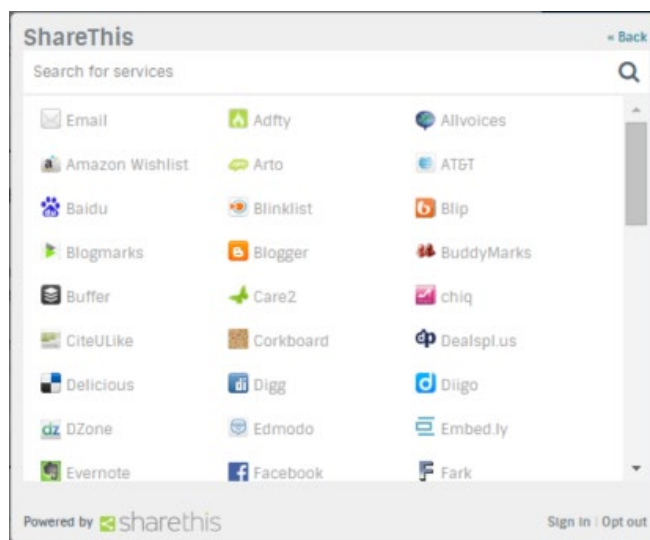


Figure 2.5 Additional Social Media Sites Southwest Lists for Its Blog

Finally, blogs need to exhibit passion for the subject covered. They work best as direct-to-the-point entries that don’t get too wordy or long. The following suggestions can help a writer ensure their material conveys passion:

Read Fresh and Thought-Provoking Material: Don’t limit your reading to current news and the same blog entries that everyone else reads. It will be reflected in your blog. It will lack freshness and fail to have a unique voice. Writing output directly relates to reading input. Absorb new and fresh ideas by observing the world, talking to people working in related areas, reading old and unusual books, and spending time reflecting and thinking. Attempt to discover useful subject matter not related to your blog that will add value because of the author’s style or way of approaching topics. Seek to find unexpected inspiration and new ways of viewing your topics from these alternative sources.

Blogs Don't Need to be Balanced: Blogs are useful in conveying an opinion. Remember, people reading blogs will read more than just your company blog. For a specific blog entry, it is better to choose a direction and make a strong case for it. Reader comments can provide alternative points of view and perhaps build a case for the opposing set of arguments. This is a good way to create a discussion online. If an entry is meant to influence readers, provide them with the best arguments for your opinion. This will convey passion. Passion becomes the elusive but essential component to powerful and compelling writing. A blog entry with passion will unleash the opinions of others and encourage them to reply and provide their thoughts to the community a business blog seeks to build. Passion will ensure a blog's message is carried beyond the website. Good writing may challenge opinions, offer alternatives to traditional views, and even offend or scare some readers. A passionate entry may be proven wrong and perhaps ruffle feathers but it will change minds and help build a reader base.

2.2 BLOG ENVIRONMENTS

A variety of environments exist for the implementation of blogs. A primary decision for businesses is whether to host their blog internally or to use a hosting service. The second option is often associated with cloud computing solutions and has become more popular in recent years.

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2.2.1 INTERNALLY HOSTED BLOGS

Hosting a blog internally has advantages and disadvantages. Internally hosted blogs means that the organization will need to have the computing hardware and software in-house. For small businesses just starting out, this might represent a challenge. For businesses that already have an IT department and a computing infrastructure, this will not pose as big of a challenge because blog hosting software is relatively stable and easy to install and use. Internally hosting a blog provides a business with more flexibility and freedom. It also ensures that the organization possesses and holds the data and information associated with the Website. It can be more easily integrated with the business Website and it allows the organization to develop an internal expertise with the administration of a blog. Table 2.2 provides examples of software that can be acquired for internally hosted blog sites.

| Software | Website | Comments |
|--------------|--|--|
| WordPress | <p data-bbox="533 1003 799 1039">http://wordpress.org/</p>  | <p data-bbox="884 842 1378 1505">This is the most popular open source blogging platform on the Web. Millions of blogs and general websites use it because it offers so many features and has many add-ins, plugins, themes, and extensions available. In addition, to being self-hosted, blogs can use hosting services with it directly or through third-party websites such as iPage.com. WordPress uses PHP and is available in numerous languages. Many experts believe this is the best blogging software available. It also supported by a large number of online communities. It is easy to confuse WordPress.org with its sister product WordPress.com which is a fully externally hosted blogging solution.</p> |
| Movable Type | <p data-bbox="555 1630 777 1700">http://www.movabletype.org/</p>  | <p data-bbox="884 1541 1378 1980">Movable Type is open source blogging software with a long history. It was released in 2001 by a company called Six Apart (a husband and wife effort). Many business blogs use this platform which can also host multiple weblogs, standalone content pages, and standalone websites. It also has file management features, user roles, templates, tags, categories, and trackback links. Movable Type has a large and active user community as well.</p> |

| Software | Website | Comments |
|-------------|--|--|
| TextPattern | <p data-bbox="523 376 807 405">http://textpattern.com/</p>  | <p data-bbox="884 297 1378 696">Textpattern was developed as a content management system. It is open source but was intended to be more of a general-purpose website tool. It is PHP and relies on a MySQL database. The current stable version is Textpattern. Many blog sites use this software because of its flexibility and browser-based interface in over 40 languages. It is favored by many developers with IT skills.</p> |
| Drupal | <p data-bbox="557 898 772 927">http://drupal.org/</p>  | <p data-bbox="884 734 1378 1319">Drupal is another general purpose Web publishing environment and content management system. It is free and open source and currently is used by about 1.5% of all Websites operating. More than just a blogging tool, it is used for corporate, government, and personal websites, knowledge management, and collaboration. The Drupal Core contains account management tools, menu systems, RSS-feeds, layout customization tools, and system administration components. Drupal is highly supported by communities of users. More than 11,000 free add-ons for the software have been developed.</p> |
| Joomla | <p data-bbox="523 1565 807 1594">http://www.joomla.org/</p>  | <p data-bbox="884 1359 1378 1984">Joomla is a very popular open source content management system reporting more than 21 million downloads between March, 2007 and February, 2011. It is used primarily as a website development tool but has found favor with many bloggers. Joomla is relatively easy-to-use. It is written in PHP and has built-in features that enable blog development and implementation of related features such as RSS feeds, news flashes, polls, searches, and other tools. Joomla has active user communities. There are over 10,000 free and commercial extensions available from the official Joomla Extension Directory and even more from other third-party sources.</p> |



| Software | Website | Comments |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <p>BlogEngine</p> | <p>http://www.dotnetblogengine.net/</p>  | <p>This blogging platform is open source and is used primarily by IT Developers that work with the ASP. NET platform available from Microsoft. BlogEngine provides a number of modern and attractive themes. It also provides extensions developed by a community of users. It has a much smaller user base.</p> |
| <p>ExpressionEngine</p> | <p>http://expressionengine.com/</p> | <p>ExpressionEngine is a high end, commercial blogging and backend content tool widely used by bloggers, particularly those in businesses needing a very polished image. ExpressionEngine is well supported by its internal staff and provides a user community on its website. ExpressionEngine provides a number of demos and sales support tools on its website.</p> |

Table 2.2 Self-Hosted Blog Platforms



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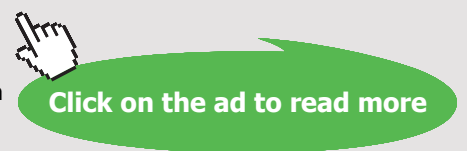
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2.2.2 BLOG HOSTING SERVICES

Many businesses decide to host their blogs on third-party websites. This makes particularly good sense for startup companies attempting to control their initial costs and for small businesses that have limited internal IT infrastructure. Many individual bloggers also take this approach. Among the advantages (in addition to not needing to maintain a hosting platform) are that software upgrades are done either automatically or with minimal effort; help support lines and customer service are usually available; the blog is probably automatically submitted to search engines; and, much of the installation and setup process may be automated. This means it is easier to get a blog started and noticed.

Some disadvantages also exist. For instance, business data is residing on another organization's hosting platform. If the hosting company went out of business or changed cost structure, a small business might have a difficult time recovering its data. However, many of the bigger blog hosts have been in business for a number of years and are more likely to be bought by larger firms rather than just close their doors.

Hosted blogs can be placed on free websites or on sites that cost a fee. Generally, fee structures are not high and provide benefits that far outweigh the costs. Blogs started in completely free services generally do not offer unique domain names. This means the blog will have a name that contains part of the service name. For instance, RogerMcHaney.blogger.com might be the result. Table 2.3 provides examples of free blogging services.

| Software | Website | Comments |
|---|---|---|
|  WORDPRESS.COM | http://wordpress.com/ | <p>WordPress provides hosting on their Website for those who do not wish to install and host the free software themselves. WordPress.com is powerful and has all the advantages of self-hosted blogs. By default, a user gets a domain name like this:</p> <p>rogermchaney.wordpress.com</p> <p>Later a business can opt to purchase a custom domain name. This is a good approach for a free, startup business blog.</p> |

| Software | Website | Comments |
|---|---|---|
|  | http://www.livejournal.com/ | <p>This blog site in some way predates the idea of blogging and offers an online journal motif. LiveJournal has existed since 1999 and has a very large active community of writers and bloggers. Not many businesses use this as a blogging platform</p> |
|  | https://www.blogger.com/start | <p>Blogger is an easy-to-use, excellent first blog tool. Blogs can be created using wizards and templates. New entries are easy to create, update and use. Google owns Blogger. Many of their sites are branded with Blogspot.com which is a blogging company purchased by Google and combined with blogger. Blogger offers tools for monetizing a blog.</p> |
|  | http://www.tumblr.com/ | <p>Tumblr is a wildly popular blog site that has grown into one of the top destinations on the Web. Tumblr combines social media features with rich media (e.g. video, audio, photography) and supports the development of individual blogs. Many users view Tumblr as a replacement for Facebook.</p> |
|  | http://www.xanga.com/ | <p>Xanga combines social media and blogging. Similar in approach to Tumblr, it focuses on personal interests and the formation of communities around interest areas. It has a variety of blogging features and offers themes, ideas, and other support for blog construction. Recently Xanga is revamping its software and focusing on mobile applications.</p> |
|  | http://www.weebly.com/ | <p>Weebly is both a website and blog builder. It offers free hosting and provides mechanisms to easily change themes and designs. Weebly is great for starters and is somewhat limited in its overall flexibility.</p> |

Table 2.3 Free Third-Party Hosted Blog Platforms

2.2.3 OTHER BLOG HOSTING OPTIONS

Another option used by many small businesses and startup companies is to find a general hosting company that offers instant blogging installations for a low cost. These companies often bundle the domain name registration into a package so an organization can get its desired name as a URL together with a set of blog development tools and support for a set yearly fee. These types of systems provide fast support and make it possible for new companies to establish a blog with very little effort. Often, WordPress, Weebly or other blog platforms are incorporated into the host's website. Table 2.4 provides several examples of companies offering these low cost services.

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| Software | Website | Comments |
|---|---|--|
|  | http://squarespace.com/ | <p>Squarespace offers blogging software but also supports general website development. It is often used by businesses wishing to offer sites and blogs featuring highend photography and artistic expressions. Blogs can be constructed easily with existing themes and other features. Squarespace offers social media integration, migration tools to bring blog content from Blogger, WordPress, MovableType, and TypePad. It also supports data forms and other business features.</p> |
|  | http://www.typepad.com/ | <p>TypePad offers free blogging space but positions that as a 'trial blog'. It provides a cost structure that increases with the addition of features. TypePad focuses on business blogs and offers monetization tools together with professional themes and other tools specific to business.</p> |
|  | http://dreamhost.com | <p>This Web hosting company has a reputation as being very customer friendly and offers top levels of support. Dreamhost is more than a blog host. They also provide general hosting services and can provide solutions to host all aspects of an organizations web presence. They focus on businesses.</p> |
|  | http://www.ipage.com | <p>I use iPage's WordPress installation and easy-to-use control panel to manage my blog themes and blog content. iPage offers full website editing tools, Weebly, and WordPress with easy-to-use installation wizards.</p> |

Table 2.4 Other Blog Hosting Options

2.3 BUILDING A BLOG WITH WORDPRESS

Building a blog can be relatively straight forward. In order to illustrate the process, a blogging implementation with WordPress is described. WordPress is one of the most powerful and widely used blogging tools available. It was first released in 2003 by Matt Mullenweg and grew from simple website enhancement code to a powerful content management system.¹⁹ WordPress has been downloaded over 100 million times and is believed to power approximately 25% of websites worldwide. In addition to use as a blogging platform, WordPress has become the most popular content management system on the Web.²⁰

WordPress is a free, open source platform based on PHP and MySQL. It is product administered by Automattic, a Web development company. This organization has been in business for over a decade and celebrated its 10th anniversary last year.²⁰ Over this time period, a large community of supporters and users developed enhancements, fixed bugs, and contributed ideas for new releases. WordPress offers easy-to-use themes and templates that provide solutions for less technical users while at the same time it provides a framework for technical users wishing to create custom and unique solutions. Among WordPress's features are its template system and a plug-in architecture. WordPress is truly an example of Web 2.0 in action since it relies on the efforts of many to maintain and enhance its platform. It abides by the Free Software Foundation's principles shown in Figure 2.6.

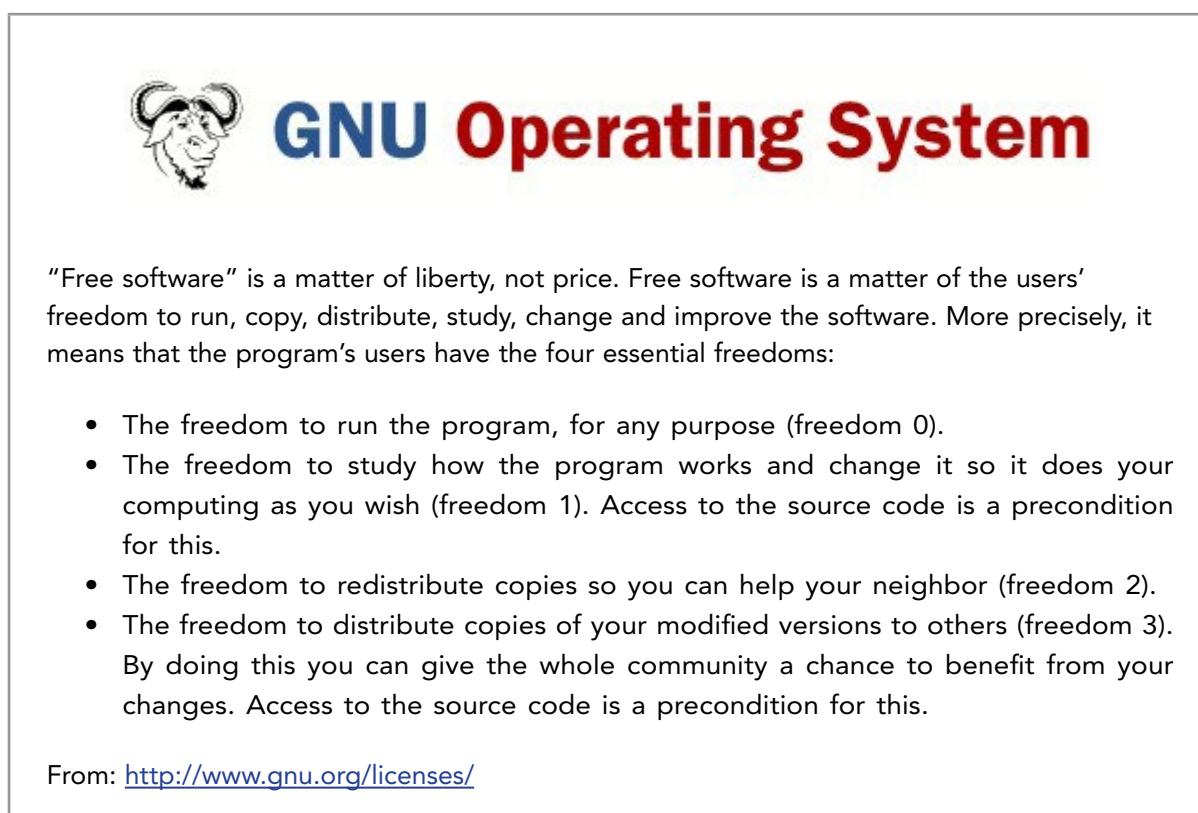


Figure 2.6 Open Source Philosophy Used by WordPress

WordPress is more than a blogging platform. As stated earlier, it is also a content management system (CMS) that enables an organization to create, manage, and update a website and all its components such as images, posted documents, and widgets. WordPress offers the following immediate advantages when used as a business blog (See Table 2.5).

| Advantage | Description |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Search Engine Optimization (SEO) | WordPress is so large and widely used that its tags, keywords, and categories have been integrated with many search engine systems. WordPress is designed to make it easy for search engines to locate and categorize content created with its platform. The business owner only needs to use the provided tools and hooks into search engines that are in place and ready to go. This is a huge advantage over custom developed websites that need to be syndicated through a service such as LibSyn. |
| Content Update | Postings and other content can be easily entered using the WordPress dashboard. A business owner does not need to know HTML, XML and other scripting tools. A very rich set of editing and formatting tools exist. |
| Communities | WordPress has active and helpful user communities. WordPress communities include those for technical support, development support, end-user support and everything in between. In addition, numerous books, manuals, and websites exist to provide advice and information about getting the most out of WordPress business applications. |
| Installation Wizards | WordPress installations are available from WordPress.com and from a wide variety of hosting services such as iPage, Bluehost and others. |

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| Advantage | Description |
|------------|---|
| Extensions | A large number of third-party developers have added a richness to WordPress that includes free themes, plug-ins, professional tools, integration with social media systems, and other features. Businesses can benefit from free expertise and the ability to extend and expand a website with polls, forms, contact pages, ratings plug-ins, comment tools, Twitter tools, Facebook integration, and more. |
| e-Commerce | WordPress offers integration with WooCommerce and other services to enable online shopping and commerce tools. |

Table 2.5 Business Blogging Advantages Offered by WordPress

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter introduced a class of applications that were among the first to become associated with the transition from static Web pages to social media and Web 2.0. Blogs have transitioned from online journals and bulletin board systems to interactive venues for facilitating communication and messages; and for providing Web site content management services. In recent years, businesses increasingly have become aware of these powerful tools and how they can be used to create a community of customers, potential clients, and employees. As a result, blogs and websites built using blogging platforms are now standard practice in nearly all Fortune 500 firms as well as in many small and medium sized businesses.

A blog can be a fundamental component of any business and can provide a mechanism for developing a public, identifying face. Appendix B of this book provides more details regarding the creation and maintenance of a business blog using WordPress. The next chapter will take a peek behind the scenes at RSS technology and how it powers blogs and blog-like tools.

3 RSS AND PODCASTING

Web 2.0 and social media tools enable businesses to create content then share and disseminate this information with potential customers and others. This process is so easy and widespread that the amount of available content has spread far beyond what any one person can ever hope to comprehend. Researchers call this situation *information overload*²¹ and have sought ways to reduce its impact. RSS is one such tool to help with filtering by delivering pre-selected material automatically. This chapter describes RSS and how it enables a business to selectively move content on the Web. Other applications of RSS such as podcasting also will be described in this chapter.

3.1 RSS DEFINED

RSS is an acronym used for the term *Really Simple Syndication* that can provide a mechanism both for making information available and for filtering relevant material from vast resources available on the Web. In general, RSS includes a family of Web feed formats used by publishers to disseminate material. Online news services such as CNN.com and BBC.co.uk use this technology extensively to publish news articles, headlines and other material in a standardized form. Figure 3.1 provides a look at the CNN RSS webpage (<http://us.cnn.com/services/rss/>) where its news stories are categorized into topic areas. Each area contains a list of stories. For instance, by clicking on the link for business feeds, the page shown in Figure 3.2 appears.

CNN RSS

Subscribe to CNN's RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds to get news delivered directly to your desktop!

To view one of the CNN feeds in your RSS Aggregator ([About RSS Aggregators](#)):

1. Copy the URL/shortcut that corresponds to the topic that interests you.
2. Paste the URL into your reader.

My Yahoo! users:

1. Click on the "Add to My Yahoo!" button.
2. Follow the instructions for adding the feed to your My Yahoo! page.

NEW: CNN.com now offers [podcasting feeds](#). [Pod](#)

Please note that by accessing CNN RSS feeds, you agree to our [terms of use](#).

[What is RSS?](#) | [How do I access RSS?](#)

| Title | Copy URLs to RSS Reader | | |
|-----------------|---|-----|-----------|
| Top Stories | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| World | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_world.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Africa | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_africa.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Americas | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_americas.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Asia | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_asia.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Europe | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_europe.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Middle East | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_meast.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| U.S. | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_us.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Money | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/money_news_international.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Technology | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_technology.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |
| Science & Space | http://rss.cnn.com/rss/edition_space.rss | RSS | MY YAHOO! |

Figure 3.1 CNN.com RSS Feed Webpage

SMS from your computer

...Sync'd with your Android phone & number

FREE 30 days trial!

Go to BrowserTexting.com

and start texting from your computer!

BrowserTexting

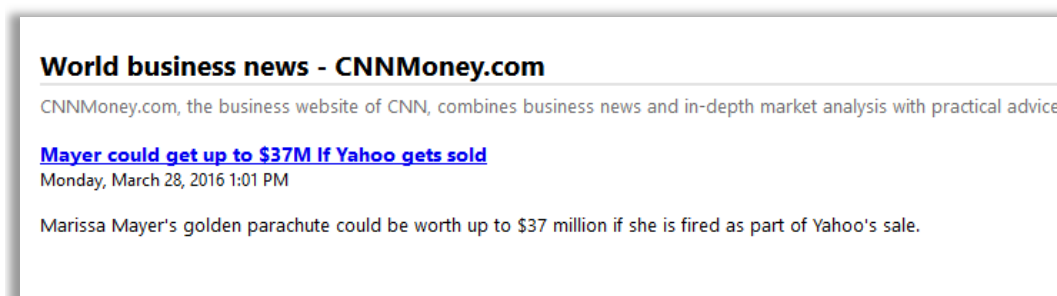


Figure 3.2 CNN.com RSS List of Business Stories

Each of these stories represents material published in a standardized format that can be loaded into various Web pages or viewed by different RSS reader programs. Each time CNN publishes a news story, the document is stored as a feed and includes a text section, metadata (e.g. publication date, author, category, et cetera) and a title. CNN.com will draw content from the list of RSS feeds for its own website. By providing public access to the feeds, it also permits its content to be distributed to other websites and individual feed reader programs, such as Newsblur or NetVibes or Feedly, where users subscribe to particular stories. In section 3.2.2, we will describe feed readers in more detail.

RSS feeds provide a method for publishers to automate the syndication process.²² It uses a subset of XML tags to place the information in a standard format recognizable to reader programs and browsers. This permits the material to be published once and then be accessed by numerous consumers. Once a feed is in place, it can be used to create a stream of published material.

RSS takes advantage of the world wide Web's structure and the way it works. XML is already used in the background of most dynamic, modern Websites. RSS uses this technology to identify user-desired digital content. "Links to that content are aggregated on a specific Web site (or feed reader) so the material comes to the user instead of the other way around. Potential readers can acquire the information from a variety of sites and centralize it for viewing. The reader no longer needs to visit a specific blog. Instead, the centralized content is updated every time a user visits the Web and new items are automatically collected."¹

Figure 3.3 provides a view of a simple RSS feed's anatomy.²³ Notice how the XML tags (the material inside the '<' and '>' brackets) describe what is being stored in the file.

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>
<rss version="2.0">
<channel>
<title>This is the Title of the RSS Feed List</title>
<link>http://mchaney.com</link>
<description>This section describes the feed list
(not the individual blog post!)</description>

<item>
<title>This is one item from the blog</title>
<link>http://mchaney.com/rss/entry1.html</link>
<description>This describes a blog entry and will appear in
the reader description of the individual post. </description>
<guid><http://mchaney.com/rss/entry1.html</guid>
</item>

<item>
<title>This is the second item from the blog</title>
<link>http://mchaney.com/rss/entry2.html</link>
<description>This describes the second blog entry and will appear
in the reader description of the individual post. </description>
<guid><http://mchaney.com/rss/entry2.html</guid>
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

Figure 3.3 Anatomy of a RSS Feed

As shown in Figure 3.3, an RSS feed is intuitive and can be easily understood. The first few lines of the feed provide information to the reader software including:

This is XML. `<?xml version="1.0" encoding="utf-8"?>`

This is RSS version 2.0. `<rss version="2.0">`

And the feeds are arranged into a channel. `<channel>`

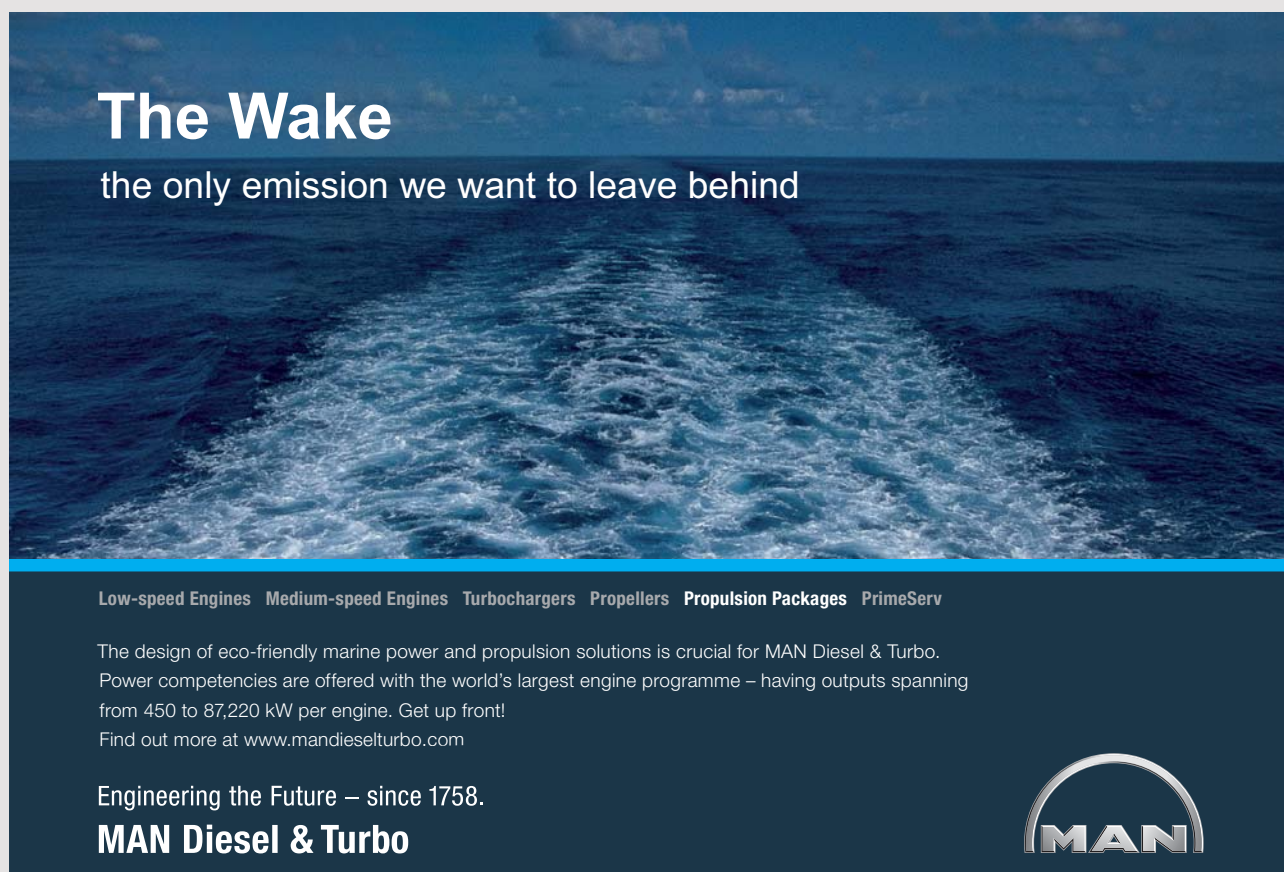
The next section describes the channel holding the feeds. For instance, in CNN.com this might be the ‘Business’ or ‘Technology’ related news feeds. The group of feeds has a ‘Title’, a ‘Link’ to their location, and a ‘Description’. In most situations, these feed elements will change very infrequently.

```
<title>This is the Title of the RSS Feed List</title>
  <link>http://mchaney.com</link>
  <description>This section describes the feed list (not
the individual blog post!) </description>
```

The final part of the feed includes the individual items. This includes the actual text of the articles or posts being made available to readers. Each individual item is enclosed in a set of ‘<item>’ tags. The first <item> opens an individual entry and the second </item> closes an individual item.

Each item is structured much like the feed itself with <title>, <link>, and <description> tags. These items describe the name of the blog post (or article), a URL for its location on the Web, and a description of the post content.

```
<item>
  <title>This is one item from the blog</title>
  <link>http://mchaney.com/rss/entry1.html</link>
  <description>This describes a blog entry and will appear in
the reader description of the individual post. </description>
```




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the only emission we want to leave behind

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Engineering the Future – since 1758.
MAN Diesel & Turbo



```
<guid><http://mchaney.com/rss/entry1.html</guid>
</item>
```

An additional tag, `<guid>`, specifies a unique URL for the post. This is often the same URL as the `<link>` tag but can be a separate permanent link (permalink) where the post will be stored. The final tags close the item, the channel, and the rss. This is required in XML structures to ensure the code is complete.

```
</item>
</channel>
</rss>
```

3.2 RSS IN PRACTICE

RSS feed technology benefits both a business and the consumer. For a business, the advantages are apparent. After enabling RSS feed capability on a blog or other website, material can be published once and it becomes instantly available to anyone with an Internet connection. The material can be read by individual consumers or can be repurposed and easily published on countless other websites and social media outlets.^{24, 25}

From the perspective of an individual, RSS provides a mechanism for reducing information overload. For example, imagine an individual who has located 30 interesting business blogs. If she were to visit each site daily searching for new items, a large investment of her time would be required. RSS feed technology permits the material to be piped into an aggregator as it is published. The aggregated material is available in one central, convenient location and can be accessed in many ways (e.g. on a computer, via mobile device, or iPad). The next section provides more information about RSS feed readers.

3.2.1 RSS FEEDS

RSS feeds can be read in a variety of ways. In general, reader software provides an efficient way to subscribe to news articles and blogs from a variety of relevant sources. These feed readers reduce and eliminate spam and advertising material that may slow down the reading process. A variety of feed reader software is available and many products are competing for dominance in that area. Categories of feed readers are shown in Table 3.1. Different approaches to acquiring feeds have been developed by various software vendors.

| Category | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|----------------------|---|---|---|
| Built-in to Browsers | Most web browsers (for example Firefox, Internet Explorer and Safari) now include features to view and subscribe to RSS feeds. | Convenient and eliminates the need to switch between programs to subscribe, read, and browse; free | Creates problems when the user wants to access material on multiple computers |
| Portal Page | Personal homepages provided by services such as Yahoo! and Google that, in addition to many other functions, incorporate feed readers. Other programs called dashboards like NetVibes are specifically created for this function. | Provide a great deal of functionality and can be a 'home' on the web; permit the user to see the same set of feeds on any computer or mobile device; free | Provide a great deal of functionality and can be a 'home' on the web; permit the user to see the same set of feeds on any computer or mobile device; free |
| Aggregator Software | Fully featured software specifically created to enable users to subscribe to and read RSS feeds from news services and blogs. Examples will be provided in Table 3.2. | Offer special options on reading, display, subscribing and marking feeds; articles can be saved or bookmarked and tagged; synchronization between different devices is possible | Less convenient than accessing material in a browser; some programs require purchase or subscription fees |

Table 3.1 Feed Reader Categories

3.2.2 RSS FEED READERS

While browsers and personal portal pages can provide useful features related to RSS feed aggregation, fully featured, aggregator programs will help the business user harness the full power of RSS technology through organizing, searching, categorizing and using news and blog entries.

Aggregator software goes by many names and is sometimes called a feed collector, news reader, blog reader, RSS reader, and other names. With aggregator software, new content can be continually added to a collection even when the user is not online. Some software pulls in feeds at preset intervals. The RSS symbol, shown in Figure 3.4, indicates the presence of feeds. Table 3.2 provides examples of feed reader software and popular aggregators.



Figure 3.4 RSS Symbol found on Websites

TURN TO THE EXPERTS FOR **SUBSCRIPTION** CONSULTANCY

Subscribe is one of the leading companies in Europe when it comes to innovation and business development within subscription businesses.

We innovate new subscription business models or improve existing ones. We do business reviews of existing subscription businesses and we develop acquisition and retention strategies.

Learn more at [linkedin.com/company/subscribe](https://www.linkedin.com/company/subscribe) or contact Managing Director Morten Suhr Hansen at mha@subscribe.dk

SUBSCR✓**BE** - to the future




| | Website | Description |
|---|---|---|
|  | http://www.newzcrawler.com/ | Newzcrawler is an RSS/atom reader, news aggregator, browser and blog client for Windows which provides access to news content from syndicated news given in XML-based formats (Atom, RSS, RDF, BackSlash, etc.), Usenet (NNTP) newsgroups, and Web pages (HTTP). Provides a number of views: News List, News Balloon and News Ticker. User interface similar to MS Outlook. Retrieves news from various web sources in background and displays in customizable views. Combines RSS, Atom (Atom is another feed format similar to RSS), Newsgroups and Web pages in one application. |
|  | http://feedly.com/ | Feedly is a news reader with expanded features meant to enable people in work environments to share, track, and collect important content. This service has been designed to look and behave in modern ways with an interesting tile interface and hooks into social media platforms. Feedly's clean, uncluttered interface is very appealing. More detailed information about Feedly is included in Appendix A. |
|  | http://www.netvibes.com/ | Although Netvibes is included as an RSS Reader, it is actually a personalized Web portal. In addition to being a fully featured feed reader, it also acts as an overall platform for interacting with Web pages and social media in many other ways. |

Table 3.2 Example RSS Feed Readers

3.2.3 SETTING UP A FEED READER

Feed readers are implemented either as online platforms or as software that is downloaded and installed on a particular computer. Currently, most feed readers are being moved into the cloud. A good example is Feedly, a cloud-based feed reader and content collection tool. Feedly's cloud-based interface makes it easy for a user with multiple mobile and desktop devices to access the same content everywhere. Figures 3.5 and 3.6 show the software being configured on the website, Feedly.com.

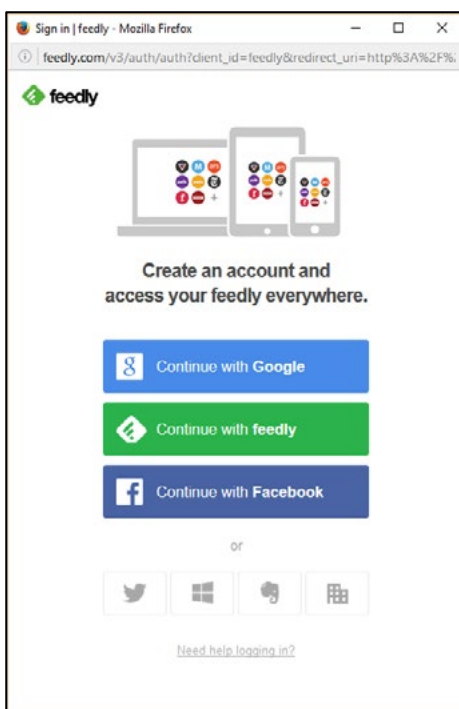


Figure 3.5 Configure Feedly Starting with a Google or Facebook Login

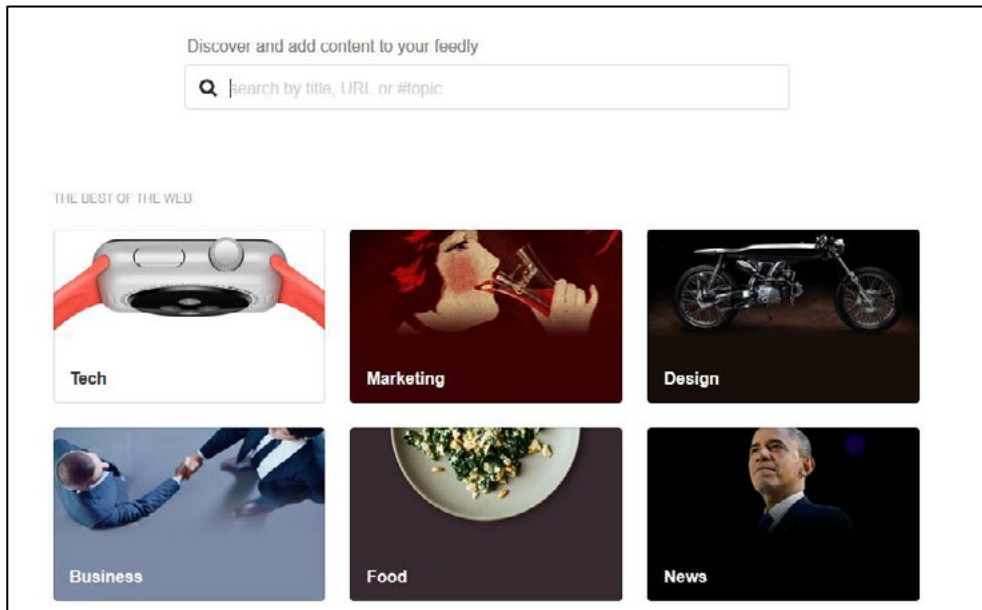
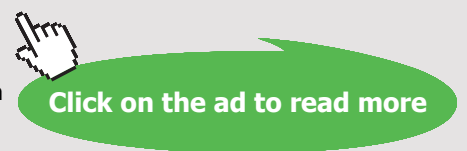


Figure 3.6 Feedly searches can be used to Find Content, or Items can be Directly Added

The user can find promoted items within categories of interest or can add their own sources. For instance, in Figure 3.7 CNN’s headline RSS feed was entered and Feedly provided an easy way to add this item.



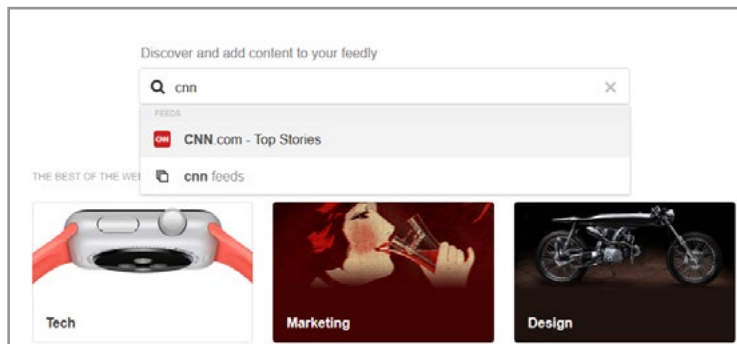


Figure 3.7 Adding RSS Feeds for Headline News

After the item is specified, Feedly adds it to a panel as shown in Figure 3.8. A variety of presentation modes are available for the stories. These include a traditional list approach (called title only), a magazine presentation, and a cards view (Figure 3.9).

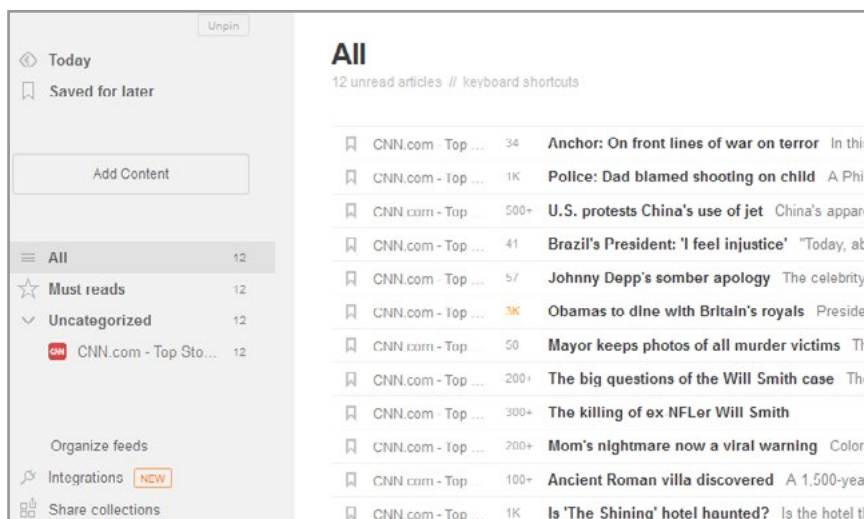


Figure 3.8 Viewing RSS Feeds for Headline News after Adding the Site to Feedly

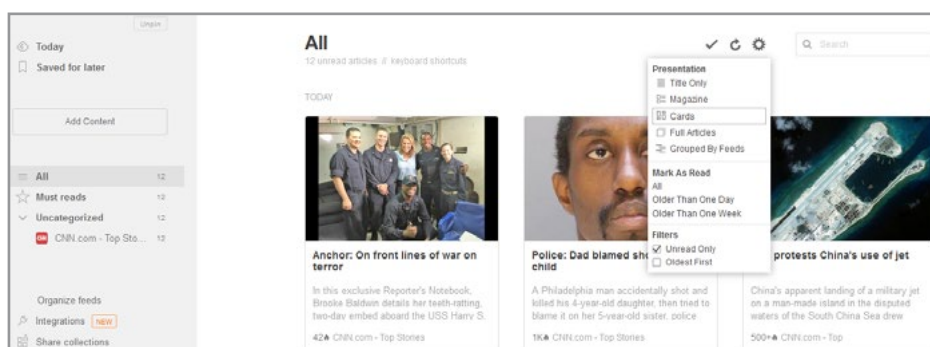


Figure 3.9 Changing the Same RSS Feeds for Headline News into the Card Presentation Mode

Feedly’s RSS feeds can be grouped into collections to help organize by topic area or function. Figures 3.10 to 3.13 illustrate the process of creating a category for an uncategorized feed and moving it to the new location.

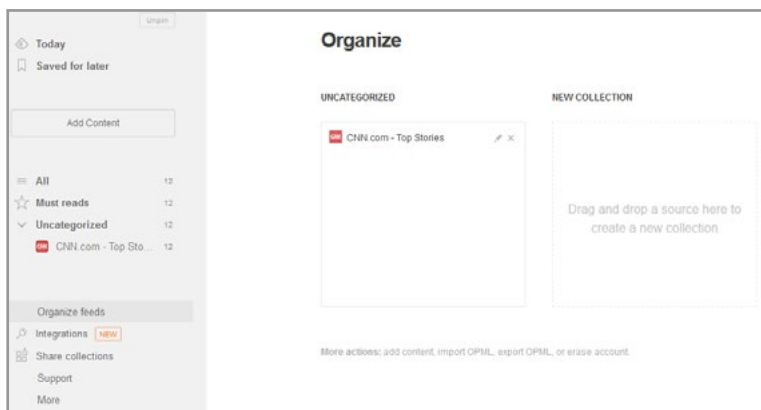


Figure 3.10 CNN Headline RSS Feeds Currently Uncategorized

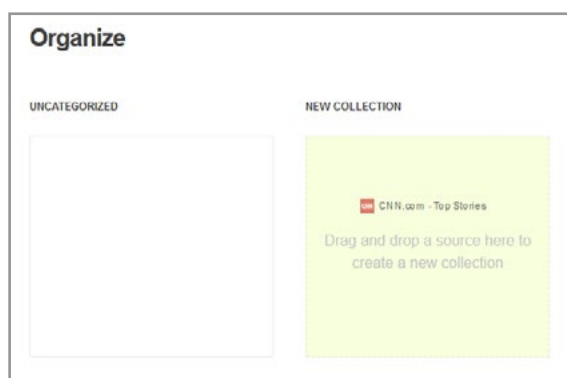


Figure 3.11 CNN Headline RSS Feeds Moved to New Collection Box

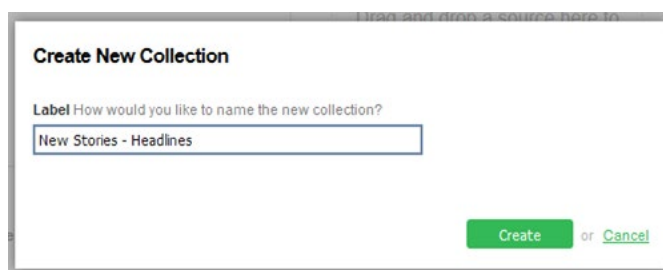


Figure 3.12 User Prompted for New Collection Name

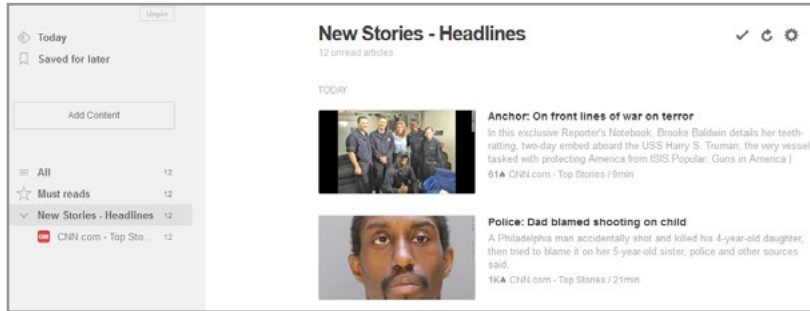
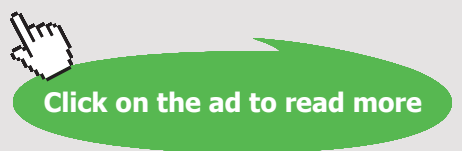


Figure 3.13 New Collection Become Visible on Main Page

As demonstrated in Feedly’s example, the content obtained via RSS feeds can be more than just text. RSS technology also is used to broadcast images, audio and video. For instance, subscribe to a podcast in iTunes and essentially you have subscribed to a feed using a different environment. The next sections investigate how RSS is used with other broadcasting tools on the Web – podcasting and videocasting.

An advertisement for TheCVagency. It features a woman with short dark hair, wearing a grey blazer over a light blue shirt, smiling and resting her chin on her hand. To the left of the woman, the text reads 'Struggling to get interviews?' followed by 'Professional CV consulting & writing assistance from leading job experts in the UK.' Below this text is an orange button with the text 'Visit site' and a hand cursor icon pointing at it. At the bottom left, there is a small bar chart icon and the text 'Take a short-cut to your next job! Improve your interview success rate by 70%.' At the bottom right, there is a blue star icon and the text 'TheCVagency Visit thecvagency.co.uk for more info.'

3.3 PODCASTING

Podcasting emerged on the Web for many of the same reasons that blogging did: it provided an easy and low cost method for anyone to get a message out. Podcasting uses the same technologies as does blogging and can be compared to radio infrastructure, except without FCC oversight (in the United States) and costly entry barriers. Podcasting provides a mechanism for businesses to instantly connect with clients, potential customers and other stakeholders. In a sense, podcasting essentially allows a business to become a broadcaster.

Podcasts are very similar to blog posts except that text is replaced with audio files. The concept involves uploading digital audio files (generally in MP3 format) to a server where Internet users are able to access the material from an audio player, mobile device, or computer. Podcasts use a particular XML format to ensure cross-platform compatibility.

Like blogs, podcasts can be syndicated and published using RSS technology. A Web infrastructure has grown up around podcasting and it is widely used by entertainment and music industries. Websites such as Apple's iTunes and Podcastalley.com index and provide access to thousands of regularly produced podcasts where businesses, organizations, and individuals have created programs ranging from political opinion to comedy to business advice. While some broadcasts are decidedly amateur, many businesses produce professional material and spend a great deal of money to get their message out on the Web this way.

3.3.1 WHY PODCAST?

Many small businesses discount the idea of podcasting because it sounds adolescent and non-professional. Although the term *podcast* does carry some of that stigma (after all, it did emerge from the efforts of former MTV video jockey Adam Curry), businesses can benefit from this technology. Small businesses in particular can use this low-cost method of reaching customers without much investment. Some of the advantages of podcasting are included in Table 3.3.

| Advantage | Discussion |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Reaches specific audience | A business can create custom content for a very specific audience. For small, local businesses this is a huge advantage and permits a sense of dialog to be developed with a client base. |
| Detached from the computer | The podcast is not dependent on a particular computer or computer system. It can be recorded remotely and its listeners are able to hear it where and when they choose. |
| Unregulated content | Unlike radio broadcasts, the content of a podcast is not regulated. Also, the message comes from the business, and it is not a second hand, edited version that a news agency might produce. |
| Downloads for listening convenience | A podcast can be downloaded to a mobile device and then played at the convenience of the listener. |
| Ability to subscribe to a series | A podcast can be developed as a series with episodes and additional information as time goes on. The series can be subscribed to by listeners so as new podcasts are developed, they will automatically have access to them. |
| Any digital audio device works | A business client can listen to the podcast on any device that is convenient. For instance, they could listen to it on their mobile phone or in their car audio system. |
| Low Cost | Podcasting can be done with very little investment. |

Table 3.3 Business Advantages for Podcasting

3.3.2 PODCAST APPROACHES FOR BUSINESS

Podcasting is one of the older mechanisms interacting over the Web, even though it did not really begin in its current form until about 2004.²⁶ In spite of this, and even though podcasting has often been associated with entertainment, businesses can still find many uses for the technology.

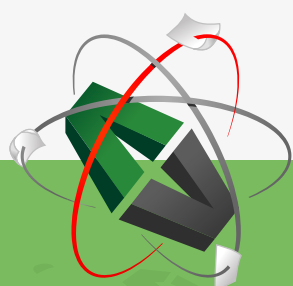
Traditional podcast formats were modeled on the idea of a radio show using a charismatic host to capture the attention of an audience. Podcasting in business has progressed well beyond that to become a powerful tool used by marketing departments and others to connect with prospective clients, existing customers, and other strategic partners like members of the media, shareholders, employees and other stakeholders.

In addition to using podcasting as a marketing tool to discuss new products, company developments and changes, or research and development work, the following approaches can be used:

Allow customers to tell their stories. Customer interviews can be recorded and featured on a company website or blog. This gives prospective clients legitimate, third-party opinions about the goods or services provided by a business. Two benefits result from this approach. First, a company may reach new customers and, second, the existing customers who are featured will feel more connected to the business.

Company events can be recorded and rebroadcast. Training sessions, expert talks, and other company events can be used as podcast content. This makes the material available to employees that may have missed the original event and also provides a sense of life for a business and visitors to its website or blog. Be sure to have a standard, signed agreement from any presenters who are featured in a podcast to avoid misunderstandings. Some consultants and speakers do not permit their speeches to be freely posted.

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SetaPDF



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Create connections with Podcasts. Industry experts and book authors are usually very open to interview offers. This provides them with publicity and legitimacy while providing ways to get more viewers to a related blog or website. Getting high quality guests can result in high quality content and more traffic.

Interview employees. By creating podcasts of various employees in the business, customers and prospective clients can get to know staff members. Seeing friendly faces and hearing people passionately talk about their work and their commitment to the company and its customers can help provide a sense of confidence.

Build a strategic network. It may be possible to interview and podcast key members of a business or industry (e.g. trade association president, chamber of commerce president, and others). This will help build a strong network of partners and provide more notice and visibility for a business.

3.3.3 PODCAST MECHANICS

Creating a podcast can be as simple as creating an audio recording and posting it to a blog or website. However, that simplistic approach will not take advantage of all the benefits podcasting has to offer. As with any material (written, audio, or video), preparation and planning are key activities. The first step in podcasting is to create a plan. Planning can include a range of areas. Among these are topics, participants, duration, background music or sound effects, and a theme for the podcast series. Infrastructure items also will need to be in place. These include equipment, recording location, editing software, Web site or blog structure, and an approach for syndication. Table 3.4 lists several important elements and tools that can be used for any small recording studio.²⁷

| Element | Examples |
|--|--|
| Website or Blog for publishing Podcast | WordPress, Blogger |
| Podcast File Hosting Service | LibSyn |
| Recording Software | Audacity, GarageBand |
| Microphone | Headset Microphone, USB Microphone such as Blue Snowball |
| Remote Interview Tool | Zoom.us, Skype |

Table 3.4 Podcasting Elements

A successful business podcast needs to have a theme. For instance, a theme might highlight new products. Another example might be to introduce members of a business team to the general public. Larger companies may have a number of podcasts each with different themes. Figure 3.14 shows security-themed blogs offered by Cisco.

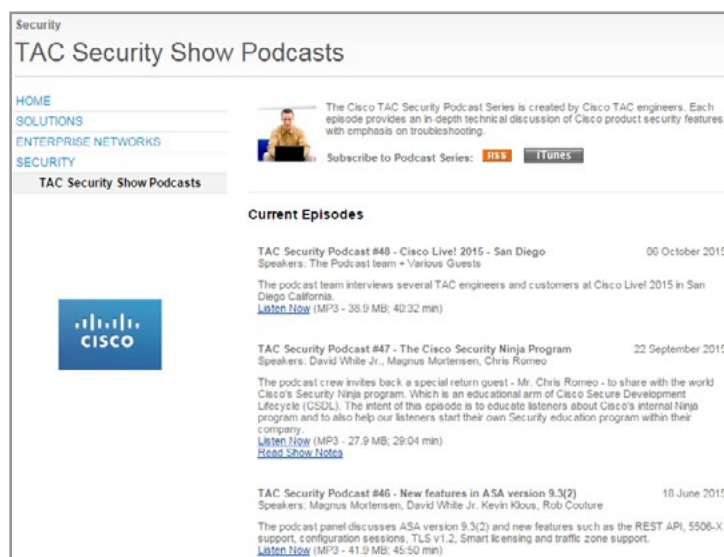


Figure 3.14 Example Podcasts from CISCO

Once a theme is conceptualized for a blog, it helps to create a written description to explain its purpose (remember this is for a series of podcasts, not just a single episode). This helps provide a common vision for the production team much like an organizational mission statement does for a company. A podcast theme should be stated in written form in one or two sentences.

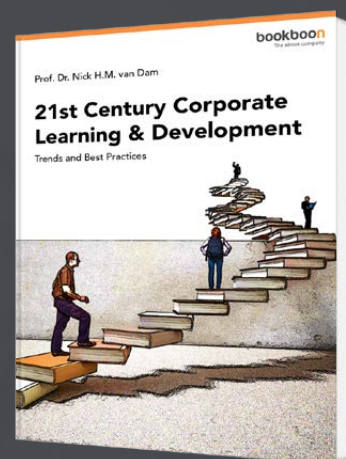
The theme can be used to help select a name for the podcast series. This name should reflect the expected content and should consider that Web searches will use the name and link it to user key words. Depending on the goals for a business podcast, it may be desirable to acquire a domain name that matches the podcast name. Having a domain name, even if the podcast is embedded on a business website, can allow new listeners to find the broadcast more easily and will enable additional indexing on Google, Bing, and other search engines. Although a podcast can be created in an ad hoc fashion, approaching the process by developing a script or at least an outline is a good idea. A typical podcast can be structured in the manner shown in Table 3.5.

| Component | Examples | Approximate Time |
|---|---|------------------|
| Intro Screen with music (catchy jingle) | <p>A short professional quality introduction to the podcast series with voice and music.</p> <p>Suitable music can be acquired from online Websites such as the Free Music Archive (FMA) at http://freemusicarchive.org/</p> <p>Some businesses will contact a local radio station and have them create a common podcast introduction audio with a professional voice. This same introduction can then be used for all episodes of the series. It is also possible to acquire a voice from online talent sources such as: http://voices.com</p> <p>The same approach can be taken by writing a script for the entire episode and having a professional voice do the complete soundtrack.</p> | 30 seconds |
| Episode Intro Monologue | Provides a quick overview of the episode and highlights specific topics about to be covered. | 30–60 seconds |

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| Component | Examples | Approximate Time |
|-----------------|--|------------------|
| Topic 1 | The podcast can be broken into about four sections. Each topic represents a question being asked of a guest or a different topic area relating to the overall theme. | 2–3 minutes |
| Topic 2 | The second topic in the show. | 2–3 minutes |
| Interlude | Use the introduction music for a few seconds to provide a break for the listeners. This is not needed in shorter podcasts. | 10 seconds |
| Topic 3 | The third topic in the show. | 2–3 minutes |
| Topic 4 | The final topic in the show. | 2–3 minutes |
| Closing Remarks | Summarize the podcast and optionally provide a teaser for the next episode. | 2 minutes |
| Closing Music | The music used for the introduction is played again here. This time, it goes a little longer. | 2 minutes |

Table 3.5 Typical Podcast Structure

A podcast script can help guide the program and provide a sense of confidence as the recording progresses. Since most podcasts are not live, the recording can be edited and rerecorded in spots to make the final version sound professional. Many podcasts are cleaned to remove the ‘ahhs’ and misstatements that have been made. However, current trends place less importance on making a podcast sound 100% polished.

3.3.4 CREATING THE PODCAST

Podcasts can be recorded in a variety of ways ranging from using free tools available on any computer to using expensive, professional studios. Broadcast quality will be affected by resources available for the project. Depending on podcast goals, different approaches should be considered. However, it is possible to get a professional sounding podcast without a large investment. This balance between cost and quality is where many small businesses set their focus.

The creation of a big budget podcast can involve hiring a development team that writes a script, has custom music developed, hires voice talent and uses a professional recording studio. A more modest approach requires experimenting with recording on existing hardware, acquiring free or low cost software and other online tools. A few simple things can be done to enhance recording quality and provide a professional-sounding podcast. Without careful attention to the sound quality, the result will reflect poorly on a business and perhaps cause potential customers to look elsewhere. Most reasonable quality business podcasting setups will require a budget of between \$500 and \$1,000, although it is possible to accomplish this for much less. Most podcasts use audio recorders on Macs or PCs. Essentially a software program such as Audacity or GarageBand enables the recording and stores a digital file of the voice on the computer's hard drive. The file can be manipulated and changed, music added, and sound effects incorporated with a computer-based recording approach. Creating a high quality voice recording does require practice. California State University Maritime Academy provides a good online guide to help get started:

https://www.csum.edu/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=356d0090-d980-4548-8741-08bc29607eb3&groupId=72269

3.3.5 HARDWARE ELEMENTS

A basic set of hardware can be used to enable a small business to create podcasts. Table 3.6 provides an overview.

| Hardware Component | Description | Examples |
|--------------------|---|---|
| Computer | <p>A PC or Mac can be used for podcasting. Most modern computers sold in the past few years will generally be suitable. Having larger amounts of RAM and a USB port are helpful and will enable editing and buffering during the recording process to be more effective. Lap tops can also be used but some may have a lower sound quality. iPads can also be used as podcasting platforms but will have some limitations due to storage capacity.</p> <div data-bbox="560 1715 911 1890" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>Photo from: http://blueblog.bluemicro.com/category/press-releases/</p> | <p>Dell with Windows 8 or above, dual core processor or above, 4 or more GB of RAM and a 500 GB or more hard drive. Apple iMac with Quad Core. iPad with camera connection kit.</p> |

| Hardware Component | Description | Examples |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Hard Disk | An external hard drive can be used with Macs or PCs for storing podcasts and audio recordings. Portable hard drives work well and can connect through USB or USB 2.0 ports on the computer. It is possible to record directly to the computer's hard drive and later transfer the recordings to the external hard drive for back up and manipulation. Cloud storage can also be used with fast Internet connections. | Iomega Prestige Portable Hard Drive. |
| Microphone | In order to get good sound quality, a USB microphone is preferred to one that plugs into a sound card on a computer. The USB microphone isolates the sound processing circuitry and avoids having internal feedback from the computer's other electronics. | Blue Snowball from http://www.bluemic.com/ The Blue Snowball is a reasonably priced, professional grade microphone This is an excellent USB microphone used by many professionals at a reasonable price. |

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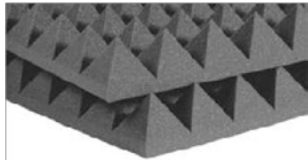
| Hardware Component | Description | Examples |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Pop Filter | <p>A pop filter is a small screen that can be placed between a speaker and the microphone he or she is using. Although it will not eliminate all pops and extra noises, it will reduce the impact of puffs or pops created by a speaker catching his or her breath between statements. The pops and puffs are insidious to a recording because they create spikes in the digital recording that the software then uses in trying to optimize the recording. Pop filters go a long way toward making a recording sound much more professional.²⁸</p> | <p>Samson PS01</p>  |
| Mixer | <p>A mixer is a device that helps bring multiple sound sources into the recording. A mixer can be used to bring in multiple microphones (if your podcast uses an interview or multiple hosts), it can bring in sound effects from another computer, or a telephone line. In addition, a mixer can be used to adjust inputs, equal different levels and create better sound recordings. If a podcast only uses a single source, like one microphone, the mixing can be done with the software itself. However, having a physical mixer gives the recording more possibilities and provides a better quality recording. Mixers have three general attributes: (1) number of channels; (2) whether they are digital or analog; and (3) their general quality. A low cost, basic mixer will generally have 12 channels. For podcasting, only about half of these will be used. The digital features found on a mixer may include effects like reverb, echo, or other distortion.</p> | <p>Yamaha MG10/2 Mixer</p>  |
| Sound Absorbing Material | <p>In order to create a good sounding podcast, the use of a sound absorbing material in the recording studio can be helpful. For a low-cost solution, blankets or rugs can be hung on the walls. For a better solution, foam can be permanently affixed to the walls.</p> | <p>Studio Foam ²⁹</p>  |

Table 3.6 Podcast Hardware Elements

3.3.6 SOFTWARE ELEMENTS

As mentioned earlier, creating a professional quality podcast requires a software element. Most podcasts are developed using audio editing software such as Audacity or GarageBand. However, fully featured, podcast development software is also available. Depending on the types of podcasts being developed, it may also be necessary to use software to record speakers from geographically separated areas.

A primary element for podcasting is digital recording software. Audacity, an open source digital audio editor, is popular among podcasters. It is compatible with Windows, Apple's OSX, Linux and other systems. Its primary focus is on audio capture and editing. This means podcasts can be created with Audacity but then must rely on another service for publishing and distribution. Audacity provides support for a number of audio formats, including the most popular, MP3. However, it has problems with proprietary formats such as WMA or AAC. This means audio converter software, such as Switch (<http://www.nch.com.au/switch/>) or Freemake (http://www.freemake.com/free_audio_converter/) might be required so certain audio tracks can be imported and used as part of the podcast. Audacity permits a number of recording sources including microphones, lines in, mixers, and audio captures from the onboard computer sound card. Recordings can be digitized from a number of sources. Audacity provides several editing tools for mixing, fades, noise reduction, cropping, multiple track integration, and special effects. Sound editing is considered Audacity's primary strength (see Figure 3.15).



Figure 3.16 Audacity Audio Software for Podcasting

GarageBand, from Apple, is also commonly used to develop podcasts. Its primary focus is to support digital recording and mixing music tracks. However, its streamlined interface and easy-to-use tools make it popular among podcasters. GarageBand provides capability for capture, editing, importing and manipulating a wide variety of audio files. One of its biggest strengths is its integration with iTunes. This simplifies the publishing aspect of podcasting in the Apple world.

Both Audacity and GarageBand can be used to capture audio from other software running on a computer. Many times a podcast will involve interviewing someone who is not physically present. This will require software that permits communication at a distance. Skype, Zoom, us or other audio conferencing software can be run on the local computer and then the conversation can be captured and imported into the audio editing software.³⁰



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3.3.7 SPECIALIZED PODCASTING SOFTWARE

Besides using general purpose recording software such as GarageBand and Audacity, a business can purchase and use specialized podcasting software such as WebPod Studio. In addition to allowing businesses to record and edit podcasts, a package such as this facilitates publication, syndication and distribution. WebPod Studio provides both audio and video podcast development support. It is designed to create new content, gather existing material and produce quality audio and video broadcasts. It also supports creating CDs and DVDs. WebPod Studio offers support for transcripts and other materials needed to produce quality broadcasts. The publishing features include adding tags and descriptions to the podcasts and then posting the podcast to a blog or podcast directory.³¹

3.3.8 RECORDING AND MIXING HINTS

Creating a podcast is more than just hooking a microphone to a computer and pressing the record button. It is important to create an environment for recording that will ensure that the broadcast sounds natural and eliminates distractions for the listeners. One approach is to create a small recording studio in a quiet setting with acoustic material on the walls. If this isn't possible and the recording will be conducted at a particular location (e.g. a business setting or public space), it is best to visit the location ahead of time and become familiar with the surroundings. Identify the best place to set up the recording equipment that minimizes background noise. Be sure that your location is not subject to disruptions at particular times of the day. If you plan to interview someone, be sure to give them details about the interview, the location, and the approach you plan to use. If possible, it helps to have a casual conversation with them prior to the podcast to ensure a sense of ease with one another.

Creating a single person monologue is the most basic form of podcast. This puts the broadcaster in control of where the podcast is recorded, how it is recorded and the material that will be covered. A monologue can be rehearsed and if necessary rerecorded and edited. In order to create a successful broadcast, it is important to have a quiet block of time where interruptions (such as incoming phone calls) are minimized.

Podcasts can become increasingly complex as more voices are added to the broadcast. Interviews, guest speakers, question/answer sessions, and call-in contributors can make the podcast much more interesting but will also complicate the recording. The ability to 'redo' becomes more difficult and editing might take longer. However, the resulting material will be more interesting and dynamic which can lead to a larger audience.

No matter which approach is adopted, a finished podcast should sound natural and easily flow from sentence to sentence. Editing can be used to eliminate lengthy pauses, ‘umms’, or mistakes. Good editing software will make the speaker sound much better. Noises inherent to the room also can be removed. If an unexpected sound overlaps a word being spoken by the podcaster, another take of the word or words can be found in the broadcast, then copied and spliced over the problem area.

When the content is fully recorded, it becomes time to mix in the podcast introduction material where the name of the podcast, the episode number and the theme music are all added. This can include the voice of a professional announcer, distinct from the podcast host. This same music can be used between podcast segments. The theme music can signal different topics and can be brought in quietly over the ending moments of the talk and gradually made louder until the speaking is complete. When the next segment begins, the music volume can be decreased when the speaker begins. These musical transitions are known as bumpers or sweepers.

Finally, when the entire podcast is constructed, it makes sense to review the overall sound levels and be sure everything is approximately the same. The listeners should not have to adjust their volumes periodically during the podcast.

3.3.9 PODCAST PUBLISHING

The finished podcast needs to be put online in a location where listeners can access it. Although the file can be simply posted on a website, this approach has limitations. For instance, unless a series has a ready-made audience or preexisting fan base, the odds of anyone finding it are greatly reduced. A better approach is to upload the recorded MP3 file to a podcast hosting service. This has several advantages. First, it can be downloaded by anyone with Internet access. Second, since it is located on a remote server, bandwidth will not be an issue and excessive downloads will impact website access to a lesser degree. Third, free podcast hosting services will facilitate other aspects of podcasting infrastructure such as tagging, publicity and so forth. One of the best known podcasting hosting services is LibSyn.com. Another is HipCast.com (See Figure 3.17 and 3.18).

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Figure 3.17 LibSyn Site for Podcast Publishing

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Figure 3.18 HipCast Site for Podcast Publishing

Both LibSyn and HipCast allow a business to manage audio and video podcasts using cloud technology. The media can be posted to existing blogs or embedded in various websites. The MP3 files are stored and the services provide statistics including number of views. It is also possible to use these services to set up a podcasting series and take care of tagging and indexing.

In general, the podcast publication (syndication) process will prompt the publisher for a podcast title, an episode number, an episode description, and tags to help search engines identify the topic areas. The file will be uploaded and a hyperlink will be provided together with options for other management features (including code snippets for embedding the podcast). Services such as LibSyn and HipCast will facilitate listing a podcast on iTunes and other podcast indexing and sales services. Tools for monetization are also available. Advertising options, methods for selling and paid subscriptions and other features are provided.

After a podcast is posted to a host, additional publicity can be acquired by indexing your material with FeedBurner. Hosting services may perform this function automatically however it is good practice for a business to list its blogs and podcasts this way. FeedBurner is a company that was acquired by Google several years ago and may be found at: <https://feedburner.google.com> (see Figure 3.19).

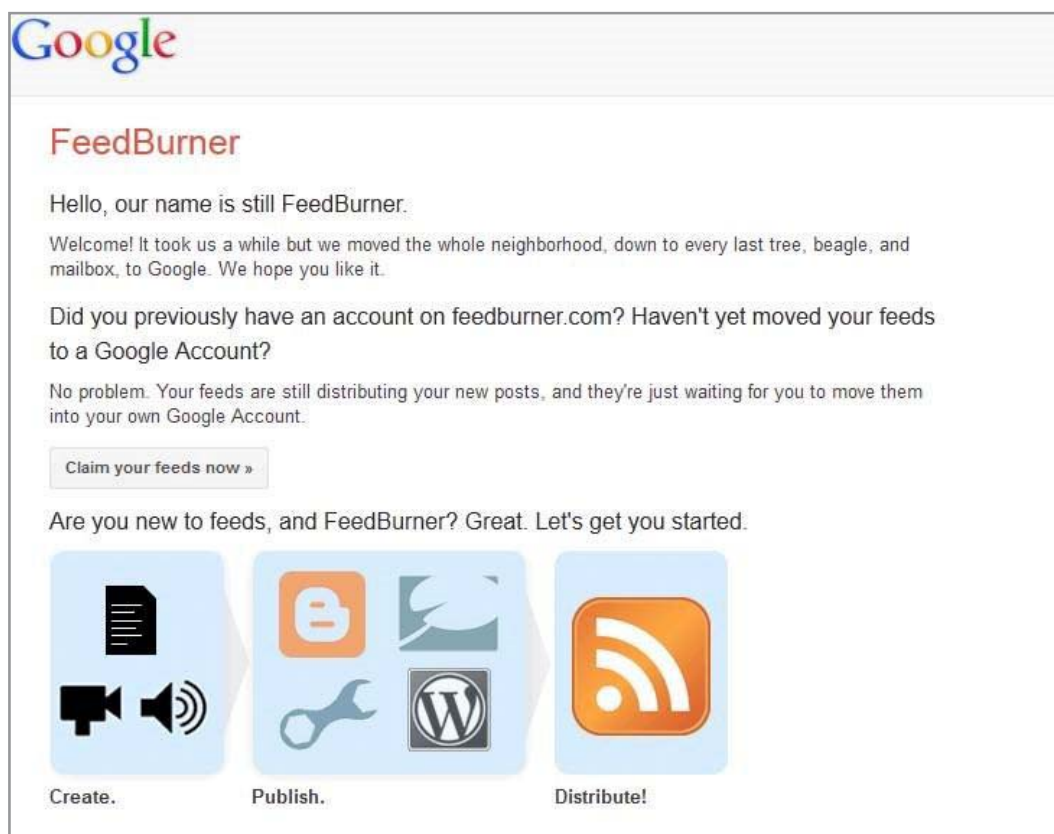


Figure 3.19 Feedburner Website

The service permits a user to publish a blog or podcast URL. This makes the podcast available for subscription using any newsreader or feed reader. FeedBurner also prepares a podcast for submitting to iTunes and prepares a URL that can be used in marketing and distribution. A FeedBurner feed will take the form:

<http://feeds.feedburner.com/businesspodcastname>

Once the podcast has been 'burned', it can be submitted to iTunes. Again, services like LibSyn and HipCast will do this for a business automatically. However, podcasts published directly on an organization's website can be submitted to iTunes. The process is straightforward:

1. Open iTunes
2. Login to the iTunes Store (the business or user will need an account)
3. Click on 'Podcasts' (located on the left sidebar menu)
4. Click 'Submit Podcast'
5. Enter podcast feed URL
6. Confirm details and submit
7. Receive email upon acceptance

3.3.10 PODCAST RECEIVERS (CLIENTS)

A podcast receiver or client is needed in order to find, subscribe, and listen to broadcasts. Software used for this purpose may also be referred to as a podcatcher. The first podcatcher, iPodder, was developed by Adam Curry (a former MTV videojockey) and Dave Winer, an early developer of RSS technology. Like more recent podcatchers, iPodder tracked podcast subscriptions and collected desired episodes when available. This software helped find podcasts, downloaded files and transferred these MP3 files to a computer or mobile listening device.²⁵ Curry's iPodder software later was redeveloped into a program called Juice. This technology led to the current state of the art in podcatching including iTunes, Zune, and numerous others.

In recent years, podcatching software can be found in a couple of different places. First, its functionality has been absorbed into blog readers. This convergence of function occurred as bandwidth has increased on the Web and most blogs contain audio and video components. Other podcast catching software can be found in the form of mobile apps (See Figure 3.20).



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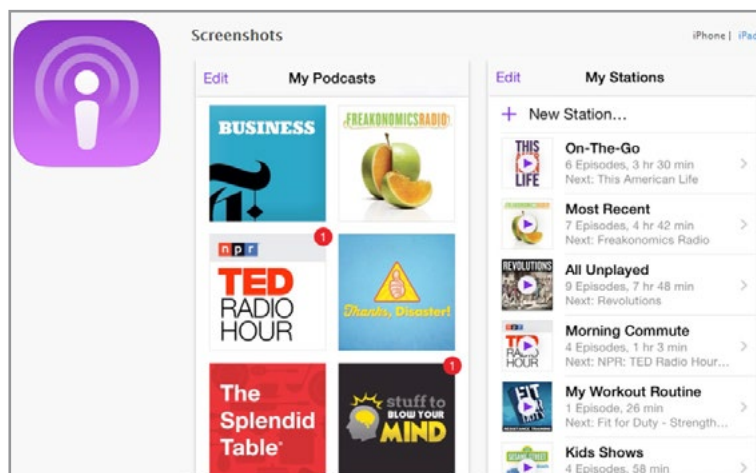


Figure 3.20 Podcast Catching Apps Are Widespread (Image from iTunes Store)

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

Businesses can benefit from using Web 2.0 tools to publish and broadcast content in the form of blogs and podcasts. Potential customers can learn about new products, coming business changes, and the people that run a company by subscribing to RSS feeds to receive blogs and podcasts. New technology has made it possible to create high quality online audio broadcasts using low cost equipment and software. This chapter has provided information about the process of creating podcasts and then syndicating and publishing this content via RSS feeds. This has become easy due to services such as LibSyn, HipCast, and FeedBurner. Chapter 4 takes the idea of podcasting one step further and provides information about adding video components to make business messages even more personal and powerful.

4 VIDEOCASTING, SCREENCASTING AND LIVE STREAMING

Podcasting, blogs, and RSS are technologies rooted in the idea that broadcasts can be created and then made available to listeners at their convenience. Chapters 2 and 3 explored this idea in the realms of text and audio. Popular technology applications also make it possible to add video components. In a sense, Web 2.0 takes the traditional idea of broadcasting a step further and enables businesses to reach their customers and stakeholders both with recorded video and in *real time*. The idea of *synchronous* communication on the Web has captured the imagination of many developers who have introduced products ranging from live radio broadcasting software to television-like live streaming sites. Chapter 4 investigates videocasting, screencasting, live audio streaming, and live video streaming.

4.1 VIDEOCASTING

Video can augment audio podcasting with a visual element. Videocasting is sometimes called vodcasting or video podcasting. Since it uses the concept of RSS feeds and the same technology as podcasting, videocasting is more than posting an online video file; it provides infrastructure for sharing and for enabling an artifact to go ‘viral’.

Videocasts can be created by small and large businesses (and individuals) with inexpensive digital video technology. High-quality visual media can be created with video cameras, various editing software and an internet connection. From a business perspective, a video podcast works the same as an audio one except that a video file is used.

Video production can range in cost from nearly free (e.g. using a webcam or mobile phone camera to capture and post video) to extremely high budget. High end video production generally requires professional assistance and is beyond the scope of this book. If a business wants to use polished, professional video for advertising (either online or on television) it might be best to contact local professionals and work with them to develop a budget based on the goals of the production.

On the other end of the spectrum, it is possible for businesses and individuals to create and share streaming video at a very low cost. Digital video permeates the Web everywhere from YouTube to Facebook to other video sites such Daily Motion and Vimeo. Digital video is quickly becoming a communication media of choice.

It is possible for nearly everyone to create a video for sharing but the quality of this video can vary. As a business (even a small business), it is important to remember that the video quality reflects on customer perceptions. This being said, an organization can easily acquire a level of proficiency that enables video to be created and distributed in the form of videocasts and video blogs. When the video is distributed in the appropriate venue, expectations regarding the quality are impacted. For instance, potential customers viewing a video on YouTube do not expect it to achieve the quality and production levels of an advertisement being broadcast on a national television station.

A few basic steps can be taken to develop a reasonable level of proficiency in video creation. As an example, video can be improved greatly through the editing process. Clips can be joined together, music and audio tracks can be added, and transitions and title screens inserted – all of which can improve the viewing experience. The next sections will provide an overview of several key components to consider when videocasting.



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4.1.1 DIGITAL VIDEO (DV)

Two of the main components in creating a video podcast are the digital video camera and computer. About a decade ago, digital video (DV) emerged as the standard choice for most videographers.³² Digital video cameras are easily connected to computers using a High Speed USB 2.0 or other interface and a single cable which transfers both image data and control signals. Digital video cameras are relatively inexpensive and are available at most stores where electronics are sold. A basic videocast with acceptable video can be developed with a wide range of cameras including a mobile smart phone or other device. It is also possible to use a webcam or video recorder on a mobile device such as an iPad.

For a slightly larger budget, the pool of available video recording options becomes even larger. Canon, Panasonic, and Sony all offer a wide range of excellent video cameras. The contenders in this highly evolving and volatile market release new and enhanced models frequently. The website Videomaker, provides up-to-date reviews and recommendations on a wide range of video cameras and equipment. This is an excellent resource to consult before making any purchase decisions (See Figure 4.1).

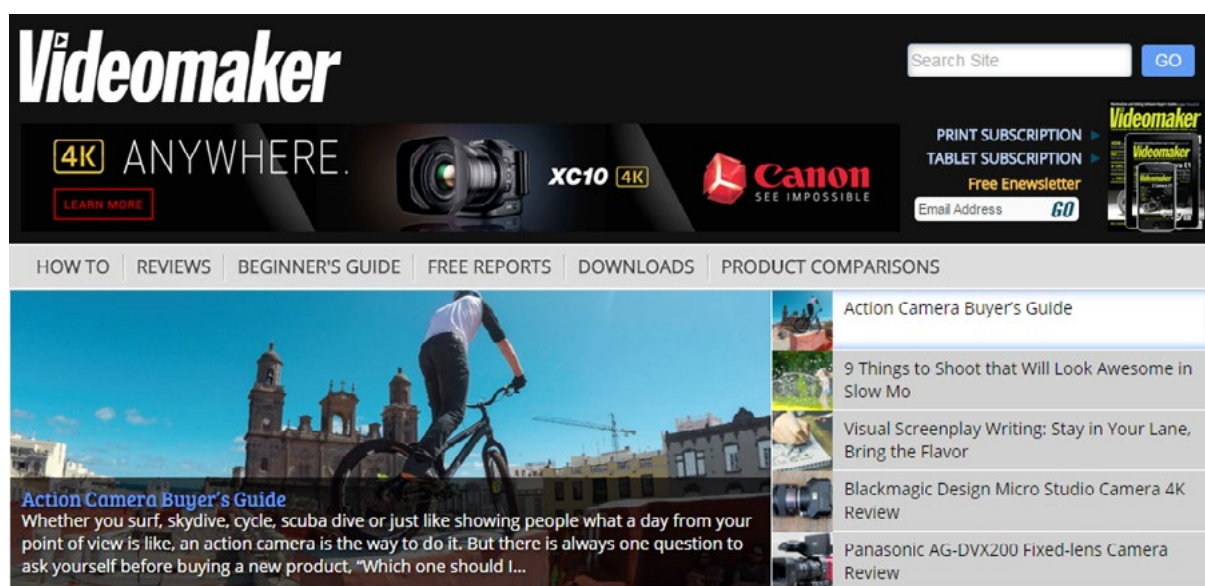


Figure 4.1 Videomaker Website for Camcorder Recommendations <http://www.videomaker.com/>

Several features should be considered when deciding on the type of video recording device to use, particularly when moving above the lowest range of recording devices. Many options are available and may be important depending on the video production goals but several key things should be considered. Among these are³³:

Lens Size: This impacts the amount of light and image quality. Generally, a larger lens will enhance light and provide a better quality image.

Video Pixels and Resolution: A pixel is the smallest addressable screen element in a video device. In other words, pixels are the dots that comprise an image. More pixels in an image result in a higher video resolution. Some cameras refer to lines of resolution instead. In either case, more lines or more pixels will provide a better video image.

Audio Considerations: Digital camcorders come with built-in microphones. In many instances it becomes necessary to attach an external microphone for better sound quality or for recording interviews more effectively. When purchasing a camcorder, it is helpful to check for a mini-jack connector for an external microphone.

Image Stabilization: Stabilization keeps images from shaking and bouncing around when recording action sequences. Camcorders may offer either optical or electronic stabilization. In most cases optical stabilization is better and will result in better video.

4.1.2 HIGH DEFINITION VIDEO (HD)

Digital video can also be captured in high definition format (HD). HD features can be found on many camcorders and provide a crisper output to fully exploit higher resolution output devices. Recording and editing HD is much the same as standard DV recording and editing. From a process standpoint, the video will require more RAM, more storage space and a faster microprocessor. Most video editing software packages incorporate tools for HD.

4.1.3 GO PRO CAMERAS

GoPro is a popular video tool often used in action-oriented videography. GoPro was conceived by Nick Woodman in 2002 as a solution to difficulties related to photographing his own surfing exploits. From its inauspicious beginnings, GoPro has grown to become the compact action camera of choice with various mountable versions intended to facilitate sports photography. In its basic form, the GoPro is a high definition, waterproof, video recording device known for its crystal-clear video. Several features differentiate GoPro from other video cameras. First, it is waterproof and shockproof making it ideal for action sports such as surfing, skydiving, bike racing and running. Also, it is WiFi enabled so videos and pictures can be easily uploaded to the Web during an activity. Figure 4.2 shows a GoPro Hero Action Camera.



Figure 4.2 GoPro Video Camera

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4.1.4 AUDIO AND LIGHTING CONSIDERATIONS

Lighting and sound are key factors when developing a videocast. Even the most basic talking head video with poor audio or dim lighting can decrease the viewers' experience or discourage them from returning for a future episode. Prior to filming a videocast for posting, it helps to take several trial runs and test out the mechanics of the videotaping session. Be sure to check background noise levels and ensure that the intended audio is not impacted by environmental sound. Try recording people speaking from different angles, with and without the external microphone, and in group discussions. Determine what works well and what will not be acceptable. Try recording sound from a distance and see what audio quality results. In the end, knowing the recording equipment's limits and capabilities will result in a better recording. Depending on the type of podcast being created, different microphones may be required. Table 4.1 summarizes.

| Microphone Type | Use | Comments |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Directional | Mounts on camera | Best used to record people speaking toward camera. Often used in interviews or when filming speakers from a closer distance. |
| Handheld | Placed on stand or held by speaker | Good for interviewing groups of people. The microphone can be passed between participants to get better sound. Can also be mounted on a stand and placed in the center of a table for small group situations. |
| Boundary | Used to pick up sound in rooms and from a variety of sources | This type of microphone is designed to pull sound in from a larger area. It is good for group discussions and for 'town meeting' situations. It may be placed in the center of a table for larger group discussions. |
| Clip-on | Attached to lapel | This works well when recording a speech or for an interview when only the interviewee's voice recording will be used. |
| Head-set | Attached over ears and microphone is in front of mouth | A headset is often used when recording voice-overs or video conferences. It combines the microphone with a headset to help reduce external noise for the person being recorded. |

| Microphone Type | Use | Comments |
|-----------------|-----------|--|
| Wireless | Many uses | <p>Wireless microphones can take the form of the others discussed previously.</p> <p>Directional, boundary, handheld, head-set and clip-on mics may all be wireless. Often, wireless microphones use Bluetooth technology. These types of microphones are often easier to use but the range must be tested in advance.</p> |

Table 4.1 Microphone Categories

Often, voice recordings may take the form of voice-overs. This means that a recording is added to the video after it has been recorded. Voice-overs usually are recorded under more carefully controlled situations using good studio equipment. It is important that the levels used on voice-overs are matched to the recorded audio tracks so the listener does not experience bursts of louder or quieter audio during the videocast. Lighting is also a key ingredient in a successful videocast. If the recording is being done in a controlled environment, professional lights can be purchased at a reasonable price. These lights help eliminate shadows and even out the video’s appearance. Many companies provide low-cost, studio lighting solutions. Figure 4.3 provides an example from <http://www.coolights.biz>.



Figure 4.3 Example of Low Cost Studio Lighting

Most videocasts do not have the luxury of professional lighting. This makes it more important to pay attention to the environment in which the recording will be done. For instance, check the existing lighting by doing a few trial video shots. Remember, the recorded video may look different than how the LCD screen appears. Several guidelines can improve the quality of a recording. First, try to avoid recording directly beneath a bright light that causes shadows to be cast over the speaker's face. Second, be sure the location is evenly lit with multiple light sources. Third, avoid locations where light levels may change rapidly or shadows may be occasionally cast.

Lighting and sound do not always need to be perfect. Depending on the goal for the recording and the length of the clip being filmed, sometimes 'realistic' and imperfect can add to the overall effect. For more professional clips (e.g. training videos and corporate messages), having good lighting and sound becomes much more important. In these situations, it becomes necessary to take extra time to fine-tune the environment and experiment with sample shots. A little preparation will go a long way to ensure that a videocast becomes a quality product.

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4.1.5 COMPUTER CONSIDERATIONS

Another consideration in digital video production is ensuring that the computer system can manage and manipulate large amounts of data. In general, this means have a fast microprocessor processor and plenty of RAM as well as sufficient hard disk storage space. Most video editing software is written to take advantage of features found on modern chips. Increasing RAM is a good way to enhance editing and to speed up the video rendering process (transforming raw video data files into the viewable, distributable files).

4.1.6 PREPARING TO RECORD A VIDEOCAST

Preparation and planning are important for developing professional podcasts and videocasts. Several techniques can be employed to help with the process. Among these are shot lists and storyboards. Shot lists essentially are lists of all the different video (or audio) clips that are needed to complete a particular videocast. A storyboard can be likened to a detailed flow chart that shows how all the shots will be pieced together into a finished project. For short videocasts, these tools might not be needed. However, by practicing with them during simple projects, skills will be developed and complex projects will go smoother.

Storyboards often are the starting point for a videocast. The storyboard provides a working plan with details specifying how a video director envisions the end product. Often, storyboards provide a venue for communication and enhance discussions of ways the videocast should be constructed. In general, it will document the visual elements, changes in screen perspectives, text elements, audio elements, music score and other aspects of a video production. A well-developed storyboard can reduce video capture and editing time as well as guarantee that a videocast's goals are met.

Storyboards are used in many industries for planning advertising campaigns, creating commercials, developing presentations, creating television and video programming, and constructing videocasts. Storyboards can be used as proposals or presentations. They may be developed by hand, as sketches or drawings, or may be done with software packages (See Figure 4.4 for an example). Some developers use PowerPoint slides as a storyboard medium. Others may use a *brown paper* technique which involves taping sketches to large sheets of paper, rearranging the scenes during a group discussion and then eventually settling on a final format. Some developers even rely on a sequence of post-it notes for storyboarding. In some cases, the storyboard is used as a guide to help develop a script for the speakers.



Figure 4.4 Storyboarding Software Example

Following completion of a storyboard, a shot list can be developed. The shot list will contain information about the way the shot is to be taken. The shot list also can provide a checklist for the filming crew and director. Information about each shot can be added to the video during editing to help keep track of the different film segments. Shots can range from close and personal to distant panoramas. Table 4.2 provides various common options.

| Shot Type | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| Close Up | A single person's face or object is used to fill the frame. When filming discussions, this can be used to capture emotion. |
| Head Shot | This is another name for a close up shot that is focused on a person's face. |
| Point of View | Creates a perspective of what a particular person can see. This shot is often filmed over the shoulder of a particular person. |
| Participant View | This is a variant of the point of view where the participant controls the video camera and films the elements from their own perspective and view. |
| Vox Pop | Vox pop comes from the Latin phrase <i>vox populi</i> which loosely translates to <i>voice of the people</i> . The idea is to create a short video answer to a question posed to many different people. The answers can be edited together into a random reflection of popular opinion. |
| Video Journal | A laptop with a webcam is used to record participant thoughts in real time. They appear to be sharing their innermost thoughts with the audience. |
| Reverse Head Shot | This is similar to a point of view shot but specifically is used to capture the response of a person who has just been asked a question. The shot is filmed over the shoulder of the interviewer. |
| Midrange | This shot is used to show one, two or a small group of speakers from a distance greater than used for a head shot. Often this is used to focus on the interchange between two people. |

| Shot Type | Description |
|---------------|--|
| Long Distance | Shows the scene or entire group of people from a distance. This is effective in videocasts of group discussions to give the viewer a perspective of the setting. |
| Tracking | A shot that follows a person or object as they move. |
| Pan | A shot that slowly includes more and more of the background. |
| Zoom | A shot that slowly focuses in on a particular person or object. |
| Time Lapse | A shot of an entire activity is captured from the same perspective. Afterwards it is edited to 'speed' up time and give the appearance of a time lapse. This can be done with a webcam that takes pictures every couple of seconds. Time lapse software is available on the Web. |

Table 4.2 Common Shots for Videocasts³⁴

4.1.7 RECORDING A VIDEOCAST

Recording the videocast requires careful thought and attention. Many problems can emerge related to sound quality, lighting and equipment. Be sure to have a backup plan in case some equipment fails.

"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect

ENGLISH OUT THERE

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In general, be ready to record early and take trial shots to test the location and the current setup. Be sure to have permission slips available for participants to sign. If the video may be posted online be sure this is made clear. During the recording process, be sure to periodically check the equipment to ensure that it is recording properly.

4.1.8 VIDEO SOFTWARE AND EDITING

After shooting video using a camcorder or other device, the raw file is transferred to a computer over a USB (or FireWire) cable. The raw file needs to be edited and put into a form that is suitable for a videocast. This means adding title screens, music, commentary, and arranging the various shots in a meaningful way. The process of creating a polished, professional video is part science and part art. Becoming proficient at this can require time, training, and practice. Many good books and websites describe ways of developing outstanding video.

Video editing software comes in many different categories and cost ranges. For tight budgets, good quality software is available. Both Windows and Apple OS generally provide free editing software. Windows provides MovieMaker and Apple computers usually come with iMovie. Both packages are powerful and relatively easy to use. Another low cost option may come with your video camera. Most digital video cameras include software with editing features. A third low cost option is to investigate online video editing services. Powerful tools are emerging and provide various services ranging in cost from free to very expensive. For instance, WeVideo (see Figure 4.5) provides powerful software for creating finished video from raw clips with titles, transitions, and music clips.

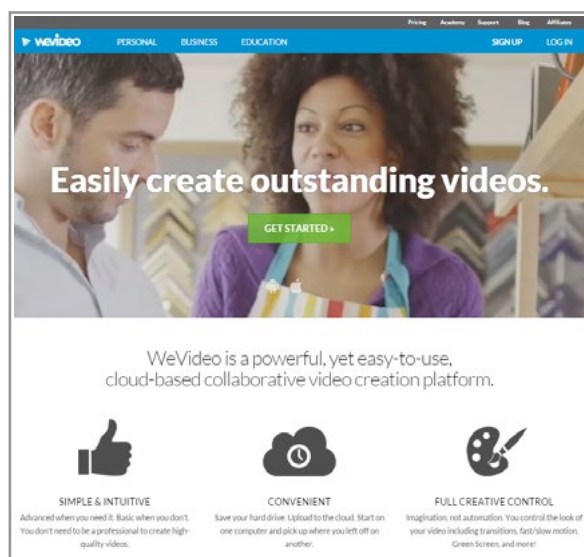


Figure 4.5 WeVideo for Creating Video Material

In addition to online solutions, a variety of professional quality video editing software is available. This software can range in price from low to very high. Table 4.3 provides examples of several popular packages. Most of these packages offer tutorials and provide information about the editing process and ways of rendering raw video into formats that can be streamed over the Web as videocasts.

| Package | Website | Description |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| Adobe Production Premium | http://www.adobe.com/creativecloud.html | High-performance video production software with a full range of editing and production tools. Often used by small businesses and educators. Part of the Adobe Creative Suite. |
| Final Cut Pro | http://www.apple.com/finalcutpro | Video editing and production software from Apple. Provides a full range of editing options and media management tools. It is known for its speed and streamlined capabilities. |
| Sony Vegas | http://www.sonycreativesoftware.com/vegassoftware | Provides a family of products for importing video, editing movies, and incorporating images into video production. A range of capabilities and prices are available. |

Table 4.3 Video Editing Software Examples

The techniques used for editing and creating polished, professional videos take time and practice. Many online training sessions, tutorials and other educational resources are available to support the use of most software systems. It is also important to consider that different cameras and software packages use various video formats. When investing in editing software, it is important to ensure that the package is compatible with the digital camera that you are planning to use.

Another consideration is that the video will need to be stored. Typically, footage is recorded and placed into a media library. Clips from the library are used to construct a finished video which is then rendered into a format for viewers. The format will depend on a number of factors, including whether it is intended to be streamed over the Web, burned to a DVD or shown in high definition format. Different versions can be created and then used in different venues. The original video that was shot will probably be in a different format from the finished production. The original video then will be kept for future projects.

Most videos require some editing prior to uploading to a website. This is not always true and many video recorders (such as the Flip) are working to streamline the process. However, basic editing will generally require several activities.

First, the video will have to be transferred from recorder to computer. This means the computer will have to have adequate storage either on its hard drive or through access to an external hard drive. Video transfer may occur through a USB or Firework port, or it may be as simple as moving a memory stick from the camera to a computer. If a MiniDV tape was used for recording, then the video may need to be imported using a software feature in the editor.

Once the video is on the computer, the clips will need to be imported into the editing software's media library. Generally, this will be a drag and drop operation but could be more complicated if the video formats between the camera and software are not compatible. In this case, a software utility program such as AVS Video Converter or Freemake may be required (See Figures 4.6 and 4.7). Before purchasing this type of software, be sure to check to see if the camera's software or the editing programs already offer conversion options.

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Figure 4.6 Video Conversion Software Example



Figure 4.7 Freemake Video Conversion Software

During the conversion process, the imported video may automatically split into individual clips. Otherwise, this may have to be done manually. Next, editing involves dragging clips into the video timeline, trimming the clips, and adding titles and images. Once the individual clips are set, transitions can be added to make the change between scenes appear smoother. It is important to be sparing with transitions and stick with simple fades or cuts. Spend time watching how scenes are changed in professional documentaries and movies and notice how transitions occur. Also, notice the typical length of clips before perspectives or viewing angles are changed. Table 4.4 provides suggested editing considerations that will make a video much more professional. After the editing process, the video should be rendered into a format that can be viewed on the Web (such as MP4 or Flash).

| Technique | Description |
|----------------------------|--|
| Working with the Timeline | Most editing software provides a zoom function. This means video clips, voiceovers, and photos can be added to the timeline and trimmed to appear smooth and perfectly timed to the viewer. Be sure to zoom in when working to put the finishing touches on a video production. This technique can also be used to eliminate small glitches or speaker mistakes. |
| Voiceovers | Audio files can either be imported or recorded directly (if this feature is supported by the editing software). Voiceovers can replace the audio track that was recorded with the video. This technique can provide the ability to add narration or to comment on the video scene being displayed. |
| Title Screens and Overlays | Most editing software offers tools for constructing title screens. These tools may offer a variety of colored backgrounds and images. It is also possible to create a title screen in a graphic design software package or photo editor and then import it as an image file. Title screens can also be developed as overlays. When using overlays, be sure the text is visible throughout the display period. Sometimes, the color of the video might change and this causes text to become difficult or impossible to read. |
| Subtitles | Screen overlays can be used to add subtitles to portions of a video. This is often done if the audio is difficult to understand or if the speaker is using a language unfamiliar to most viewers. A full set of subtitles can be added to a video with the video editor or specialized software. |
| Introductory Clip | If the videocast is part of a series, all episodes may have a common introduction which includes music and perhaps a professionally recorded voice and screen display. |
| Music | Music can enhance a videocast. Most frequently, music is played during title and introduction screens and again during the closing credits. Music also may be used during visual sequences or during scene changes. Music is available from a variety of websites. However, only a portion can be legally used. It is important to check the license agreements to determine if it can be used. Legal music for reuse can be found at: http://search.creativecommons.org/ |

| Technique | Description |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <p>Stock Video Clips and Photos</p> | <p>Stock video and photos can enhance shot video. Public domain footage (e.g. Creative Commons License) can be found in a variety of locations. Likewise, royalty free footage can also be acquired. This type of footage requires a onetime payment for use. Any stock footage should be credited at the end of the video.</p> <p>Various well-known stock footage sites include:</p> <p>Moving Image Archive http://www.archive.org/details/movies</p> <p>Flickr http://www.flickr.com</p> <p>iStock http://www.istockphoto.com/video</p> |
| <p>Opening or Closing Credits</p> | <p>Most editor software will provide features for adding opening or closing credit screens in a variety of formats. Scrolling information or pages may be used.</p> |

Table 4.4 Advanced Editing Techniques and Ideas

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4.1.9 POSTING A VIDEOCAST

Posting a videocast follows the same basic process as posting a podcast. One difference is that a videocast needs to be rendered into a viewable format that can be shared on the Web. Most video editing software packages provide a wizard to make this easier. The wizard may be found under an option such as ‘Export’, ‘Create Movie’ or ‘Render’.

Once the file is rendered, it needs to be uploaded to a hosting service. Many video hosting services exist. YouTube is the most widely used of these. Others are shown in Table 4.5. In most cases, you will need to create an account and then upload the video. The video will be transformed into a Flash format and made available through a link or with code that can be used to embed the video in a blog or other website (See Figure 4.8). The videocast can be publicized the same as a podcast or blog entry with RSS feed technology, tagging, and so forth.




| Website | Site Image | Web Address |
|-------------|---|---|
| YouTube |  | http://www.youtube.com/ |
| DailyMotion |  | http://www.dailymotion.com/ |
| Vimeo |  | http://vimeo.com/ |

Table 4.5 Posting Sites Useful for Videocasting

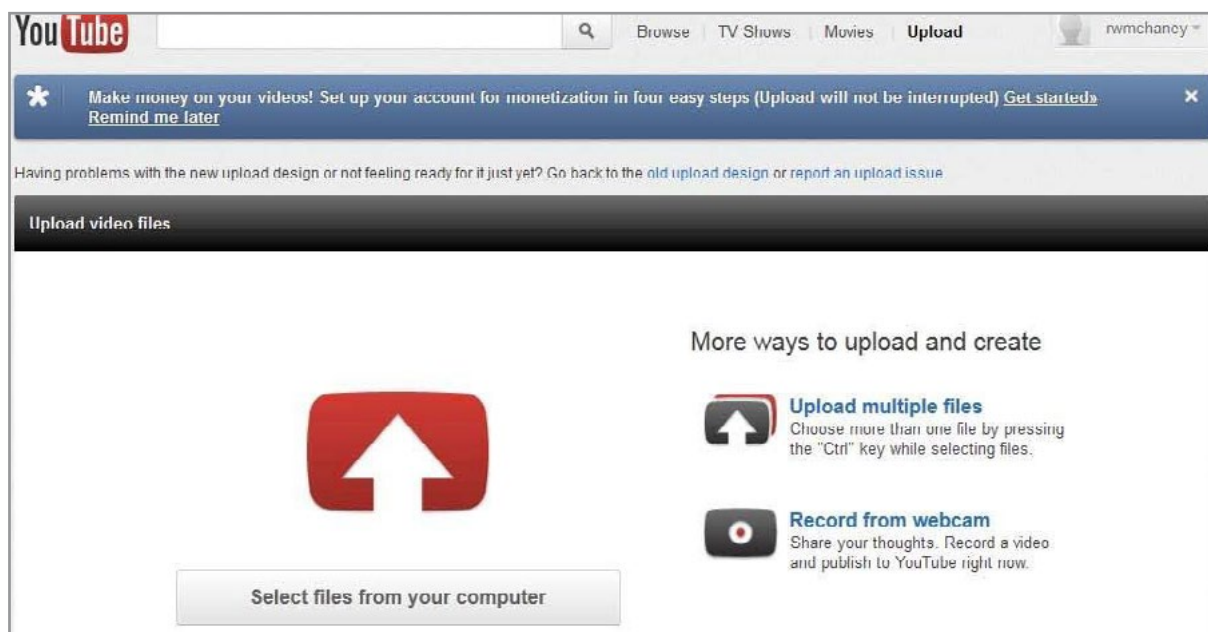


Figure 4.8 Uploading to YouTube

4.2 SCREENCASTING

Screencasting is closely related to videocasting and is another way to create material for inclusion in social media. The primary difference is the source of the video. Screencasting digitally captures a computer screen display and stores it in a video file¹ This means anything playing on the computer can be captured for editing and rebroadcast. Sophisticated screencasts may include a voice track narration that is added either during the screen capture process or afterward during the editing process. Many videocasts incorporate screen captures for a blended effect. Screencasts provide a useful method for demonstrating software usage and creating tutorials. Streaming video from webcams can be the source of screencasts. So can examples of websites or any other software in action. Screencasts are easy to create, post online or add to a blog.³⁵



Figure 4.9 Camtasia Studio for Screencasting

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Screencasting has been enhanced, streamlined, and made more productive through a variety of tools. Popular Screencasting software packages are: Camtasia (see Figure 4.9), ScreenFlow, Snapz Pro X, and CamStudio. These tools focus on video capture of a computer's screen and recording the accompanying audio in digital form. Other tools take a more specific approach and enable the development of video presentations using tools such as PowerPoint as a base. For instance, Brainshark, a cloud-based software system, permits existing static content including PowerPoint slide shows to be transformed into narrated video presentations for online access. Additionally, Brainshark provides tracking software to ensure communication effectiveness and monitor use of the presentations. Brainshark offers products tailored for individuals, small office/ home office professionals, and larger enterprises. The single-user version of Brainshark's online video presentation developer can be used to create, share and track publicly accessible presentations for free (See Figure 4.10).



Figure 4.10 Brainshark's Content Creation Products

Animoto is another example of a powerful and fast online video production tool. Animoto's output falls somewhere between videocasting and screencasting with capabilities helpful for each area. This online toolset was developed with the mission of "help[ing] people better share their stories and express themselves through online media by innovating technologies in the field of video production."³⁶ Animoto uses the latest in digital audio and video technologies to "bridge the gap between the high production value of film and television, and the more *amateur* feeling of most user-created videos and photo albums."³⁶ It uses Cinematic Artificial Intelligence to emulate a human director and an editor to analyze and combine user-selected images, video clips and music to create a sophisticated output video (See Figure 4.11).

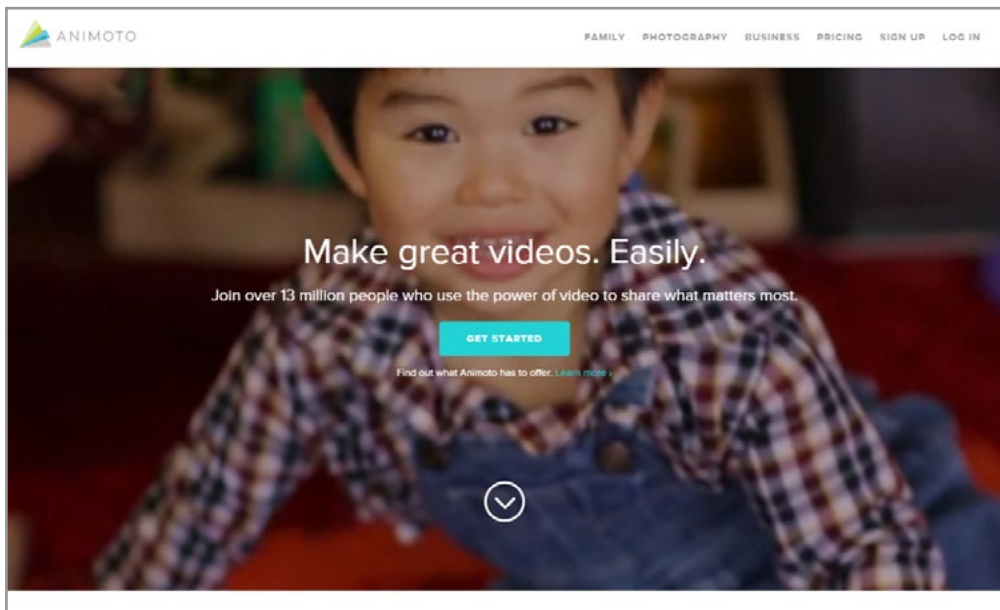


Figure 4.11 Animoto Video Production Site

Animoto also has entered the mobile app marketplace with a mobile version of their software that enables quick production of video artifacts. Business professionals use this tool to create ‘on-the-fly’ sales and presentation material (See Figure 4.12).

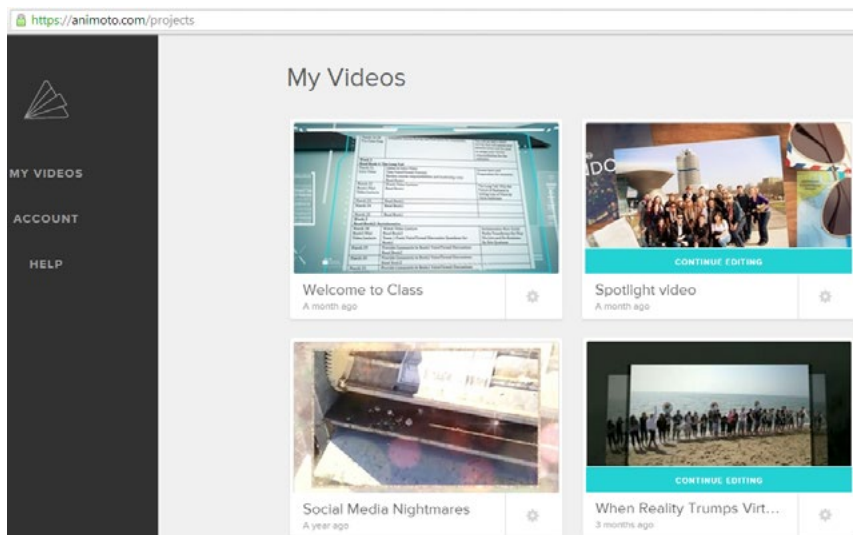


Figure 4.12 Animoto’s Mobile App Allows Quick Video Production

4.3 LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming video (and audio) is the idea of viewing and broadcasting **real time** audio and/or video over the Internet. Previously, we investigated videocasts and podcasts which are asynchronous broadcasts. This means that the audio and video were prerecorded and posted for later viewing. Live streaming creates a real time or synchronous link between viewers and broadcasters. With this in mind, live streams can also be captured for asynchronous viewing later. Live streaming is the Web 2.0 equivalent of live television broadcasts except that most are done without expensive studio equipment and facilities.

4.3.1 MAJOR PLAYERS IN LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming has roots in several traditions and can be considered to be the convergence of technologies from different venues including chatrooms, broadcast television, and telephone systems. For instance, the popular live streaming sites, ChatAvenue and Tinychat are descended from text and audio based chatroom technologies. Tinychat provides a venue for a user to create a video chat room where their 'broadcast' and others form the center feature of the room. Other users can join the room, view the broadcasts, and interact with text, audio, and video feedback with the host's permission. The rooms can be public, private or a mix based on criteria set by the host. Figure 4.13 shows a Tinychat live video broadcast.

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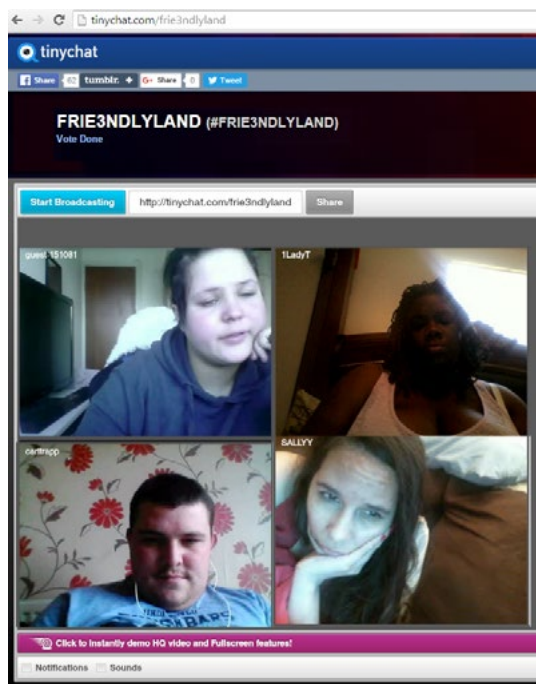


Figure 4.13 Example of Live Streams from Tinychat

In Tinychat, the host retains the ability to control who enters the room and broadcasts video, but the users themselves select the video that will be the focus of their attention. Hosts can come and go and the room can remain intact. The users and host interact with synchronous text, audio and video. Tinychat is primarily used by teenagers and young adults. Figure 4.14 illustrates.



Figure 4.14 Example of Live Streams from Tinychat

Both ChatAvenue and Tinychat have been widely adapted for social interaction. Both have been used by businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and various companies to broadcast live events, stream presentations, publicize album releases, offer training/instruction, and provide question and answer venues for a variety of authors, musicians, and celebrities. Cutting edge businesses in entertainment and music industries make up a sizable share of commercial clients for these types of websites. Social live streaming is becoming more popular and is being recognized as a powerful new way to reach customers, potential customers, and other stakeholders.

Live streaming techniques have also emerged in venues that emulate traditional television broadcasting. Websites such as VaughnLive.TV and UStream enable users to create channels and broadcast shows reminiscent of public access cable television. A variety of tools and video enhancement support capabilities are continually being added to make the broadcasts more professional in appearance. For instance, HD digital video is supported on many live stream websites. UStream provides an embeddable video player and a broadcast schedule similar to a cable TV guide. UStream provides the ability to create live video programs that can be inserted into any blog or website with tools to archive and replay past programs. Figures 4.15 and 4.16 provide examples of VaughnLive.TV and UStream.

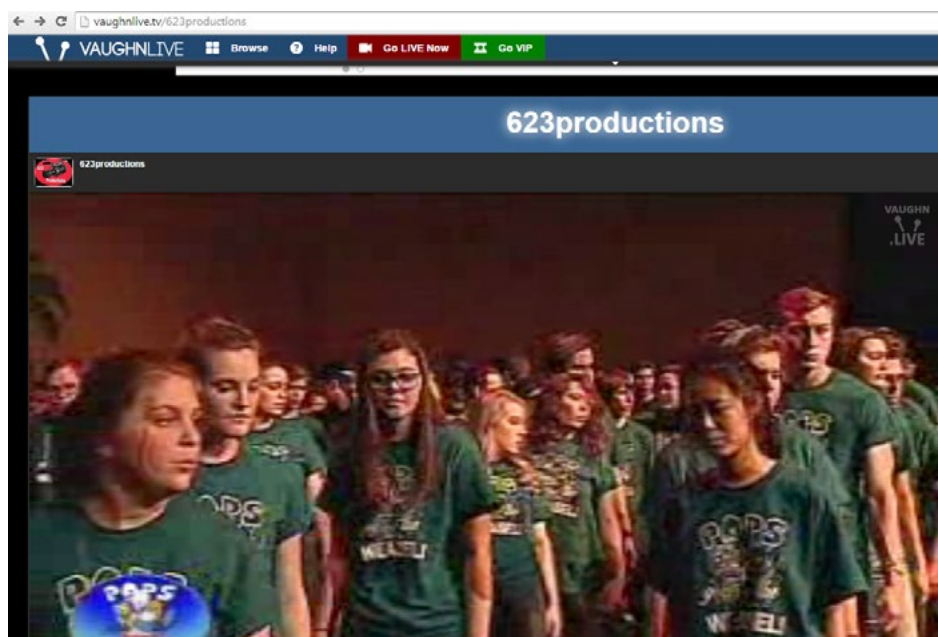


Figure 4.15 A Production on VaughnLive.TV

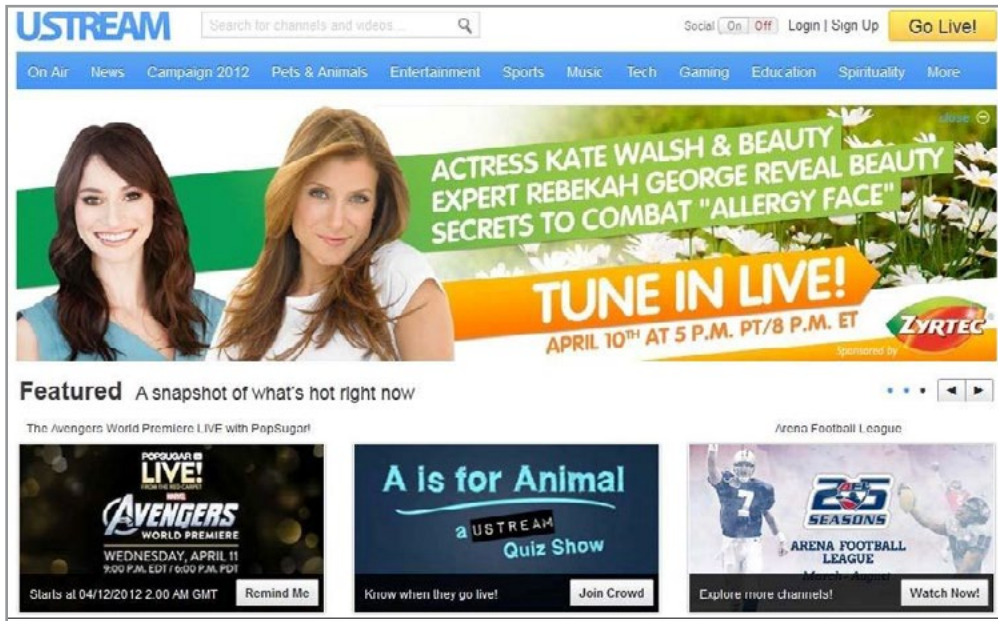


Figure 4.16 UStream is Similar to a Web 2.0 Version of Television

In similar fashion, the website, Livestream (see Figure 4.17), takes a community approach and provides a way to get live events out on the Web. It also provides mechanisms for streams to be embedded or shared via social media.

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and start texting from your computer!

BrowserTexting

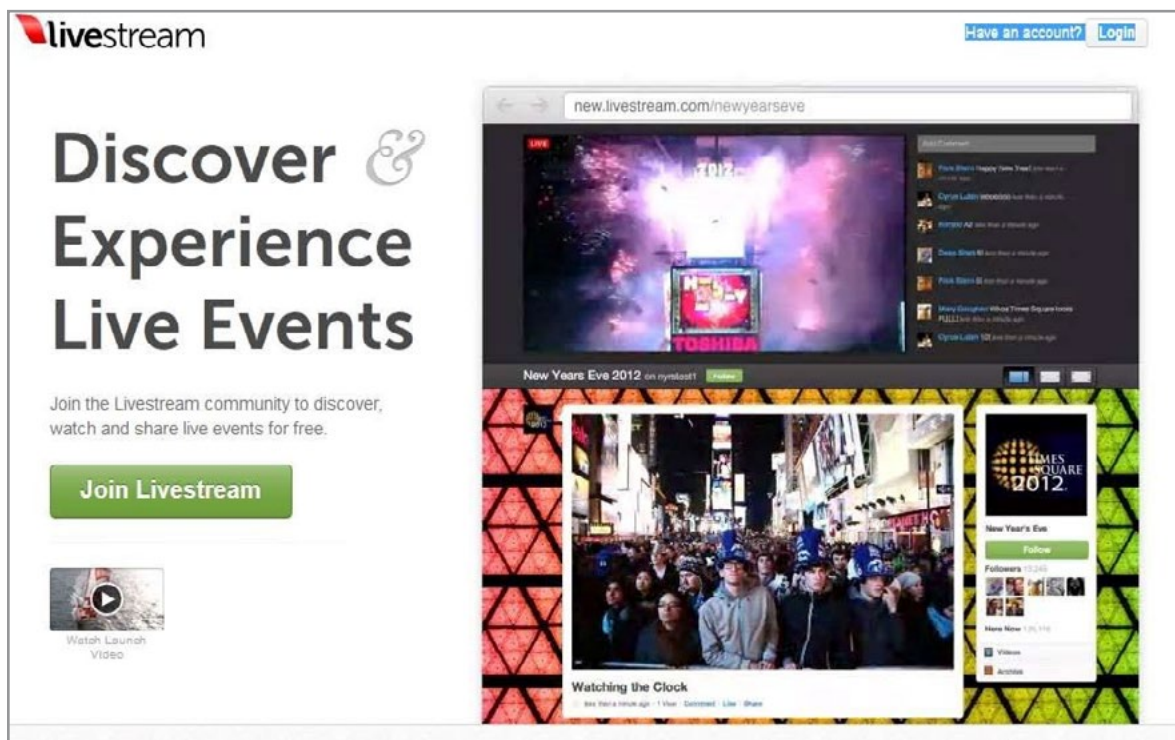


Figure 4.17 Community Events can be Broadcast with Livestream

Synchronous online video has become widely available and easy to incorporate into blogs, websites and specialty sites. This trend portends the rapidly approaching era of Internet television. Live video will gain popularity and become available to the masses. This means that every business and every person will have the means to develop and broadcast their own video programs. YouCams (see Figure 4.18) provides tools for embedding live streaming into existing website structures and has been marketed as a webcam chat widget with capabilities for embedding video chat capabilities. YouCams works best from an established website with its preexisting audience and has a focus on smaller groups. Another feature offered by YouCams is its capability to enable groups to watch YouTube videos and see participant reactions in real time.



Figure 4.18 YouCams Provides Tools for Existing Websites among its Services

Other Live Streaming capabilities have developed from the idea of telephone conversations and instant messaging. For example, Zoom.us, a competitor of Skype, provides a variety of features that make it easy to either hold individual or group conversations online. Zoom allows users to set up conferences with a dial-in phone number and engage in an online meeting. According to Zoom.us, “simple online meetings, group messaging, and a software-defined conference room solution [are combined] into one easy-to-use platform. [Their] solution offers the best video, audio, and wireless screen-sharing experience across Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, Blackberry, Zoom Rooms, and H.323/SIP room systems.”³⁷ See Figure 4.19.

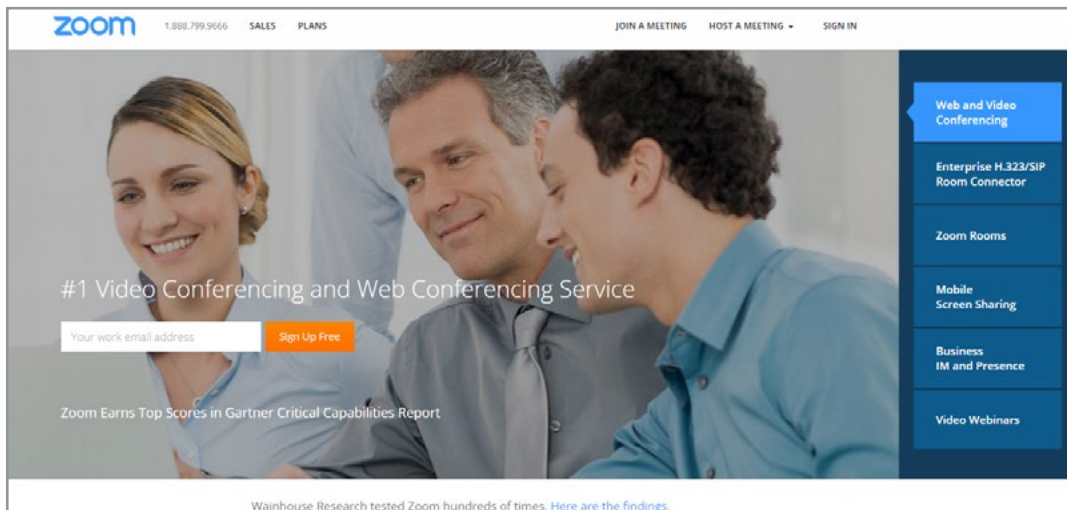


Figure 4.19 Zoom.us provides Live Streaming and Video Conferencing Capabilities

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4.3.2 LIVE AUDIO STREAMING

A variety of other tools are appearing in the young and dynamic field of live streaming. One of these, called BlogTalkRadio (<http://www.blogtalkradio.com>), seeks to emulate talk radio on a variety of subjects but uses blog technology (coupled with audio streaming and often, video streaming) to provide live and asynchronous content (see Figure 4.20). A search on Google will locate dozens more services related to video and audio live streaming.

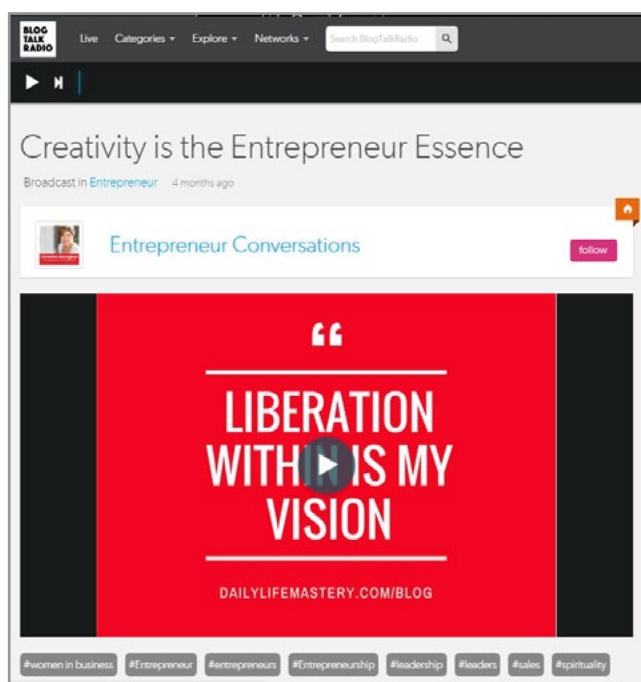


Figure 4.20 Entrepreneurship Talk Show on BlogTalkRadio

4.3.3 TYPICAL LIVE STREAMING APPLICATION FEATURES

Live streaming products provide a wide variety of features in addition to broadcasting video (and audio) over the Web. Many of these features come from the predecessor of the technology or may have been added as a result of convergence in the area. The following list provides a look at many of these features (Pick, 2007):

Live broadcasting (synchronous) – Stream live video from a user’s video capture device.

Scheduled broadcasting (asynchronous) – Allows video to be rebroadcast at a predetermined time. This means that a digital video file becomes available after a particular time and date.

On-demand broadcasting (asynchronous) – In this situation, users determine the time when they will view the broadcast.

Embedded live player – Allows the video producer to embed a customized video player displaying live video. Usually the embedded player will be inserted into an existing website or blog. This enables users to view video from the current site so that they will not have to move to another website.

Embedded recorded player – Permits the video producer to embed a customized video player displaying pre-recorded or archived video. Usually the embedded player will be inserted into an existing website or blog. This enables users to view video from the current site so they will not have to move to another website.

Multiple participants – Allows more than one broadcaster to participate in a video presentation session. This might mean that one video feed is transferred between various broadcasters or that multiple broadcasts are streamed at the same time.

Integrated text messages – Provides the facility for viewers to interact with broadcasters or each other via text messages typed into a common interface during a video broadcast. This allows viewers to hold a text discussion during a live or recorded broadcast.

Integrated audio chat – Provides the facility for viewers to interact with broadcasters or each other via audio chat spoken during a video broadcast. This allows viewers to hold an audio discussion during a live or recorded broadcast.

Integrated video chat – Provides the facility for viewers to interact with broadcasters or each other via video chat during a video broadcast. This enables viewers to have a rich discussion during a live or recorded broadcast.

Webcam capture – Some live streaming websites provide the capability of direct video capture. In other words, users can stream or record video clips from either a built-in or external webcam. The video may be presented live or stored for later viewing.

Audio capture – The capability of direct audio capture is a feature on some live streaming websites. An internal or external microphone can be used to stream or record audio. The soundtrack may be presented live or stored for later listening.

Mobile device capture – Another feature of some live streaming websites includes the capture of video or still photos from a mobile smart device. With this technology, users can stream or record video clips from their phone, pad or other device. The photos, audio, or video may be presented live or stored for later viewing.

Import video – Many live streaming sites have the capability of importing existing video. The imported video might come from video sharing websites such as YouTube or Vimeo. Alternately, it may be imported from a computer, mobile device or hard drive. The imported video can be made available for later viewing or can be imported into a live broadcast where voiceovers or text can be added.

Import digital images – Photographs, illustrations, graphics and other artifacts can be uploaded or pulled from other websites for use in live streaming.

Import audio tracks – Music and other audio tracks often can be acquired from websites, computers, mobile devices or storage devices. These tracks can be broadcast directly or mixed into a broadcast.

Titles and transitions – Live streaming sites often contain tools for adding header screens and building transitions for broadcasts or stored video footage.

4.4 WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is a popular texting and phone app that enables people to communicate over the Internet. This saves money for phone users who typically talk over cellular networks. It is free to download and allows users to send text messages, images, audio and video over the Internet. See Figure 4.21. Its popularity stems from capabilities such as group chatting, voice messages, location sharing, and an interface to phone systems (extra charges for calls to non-WhatsApp phones). WhatsApp reported having over 700 Million users in January, 2015 and during 2016 approached 1 billion users world-wide.³⁸ This makes WhatsApp the world's largest online messenger app. It was founded by a group of ex-Yahoo employees and was eventually purchased by Facebook in 2014.³⁹



Figure 4.21 What's App Home Page

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4.4.1 BUSINESS POTENTIAL OF WHATSAPP

WhatsApp's staff is working hard to develop a base of business users. In addition to cutting the cost of phone calls, WhatsApp announced that it was testing tools that allow users to communicate with businesses and organizations that they want to hear from. This B2C social media approach to communication is innovative and could revolutionize the way many transactions are conducted. For instance, a credit card holder might get a call from a bank about potentially fraudulent charges or a traveler might get a message about rescheduling a delayed flight from an airline. The tools will be carefully vetted to ensure that spam, ads and fraud are not enabled.⁴⁰

4.4.2 WHATSAPP FOR BUSINESS

Many businesses already have embraced WhatsApp as a way to cut communication costs. But other uses are emerging. Among these are⁴¹:

Tool for Internal Team Communication – Many people already use WhatsApp and are willing to set up groups for business communication. This permits texting and calls within a team.

Customer Communication – Small businesses are using WhatsApp to cut the cost of phone calls. This is particularly true for those wishing to make international calls.

Customer Support – A number of new tools are appearing that integrate WhatsApp into their customer support platforms.

Marketing & Promotion – Many customers are open to receiving information regarding promotions, sales and new products. Communication can be facilitated with WhatsApp.

Other Creative Uses – Some businesses have created an operating model heavily integrated with WhatsApp. Examples exist for maid services, Uber and Airbnb operators and others.

In general, WhatsApp is a popular communication tool with several social media features integrated into its platform. Its simplicity and low cost make it appealing both to personal users and business planners.

4.4.3 WECHAT – A WHATSAPP COMPETITOR

WeChat is another very popular, social media enabled chat application. It began moving businesses into messaging and texting in 2013. It offers a number of features useful to businesses such as payments system options, advertising programs, and automated Q/A systems. WeChat, (which is based in China and called Weixin) has more than 10 million business accounts including fast-food giant McDonalds, many media organizations, and the Chinese Communist party. Figure 4.22 shows WeChat's app icon.



Figure 4.22 WeChat App Icon

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter provided a look at how Web 2.0 applications move the power of live audio and video broadcasting into the hands of businesses and individuals. The idea allows businesses to reach their customers and stakeholders in real time and permits archived copies to be reused later. The world of synchronous communication on the Web has captured the imagination of many innovators and a wide variety of services has emerged from diverse backgrounds. Convergence in this area is moving the best facets of these services into more common platforms with components derived from chatrooms, radio, television, blogs, video sharing sites, telephone systems and other traditions. Web 2.0 broadcasts range from people speaking into their webcams to sophisticated digital productions that are beginning to rival Hollywood capabilities. Mobile apps are making all of these technologies more personal and provide organizations with more ways to connect with stakeholders. In short, businesses have the opportunity to personalize their communications and operate at different levels to achieve their goals and objectives.

5 WIKIS AND COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTS

Web 2.0 concepts may have emerged first with the advent of Wikis. The word *Wiki* was derived from the Hawaiian language and means *quick*. Wikis now represent a class of applications which includes tools for collaboratively developing a variety of documents, and the associated tools to facilitate multiple authoring. In general, wikis and other document sites provide features to enable users to co-create and edit content, develop topics, link pages, add tags, and cross reference material. In fact, many of the features explored with blogs are also available within wikis. Most collaborative documents are inherently flexible and can be used for displaying content on a webpage with the added bonus of allowing content to be dynamically updated using only a Web browser.^{1, 42}

Most collaborative documents eventually serve as knowledge repositories and are successfully used in business, personal and academic settings. Wikipedia is the best known and most popular wiki. It is a massive online encyclopedia with more than 5 million English articles (see Figure 5.1).

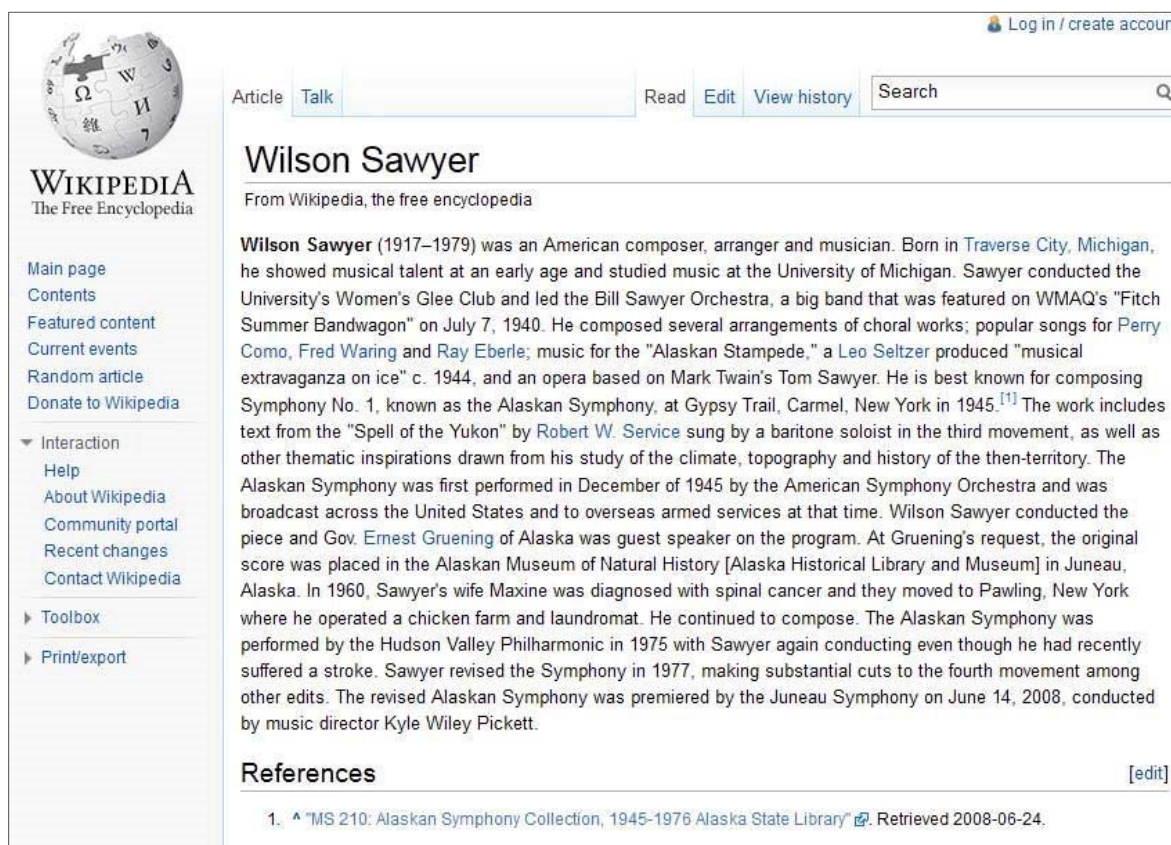
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Wilson Sawyer

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Wilson Sawyer (1917–1979) was an American composer, arranger and musician. Born in [Traverse City, Michigan](#), he showed musical talent at an early age and studied music at the University of Michigan. Sawyer conducted the University's Women's Glee Club and led the Bill Sawyer Orchestra, a big band that was featured on WMAQ's "Fitch Summer Bandwagon" on July 7, 1940. He composed several arrangements of choral works; popular songs for [Perry Como](#), [Fred Waring](#) and [Ray Eberle](#); music for the "Alaskan Stampede," a [Leo Seltzer](#) produced "musical extravaganza on ice" c. 1944, and an opera based on Mark Twain's [Tom Sawyer](#). He is best known for composing [Symphony No. 1](#), known as the [Alaskan Symphony](#), at [Gypsy Trail, Carmel, New York](#) in 1945.^[1] The work includes text from the "Spell of the Yukon" by [Robert W. Service](#) sung by a baritone soloist in the third movement, as well as other thematic inspirations drawn from his study of the climate, topography and history of the then-territory. The [Alaskan Symphony](#) was first performed in December of 1945 by the [American Symphony Orchestra](#) and was broadcast across the United States and to overseas armed services at that time. Wilson Sawyer conducted the piece and [Gov. Ernest Gruening](#) of Alaska was guest speaker on the program. At Gruening's request, the original score was placed in the [Alaskan Museum of Natural History \[Alaska Historical Library and Museum\]](#) in [Juneau, Alaska](#). In 1960, Sawyer's wife [Maxine](#) was diagnosed with spinal cancer and they moved to [Pawling, New York](#) where he operated a chicken farm and laundromat. He continued to compose. The [Alaskan Symphony](#) was performed by the [Hudson Valley Philharmonic](#) in 1975 with Sawyer again conducting even though he had recently suffered a stroke. Sawyer revised the [Symphony](#) in 1977, making substantial cuts to the fourth movement among other edits. The revised [Alaskan Symphony](#) was premiered by the [Juneau Symphony](#) on June 14, 2008, conducted by music director [Kyle Wiley Pickett](#).

References

[edit]

- ↑ "MS 210: Alaskan Symphony Collection, 1945-1976 Alaska State Library" . Retrieved 2008-06-24.

Figure 5.1 Example Article from Wikipedia

Wikis and collaborative documents can be set up using a variety of user rights. For instance, some applications may offer open viewing and editing to everyone. Public wikis such as Wikipedia fall into this category. Other applications may limit access to particular editors and selected readers. This is called a private wiki or collaborative document. Semi-public applications such as these may require users to register and obtain a user name and password prior to access. Collaborative documents may display as text, word processing interfaces, spreadsheets, or other pallets specific to the application. Chapter 5 will explore wikis and other collaborative document technologies and will provide a perspective on how these applications can be used in business.

5.1 WIKIS

As stated earlier, wikis are flexible, collaborative documents and can display dynamic Web content with add-ins including digital photos, videos, audio clips, PowerPoint slides, PDF documents, Flash animations, and other artifacts.⁴³ Mature wikis have become long-term knowledge repositories and have been successfully used in private, personal, corporate and educational settings.^{42,44,45} Additionally, wikis have been used to support learning communities.⁴⁶

5.1.1 PROTECTING WIKIS

As users change a page, a history record is created and this record permits vandalism, errors, or mistakes to be removed with little effort. The latest version of a page is displayed as the current text for the page and the authorship of each piece will be recorded.^{42,44} In spite of maintaining history records and supplying tools associated with rolling back unwanted changes, critics argue that wikis, particularly public ones, are likely to be vandalized and will require continual monitoring and supervision. While, this may be true in some instances, a number of automated monitoring tools and community developed software can help protect content.

Wikis are vandalized for a variety of reasons. One category is *malicious damage*. It may be done for fun by hackers or in a more organized way to systematically determine how quickly the changes are undone. This provides information to the perpetrators so they will know how long more substantial changes will be left alone.

Another form of vandalism takes the form of *posting advertising pages*. In this instance, the wiki represents free server space where agents can post material for themselves or their clients. This is probably the most common type of damage to many wikis and may be caused by individuals or through the use of automated programs.⁴³ If Mediawiki was used to develop the wiki, an add-in called *The SpamBlacklist* can help prevent these entries. This add-in provides a shared list of perpetrators.

More vandalism may take the form of *embedded links*. The vandal will add links to reference lists, article bodies, and other locations that link back to their sites or their clients' sites. Most have a goal of raising their search engine ranks. Having more links back to a site from an established location will help achieve this goal. A similar approach is to embed particular *keywords*. This can also help raise the search engine awareness of particular sites. Embedded links and keywords may be added by automated bots or individual hackers. Table 5.1 provides a summary of vandalism types found on many wikis. Figure 5.2 provides a vandalized page example from ELATEwiki.org.

| Category | Description |
|---------------------------|---|
| Malicious Damage | Done to test the water and determine response time for wiki repair |
| Posting Advertising Pages | Takes advantage of free web server space and provides awareness of products or services |
| Embedding Links | Raises ranking in search engines |
| Embedding Keywords | Raises ranking in search engines and provides awareness of products or services |

Table 5.1 Wiki Vandalism Types⁴³

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TheCVagency
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Click on the ad to read more

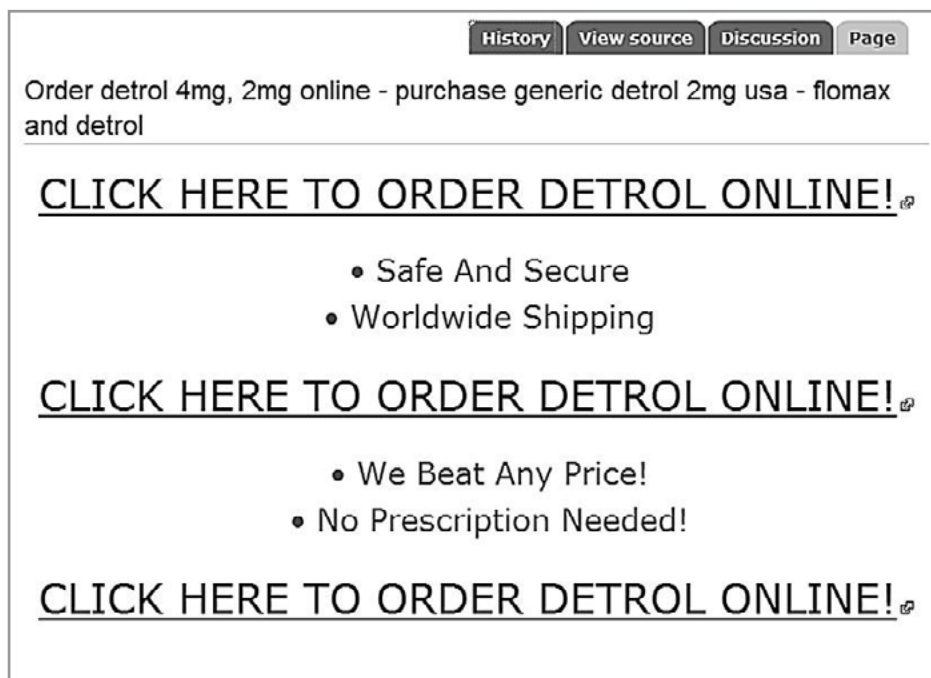


Figure 5.2 Example of Vandalism Posted on a Wiki

5.1.2 EXAMPLES OF WIKI USE

Wikis are used in business and in many other areas. Some fields like medicine or the sciences require high editorial standards to ensure that posted material is high quality and accurate. One method used to ensure high standards is the expert-moderated approach.⁴⁷ New content added to a wiki is reviewed by an expert or panel of experts before it becomes public. In other areas, standards may be less strict and oversight is provided by volunteers who read the material as it changes and is added to the wiki. Wikipedia uses this method for its page development.

In businesses, wikis are being used in a variety of different ways. For instance, internal documents may be developed collaboratively for recording procedures and for creating a knowledge repository that remains even if skilled employees leave. American Express used wiki technology to develop an executive travel wiki which enabled employees to share hints about corporate travel and the procedures required to receive reimbursement for expenses. Other organizations use wikis as internal documentation for in-house systems and software applications. Still others promote the use of wikis by customers to help produce documentation of products or software. According to researchers Majchrzak, Wagner and Yates⁴⁸, corporate wiki users are either synthesizers or adders. Synthesizers provide information needed by others in an organization and adders enter information needed to accomplish their jobs.

In the academic world, wikis have been used for collaborative grant writing, academic unit documentation, committee reports and work, strategic planning documentation, and as knowledge repositories. Wikis also are popular in the classroom and have been used by teachers to develop collaborative writing projects for students.

Still other applications can be found in government and legal areas. Various government agencies use wikis to document internal procedures and for public reporting. Courts and other entities have used wikis to post rules and to enable constituents to post and answer questions. WikiIndex (see Figure 5.3) is a wiki that provides a list of wiki communities in a wide range of areas.



Figure 5.3 WikiIndex is a Wiki Indexing Wiki Communities

5.2 WIKI SOFTWARE

A number of different software systems are used to develop wiki applications. The most popular is MediaWiki, a free web-based software application developed by Wikimedia Foundation and a large community of users. MediaWiki is used by Wikipedia and thousands of other websites. It was developed in the PHP programming language and relies heavily on a backend database system (most commonly MySQL). MediaWiki was first released in 2002 and coincided with the publication of Wikipedia. Since that time more than 700 configuration settings, 600 automated tools, and 1,800 extensions have been added. MediaWiki supports a large number of languages, website configurations, edit tracking, and talk pages.⁴⁹ It is licensed under the GNU General Public License (GPL).

A drawback to MediaWiki is that it is generally internally hosted (although other options do exist). This means that an organization will need to have computing hardware and software in-house, and will need to have the expertise to maintain the software as new releases and upgrades appear. The same dilemma exists for blog software. For small businesses, this might represent a challenge. But for businesses with an existing IT department and infrastructure, this would not be a problem because WikiMedia or other hosted wiki software is relatively stable and easy to install and use. Internally hosting a wiki provides a business with more flexibility and freedom. It also ensures that the organization possesses and holds the data and information associated with the Website. It can be more easily integrated with the business Website and it allows the organization to develop an internal expertise with the administration of a wiki. Table 5.2 provides examples of software that can be acquired for internally hosted wiki sites.

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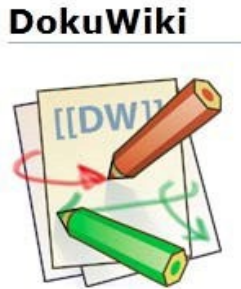
| Software | Website | Comments |
|-----------|--|--|
| MediaWiki | http://www.mediawiki.org/  | <p>This is the most popular wiki platform on the web. Thousands of wikis and general websites use it because it offers many features and add-ins and extensions are available. In addition to being self-hosted, wikis can use hosting services directly or through third-party websites such as Siteground.com. MediaWiki uses PHP and is available in numerous languages. It is also supported by a large number of online communities.</p> |
| TikiWiki | http://tiki.org/  | <p>TikiWiki CMS Groupware is wiki software and other tools. It is an open-source Content Management System (CMS) and Groupware software system useful for general websites, portals, Intranets and Extranets. It includes collaborative tools generally associated with wikis and the ability to function in international settings. TikiWiki offers the ability to extend the software. Major features include articles, forums, newsletters, blogs, a file/image gallery, Wiki, drawing applet, trackers, a directory, polls/surveys and quizzes, a FAQ, chat, a banner management system, Webmail, a calendar, Ephemerides, maps, charts, Mobile Tiki (PDA and WAP access), RSS feeds, a category system, a theme control center, workflow, live support, Shoutbox, ACLs, and more.</p> |
| DokuWiki | http://www.dokuwiki.org/  | <p>DokuWiki is a standards-compliant, user-friendly Wiki, mainly aimed at creating documentation. It is specifically designed for developer teams, workgroups and small companies. It has a simple but powerful syntax to ensure data files remain readable outside the Wiki. All data is stored in plain text files so no database is required. It may be the best choice for a small or medium company seeking to develop collaborative internal documentation. It supports team and workgroup interaction. Like TikiWiki and MediaWiki, it is written in PHP.</p> |

Table 5.2 Self-Hosted Wiki Platforms

5.2.1 WIKI HOSTING SERVICES

Businesses or individuals may choose to host their wikis on third-party websites. As was the case for blog hosting, both startup businesses closely watching costs and small businesses with limited IT resources may favor this approach. Small private practices (e.g. law firms, veterinarians or physicians) may also find this service advantageous.

Advantages of hosting services include that wiki software upgrades are managed, help lines and customer support service are available, search engine optimization (SEO) is included and installation/ initial setup may be streamlined. Disadvantages may include loss of control of business data, uncertainty regarding the host's future status, and difficulty with specialty needs.

Hosted wikis can be placed on free or low cost websites. As with blogs, completely free services generally do not offer unique domain names. This means the wiki may have a name containing part of the service name. The website, WikiDot (<http://www.wikidot.com/>), for example provides free and low cost wiki space for business, personal and education uses. Wikidot provides user friendly tools to create collaborative websites without needing to know HTML, PHP, JavaScript or other languages. By default, a user gets a domain name like this (for a class called MANGT366): <http://mangt366.wikidot.com>.

5.2.2 OTHER WIKI HOSTING OPTIONS

Small businesses and startups may also opt for a general hosting company that offers wiki installations for a reasonable cost. Many of these companies exist and will typically bundle a domain name registration with a wiki and other hosting. This means that an organization can get its desired name as a URL together with wiki development tools and support for a yearly fee. Table 5.3 provides several examples of companies offering these low cost services.




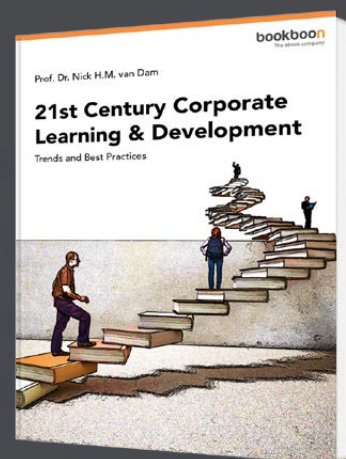
| Software | Website | Comments |
|---|---|---|
|  | http://www.siteground.com/wikihosting.htm | SiteGround provides MediaWiki, DokuWiki and TikiWiki hosting capabilities. Many other general hosting options also are offered. |
|  | http://www.2by2host.com/mediawiki-hosting.html | 2By2 provides MediaWiki help with 24/7/365 tech support. It offers expert developers and has servers optimized for MediaWiki installations. Purchase of a hosting plan includes free installation of MediaWiki. |
|  | http://www.hostgator.com/apps/wiki-hosting.shtml | HostGator provides Mediawiki hosting among its comprehensive web hosting services. HostGator wikis support user generated content and knowledge bases. MediaWiki, the free wiki software behind Wikipedia, is hosted on this website. |

Table 5.3 Other Wiki Hosting Options

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5.3 BUILDING A WIKI

After determining a wiki's focus and general content, building it successfully requires several important initial considerations. Among these are: (1) worldview definition; (2) paradigm development; (3) technological considerations; (4) content ontology; (5) risk assessment; and, (6) sustainability planning. Even the simplest wiki construction requires definition in several of these areas.

5.3.1 WIKI'S WORLDVIEW

A wiki's worldview is essentially a decision regarding how the content will be viewed, developed, and used by its community. Choices will determine if it is private, semi-private or completely open. Most commonly, wikis use a Web 2.0 worldview to facilitate sharing intellectual resources and encourage users to contribute new material. The premise is the users understand that their contributions will remain available with a Creative Commons license. This ensures that the wiki is used as a communal construction of knowledge, online discussion, and reflection for an interacting group of users. The net result can be a synergistic increase in group learning rather than an individual quest for knowledge.⁵⁰⁻⁵²

5.3.2 PARADIGM DEVELOPMENT

A successful wiki, at least for a public one, needs to have a unifying theme that makes its purpose clear to its potential community of users. This means engaging in a paradigm development that includes brainstorming potential content, developing an identity, and determining a look and feel for the website. Often, creating graphics and a determining a color scheme for the site is required. The wiki will require a name and, if possible, the acquisition of a related domain name. Figure 5.4 provides a look at the graphics developed for ELATEwiki.org.

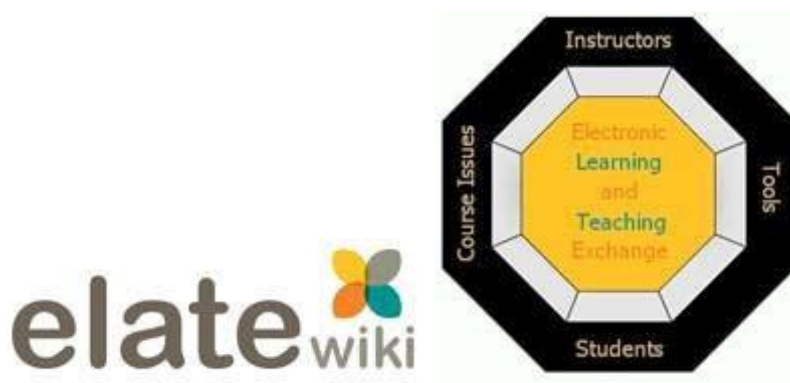


Figure 5.4 Graphics for ELATEwiki

5.3.3 TECHNOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Another key consideration in the implementation of a wiki involves selecting hardware, software, and hosting options. An implementation team will need to research and discuss these options to ensure that a choice is made that balances cost, speed, features, skill levels, and sustainability. Various wiki software and hardware configurations can be proposed and pros/cons compared before reaching an implementation decision. A determination of whether to use external or internal hosting will be required (as discussed in section 5.2). This decision will need to consider expected server load, multimedia content inclusions, and future capabilities.

5.3.4 CONTENT ONTOLOGY

The idea of constructing a wiki with no predetermined structure and allowing users to build it organically is tempting. However, the reality of letting a wiki evolve without building any existing framework or preconceived branches is unlikely to succeed. Users need to have a general idea of where and what to contribute and providing an initial content ontology can help get the site started. Organic growth can occur as new ideas and additions are generated.

According to Martin Hepp, Katharina Siorpaes, and Daniel Bachlechner⁵³, “Ontologies are unambiguous representations of concepts, relationships between concepts (such as a hierarchy), ontologically significant individuals, and axioms.” A successful, initial ontology should be developed to provide new users with a sense of order and a comfortable way to tag their content contributions and organize their material. The initial ontology is a simple starting point that users can expand into a more complex structure as the site grows and evolves. Without an initial ontology, potential users might fail to develop an initial contribution and would not see a way to add value to the site. They would not understand how to connect, display, or categorize their entries.⁴²

A wiki’s ontology can be implemented with an overall macro structure and an initial set of subject tags. This provides an overall, high-level categorization of topics. This macro structure groups content into logical areas where contributions can be added. In a sense, the macro structure can be imagined as categories. Wiki tags can be used to create these categories and then a page structure can be developed to list all the pages for each area. Within each category, individual pages and additional tags can be added. Use of multiple tags allows a particular page to be a member of multiple categories. For more discussion on ontology and tagging see McHaney.⁴²

5.3.5 RISK ASSESSMENT

Wikis are inherently subject to a variety of risks. Many of these are associated with oversight and quality. A wiki is intended to attract users and develop a community that will ensure accuracy of content and a high level of quality. This may not always be the case, particularly when a wiki is started. In order to minimize risks and reduce problems associated with content accuracy, several considerations are needed. A disclaimer statement might be required for public wikis and specific, human oversight might be initially needed. Section 5.1 provides additional information about vandalism and solutions for minimizing its impact.

5.3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

A wiki is intended to attract users and develop a sense of community that will enforce accuracy and ensure quality. However, this can be difficult to achieve. Clay Shirky⁵⁴, in *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations*, provides a helpful perspective. He suggests a social tool such as a wiki needs to achieve a balance between *promise*, *tools*, and *bargain*. When the correct balance is achieved, a community will emerge and sustainability will result.

A dark blue advertisement for Rand Merchant Bank. The background features a large, faint, stylized lion's head. In the center, the text "YOU THINK. YOU CAN WORK AT RMB" is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters. In the top right corner, there is a white rectangular box containing the Rand Merchant Bank logo (a lion holding a key), the text "RAND MERCHANT BANK", "A division of FirstRand Bank Limited", and the slogan "Traditional values. Innovative ideas." data-bbox="138 534 900 832"/>

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5.4 OTHER COLLABORATIVE DOCUMENTS

Wikis were among the first collaborative, online document systems. The core concepts of wikis, including co-creating content, tracking history and providing rollback features, are now commonly used with other families of online applications. Among these, word processors, databases, spreadsheets, calendars, and many others have become popular. An organization wishing to explore options for collaborative document creation will find a vast array of options ranging from specialty software focusing on a particular area to the Microsoft's cloud-based, office application software (see Figure 5.5). In most cases, collaborative document environments are supported by the cloud and the ability for people to interact in virtual space.



Figure 5.5 Microsoft Mainstreams Collaborative Application Software

Table 5.4 provides several example contenders in the online, collaborative application software marketplace.





| Software | Website | Comments |
|--|--|--|
|  | http://docs.google.com/ http://drive.google.com/ | <p>Google provides a powerful suite of application software with full, collaborative capabilities. Google Docs include a word processor, spreadsheet, calendar, and more. It is lacking a database component. Google Docs currently are being redeployed as Google Drive. This is an online location where a user can create new documents, spreadsheets and presentations</p> |
|  | http://www.zoho.com/ | <p>Zoho, based in California, is a leader among free and low cost, collaborative, online office suite software.</p> |
|  | http://www.microsoft.com/office365 | <p>Office 365 is Microsoft's cloud-based, collaborative version of MS-Office poised to become its new flagship business software suite.</p> |
|  | http://www.thinkfree.com | <p>ThinkFree Office is an MS Office-compatible productivity suite which can be used to collaborate online. It provides Write, Calc, and Show which are a word processor, spreadsheet, and presentation software system. ThinkFree is from the Korean company Hancom, Inc. established in 1990.</p> |

Table 5.4 Free or Low Cost Third-Party Hosted Wiki Providers

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

Web 2.0 collaborative document concepts emerged and took shape with the advent of wikis. This class of applications includes tools for co-developing documents and offers an organized process to facilitate mass authoring. Most collaborative document systems provide features that allow users to co-create and edit content, develop topics areas, link pages, add tags, and create cross references. These flexible documents are generally edited from within a Web page and are visible to a selected audience. Additional tools permit document owners to determine who can access material, what type of access is granted (e.g. read only, editing, et cetera) and how the material is distributed. Some collaborative systems include talk pages or onscreen chat windows. Others provide a presentation mode. Most collaborative documents serve as work spaces and may become knowledge repositories. Chapter 5 provided a look at wikis and tools used for collaborative creation of documents and other material; and provided a perspective on how these applications are used in business.

6 TWITTER

Twitter has impacted the way businesses communicate, interact, and ultimately connect with stakeholders. Twitter has come a long way from its often maligned early days when critics called the service “irrelevant, stupid, and just plain dangerous” for business.⁵⁵ As Twitter approached its 10th anniversary on March 21, 2016, the social media service boasted over 320 million monthly users tweeting enough messages with embedded links to send followers to more than 1 billion unique Web sites per month.⁵⁶ In fact, according to Internet Stats, “[e]very second, on average, around 6,000 tweets are tweeted on Twitter which corresponds to over 350,000 tweets sent per minute, 500 million tweets per day and around 200 billion tweets per year.”⁵⁷ Twitter-based communication has become a daily part of news broadcasts, a repository of knowledge, a source of business intelligence, a tool for mass communication, an organizational aid, a wealth of helpful hints, and a real time record of cultural interaction records. Industries have grown up around Twitter with foci ranging from data analytics, to developing marketing channels, to creating social communication platforms. This chapter explores uses of Twitter, and its impact and influence on business.



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6.1 TWITTER OVERVIEW

Twitter can be classified as a microblogging service and social media platform. The basic premise involves a user who constructs a message (originally limited to 140 characters) and then sends it to a list of followers. These short messages are called tweets. The 140-character message size was intended to enable the technology to work within the 160-character limitations of SMS protocol on mobile phone networks. SMS or Short Message Service is the most widely used data application in the world and is available on nearly 80% of all phone services⁵⁸ making it an important constraint to any messaging service wishing to reach a maximum number of users. SMS technology allows tweets to move over the Internet, through fixed line phones, and within mobile communication systems. Twitter users engage these channels to connect from almost all modern technology platforms.

A tweet carries more information than just the 140-character message. Since SMS allows up to 160 characters, the 20 additional characters are used behind the scenes to carry additional information such as username and other short codes. In addition to the information being sent out using the SMS protocol, an astounding number of other items are also stored for each tweet.

In early 2016, Twitter announced it would soon lift the 140-character tweet length in a limited way. This meant that a user would be able to continue typing until he or she reached a 10k character limit.⁵⁹ At first glance, this seems like a great improvement---especially to Twitter users who frequently notice they have exceeded their message character limits. However, critics have suggested that the very thing that makes Twitter powerful and unique is the 140-character limit. Twitter counters this by envisioning a Tweet displaying the first 140 characters with an expand option on the message to maintain its original intention of keeping messages brief. Others suggest that Twitter's capability to drive traffic to Web sites could be comprised if the content is included in the message.⁶⁰

6.2 TWITTER HISTORY

Twitter was first imagined by Jack Dorsey while he was working for Odeo, a company that developed search tools and directory system for RSS-syndicated audio and video feeds. Odeo created a user-friendly Adobe Flash interface that allowed users to create, record, share, and find podcasts. During a brainstorming session at Odeo, Dorsey suggested an extension to existing SMS platforms that fell somewhere between texting, email, Listserv entries, and social network updates. He envisioned how groups of friends would use the new tool to track each other's activities based on short status updates. Dorsey pitched the idea to Odeo's co-founders Evan Williams and Christopher Isaac "Biz" Stone. They liked the idea and encouraged Dorsey to move ahead on the project.

Dorsey worked with software developer Noah Glass who referred to the new product as “twtr”. Twtr was launched on March 21, 2006 by Jack Dorsey with a tweet at 9:50 PM that read “just setting up my twtr”. Later Glass suggested adding vowels to the name and twtr became “Twitter”. Twitter was reformed as its own company in April 2007.

During the time Twitter was being developed, Apple released iTunes. The popular reception of this software quickly made obsolete Odeo’s podcasting business model. Jack Dorsey, Biz Stone, Evan Williams and other members of Odeo staff bought back their company back from the investors and thus acquired full ownership of the Twitter platform. According to various sources: “[t]here is some controversy surrounding how this all took place. It’s questionable whether Odeo investors knew the full scope of the Twitter platform.”⁶¹ Obvious Corporation was formed by Stone, Williams and Dorsey to facilitate the buyback of Odeo from investors and to house Twitter, providing a company for its further development. Glass was pushed out of the company, in spite of his early and crucial involvement.⁶²

Twitter continued to grow and received a great deal of worldwide publicity at conferences and in the popular press. By 2009, Twitter became a favorite of celebrity users and public figures. One of the first famous Twitter users was Kevin Rose, founder of Digg. Rose made the public aware of how Twitter fame translated into cultural capital that could be leveraged in a variety of ways.⁶³

A growing number of celebrities, athletes, and politicians soon became regular Twitter users. Actors such as Aston Kutcher leveraged Twitter’s capabilities to speak directly to fans and to receive messages. Kutcher and Twitter formed a symbiotic connection and increased each other’s popularity and notoriety. Twitter’s appeal became undeniable for those seeking publicity. First, it provided a direct link without needing an intermediary. Previously, celebrities relied on the popular press and publicity agents to get their statements out to the public. With Twitter, unedited messages were sent directly in real time to millions of connected followers. Control over content remained with the celebrity and was not subject to interpretation and rewording by people controlling the press. Likewise, politicians were able to maintain connections with their supporters. Setting the standard for Twitter use in political campaigns, Barack Obama not only tweeted messages, he also received tweets and used the information to fine-tune his campaign.

By 2012, Twitter had over 500 million registered users and generated nearly 350 million tweets daily. Over 1.5 billion search queries were being conducted per day. Twitter truly had become a global phenomenon impacting individuals, celebrities, newsmakers, politicians, and businesses. Twitter became one of the top ten Websites on the Internet. Its traffic continued to increase because unregistered users were given permission to read tweets. Only those wanting to send out tweets were required to complete the free registration process.

6.2.1 TWITTER CATERS TO CELEBRITIES

Early on, the developers of Twitter recognized the benefit of ensuring that Twitter could be used by high profile individuals. Not only do the celebrities benefit, but also Twitter's popularity surged each time a celebrity tweet was publicized in the mainstream press. Potential users were attracted to the service wanting to read postings and follow links provided by celebrities. To help facilitate this process and reduce celebrity pretenders, Twitter provided two facilities to its high profile users. First, Twitter provided 'verified accounts'. Examine Figure 6.1 to get an idea of why this is necessary.

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The screenshot shows a list of seven Twitter accounts related to Johnny Depp. Each entry includes a profile picture, the name of the account, the handle, a short bio, and a 'Follow' button. The accounts are as follows:

| Profile Picture | Name | Handle | Bio | Follow Button |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| | Johnny Depp | @JOHNNYDepp | John Christopher `Johnny` Depp -- Actor, Producer, Director, Writer and Musician b. June 9, 1963 | Follow |
| | Johnny Depp | @johnnydepp9 | Yes im the real Johnny Depp | Follow |
| | Johhny Depp | @JohnnyDepp____ | Official John Depp | Follow |
| | Johnny Depp News | @JohnnyDeppNews | We keep you up to date with all the latest Johnny Depp News, Movies, Projects, On Location, Casting and whats Coming soon. | Follow |
| | Johnny Depp | @johnnydepp____ | | Follow |
| | Johnny Depp Fan Club | @johnnydeppcombr | Twitter oficial do site dedicado ao ator Johnny Depp, o You Know. Para saber como nos contatar e outras maneiras de ter notícias do Depp, acesse o nosso site! | Follow |
| | Johnny Depp | @RealDepp | | Follow |

Figure 6.1 Johnny Depp Twitter Accounts

As you can see, anyone can start an account with a username that has not been claimed. Twitter's verified account system helps followers ensure that they are subscribed to the person they wish to follow and not to an imposter. A verified account also gives the celebrity user a sense of relief that he or she will stand out among other similarly named accounts. A special symbol is displayed next to the account name to show that Twitter has ensured that the account has been created by (or for) the person being represented.⁶⁴ By 2010, the verified account service had become so popular that Twitter removed the service's public signup page and instead limited verification to high profile users, business partners, and celebrities. This is particularly important in the business world. Figure 6.2 provides a verified account example.



Figure 6.2 Verified Twitter Account. Notice the Blue Checkmark by the Company Name

Second, Twitter employs staff members to work with publicity agents and media public relations staff. This group ensures that Twitter is used in high profile advertising and in publicity campaigns. Twitter provides support and promotional tools that can help create buzz among potential followers. Additionally, Twitter supports these efforts with data analytics to help determine what worked and what resonated with followers.

6.2.2 TWITTER GOES VIRAL

Twitter is a rare example of a social media service that took on a life of its own. As its subscriber base grew, users began organizing their tweets and introducing new conventions that made communicating easier. Before long, a jargon developed that described a variety of actions within Twitter. For instance, people needed a way of identifying Twitter user names within the context of a tweet. Someone came up with the idea of placing the '@' symbol in front of names to help identify a username. The idea caught on and was soon added to the Twitter platform as a permanent feature. Now, @username (called a handle) is the standard way of addressing a Twitter user. A similar idea emerged with the '#' symbol. Initially, hashtags were used on IRC (Internet Relay Chat) networks to help group messages related to a particular topic, and to make searches easier. Twitter users began using hashtags to help group conversations. As the practice became more popular, Twitter developers took notice. On July 1, 2009, Twitter started to hyperlink all hashtags in tweets to facilitate searches. Approximately a year later, "Trending Topics" which listed the most popular hashtags was added to Twitter's home page.




- The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education
- Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12
- 15 Million Children Reached

About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFKI. An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.

Another example of user innovation in Twitter is the use of the characters ‘RT’ to represent **retweets**. The ‘RT’ convention gave users a way to repost tweets sent out by others. Counting retweets provides a measure of popularity of a particular message. Like hashtags and the ‘@’ symbol, Twitter developers embraced the idea of retweets and in August of 2010, incorporated it into their core platform.

6.3 USING TWITTER

As mentioned in section 6.2.2, Twitter’s community of users has provided useful ideas for making the tool user-friendly and capable of providing additional functions. Adding to its functionality is the way Twitter capitalizes on the methods that busy people use to get tasks done. For instance, Twitter users will often find a convenient moment to access their smartphone and send a tweet or check on recent tweets from others. Twitter works well in spare moments when waiting in line at a store or during commercial breaks in a news broadcast. Twitter collects new information and provides it in easy-to-access ways during short bursts of time. Since Twitter is a constant stream of comments, new ideas, and status changes, it is not necessary to digest each and every tweet. Most find it works well to get on for a few minutes at a time. More crucial messages can still be tracked using tools that are developed to find, organize, and prioritize tweets according to source, content and other factors. Section 6.4.1 will cover these tools in more detail.

Relatively few concepts and actions are required to become a proficient Twitter user. Basic concepts include the following:

Handle – A user name that starts with the ‘@’ symbol is a Twitter handle. My handle is @mchaney. Users register their handle and use it as an identifier for their tweets and other users can send messages to it like an address. Other example handles follow:

@MLB – Major League Baseball twitter handle

@BarackObama – U.S. President Barack Obama’s Twitter handle

@nytimes – New York Times Newspaper Twitter handle

Mentions – When a handle appears in a tweet, it will automatically trigger a mention and will be placed into that user’s mentions folder (provided the sender or receiver is not blocked) which is under the “@ connect” tab on a user’s Twitter homepage. See Figure 6.3.

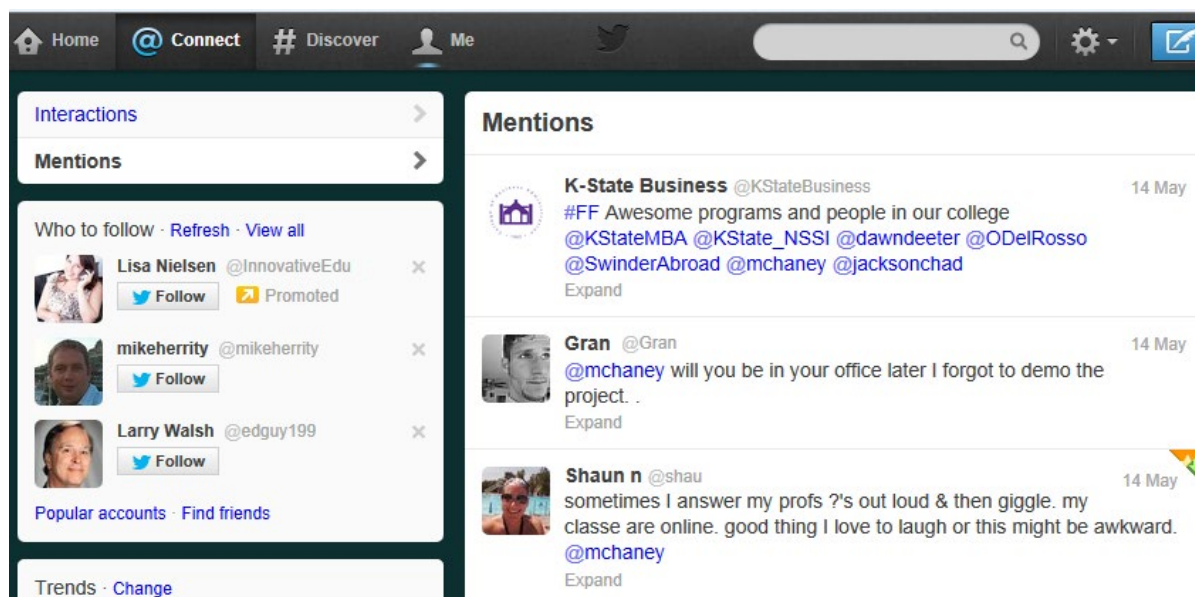


Figure 6.3 Twitter Mentions

If a tweet starts with a handle (e.g. @handle), it will be placed into the home tweet streams of only people who follow both the sender and the one being mentioned. Although considered a private tweet by Twitter, it can still be viewed by the public. A 'private' tweet can be accessed on the senders' and receivers' public sites or on the sites of anyone who follows both the sender and receiver. When this level of privacy is not desired, many Twitter users will place a '.' in front of the handle. Since Twitter looks at the first character in determining whether a message is meant to be 'private' or public, the '.' ensures that the message will be broadcast to all followers of a sender. The period seemed to have come into favor for this function because it is a small character and will not distract the readers. An example is shown in Figure 6.4. Notice the '.' inserted prior to the handle in the reply. Adding the period is a quick way to reply without needing to rearrange the order of the words.

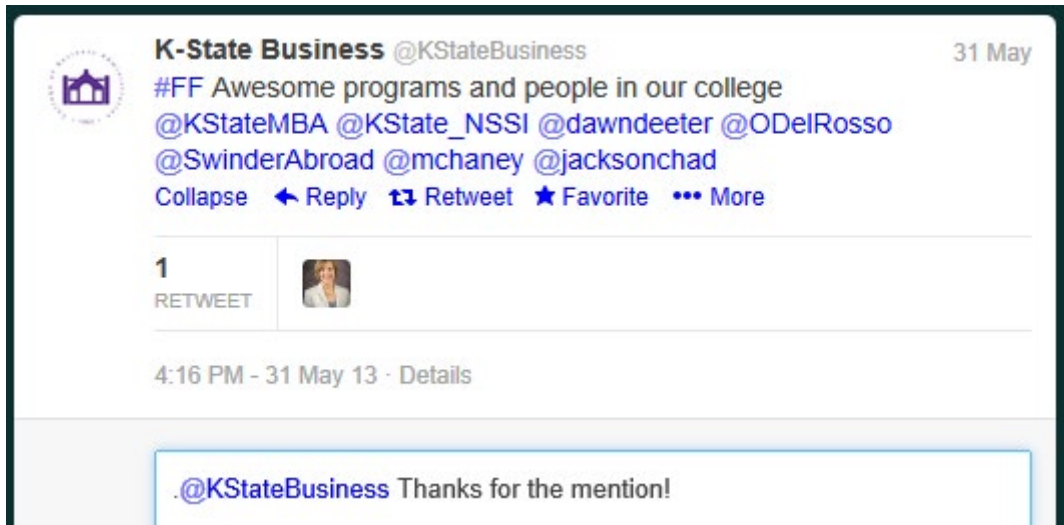


Figure 6.4 Adding a '.' to Make a Tweet Public

Replies – Twitter replies can be generated by clicking on a mention. Several options appear at the bottom of a tweet including Reply (see Figure 6.5). A reply will format the response tweet as a private message that follows the conventions described in the preceding *Mentions* paragraph. If any character is placed ahead of a tweet’s '@' symbol, the reply becomes a public tweet.

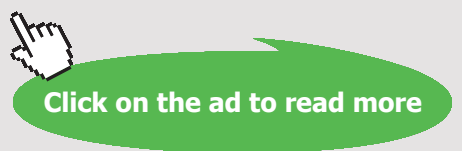




Figure 6.5 Ways of Sharing a Tweet

DM – Direct Message. Direct messages are Twitter’s most private form of communication and in a sense, a version of nearly-real-time email. In their original incarnation, direct messages were limited to 140 characters. In late 2015, Twitter increased this limit to 10,000 characters. A direct message can be sent easily: type a ‘D’ followed by a handle to start a tweet. A direct message can also be started with a ‘DM’. Direct messages are sometimes mistakenly made public when the sender forgets to include the ‘D’. Likewise, the reply to a direct message must also have the ‘D’ or ‘DM’ or it becomes a public tweet. Direct messages do have restrictions. A direct message can only be sent to a follower. This reduces the amount of spam sent to Twitter message boxes.

RT – Retweet. A tweet can go viral when it is retweeted by enough people. A retweet occurs when a user forwards received tweets to his or her followers. Generally, a retweet starts with the characters ‘RT’. However, retweets can also just be forwarded tweets. Using the ‘RT’ characters is a form of attribution showing that the current message is being reposted. Many organizations use a tweet’s retweets counter as a measure of impact. Figure 6.6 shows a tweet and its retweets count.



Figure 6.6 Retweet without the RT Characters

The retweet button provided by Twitter will not add ‘RT’ to help keep the message below the 140-character count. Some users will embed a tweet into their message or add his or her own thoughts to the beginning or end of a tweet to communicate similar but modified content. Occasionally, the user will start a message with ‘MT’ for Modified Tweet. This is a courtesy to the original tweeter and indicates that the user has edited the original message. Often, this may occur if the user needs to trim some characters from the original message to enable more room for added comments. Table 6.1 provides a summary of common Twitter lingo. Table 6.2 provides examples of what happens with variously formatted tweets.

| Twitter Item | Meaning | Comment |
|--------------|--------------------|---|
| @ | Handle and Mention | The ‘@’ symbol is used to start a handle placed into a tweet. It also means that the user has been mentioned. If a tweet begins with an ‘@’ handle, then Twitter considers it a direct message. |
| . | Period | It is sometimes used as the first character of a tweet to prevent it from being a direct message. For example a tweet starting with .@mchaney would be a public tweet where @mchaney would be a direct message. |
| # | Hashtag | Used to create a keyword that serves to help group tweets related to a particular topic. |
| RT | Retweet | Inserting RT means a received tweet is being forwarded to a user’s followers. |
| PRT | Partial Retweet | Inserting PRT means that most of a previous tweet is being forwarded. It might have been truncated due to length or for other reasons. |
| DM or D | Direct Message | ‘D’ or ‘DM’ at the start of a message makes it a direct message. |
| FF | Follow Friday | A hash tag used to introduce followers on Fridays. A Twitter tradition. |

Table 6.1 Common Twitter Lingo

| Tweet | Comments |
|-----------------------------|--|
| @mchaney happy Monday | Direct message to @mchaney |
| .@mchaney happy Monday | Direct message made into a public message with the preceding '.' |
| DM Hi @mchaney happy Monday | Direct message to @mchaney |
| D Hi @mchaney happy Monday | Direct message to @mchaney |
| RT .@mchaney happy Monday | RT .@mchaney happy Monday |
| MT .@mchaney blah Monday | Modified Retweeted message |

Table 6.2 Example Tweets

With us you can
shape the future.
Every single day.

For more information go to:
www.eon-career.com

Your energy shapes the future.

e-on

6.3.1 TWITTER LISTS

A key to successful use of Twitter is being able to reduce the ‘noise’ and focus on connections consistent with an individual or business goal. One way of doing this is through the use of lists⁶⁵. Twitter and a number of third party vendors provide tools to create and manage Twitter lists. These lists become important and can help a user manage who they choose to follow based on different criteria. For instance, one list could be created for business contacts, another for personal friends, one for organizations of interest, and yet another for collecting celebrity tweets. Lists can be private or public. As expected, public lists can be followed by other users. By following a public list, a user does not have to individually subscribe to each account to receive all tweets generated within the group. This makes Twitter lists essentially the equivalent of groups in other social media.⁶⁶

Dave Charest⁶⁵ suggests creating three lists to start: Peers, Pros and Patrons. Each of these is necessary, he believes, for “moving you toward your goals.” Charest’s list categories can be summarized as follows:

Peers – These are individuals at the same level and in the same industry as the list owner. Peers will be strategic partners, future business contacts, and others who will move through their careers at relatively the same pace. Peers could be at the same organization, a similar organization or even competitors who happen to be tweeting.

Pros – Charest suggests creating a list of experts and thought leaders within a relevant industry. The people on this list represent a group operating at a level the list owner hopes to reach. Much can be learned from the content posted by these experts/thought leaders and by observing how these individuals use social media.

Patrons – These people fall into the categorization of customer or client. They may be individuals who are likely to become customers or volunteers. They may also be people who consider the list owner to be a thought leader. Charest suggests monitoring this group to better understand patrons’ interests, to answer their questions, and to watch for feedback (positive or negative). By understanding this group, it becomes possible to grow a larger list of followers and drive more traffic to related Websites or business venues.

In addition to Charest’s lists, two other important lists might be:

Friends – Many Twitter users keep their business and personal lives separate with two different accounts. In fact, this is advisable! If this is not possible or if the account owner’s Twitter grew up as a mix of friends and colleagues, then using a separate friends list is a good way to simplify communication and to keep friends’ tweets in a convenient category. Remember, lists are for collecting tweets, not for limiting who will receive them.

Personal Interest – This is another list category that helps categorize incoming tweets. Personal interest tweets can include those from areas outside the business domain but can provide insight, ideas, and creative outside-the-box concepts. An example of an excellent creative twitter feed is Maria Popova’s @brainpicker and her related website brainpickings.org. Her Website and tweets provide thought provoking, interesting tidbits of information from a variety of sources. See Figure 6.7.



Figure 6.7 Thinking Outside the Box with brainpickings.org

Having a set of lists makes the process of adding new contacts easier. Individual twitter feeds can be added to build a knowledgebase relevant to a business or to achieve specific goals. By tracking various areas, new potential contact will become apparent and a stronger base will emerge. Following a Twitter list does not mean an account owner follows every user on the list. A list’s tweets are not added to the account owner’s main stream. Instead, a separate tweet stream is maintained. Lists can be used to follow accounts without really being a follower. If there are certain users with interesting tweets but are not accounts desired for a main Twitter stream (this might be important to businesses), then these accounts can be added to a list and the list’s tweet stream checked when appropriate.

Twitter lists have taken on a life of their own. For instance, popular twitter lists allow people to have a ready-made group of similar people to follow. Public lists can provide publicity and more notoriety for an individual user or business. The World Leaders list is an example of a very popular Twitter list. See Figure 6.8.



Figure 6.8 Popular World Leaders Twitter List

The advertisement features a background of a lecture hall with rows of wooden chairs. A large blue chevron symbol (>) is positioned in the center, with the word "be" to its left and "your degree" to its right. Below this, the text reads: "Bring your talent and passion to a global organization at the forefront of business, technology and innovation. Discover how great you can be. Visit accenture.com/bookboon". At the bottom left, it says "Be greater than. consulting | technology | outsourcing". At the bottom right is the Accenture logo with the tagline "High performance. Delivered." and a small blue chevron above the word "accenture".



6.3.2 CREATING A TWITTER LIST

Twitter has made the process of creating lists easy. After logging in to Twitter, navigate to “Lists” as shown in Figure 6.9.



Figure 6.9 Navigating to Lists in Twitter

Once into the “Lists” section, a box will appear showing all subscribed lists (e.g. lists being followed) or lists to which the current user belongs. On the right side of the box, the “Create List” button can be pressed to begin a new list. Figure 6.10 illustrates.

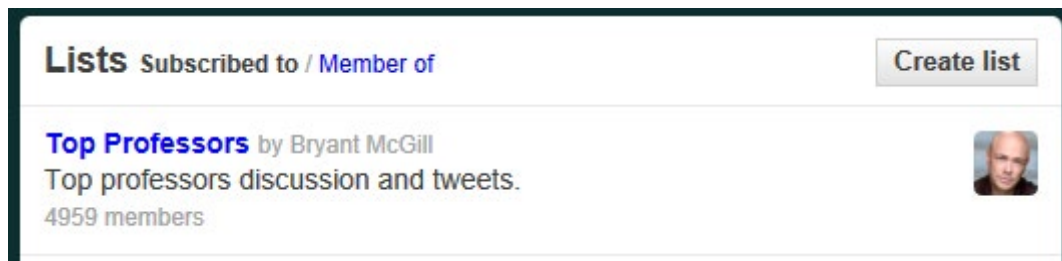


Figure 6.10 New List Creation

A new navigation box will appear. A name needs to be added. The name can be one or more words and is also used as the list’s URL. Example names include: Friends, Influential Business Leaders, and MyFavs. This is translated into a URL like “<https://twitter.com/mchaney/thought-leaders>.” Notice how space in “Thought Leaders” is replaced with a dash in the URL. At the same time, an optional description is requested. Particularly with public lists, this item is important so that potential followers will understand the group’s theme better.

The dialog box also asks the user whether the list should be public **or** private. Public lists can be seen and subscribed to by anyone. Private lists can only be seen or subscribed to by the creator. Even members of a private list do not know that they have been added. This can be helpful, for instance, if a business wants to track competitor tweets without becoming a follower of that business. Figure 6.11 shows the “Create a New List” dialog box being populated.

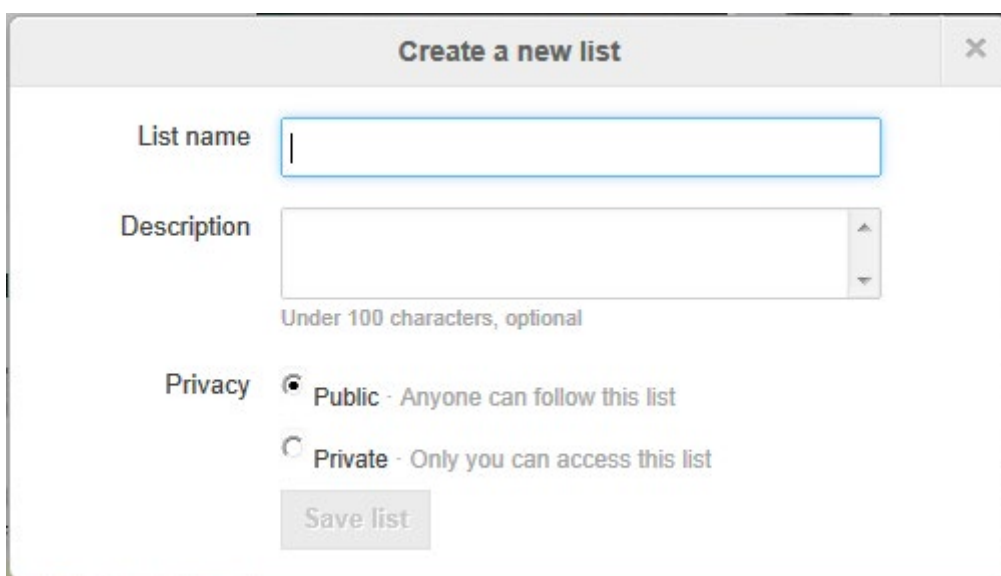


Figure 6.11 Create a New List Dialog Box

After the new list has been saved, people can be added. In a new list, a search feature appears to help facilitate finding more people. See Figure 6.12.

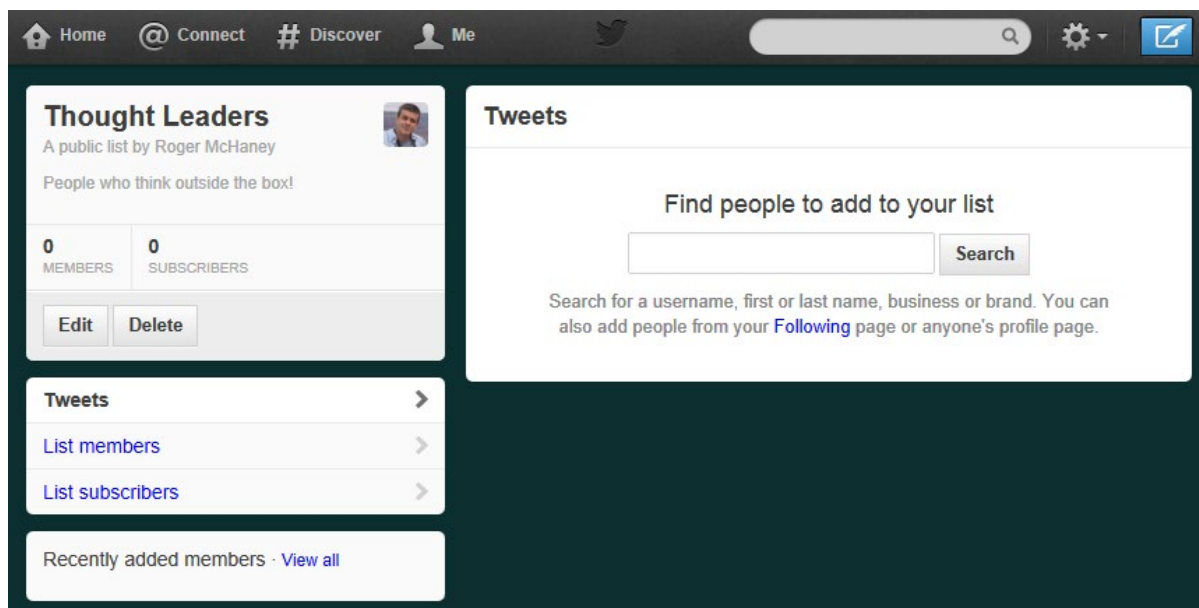


Figure 6.12 Adding People to the List

Using the search brings up a list of people. An individual can be added (or removed) from a list by clicking on the person icon (as shown in Figure 6.13). List members can also be added directly from their own profile page.

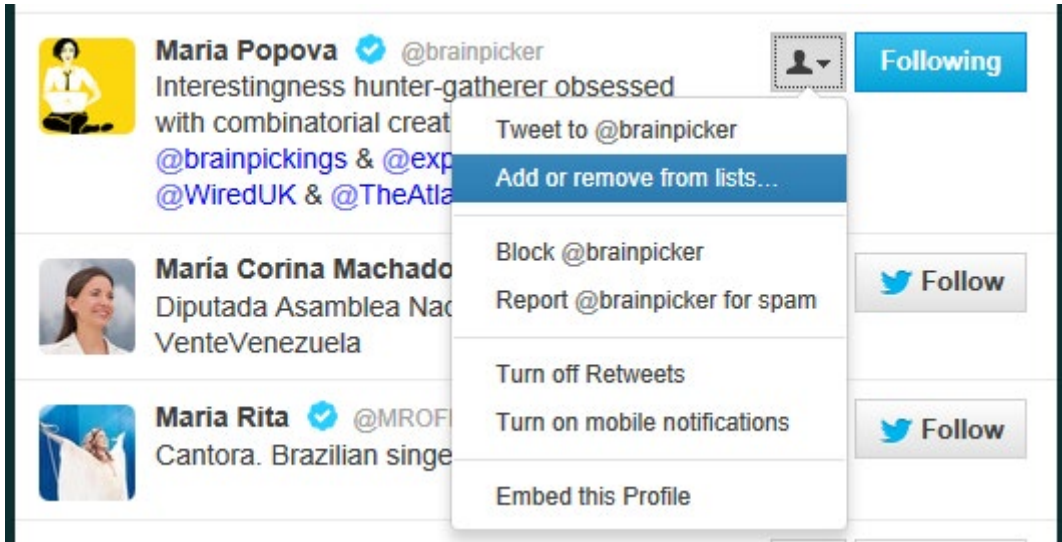


Figure 6.13 Adding Person to a List

"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect

ENGLISH OUT THERE

Click to hear me talking before and after my unique course download

An advertisement for an English course. It features a woman, Jane, a Chinese architect, smiling. To her right is a green speech bubble containing the text "ENGLISH OUT THERE". Below the speech bubble is a call to action: "Click to hear me talking before and after my unique course download". The background is a blurred image of a city street.

The selected person can be added to one or more lists. Figure 6.14 illustrates.

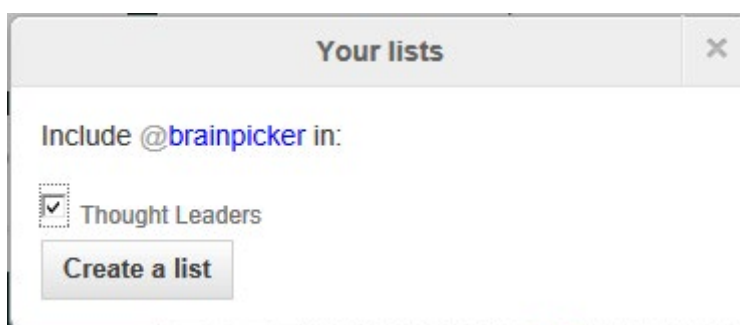


Figure 6.14 Picking a List

Viewing the list then provides a list of recent tweets by members. Figure 6.15 provides an example.



Figure 6.15 List Member Tweets

In addition to adding others to lists, a list owner can add themselves by visiting their own profile page and following the same steps used for adding other members. Currently Twitter lists for each user are limited to 1,000 person lists, which can each hold up to 5,000 accounts.⁶⁷ Any lists that have been created will be displayed under the "Lists" section of the Twitter navigation choices. Private lists will be followed with a small lock icon. By clicking on a list name, the account owner will see a display of all the current tweets sent out by the list members. See Figure 6.16.

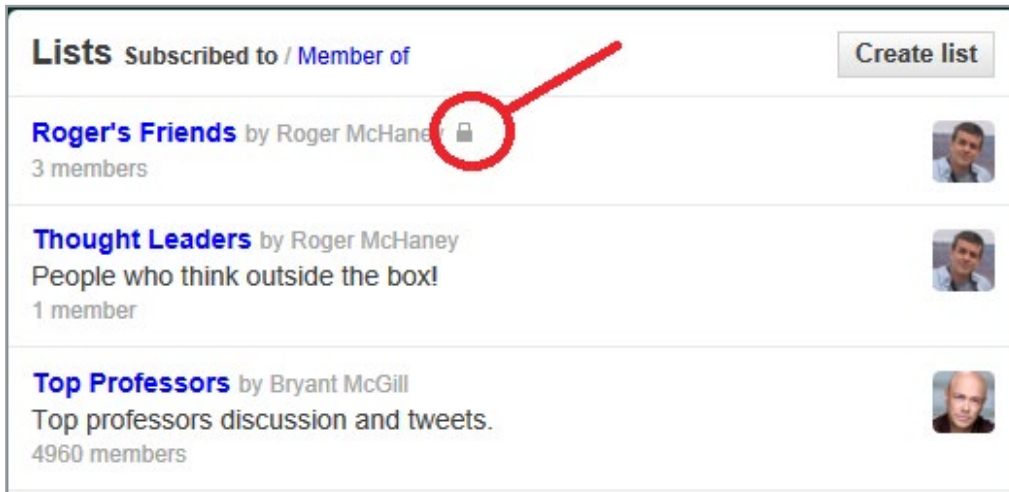
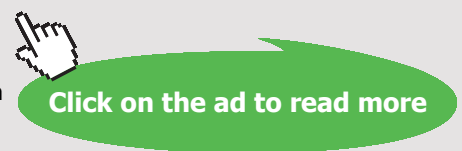


Figure 6.16 Private List indicated by a Lock Icon

The list's dedicated page can be viewed by clicking on the list name. Other users will see this page for public lists (without the Edit or Delete options). The edit option on the list owner's page will enable changing the list title or altering whether it is public or private. Users can be removed from a list using a procedure similar to adding them. The box next to the list can be unchecked to remove their name. Lists to which the Twitter account holder belongs can be viewed by clicking on the "Member of" link shown in Figure 6.17.

An advertisement for Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. The background features a world map. In the top left is the 'DUKE THE FUQUA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS' logo. The main text reads 'BUSINESS HAPPENS HERE.' with 'HERE.' in a large, bold font inside a circular collage of diverse people's faces. Below the text is the URL 'www.fuqua.duke.edu/globalmba' and an orange button that says 'Learn More >'.



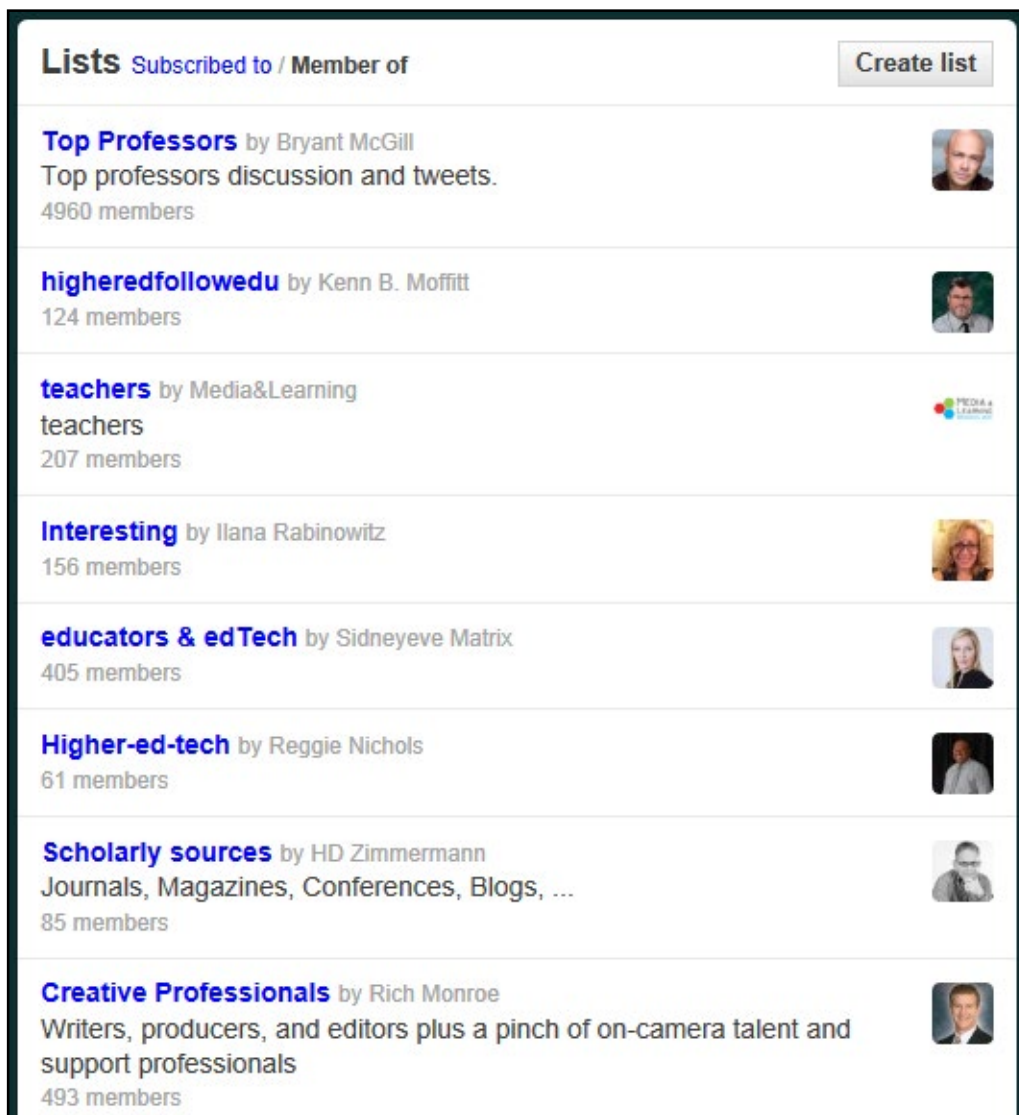


Figure 6.17 User's Lists

If an account holder finds his or her name (or business account name) on a public list that is not consistent with organizational goals (for instance a list titled, “Bad Businesses”), the listing can be removed if the account holder blocks the list creator. This means the current account will be removed from the list and that the list creator can no longer be a follower.

6.3.2 FINDING TWITTER LISTS

Lists are one of Twitter's most powerful features, particularly for business users. Spending time finding useful lists can have a large payoff in terms of having access to relevant information. The first way to acquire a useful list collection is to visit the profile page of other Twitter users in the same business domain. Any public lists they follow, belong to, or have created will be visible after clicking "View all" on their lists. Another way of finding lists is to use a third-party application that maintains a directory of Twitter lists. An excellent example of this is TwitListManager (See Figure 6.18).

Twitlistmanager - Twitter list management, just the way i like it

Manage your Twitter lists

Twitlistmanager offers a comprehensive way to manage your Twitter lists. "Even a child can do the laundry" as we say in Dutch, which means it's very easy.

Twitlistmanager fetches the people you follow, as well as any lists you've already created, and puts everything on a single page. You can create new lists if you want to, and simply check boxes to add or remove people to your lists. When you're done, click "Save Changes". It's that simple!

[Sign in with Twitter](#)

Your privacy

When it comes to privacy, Twitlistmanager keeps it simple. Twitlistmanager doesn't store any data. Your login information is used to log in directly at Twitter, and manage your lists. No fine print, no spam.





Ok, what does it cost?

Twitlistmanager is free! It's just a little something to make my life easier, I hope you like it as well. It does cost me money to maintain so if you like Twitlistmanager, consider using Paypal to make a donation.

[Donate](#)

By all means, please share!

If you like Twitlistmanager, spread the word! Put it on Facebook, Tweet about it or open up a window and shout it out, Eddie Murphy style.

[f Like](#) 377
 [t I tweet](#)
 [in Share](#) 261
 [G+1](#) 221

Twitlistmanager uses the Twitter API - Concept by @bbstripes - Contact

Figure 6.18 TwitListManager for Managing Twitter Lists

TwitListManager (<http://twitlistmanager.com/>) maintains a categorized directory of Twitter lists. Users can browse through lists by category, find popular lists, and add their own lists to the directory. Other broader tools, such as TweetDeck and HootSuite, also offer Twitter list management features.

6.3.3 SHORTENED LINKS IN TWITTER

Although Twitter is planning to offer larger Tweet lengths, each character position is valuable. Often, tweets contain a URL which can be very long and which will eat up valuable tweet real estate. A Web address shortening tool can help conserve characters. Although Twitter does this automatically for users, it is possible to use third-party services which provide statistics in addition to shortened addresses.

Short addresses are easily obtained in Twitter's user interface. Copying and pasting an existing URL into a tweet (including the `http://` prefix) will result in a shortened address of 20 or fewer characters. Short addresses can also be obtained outside of Twitter. Bit.ly is an example of a third-party site that provides shortening services. Bit.ly (<http://bit.ly>) provides a statistical summary and tracking service reflecting how many times people have clicked on the link. Figure 6.19 illustrates example statistics from Bit.ly.

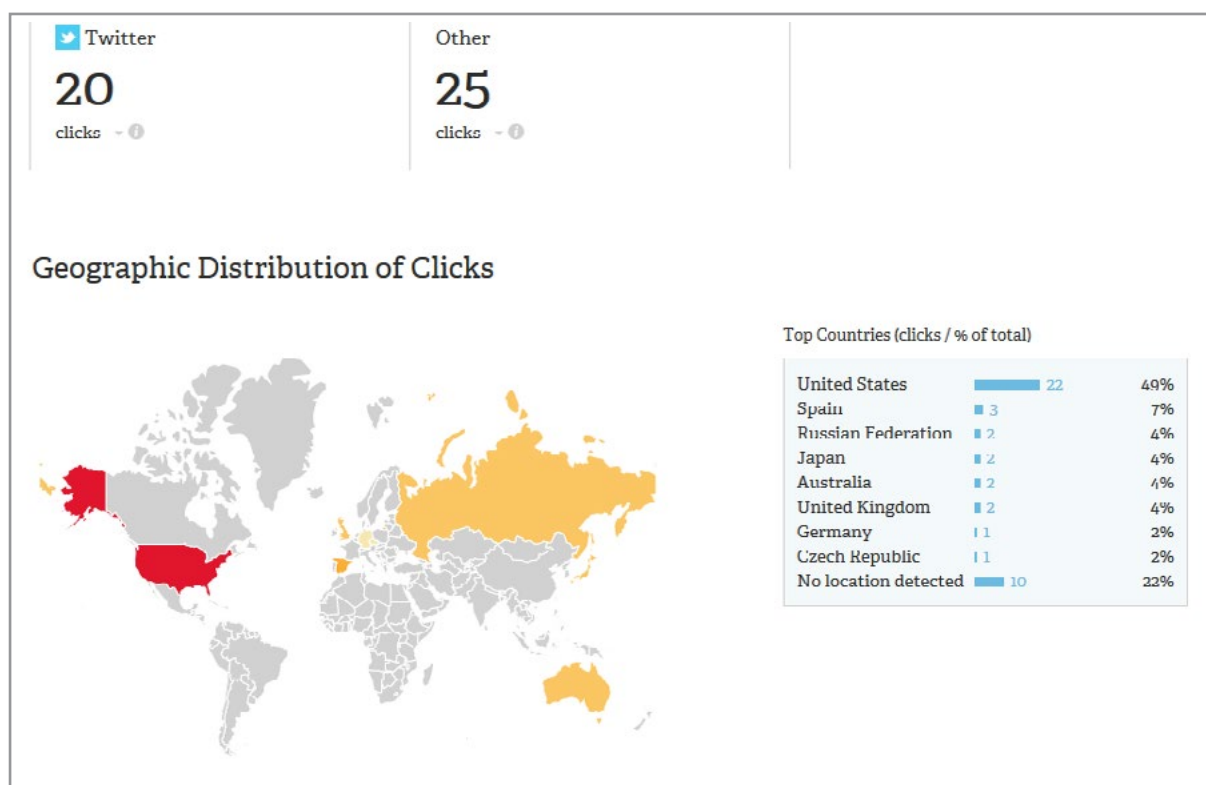


Figure 6.19 Example Stats from Bit.ly

6.4 TWITTER SEARCHES

Although tweets are intended to share information with anyone who follows a particular account, these messages can be accessed through public searches and in other ways. Every tweet from all of a user's subscribed accounts is stored in a timeline. Collectively, this creates a vast information network storing millions of messages available for research and business intelligence applications. Not only does Twitter provide a way for individuals, businesses and stakeholders to communicate, but also (perhaps) more importantly, Twitter provides a vast network of business intelligence ready to be interpreted.⁶⁸

6.4.1 TWITTER AS AN INFORMATION NETWORK

Twitter has become an amazing phenomenon that grew from a simple communication system into a powerful information network. Since Twitter communication is public and messages can be searched, a variety of possibilities are created. First, many people and businesses use Twitter to discover and share new information. Twitter searches can be conducted using a variety of tools provided both by Twitter and by third-party organizations. For instance, a search of tweets can be conducted from Twitter's Web page. Figure 6.20 provides an example of searching for tweets mentioning "Digital Business".

Our tools are designed to experience pressures up to

35 Kpsi

That's 2,380 times atmospheric pressure, or **458 elephants** standing on a soccer ball.

Who are we?
We are the world's leading provider of reservoir characterization, drilling, production, and processing technologies to the oil and gas industry.

Who are we looking for?
We offer countless opportunities in the following domains:

- Operations
- Research, Engineering, and Manufacturing
- Geoscience and Petrotechnical
- Commercial and Business

We're looking for high-energy, self-motivated graduates with vision and integrity to join our team.

What will you be?

careers.slb.com

Schlumberger



Figure 6.20 Searching Tweets from Twitter's Website

Twitter also provides an application called TweetDeck which is a social media dashboard application. It allows users to send and receive tweets, view profiles, conduct searches, save common searches, manage lists, and perform other Twitter related tasks. Figure 6.21 demonstrates the use of TweetDeck for conducting a search of recent tweets containing the words "Digital Business". In addition to tweet searches, TweetDeck also provides support for creating tweets, searching for users, and other functions.

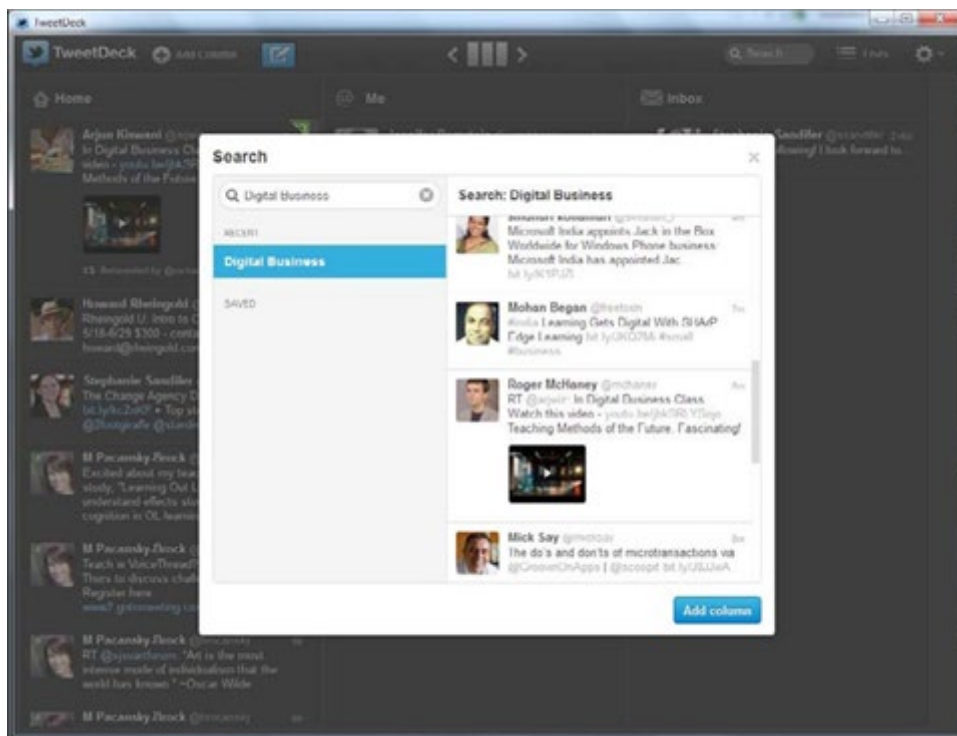


Figure 6.21 Searching Tweets Using TweetDeck from Twitter

Since Twitter communication is public, most tweets are available to the entire world. Twitter’s default search only extends back a couple of weeks, so a wide variety of third-party applications has emerged to provide additional search capabilities and interface with business intelligence tools. Competition is fierce in this area and many new applications appear regularly. Table 6.3 provides examples of various tools that exist in this area.

| Name | URL | Summary |
|-------------|--|---|
| Backtweets | backtweets.com | Searches through an archive of tweets to find links back to your site. |
| Hashtags | hashtags.org | Tracks hashtag frequency on Twitter and provides details about the hashtag. |
| Tweetstats | www.tweetstats.com | Provides a suite of tools to graphically examine tweet stats. |
| Tweetstork | www.tweetstork.com | Finds users interested in particular types of tweets. |
| Twellow | www.twellow.com | Searches by area of expertise, profession or other attribute listed in profiles on Twitter. |
| Twilert | www.twilert.com | Enables user to receive email alerts of tweets containing particular brand, product, service, or any keyword. |
| Twissues | www.twissues.com | Back Up and Search Twitter Archive. |
| Twitterfall | www.twitterfall.com | Twitter keyword tracker+D18 |

Table 6.3 Example Third-Party Twitter Applications Useful in Business
(Compiled by Jeong-Ah Lee, Kansas State University)

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While these search tools are useful, most are limited by time frame and the number of tweets that can be accessed at any given time. Part of the reason is the enormous volume of tweets that has been generated since Twitter first appeared in 2006. Twitter appears to want all tweets to be available to the public but this requires maintaining a large and expensive infrastructure. In April of 2010, Twitter donated its archive of public tweets to the U.S. Library of Congress.⁶⁹ This means that every public tweet ever sent will be preserved and eventually made available to researchers, businesses, and the general public. This historic donation will remove the social responsibility from Twitter to provide this information and will enable a potentially rich, grass-roots-level history, generated by the people living the events, to be retrospectively reviewed. According to Watters⁶⁹ in Forbes Magazine, “Several important historical moments ha[ve] already been captured on Twitter when the announcement was made last year (the first tweet from space, for example, Barack Obama’s first tweet as President, or news of Michael Jackson’s death), since then our awareness of the significance of the communication channel has certainly grown.”

This project will make valuable data available to businesses on their own products, customers, and services as well as on such information about their competitors. However, a project of this magnitude will take time to design and release. It will come with a number of challenges. It will not be available overnight. In the meantime, searches will provide the best source of information from Twitter and its users. However, Twitter occasionally changes the way that Tweets can be accessed and as a result, a number of tools were discontinued. It is advisable to carefully check the service’s history before investing too much time in its use.

6.4.2 MANAGING FOLLOWERS

The networks formed with Twitter can be extremely complex with large numbers of people who follow and stop following for a variety of reasons (called ‘unfollow’ in Twitter lingo). The pool of followers can be a latent resource bringing a wealth of knowledge and other benefits. A wise business Twitter user can find ways to become better acquainted with his or her follower base; to target new followers; and, to follow key players in strategically relevant areas. For these and other reasons, it makes sense for a business to use a follower management tool. These tools enable a user to classify her or his followers; watch trends that might include people who become followers (or stop following); and, find new connections. Tools that help with this include <https://statusbrew.com/> and FindUnfollow (a mobile app). See Figures 6.22 and 6.23.

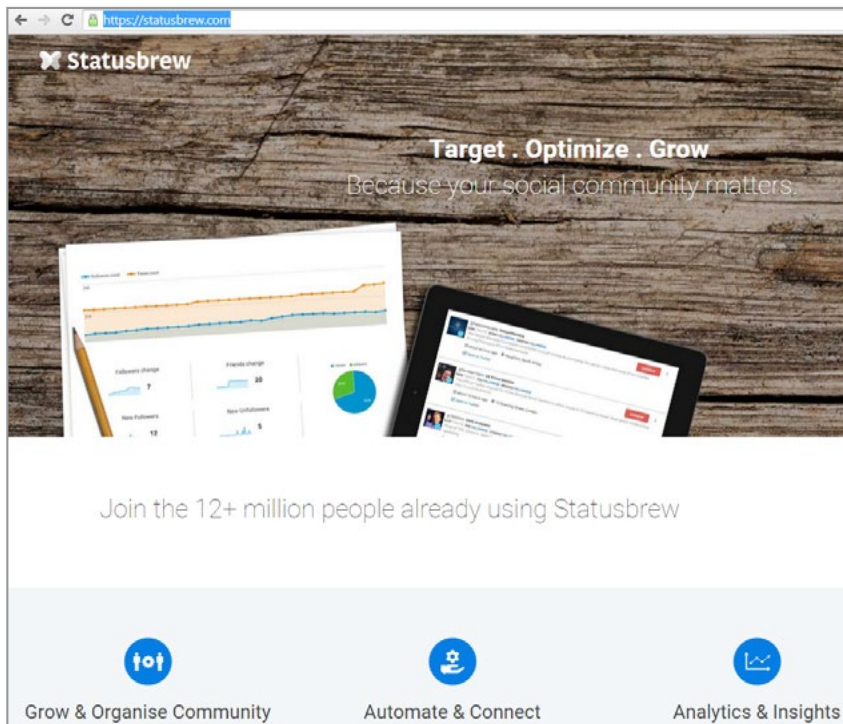


Figure 6.22 Statusbrew Management Tool for Twitter and Other Social Media

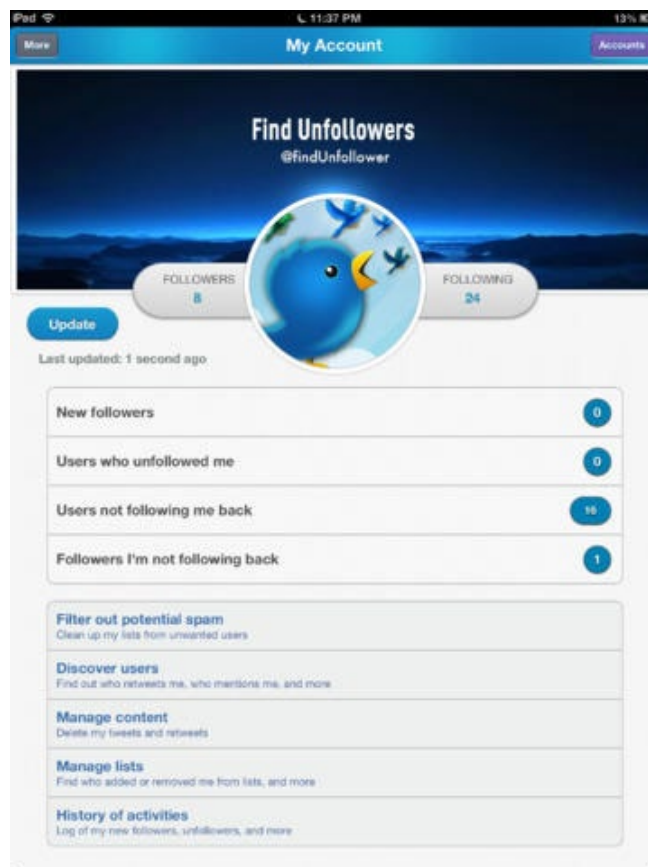


Figure 6.23 Find Unfollowers Mobile App for Twitter

Both of these tools provide information relevant to maintaining large numbers of followers. Among the helpful tools are facilities to discover:

1. new followers
2. recent unfollowers
3. users not following back
4. followers who the current account holder does not follow back

Knowing this information can help provide a mechanism to ensure that key followers do not slip away unnoticed, and that new followers can be contacted and better integrated.

6.4.3 GROWING A LIST OF FOLLOWERS WISELY

Users have sought easy methods to build their follower base since Twitter's inception. According to TwitterCounter.com (see Figure 6.24), celebrity icon Katy Perry has the most followers, with Justin Bieber, Taylor Swift and Barack Obama not too far behind.

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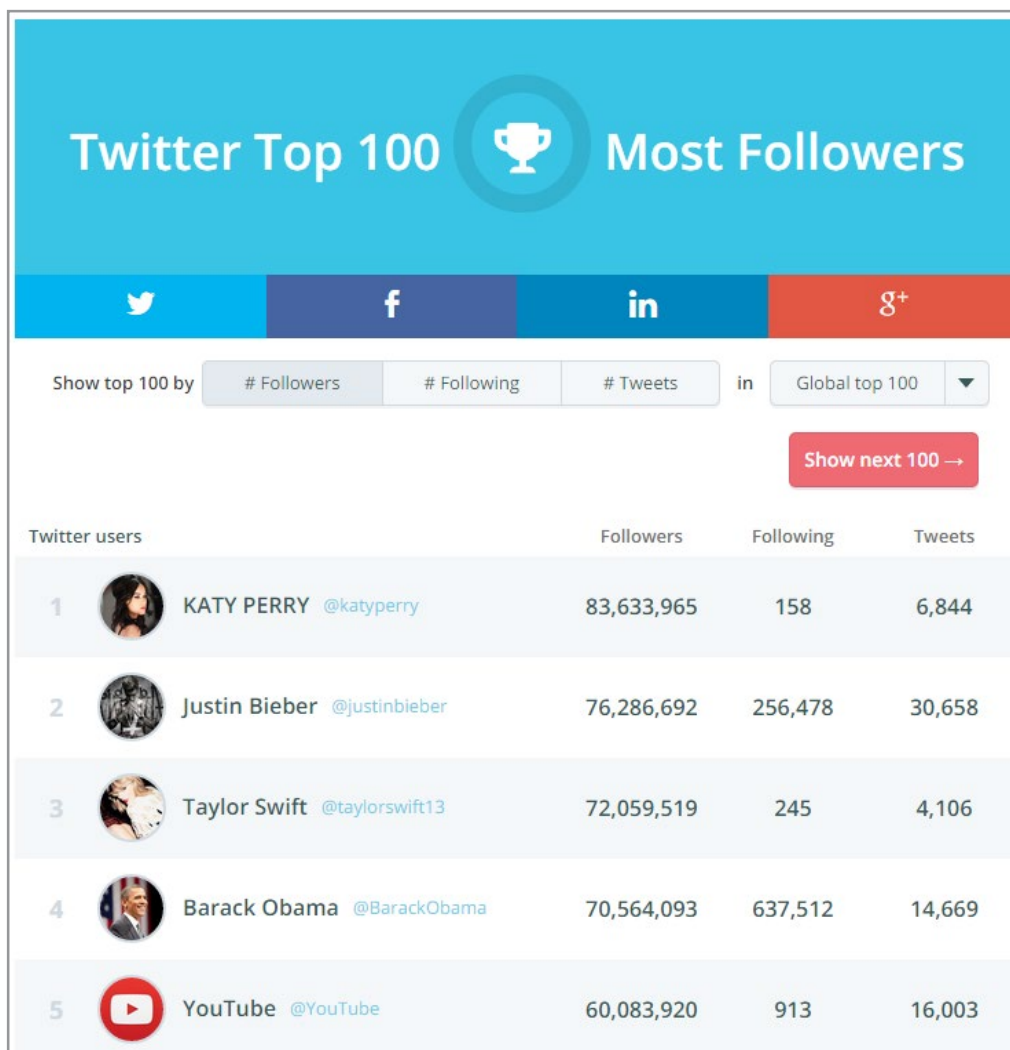


Figure 6.24 Celebrity Twitter Follower Counts (from TwitterCounter.com)

Notoriety provides celebrities with a ready path for acquiring followers, but for most people and businesses, the process is more difficult. To aid, a variety of tools promise to quickly add followers to subscribers' accounts. Many of these tools originally took the form of mass follow bots which attempted to automate the follower-acquisition process. Some of the less reputable services would create fake users and make these followers of subscriber accounts. Other tools appeared which would automatically follow back any follower. Users began placing a #followback, #teamautofollow, or #teamfollowback hashtag in their message to indicate they would follow anyone who followed them. These strategies had the effect of creating large numbers of followers with little or no value. In essence, they became numbers and not potential customers or business partners.

In 2013 a report named Twitter “as the network with the largest underground economy for the buying and selling of fake followers.”^{70, 71} Shortly after, Twitter disabled its auto follow feature which was often used by those attempting to game its following service or to use Twitter as a spam server. The auto follow had previously enabled “an immediate and programmatic means of following another user back after they follow you.” And it was removed.⁷¹ In an even more sweeping move, Twitter removed the auto follow back functionality from its API and stopped third party applications from providing that service. With the programmatic features gone, the primary ways of acquiring followers become: to follow other users (including your followers); to publicize a Twitter handle, and to write clever, timely tweets likely to be retweeted. Leslie Walker⁷² suggests six ways to increase Twitter followers.

- Start following. Find others with shared interests and hope that they return the favor and follow back.
- Create a complete and compelling Twitter profile. This will put others at ease and help them identify reasons for wanting to follow.
- Follow those who have followed your account. Many users appreciate the engagement and will remain as a follower longer. This may also make it more likely that other followers of the account may add you as well.
- Tweet regularly. This will keep an audience engaged and provide more notice.
- Ensure that tweet content is relevant, timely and contains recognizable hashtags. Again, good content makes a world of difference in Twitter.
- Remember that the quality of followers is more important than having numbers of bot-generated accounts. One live customer is far better than one thousand fake ones.

While numbers still play an important role in Twitter, having an organically grown list of followers truly engaged in relevant interests is far more important.

6.4.4 FOLLOW FRIDAY

Follow Friday (#ff) is tradition on Twitter which can result in more followers. The idea is to send tweets on Fridays with the hashtag #ff or #followfriday. The tweets are meant to help followers identify new people that they in turn may wish to follow. Being mentioned in a #ff tweet is considered a friendly gesture. To create a #ff tweet, a list of Twitter handles is inserted into the message followed by the hashtag. For example:

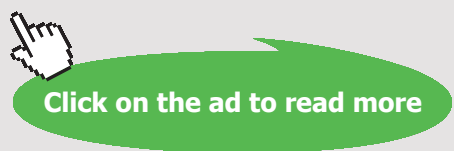
@mchaney @edutech @susanb #ff

Sometimes a short message is also inserted. For example:

Welcome newbies @mchaney @edutech @susanb #ff

The recipients of that tweet, trusting its source, may choose to follow the list of names provided.

The advertisement features a light blue background. On the left, a laptop screen displays a web-based messaging interface with a list of contacts and a message from 'Elias Naur'. A blue double-headed arrow points from the laptop screen to an HTC smartphone on the right, which shows the same text messages. A green diagonal banner in the top right corner reads 'FREE 30 days trial!'. Below this, the text 'Go to' is followed by a green button containing 'BrowserTexting.com'. Below the button, it says 'and start texting from your computer!'. At the bottom right, there is a speech bubble icon with the text 'BrowserTexting'.



6.4.5 TWITTER ANALYTICS

In situations where important, mission critical information can be learned by mining tweets, a business might want to use more sophisticated search tools. As mentioned earlier, business analysis of Twitter is truly in its early stages and the available tools have not yet fully matured. However, advances are being made. For instance, the TweetArchivist provides the ability to understand more about tweets that mention a particular topic. This topic might be a business or product name. In Figure 6.25, Tweet Volume, Top Tweeters, Number of Retweets, Top Words, Top URLs and the source of tweets are all summarized for the phrase “Kansas State University”. By discovering where social chatter comes from and what is being said, businesses can begin to understand more about their clients, potential markets, and competitors. Information regarding business opportunities, quality management efforts, and general improvement venues also can be determined. A number of other useful statistics can be obtained from the TweetArchivist.

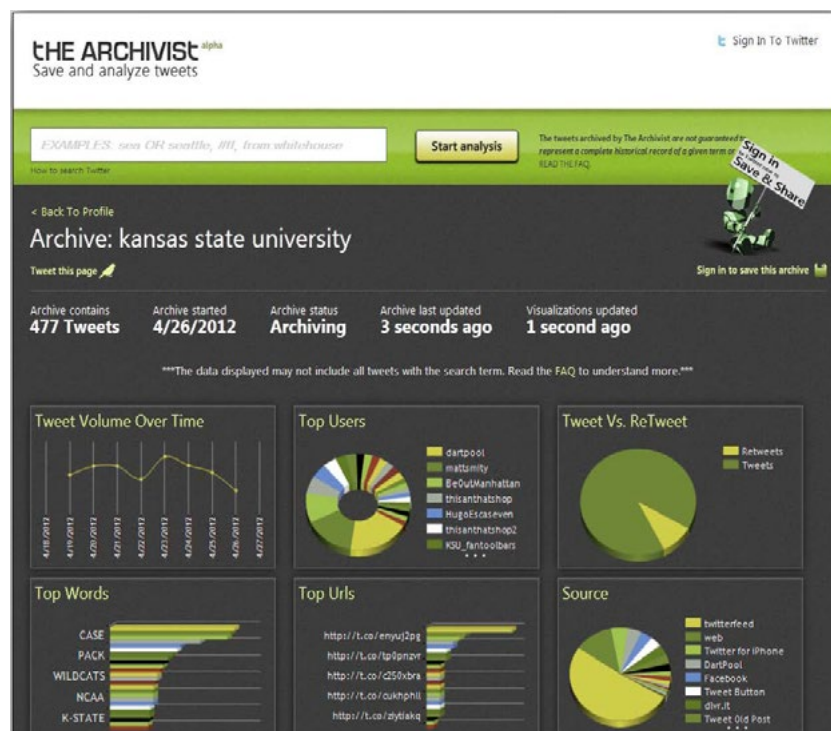


Figure 6.25 The TweetArchivist Provides Tweet Analysis (<http://www.tweetarchivist.com>)

Organizations that need to analyze older (and this may mean only a few months!) Twitter content and cannot wait for the Library of Congress to open their Twitter database can obtain services from organizations such as Gnip.⁷³ Gnip offers access to Twitter data streams and dozens of other social media feeds and is an authorized reseller of Twitter data. Twitter’s full data feed, called its Firehose, provides all tweets being sent. Gnip extracts the subset relating to a particular firm, its products, and other interests (See Figure 6.26).

Figure 6.26 Gnip is a Paid Tweet Analysis Service (<http://gnip.com/>)

Businesses use Twitter for a variety of purposes, ranging from marketing to customer service to product development. Twitter can be particularly powerful for new companies and can result in the quick spread of information. Jill Duffy⁷⁴ of PC Magazine provides several tips and suggestions for companies wishing to successfully use Twitter. First, she says, be sure to define the business purpose for using Twitter. If it is merely to drive traffic to the company Website, Twitter may not be the best tool. Instead, think of using Twitter to create a dialog and gather business information. Second, be sure to assign the correct tweeters. These people need to be knowledgeable, good listeners and trustworthy. They will represent a company to the world. Remember that tweets are public and once they have been sent out, it is nearly impossible to effectively retract what was said. Third, Duffy suggests developing a voice. This can be tricky because people want to know who they are ‘talking’ with. So, an organization needs to establish a way to put ‘faces’ on its Twitter feeds. Fourth, follow the right people. Be sure to subscribe to high quality Twitter feeds and remove spammers and those pushing adult content. An organization with the support of friendly tweeters is fortunate and can look forward to Retweets that help spread information more widely. Finally, Duffy says to have a business-appropriate sense of humor. Remember that people are reading tweets and sending them because it is fun and interesting for them. Twitter provides additional tips and best practices on its Website (Figure 6.27).

Best Practices

Build your following, reputation, and customer's trust with these simple practices:

1. **Share.** Share photos and behind the scenes info about your business. Even better, give a glimpse of developing projects and events. Users come to Twitter to get and share the latest, so give it to them!
2. **Listen.** Regularly monitor the comments about your company, brand, and products.
3. **Ask.** Ask questions of your followers to glean valuable insights and show that you are listening.
4. **Respond.** Respond to compliments and feedback in real time
5. **Reward.** Tweet updates about special offers, discounts and time-sensitive deals.
6. **Demonstrate wider leadership and know-how.** Reference articles and links about the bigger picture as it relates to your business.
7. **Champion your stakeholders.** Retweet and reply publicly to great tweets posted by your followers and customers.
8. **Establish the right voice.** Twitter users tend to prefer a direct, genuine, and of course, a likable tone from your business, but think about your *voice* as you Tweet. How do you want your business to appear to the Twitter community?

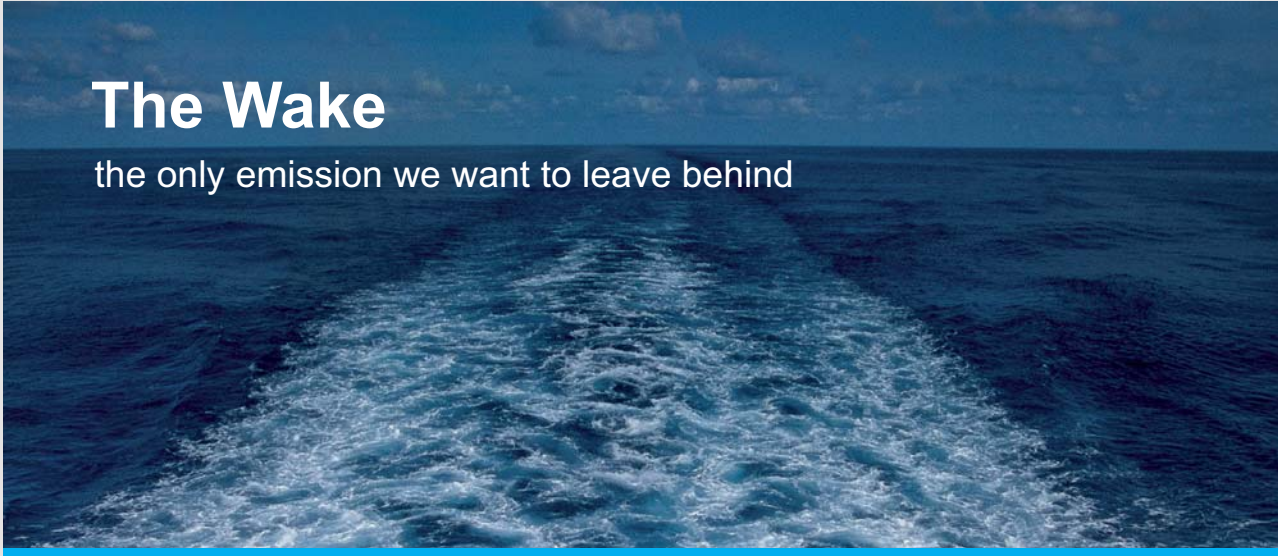
Figure 6.27 Twitter Best Practices (from Twitter.com)

6.5 CONCLUSIONS

Twitter transformed the way people communicate using their mobile devices and the Internet. From celebrities to high school kids to business leaders, this microblogging service and social media platform has enabled an entirely new mechanism for fast, timely messaging. Users construct and send Tweets to a group of followers. These short messages can be collected by third party software and content analyzed to provide business intelligence. Twitter also provides services for data mining its tweet streams. As a result, a support industry has grown up around Twitter to provide data analytics, follower management support, strategies for increasing the impact of tweets and many other functions. Love it or hate it, Twitter is one of the most important changes to impact business in recent years.

7 FACEBOOK AND LINKEDIN

Two of the highest impact social media websites for business are Facebook and LinkedIn. Coupled with Twitter, these three represent a high impact minimum that all organizations need to incorporate into their planning. Throughout this book, both social media and social networking have been mentioned. Although similar, these two terms are distinct. To best understand Facebook and LinkedIn, it is necessary to clarify the two meanings. According to Matt Goddard⁷⁵, social networking is the ‘what’ and social media is the ‘how’. In other word, social media are tools that facilitate social networking⁷⁶. For instance, LinkedIn is social media. Social networking takes place in LinkedIn each time people form connections, exchange information, share, or discuss. Twitter is social media and each Tweet represents the act of social networking. Social media makes social networking easier.



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Goddard⁷⁵ further states that “[s]ocial networks are made up of peers seeking and giving advice to make better decisions. Advanced social networking science can even tell us which people give out the most advice in the network and have the most influence. These people are called opinion leaders.” The group of interconnected peers on Facebook or LinkedIn represents a social network. Social networks can exist without social media and have for thousands of years. Social media, a recent arrival on the scene, has provided a new set of tools to make social networks easier to create, join, manage and use. Social media includes blogs, online videos, social news, social bookmarking and much more. This chapter goes on to explore two of the most popular social media websites in the business world: Facebook and LinkedIn.

7.1 FACEBOOK FOR BUSINESS

Facebook is *the* social media giant. As of June, 2016, Facebook had more than 1.65 billion MAUs (monthly active users). Further, 1.09 billion of these were DAUs (daily active users). Over 100 billion social networking connections exist within Facebook. These statistics from Facebook mean that businesses cannot overlook this global communication channel.⁷⁷

Developing a business presence on Facebook is a must, but the approach is far from simple. First, many people view Facebook as a primary method for communicating with family and close friends. This means that business connections, advertisements, and intrusive messages may not be welcome. In education, the same problem exists. Most students use Facebook but they do not always want their teachers to be part of their personal network. This means businesses need to carefully plan their interactions in ways that respect typical Facebook use. This is not to say that all people prefer to avoid any commercial contact on Facebook. In fact, on any given day, hundreds of millions of *Likes* are given to business pages and business content is viewed, downloaded, and commented upon. The next sections will provide a look at Facebook practices and describe ways many businesses are currently seeking to connect with stakeholders and potential customers.

7.1.1 PROFILES, PAGES AND GROUPS

The fine line between business and personal use is reflected in Facebook’s website structure in the form of profiles, pages and groups. These structures give different levels of interaction to users and have been specifically tailored to control the way businesses can access people on Facebook. Profiles are the basic structure in Facebook and are intended for individual use. Some businesses have created profiles, but this practice violates the terms of service agreement with Facebook. Profiles are intended to represent a person’s identity and contain the elements shown in Table 7.1⁷⁸ and Figure 7.1.

| Element | Description |
|------------------------|---|
| Summary | Provides a description of the profile owner. Includes an overview of personal identity, geographic location, work/school information, and a summary of personal facts. Friends see recently tagged photos together with current activities. |
| Experiences | Provides space for more details of the profile owner's life. This might include information about how the owner spends her time, her hobbies, work projects, activities, and classes. |
| Common Interests | This area provides a venue to connect with friends with common interests. It might include sport teams, music, art, literature and people that provide inspiration. Top interests appear as a row of images that can be rearranged. |
| Meaningful Friendships | Best friends can be highlighted together with family members here. Other key people such as colleagues can be listed and arranged. |
| Friend Connections | A set of connections to friends' profiles are listed on the owner's page. Information such as mutual friends, common events, shared photos, and wall posts are listed here. |

Table 7.1 Facebook Profile for Individuals

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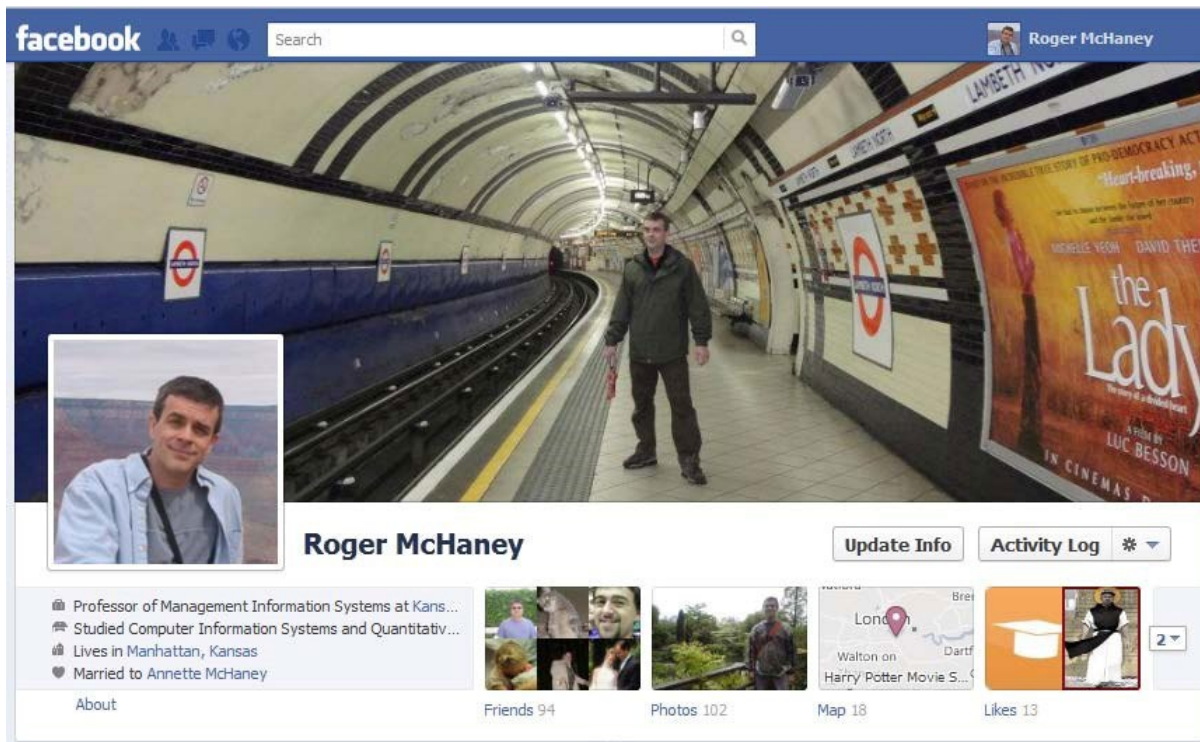


Figure 7.1 Facebook Profile for the Author

Facebook pages, on the other hand, are specifically designed for business use. Pages include the elements found in Table 7.2.

| Element | Description |
|---------------|--|
| Cover Photo | This should be a unique photo that represents the business or an aspect of the business meant to capture the attention of customers and other stakeholders. |
| Profile Photo | This will be a small photo used to represent business identity. Typically, a business logo is used as a profile photo and it will appear anywhere in Facebook that a link or content associated with the business is posted. |
| About | About provides a venue for a business description, contact information and links to helpful information such as business hours, location and so forth. |
| Posts | A location for fresh material related to a business. Posts, photos, videos, links, and other content is listed here. |

Table 7.2 Facebook Page Elements for Business Use

Facebook recommends that businesses use their pages to develop a rapport with customers.⁷⁸ They suggest regular posts to help foster relationships and to stimulate an active online community. A consistent voice and authentic, original information can encourage people to interact with the business. Facebook suggests the following items to encourage development of a community:

- **New Content:** Photos, videos, menus, sneak peeks, new product information and event announcements.
- **Questions:** Stimulate customers to provide feedback and opinions about products and services.
- **Events:** Information about new product launches, anniversaries, promotions, in-store events and sales.
- **Stories:** Posts that provide stories about products, successes, or other customers.

Facebook provides the ability to manage a page from an administrative panel. This means that the business owner can track activity, respond to comments, and track page statistics. Facebook locates its page statistics or metrics on its Page Insight Dashboard. A business can learn the identity of its page visitors, the day of week most visitors come to the page, the frequency of comments and which posts generate the most interest.

Unlike profiles, pages do not accumulate *friends*. Instead, people become *fans*. In order to develop a business page, a user must first have a profile (unless they are using Facebook Business Manager). The profile holder can then become an administrator of a page. Pages provide additional benefits. For instance, people don't have to be logged into Facebook to view a business page. They don't even need to have a Facebook account. Each page is indexed by Google and other search engines and will be listed when searches are conducted. Profiles are limited to 5,000 friends and 1,000 pending friend requests but business pages can have an unlimited number of fans. For instance, pop star David Bowie's Facebook page had almost 7 million likes as of May 2016.

From a business perspective, pages can be promoted with sidebar ads on Facebook, customized tabs with coupons and other items (e.g. maps, videos, et cetera), or discussions with fans. Figure 7.2 provides an example business page and Figure 7.3 shows Facebook's business information page.

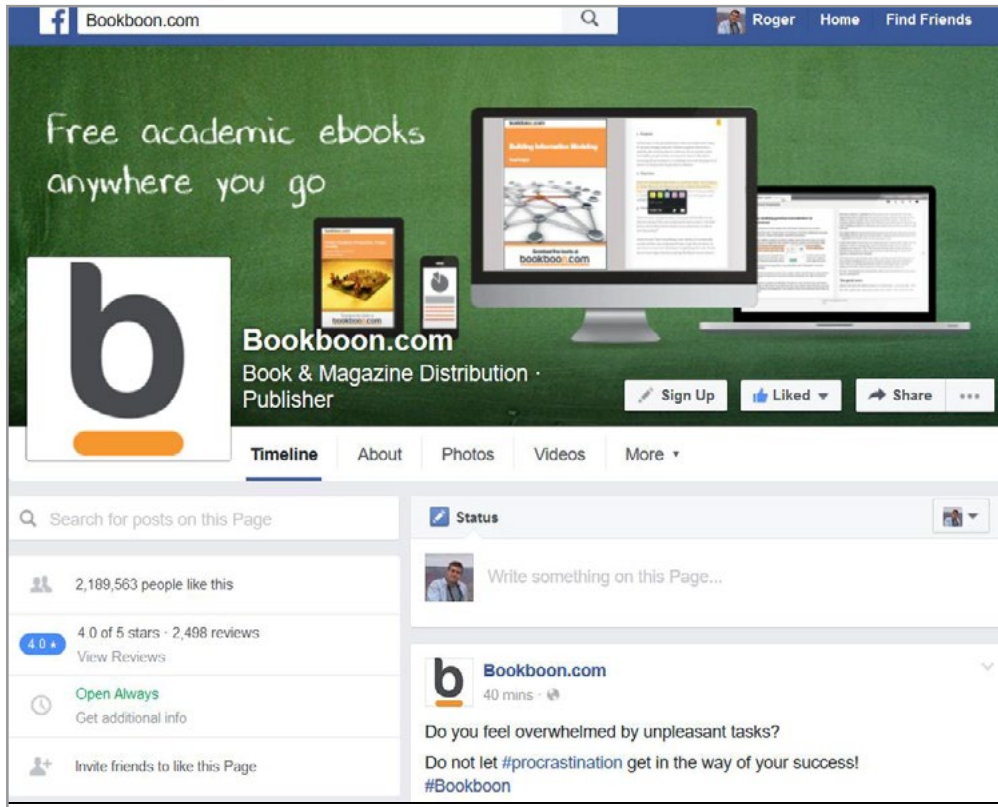


Figure 7.2 Facebook Page for Bookboon.com

wethrive.net

How to retain your top staff

FIND OUT NOW FOR FREE

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW:

- What your staff really want?
- The top issues troubling them?
- How to make staff assessments work for you & them, painlessly?

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Because happy staff get more done

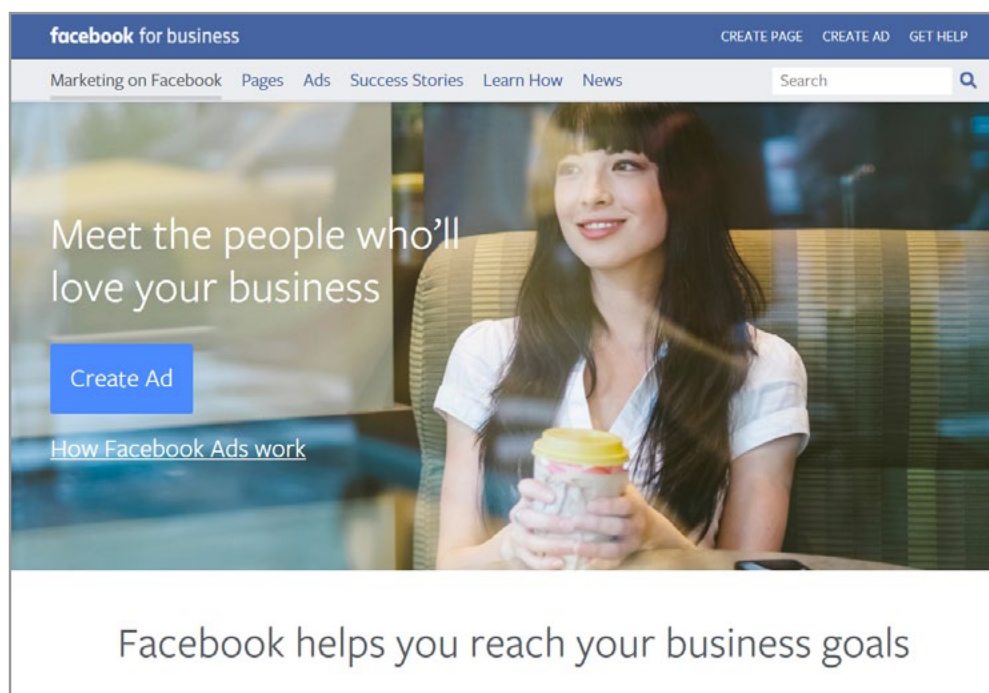


Figure 7.3 Facebook's Business Information Page

Groups are another feature on Facebook. Groups are intended to allow a subset of people to interact and share information. Groups are a private space that can be configured in various ways. A group can be secret so that only members can see it, know who is in it and what other members post. A secret group could be used for company employees or a set of business associates. Closed groups can be seen by everyone and everyone will be able to see the membership list. However, the content is only open to members. Open groups can be seen by anyone, membership is open and all content can be seen by the public. Groups are intended for use with profiles but can be used in some business settings.

7.1.2 SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PAGE FOR BUSINESS

Business pages are valuable for many reasons, the most obvious being that almost a billion people use Facebook and it is important to meet customers where they congregate.⁷⁹ People become fans of a business page simply by clicking a 'Like' button. This creates a like between their profile and the business page if they are logged into Facebook. Each time a person presses 'Like,' the business icon will be placed onto the user's profile page. This provides visibility for the business and helps information to move through networks of friends.

Setting up a Facebook page for business is very similar to creating a business Web page. While customization is held to a minimum, the uniformity gives users the ability to easily navigate and feel comfortable on the site. Businesses are only permitted to provide basic information on Facebook. Links to their non-Facebook websites provide a way for fans to obtain additional information.

As mentioned earlier, in order to create a business page, a user will need to have a Facebook profile (unless they use Facebook Business Manager). The connection between a user's profile and a business page is not public information. Only Facebook and the profile owner know the connection exists. There will not be any blending of personal and business information unless the account owner posts it in both places.

A user may have an unlimited number of Facebook pages and each page may have an unlimited number of fans. Pages are indexed on Google and other search engines and can be developed to target specific posts by location and language. Additional administrators can be added to Facebook pages to help with posting content and other activities. A Facebook page can be registered with a unique username at <http://www.facebook.com/about/pages>. See Figure 7.4.

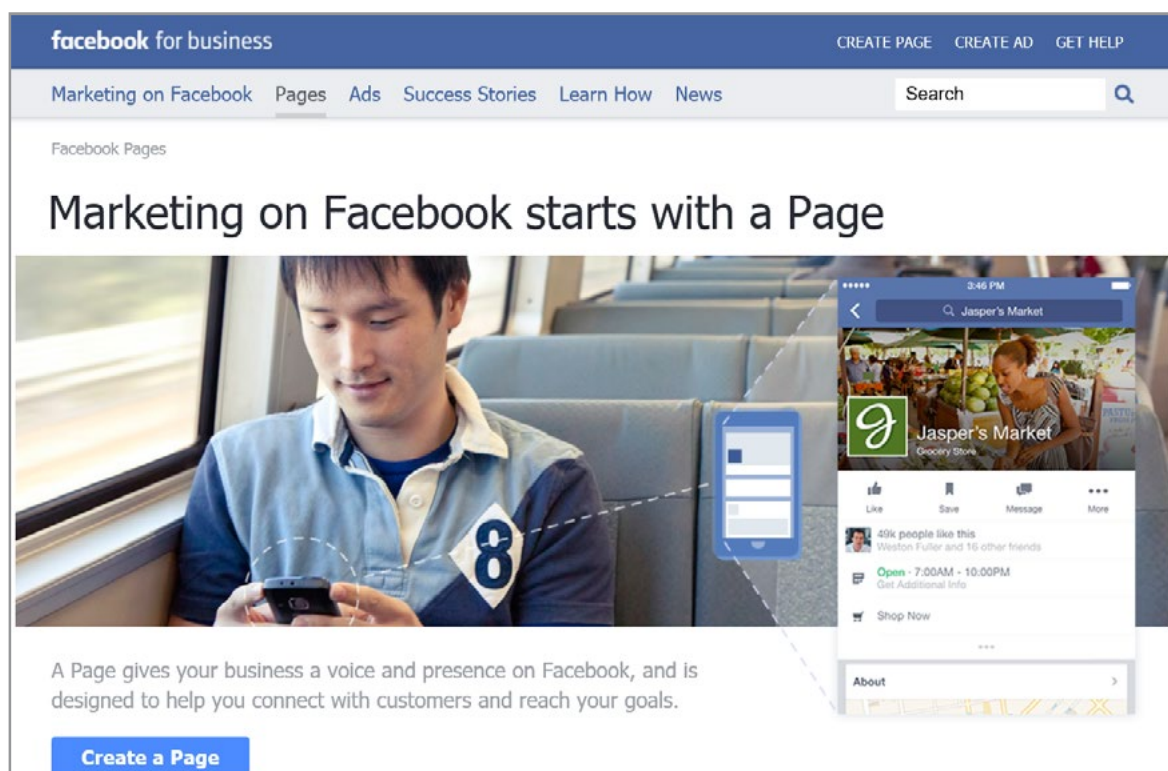


Figure 7.4 Facebook Pages

Mari Smith⁸⁰ provides information regarding the development of a Facebook page for business use. First, she suggests studying other Facebook pages to get a sense of what users currently expect. [Facebook's directory of pages](https://www.facebook.com/directory/pages/) is a great starting point: <https://www.facebook.com/directory/pages/>. See Figure 7.5.

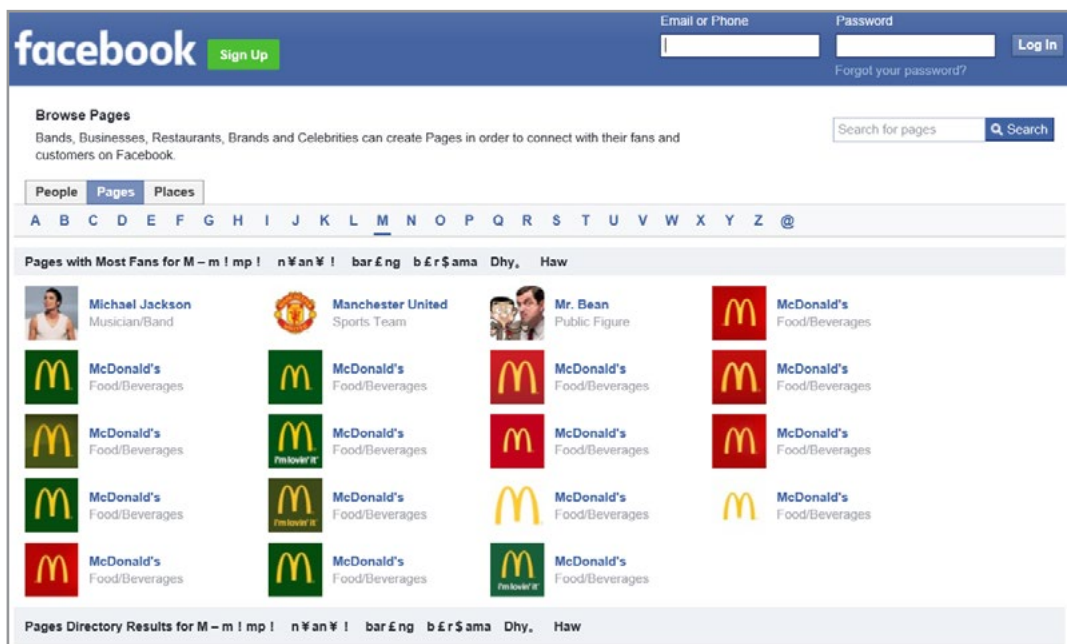



Figure 7.5 Facebook Page Directory Example

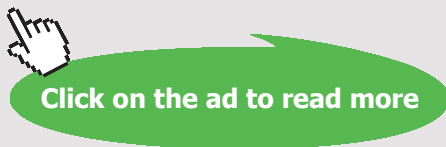
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Smith⁸⁰ then recommends a six-step approach to building a business Facebook page. The first step is to determine the page's objective. By definition, a page is a single unit of information and not a comprehensive website. This means that a primary purpose is essential. The objective might be brand awareness, developing a contact list, driving traffic to a corporate website, developing a sense of community, or gathering ideas for new products. The second step is to devise a design strategy. By understanding what needs to be accomplished, decisions regarding the type of media, posts, and other material can be determined. For instance, if the objective was to develop a sense of community, then infrastructure for posting questions and polls can be given a prominent location to help develop a sense of an ongoing dialog with fans.

Next, a content strategy can be determined. This means deciding whether photos, videos, posts, updates, events, and links should be used and in what mix. Connections to favorite blogs can be supplied together with custom developed material. Smith's fourth step is to promote the new Facebook page both inside of Facebook, across the Web and in the real world. Facebook promotion can be done using a variety of methods (many covered in the previous chapter). Widgets can be added to Websites, Facebook ads can be placed, blog entries can be written and links back to the page incorporated. Twitter and print media can be used to drive traffic to the page. The list of possibilities is large.

Following promotion, engagement and retention are necessary. Organizational resources will be required to enable the page to be monitored and moderated. Additional page administrators may be required depending on how much traffic is generated. Again, depending on the page objectives, it may be important to have immediate responses to customer posts or questions. Other forms of engagement might include regular posts, polls, personalized messages to fans and the addition of a discussion board.

Finally, the sixth step is to begin converting fans into long-term, loyal customers. Smith⁸⁰ recommends waiting until the fan base is approximately 500–1,000 strong. This will enable efforts to achieve measureable results. Conversion can be tricky but it generally involves providing coupons, discounts, special events, or other incentives to give fans a call to action.

7.1.3 FACEBOOK BUSINESS MANAGER

Recently, Facebook added a set of functions called Business Manager. The primary idea was to allow businesses to securely access, share, and control Facebook pages, ad accounts, and other items. The development of Business Manager was motivated by prior limitations on the way pages had to be administered – page owners had to be linked by their personal profile pages. This created a conflict for individuals wanting to maintain personal profiles on Facebook without sharing login details with co-workers, ad agencies, or other partners involved with page administration. With Business Manager, anyone can be given permission to see all of a business' pages and ad accounts without sharing login information or needing to be connected to coworkers on Facebook.

Although pages can still be administered by individuals linked through their profile, Business Manager makes more sense for companies larger than sole proprietorships. For instance, Business Manager works well if a business needs more than one ad account or if it works with partners who need to modify their pages or ad accounts. Business Manager provides the ability to assign permissions to employees, partners, ad agencies, or others.

Prior to Business Manager, business page administrators had to be cautious to avoid mixing posts from their personal identities on Facebook with business interests. For example, if a page administrator commented on a personal friend's post, they had to ensure that they had switched back to their personal account to avoid posting as a representative of the business page. This was prone to accidents and resulted in many embarrassing moments for businesses. Page administrators often got around this potential problem by creating fake accounts. This separated them from their personal accounts and also made them more willing to share login credentials with their team members and co-workers. This was not a good solution because it violated Facebook terms of use and sometimes these fake pages were deleted and this cut off access to the business' page.

The main advantages of using Business Manager include the following:

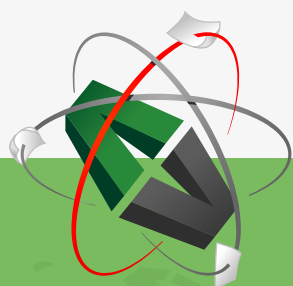
- Eliminates mix-ups between personal accounts and page administrators
- Allows businesses to manage page roles and ad account access from one convenient place
- Allows a business to see which pages and ad accounts have been assigned to a particular individual
- Allows a business to see a list of people working on a particular page or ad account
- Allows partners and affiliated ad agencies to request access to pages and ad accounts

7.1.4 USING MORE OF FACEBOOK'S CAPABILITIES

Facebook can be used with relatively little understanding of its capabilities. It can also be used in sophisticated ways. Its numerous options and various settings can be reconfigured to customize its use. For instance, one little known feature on Facebook is its 'list' settings.

Facebook allows users to set up lists for their profile page. The lists define what a particular group of people can and cannot see by permitting privacy settings to be adjusted. It is possible to create custom lists for common groups of friends. For example, a teacher might have family, personal, student, and colleague lists. By assigning friends to a specific list, privacy settings can be manipulated to only allow certain material to be accessible by individuals on a particular list. For a teacher, he or she might not want students to be able to access photos and posts related to his or her family. Likewise, those on his or her family list might not need to have access to a student study guide.

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The profile owner can visit his or her group of Facebook friends to create a new list or add someone to an existing list. To do this, mouse over the name of the friend to be added to a specific list. When the dialog box appears, click on the 'Friends' button and a box with all available lists will appear (see Figure 7.6). The profile owner may have to click on an item that says 'show all lists'. It is also possible to create a new list from this dialog box. Click on the list or lists for this particular friend. Once a friend is added to a list, then content added to a Facebook profile can be screened from their view more easily (if desired).



Figure 7.7 Creating Friend Lists in Facebook

In order to post information restricted to a specific list of people, first create a post, load a video or add a photo as normal. Then, use the dropdown box associated with the content to select the list of friends as an audience. Figure 7.7 shows how a post about a power outage will be made visible only to family members.

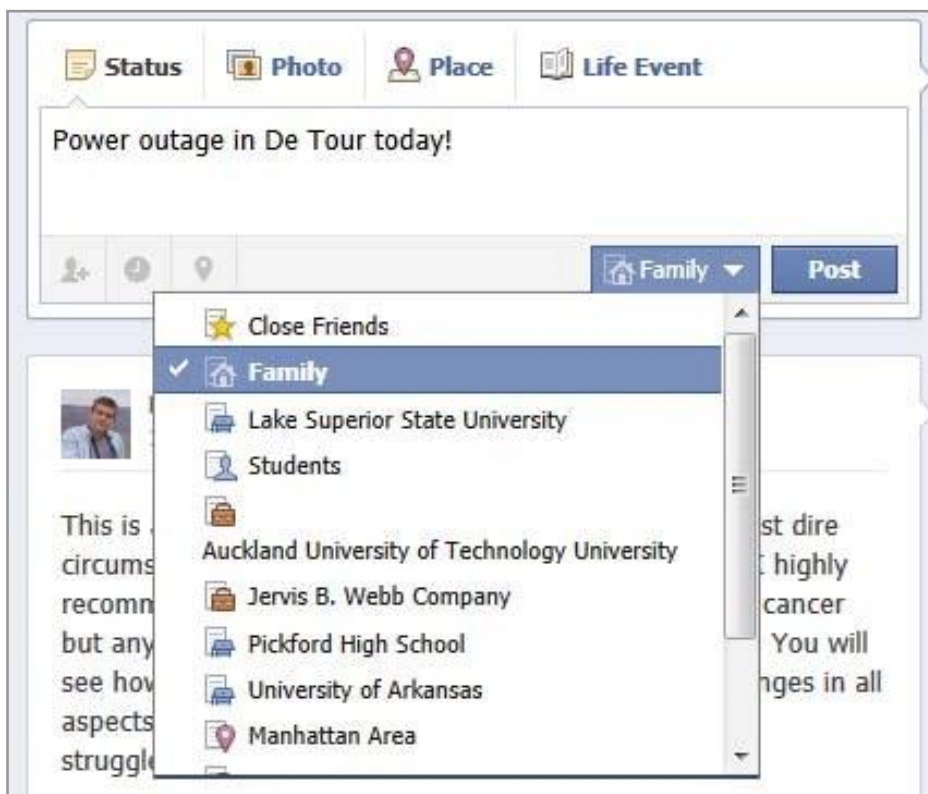


Figure 7.7 Screening Content from All but Family in Facebook

After posting the content, the settings can be modified to include more viewers. Figures 7.8 and 7.9 show how this can be done by using a dropdown menu and then by adding lists or giving specific friends the ability to see the post. This is a very powerful capability in Facebook that makes it possible to use one account for multiple purposes.⁸¹



Figure 7.8 Changes to Make Content Visible to Selected Facebook Lists and Friends

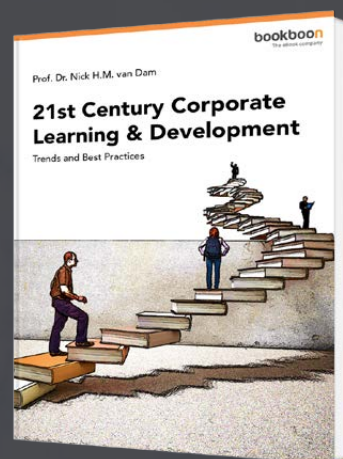


Figure 7.9 Example of Making Content Visible to a List and Specific Friend

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7.1.5 SETTING A BUSINESS POLICY FOR FACEBOOK

Using Facebook for business, even a small business, requires functional organization and a consistent approach. For this reason, it becomes important to assign the responsibility for Facebook or any social media updates to the correct entity within a company. Initially, many businesses assigned social media and website responsibility to an IT department or a technology person. While it is necessary to have technology support for social media, effective use requires content development and expertise from functional business areas that communicate with targeted stakeholders. This often means that social media used to communicate with those outside an organization is best served by a media specialist or someone from a marketing or customer service background. Internal use of social media may come from human resources or various departmental managers. While IT people are important members of a social media team, they are seldom the correct people to develop and post content and respond to comments.

A good approach is to set up a social media team and use that entity to manage content, updates, approaches, and provide a general philosophy. A team might comprise functional managers, media specialists, marketing specialists, copy writers, and technology people. Ultimately, a particular person should be in charge of the effort. In small companies, this will not be a full time effort but rather will be a component of someone's job.

Social media posts or content should be subject to an editorial process and perhaps comply with a set of editorial guidelines. It might be important to have guidelines defining comments as spam if they include links to non-related content or if the posted comment is self-promoting. A policy might be to ensure that every comment receives a thoughtful reply. Another policy might be to ensure that at least one new post appears each day and that that post contains original content from within the organization. Perhaps a second post with a link to related content from outside the company should be added each day. Another policy might be to include a poll once a week. It might become a corporate practice to ask thought provoking questions to get customer input or feedback. Perhaps new product development ideas can use Facebook communication to determine customer needs. The potential depends on organizational goals and the resources available. The possibilities are endless.

It is important to remember that social media implementation requires resources, a thoughtful and consistent approach, and a team that is dedicated to long-term results. Building an audience of fans will not occur overnight.

7.2 LINKEDIN FOR BUSINESS

Without a doubt, LinkedIn has become the social media venue of choice for businesses and individuals seeking to network with a career focus. It was founded in December 2002 and publically launched in May 2003. By mid-2012, LinkedIn had more than 175 million registered users from over 200 countries. In May, 2016 LinkedIn had expanded to more than 430 million users.⁸² In June of 2016, LinkedIn was purchased by Microsoft. While Facebook focuses on connections between friends, relatives, and other casual acquaintances, LinkedIn has specifically courted the business world and attempted to create an online venue where job histories, resumes, recommendations, and career-related networking can take place. Many businesses recruit new employees using LinkedIn and for many individuals, LinkedIn has become the primary location where all business contacts, skill inventories, training records, and experience histories are maintained. LinkedIn also is useful in maintaining communication and contact with business associates. For instance, if a member changes jobs, locations, or receives a promotion, she easily can send the updated information to her business associates.

7.2.1 PROFILES ON LINKEDIN

Much like Facebook, LinkedIn relies on profiles for individual users. The primary difference relates to the type of material that is important to LinkedIn users. Table 7.3 provides a general description of the primary profile components for LinkedIn. Figure 7.10 provide an example of profile information.

| Component | Description |
|-------------------|--|
| Picture | This is a unique photo of the profile owner. Most users prefer pictures showing that individual wearing business attire. |
| Positions | This is a list of current and past job positions including dates, titles, job duties, responsibilities, and other pertinent information. |
| Achievements | A profile holder can provide a summary of his or her primary achievements. |
| Education History | This is a list of all education and training attended. Generally, it focuses on university experience and degrees but can include other training venues as well. |
| Links | A list of links can be added. Most users include links to their blogs, company website, or other important locations relevant to work life. |

Table 7.3 LinkedIn Profile Components

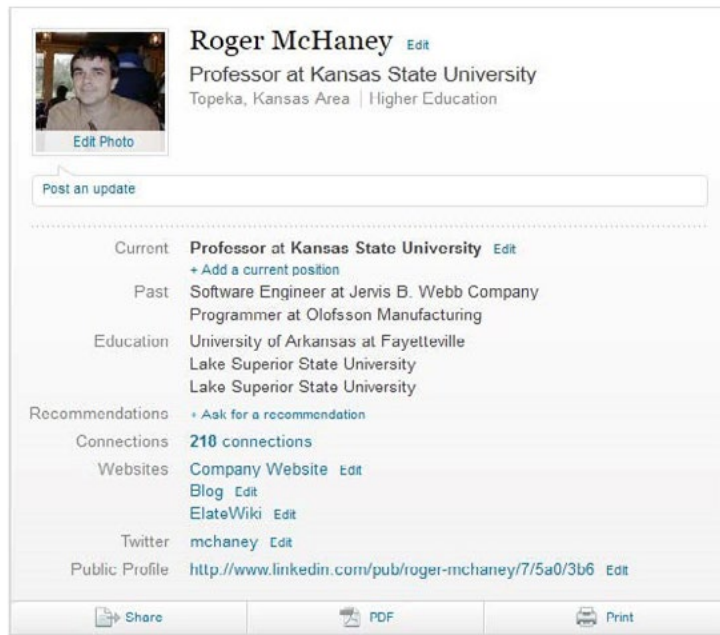


Figure 7.10 LinkedIn Profile Example

The advertisement has a dark blue background with a large, stylized, light blue lion logo. The text 'YOU THINK. YOU CAN WORK AT RMB' is written in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center. In the top right corner, there is a white box containing the Rand Merchant Bank logo (a lion with a key) and the text 'RAND MERCHANT BANK', 'A division of FirstRand Bank Limited', and 'Traditional values. Innovative ideas.'

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In general, LinkedIn includes a basic resume, a personal summary, contact details, and links to pertinent websites. All are focused on professional networking. LinkedIn offers different levels of access. Free access means users will see sponsors and advertisements, but LinkedIn has been careful to keep the ads less intrusive. By upgrading to a paid account, additional capabilities are added. Among these are faster searches of LinkedIn's membership database, direct messaging without needing introductions, and more profile organization tools and options.

Once a profile has been created, a LinkedIn user can publish it and begin creating connections. Connections are current and former colleagues, teachers and classmates, business associates, and other professional contacts may be included. In general, the idea is to create direct connections by adding people relevant to the user's professional circle. These connections can provide introductions to additional professionals which help build a network in particular specialty areas.

LinkedIn's connections can provide ways to find freelance and consulting work. It is possible to include information to aid others seeking consultants. It also is possible to use connections to build business customer bases, seek new sales leads, or to find new career opportunities. Among the featured uses of LinkedIn are:

- Obtain, store and distribute online recommendations that can be used to attest to professional abilities or character.
- Obtain introductions to key individuals in relevant industries.
- Obtain introductions to potential employers.
- Search job listings placed on LinkedIn.
- Create an online resume that continues to grow with experiences and career changes.

LinkedIn also provides interest groups that allow members to engage in threaded discussions. Individuals participating in groups may be invited to join professional networks by others in the conversations. Discussions can be used to post job listings. LinkedIn also permits resumes to be searched by professionals seeking to recruit top talent into their firms.

7.2.2 LINKEDIN FOR JOB SEARCHES

LinkedIn is well known for its capability as a job search tool. In many ways it has become the new standard for posting resumes, recommendation letters, and providing career histories. Potential employers can see prospective hires' networks of contacts which can add to the applicants' credibility and relevance.

In addition to traditional job postings, LinkedIn often is used to find jobs from employers seeking telecommuters. Many employers use LinkedIn exclusively for job postings. This, of course, emphasizes the importance of having a LinkedIn account and a complete profile.

Using LinkedIn to find a job means ensuring that a profile is set up to emphasize the applicant's strengths. While most jobs still require a separate resume and cover letter, LinkedIn profiles may be used for screening to provide a bigger picture. This means the entire "resume" portion of the profile should be complete, error-free, updated, and relevant to the type of work being sought.

LinkedIn can be used to discover and join groups related to the work field desired. This provides more opportunities and demonstrates to potential employers the relevance of the job. Once a group member, it becomes possible for a job seeker to invite potential employers to join their network or to participate in direct discussions. Finding jobs on LinkedIn starts with the 'Jobs' tab (See Figure 7.11).

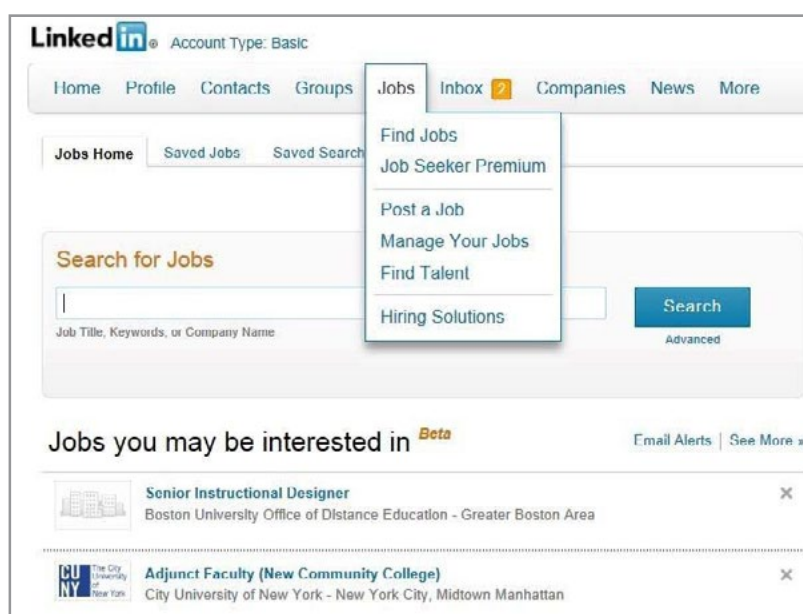


Figure 7.11 Job Tab in LinkedIn

LinkedIn will generate a list of relevant jobs based on a user's resume and job history by trying to match up key words in job listings. By default, this provides views of jobs that may match potential search criteria. The system also provides advanced search features to allow a user to broaden their search or narrow in on a specific job category.

As mentioned earlier, LinkedIn offers discussion groups. These groups can provide additional methods for finding (or listing) jobs. Group members may post direct emails or Web links to pages specific to particular jobs. Some groups require contacting a moderator to join but others are open to all. Job seekers can also use discussion groups to highlight their knowledge and become parts of relevant industry dialogue. Contacts and credibility can be enhanced this way.

Often, the best way to find job openings on LinkedIn is by using its power as a social network. Word of mouth and being linked to colleagues and friends of friends can often lead to opportunities that will result in job offers or at least information about potential openings. Credibility can be gained by having recommendations regularly added by significant colleagues as a career history is built over time.



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7.2.3 LINKEDIN COMPANY PAGES

Company pages are a relatively new feature for LinkedIn. The idea is to allow businesses to post additional details that will be of interest to current or potential employees, stakeholders, and the general public (see Figure 7.12). A company page can provide news feed type features where changes, updates, and news can be posted.⁸³ Many organizations have begun to use company pages to create special offers for visitors and those that recommend or endorse the page. Similar to company pages found on Facebook, these pages are open to the general public and can be found with Google and other search engines. It is important for a company to include their contact details, email addresses, and other details on these pages.

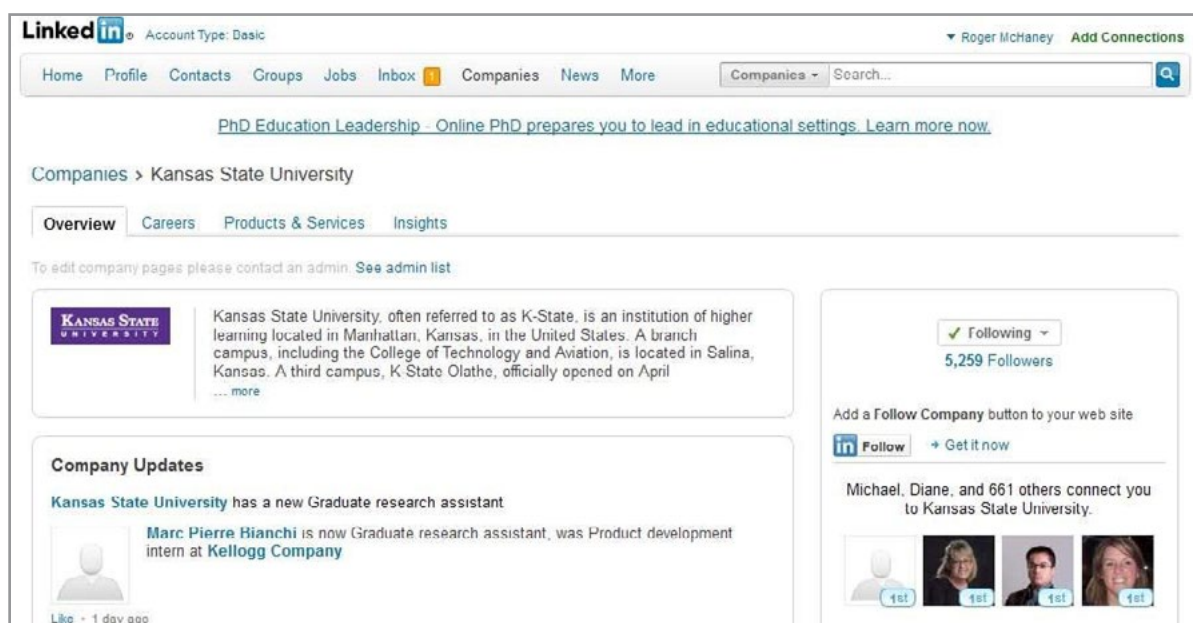


Figure 7.12 Kansas State University Company Page in LinkedIn

7.3 CONCLUSIONS

Big social media has become a significant component of many organization's public faces. Customers, employees, and stakeholders expect to find high quality, useful information on Facebook, LinkedIn, and similar sites. These venues have increased in importance and have even replaced traditional Web pages for many small businesses. The ease of construction and familiar interface and ability to contact important customers contribute to this movement.

More than just a website, social media facilitates social networking and the creation of communication links between organizations and individuals important to its existence. Emerging communities of individuals sharing common interests and experiences related to the organization are becoming commonplace and, although somewhat outside a company's control, can provide valuable insight and connections.

8 SOCIAL BUZZ AND VIRAL PHENOMENON

Web 2.0 has enabled crowd behavior to become independent of time and geographic location. While crowd behaviors still exist, their manifestation can be vastly different. Physical crowds can still form as they always have but often their composition and locations are influenced by social media. News stories are filled with examples: Egypt's 2011 Tahrir Square revolution against former president Hosni Mubarak which relied heavily on a Facebook page maintained by a rotating staff of twenty during the uprising; the 2011 London Riots where four days of looting and rioting moved across the UK in a way made possible by rioters' use of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter; and less insidious, flash mobs such as London's 2006 silent disco where thousands of people assembled suddenly at various Underground Stations to dance to music audible only in their earphones for a short time before dispersing.

In recent years, flash mob formation has taken on a strategic element. In 2015, a group of Franciscan Friars gathered at Piazza della Signoria in Florence, Italy for their event, *Missione Giovani Firenze 2015*. The idea was to use flash mobs as a way to encourage young people to become aware of the need for more involvement with the church. Nuns and friars used social media complete with hashtags (#liberiperamare) and an anthem, "Esci Fuori!" (Come out of there!) to publicize a series of flash mobs.⁸⁴ Earlier versions of the enthusiastic dancing in 2013 were posted to YouTube and became very popular.⁸⁵

The commercial potential of flash mobs has been noticed and a number of flash mob dance troupes have emerged. These dancers hire their services out to corporate clients wishing to draw attention to new products or inject life into their existing marketing efforts. The Wall Street Journal reports that "[d]ance groups like Bay Area Flash Mob, in San Francisco, which mainly did free flash mobs for the fun of it, began getting inquiries from businesses [in about 2010]."⁸⁶ Linda Freund provides an example of Nike paying about a \$1,000 to stage a flash mob at a San Francisco golf-shoe launch. Freund reports that a YouTube video documented the event and "shows dancers, including an eight-months pregnant woman, pumping footwear in the air to Lady Gaga's 'Poker Face'."⁸⁶

Of course, commercialization of what originally were spontaneous fun events has taken some of the shine off flash mobs but these events do illustrate the potential social media has for influencing crowd behaviors.

These examples show how social media can be used to organize physical crowds in particular locations at certain times. However, crowds are no longer limited in this way. People can be separated in time and space, or belong to multiple crowds simultaneously through use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, StumbleUpon, Reddit, and others. It is also important to recognize that social media provides multiple functions. For instance, a person may belong to communities that have been organized with social media tools but those same tools can result in crowd-inspired “waves” to move through these communities at incredible rates. These waves lack leadership and a common purpose and are often referred to as being *viral*.

Ideas, concepts and rumors can rapidly move through online channels but are limited by the technology that exists to facilitate this movement. For instance, online crowds use comments, votes, thumbs up or down, blog entries, tweets, and so forth to send something of interest to their connections. This changes the nature of the crowd and reduces the richness of the communication. This chapter looks at ways various social media tools create an infrastructure resulting in social buzz.

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8.1 PINTEREST

Pinterest is a social media sharing website designed so users can organize and share images and videos that have caught their interest. Uploaded images are called Pins and are typically organized into Pin Boards. Pin Boards generally relate to a theme and can be followed by other Pinterest users. Content can be repinned, liked, and shared. Users can follow each other as well as specific Pin Boards. Pinterest is visually-oriented and well-suited for use on mobile devices.

Pinterest opened for beta use in 2010 and was founded by Ben Silbermann, Paul Sciarra and Evan Sharp. Pinterest CEO Ben Silbermann differentiates his company as being a catalog of ideas and not just another social network. He says Pinterest seeks to inspire users to go out and do that thing that grips their imagination.⁸⁷

By the end of 2011, Pinterest had become one of the top ten social media sites on the Internet with 11 million visits per week and was named the best new startup of 2011 by TechCrunch. The site was more popular with women than men and this provided it with a unique demographic that appealed to both investors and potential advertisers. In October 2012, Pinterest took steps to remove negative and offensive pin boards in an effort to keep the site respectful. Later that month, Pinterest announced the roll-out of business accounts which permitted businesses to either convert their existing personal accounts or start new ones.⁸⁸

8.1.1 PINTEREST PREMISE

The premise behind Pinterest is that users easily can track interesting items they find on the Web (or that they create for themselves). The community aspect becomes important as individuals rely on others with similar interests to help find new relevant items. Due to its nature, Pinterest has become popular in areas where a visual component is important. For instance, Pinterest often is used for interior design, art, fashion, recipes, food, cake decorating, and shopping. Businesses benefit from interest in their products because traffic is driven to their websites. Users have the ability to communicate by reposting content, sharing pins on Facebook, tweeting pins, or embedding Pinterest material on blogs.⁸⁹

Pinterest guards against self-promotion but welcomes the development of Pin Boards that contain information about commercial products and services. A company can participate in Pinterest as a community member but would need to be careful of the manner in which material is posted in order to avoid overtly commercial content. Figure 8.1 provides a view of the Chobani Yogurt Company's Pinterest site with example Pin Boards and posts.

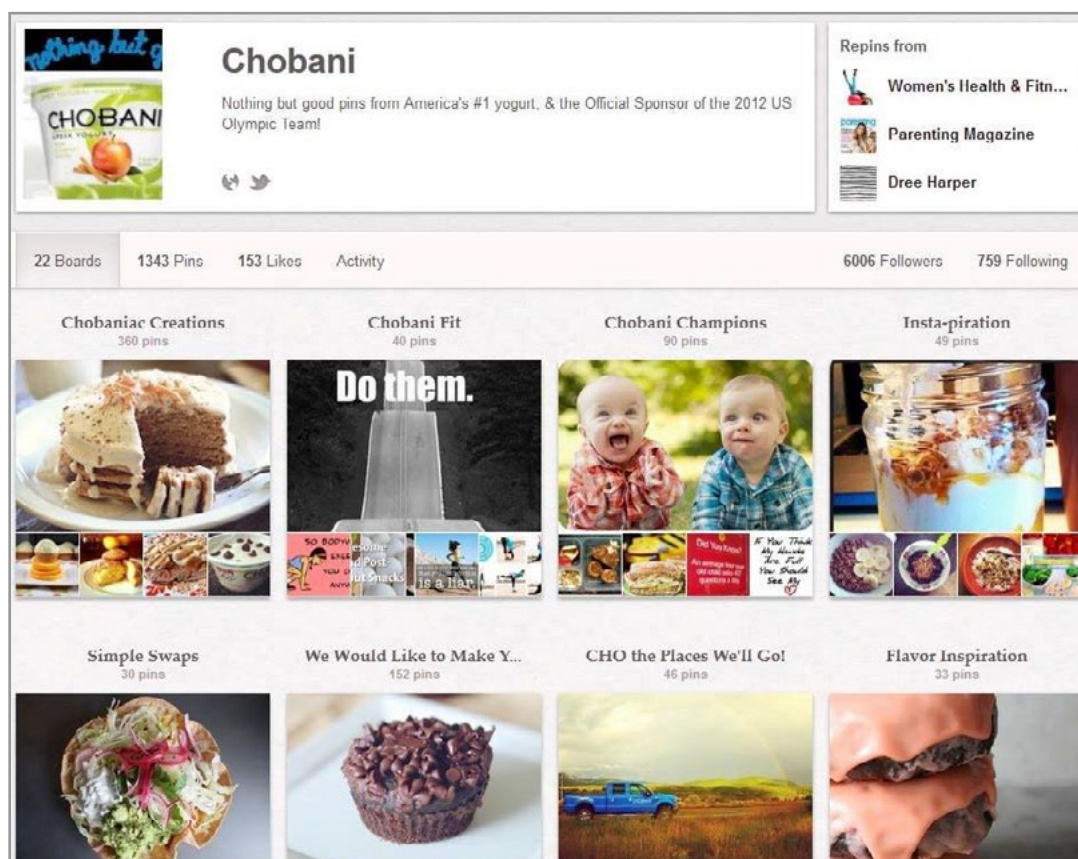


Figure 8.1 Chobani Yogurt Pinterest Site

8.1.2 PINTEREST BUSINESS MODEL

Like many social media websites, Pinterest allows businesses to create pages to promote their products and services. Pinterest business pages can become virtual storefronts and are intended to be repinned and shared on enthusiastic customers' pin boards. A variety of studies have indicated that traffic driven from Pinterest can result in higher revenues and greater percentages of sales than from other social media sources.⁹⁰

Another source of revenue for Pinterest is a tool called 'Rich Pins'. Although rich pins do not directly provide a money stream through subscription fees or other means, they do provide data about the items being listed and sold to Pinterest users. From a consumer perspective, Rich Pins include extra information about certain types of items being pinned. At the time this book was published six types of Rich Pins existed: app, article, movie, recipe, place and product. In addition to the normal set of information found on a Pin, a Rich Pin automatically shows current pricing details and has a direct link to the retailer's product page to make purchasing easier.

From a business perspective, Rich Pins are the best way to move potential customers to a place where they can purchase a product or service (See Figure 8.2). Pinterest has a developer's site which provides details regarding the implementation of Rich Pins. In general, Rich Pins must be validated. Once this is completed, a retailer receives a validation code and markup code that can be embedded in their website. This means a Pin It Button can be added to the company's product pages and Pinterest users will be encouraged to pin products and spread the word about availability and pricing.⁹¹



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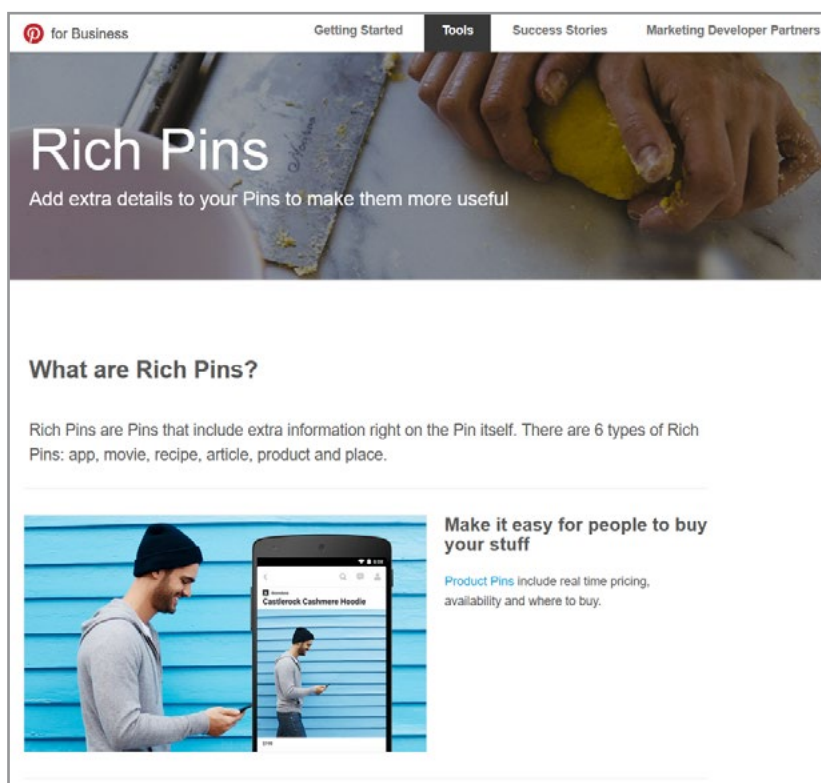


Figure 8.2 Rich Pins

Although Pinterest does not receive enhanced revenue directly from Rich Pins, long term revenue goals could be driving the process. Rich Pins provide Pinterest with structured data feeds directly from retailers. This allows Pinterest to build a visual database of products and items that can be monetized. Pinterest has captured details about the product and service names, prices, SKUs, sources, images, and other data for millions of products. According to Danny Maloney, Google alumnus and CEO of Tailwind (a leading visual marketing firm)⁹²:

- Soon, Pinterest will be able to introduce smart tags leveraging its visual database knowledge acquired from smart pins.
- Then, Pinterest will have the capability to use image recognition technology to group pins of similar images for brand analytics and be able to add those smart tags as a service.
- Finally, Pinterest will be able to provide potential purchasers with tagged items that include links of where to buy even if the pin didn't come from that retailer's site.
- Pinterest will monetize this service by syndicating its product search to e-commerce sites, making social commerce a reality across the Web.

8.1.3 BUYABLE PINS

In June of 2015, Pinterest announced the addition of Buyable Pins. Essentially, Buyable Pins are a simple, secure way to buy products pinned on Pin Boards. Customers are able to shop, checkout, and buy without leaving the mobile app or Web site. Pins with blue prices are an indicator that the items shown can be purchased right through the app. Figure 8.3 illustrates.

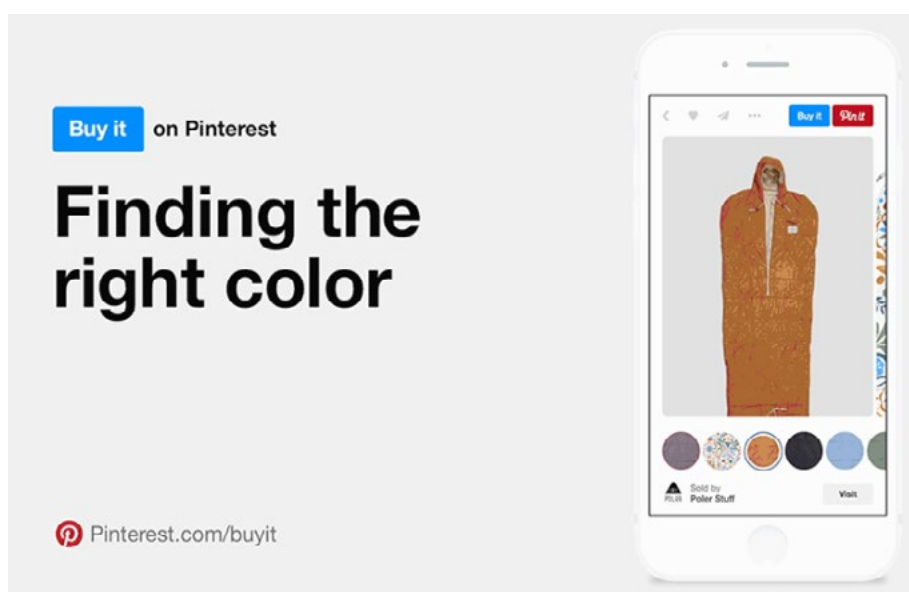


Figure 8.3 Buyable Pins

Retailers must either have a direct agreement with Pinterest to sell their products (e.g. large retailers like Neiman Marcus, and Nordstrom) or have an online store with Shopify. To get started, the Pinterest sale channel has to be added in the administrative panel. From there, Pinterest will verify the retailer's store. Then all pins related to items from that store will become buyable.⁹³

8.2 SOCIAL BUZZ WITH STUMBLEUPON AND REDDIT

Websites such as StumbleUpon and Reddit have become giants on the Web. Both provide venues for finding and sharing interesting material. For a business, this can mean publicity (hopefully in a good way), new customers and free exposure.

8.2.1 STUMBLEUPON

StumbleUpon is designed to connect people to great content. The website asks a user to provide basic information about likes (already a marketer's dream come true) and in return they provide a journey to websites, videos, blogs, photos and other material. The more other users like the page, the higher they become rated and hence more likely to be viewed by even more 'Stumblers'. As a user views more pages and rates them, their profile become more specific and can be better tailored to them. Figure 8.4 illustrates.

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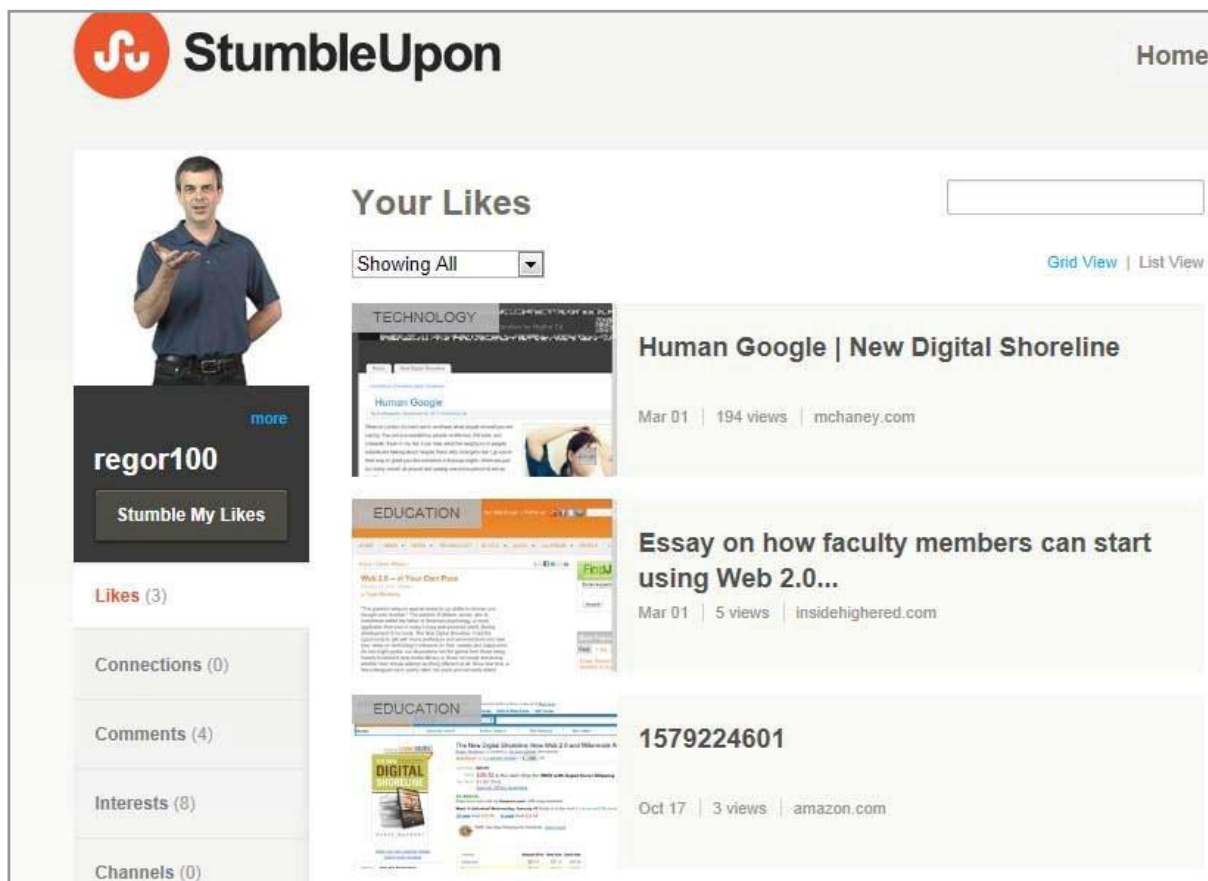


Figure 8.4 Using StumbleUpon

StumbleUpon can be an addicting website that becomes time consuming from a user’s perspective. From a business perspective, it can become an excellent way to receive publicity. The Hatcher Group (working to connect nonprofits and foundations to policymakers and the media) suggest several ideas to help develop and maintain a presence on StumbleUpon. Table 8.1 illustrates.

| Idea | Comments |
|---|--|
| <p>Create a Memorable Avatar</p> | <p>A StumbleUpon avatar needs to be something recognizable that brands user contributions.</p> |
| <p>Learn from Top Stumblers</p> | <p>Top Stumblers have determined how to use the system to maximum potential. Review their profiles, their likes, and their submissions.</p> |
| <p>Maximize Fan Base</p> | <p>By adding people as friends, a business can build a bigger fan base. Try to add people with similar interests who already have many fans. StumbleUpon only allows 200 friends so if your business reaches that limit, be sure to delete the inactive ones and continually add new active users who have also added you.</p> |

| Idea | Comments |
|---|---|
| Include the StumbleUpon Button on Site | Prominently displaying a StumbleUpon button on a blog, wiki or website will increase its chances of getting votes and even of being submitted in the first place. |
| Regularly Submit Quality Posts | Adding quality posts will attract fans and give your submissions more credibility. Stumblers are very good at detecting self-promotion and generally despise it. Success comes with long term interaction with the community. It is important to submit from sites that are not always your own. |
| Send Messages to Followers | Sending messages with links to your favorite submissions is a good way to generate votes. Be careful to use this sparingly because you do not want to gain a reputation as a spammer. |
| Vote Often | Voting frequently will get your avatar, screen name, and link to your profile posted. This makes it easier for others to find you and your submissions. |
| Choose Submission Titles and Reviews Carefully | People will either view or discount sites rapidly based on a descriptive title. It may help to include a quote from the site or a brief, interesting summary. |
| Tag Carefully | StumbleUpon limits tags to five so be sure to include five relevant and descriptive tags. |
| Choose Appropriate Topics for Submissions | Be sure to choose the correct topic in order to get viewers for your submission. |
| Get Listed on StumbleUpon Buzz | The ultimate accomplishment on StumbleUpon is getting your submission listed on the StumbleUpon Buzz page. That will ensure thousands of viewers per day. Getting rave reviews and votes helps get a submission listed on the buzz page. You may have to call in favors and ask friends and followers to provide reviews and votes to help accomplish this. |

Table 8.1 Building a Presence in StumbleUpon (From: The Hatcher Group, 2008)

In addition to gaining notoriety from submissions to StumbleUpon, a business can also use their advertising services to target particular interest groups and topics.

8.2.2 REDDIT

Reddit is a popular website known for its openness and diverse user community.⁹⁴ The premise behind Reddit is that users will submit content (typically text-based posts, images, links or other items). Sometimes the posts are discussion topics, other times comments or controversial statements. Other users then vote the post up or down. The most popular posts move up until they reach the site's front page. Comments to the posts can also be voted up or down. The website is divided into subject areas called subreddits which can be subdivided even more. Reddit is truly a user driven website and has become a platform used to raise public awareness regarding many issues. Reddit is often considered revolutionary and provides a platform for individuals to build a following. That being said, Reddit users are often turned off by self-promotion.

Reddit can be used by businesses provided they have a blog or other content they publish. An article or item can be submitted to Reddit. Then, as others read the article or view the content, they can vote it up (hopefully) resulting in even more readers. Reddit works the best with well written informative content, particularly if it has a social conscience. On the negative side, Reddit communities have been criticized for having a hive mindset and for being subject to some negative aspects of group interaction, crowd psychology and collective consciousness.

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Reddit is unique in many ways. Probably most interesting to businesses is that Reddit reaches engaged individuals. Reddit users typically are predisposed to leaving comments and participating in real dialog. Reddit provides a paid advertising service that allows a company to reach those reading and posting in particular subreddit areas. Reddit ads also include comment threads where viewers can discuss the ad and the product being advertised. Figure 8.5 provides a view of Reddit’s advertising program.

reddit advertising

Reach your audience

- Get your message to millions of viewers
- Target viewers on what THEY are interested in, not what their demographic is
- Use text, images, and video in your ads

Control your budget

- Bid based system ensures you get a fair piece of the daily pie
- Low CPM, even with low bids

Interact with customers

- reddit ads have comments, view what people think in real-time
- Up and Down vote system, see how much people enjoy your link, in one metric

Track your stats

- View graphs of your impressions and clicks
- All stats available for download

Start advertising today!

A comic that explains it all.
 Have questions? Read the [FAQ](#), or send us an email.
 Interested in a bigger campaign? Talk to our sales team.

[Create an ad](#)
manage existing ads

Figure 8.5 Using Reddit for Paid Ads

Many of the same hints suggested for StumbleUpon apply to submitting material to Reddit. Chris Campbell⁹⁵ of Lakeshore Branding makes the following suggestions for submitting items (See Table 8.2):

| Idea | Comments |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Regularly Submit Quality Links | Be sure to submit links from your blog entries as new, interesting material is created. Reddit is viral by design and if something interesting is submitted, the material may take on a life of its own. Likewise, any whiff of spam or self-promotion will quickly doom a link. If you have a website or blog that regularly delivers fresh, quality content, don't hesitate to promote it on Reddit. |
| Use Eye Catching Titles | Having an interesting title is the first step toward getting readers interested in your material. Do more than submit links; use catchy material to draw attention. Remember, Reddit thrives on the 'here and now' and most readers are looking for innovative and new material. The title needs to convey this. |

| Idea | Comments |
|---|--|
| Use Tags | Relevant, interesting tags are just as important as an interesting title. Be sure to add tags for every new link. This means more people will find it. |
| Share Customer Testimonials | Creating a testimonials page can be an excellent approach for promoting a business, product or service. Creating a list of customer reviews, interesting stories, quotes, and successes can help build a great content page. A Reddit link to that page might provide an alternative to other ways of getting the message out. |
| Target Multiple Categories | Successful submission to Reddit requires placing links under relevant categories. Since Reddit is a viral system, a link in one category might not catch on while another may. For instance, company news might find an audience under: Business, News, or Announcements. Information about a product might be best submitted under Gadgets, Technology, or another more specific subreddit. |
| Submit Pictures and Videos | Reddit thrives on the visual appeal of photos and videos. Information provided in this way will attract more interest than the content of a text-based blog. |
| Participate by Doing More than Submitting Your Company Links | Reddit does not work well for self-promotion. It is a community that provides a venue for information sharing and engagement. Reddit rewards committed users with its karma ladder. By voting more and participating, a Redditor will gain more followers who will pay more attention to your submitted material |

Table 8.2 Building a Presence in Reddit

8.3 TUMBLR

Tumblr fills the gap between Twitter's microblogging features and Facebook's overarching social media capabilities. It provides a place where content can be quickly posted, particularly from mobile platforms. This service first appeared in April, 2007. Since that time, Tumblr has over 555 million active monthly users.⁹⁶ It has a high user retention rate and this makes it appealing as a place for a business presence. The idea behind Tumblr is to refresh the medium of the blog and to renew it with a better format, centralized management, and higher levels of interactivity. Tools have been added to Tumblr to enable users to post photos, videos, audio, text, bookmarks, tags, and embedded pages for sharing. Tumblr does not require posting media on other sites (for instance posting to YouTube and then embedding it in a blog entry). It allows material to be uploaded directly from a number of sources including mobile devices (See Figure 8.6).

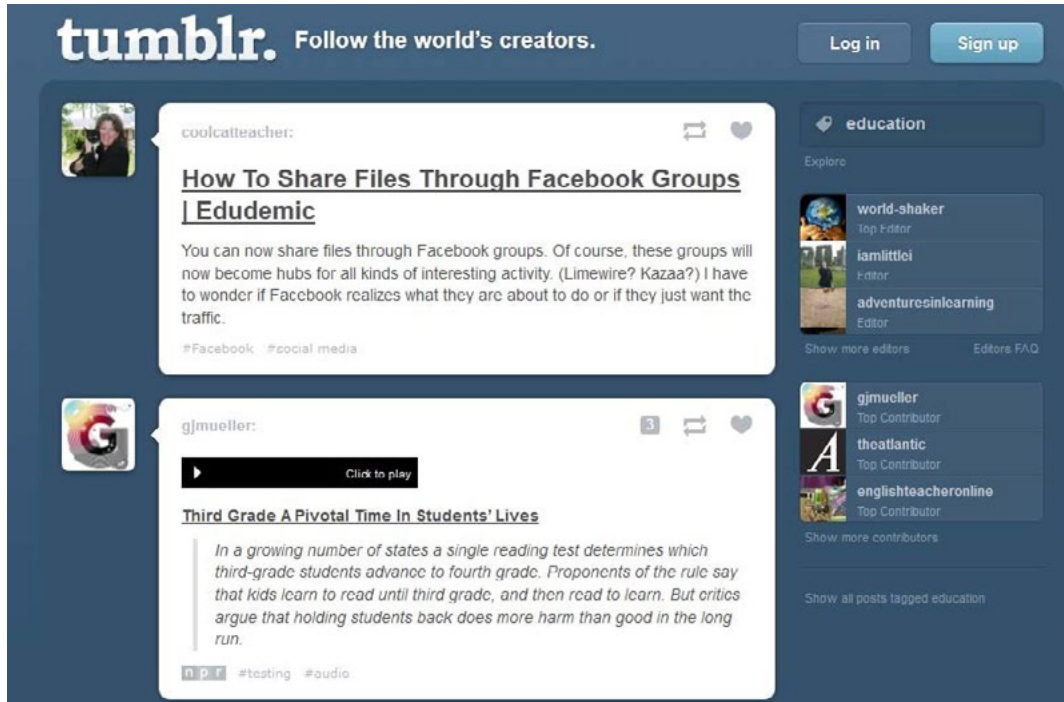


Figure 6.6 Example of Tumblelogs Tagged with Education

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be > your degree

Bring your talent and passion to a global organization at the forefront of business, technology and innovation. Discover how great you can be. Visit accenture.com/bookboon

Be greater than.
consulting | technology | outsourcing

accenture
High performance. Delivered.



Tumblr is populated with tumblelogs. These ‘blog entries’ may take the form of a stream of Tweets. In other instances, the entries might appear more like multimedia blog entries. Many people use a tumblelog to represent a personal view of their lives like an online diary or journal. Tumblr users can follow each other’s blogs and restrict viewers with privacy settings.

Tumblr provides a dashboard feature which provides a number of functions. For instance, different types of content and communications can be shared with small friend groups. This makes Tumblr ideal for work groups wishing to exchange prototypes, mockups or ideas prior to releasing material to the broader public. Some groups use specific hashtags, added to posts to track activity. Others place member names in the post commentary.

8.3.1 TUMBLR FOR BUSINESS

Tumblr is not a venue traditionally envisioned for business use. For many industries, it might be a poor choice. For instance, banking, financial services and those seeking to develop a traditional business reputation might not find the ‘flash and glitter’ of Tumblr compatible with their business objectives.

Tumblr does excel in businesses seeking a fast paced, social network optimized for quick consumption content, particularly when multimedia is the focus. Tumblr is mainly concerned with photos, videos, quotes and questions. Its members are known for being edgy, artistic, and inspirational. This means businesses and brands with highly visual cultures are perfect for Tumblr. As an example, many organizations in industries such as fashion, art, travel, hotel/restaurant management, and publishing are supplementing their primary websites with this venue. Posts are often completely visual and meant to be consumed on mobile devices where text can be difficult to read. Table 8.3 provides examples of businesses maintaining Tumblr sites. Figure 8.7 provides a further example of Tumblr’s visual nature.

| Company | Tumblr Site Address |
|----------------------|---|
| Ace Hotel | http://blog.acehotel.com |
| Elle | http://elle.tumblr.com |
| Entertainment Weekly | http://entertainmentweekly.tumblr.com |
| Glamour | http://glamour.tumblr.com |
| Rolling Stone | http://rollingstone.tumblr.com |
| J Crew | http://jcrew.tumblr.com |
| Huffington Post | http://huffingtonpost.tumblr.com |
| Twitter | http://status.twitter.com |

Table 8.3 Example Businesses Using Tumblr

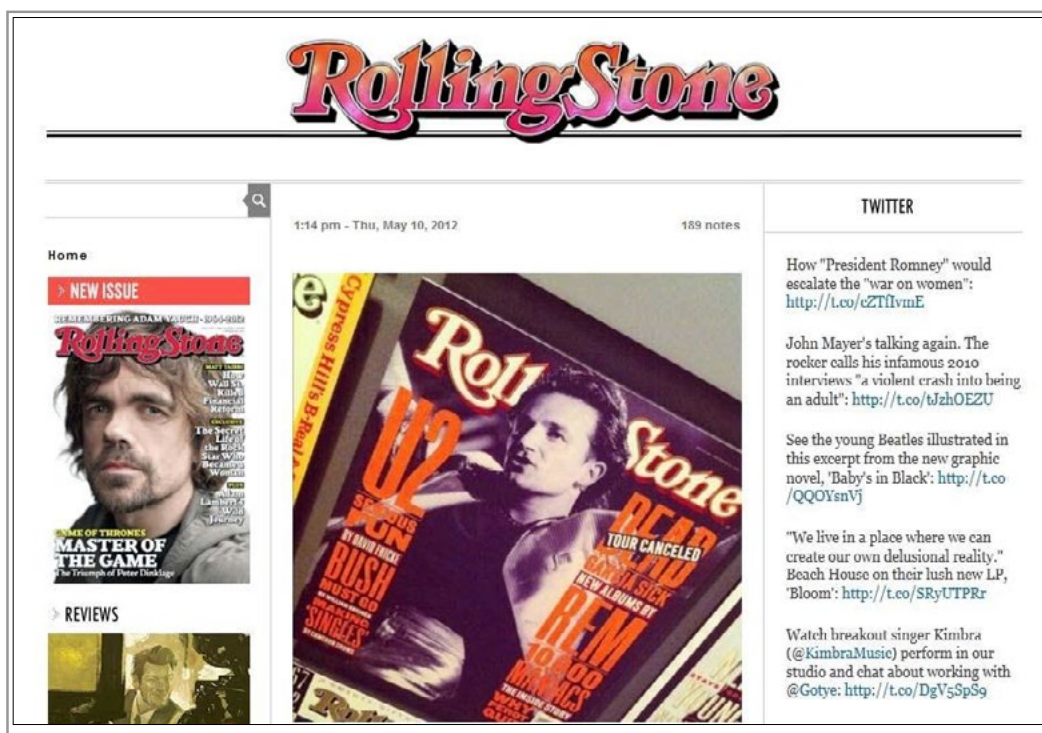


Figure 8.7 Visual Nature of Rolling Stone Magazine’s Tumblr Site

8.3.2 TUMBLR BUSINESS CHARACTERISTICS

Tumblr is not a full-featured blogging platform like WordPress, nor is it a minimal social platform like Twitter. Its strength lies in the simplicity to rapidly develop, customize and use its resources. And perhaps more importantly, it is easy for users to find and view material on mobile devices. Tumblr offers only minimal customization options and does not permit self-hosting. These limitations mean most businesses view it as a supplement to primary websites.

Tumblr is ideal for reaching a user demographic harder to contact via print media or in other ways. Tumblr offers users more than a platform. For them it is a community, where people share content, interact, answer questions, and follow tumblelogs that align with their interests. If an organization has products or services applicable to Tumblr's demographic (under 34 years old and mobile device users) and relevant visual content can be created and posted, then it is an ideal venue. Organizations have found that coupons, product information, sales notices, and other material often are shared among users on Tumblr. The key is to keep it fresh, visual, and meaningful.⁹⁷



"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"

Jane, Chinese architect

ENGLISH OUT THERE

Click to hear me talking before and after my unique course download

8.4 TRACKING SOCIAL INTEREST

The use of social media by an organization is an inexact science at best. The act of creating content and posting it can be controlled but what happens afterward is far from predictable. At best, a sense of what happen with postings or different types of community interaction can be derived by tracking emerging social interest over time. A number of free tools have been created to help monitor social media activity and provide a sense of the attitude toward a brand, organization, or product. The tools in this area compete for leadership and currently use a variety of approaches. Each tool may provide different social mentions. After locating a mention, it is possible to post it to a curation service such as Scoop.It (www.scoop.it) to maintain a more permanent list (See Figure 8.8).

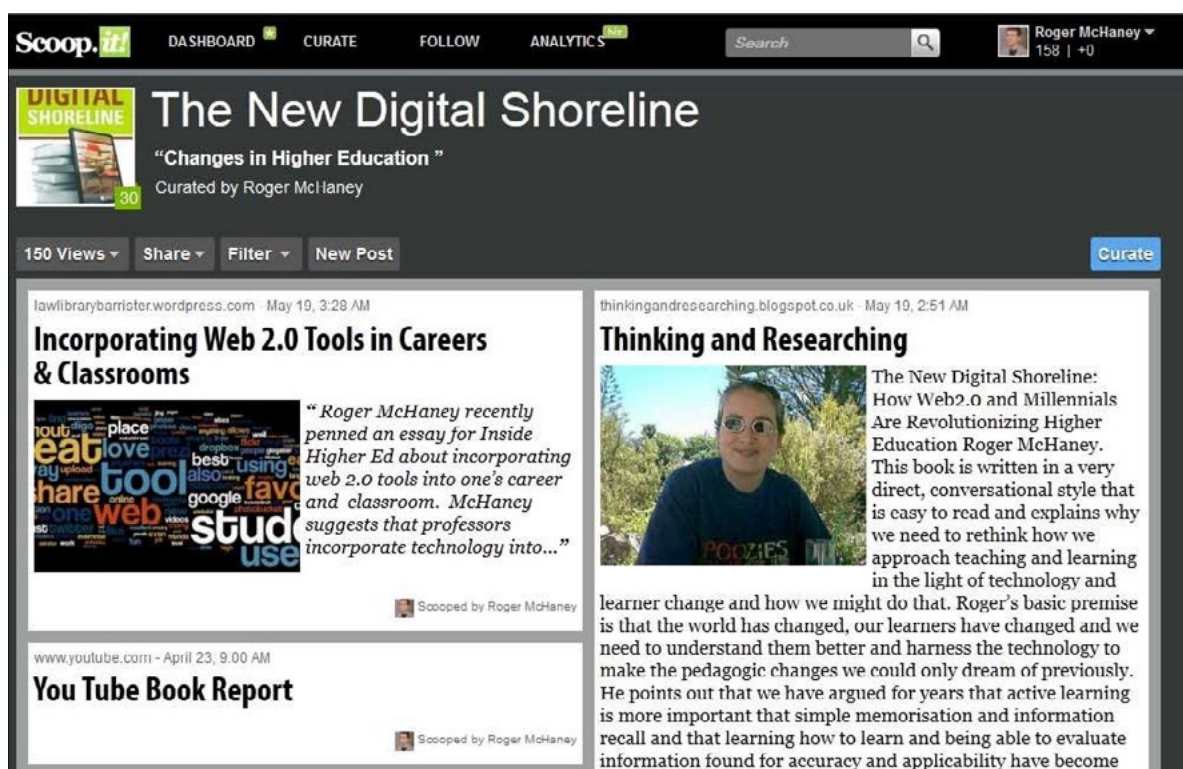


Figure 8.8 Using Scoop.it to Maintain Records of Social Mentions

Trying to track every social media mention related to an organization can be daunting and may not be completely possible. The combination of keywords, abbreviations, foreign language translations and so forth make it very hard to anticipate every way an organization, brand, product, employee and related entity might be mentioned by anyone, anywhere. To start, it is helpful to find mentions related to primary keywords, company name, product name, or brand, and build from there. Many organizations seek every mention to help learn what customers and potential customers like and do not like. This makes it possible to enact changes that will motivate positive publicity.

An organization that uses particular social media software platforms should start by understanding their available analytics. For instance, if an organizational blog is being maintained, then comments, likes, tweets and so forth from that blog page can be collected and reviewed. Likewise, if an organizational Facebook site exists, a comprehensive analytics suite called **Insight** will be available and will enable site owners to better understand fans and their use of the site. Facebook Insight provides basic user information including likes, unlikes, active users, traffic counts, and referrers. It also provides interaction activity analysis that looks into specific content updates and the reactions of users to those updates. This information helps an organization acquire data regarding the reception of its posts and gives a better understanding of posts or updates with the most impact. After monitoring likes, shares, comments, and unlikes, benchmarks can be established. This will provide an organization with a sense of what fans enjoy and enable a better sense of direction for future posts and updates. Most social media platforms provide a set of metrics on an account holder's dashboard.

Trackable links can also be used with Facebook and other social media. Link shortening websites such as goo.gl or bit.ly will provide statistics on the number of users who visit your site recommendations through these recommended short links. (See Figure 8.9).



Figure 8.9 Link Shortening Websites Provide Analytics

Budgetary constraints are a reality for all businesses. This may mean social media tracking has to take a back seat to more pressing projects. To help ensure that important viral activity is not missed, many organizations rely on low-cost tracking tools that attempt to summarize all the activity taking place in the social media world including blog entries, video posts, tweets, mentions, posts, comments, and so forth. The next sections will look at leading social mention tracking tools and discuss their use and limitations. It is important to try a variety of tools to discover the ones that work for a particular organization. Then the results can be measured and recorded to better understand how social media activity is helping achieve organizational goals.



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8.4.1 SOCIAL MENTION

Social Mention (www.socialmention.com) is a website-based social media search and analysis platform that aggregates user generated content from across the universe into a single stream of information. See Figure 8.10.

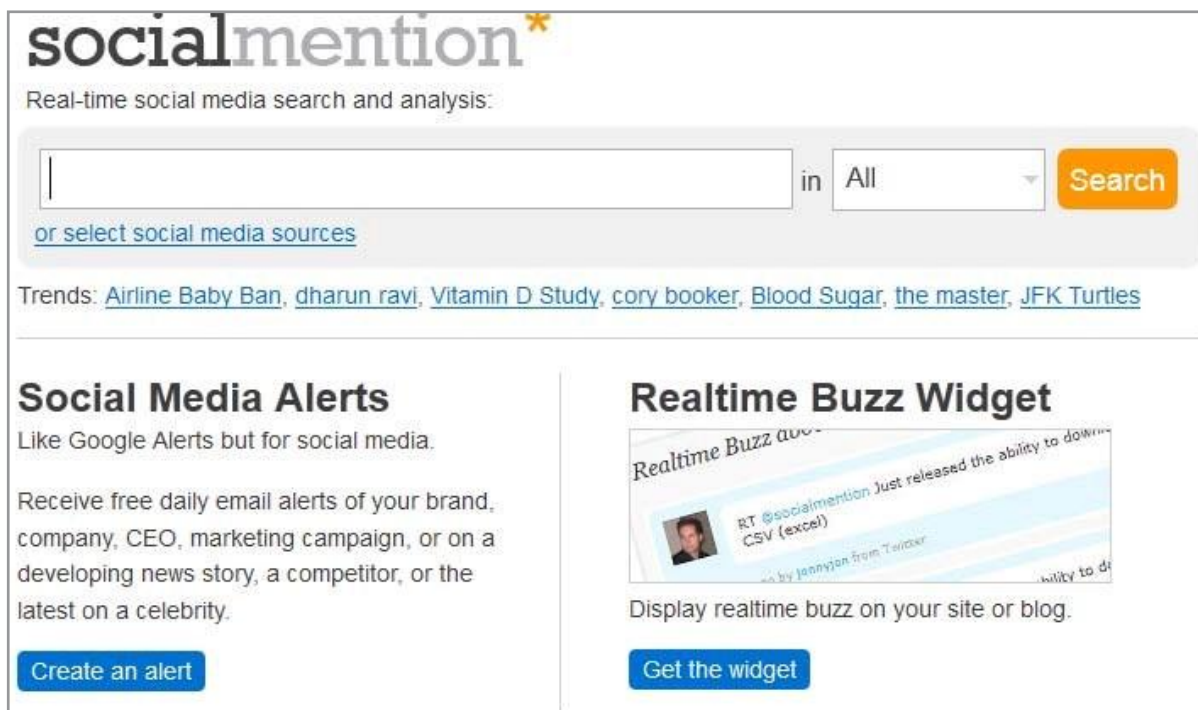


Figure 8.10 Social Mention Real-time Social Media Search

Social Mention works in real time and provides users with a summary of the current buzz related to a particular business, person, product or set of keywords. It monitors more than 100 social media websites including Twitter, Facebook, Digg, WordPress, Google, and YouTube. Its sources come from blogs, microblogs, bookmarks, comments, events, images, news, video, audio, Q&A, and networks. In addition, Social Mention provides options for receiving email alerts each time new social media is posted.

Social Mention provides an excellent, comprehensive view of social media presence. In order to acquire this view, it is essential to discover key words or phrases that are being used to describe a company, person, product or brand. It may be necessary to perform multiple, ongoing searches to cover the range of possibilities. Figure 8.11 provides a look at Social Mentions related to the keywords: *Real Madrid*.

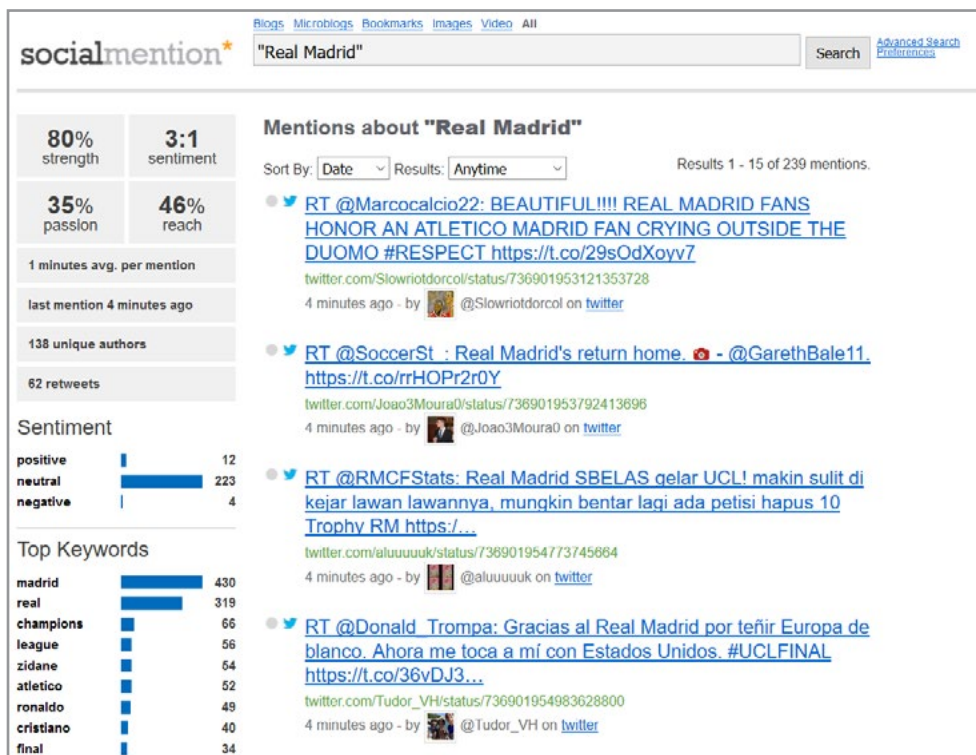


Figure 8.11 Social Mention Search on Real Madrid

As shown in the figure, Social Mention provides measures of passion, of whether the mentions are positive or negative, and which keywords are most related to the mentions. By changing keywords, new searches might provide a different set of results. In order to ensure a comprehensive view of the social buzz, it is necessary to perform a range of searches.

8.4.2 IFTTT

If This Then That (IFTTT) is a helpful tool for monitoring online mentions. It automates the process of finding relevant online social content using a simple approach: If this happens, then do that. The premise is to allow users to set up actions based on what is being posted on social media websites. IFTTT lets users create recipes for anything deemed noteworthy (e.g. from Facebook posts on a particular topic to weather service updates). These recipes are rules sets. Each recipe has a trigger channel (relates to the “if this happens”) and an action channel (relates to the “then do that”). Text messages, emails, and other actions can be taken. Figure 8.12 provides a view of IFTTT’s homepage.

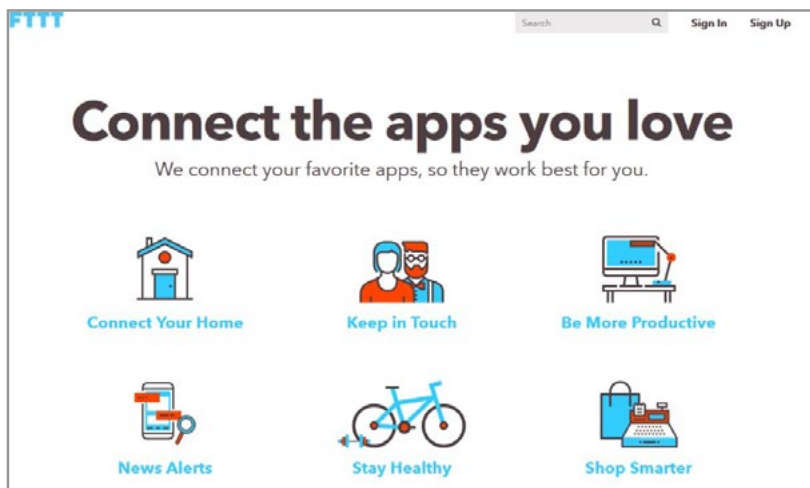


Figure 8.12 IFTTT Home Page

Our tools are designed to experience pressures up to

35 Kpsi

That's 2,380 times atmospheric pressure, or **458 elephants** standing on a soccer ball.

Who are we?
We are the world's leading provider of reservoir characterization, drilling, production, and processing technologies to the oil and gas industry.

Who are we looking for?
We offer countless opportunities in the following domains:

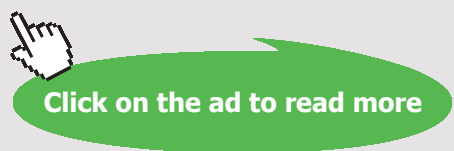
- **Operations**
- **Research, Engineering, and Manufacturing**
- **Geoscience and Petrotechnical**
- **Commercial and Business**

We're looking for high-energy, self-motivated graduates with vision and integrity to join our team.

What will you be?

careers.slb.com

Schlumberger



8.4.3 KLOUT

Klout takes a different approach to understanding social buzz by developing a measure of online influence. It provides insight on the following:

- Do others trust your opinions online?
- What topics are you the most influential on?
- How do you compare with your friends?

Klout uses metrics from interaction within Twitter and Facebook and looks at reach (e.g. audience size) and amplification (e.g. how others reuse and interact with posted material and tweets) and network (measure of connected community's overall influence). See Figure 8.13.

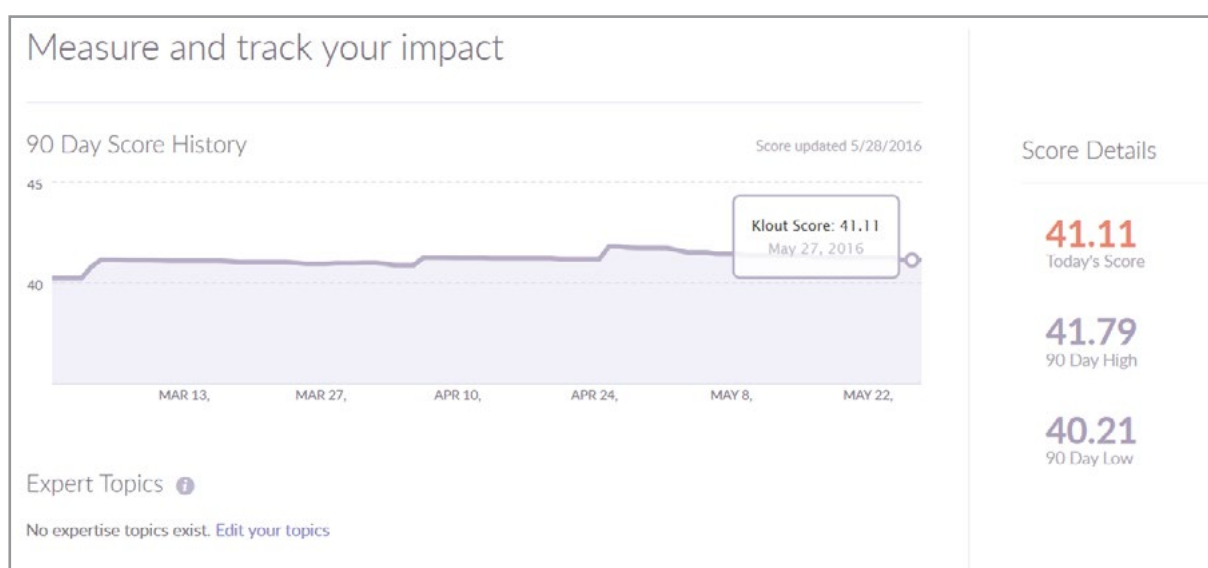


Figure 8.13 Klout Score

Klout provides data regarding connections and allows an individual or business to better understand who they influence or who their competitors influence. This makes it possible to understand more about how online information flows and which sources provide the most influence. This can become excellent business intelligence that will help guide the direction of future social interactions on the Web.

Klout is easy to use. It starts with a Twitter account. Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and other accounts can be added as well. Klout provides information about a user's areas of expertise and a summary of user characteristics. Klout can be used to measure, monitor, compare, and improve social interaction by an organization (See Figure 8.14).

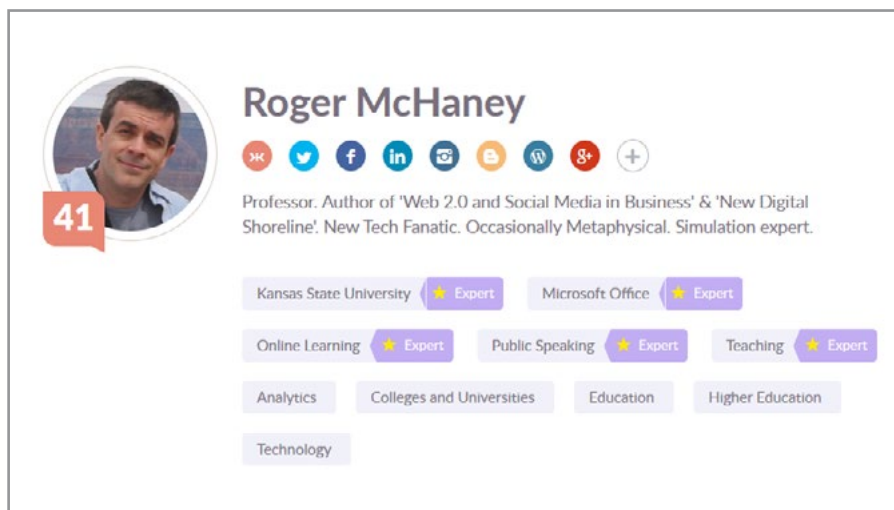





Figure 8.14 User Characteristics on Klout

8.4.4 OTHER MEASURES

Competition in social media influence and buzz measurement areas is currently fierce. Dozens of companies are forming and fighting to contend in this area which has data analytics and business intelligence at its heart. Table 8.4 contains other example services.

| Icon | Website | Description |
|---|--|--|
|  | www.brandwatch.com/peerindex-and-brandwatch | Similar to Klout, this service provides a measure of influence based on Twitter activity and other actions. Bandwatch recently purchased Peer Index and uses it to identify audiences. |
|  | www.youtube.com/analytics | YouTube analytics and YouTube Insight provide demographic information related to people viewing an organization’s posted video. Geographic information and other data are provided in report and summary form. |
|  | boardreader.com | This site provides analytics that offer a view of social chatter in online forums. It is very easy to use and provides a great starting point for finding where relevant activity is occurring. |



| Icon | Website | Description |
|---|---|---|
|  | hootsuite.com/ | Hootsuite is receiving a great deal of recent attention from larger corporations. It provides a social media dashboard and analytics tools to make social media buzz easier to understand, track, and manage. |
|  | http://www.google.com/alerts | Google Alerts is a free service that allows a user or business to monitor anything appearing on the Web related to a particular set of keywords. The results are either emailed to the user or displayed as a feed. |

Table 8.4 Other Measures of Social Influence

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Special Christmas offer:

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- ▶ **start studying and paying only in 2015**
- ▶ **save up to \$ 1,200** on the tuition!
- ▶ Interactive Online education
- ▶ visit ligsuniversity.com to find out more!

Note: LIGS University is not accredited by any nationally recognized accrediting agency listed by the US Secretary of Education. More info [here](#).





8.5 CONCLUSIONS

Television networks, radio stations, and newspapers have traditionally competed to influence their constituencies. Web 2.0 has enabled individuals and organizations to acquire similar capabilities and use content creation and social interaction to develop online influence. Tools such as StumbleUpon, Pinterest, and Reddit provide mechanisms to disseminate links to new content or interesting online material. Viral activity can result in a ripple effect where a Tweet is passed in ever-widening circles. Social media such as StumbleUpon and Reddit can enable even broader exposure to posted content. Businesses are interested in understanding viral phenomena and how particular content is received, discussed, and used by their stakeholders. Social media buzz measurement tools can provide metrics and benchmarks for determining the types of posts, comments, videos, and content which exert the most influence. Tools such as Social Mention, BoardReader, and Klout decipher the complexities of social media activity and provide a framework to enable businesses to better target their social media communications and improve their effectiveness.

9 LOCATION-BASED SOCIAL MEDIA

Location-based mobile platforms enable users to “check in” via a smartphone app and share their location and other details with friends and businesses. Location-based services (LBS) are seen as a big area for business expansion with nearly 5 billion mobile users in the world. Popular LBSs include Foursquare, Yelp, Waze, and Living Social.

9.1 GEOGRAPHY IN SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the biggest advantages of social media has been the reduction of geographic and time-based constraints. This means that no matter where a person is located, she or he can interact with others around the globe. This capability adds many advantages but instances exist when geography is important to social media users. For example, perhaps someone wants to find a good restaurant located nearby. It wouldn't make much sense for someone to search restaurant reviews for Hyderabad, India when he or she needed to find a venue to meet friends in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan! In response, certain social media services have emerged to tie together geographic location and social interaction. These services are based on the concepts developed in the field of Geographic Information Systems or GIS. Google Maps provides an example of a large scale effort to make geography available to information technology vendors. Many websites now include a Google Map component to help illustrate location (See Figure 9.1). The overall result has been a field called geosocial networking. This form of social networking takes advantage of geographic services such as geocoding and geotagging to enable social dynamics.⁹⁸ A number of services have become popular using these technologies.

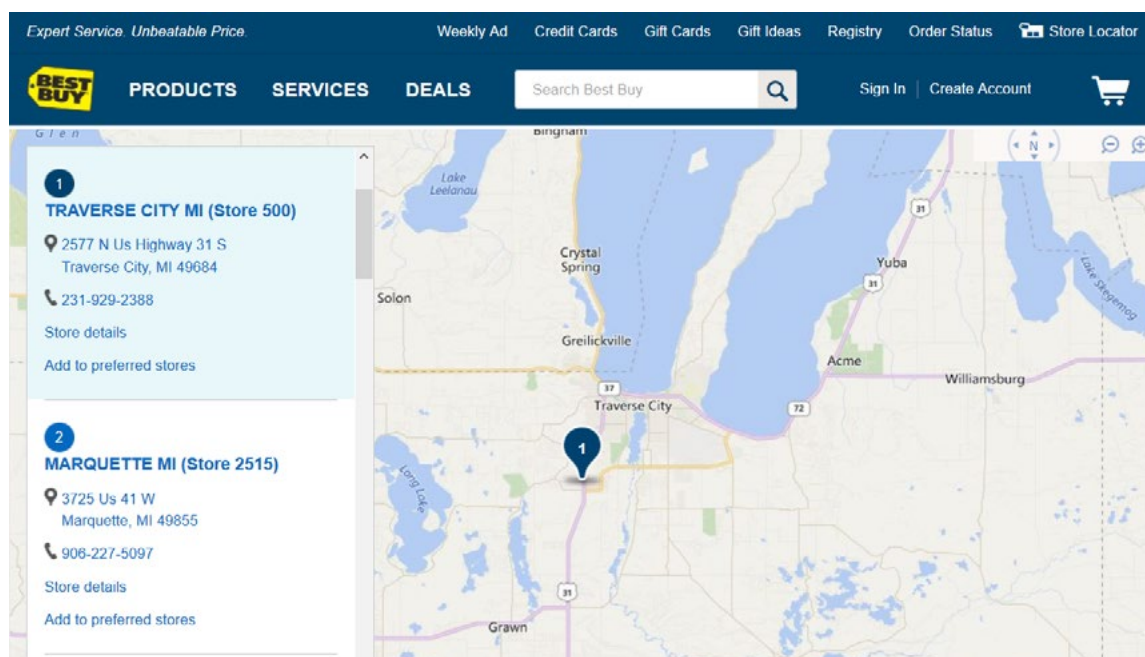


Figure 9.1 Geographic Service Integrated with Best Buy Website

In addition to retailers using geographic services, most social media websites now track the geographic location where posts are made. This feature is called **location awareness** and it refers to devices that can passively or actively determine their location based on satellite, cellular or other information. Most often, users are given the option of enabling location services or not. Figure 9.2 shows location services on an iPhone.

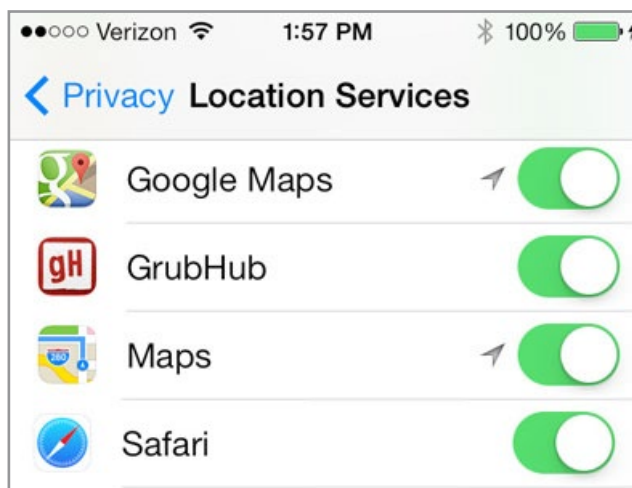


Figure 9.2 Location Services Enabled on an iPhone

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9.2 FOURSQUARE AND SWARM

Foursquare and Swarm create competition between users by encouraging them to earn points and stickers for leaving tips, information, and photos of their current location. This information can be used by others to create to-do/to-go-to lists. Merchants and brands can leverage their Foursquare presence by offering specials and VIP information to Foursquare users. So, in a sense, Foursquare is creating a worldview based on users' opinions and experiences. Foursquare was founded in 2009 by Dennis Crowley and Naveen Selvadurai and has grown to over 60 million users as of June, 2016. Table 9.1 provides a summary of Foursquare's approach to collecting and sharing information from a customer perspective.^{99, 100}

| Activity | Description |
|-------------------------|---|
| Check-in | The primary activity on Foursquare (Swarm app) is for users to check in at their location and current venue. A mobile device is used to indicate current geography and this opens the door for publishing tips and hints. Venue tips are essentially hints on how to fully enjoy a particular venue to the fullest. Tips may be about favorite dishes, places to sit, how to get a discount, or other little known facts. When a Foursquare member checks in to a venue with his or her mobile device, these hints become visible. Businesses can also leave hints for people visiting their venue. Check-in is manual so a user does not have to make their location public. |
| Get Points and Stickers | Leaving hints and tips enables users to earn awards, points and stickers. The more check ins, the more points that are earned. Users compete with friends to top the leaderboard and gain recognition and status. At particular point levels or after achieving milestones, users are given badges. Badges are often sponsored by organizations and send users messages and give them bragging rights. Figure 9.3 provides example stickers and how they compare to the older Foursquare badge system. Swarm is used for many of these functions. |
| Become Mayor | If a user checks into a venue more times than any other user over a period of 60 days, he or she is tagged as its 'mayor.' He or she will be recognized on the venue's Foursquare page. Their comments and hints will get priority on the venue's site. |
| Get Rewarded | Often, businesses will reward their mayors with discounts or freebies. Foursquare also can be used by businesses as a "digital loyalty card" to track visitors. Regular visitors might be offered a discount, free drink, or other incentives. Businesses may also offer broader discounts to any Foursquare visitor that checks in at a particular time. |

Table 9.1 Foursquare User Activity



Figure 9.3 Foursquare Images of Stickers and Comparison to Old Badge System

9.2.1 FOURSQUARE FOR BUSINESS

Unlike many social media applications, Foursquare is specifically designed for use by business. In fact, Foursquare started the social “check-in” model that became very popular. Foursquare charges a small fee to verify a business Foursquare provides free data analytics including customer demographics (male to female ratio, regular customers); time-related statistics (check in times); and information comparing customer check in to loyalty program memberships. Foursquare is working to create more powerful data analytics to provide more customer information for businesses. Table 9.2 offers a business user’s perspective of Foursquare.

| Activity | Description |
|-------------------|---|
| Claim Venue | A business can see if a customer has created a venue for their location. If so, the business owner can claim this venue by clicking a link that notifies Foursquare that they manage it. Foursquare will ask questions and verify the claim. A verification code will be issued via phone or email. The business will then have the ability to personalize venue information. |
| Create a Special | Businesses can create specials to entice users to enter the physical venue and make purchases. Specials may include discounts, free gifts, return visit specials, or other things. Foursquare offers a wide variety of pre-created, easy-to-use specials that can be customized. See Figure 9.4 for an example special. |
| Track and Analyze | The venue and its specials can be tracked with Foursquare analytics. Statistics such as number of check ins, most recent check in, most frequent visitor, percent of visitors using specials, and other information are available. |

Table 9.2 Foursquare Business Activity

FREE
30 days trial!

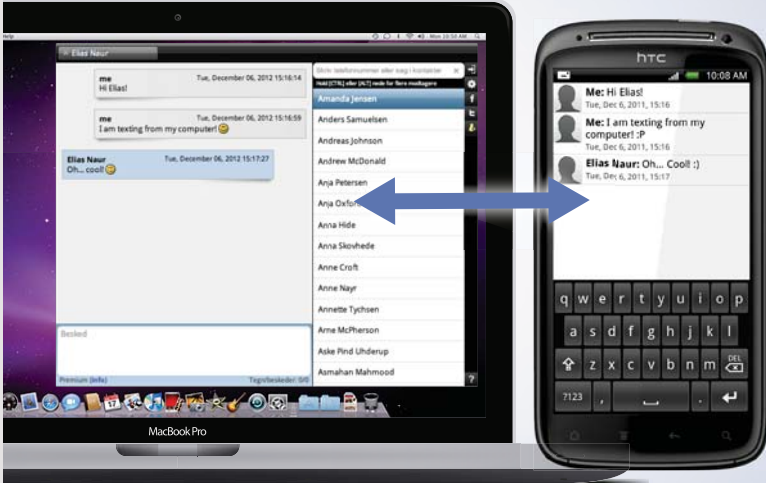
SMS from your computer


...Sync'd with your Android phone & number

Go to

BrowserTexting.com

and start texting from your computer!




BrowserTexting

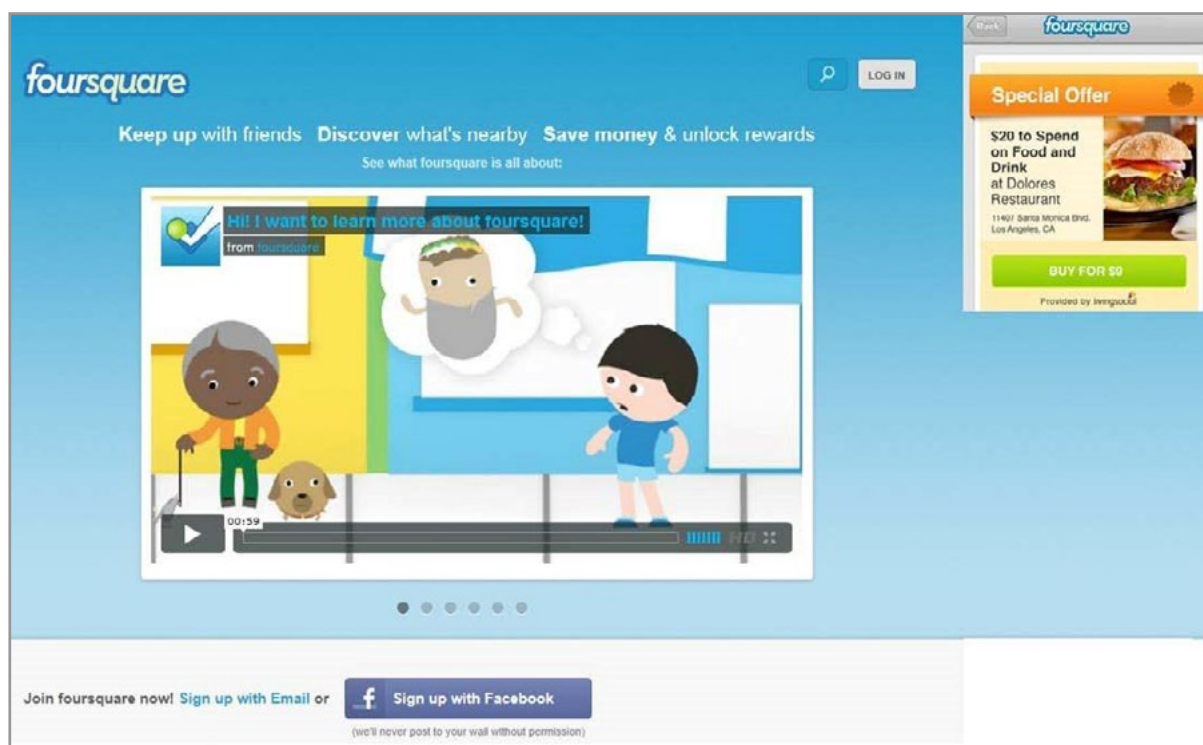


Figure 9.4 Foursquare Special Offer

9.2.2 SWARM

Foursquare was developed to connect people to geographic locations and places. The original application did that in two different ways. First, it helped people find a place because it offered something they wanted (e.g. certain food or item). Secondly, Foursquare helped people meet up with their friends (using the check-in services). Recently, Foursquare split these two different uses into different applications: Foursquare and Swarm. The Foursquare App can be compared to Yelp and acts as a venue rating and review site. Swarm deals with the aspects of Foursquare related to checking into venues and in a sense turns visits into a game. Swarm allows users to check in to favorite places, collect coins and stickers, and compete with a weekly leaderboard.¹⁰¹ Figure 9.5 provides an image of a leaderboard from Foursquare's website.

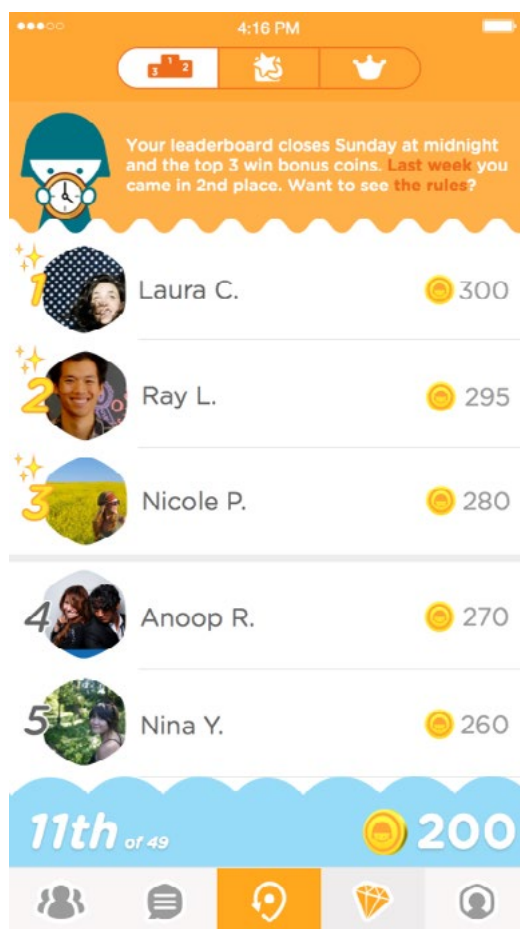


Figure 9.5 Leaderboard from Foursquare's Swarm App

9.3 YELP

Yelp.com is a local business social networking site that provides reviews and discussions related to services primarily in food, restaurant and entertainment venues. Yelp has a large community of users in metropolitan regions but also has expanded into smaller, regional areas. Yelp users submit reviews on places, products or services using a five-star rating system, and then add comments. Businesses claim venues and provide updated information such as contact details, operation hours and other information. Businesses also can respond to user reviews.

Russel Simmons and Jeremy Stoppelman, formerly of PayPal, founded Yelp in 2004. By 2010, it had yearly revenues exceeding \$30 million and boasted more than 4.5 million user reviews. It went public in 2012. The latest figures (in 2016), show that Yelp.com has 135 million monthly visitors and over 95 million user reviews. Its primary income results from paid advertising. Figure 9.6 provides a view of a Yelp Page for the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island in Northern Michigan.

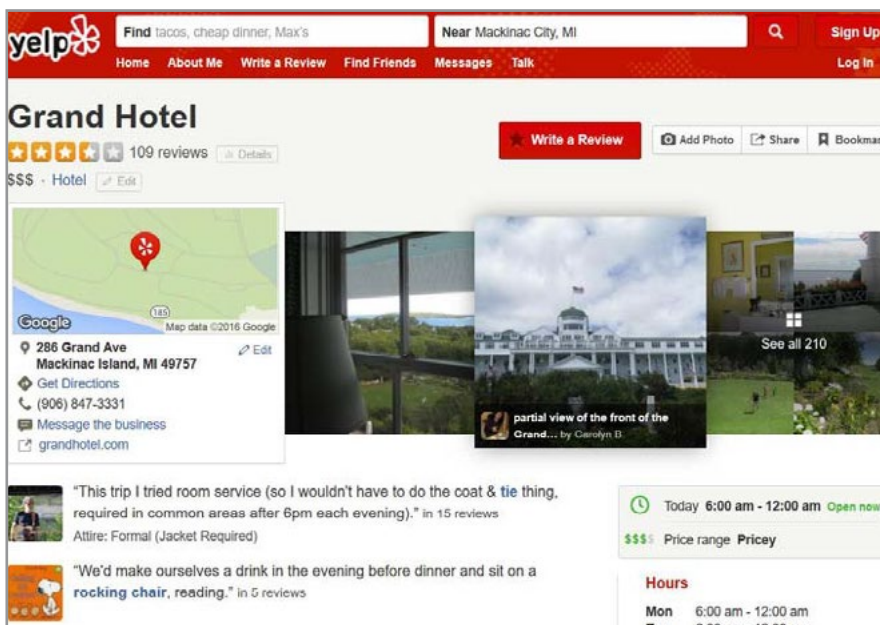


Figure 9.6 Yelp Page for the Grand Hotel


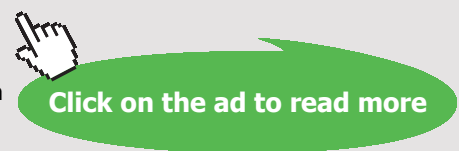
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9.3.1 YELP FOR BUSINESS

Despite claims of fake reviews and controversy that competitors often post bad things to manipulate potential customers, Yelp has remained a popular and useful business tool. Paul Chaney of Practical E-Commerce provides a set of tips for businesses that want to use Yelp more effectively.¹⁰²

One: An organization must claim their Yelp business page. This provides a place where photos can be added, links provided to the business website, restaurant menus or other business artifacts can be added, offers listed, and business operating information updated. In a sense, this becomes a business homepage on Yelp. Figure 9.7 illustrates the Yelp for Business Owners search function.

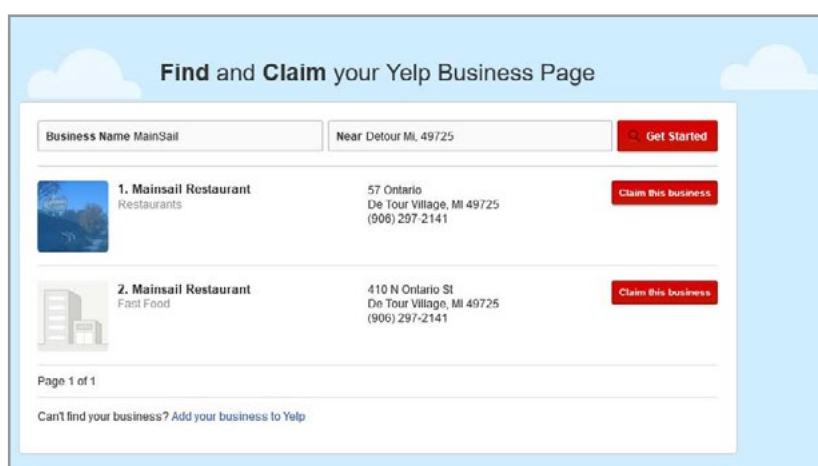


Figure 9.7 Find and Claim Your Yelp Business Page

After performing the search, the owner's listing will appear. After finding it, the owner needs to click the "Claim this business" button. For business that are not already listed, the "Add your business to Yelp" link can be used. In either case, business details can be added with a form. Figure 9.8 provides more detail.

Figure 9.8 Business Listing in Yelp's Find and Claim Area

After completing an informational form, Yelp will authenticate the listing via phone. Figure 9.9 shows the notification message. A four-digit code will be provided. Following validation, Yelp allows access to the business page.

Figure 9.9 Yelp Site Phone Validation

Two: After obtaining its venue, a business needs to update and maintain its operating information. Yelp provides places for business name, address, phone number, hours of operation, and other items. Since Google and other search engines directly search Yelp pages, details and updated information can help people conduct more effective local searches.

Three: Once reviews start appearing, it is important to read those and identify what customers are saying. Positive reviews will help rank the business higher, and negative ones can be used to make improvements. It is important to respond to customer reviews, particularly if they are negative and point out flaws that can be improved. Admitting shortcomings and listing what is being done to improve them will help. Responses can also be sent as private messages. Public comments can be used to correct misinformation in a review or to thank customers.

Four: Photos can be added to showcase a business and add visual interest. Restaurants can post photos of menus and plated food. An artist can provide visual images of her work and so forth. Figure 9.10 provides an example of photos from Yooperman Restaurant.

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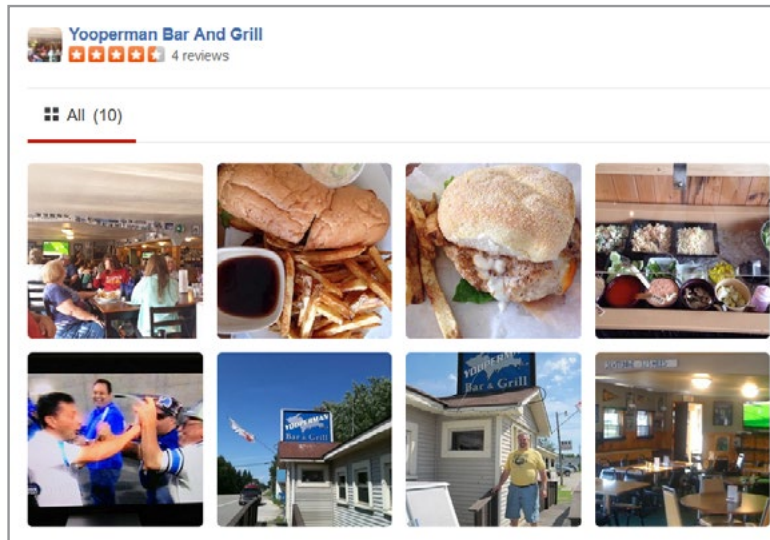


Figure 9.10 Photos Added to a Yelp Site

Five: Yelp provides tools to encourage customers to visit a business. These incentives include deals and gift certificates (See Figure 9.11). Yelps deals essentially are prepaid vouchers that can redeemed at a business venue. Yelp collects payments and retains a fee. There is no upfront cost to a business. Yelp’s fees are 30% for deals and 10% for gift certificates. The rest of the purchase amount is paid to a business each month. Yelp provides each business with an administrative console where all transactions are listed.

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- Print out your voucher, or redeem on your phone with the Yelp app.

| Reg. Price | Discount | Savings |
|------------|----------|---------|
| \$40 | 50% | \$20 |

\$20 Buy now

Effective marketing

Yelp Deals are prepaid vouchers that offer consumers an attractive discount (e.g., \$10 for \$20) at your business. It's an easy way to give consumers who are already searching for a business like yours an incentive to choose you over the competition. Yelp users can buy your deal or gift certificate directly on your business page via the Yelp website or mobile app.

No upfront costs

There are no upfront costs with Yelp Deals or Gift Certificates. When customers buy your deal or gift certificate, Yelp collects payment from the purchaser and retains a share of the purchase (30% for deals, 10% for gift certificates). The remainder is paid to you each month.

Easy set-up and management

It takes only a minute to set up your Yelp Deal or Gift Certificate. You create the offer and can remove the deal or gift certificate from your business page at any time.

Figure 9.11 Yelp Deals and Gift Certificates

Six: Yelp provides business analytics related to user visits. The administrative console offers a set of tools to track visitor engagement, customer leads, revenue estimates, and other features. By carefully using these tools, deals, incentives and specials can be rolled out more effectively. Figure 9.12 illustrates.

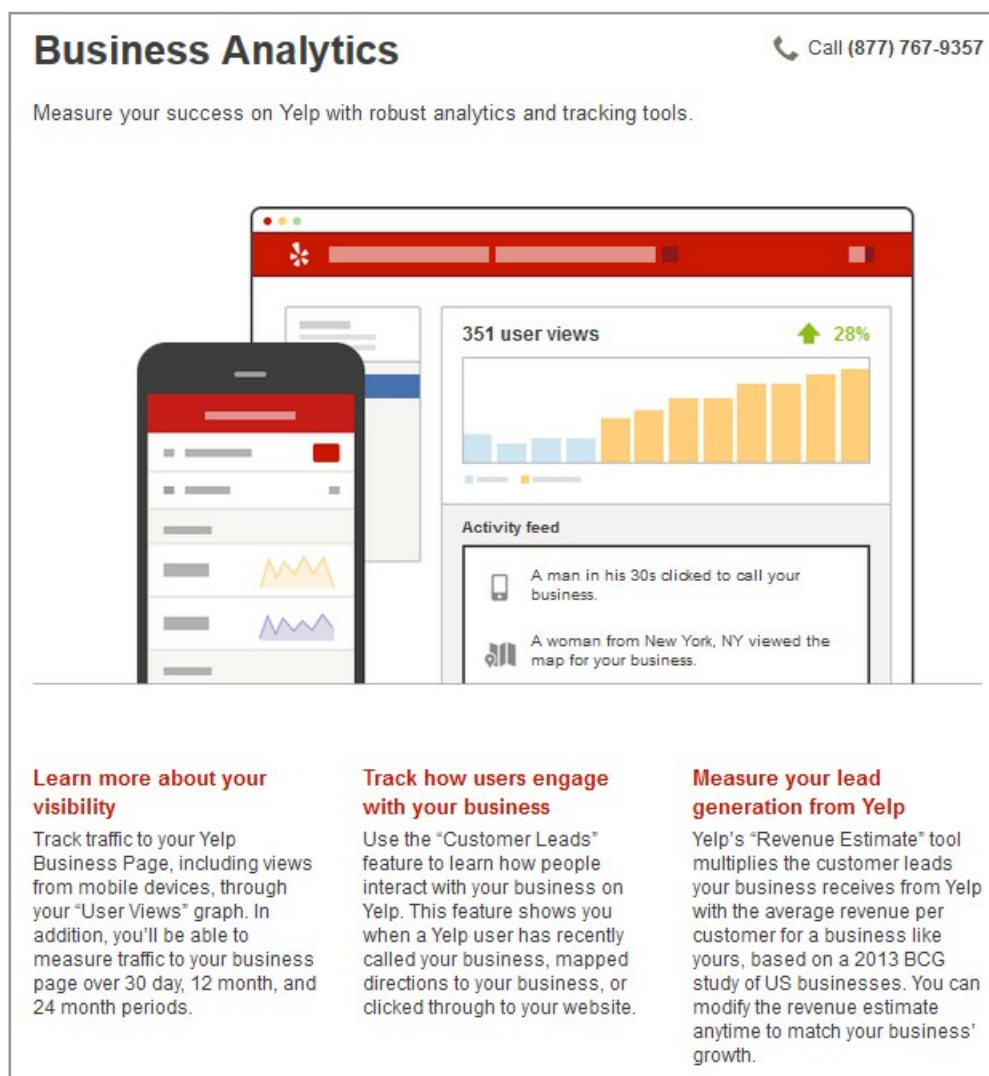


Figure 9.12 Yelp Offers a Variety of Analytics for Businesses

Seven: Yelp offers a variety of advertising options. The pricing ranges from free to full service. Among the more popular options are features to remove competitor ads, calls to action, slideshows, and targeted ads. Figure 9.13 provides more details.

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|---|---|--|
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Figure 9.13 Yelp Offers Advertising Programs

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9.3.2 YELP EFFECTIVENESS

Yelp has created a social-media driven business model that offers a variety of truly helpful features. It links physical location with the benefits offered by social media in way that improves business performance. Yelp reviews can be tweeted or posted to Facebook. Yelp sites can be promoted in other ways too. The following promotional items can be offered¹⁰²:

- A Yelp button or badge can be added to a business website;
- A link to Yelp can be included in email signatures;
- A Yelp sticker can be placed in a store window;
- Customers can be encouraged to check-in using Yelp's mobile app when visiting.

The Internet is a big place and Yelp helps local businesses receive focus from nearby customers.

9.4 WAZE

Waze is a community-driven social media application that gathers map data and traffic information from users. It provides a good example of the local-based applications emerging in mobile user environments. Waze is tied closely to GPS and map systems, and learns from user driving times and experiences to provide real-time routing and traffic updates. The Waze database of roadways was largely produced from automatic acquisition of user data as people drove their cars. Added to this are personally observed data items reflecting driving experiences. Among these are real-time accidents, traffic jams, police presence, and speed traps. Figure 9.14 shows the Waze mobile app and a sample application screen.

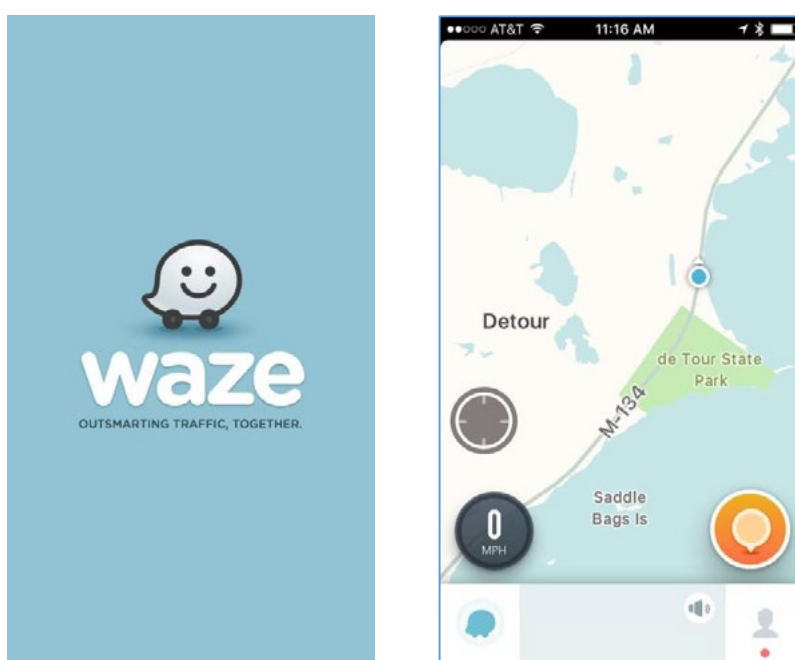


Figure 9.14 Waze Mobile App and Sample Screen

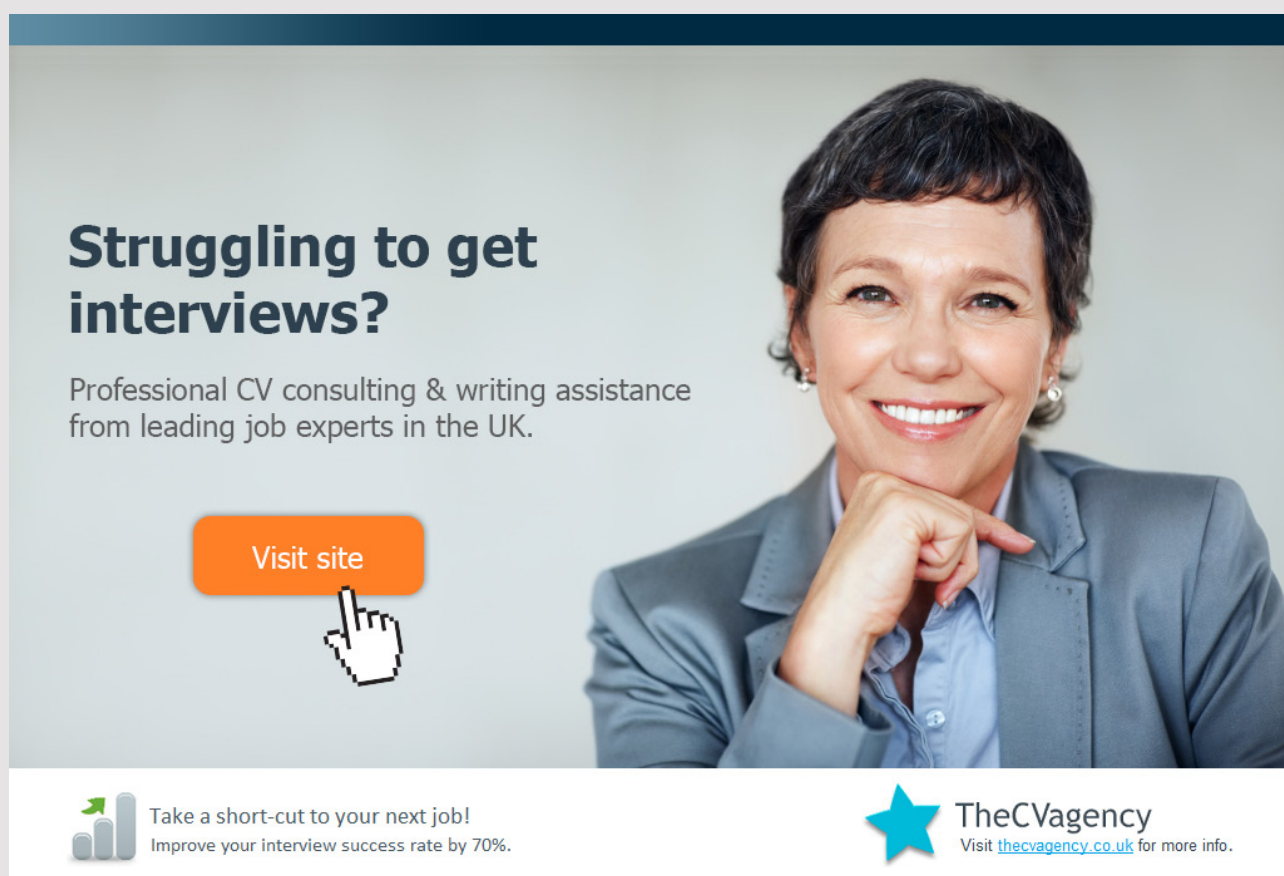
Waze initially was developed in Israel and was launched there in 2008. A few years later it was purchased by Google. At that time, it had a goal of using social media to save each driver five minutes a day. Since that time, Waze has become an application that seeks to collect and to develop a deeper understanding of why traffic happens. Waze has more than 50 million users and continues to grow in popularity.¹⁰³ According to Forbes Tech, Waze has become so popular because it has figured out how to engage with users.¹⁰⁴ Waze continues to generate many of its maps using GPS to track user movements. An active user base appears motivated to share driving experience social information. This, coupled with technology-generated data, provides highly accurate information that offers useful real-time driving help.

9.5 CONCLUSIONS

Location-based services continue to leverage GPS data in ways that tie social media to a place that enables localization of interaction. With the widespread use of mobile devices, location services promise to grow and become more prominent elements of business strategic planning. This is particularly true for businesses with brick and mortar locations such as restaurants, hotels, entertainment venues and so forth. As long as particular services exist in non-virtual forms, location services will be a required part of the overall landscape of social media.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA RAW

A number of social media applications have emerged in response to consumers wishing to have easy-to-use, rich media applications that permit them to quickly interact with peers, anonymous like-minded temporary friends, or people in close proximity. Most of these applications are not central to business social media plans, nor will many businesses roll out a presence on these platforms. However, it is important for business planners to realize that these virtual environments exist and may exert an influence on potential customers and on their reputation. Popular mobile applications in this category include Instagram, Snapchat, YikYak, Whisper, Tinder, Vine, Meerkat and Periscope. This chapter takes a brief look at these and investigates why business leaders should have a basic understanding of what makes this movement within social media important. We also look at what some businesses are doing to leverage these new forms of social media.




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10.1 INSTAGRAM

Instagram, launched by creators Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, in October 2010 is a free cloud-based mobile photo and video sharing social networking service. They created an easy-to-use app that allows users to quickly share pictures and videos taken with mobile devices (See Figure 10.1). Sharing can be private or public and allows posting on an Instagram feed as well as through other services including Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. Users create a profile and are provided with a news feed that displays posts from friends and other relevant sources.

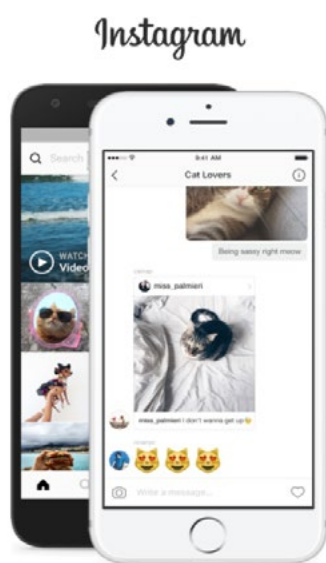


Figure 10.1 Instagram Imagines from Instagram.com

10.1.1 INSTAGRAM POPULARITY

Instagram has become a very popular application with more than 400 million monthly visitors. Facebook purchased the service in 2012 but mostly has left it to continue without changes. Unlike other social media services, according to its terms of service, Instagram does not claim ownership rights regarding any posted material (including photographs, music and videos). This adds appeal for artists, musicians and photographers who want to obtain publicity for their material but do not wish to surrender their copyright.

Instagram use is driven by visual sharing and acquiring followers. A posted photo or video appears on the account holder's profile. Followers will see the same post in their news feed. Users have "Followers" and "Following" counts to display their level of popularity and potential interaction. Each user's profile has a button that can be tapped to follow their posts. Private profile follower requests need approval from the account holder. By default, accounts are set to public which means that anyone can find and view a user's posted items unless that user has set her account to private.¹⁰⁵ An Instagram user can double tap a post to 'like' it and then, if desired, add a comment. Users can apply a variety of filters to alter their photos. Aspect ratios can be changed and colors modified to enhance interest. Instagram videos are limited to 15 seconds.

10.1.2 BUSINESS ON INSTAGRAM

Business interest in Instagram is rapidly increasing. This movement was motivated, in part, by several factors. First, Instagram's audience is highly desirable. The platform reaches many females (68% of its user base), most of whom are under 35 years old. And, many users fall into middle and higher income brackets, making them attractive to retailers seeking customers. Second, Instagram has rolled out a number of attractive advertising programs.¹⁰⁶ According to Instagram.com, these programs make it so "[b]usinesses can share their stories with a highly engaged audience in a creative, high-quality environment and drive action with their ads." Instagram provides photo, video and carousel ads (which allow a swipe function through a number of photos). Figure 10.2 illustrates. The ads are designed to move customers to a website where items can be purchased or other actions taken. The ads are specifically formulated to mobile platforms and are created with wizards. Case studies and engagement statistics from Instagram indicate that its audience comprises a highly active group of users willing to make purchases and interact with advertisers.

Instagram Ad Solutions

Instagram is now an end-to-end advertising solution that drives real business results. Increase awareness and message association, or get visits to your website or downloads of your mobile app.

Instagram Ad Formats

Photo Ads

With photo ads, businesses can tell their story through beautiful imagery. Whether it's inspiring people to see your brand differently or to take action, they offer a clean, simple and beautiful creative canvas.

Video Ads

Video ads offer the same visually immersive quality as photo ads on Instagram — with the power of sight, sound and motion. And now, you can share videos up to 60 seconds long and in landscape format.

Carousel Ads

Carousel ads bring an additional layer of depth to photo ads. People can swipe to see additional images and a call to action button takes them to a website to learn more.

Figure 10.2 Instagram Advertising Solutions

10.1.3 INSTAGRAM STORIES

In August 2016, Instagram introduced a new feature called ‘Stories’. With Stories, an Instagram user shares photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. People see ‘Stories’ from those that they follow and know when something new has appeared because their profile photo displays a colorful surrounding ring. Since the Stories disappear, there are no likes or public comments for these postings. Instagram suggests sending private messages to communicate about Stories. Additionally, Stories adhere to a user’s privacy settings to ensure only desired followers can view a particular post. Features enable an account holder to see who has viewed each each photo and video. By releasing Stories, Instagram has intensified its rivalry with Snapchat.

10.1.4 PROVIDING VALUE TO INSTAGRAM USERS

Instagram is based on the premise of rapid social interaction. Social technology expert, Elise Moreau, offers a set of recommendations for making an effective presence on Instagram. Table 10.1 summarizes.^{107, 108}

| Recommendation | Description |
|--|--|
| Post interesting and colorful content | A user’s goal should be to post photos and videos that evoke emotion – happiness, humor, motivation, nostalgia, et cetera. High quality, color photos get attention better. |
| Do not overuse filter effects | Instagram filters can be used to artistically enhance posted images and videos, however, it is possible to overdo it! Remember that filters provide a look and feel, and often this might be the subject of a current trend. After the trend peaks, content using a particular filter may appear dated. Photos and videos that are colorful, but relatively natural looking will not appear dated. |
| Hashtags are important for extending reach | Hashtags can increase reach but caution applies – overuse can drive away potential customers. Messages bloated with hashtags appear non-professional and non-friendly. Use specific keywords as hashtags and keep these to a minimum. |
| Explore tab helps find new content | Instagram offers an Explore tab where the most popular photos and videos are featured. The Explore tab is tailored to each user according to the photos and videos that have been liked or commented on by his or her connections. A business can find new followers by checking this tab regularly |

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| Recommendation | Description |
|--|--|
| Keep followers engaged with frequent posts | A business needs to regularly post fresh content to keep followers engaged. Posting once every day or two is frequent enough to keep followers interested. A business that goes long periods of time without posting will lose followers. |
| Instagram Direct can be used to contact specific users | Individual followers can be contacted with a specific message as a thanks or notification of a special event or opportunity. Instagram Direct is a privately direct messaging service that permits sending photos or videos. An occasional direct message is a nice touch. |
| Interact with followers | A business should never ignore its most loyal followers who regularly like and comment on posted content. Instead, make your followers feel valued by replying to their comments, checking out their content, and liking photos or videos. Third party tools such as Iconosquare can be used to track comments and determine which users are interacting the most. |
| Do not purchase followers | While it is possible to 'buy' Instagram followers and get big numbers, these followers may be fake and therefore will not provide interaction or ultimately any business transactions. Others may question an account when a large user-base never provides likes or comments. Real engagement, which takes time to build, is far more valuable. |
| Selectively use shoutouts | Interacting with current followers is recommended, but sometimes using a general public message called a shoutout (which is sent out by a friend on another account) can help reach more people. An occasional shoutout is good but be careful not to overdo it! |
| Be aware of Instagram trends | Hashtags, shoutouts, filters, and other items will have an informal expiry date when they move from cool to non-cool. It is important to keep up with the latest trends to avoid looking uninformed and creating the risk of losing valuable followers. |

Table 10.1 Making Instagram More Effective

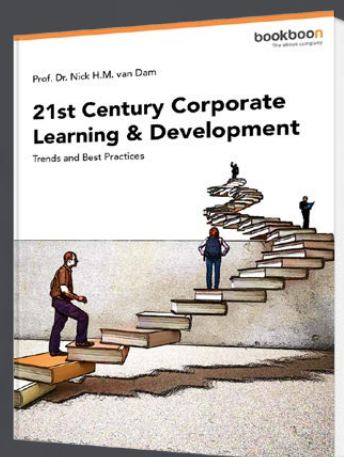
Business social media practitioners can professionalize their Instagram presence by being aware of how potential stakeholders use the service. This means adding value and becoming part of Instagram's social media fabric. Elise Moreau elaborates with several further ideas for providing useful content that are summarized in Table 10.2.¹⁰⁷

| Value-Added Content | Description |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Add professional quality photos | Often, the most popular Instagram photos (found on the Explore Tab) are professional quality, high resolution photos. A business that shares excellent photos will attract more attention. |
| Add professional quality videos | A business can get its message across in a professional quality video, even though Instagram limits these to 15 seconds. Pre-recorded uploads developed with video editor apps can make a big impact and are often shared and passed among friends. |
| Consider creating a business presence | Businesses are working hard to create and maintain a presence on Instagram. Remember, this social network thrives on visual content and offers a great opportunity for businesses to show off logos, product, current event info, and anything else that can generate likes and comments. |

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| Value-Added Content | Description |
|----------------------|--|
| Promotional contests | Many businesses launch contests on Instagram to generate buzz about their products, increase interaction and acquire more followers. |
| Shoutouts | Shoutouts occur when a valued customer or advocate agrees to post a message on their own account from a business' feed with instructions in the caption to follow. This can be highly effective if strategic partnerships are created with opinion leaders in a particular area. |

Table 10.2 Innovative Uses of Instagram

10.2 SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a popular, free, trendy mobile messaging application used to transmit photos, videos, text, images, and drawings. It has resonated with younger users for a variety of reasons – one of which is that messages disappear from the recipient's phone a few seconds after receipt. This has made Snapchat the most popular app among teen users¹⁰⁹, and makes it an attractive social media application for business planners.

10.2.1 SNAPCHAT HISTORY

Snapchat was developed by Stanford University students Evan Spiegel, Bobby Murphy, and Reggie Brown. Initially it started as a product design class project, called Picaboo. The idea was to enable users to communicate using short-lived images. Although students in the class were skeptical, Snapchat evolved from that idea into its current mix of private messaging, public content, business brand networks, publications, and live sporting and music events. In spite of the public social media content, Snapchat remains most popular as a personal messaging service. Users like the idea of being able to send a message that will not be available after a couple of seconds. This sense of enforced privacy is a big attraction and has resulted in big numbers. According to Snapchat's website, by the end of 2015 users were sending 6 billion videos per day. In 2016, Snapchat videos were being viewed over 10 billion times daily.¹¹⁰

10.2.2 FEATURES OF SNAPCHAT

Snapchat's simplicity has a big appeal. The main idea is to snap a picture or video using a mobile phone camera, select desired recipients from the default contact list, decide how long to make the message visible (up to 10 seconds), and send. Recipients receive a notification much like a text message which can be tapped to view. The message disappears from the recipients' phones once the time limit expires. As might be imagined, the idea of a disappearing message has prompted the emergence of other apps intended to permanently captures snaps and save them for the recipients.

A recent addition to Snapchat is a one-to-one private chat feature. This feature enables users to chat via private messages that disappear when the session ends (unless users choose to save the chat which allows both parties to access the conversation). Video chat capabilities have also been added to Snapchat. Another new feature permits users to transfer money through the chat function. This is called Snapcash.

Snapchat offers other features. For instance, users can apply fun filters and stickers to snaps. Users can also create Snapchat Stories which are a compilation of videos and photos available to a user's friends. Snapchat Stories persist for 24 hours and can be viewed multiple times. In addition to appealing to individual users, Snapchat stories have begun to catch on among business users.

10.2.3 SNAPCHAT FOR BUSINESS

Due to its incredible popularity, businesses have taken notice of Snapchat and actively seek innovative ways to add it to their social media presence. Snapchat is open to this idea and has made several business-friendly overtures. One example is Snapchat's Discover feature. Discover provides exclusive content from a variety of partner networks such as CNN, Comedy Central, ESPN, and People Magazine. Having partner channels provides a natural location for advertising and permits content to be viewed by a wide audience. Users can Snap Discover stories to their friends. Figure 10.3 illustrates several discover partners.

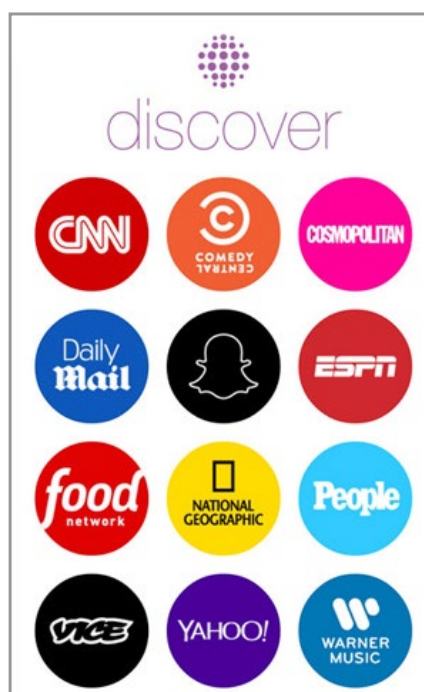


Figure 10.3 Snapchat Discover Feature Example Partners

In general, Snapchat is useful for businesses wishing to increase engagement and brand awareness. Many marketing efforts now include components related to Snapchat. Kate Talbot provides a set of ideas to integrate Snapchat into brand awareness campaigns.¹¹¹ See Table 10.3.



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| Brand Awareness Idea | Description |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Provide Access to Live Events | Snapchat can give audiences direct access to live events. Product launches, awards, trade shows, and other events can be pushed onto Snapchat or summarized in Snapchat Stories. |
| Deliver Private Content | Private content can be sent to stakeholders via Snapchat. Exclusive information, pre-release notices or other offers can be transmitted to make followers feel special. |
| Offer Contests, Perks or Promotions | Social media giveaways, promotions, coupons and rewards can be sent to followers as a way of saying 'thanks for following'. |
| Take People Behind the Curtain | Snapchat can provide behind-the-scenes content to followers as a way of creating and engaging a stronger audience. Allowing followers to see what is happening in the daily life of an organization is a perk that can be fun. For instance, send Snaps from company events or outings. |
| Partner with Opinion Leaders | People skilled with Snapchat can be excellent advocates. A company should be sure to interact with them and encourage them to share information with their followers. |

Table 10.3 Snapchat in Brand Awareness

10.3 YIK YAK

Yik Yak is a mobile app intended to promote anonymous communication among people within a five-mile geographic radius. This particular social media app can be fun but has been criticized as a platform that enables cyberbullying. For this reason, several schools banned its use, and eventually Yik Yak built controls to block use near all high schools and middle schools.

In spite of negative headlines and several high profile news stories linking Yik Yak to harassment and threats, many college students use it regularly. In its purest form, Yik Yak is a good place to put out public messages, called Yaks, on items like party or event locations, gripes about university classes, or searches for nearby, like-minded companions. Many Yaks are jokes, quips, funny sayings, sarcasm and plain venting.¹¹² Users can contribute by writing, responding, and “voting up” or “voting down” Yaks with likes or dislikes.

Tyler Droll and Brooks Buffington, graduates of Furman University developed Yik Yak after collaborating in a class that covered iPhone app development. Following graduation, they developed Yik Yak more fully and released the app in November 2013. By 2014, it was the 9th most downloaded social media app in the United States. Figure 10.4 shows Yik Yak’s app icon.



Figure 10.4 Yik Yak Mobile App Icon

10.3.1 FEATURES

Yik Yak relies on a number of innovative features which make it interesting to users. Many of these ideas have been integrated into other social media platforms in various forms. Table 10.4 provides a summary of several primary features found in Yik Yak.¹¹³

| Feature in Yik Yak | Description |
|--------------------|---|
| My Herd | The My Herd feature allows a user to set a single place as their base or geographic home location. This base camp might be their home, campus, work location, or favorite venue. Setting the My Herd features allows the user to read and leave posts from/to the designated area even when the user is not physically there at the time. The idea is to allow people to stay in touch with a familiar group. |
| New / Hot Tabs | Yik Yak has a toggle switch that enables users to see either new (most recent) posts or hot (trending) posts. The new posts are displayed in descending order with the latest posts at the top. Hot posts comprise those receiving the most up votes in approximately the past hour, and display the most popular at the top. |
| Other Top Yaks | This feature shows the Google image search results page for the word "yak". Usually just pictures of yaks (the animal) appear. This is feature is an example of the way Yik Yak portrays itself as a fun social media application that should not be taken too seriously. |
| Peek | Peek allows users to anonymously view other Yik Yak community feeds. This means anyone can peek at the Yaks being generated at any college or city in the world. Peeking allows users to look but does not allow them to vote or post in these communities. |
| Photos | Users can include photos in their Yaks. Yik Yak does say that photos are moderated and that no illegal or inappropriate content is permitted. Additionally, faces are not allowed to keep things anonymous. |

| Feature in Yik Yak | Description |
|--------------------|--|
| Up or Down Vote | Yaks can be up or down voted by local (or base camp) users. This is a rating system to help determine if a post is popular enough to warrant more attention. If an item is down voted to a score of -5, it is permanently deleted from the system. |
| Word Filter | Yik Yak provides a behind-the-scenes word filter. When particular words appear in a post, the system will remind the user that these words are offensive and ask if the user wishes to still post. In many cases, Yik Yak will remove the post after a short time (or immediately) if the user decides to still post. |
| Yakarma | Yakarma (Yak Karma) is a score intended to measure the activity and success of a particular user. Yakarma may raise or lower based on the number of up or down votes a user's posts receive. Yakarma also is impacted by the number of up and down votes a user places on others' posts. Yakarma is intended to motivate users to become more active in positive ways. |

Table 10.4 Primary Features Found in Yik Yak

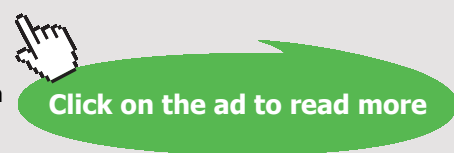


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10.3.2 YIK YAK AND ETHICS

Yik Yak has been subject to criticism that its anonymous posting approach provides an ideal platform for cyberbullying and threatening behaviors. Due to its popularity with students, newspapers have run stories to bolster these claims and this has impacted some venture capitalists and tempered their willingness to invest. Others do not view this as a problem but instead believe it is the price that a society must pay to ensure freedom of speech. According to an article written by William Cohen of the New York Times,¹¹⁴ one investor said, “Yik Yak has tapped our desire to connect authentically with those around us. Its hyper-local forums provide a sense of community and a place to be our genuine selves, and that’s really resonated with millions of people, myself included.” Further, he suggested that, “Yik Yak takes cyberbullying very seriously and has made a number of meaningful changes to address it, such as proactively geo-fencing middle and high school campuses so the app simply can’t be used there. Cyberbullying is a broad and thorny challenge faced by all social media networks and there’s clearly more work to be done, but Yik Yak is definitely moving in the right direction.” Do investors and business advertising on platforms such as Yik Yak have a social responsibility to ensure it does not harm anyone? The question still remains and will be an issue for many social media communities.¹¹⁴

10.3.3 YIK YAK AND BUSINESS

In spite of ethics concerns, many businesses consider Yik Yak in their social media planning. Since Yik Yak appeals to the lucrative college student demographic and is tied to geographic location, it becomes hard to resist. This is particularly true for businesses located near university campuses (e.g. pizza shops, clothing stores, fitness centers, and apartment complexes).

College student and social media expert Dan Blevins¹¹⁵ believes businesses can greatly benefit from using Yik Yak if they keep its capabilities and reasons for its appeal in perspective. For instance, Blevins suggests that in order to use Yik Yak to promote a local business, the college student mindset must be considered. He says, “[c]ollege students HATE when a business tries too hard to get their money. If college students even get a whiff of unappreciated advertising, [they] will disregard any marketing or advertising efforts from that company.”¹¹⁵ He then provides five creative ways to use Yik Yak to boost a business without insulting users. Table 10.5 summarizes.

| Creative Idea for Yik Yak | Description |
|--|---|
| Utilize Storytelling | Yik Yak users are on the social media application because they want to make a deeper connection with like-minded people. Storytelling helps bring a situation to life and builds these connections. Creative Yaks make the information relatable. A business with short, simple, and relatable Yaks will be way ahead of the competition in this environment. |
| Post Pictures | Yaking images will help a business stand out. If the images show fun things happening and evoke an emotion, people will pay attention. |
| Use Emoticons | Emojis can add a bit of pizzazz to a Yak but be sure not to go overboard! |
| Consider Flash Yaks | Post a series of Yaks that deal with the same subject in a short period of time. If done smartly (and not too often), Flash Yaks can benefit business branding efforts. Flash Yaks can be sent by a single user or in a choreographed sequence from multiple users. If enough Yaks relate to the same topic, many people will become intrigued and curious. |
| Keep It Casual and Tap into User Curiosity | Don't sound too much like a traditional business. Remember Yik Yak is a fun place and a serious intrusion will not be appreciated. If possible, brand your business without seeming like that is what is happening. Make users want to learn more about an event or special. |

Table 10.5 Using Yik Yak Smartly for Business

In short, be sure to recognize that Yik Yak is a playful, local bulletin board system. Businesses can achieve advantage by participating here, but only in subtle ways that integrate with the user mindset.

10.4 WHISPER

Whisper is an anonymous social media community available through a mobile app. The idea is to allow users to post anonymous messages that can receive replies. The messages, called “whispers”, are superimposed over images supplied automatically by Whisper or provided by the user sending the message. Whisper was released March, 2012 by Michael Heyward and Brad Brooks. By April of 2016, whisper had 30 million monthly active users.¹¹⁶ Figure 10.5 illustrates several sample whispers from the website, <https://whisper.sh/>.

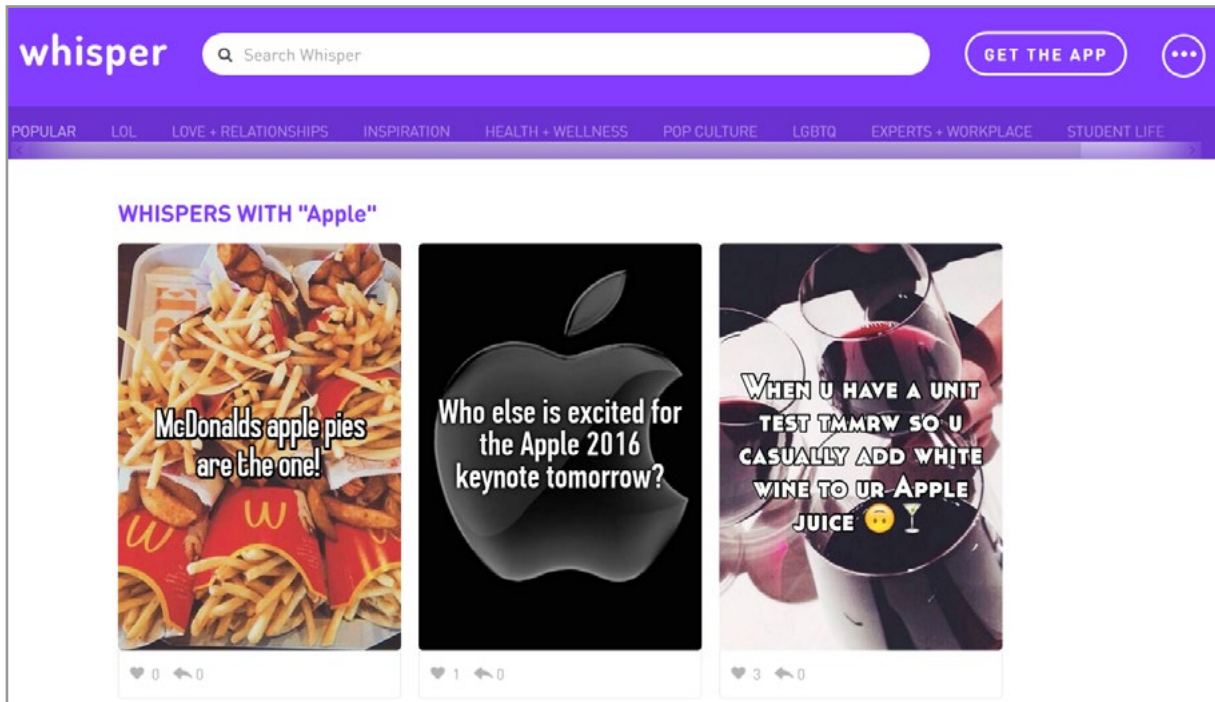
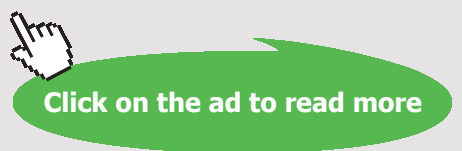


Figure 10.5 Sample Whispers

An advertisement for bookboon.com. At the top left is the logo 'bookboon.com'. The main heading is 'Corporate eLibrary' in a large, bold, black font. Below it is the text 'See our Business Solutions for employee learning'. A large, rounded blue button with the text 'Click here' is centered below the text. At the bottom of the advertisement is a stack of colorful rectangular blocks representing various business solutions: Management (green), Time Management (orange), Problem solving (red), Self-Confidence (grey), Effectiveness (green), Project Management (green), Goal setting (purple), Motivation (yellow), and Coaching (pink).



Whisper recently released keyword targeting to potential advertisers interested in providing embedded messages within its app. This means an advertiser's message can be targeted to particular words. For example, if a user posts a whisper with the word "reading", an advertisement for a new novel might show up next to the content. This approach opens many opportunities for businesses wishing to reach Whisper users.¹¹⁷ This is important because Whisper is very popular among Generation Z young people (e.g. those born in the mid-1990s to approximately 2010).¹¹⁸ Figure 10.6 shows the Whisper app icon.



Figure 10.6 Whisper App Icon

Whisper could be vulnerable to problems similar to those associated with Yik Yak (for instance cyberbullying and other behaviors that emerge in anonymous environments). Since Whisper is not specifically location based, bullying has not been an issue. To further distance itself from potential problems, Whisper began a 2015 partnership with the Ad Council to promote the "I Am A Witness" anti-bullying campaign to help stem undesirable behaviors.

10.4.1 CITIZEN JOURNALISM

One of the most interesting phenomenon on Whisper has been its emergence as a citizen journalism platform. When particular governments blocked Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and others, many citizens turned to Whisper as a tool for getting their message out into the general public. Whisper became a place where individuals posted news and updates related to war, atrocities, and other events in ways that protected their individual identities.

10.4.2 WHISPER FOR BUSINESS

Whisper is interested in finding ways to integrate business interests into its social media environment without disrupting the appeal of its community of users. While the anonymity aspect prevents a business from specifically identifying users by name, the demographic (e.g. Generation Z) makes Whisper users an important market.

Whisper allows users to superimpose text over images. Many businesses are working within these constraints to develop a non-intrusive approach to getting their message out. On one end of the spectrum, simple images and message can be posted. Figure 10.7 illustrates a Whisper about Dodge Ram trucks.



Figure 10.7 Whisper About Dodge Ram Trucks

On the other end of the spectrum, Whisper has begun to work with specific businesses to develop campaigns that involve a series of targeted messages over time. Whisper also is looking into ways it can label posts in the app that are advertisements for a business or product. According to the Fiverr Team, Whisper is working to create campaigns that “motivate people to interact, comment, and post more messages, thus boosting the usage of the app and boosting ad revenue.”¹¹⁹

In general, the anonymity of Whisper gives businesses an advantage. Users do not know which Whispers are campaign items and which are just messages posted by other users. This keeps people from immediately discounting an item because they believe it is an ad. Whisper is a very good and inexpensive way to target niche markets. People response to messages and may spread messages to their friends.

10.5 VINE

Vine is a video sharing mobile app. Users can share short videos (up to 6 seconds) that play as looping segments. Vine was initially developed by Dom Hofmann, Rus Yusupov, and Colin Kroll in 2012. Prior to its initial public offering, Twitter bought the company for approximately 30 million dollars. Within three years, Vine had over 200 million active users.¹²⁰ Figure 10.8 shows Vine’s app icon and Figure 10.9 shows Vine’s Web page interface.



Figure 10.8 Vine App Icon

The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. This central image is framed by a large, stylized orange and yellow speech bubble. In the top left corner, there is a logo for "e-learning for kids" consisting of a grid of colorful squares. To the right of the central image, there are two smaller circular inset images: one showing three children looking at a tablet together, and another showing children working at computers in a classroom. Below these insets, a green oval contains three bullet points: "The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education", "Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12", and "15 Million Children Reached". At the bottom left, a paragraph of text provides information about the organization. At the bottom right, a green button with a white hand cursor icon says "Click on the ad to read more".

e-learning for kids

- The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education
- Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12
- 15 Million Children Reached

About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFKI. An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.

Click on the ad to read more

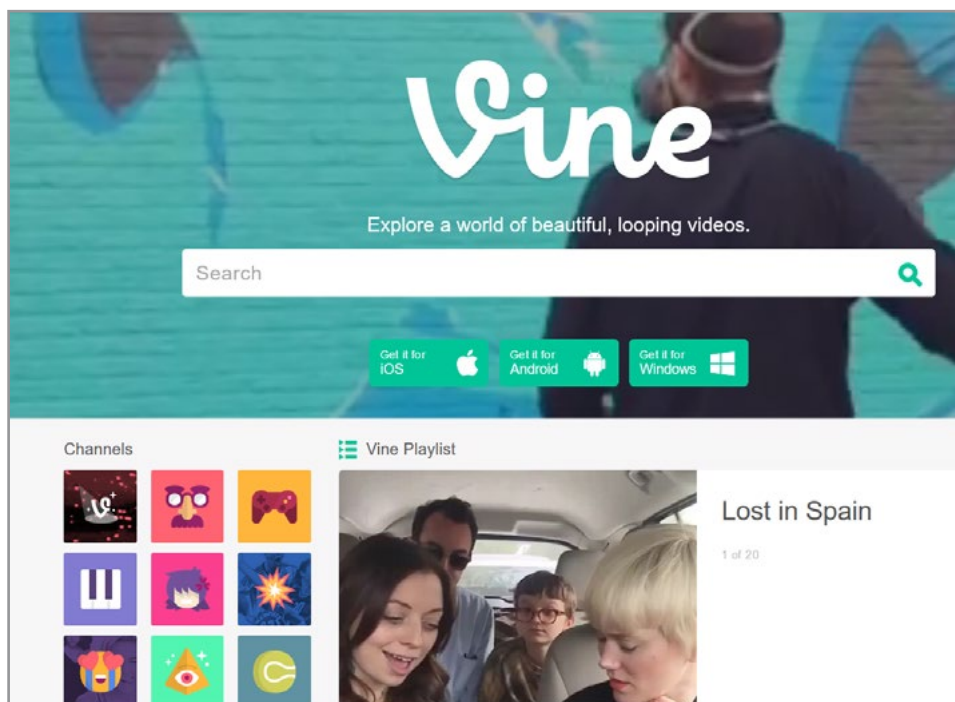


Figure 10.9 Vine Web Page Interface

The software uses a paradigm where a user posts a video on Vine's social network. This video can also easily be shared on other social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Vine allows users to search and browse videos posted by others or see videos grouped by theme and popularity. They categories called 'Editor's Picks' and 'Popular Now' as well as a set of themed channels. An Activity tab lets each user see their followers, who commented on their vines, and who 'liked' their videos.¹²¹ Figure 10.10 shows Vine's Explore tab with a variety of hashtags indicating themes.

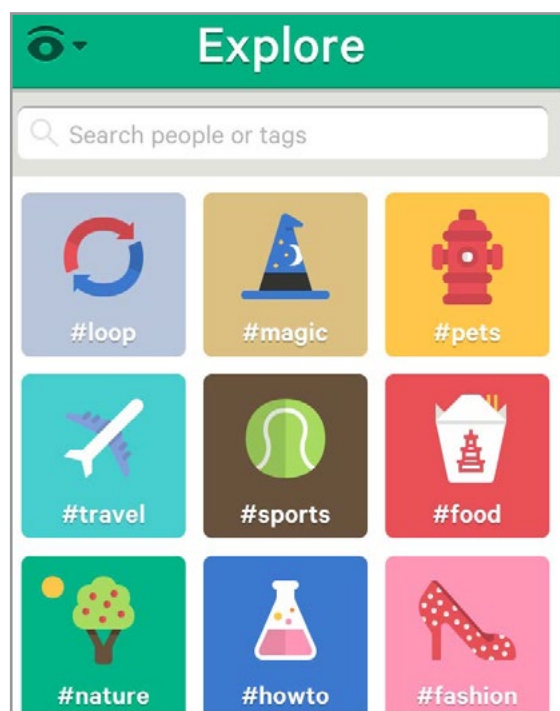


Figure 10.10 Explore Vine Hashtags

10.5.1 VINE FOR BUSINESS

Vine has received attention from the business world because of its ability to facilitate video-based marketing. Video can help create powerful messages and enable branding to be done in sophisticated ways. A number of companies have developed 6-second video messages that provide branding as well as some utility to customers. For instance, Lowes provides a series of Vine videos that quickly inform consumers how to fix common problems. Among their 'Fix in Six' series are 'Remove Scratches with a Walnut', 'Keep Squirrels at Bay', and 'Magnetic Strip to Hold Bobby Pins'. The Lowes videos won the retailer a series of awards including: Cannes Lion (a bronze in Cyber), a silver Clio, best in show at the Mashies Awards and others.¹²²

According to social media specialist, John Waghorn, using a platform such as Vine offers a number of advantages but these have to be considered within the limitations of the platform and should be just a portion of an overall video marketing strategy. He suggests considering:¹²³

- The types of videos to create;
- How the business will communicate with its desired audience;
- Whether a business has the resources to make and upload a series of videos;
- How the videos will tie into the overall brand/business theme.

Appropriately implementing Vine will provide a number of advantages. For instance, Vine works well to advertise new products, promote sales, advertise discounts and demonstrate products. Visual displays provide a great deal of persuasion and give customers a sense of confidence prior to purchase. Vine ties nicely into larger social media efforts. Vine videos are automatically posted in Twitter timelines (if desired) and can use hashtags to make searching easier.¹²³

According to Lisa Furgison, a Twitter expert, Vine can add power to Twitter and provide a number of advantages to businesses. Among these are:¹²⁴

1. A large audience – Vine has an audience of over 100 million people watching videos monthly.
2. The next big thing – Using new and trendy social media platforms give businesses an appearance of freshness and being ahead of competition.
3. Easy to learn – Vine is both easy to use and easy for customers to connect with.
4. Create attention-grabbing videos – Videos are fun to create and provide positive attention. The time investment can be worthwhile.
5. Create brand awareness – Videos provide education and more direct information to customer than text transmitted through Twitter or posted on Facebook.
6. Boost sales – Vine can connect back to a Web site or place where sales can be enacted.



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Table 10.6 provides further ideas about ways a business can use Vine to engage its customers.¹²⁵

| Engagement Idea | Description |
|--|---|
| Ask customers to participate in a Vine competition | People enjoy making short Vine videos. A business can engage in promoting “user-generated content,” where fans vote for favorite submissions and prizes can be offered. New submissions can be tweeted out and a community of interest generated. |
| Show off a new product or service | An audience loves to get advanced looks at new products and services. Vine provides an easy way to do this. |
| Create a timeline | Vine videos can be useful for creating a timeline to showcase the way a business has changed over time. |
| Make a connection to a current event | Vine videos can be used to develop quick peeks at ongoing events or promotions. |
| Show your product in a new way | Cool or innovative videos can provide a new way of looking at an exist product or service. |

Table 10.6 Using Vine to Engage Business Customers

10.5.2 VINE VERSUS INSTAGRAM

Vine shares a number of features with Instagram. There are, however, a number of differences that need to be considered for businesses interested in using the social media platform. First, Vine is part of the Twitter platform and so, by default, it cannot access a user’s Facebook friends. This may be partly by design since Instagram belongs to Facebook. Other key differences exist between the platforms. Among these are:

- Instagram videos can be longer than Vine allows (e.g. more than twice as long)
- Instagram offers filters
- Instagram adjusts for shaky filming
- Instagram videos can be shared in more ways (e.g. Tumblr, Facebook or email)
- Vine videos can be embedded into Twitter
- Vine videos can use embed codes for integration into blogs and WordPress pages
- Vine videos are auto-looping
- Vine lists trending hashtags

In short, Instagram has better editing and social sharing features. Vine is better suited for fast communication and use with blogs.¹²⁶

10.6 PERISCOPE AND MEERKAT

Periscope and Meerkat are competing social media apps vying for the instant video marketplace. Whereas Vine and Instagram allow users to post recorded video clips on social media websites, Periscope and Meerkat stream live video into a social media environment. This takes the concept of Tweets and Snapchats one step further and enables users to continuously broadcast current events live via phone.

Meerkat was the first of these two apps to appear (February of 2015) but it was immediately met with competition from Periscope (March of 2015). Twitter purchased Periscope and quickly integrated it into their social media platform giving it a huge advantage and a large pool of potential users. At the same time, it cut off Meerkat's access to Twitter. In spite of this, Meerkat quickly became popular.¹²⁷ After an initial surge, Meerkat's popularity faded and Periscope picked up a large market share.¹²⁸ In addition to having the power of Twitter's social network behind it, Periscope appears to be a more intuitive app regarding appearance, functionality and usage.¹²⁹ Additionally, Periscope provides a way for users to replay live videos that are no longer being broadcast.¹³⁰ Figure 10.11 shows the app icons for Periscope and Meerkat.

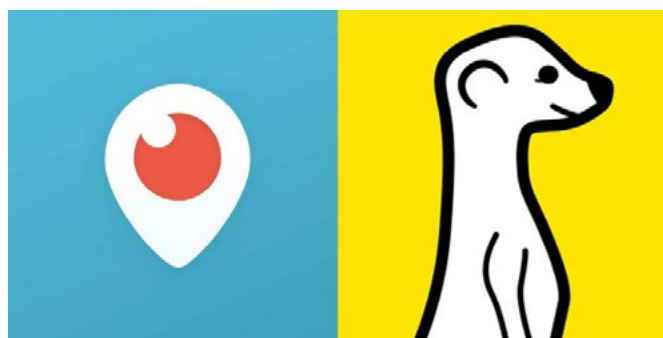


Figure 10.11 Periscope and Meerkat App Icons

By the mid-2010s it appeared that Periscope was the clear market leader in live streaming video apps. In spite of that, Meerkat continued to look for ways to integrate its service with other social media environments. Meerkat Embed was introduced as a way to integrate live streams into Web sites and blogs. See Figure 10.12.

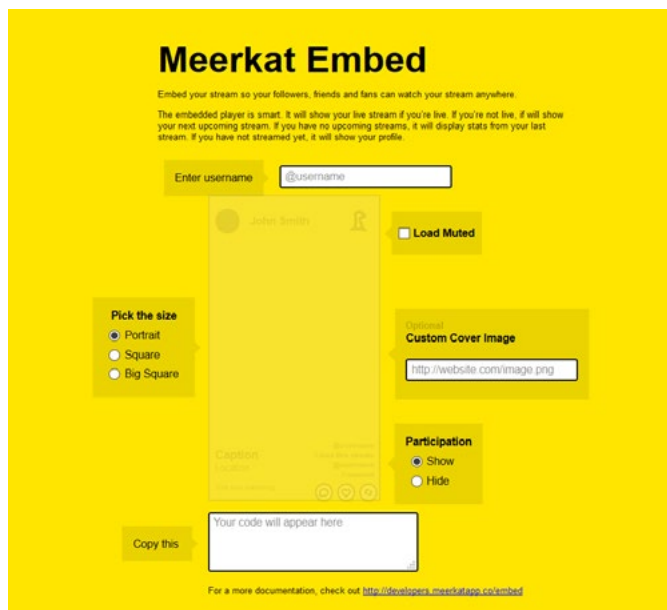


Figure 10.12 Meerkat Embed Feature

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shape the future.
Every single day.

For more information go to:
www.eon-career.com

Your energy shapes the future.



10.6.1 EXAMPLES OF LIVE STREAMING

Live streaming has quickly become an important form of social media. For some, it represents a way to keep in touch with friends in a more personal way. It might be used by those separated from loved ones to keep in touch or for someone to meet new friends. Users may feel compelled to provide a glimpse of their daily lives using live streaming. For instance, browsing Periscope will reveal people walking their dogs, jogging, cooking, complaining about a hangover, driving somewhere, watching TV, playing a video game, or putting on their make-up. Many users are just looking for someone to talk with and to find common interests. Figure 10.13 gives an example.

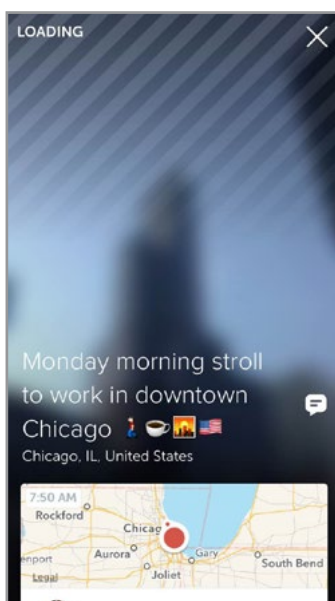


Figure 10.13 Example Periscope Stream Loading

Periscope provides a visual interface that lists many of the live streams currently being broadcast. Figure 10.14 shows the interface using the 'map' tab. Red circles indicate ongoing broadcasts from a location. Blue dots are recently completed broadcasts. As a user zooms in, more specific locations are revealed.

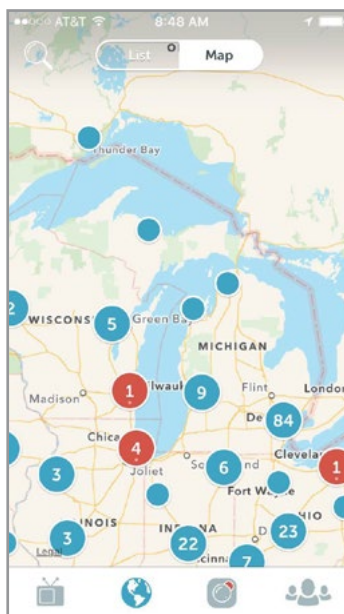


Figure 10.14 Periscope's Map Interface Showing Current Streams

10.6.2 USING PERISCOPE IN BUSINESS

According to Cas McCullough¹³¹, social media expert, of Content Marketing Cardiology, businesses can benefit from the use of Periscope (or Meerkat). Among ideas that can help energize a business are:

Live Product Demos – Audiences can benefit from watching a new product launch via live streaming. Potential customers can interact during the demonstration by asking questions and receiving information from the demonstration team. In Periscope, for instance, an active event will quickly rise to the top of the lists of streams and this will attract more attention.

Industry News Reports – A business can provide general news related to their industry. This will provide a sense of connection to interested people, provide exposure and a sense of relevance to an organization, and give customers insights that extend beyond a particular company's offerings. Reports can be posted to a blog for later consumption.

Connections with Opinion Leaders -Live streaming is a great way to connect with opinion leaders who already have a voice and audience. These people will appreciate it if representatives from a company regularly show up in an influencer's broadcast, ask interesting questions, make insightful comments, and share with followers. It is important to avoid hijacking the broadcast.

Bring Viewers Behind the Scenes – Broadcasts that provide glimpses inside an organization can be enticing and attract attention. Remember, people using social media want personal connections and this is a great way to do this.

Build a List of Followers – An excellent list of users can be collected by following people watching the live stream. Over time, an extensive list can be created.

Collect Content During the Live Stream Event – Broadcasts can be recorded and then used as raw material in other multimedia offerings. Blog posts, informational videos, source material for YouTube videos and many other items can be created from material created during the live streams. Software such as Camtasia can be used to collect the broadcasts in other ways.

Regular, predictable and interesting broadcasts can help build momentum and continue to grow an audience. A schedule helps people recognize when to expect more content. A broadcast that coincides with audience member lunchtimes or other convenient times can help to ensure a solid following on Periscope.¹³¹

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10.7 TRELLO

Trello is a social media influenced, collaboration tool useful to people wishing to organize projects. This tool can be used as a standalone productivity system. However, it was designed in the era of social media and incorporates many ideas and concepts that provide value related to interaction. Although it is not social media in the strictest sense of the definition, it does permit people to work together over virtual networks. For many people, it has become an indispensable tool in their daily work (and personal!) lives.

Trello was developed by Fog Creek Software, a company started in the year 2000 by Joel Spolsky and Michael Pryor. The premise was that the work environment can be conducive to the creative process.¹³² Trello reflects that philosophy. In 2016, Trello had more than 10 million users.¹³³

10.7.1 WHAT IS TRELLO?

In its simplest form, Trello is a set of boards. Each board is a list of lists filled with cards. Cards contain multimedia information about each item in the list. Teams (or individuals) use the cards to track activities, communicate, and document work. Trello helps organize, track, and facilitate projects in a social media setting (See Figures 10.15 and 10.16). Figure 10.17 shows a set of Trello boards.

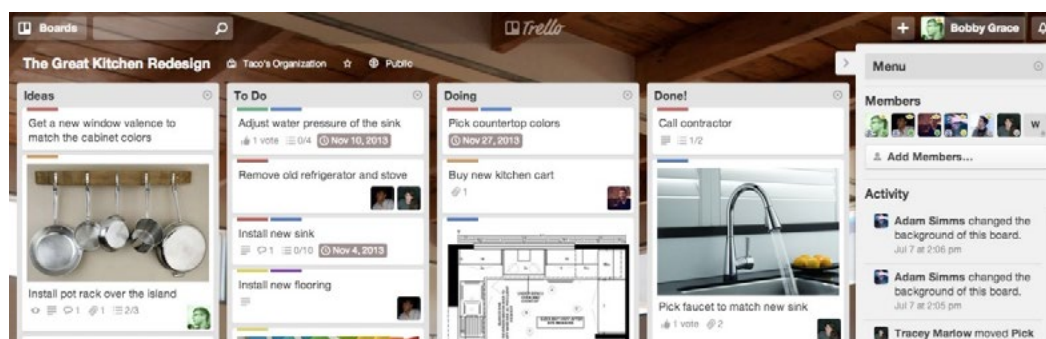


Figure 10.15 Uses of Trello from Trello.com Website

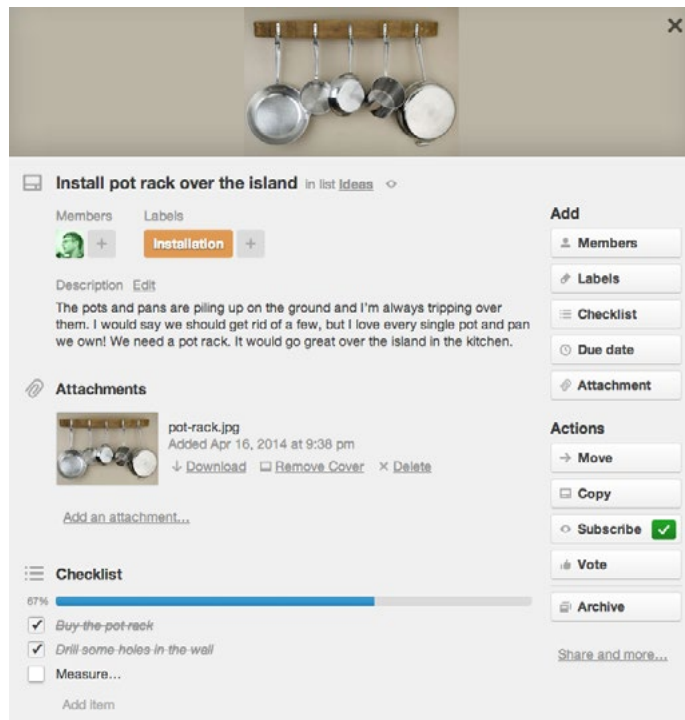


Figure 10.16 A Trello Card from Trello.com Website

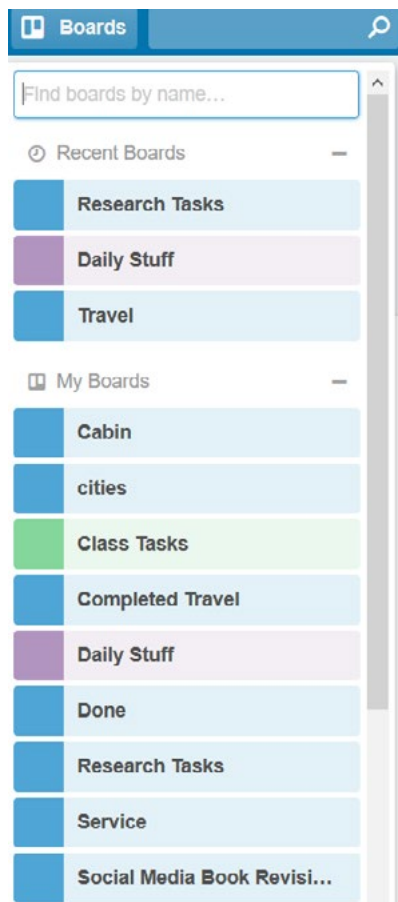


Figure 10.17 Trello Boards

Trello's social aspects become most useful in team project settings. A user can invite people to a board by dragging and dropping names located in a contact list. Once in a project, people can be dragged and dropped to specific cards to assign tasks. However, everyone will see the entire board. Discussions with comments and attachments facilitate communication between team members. Likes, emojis, and other social media features add life to discussions. File exchange is enabled through popular platforms such as Box, Dropbox, and Google Drive. Trello provides a notification system integrated with email, desktop notifications and mobile push notifications.

10.7.2 TRELLO TEAMS

Trello offers features to facilitate team creation. Teams have administrators and members with varying levels of access. Teams are intended to comprise a group that may have several projects. Projects have members while teams cross multiple projects (although teams can be restricted to single projects). Teams provide a way to see all related boards from a single interface and allow project members to be tracked from one place. Teams can use all social media tools for communication.¹³²



"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect

ENGLISH OUT THERE

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10.8 CROWDFUNDING

Social media can be used as a method of raising capital through collective, grassroots efforts. This process is called crowdfunding. Substantial amounts of funding can be acquired by receiving a small amount of capital from a large number of individuals. The net result is a powerful mechanism for starting a business, launching a product, funding a cause, or promoting a change for social good. Social media tools are used to accomplish this by raising awareness and connecting people.

Crowdfunding is an entirely new approach to fundraising that would not have been possible a decade ago. Traditionally, capital was raised by developing a business plan and approaching a bank or investor. Crowdfunding provides a single social-media enabled platform where products, business pitches, or ideas can be showcased and shared with large numbers of people. So crowdfunding provides:

- Greater Reach – Access to large numbers of potential investors
- Presentation Platform – A place to provide artifacts that bring an idea to life for potential investors
- Validation of Concept – Through social media tools, flaws, missing elements or enhancements can be discussed and resolved.
- Publicity – The platform can provide a place where a product can be showcased and initial public knowledge created for potential customers.

10.8.1 TYPES OF CROWDFUNDING

There are several crowdfunding models. These models are at the center of websites such as Kickstarter, Indiegogo, and others. The 3 primary approaches are donation-based, rewards-based, and equity crowdfunding. **Donation-Based crowdfunding** often is preferred by those seeking to raise money. This makes sense because there is no financial return to investors. Common donation-based initiatives include fundraising for charities, nonprofits, and funding expensive medical bills. **Rewards- Based crowdfunding** entices investors with a reward, typically in the form of a future product or service yielded by the process being funded. There is no financial return for the investor, but rather a gesture of gratitude is provided. Recipients of the funds are not obligated to share future profits, nor are they giving up ownership shares. **Equity-Based crowdfunding**, on the other hand, gives contributors ownership shares and in the best cases, profits. Many equity contribution schemes are subject to regulations meant to protect investors and those conducting the campaign. Equity-Based crowdfunding generally is less reliant on social media.¹³⁴

10.8.2 CROWDFUNDING SITES

As mentioned in the previous section, crowdfunding comes in several different forms. The form used often depends on the end goal for the project. For instance, an individual might be trying to raise money to pay their living expenses while they work to get a business idea off the ground. In other cases, the money might be used to pay for printing and marketing a book. In yet other instances, a small business might seek funding to get a product developed. Figure 10.18 provides an example of a beehive project funded with Indiegogo.

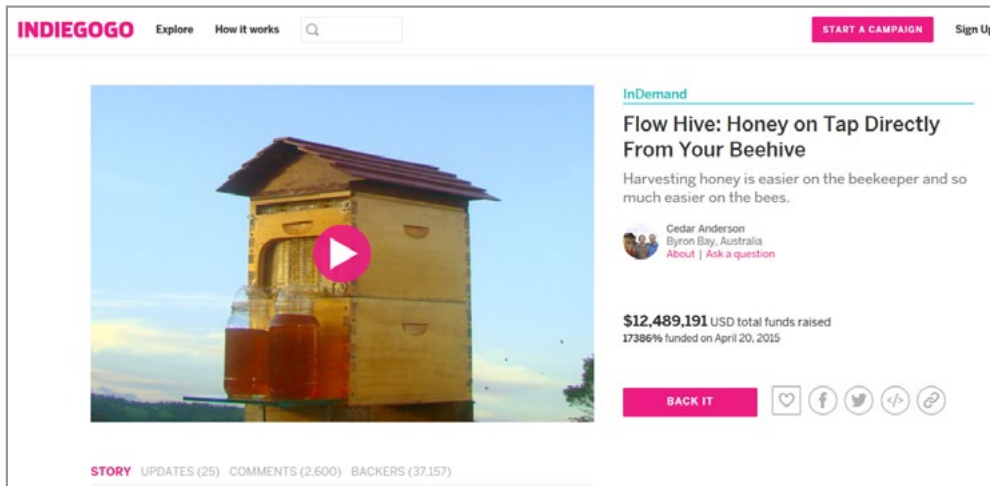





Figure 10.18 Indiegogo Beehive Example

The key to success in crowdfunding is two-fold. First, have a great idea and second be able to pitch it in a way that makes people wish to be part of what you want to do. Different crowdfunding sites have different approaches and tools, so it is important to ensure that your project idea is compatible with the site’s tools. The concept comes to life through social media interaction as the person seeking funding interacts with site users who are potential investors. Table 10.7 provides a list of several well-known crowdfunding sites.

| Site | Icon | Comments |
|-------------|---|---|
| Kickstarter |  | Kickstarter is the most popular crowdfunding site. It funds creative projects in categories such as film, music, and publishing. Its most successful projects are from the games, technology, and design categories. It does not accept projects for causes, awareness, charity or scholarships. Kickstarter only funds projects that have met their funding goals. It charges approximately 5% of the amount raised for every successful project. It funds all or nothing. |

| Site | Icon | Comments |
|-----------|---|--|
| Indiegogo |  | <p>Indiegogo is willing to fund more project types than Kickstarter including donations for charity, awareness campaigns, and scholarships. Indiegogo charges approximately 4% from every raised fund. It also offers a flexible funding plan. This means if a campaign fails to reach its financial goal, Indiegogo charges 9% of the fund, but the project still gets to take the remainder of the money raised.</p> |
| RocketHub |  | <p>RocketHub offers a 3-step process to upload a project then provides tools to track the funding progress and status. RocketHub's most popular feature is LaunchPad which presents offers for members to work with top-notch brands, marketing firms and companies. In a prize based format, members can receive help that ranges from their project being featured in various venues to full-blown marketing campaigns. RocketHub often attracts artists, musicians, writers, and photographers. RocketHub charges 4% for successfully funded projects, and 8% for those that do not meet the full goal.</p> |



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| Site | Icon | Comments |
|-------------|---|---|
| GoFundMe |  | <p>GoFundMe focuses on funding individuals and causes. As such, it relies heavily on social media connections. GoFundMe project examples include paying for tuition, traveling expenses, fees for a pet's operation, and so forth. It focuses on donations and generosity. GoFundMe provides a portfolio of social media widgets, a social media dashboard and other tools to help spread the message about a campaign. GoFundMe charges 5% of each donation.</p> |
| Crowdfunder |  | <p>Crowdfunder seeks to match Angel Investors to funding opportunities. It allows startups and small businesses to sell equity, obtain working capital and create revenue-based securities. It is more of a venture capital operation than a social media platform.</p> |

Table 10.7 Popular Crowdfunding Sites

10.8.3 CROWDFUNDING STRATEGY

Before using a social media enabled crowdfunding site, it is important to develop a strategy. Choosing the correct site is a crucial step in this strategy and that largely depends on the type of project being funded. Be sure to assess the costs, the rewards, the perks and benefits for each site.¹³⁵ Ultimately, crowdfunding is a sales pitch that must convince people to donate or invest money to help with untried concepts and new ideas. Projects must be interesting, realistic and unique. Figures 10.19 and 10.20 provide a look at Indiegogo projects and an Indiegogo timeline. Figures 10.21, 10.22, and 10.23 look at Kickstarter categories, project flow, and testimonials.

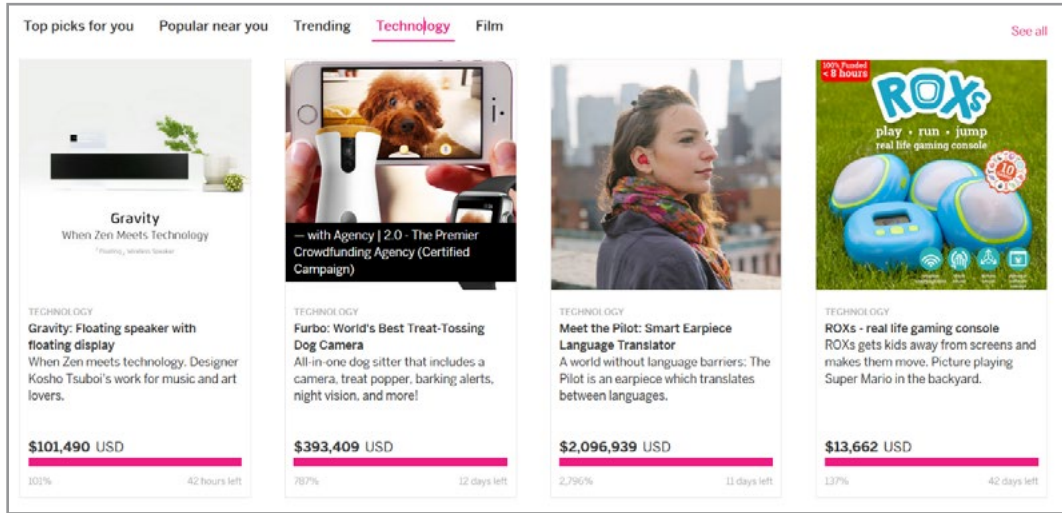


Figure 10.19 Indiegogo Sample Projects

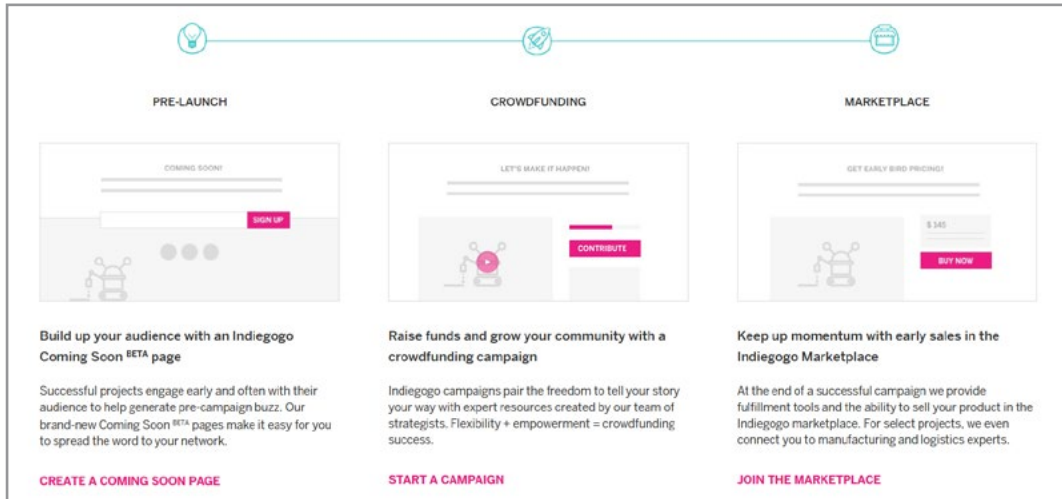


Figure 10.20 Indiegogo Timeline

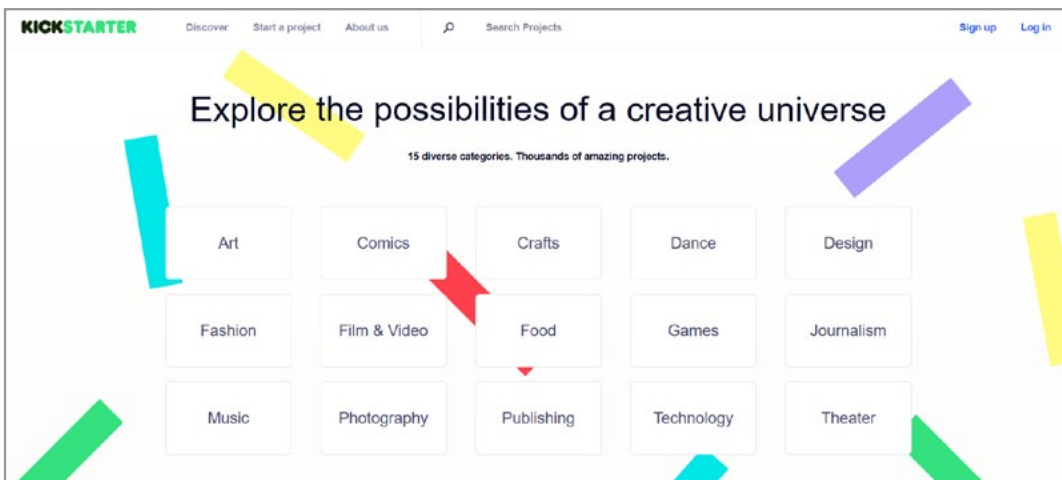


Figure 10.21 Kickstarter Categories

Running a project has never been easier. Take the tour.

1. Build your project
2. Get feedback
3. Launch it to the world!
4. Track funding progress
5. Funded!
6. Keep backers in the loop
7. Send rewards
8. You did it

We guide you through the process so you can present your ideas clearly.

Figure 10.22 Kickstarter Project Flow

Our tools are designed to experience pressures up to

35 Kpsi

That's 2,380 times atmospheric pressure, or **458 elephants** standing on a soccer ball.

Who are we?
We are the world's leading provider of reservoir characterization, drilling, production, and processing technologies to the oil and gas industry.

Who are we looking for?
We offer countless opportunities in the following domains:

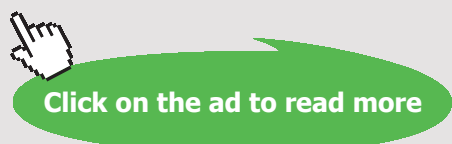
- Operations
- Research, Engineering, and Manufacturing
- Geoscience and Petrotechnical
- Commercial and Business

We're looking for high-energy, self-motivated graduates with vision and integrity to join our team.

What will you be?

careers.slb.com

Schlumberger



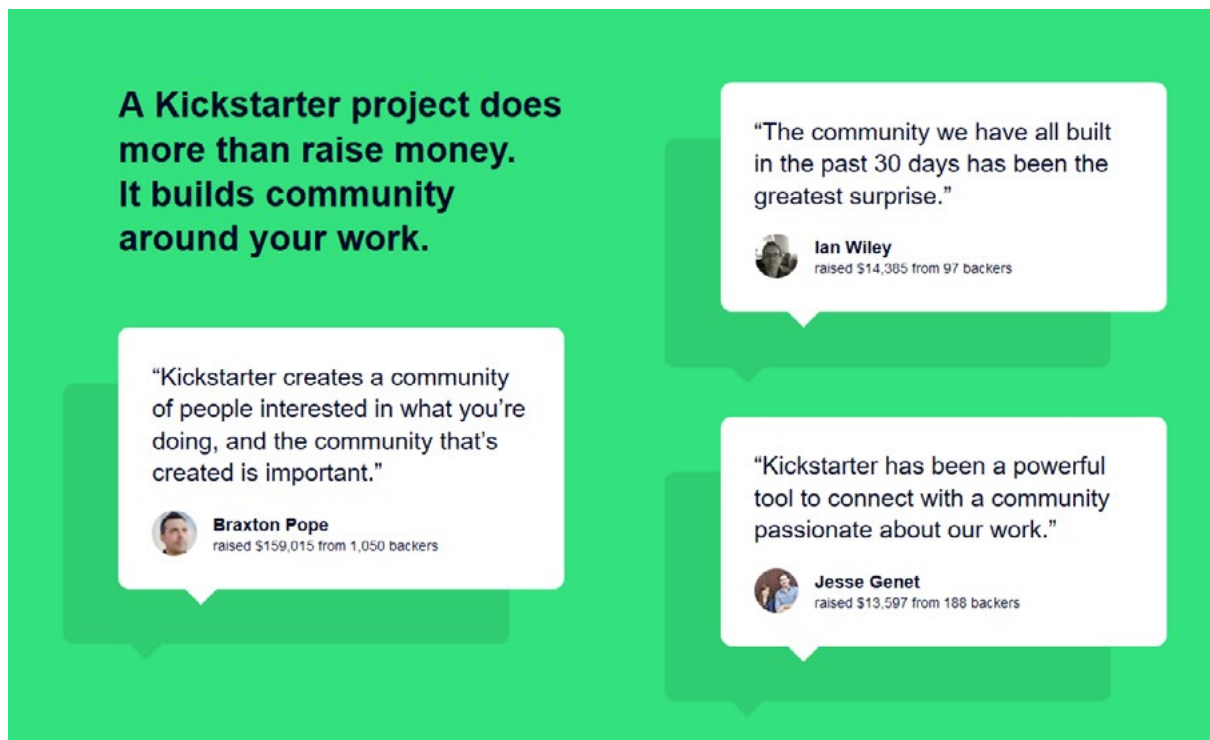


Figure 10.23 Kickstarter Testimonials

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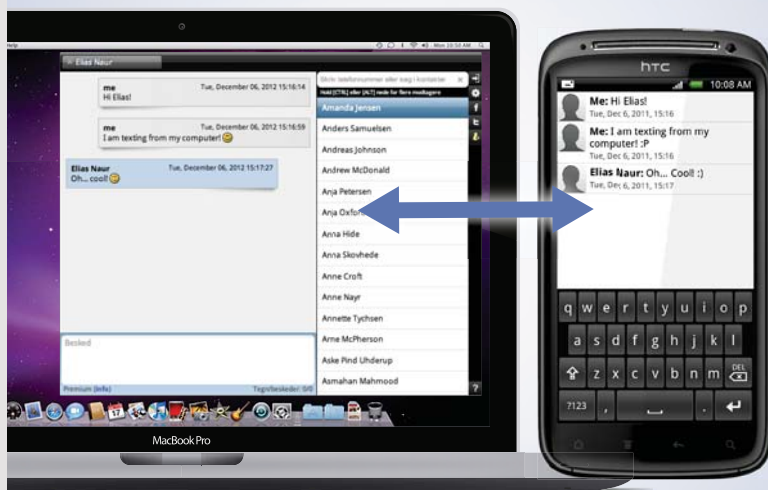
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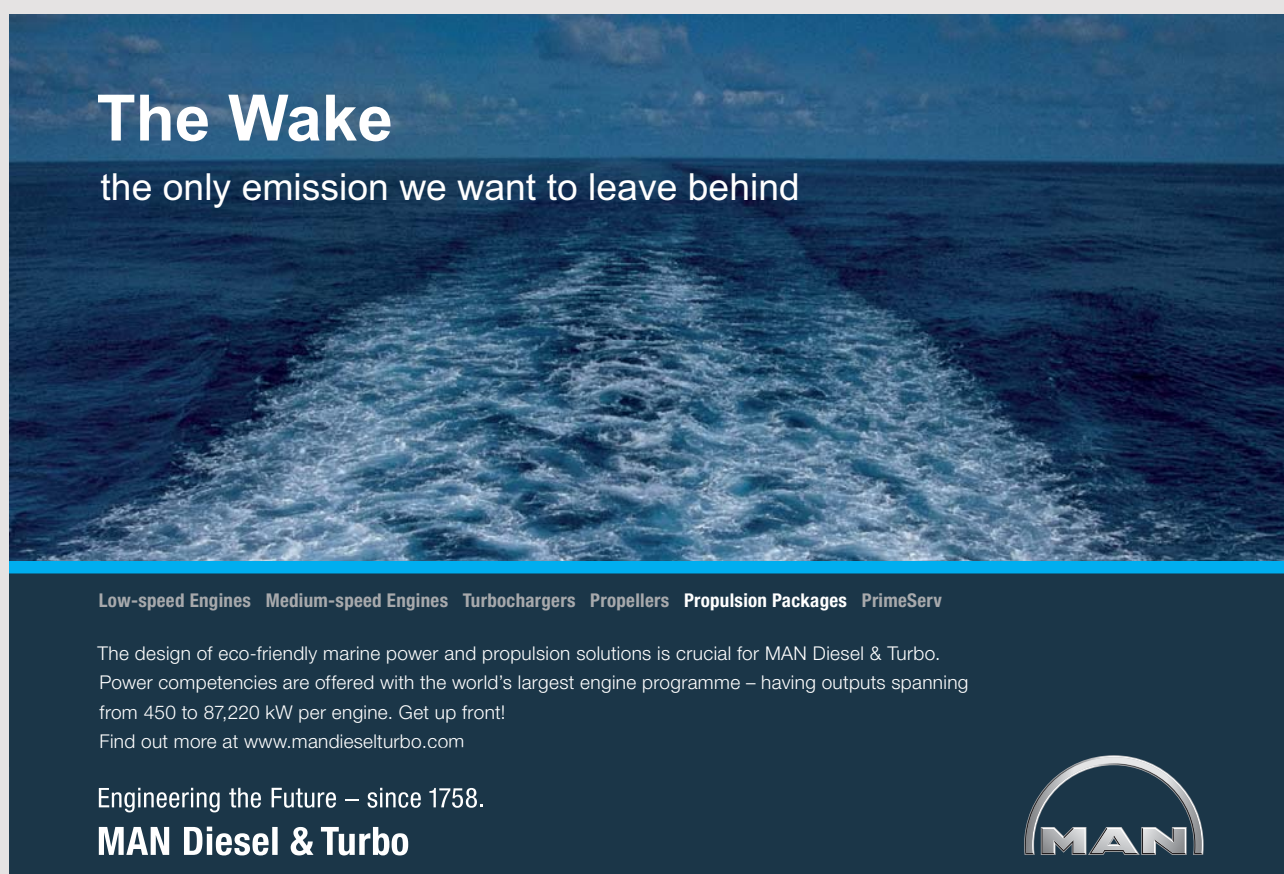
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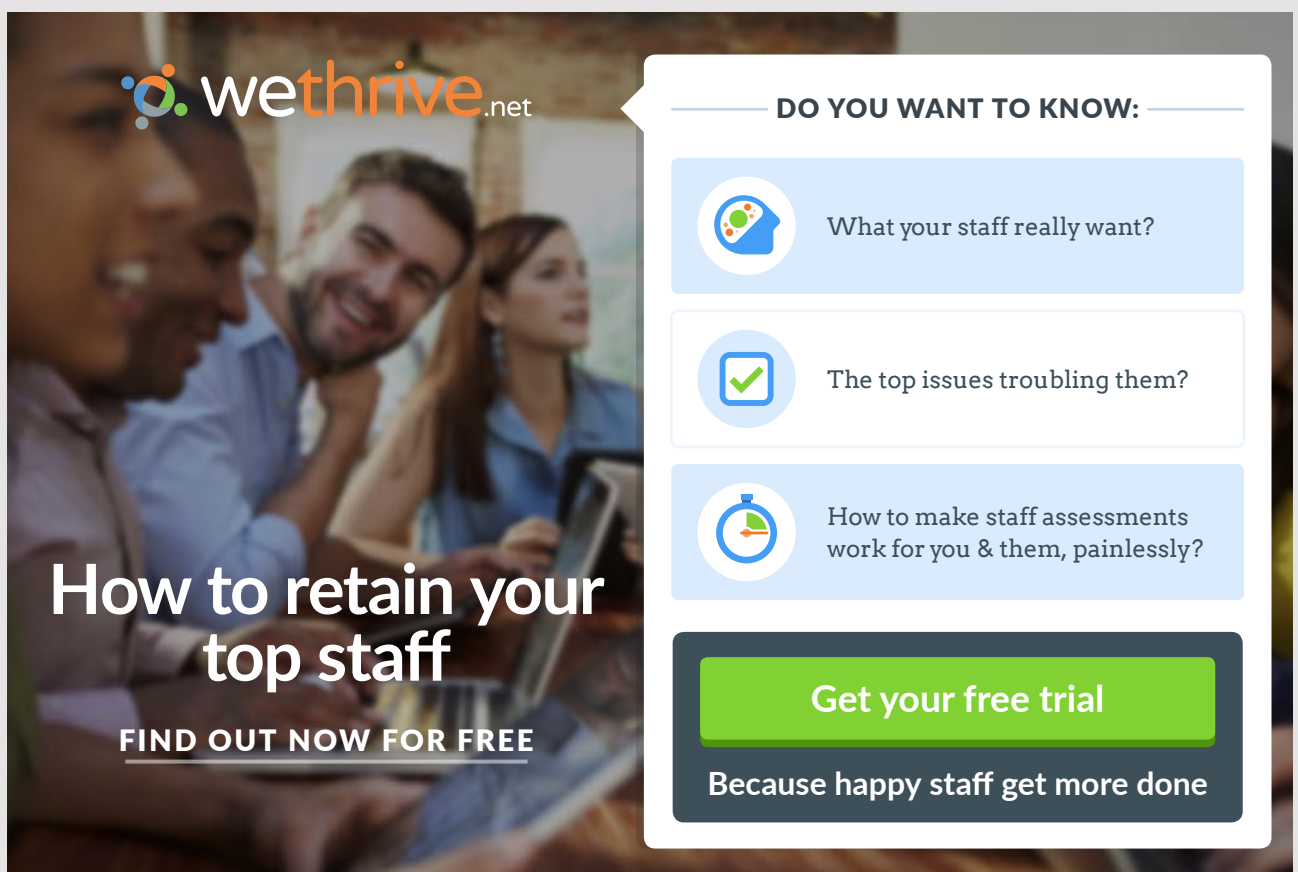
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APPENDIX A: APPLICATIONS OF WEB 2.0 TOOLS

Welcome! This chapter is intended to provide you with an introduction to a number of Web 2.0 tools, all of which should increase your facility with social media. We will spend time with software such as Jing, and then an array of social media and Web 2.0 tools including Blogger, Feedly, Dropbox, LinkedIn, Evernote, SlideShare, SoundCloud and others. Many of these resources reside “in the cloud” as they say. You will not have to worry about where they are – you will usually just need your userid and password. The good news is that all of them are free – at least for the introductory versions – and they will often provide you with a lot of storage space. The bad news is that because they are provided by many different companies, they will each have their own unique look and feel. If you are used to Microsoft Office or Google Docs, where all of the applications have the same look and feel, this can take some getting used to, but it is definitely worth the effort. We will give you a good running start with each of these applications, and will provide some additional resources in case you need/want to know more.



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A.1 JING

Jing is software that is provided, for free, by the Techsmith Corporation (<http://www.techsmith.com>). As you will see when you go to their home page, part of which is shown in Figure A.1, Techsmith offers almost a dozen different software solutions.

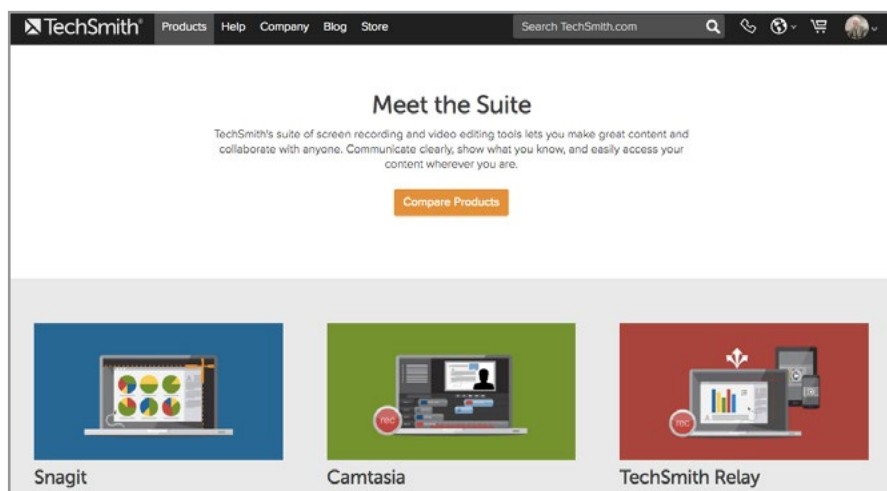


Figure A.1 Techsmith Welcome Screen

We will focus on Jing, because it provides several capabilities that are very powerful and very useful – specifically, the ability to capture screenshots (or partial screenshots) along with the ability to quickly and easily create short (under 5 minute) videos that can be shared with others. In addition, Jing provides storage space (for free) so that you can quickly and easily access your screenshots and videos whenever and wherever you might be. Let's get started.

A.1.1 DOWNLOADING AND INSTALLING JING

Proceed to the Techsmith home page (<http://www.techsmith.com>). Click on the products link at the top of the page, and then view all products, and then scroll down until you find Jing (See Figure A.2).

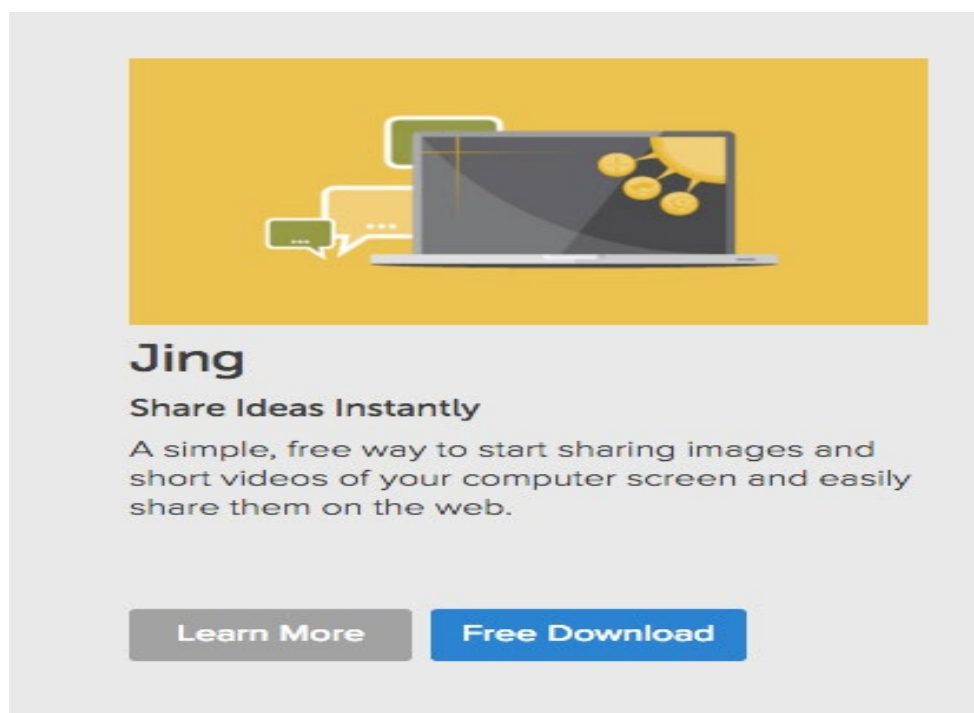


Figure A.2 Jing Download Page


When you select **Free Download**, you will be able to download a version for a Mac or Windows computer. Techsmith does a great job of walking you through the installation process.

A.1.2 GETTING STARTED WITH JING

Techsmith provides you with a video entitled *Taking Your First Capture*. **STRONG SUGGESTION** – Take three minutes to watch this video – it is well done and quite useful. The video provides you with an overview about how to capture images, and also about how to capture (or create) a video. Techsmith also provides a lot more help about Jing. In order to find all of these help videos, return to the Techsmith home page, and note the Help link at the top of the page. Select that, and then tutorials. You will note that the tutorials are organized by product, and Jing is one of them. When you select Jing, you will find that there are 26 tutorials. They are all short – a few minutes each – and well done – and they are broken down nicely by topic.

A good way to get started with Jing is to focus initially on capturing screenshots, and then saving them locally to your computer and then remotely to Screencast (more about Screencast shortly). When you save files locally to your laptop or desktop, you will find that they are saved as PNG files – which is an abbreviation for Portable Network Graphics. As Google tells us “**Portable Network Graphics (PNG /'piŋ/)** is a raster graphics **file** format that supports lossless data compression. **PNG** was created as an improved, non-patented replacement for Graphics Interchange Format (GIF), and is the most used lossless image compression format on the Internet.” These files are easy to store and use, and can be shared as well.

You may also upload your files to Screencast, which can be really helpful. So, what is Screencast and why should you care? Techsmith provides an answer to this question with one of their Jing tutorials (although it is listed about mid-way through the 26 tutorials). The link to that answer can be found at: <https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-jing-what-is-screencastcom.html>




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A short answer about Screencast, taken from that page, is that Screencast: “is TechSmith’s media hosting solution and it works great with Jing. Jing uses Screencast.com to securely host your content since it’s perfect for the kind of images and videos you’ll want to make with Jing. We also use Screencast.com so we can give everyone a [free](#), secure hosting option that enables the fastest visual communication possible!

- **Is Screencast.com free for Jing users?** [Yes](#). We give you 2 GB of storage, and 2 GB of [bandwidth](#) per month.
- **Is Screencast.com private?** Yes. Your content on Screencast.com is [your business](#).”

The really wonderful news is that Techsmith provides this resource for **FREE** – and it is yours, as soon as you register Jing with them. Your userid and password will be used for you to access your screencast account. **STRONG SUGGESTION:** Take some time to practice saving screenshots (images) – first as PNG files to your local computer, and then remotely to Screencast. As you will find, your Jing files are uploaded to Screencast for you, and each file will be given a unique hyperlink. With this in mind, it is good for you to give each file a name that you are likely to remember at a later date.

Here is what my Screencast account looks like; yours will look similar (See Figure A.3). Note that there is a special folder for all of the Jing files. (As you will note, I also have a Snagit account with them. You can purchase Snagit for about \$30 if you are an educator or a student.)



Figure A.3 Screencast Web site

When you go into the Jing folder, you will find all of the images and videos that you have chosen to upload to Screencast waiting for you. When you scroll over them, some icons appear on the left side that provide you with options. One of them, the Share option – will provide you with the information that you will need to share an image or a video with others. There is an excellent tutorial provided by Techsmith about Screencast. You can find it within the Jing tutorials list. You can also find it at: <https://www.techsmith.com/tutorial-jing-share-to-screencastcom.html>

A.1.3 FINAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT JING

Jing is an amazing piece of software. It is fast, it is free, and it is powerful. Many students report that it is one of the best things they have learned, in a class that focuses primarily on social media and Web 2.0 technologies – and technically, Jing is neither. (Although you should note that within Jing, you do have the ability to link Jing to your social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter and YouTube). And, there are some limitations that you should know about. First of all, the movies are created by Jing in SWF format. For those of you who might not know what that means, Google tells us that “**SWF** is a **file** extension for a Shockwave Flash **file** format created by Macromedia and now owned by Adobe. **SWF** stands for Small Web Format. **SWF files** can contain video and vector based animations and sound and are designed for efficient delivery over the web.” SWF files work well – but Jing will only permit you to create 5 minute videos. And, YouTube does not really know what to do with SWF files; if you intend to upload your videos to YouTube, you will have to learn how to convert the SWF files to a different format. And, you **CANNOT** send SWF files to others; it is best to upload them to Screencast and then provide others with the links to those videos. And, it is not possible to edit the SWF videos using Jing; if you wish to do that, you will need a more advanced software program such as Snagit.

If you find at some point that some of the Jing limitations such as lack of editing or video time restraints concern you, there is an answer – also provided by Techsmith. They sell a product called Snagit – for which the list price is \$49.95 – but there is a significant educational discount for those who qualify. Snagit provides many additional features – such as the ability to edit both images and videos, that go way beyond the initial Jing capabilities. Snagit will also permit you to save videos in file formats that YouTube will accept without having to do any file format conversions.

So, enjoy Jing; in all likelihood, you will get a lot of good use out of it – and you cannot really beat the price and the storage capacity that Techsmith provides. Now we will take a look at some other social media and Web 2.0 applications.

A.1.4 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR JING

The best provider of help for Techsmith products is Techsmith. As mentioned earlier, just go to the Techsmith home page, select Help, then tutorials, and then Jing. There are 26 tutorials – all well done – and most of them are not more than about 3 minutes or so in length.

Here is an additional tutorial (about 10 minutes) that you might find to be of help: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTz5sehAxN4>

And, there is a nice set of PowerPoint slides on SlideShare entitled Getting Started with Jing. Either find them on SlideShare (<http://www.slideshare.net>) by entering **Getting Started With Jing**, or go to the following link: http://www.slideshare.net/ProfDrAmin/getting-started-with-jing?qid=e5105c1e-4d3c-4501-8ef3-6b039cb5a0ce&v=&b=&from_search=1



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A.2 DROPBOX

Dropbox is a wonderful Web 2.0 resource. Dropbox provides you with 2 GB of free storage “in the cloud” as it were – for all of your many files. As Wikipedia tells us: “Dropbox is a file hosting service operated by American company Dropbox, Inc., headquartered in San Francisco, California, that offers cloud storage, file synchronization, personal cloud, and client software. Dropbox allows users to create a special folder on their computers, which Dropbox then synchronizes so that it appears to be the same folder (with the same contents) regardless of which device is used to view it. Files placed in this folder are also accessible via the Dropbox website and mobile apps. Dropbox uses a freemium business model, wherein users are offered a free account with a set storage size and paid subscriptions for accounts with more capacity.”

Once you have your Dropbox account set up, you will be able to access your files on your laptop, your smartphone, your tablet, or on some else’s computer using the Web access to Dropbox. This makes it quick and simple for you to store and then find files, as well as to share them with others. We will get you started with Dropbox, and then will refer you to some additional resources.

A.2.1 GETTING STARTED WITH DROPBOX

Proceed to the Dropbox home page, which should look like the one shown in Figure A.4:

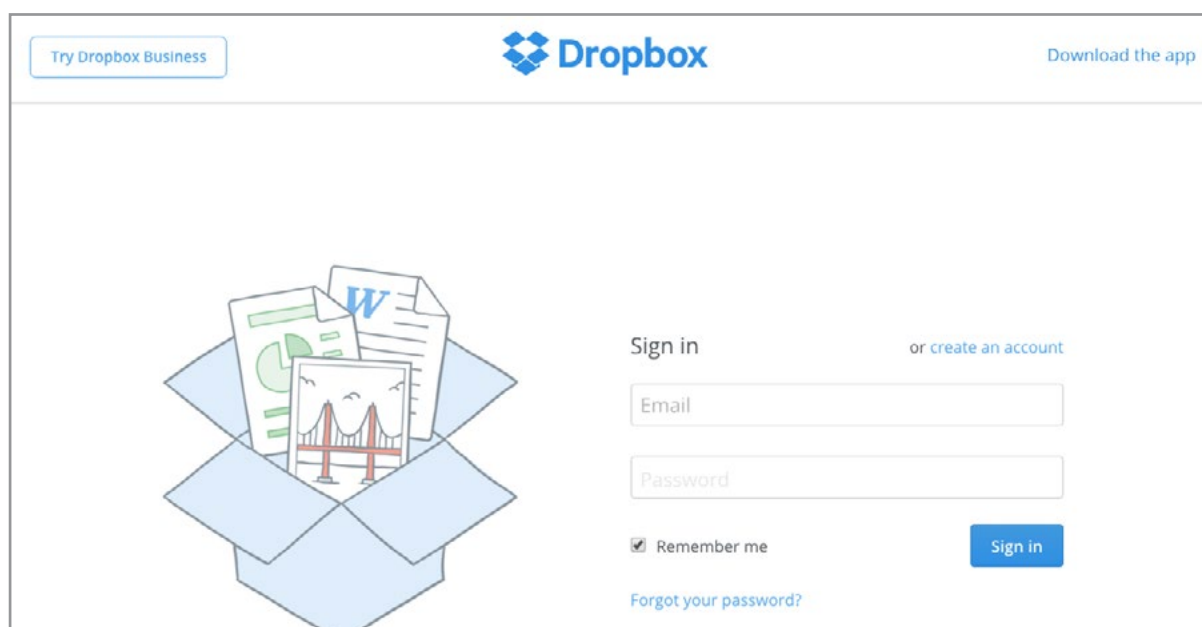


Figure A.4 Dropbox Home Page

Choose *create an account*, and provide them with your email and password. You will be greeted by the Dropbox welcome screen, which is shown below. **STRONG HINT** – take some time to complete these steps; Dropbox does a great job of providing some nice clear tutorials that are intended to welcome you to their product. And, note that that they will reward you with extra storage space as well (See Figure A.5)!

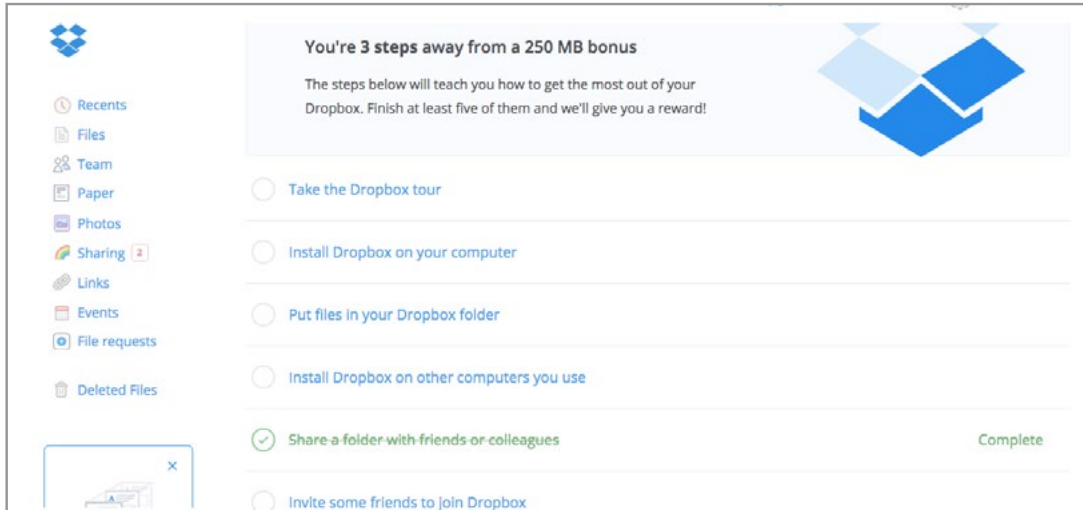


Figure A.5 Dropbox Welcome Screen

A.2.2 OBSERVATIONS ABOUT DROPBOX

Dropbox is an amazing Web 2.0 resource once you get used to having it in your life. The fact that you can now access your files from anywhere, at any time, using almost any device available – laptop, phone, tablet or someone else’s computer – is amazing – and the fact that it is free is even more amazing. Dropbox is a great example of the power of cloud computing, and how it is transforming what we do and how we do it. And, you can actually download the Dropbox application, and install it on your computer (either Windows or Mac), in addition to being able to use it on the Web. Once you do so, it resides there as an additional location where you can store your files. Note how Dropbox appears in Figure A.6:

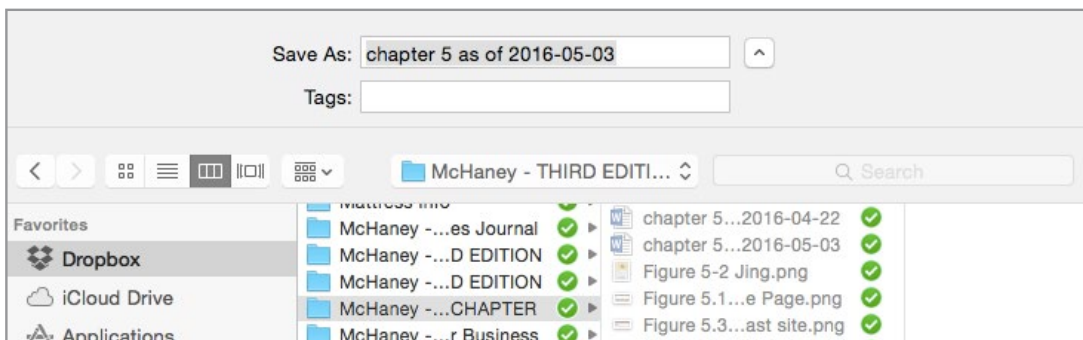


Figure A.6 Dropbox Installed on a Mac

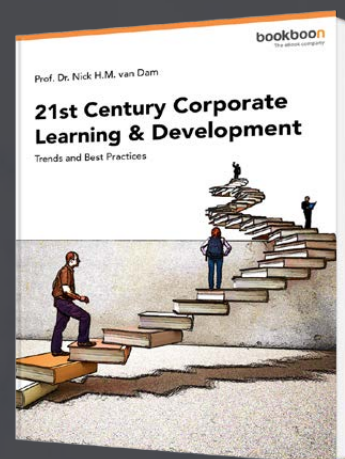
In addition to storing files, Dropbox does a wonderful job of synchronizing them after they have been installed. You will quickly find that Dropbox does this synchronization automatically, without your having to do anything. So, if you are working on a project, and you have various versions of a file before it is complete, you can save these versions to Dropbox, and know that they will be stored safely, and will be available whenever and wherever you next need them.

Finally, you should take time to learn about how to share Dropbox files with others. If you have the free version, these features are somewhat limited, but they work. And, if you ever decide to pay for the professional version (about \$100 for the year – with 1 TB of storage) – you will then have additional features. Note in the image below how several Dropbox folders are shared; in each case we are told who is the “owner” of that folder, and who has access rights to it. Once you take the time to learn about sharing – **and the Anson Alexander video at the end of this section does a good job of showing how to do that** – then you can quickly and easily use the sharing feature. It is a great way to work with teams, and extremely useful. Here is the illustration of some of the shared folders in my Dropbox account (Figure A.7):

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| Name ▲ | Modified | Shared with |
|---|--------------------|---|
|  CIS101 | -- |  |
|  CIS 133 | -- |  |
|  DI slides | -- |  |
|  Getting Started.pdf | 12/3/2013 12:00 PM |  |

Figure A.7 Shared Dropbox Folders

A.2.3 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR DROPBOX

Here are some really useful resources as you learn more about Dropbox. The first one, which is really excellent, is provided by Anson Alexander, and is called *Dropbox Tutorial 2015 – Quick Start*. This one takes 18 minutes to watch – but is well worth the time. He covers all of the many features provided by Dropbox, in a nice, clear and informative fashion. You should also note that Anson Alexander regularly updates his videos – meaning, that the 2015 version is the most current one, but you might wish to check YouTube to see if there is a more current one available. Here is the link to the 2015 Dropbox video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29qfd5zDU8A>

The second one is a video entitled “Everything You Need to Know About Dropbox” by Steve Dotto. It takes about 7 minutes to watch the video – and even though it is a few years old, it is chock full of useful information that still works with the current version of Dropbox. You will also note that some other tutorials about Dropbox are listed on the YouTube site as well. You can locate Steve’s video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6tkGSIFsH0>

Finally, for those of you who might like to know about some of the extra features of Dropbox, there is an excellent posting entitled “15 Things You Didn’t Know You Could Do with Dropbox” on the MakeUseOf.com Web site (<http://makeuseof.com>). There are some very powerful (and relatively easy) suggestions provided, that will give you increased power and use of Dropbox, once you have mastered the fundamentals. Here is where you can find this really interesting article: <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/15-things-didnt-know-dropbox/>

A.3 EVERNOTE

Evernote is another example of a really outstanding cloud computing Web 2.0 application. Evernote, which is similar to One Note – provided by Microsoft with the most recent versions of MS Office – is available for most current operating systems and platforms. Evernote can be installed on your laptop, phone and tablet, and automatically will synchronize itself in real time. Evernote provides you with the ability to take notes, to save images, to search quickly and easily within your notes using tags or key words (or by geography) – all in an amazingly short period of time. You can take notes in a class or at a meeting, and then share those notes with others – and also have the ability to search for things that were said – all instantly, and easily. Evernote comes in three different versions, as you can see in Figure A.8, but you can feel free to begin with the free version, until you see whether or not you need the more advanced and costly features.

The screenshot displays three pricing tiers for Evernote, each with a corresponding icon: a circle for Basic, a circle with a plus sign for Plus, and a circle with a checkmark for Premium. The Premium tier is highlighted with a green checkmark icon and a green plus sign icon.

| BASIC | PLUS | PREMIUM |
|--|---|---|
| All the simple tools you need to start getting organized. | Step up to more space, mobile features, and peace of mind. | The complete Evernote experience for being your most productive. |
| For occasional use, Evernote Basic includes: | Expanded for frequent use, Evernote Plus adds: | Designed for constant use, Evernote Premium adds: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 60 MB of uploads per month + Clip from anywhere on the web + Share and discuss in Evernote + Sync across phones and computers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 1 GB of uploads per month + Access notes when you're offline + Add passcode lock on mobile apps + Save email into Evernote | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + 10 GB of uploads per month. More than enough space for our most active users + Search in office docs & attachments + Turn notes into presentations + Annotate attached PDFs + Scan and digitize business cards + View previous versions of notes |
| | | Get Premium for your team |

Figure A.8 Evernote Options

A.3.1 GETTING STARTED WITH EVERNOTE

It is easy to begin with Evernote – just go to: <http://www.evernote.com> and click on the *Sign Up Now* button, as seen in the figure below. You can sign up on your laptop or desktop; once you have done that, be sure to download the apps for your phone and tablet (See Figure A.9).

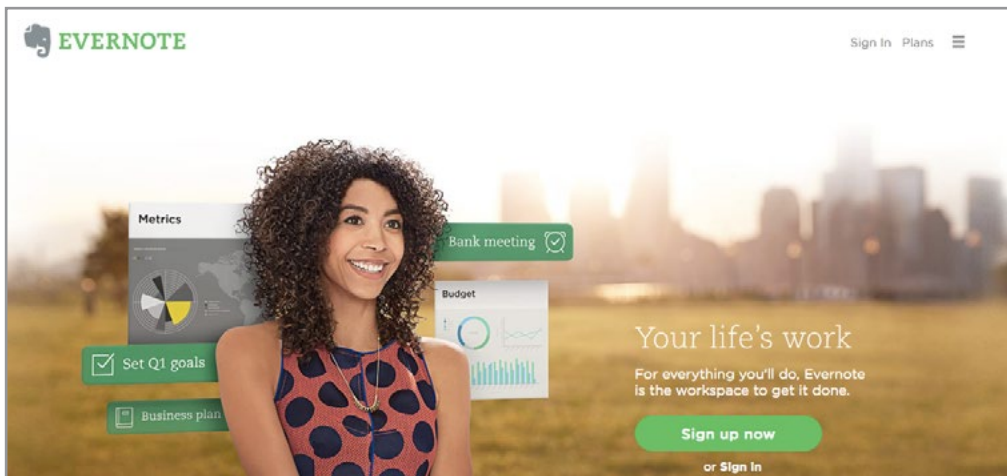


Figure A.9 Evernote Sign Up Now Page

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You will notice information about Plans in the top right of the sign up page; for the moment, you should feel free to begin with the free plan. You can always change later, and there is no loss of data. Once you have signed up, you will see the Evernote *Let's Get Started!* page – shown in Figure A.10. Note that they are ready to provide you with some quick help about how to do various tasks with Evernote. **STRONG HINT** – it is useful to take a few minutes to go through some/all of these topics. In this case, just click on the topics that are of interest to you. As soon as you do so, helpful notes will be added to your Evernote account, where you can read them and follow the directions. If you are interested in them all, then just click on them all, and all of the help screens will appear in your Evernote account. You can figure Evernote out on your own; this just makes it a bit easier. And, there are some additional resources provided at the end of this section that might also be of use.

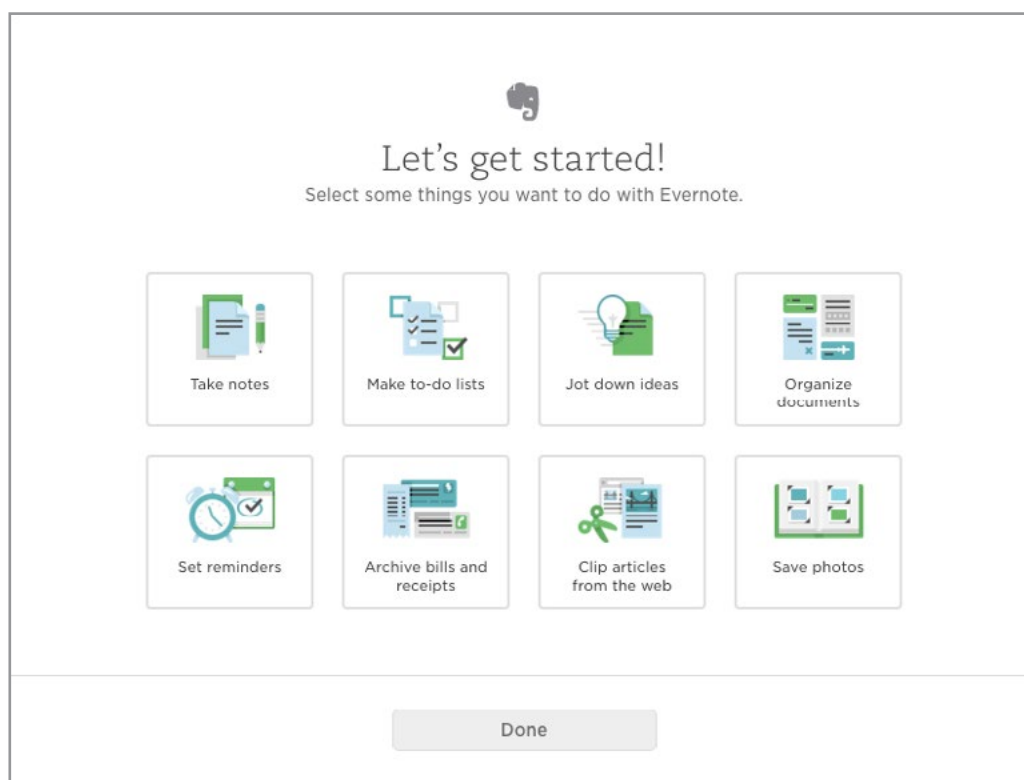


Figure A.10 Evernote Let's Get Started Page

For one of the options, *Clip Articles from The Web*, you will learn about the *Evernote Web Clipper*. This is an extension that can be quickly and easily added to your browser. Once you have downloaded the extension, you can then just copy and paste interesting Web pages, or sections of Web pages, to Evernote. If you choose this option, once you have downloaded the extension, you will be taken to a page (shown in Figure A.11) that also includes an introductory video. Take a minute to watch the video; it provides a good clear introduction to this feature – and will make you want to start using it immediately!

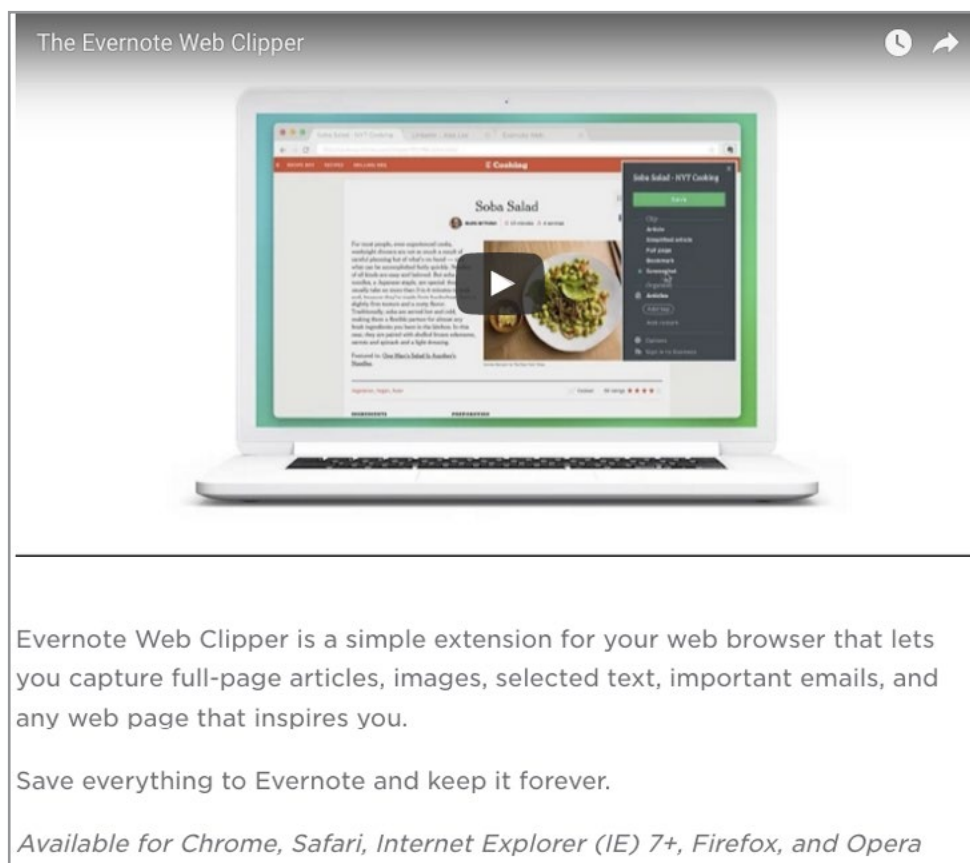


Figure A.11 Evernote Web Clipper

A.3.2 EVERNOTE OBSERVATIONS

As you will soon discover, Evernote is about to become an indispensable part of your “Web 2.0 toolkit”. This cloud-based, extremely powerful, user friendly application, will make you wonder how you managed to get along without it. And, as you will see later, there are other Web 2.0 applications (such as Flipboard) that now make it possible for you to send files from them directly to Evernote. So, not only can you use Evernote as a standalone application, but you can also use it as a storage zone and a search zone for files from other places.

Once you have started to save notes, you will begin to think about how to find what you have saved. Be aware that you can store files with tags, and you can also put files into notebooks with different names. You can also use the search box at the top of the page, and if you enter a word or a phrase, Evernote will highlight all of the notes that you have saved that contain that word or phrase. In addition, Evernote provides you with geotagging features – each of your notes is time and date stamped, and they also contain information about where you were when you entered that note. So, you might not remember exactly what was said, or when, but you might remember where it was said, and Evernote will let you find it that way.

A.3.3 EVERNOTE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As you might imagine, there are many excellent resources available for Evernote. One of them is a 25-minute video, titled *Evernote Tutorial 2015 Live*. It is chock full of information about Evernote, and is very well done. If you are going to use Evernote – this is a great way to get started – and will show you the beginning features of Evernote, along with some of the more advanced ones. You can find this tutorial at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UoDcIuGr3LM>



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And then there is the *YouTube Evernote Channel*. Provided by Evernote, this channel contains 240 (!) videos, on almost any Evernote topic imaginable. They have videos about Evernote and various operating systems, beginning and advanced features, interoperability with other applications, etc. You could probably spend many many hours watching all the videos that are there. Here is where you can find these tutorials: <https://www.youtube.com/user/EvernoteVideos>

A.4 SOUNDCLLOUD

As it states on their Website “SoundCloud is a global online audio distribution platform based in Berlin, Germany, that enables its users to upload, record, promote, and share their originally-created sounds.” Founded in 2007, SoundCloud permits users from around the world to have quick and easy access to musicians worldwide. Many individuals know about SoundCloud as a place where they can go to listen to music – but for our purposes, the attraction of SoundCloud has to do with the fact that they also make it quick and easy for ordinary individuals to upload music or podcasts. And, once those podcasts have been uploaded to SoundCloud, it is then quite easy to share those files with others, either by providing the URL, or by embedding the SoundCloud code into a blog. **We will focus on how to create, upload and share podcasts in this section of Web 2.0 tools.**

A.4.1 GETTING STARTED WITH SOUNDCLLOUD

It is easy to begin with SoundCloud. Just go to their home page – <http://www.soundcloud.com> – and create an account. Once you do that, you will see a screen that looks a lot like the one in Figure A.12:

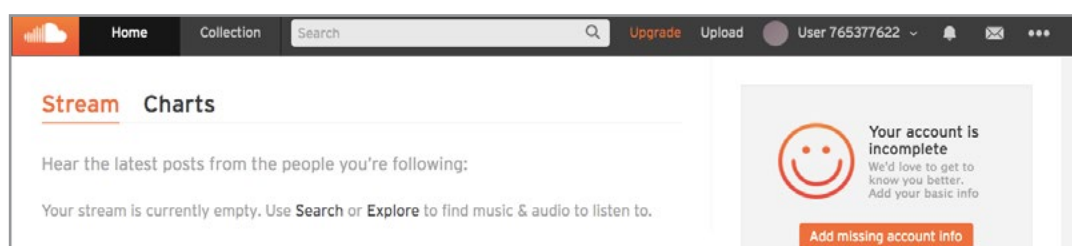


Figure A.12 SoundCloud Welcome Page

Note that they will encourage you to add some information about yourself. SoundCloud also provides lots of options for you to listen to music that has been created by others. But for our purposes, we will focus on the *creation* side of using SoundCloud – and for that we need to begin with the Upload link at the top of the screen. (**IMPORTANT** – if you ever decide to sign out of SoundCloud – it is not obvious how to do so. Just click on the three dots on the very right hand side of the top of the screen, and down at the bottom of the drop down menu, you will see a sign out link.)

When you click on the Upload link at the top of the page, you will come to a screen such as the one that is shown in Figure A.13:

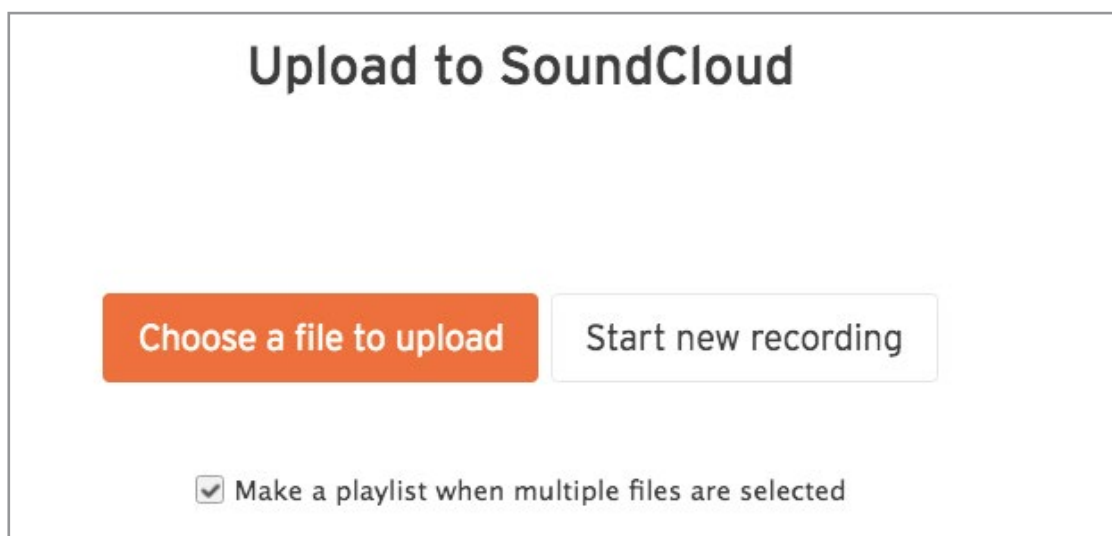


Figure A.13 Upload to SoundCloud

You will notice that you can choose to upload a file if you already have one. SoundCloud is very liberal about the audio files that they accept – so, if you have a file or files that you wish to upload, that should be an option. But for our purposes, we will choose *Start new recording*. When you do so, it takes you to a screen that looks like Figure A.14:

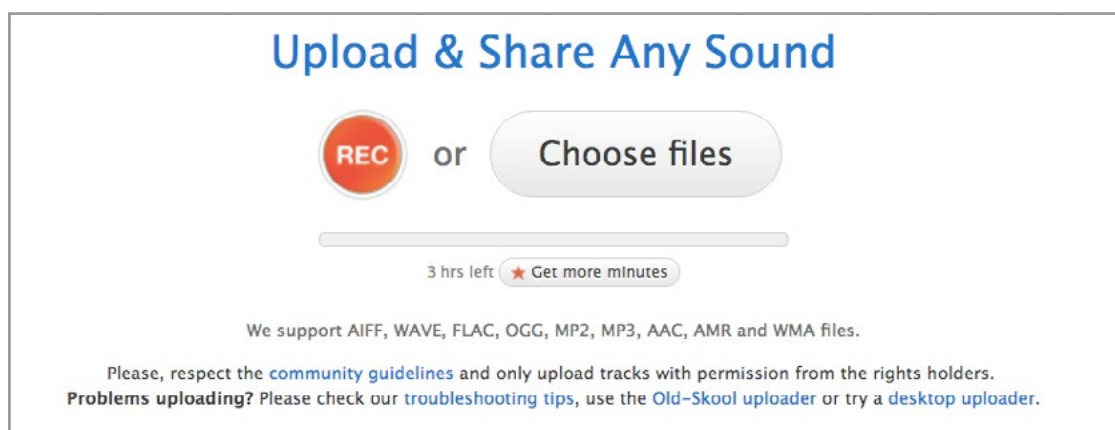


Figure A.14 Upload & Share Any Sound

Note that they support almost any audio file that you can think of. They also tell you how much upload time you have left, and how (of course) to upgrade your account so that you can have more minutes. As you can see, there are basically two options – you can either Record (REC) a new file, or you can choose to upload (Choose files) an already existing one. If you are interested in recording your sounds – music, words, or a combination – then just click on the REC button. When you do so, it takes you to the screen shown in Figure A.15:

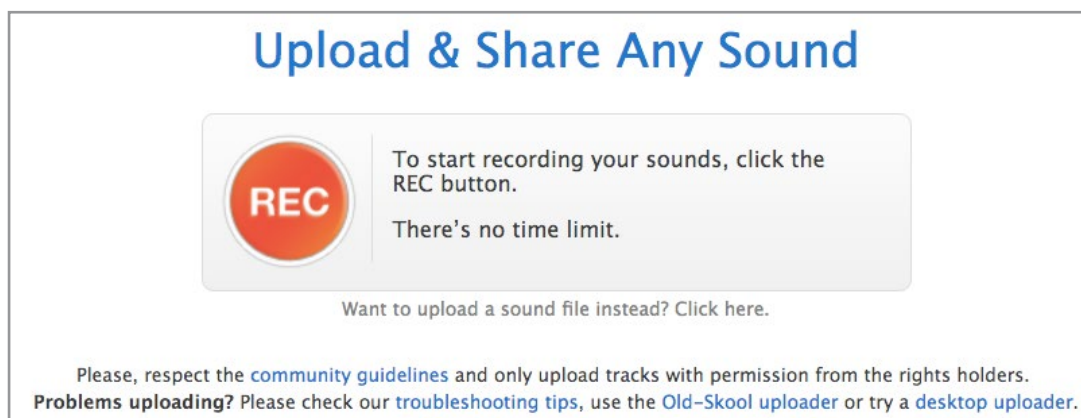


Figure A.15 Recording Your Sounds

As you can see, they make it very easy to figure out what to do. You should feel free to use the microphone that comes with your laptop, or you can use a headphone microphone. If you are going to do a lot of recording, you might find that the quality of a headphone microphone is worth the investment.

When you click on the REC button, you should find that you are immediately in record mode. It takes a little time to get used to that idea – so you want to be prepared with what you are going to say or read or record. Once you have recorded something, your screen should look like the one shown in Figure A.16:



Figure A.16 Demo File

You can click on the red arrow to playback what you have done. You can also choose to start over if you are not pleased. But, if you like what you have created, you can just click on *Upload your recording* to upload the file to SoundCloud. As soon as you choose to upload your recording, you will be taken to a screen like the one in Figure A.17, filled with choices. Feel free to work your way through the choices, choosing the ones that feel comfortable to you.

Upload & Share Any Sound

Upload completed Transcoding completed

Info

Title *

Audio Recording on Tuesday afternoon

Permalink: <http://soundcloud.com/dsachs47/audio-recording-on-tuesday-1>

Image ? Description

Upload image

Type Genre | Please enter one

Recording

Tags | Separate with spaces or use quotation marks (e.g. "spoken word") - limited to 30

Selected License: **All Rights Reserved** Change License ?

▶ Show more options | Add a buy or video link and more metadata

Settings

• Public | This track is currently available to everyone

Figure A.17 Upload Choices

Note that you can give your file any title that you choose – and you also have a lot of flexibility about the licensing of what you have done and also about whether or not your new creation will be available to the public or not. You can also choose to share your files on Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr. And, you can choose to let others download the file (or not) and whether or not the embed code for your file will be made public. Once you choose to upload your file, SoundCloud will quickly do so – and you should wind up with a screen that looks like Figure A.18:



Figure A.18 Demo File on SoundCloud

Of particular interest is the **share button** down at the bottom of that screen. Once you click on the share button, you will see that you have a wide array of choices, which will enable you to share your new creation with many different social media. As well, you could copy the URL for the file, shown at the bottom of the Share Choices – and then email that URL to others. Your screen should resemble the one in Figure A.19 – filled with social media options including Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Google+ and Pinterest.

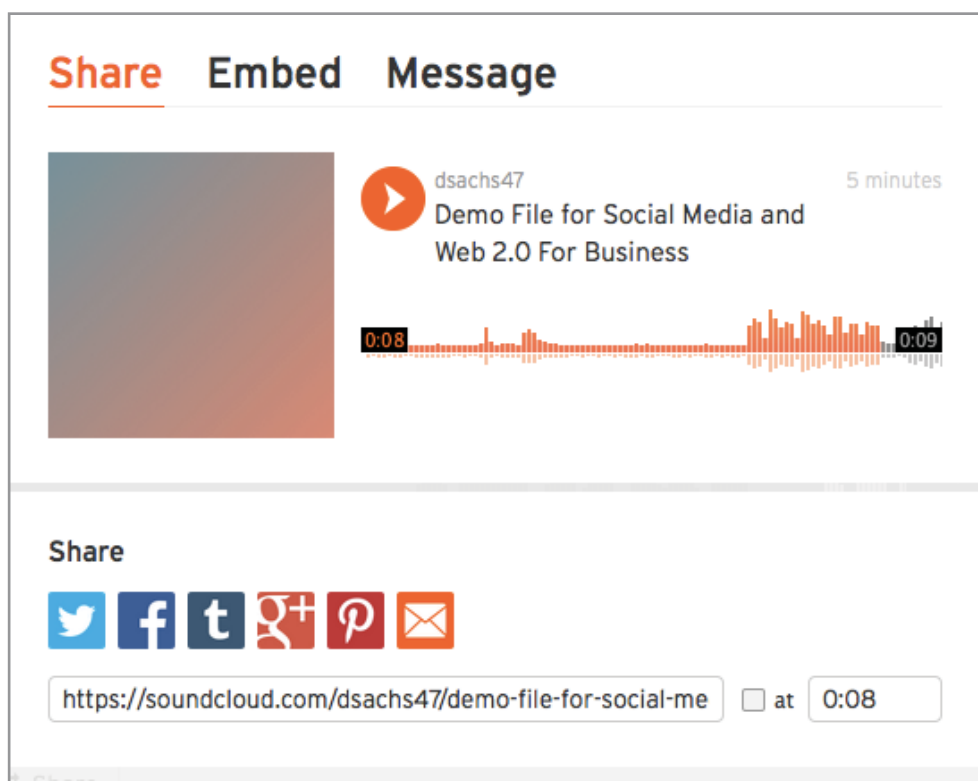


Figure A.19 Share Options

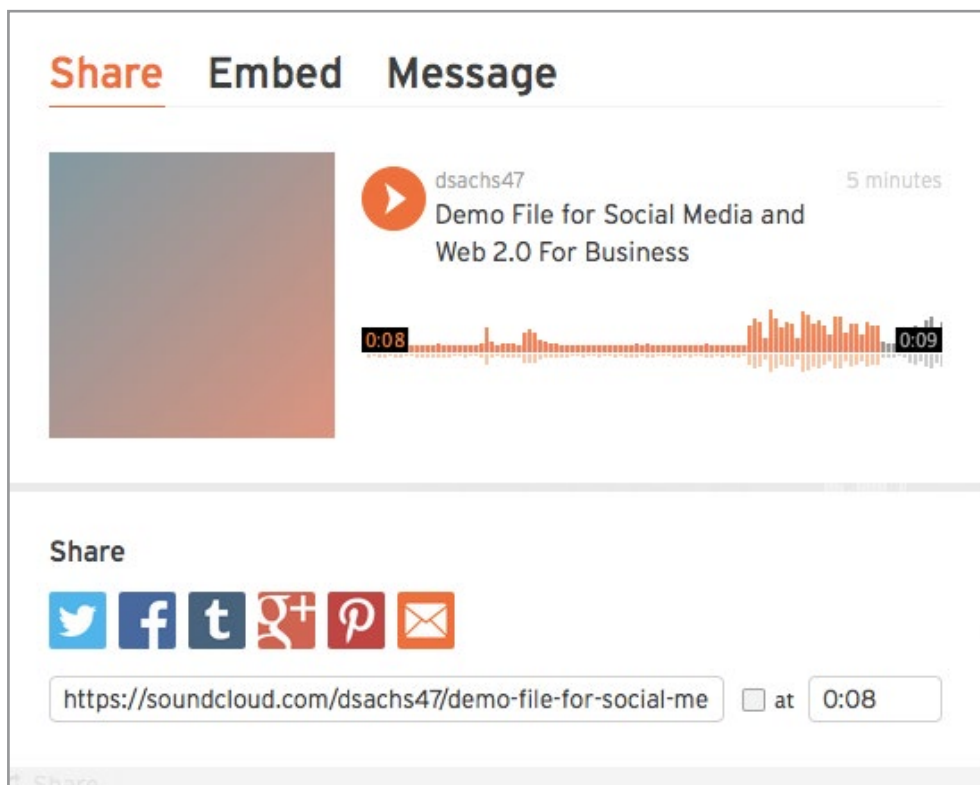


Figure A.19 Share Options

All of these options are excellent – and they mean that you can create a podcast, or record some sounds, and then quickly and easily share them with your followers. **IMPORTANT:** There is one more option that is extremely useful to know about, and that is found by clicking on the **Embed link** at the top of the Share Options page. When you do that, you will be provided with a screen that looks like Figure A.20:

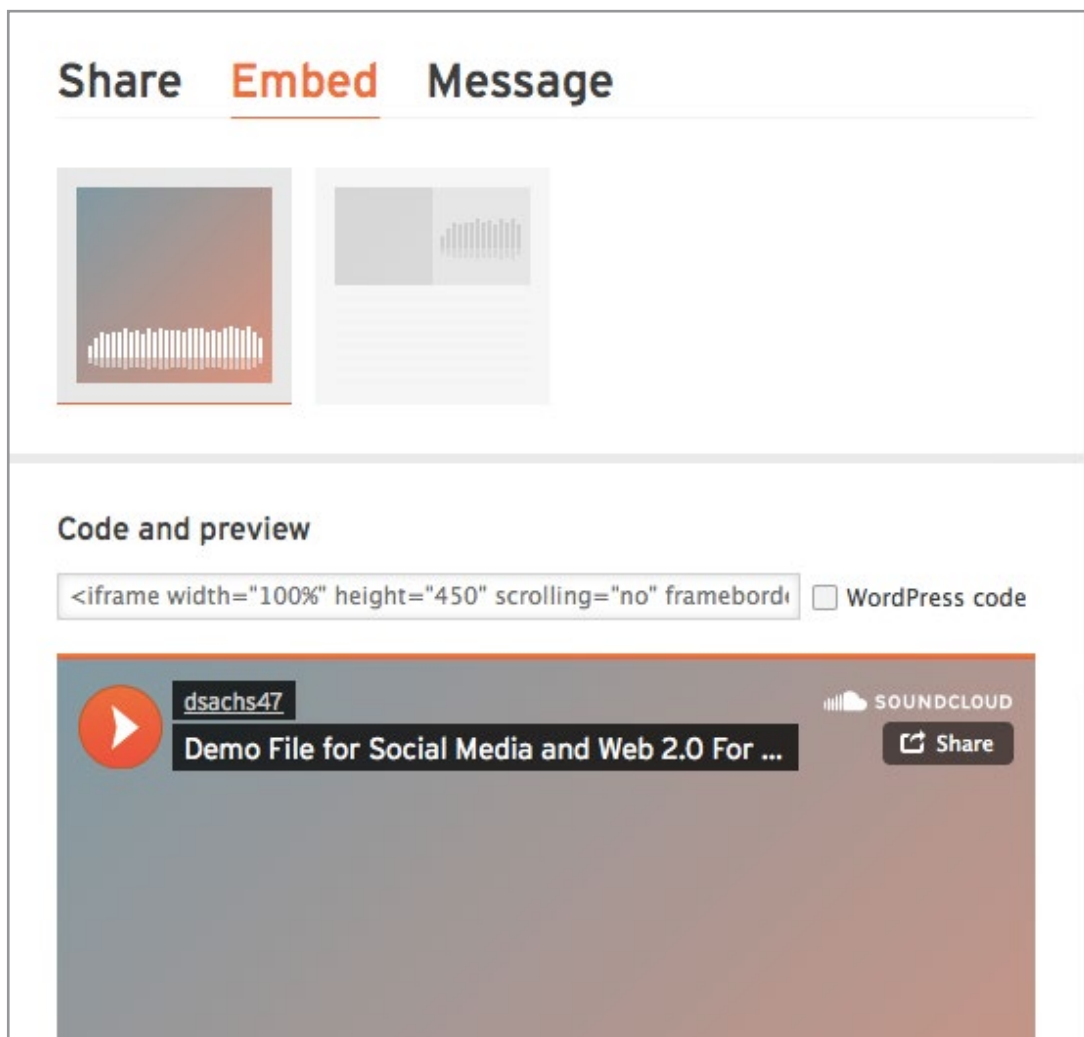


Figure A.20 Share Options

The important piece of code – **the embed code** – is located under the words *Code and Preview*. You can copy and paste that embed code into your blog – such as Blogger. **NOTE** – if you have Word Press, then just click on the *WordPress code* box, and you will be given the correct code for your WordPress blog.

A.4.2 SOUNDCLLOUD OBSERVATIONS

SoundCloud provides a quick and easy and rather powerful introduction to the world of podcasts. Many individuals who try this for the first time, remark on how amazing it is to be able to create a podcast in such a professional way – so easily. It is also true that many individuals who try this for the first time do not like hearing the sound of their own voices, realize that it is a lot harder to talk for two or three minutes than it initially appears to be, and that it might take some work and practice before perfection is achieved. But having said that, if you have a blog, or you have a following on one of the many social media, and you want to share your actual voice and thoughts with your followers, Sound Cloud provides a powerful and rather quick way to do that.

And, having said that, there are a few things to consider. Sometimes some browsers work better than others with SoundCloud. While preparing this demo, it became clear that Google Chrome was not interacting well with the SoundCloud record button, but Firefox worked perfectly. So, if you run into similar issues, just try another browser; that often seems to solve the problem.

And, you might have noticed that SoundCloud does NOT provide you with an edit option. To some extent, what you record is what you get to live with – and that can be a challenge. Sometimes your SoundCloud recording is going really well – but then you cough or hesitate or someone makes a noise, and now you wish you could fix that. If you find that you are going to do a lot of sound creating – podcasts or music or whatever, then you might want to spend time learning more about Audacity, which was mentioned earlier in this book. Audacity is a wonderful, well respected, free, multi-track, editor and recorder – and it is well worth the time to learn about it if you are going to do a lot of recording. You may download Audacity at this following site: <https://sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/>

A.4.3 SOUNDCLLOUD RESOURCES

One resource is called *How to Use SoundCloud to Record or Post Audio*. It is a good, clear 4-minute video that shows how to create and upload audio files to SoundCloud. It is very well done and quite easy to follow. You can watch this video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1F7mGAfLYjY>

The second resource is called *Welcome to SoundCloud* – and it provides a good clear overview of SoundCloud – the entire SoundCloud, not just the podcast part that we have focused on. You can find that video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7hh7IRPOdE>

A.5 FEEDLY

It is possible that you have already heard about RSS Feeds, a really important concept that helps to provide interrelationships on the Web. In this example of a Web 2.0 tool, we are going to look at an excellent example of how RSS Feeds can be really useful, and how they can be used to provide you with quick and easy access to Web resources located all over the place. And, most importantly, how you can use RSS feeds, in conjunction with feedly, to better organize your access to these resources. Our example is called feedly, which was mentioned earlier in this book. As Wikipedia states: “feedly is a news aggregator application for various Web browsers and mobile devices running iOS and Android, also available as a cloud-based service. It compiles news feeds from a variety of online sources for the user to customize and share with others. feedly was first released by DevHD in 2008.”

You can find feedly on the Web at: <http://www.feedly.com> and you can also find it available for iOS and for Android phones and tablets. As they say in their Welcome screen: “Welcome to feedly! A single place for all the knowledge you rely on to keep ahead.” If you have lots of blogs in your life, or other Web resources that contain RSS feeds, then you will definitely want to learn how to use feedly. Let’s get started.

A.5.1 FEEDLY INTRODUCTION

To begin with, let’s go to the feedly home page. It should look like the image in Figure A.21:

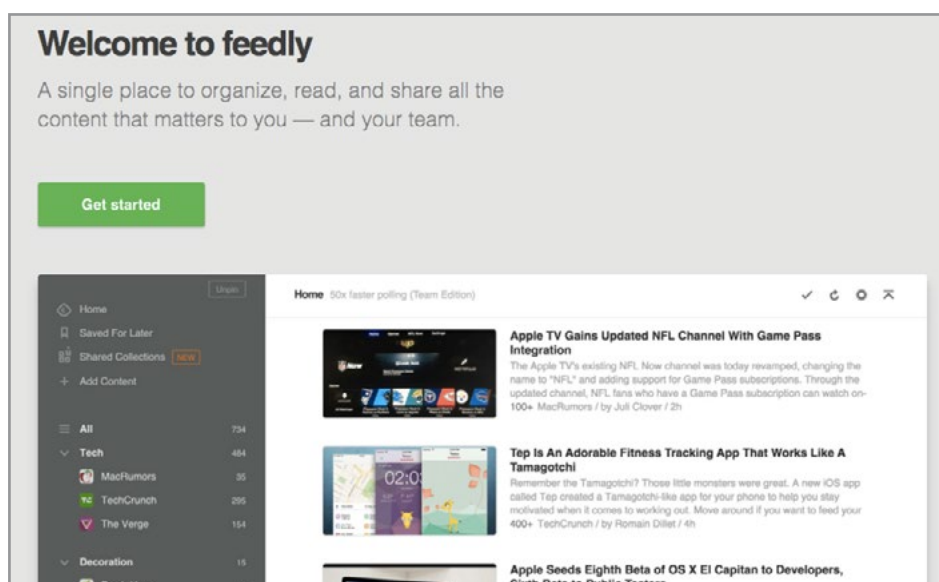


Figure A.21 Welcome to feedly

When you click on Get Started, you will be taken to a screen that provides you with several ways to get started. Note how tightly feedly is linked to an array of social media – and notice how easy it is to sign up. Here are your options (See Figure A.22):

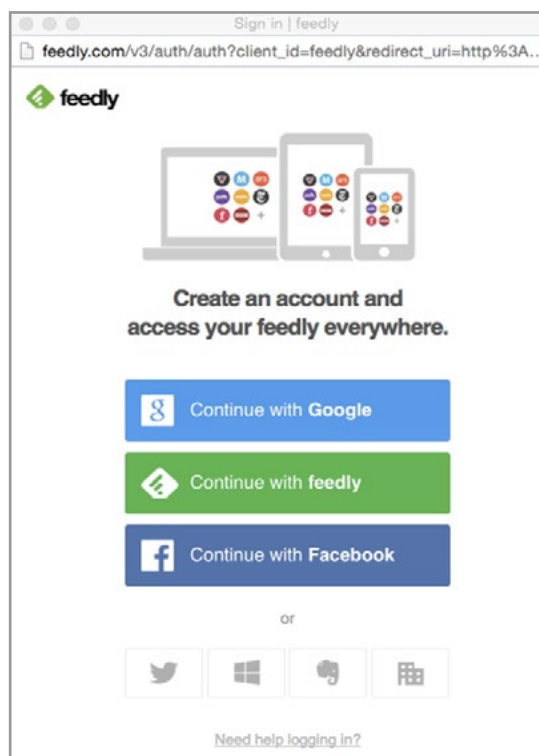


Figure A.22 feedly Getting Started – Create an Account Page

Once you have created an account, you will be taken to the feedly **Adding Content Page**, shown below. Note that you have several different ways to populate your feedly site. You can add content that you have already discovered elsewhere, you can choose to add some of the content that feedly provides to you, or you can search for new content. There is no “right” answer here; you can choose to add content using any or all of the ways that feedly provides. Here is what the blank add content page looks like in Figure A.23:

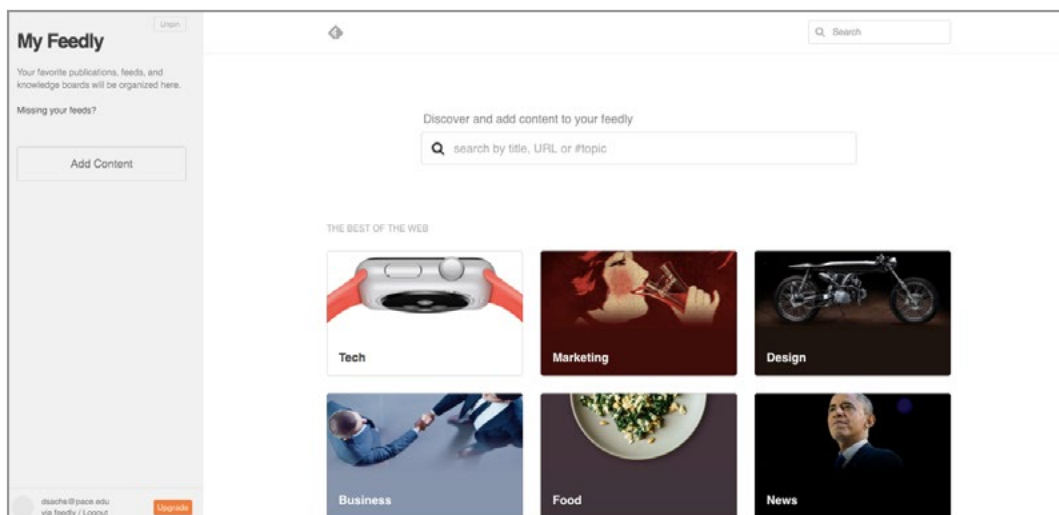


Figure A.23 feedly Adding Content Page

I have an interest in Costa Rica, so the first thing that I wanted to do is to add some of the blogs that I have found about Costa Rica to my feedly. I already have saved these blogs. Now I want to add them to feedly, so I will be able to go to one location (feedly) and find them all. To do this, I just copy and paste the name of the blog into the Add Content box (on the left hand side in Figure A.23). As soon as I paste in the name of the URL, a new set of choices appears. See Figure A.24 below.

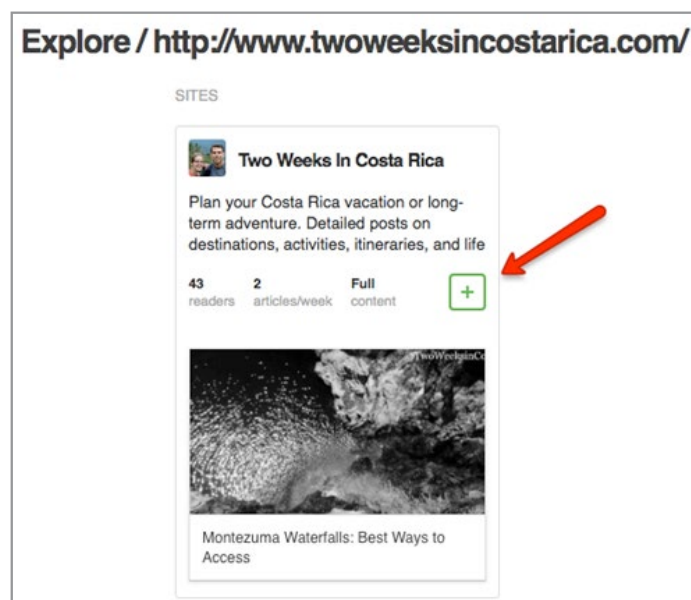


Figure A.24 feedly Adding a Blog Page

Note that feedly provides a short description of the blog, information about the number of readers and the postings per week, and feedly also provides a box with a large green plus sign. Clicking on that box, enables me to set up my new feedly collection – so that I can have all of my blogs about Costa Rica, in one nice organized folder (collection) called Costa Rica. See Figure A.25:

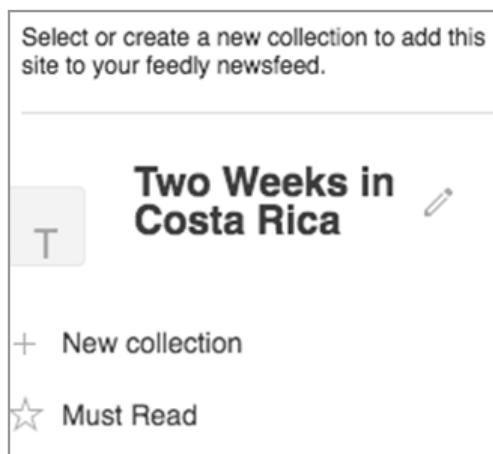


Figure A.25 Adding a New Collection to feedly

Once you have created this new collection, it is quick and easy to add the rest of your blogs to it. Just keep selecting Add Content, paste in the URL of your blog, and then click on the Green plus box and add it to your collection. I was able to add five blogs to the Costa Rica collection in a few short minutes. Here is what it looked like when I finished (Figure A.26):

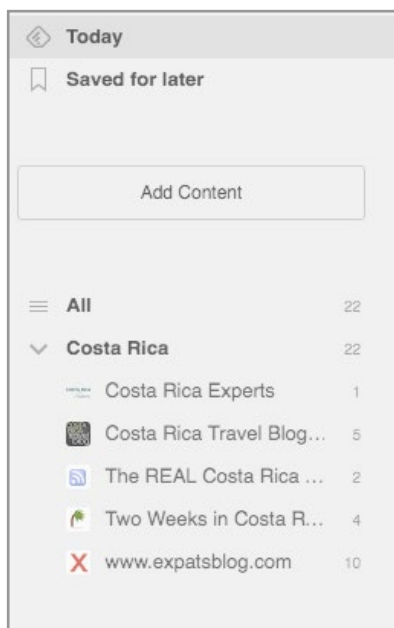


Figure A.26 feedly with Blogs Added

A.5.2 FEEDLY OBSERVATIONS

Feedly is a powerful, user friendly, easy-to-use example of a great Web 2.0 resource. You can have “one stop shopping” for your Web resources – such as Blogs – where all you have to do is go to one location, and you can find all of your collections. And, perhaps most importantly, you do not have to remember all of their varied URLs. In addition, feedly is a great way for you to be able to share your collections with others. There are other more advanced features as well.

A.5.3 FEEDLY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Getting Started With Feedly – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMc_baxglks

A 7-minute video that provides you with a good, clear introduction to feedly. Gives you an overview of the basic features, along with some advanced ones.

Feedly Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9AZEiWYCHo>

This tutorial is about 10 minutes in length, and again provides a good overview of feedly, along with some suggestions about how you can use it for content curation and for sharing.

Unofficial Guide To Feedly: Better Than Google Reader: <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/unofficial-guide-to-feedly-better-than-google-reader/>

This tutorial, which is really well done, was created in 2013. That was the year when Google announced that they would no longer provide Google Reader. Until that time, Google Reader had been the RSS reader that most people used – so initially there was a lot of consternation. The good news is that feedly came along, and, as you can see, some people think that it is a lot better than Google Reader.

A.6 FLIPBOARD

As you have just seen, feedly provides you with a great way to organize many of your own resources. With Flipboard, we turn to another Web 2.0 resource that takes that concept of organizing resources from many sources (curating, as it is sometimes called) to another level. Flipboard is a wonderful site, that you can access on your phone, your laptop, or your tablet. As Wikipedia states: “Flipboard is a social-network aggregation, magazine-format mobile app localized in more than 20 languages. The software collects content from social media and other websites, presents it in magazine format, and allows users to “flip” through their social-networking feeds and feeds from websites that have partnered with the company.”

We will take a minute to look at the Flipboard home page – and several of the options that they are offering to you. The first screen shot just shows a welcome page – similar to ones that you have seen before, and they provide the option of signing up with either Facebook, or with your name, email and password. **IMPORTANT:** If you were to only look at the first screen, you would miss a lot of Flipboard’s features. So, take a look at the sign up page, and then we will move on (See Figure A.27).

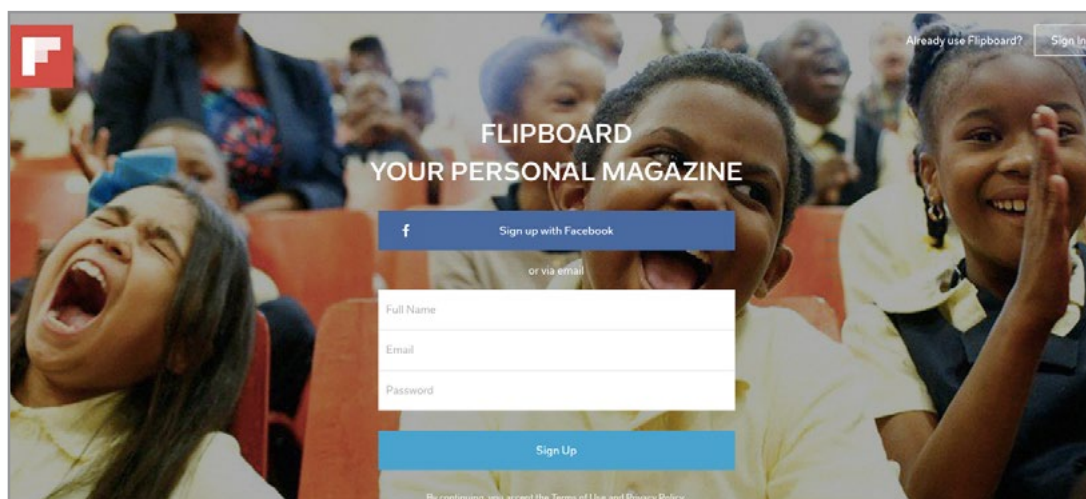


Figure A.27 Flipboard Sign Up Page

In this second page, shown in Figure A.28, you begin to get a sense of the power of Flipboard. You can see that they are ready to help you find stories from many different areas. This screen offers DIY (Do It Yourself), Social Media, Yoga, and Technology for starters.

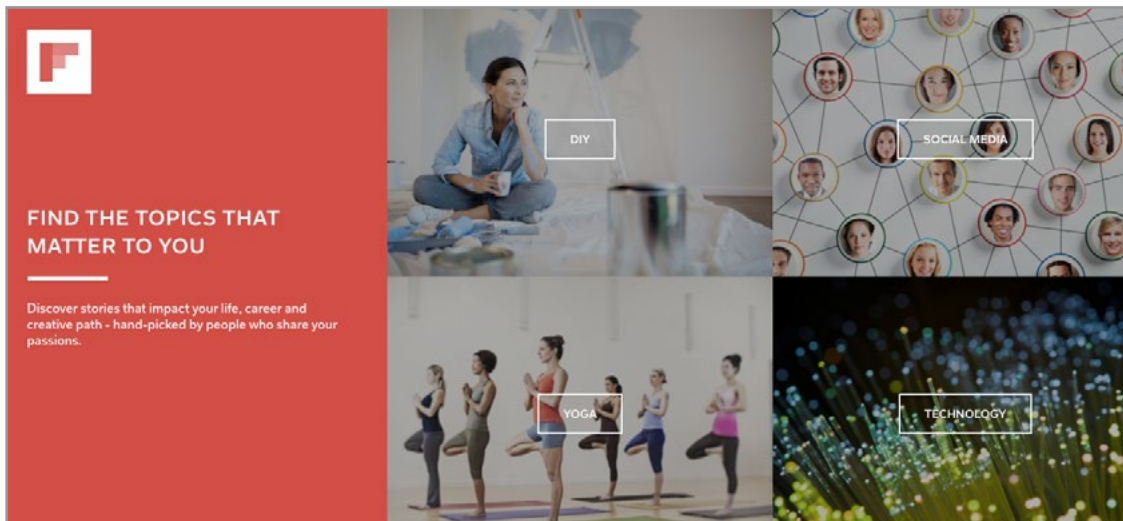


Figure A.28 Flipboard – Find The Topics That Matter To You

In the third screen, shown in Figure A.29, we see that Flipboard offers more topics, including Space Exploration, Tech and Arts, and How to Style, and they also give you a hint that you will be able to save articles, videos and photos, and then share them with others, after you have organized them into your own digital magazines.

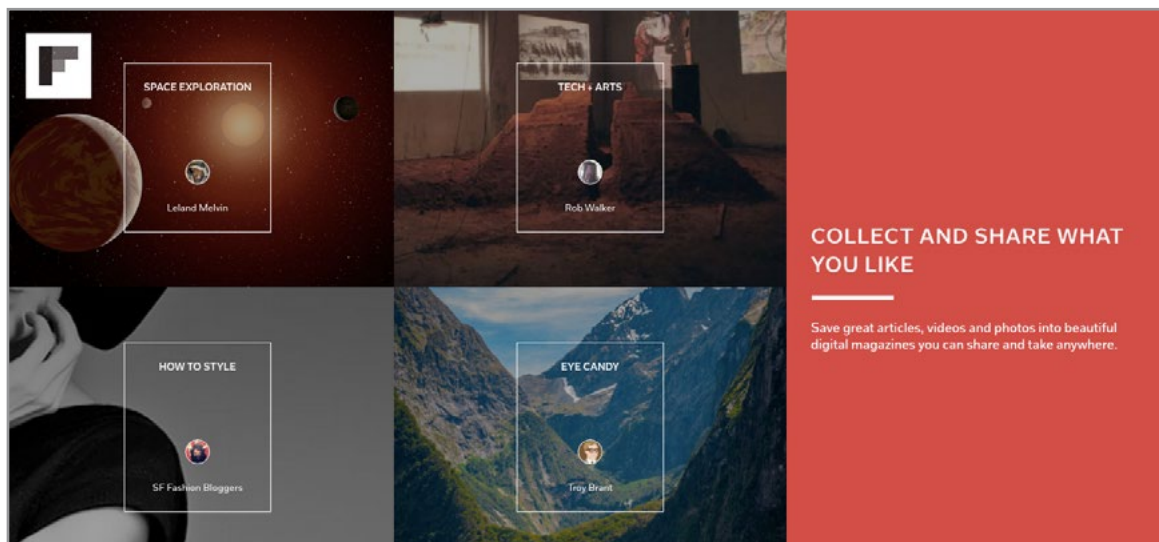


Figure A.29 Flipboard – Collect and Share What You Like

And finally, in the fourth screen, Flipboard provides you with a hint about all of the many resources that they access. Notice that this screen (Figure A.30) depicts the New York Times, Fast Company, National Geographic and the Wall Street Journal – for starters.

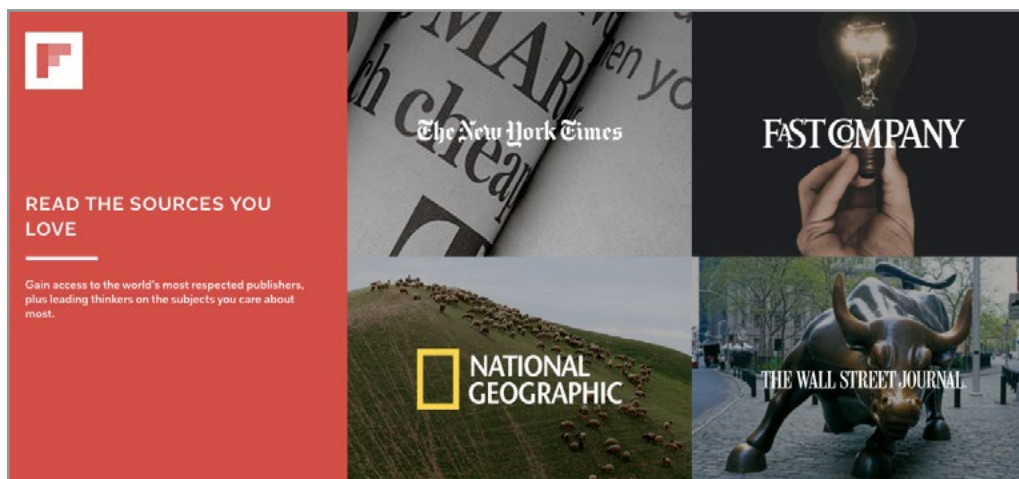


Figure A.30 Flipboard – Read The Sources You Love

So, as you can see, Flipboard offers you many varied options for the news and information that you might like to have in your life. Let's get you started.

A.6.1 FLIPBOARD – GETTING STARTED

It is easy to get started with Flipboard. Just go to their home page – <http://www.flipboard.com> and create a new account for yourself. **IMPORTANT** – Please note – you can also have Flipboard on your phone and tablet – the process is almost the same as shown here – the screenshots just look a bit different. Once you provide them with your name, email and password, you will come to a screen like the one below. Note that they are very “encouraging” about the fact that you have to sign up for at least seven topics, in order to have your own personalized Flipboard. Shown in Figure A.21 is the screen and their choices:

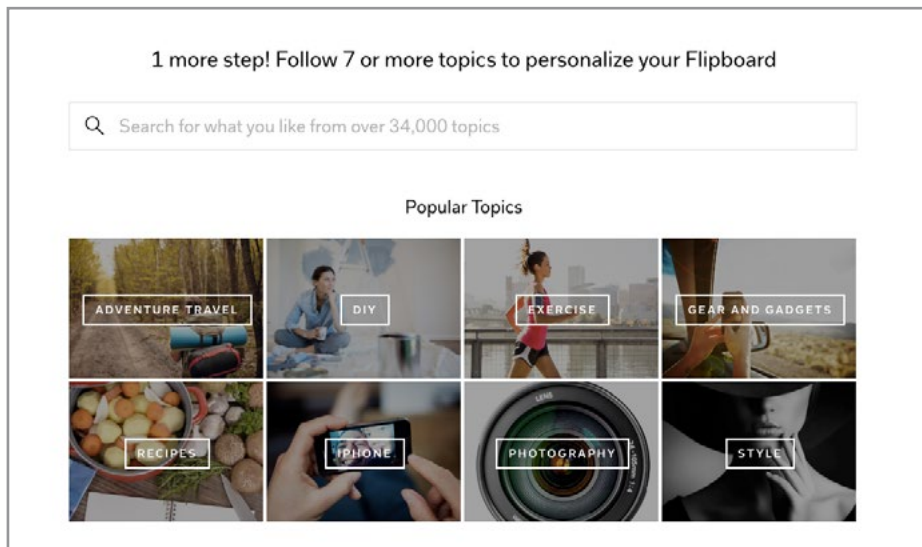


Figure A.31 Personalizing Flipboard

Note that they provide 34,000 (!) topics from which you can choose. As you select each one, the topic turns blue and there is a little checkbox. Be aware that you can change these choices at any time, quickly and easily. Once you have selected 7 (or more) choices, you will see a message that compliments you at the bottom of your screen, and which also instructs you to hit **Done** so that you can see your Flipboard. See Figure A.32:

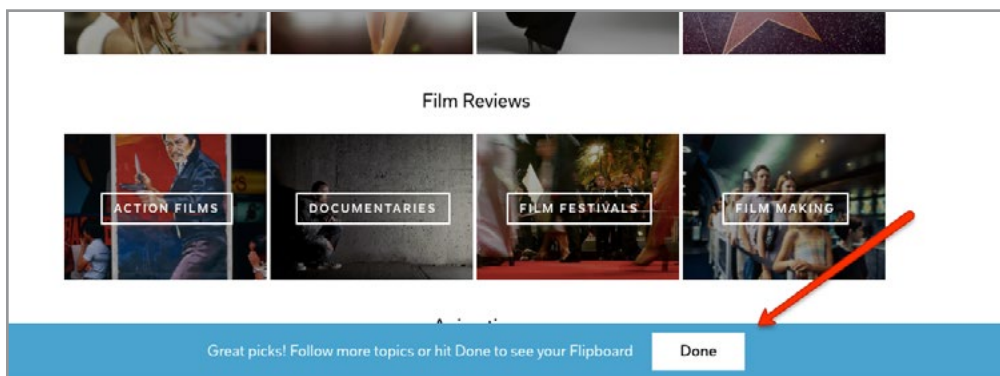


Figure A.32 Flipboard – Done Picking Choices

Once you select Done, you will be taken to a screen that will begin to show you all of the cover stories from the various topics that you have selected. Also note that Flipboard immediately starts to tell you how to save select articles so that you can begin to create (and possibly share) your own news magazine. And, remember, all of this information is now available to you (immediately) on your phone and on your tablet. Flipboard provides another great example of the power of cloud computing at work. The second hint (see the image in Figure A.33) is quite useful – and shows you how you can quickly and easily provide Flipboard with information about the articles that you like – which will, in turn, lead them to show you similar articles in the future.

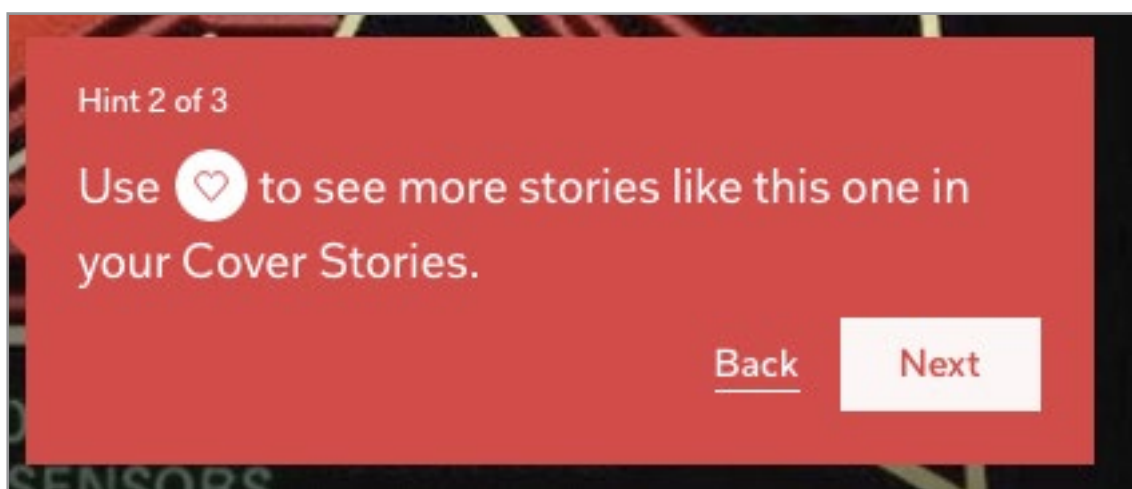


Figure A.33 Flipboard Hint02 – How to personalize Flipboard

A.6.2 FLIPBOARD OBSERVATIONS

It feels as if the world is filled with an enormous amount of information these days – all coming at us very quickly. Flipboard seems to do a good job of organizing the information that is out there, in a way that I (and many of my students) find to be quite useful. I have noticed that I try to find time each day to take a look at what Flipboard has found – and am intrigued with how many interesting articles – from so many varied resources – Flipboard has discovered for me. You can save them – either within Flipboard – or, if you are using a tablet, and you have Evernote – then you can actually set up Flipboard to save files over to Evernote, where you can then search for them at a later time. Flipboard is a helpful and useful Web 2.0 resource – that seems to be non-intrusive, and interesting.

A.6.3 FLIPBOARD ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

As you have seen, Flipboard is pretty easy to set up and to use. But, if you are interested in having some additional instruction about how to best use it, here are some resources that might be of help.

Getting Started on Flipboard – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcouQMBtTNM>

This is a 12-minute video that provides a good clear overview of Flipboard, and will walk you through all of its many features. Nicely done and worth the time.

How to Get Started With Flipboard – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qhdONS1isI>

This is a quick (3.5 minute) video, that focuses on the notion of “thought leadership” and how you might become a leader in your field. The speaker believes that Flipboard can be an integral part of that process, and this is his take on how to do that.

Flipboard Tutorials – <https://about.flipboard.com/tutorials/>

Finally, from Flipboard themselves, here is a whole set of interesting and varied (and short) tutorials about Flipboard that focus on a variety of topics. If you have the time, it is worth looking to see what they might have to offer.

A.7 SLIDESHARE

SlideShare is a wonderful Web 2.0 slide hosting resource, chock full of an amazing array of resources and it is available to you for a very reasonable cost – free! According to Wikipedia, “LinkedIn SlideShare is a Web 2.0 based slide hosting service. Users can upload files privately or publicly in the following file formats: PowerPoint, PDF, Keynote or OpenDocument presentations. Slide decks can then be viewed on the site itself, on hand held devices or embedded on other sites. Launched on October 4, 2006, the website is considered to be similar to YouTube, but for slideshows. It was acquired by LinkedIn in 2012. The website was originally meant to be used for businesses to share slides among employees more easily, but it has since expanded to also become a host of a large number of slides that are uploaded merely to entertain. Although the website is primarily a slide hosting service, it also supports documents, PDFs, videos and webinars. SlideShare also provides users with the ability to rate, comment on, and share the uploaded content. The website gets an estimated 70 million unique visitors a month, and has about 38 million registered users. SlideShare was voted among the World’s Top 10 tools for education & e-learning in 2010. SlideShare’s biggest competitors include Scribd.com, and Issuu. Some of the notable users of SlideShare include The White House, NASA, World Economic Forum, State of Utah, O’Reilly Media, Hewlett Packard and IBM.”

Note that SlideShare gets an estimated 70 million unique visitors a month (!), and yet many individuals have never heard about it. As well, it is interesting to note that LinkedIn decided to purchase SlideShare in 2012. Clearly, there is something going on here!

A.7.1 GETTING STARTED WITH SLIDESHARE

Your first step is to head to the SlideShare home page, located at: <http://www.slideshare.net>. Your page should resemble the one shown in Figure A.34. Note that when you scroll down the home page, you will see that it includes major headings: Today's Top SlideShares, Featured SlideShares, Featured Topics, Latest Conferences, and Trending in Social Media. At the bottom of the homepage, you are provided with the ability to Browse SlideShares, or Browse Users alphabetically.

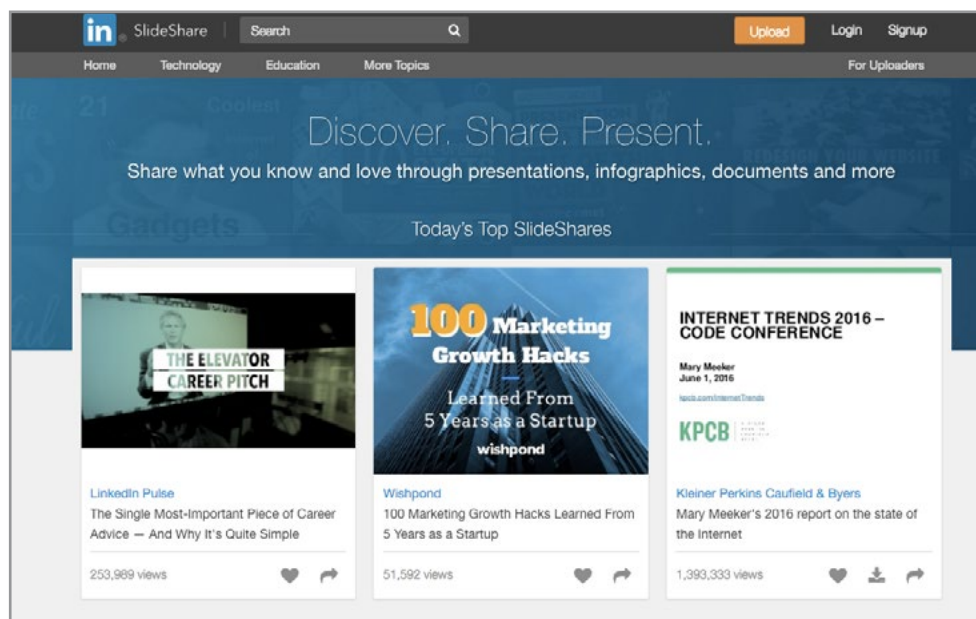


Figure A.34 SlideShare Home Page

A quick look at the SlideShare Featured Topics, gives you a hint about how many resources are available. Note the wide array of topics, including Sports, and Internet, and News and Politics, and Travel and... Take some time to look at the many featured topics shown in Figure A.35:

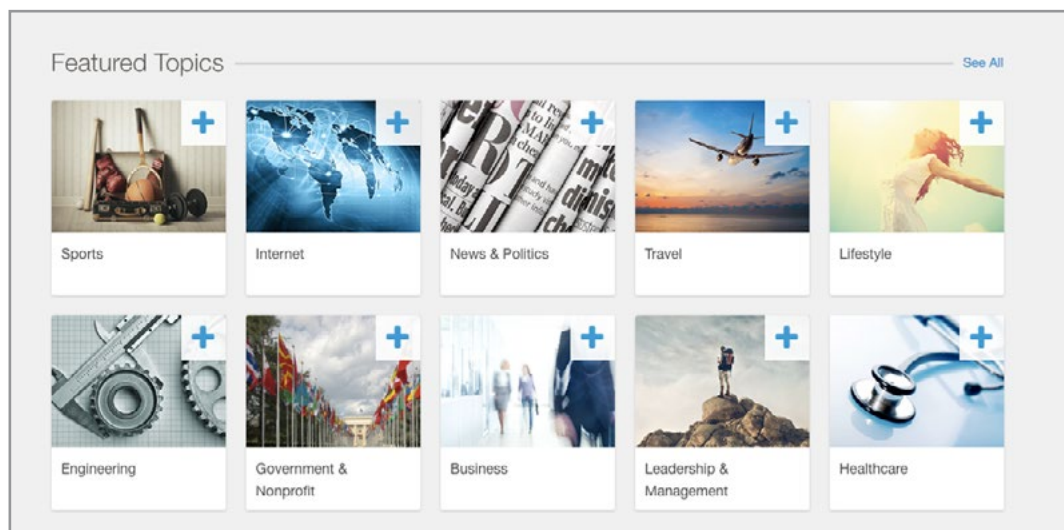


Figure A.35 SlideShare Featured Topics

In all likelihood, you can find SlideShare resources about almost anything that is of interest to you. You can find SlideShare slides quickly and easily, and, for many of them, once you have registered with SlideShare, you will have the ability to download them as well.

Let's spend a few minutes looking at the SlideShare registration process. When you choose **Sign Up** on the SlideShare home page, it takes you to the screen shown in Figure A.36. Note that if you already have a LinkedIn account, you can use that account information. If not, you are strongly encouraged to join LinkedIn. Or, if you are a company or a university, you are urged to join SlideShare. Note that it **appears** that you do NOT really have a choice to join SlideShare any other way – meaning, as an individual, you may either use your LinkedIn account information if you already have one, or you can create one. (Although I should point out, that once you get to the actual account creation page, SlideShare will also let you use your Facebook account information to login, if you choose.)

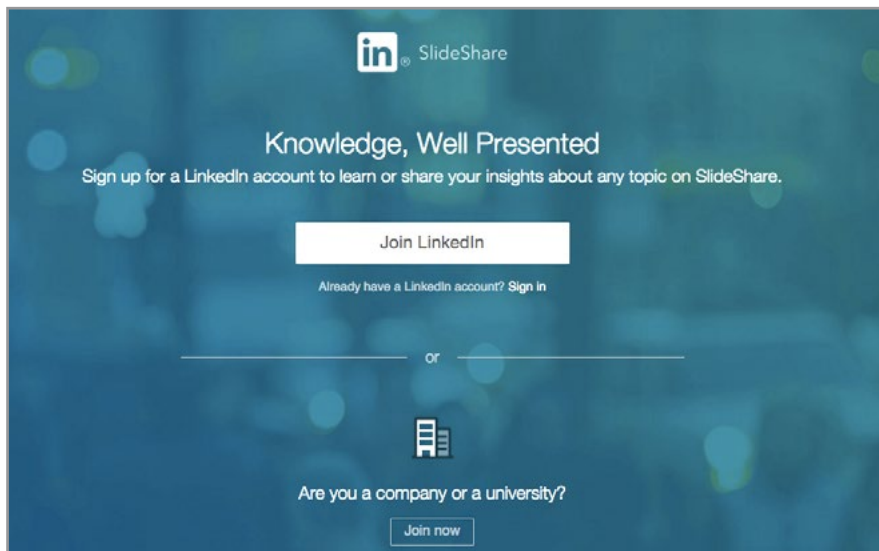


Figure A.36 SlideShare Sign Up Page

Once you have set up your SlideShare account, you now have access to all of the resources that SlideShare provides. For example, I have an interest in Costa Rica. Note what happens when I put Costa Rica in the search box at the top of the SlideShare home page (45,515 results!). See Figure A.37.

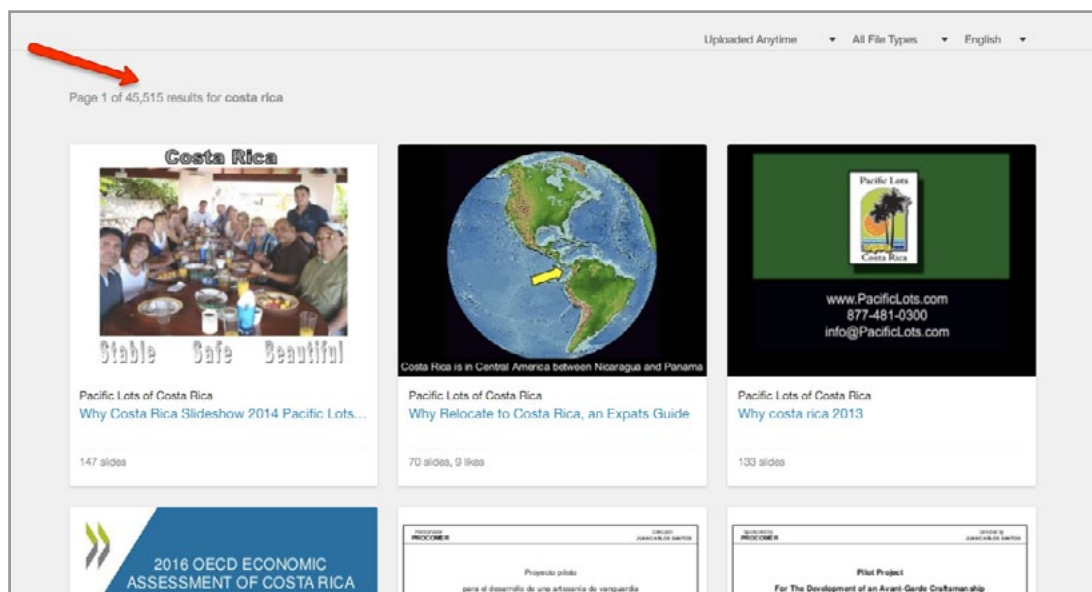


Figure A.37 Costa Rica Search on SlideShare – with 45,515 results!

If you select a set of slides, you have several options. You can just look at the slides, or as you can see in the example in Figure A.38, you are given choices to *Share, Like or Download* the slides.



Figure A.38 Options for Slides

If you choose to **Share** the slides, you are taken to a screen that offers you eight different options(!). As you can see in Figure A.39, you may share the SlideShare slides on social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or Google+. Or you may email the slides. Or you can copy the embed code and put it into a blog such as Blogger. Or, if you have a WordPress blog, they provide you with special WordPress code. Or finally, you can just copy and paste the URL for the SlideShare slides into an email or perhaps elsewhere.

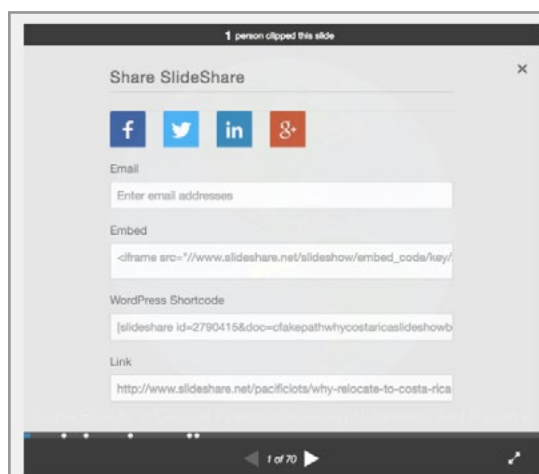


Figure A.39 Share SlideShare file options

A.7.2 SLIDESHARE OBSERVATIONS

As you have probably realized by now, SlideShare is an amazing resource, chock full of interesting, varied and useful resources. If you have to do some quick research on a topic, SlideShare is the place to turn. If you are interested in seeing how others have covered a given topic, SlideShare can be your answer. And, if you are interested in sharing your particular passion or expertise with others about a particular subject, SlideShare might be the way to do that. Businesses and individuals regularly use SlideShare as a way to demonstrate their expertise, and perhaps, to increase their business. Remember, Wikipedia says that there are 70 million unique visitors to SlideShare each month.

A.7.3 SLIDESHARE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Here are three interesting and useful resources that might help you to get better use out of SlideShare.

Basic Tutorial How to Use SlideShare:

http://www.slideshare.net/ramos_cherrylin/basic-tutorial-how-to-use-slideshare-45572037

This first resource provides a good overview of SlideShare – on, of course, SlideShare. Feel free to download or share the slides – and to work through them to get a better sense of the many ways that you can think about using SlideShare.

How to Easily Create a SlideShare Presentation:

<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/how-to-create-slideshare-presentation-free-template-ht#sm.000009qspX0ut2eecsufug2dkhyn2>

This second set of resources answers a slightly different question. The wonderful folks at HubSpot assume that sooner or later you might wish to post your own set of slides to SlideShare, and they would like to help you to do so in an effective fashion. They offer good advice about how to think about creating your presentation, and they also provide five useful PowerPoint templates (free) that might be of some help.

Up and Running with SlideShare – on Lynda.com:

<https://www.lynda.com/SlideShare-training-tutorials/5902-0.html>

This final resource about SlideShare is interesting for two reasons. First of all, it is an excellent video – about 45 minutes in length, that provides a great deal of very useful information about SlideShare. Also, it is provided by Lynda.com – a well-respected provider of training about computer languages, and applications packages and many other technical areas. Interestingly, Lynda.com was recently purchased by LinkedIn – for about \$3 billion. So, it is very fitting that good quality training about SlideShare would be provided by Lynda.com. Enjoy.

A.8 BLOGGER

Blogger, which is known as a blog publishing service, began in 1999. It was purchased by Google in 2003, and provides users with the ability to set up and publish their own blog (web log) which can be used for personal or business purposes. Blogger blogs are hosted by Google, and Blogger permits users to add photos and videos and audio (podcasts) to their blog. Blogger users are provided with a set of templates, and may use others as well. A typical Blogger blog will end in “blogspot.com”, so the blog address might be “something.blogspot.com”, but Blogger also permits users to have their own domain name, such as www.toysfortots.com. Blogger is one of the “big three” blogging publishing services available (the others being WordPress and Tumblr) and feedback about Blogger’s ease of use and power is quite positive. Let’s take a look.

A.8.1 GETTING STARTED WITH BLOGGER

As you might imagine, since Google owns Blogger, they are going to urge you to sign in with your Google account – and, if for some reason you do not have one, they will help you to set one up. They also take this opportunity to do some “cross selling” and they will urge you as well to sign up for a Google+ account. You do **NOT** have to do that; you should feel free to just sign in to Blogger. They will also ask you to set up a Blogger profile, and, again, you should feel free to either do so, or not. Eventually, once you get past all of the welcome options, you will be signed in, and you will come to a page that looks like the one shown in Figure A.40:

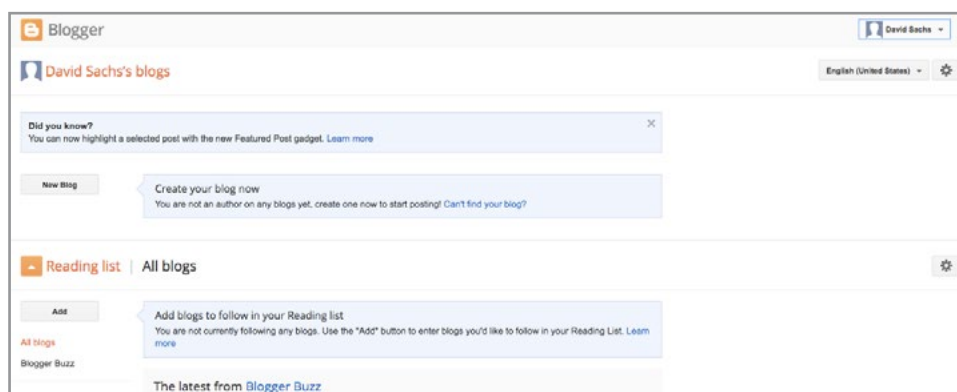


Figure A.40 Blogger Welcome Screen

If you select the little gear over on the top right of the welcome page (next to the words English (United States)), you will get a drop down menu that offers Blogger Help, Send Feedback, Edit User Setting, and About Our New Look. Blogger Help is chock full of useful resources; the image below shows what it looks like. Of particular interest is the **Blogger Getting Started Guide**. We will also provide additional Blogger resources at the end of this section. See Figure A.41.

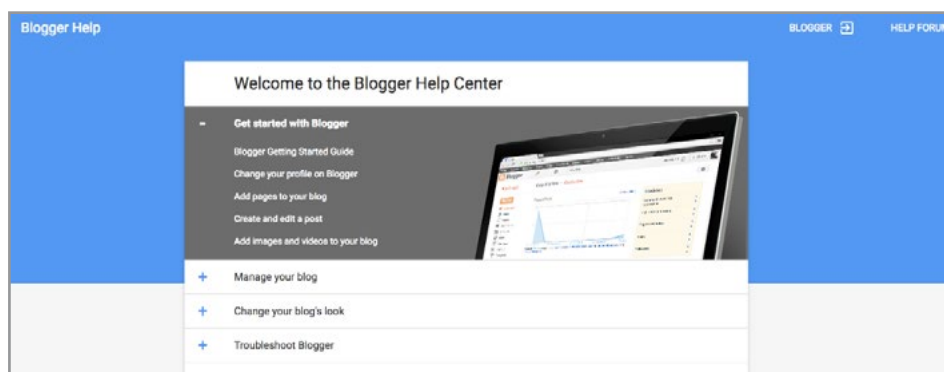


Figure A.41 Blogger Help

The Blogger Getting Started Guide is very straightforward, and contains nice clear information about how to initially create a blog, and then how to add some information (posts) to it. It is worth taking a few minutes to read through it. For our purposes, we would like to create a New Blog; so, we will return to the Blogger Welcome Screen and click on the text box on the left-hand side labeled New Blog. When we do so, it takes us to the **Blogs List – Create a new blog**, shown in Figure A.42.

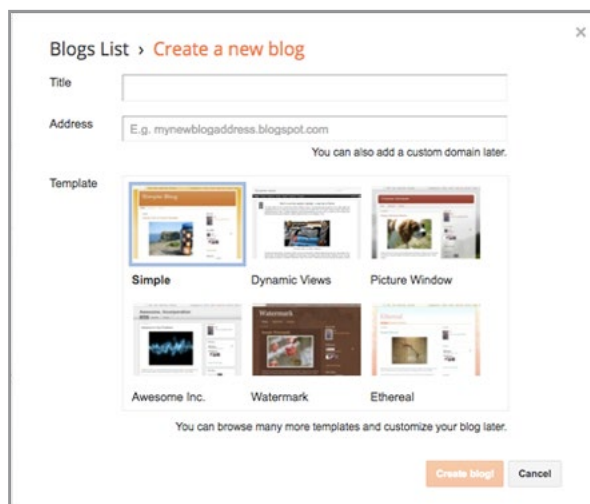


Figure A.42 Blogs List – Create a new blog

At this point, you have to create a title for your blog, you have to create a Web address for your blog, and you have to choose a template for your blog. It is worth taking a few minutes to think about the title for your blog – as well as the Web address; the template is easy and can be changed later. Once you give your blog a title and a Web address, that is how others will find you on the Web. If you have the time, read the article by Jeff Bullas entitled 9 Simple Steps for Choosing the Perfect Name for Your Blog. Here is the link: <http://www.jeffbullas.com/2016/06/03/9-simple-steps-choosing-perfect-name-blog/>

I have chosen to call mine the McHaney Book Demo Blog, since it is for this book, and I have chosen a Web address (URL – uniform resource locator) that is almost the same. **NOTE** – You do NOT have to do that; you can have a title that says one thing and a URL that says another. Blogger will tell you instantly whether the blog address is available; if not, then just choose another URL until you find one that is available. I have also chosen the Picture Window template, knowing that I can change it later if need be. Here is what the Create a New Blog screen looks like, before I choose to create the actual blog (Figure A.43).

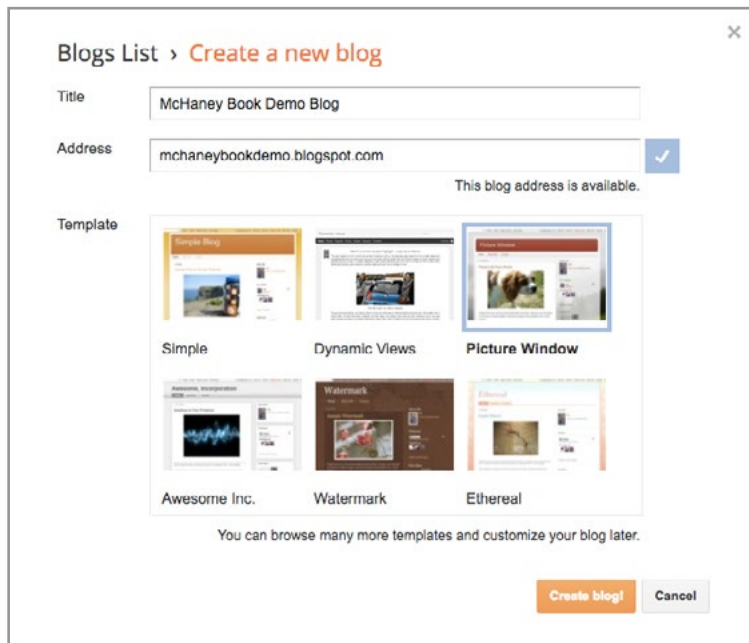


Figure A.43 Create a New Blog – with Choices

After selecting **Create blog!**, the Blogger Overview page appears. It contains some legal information that you should know about. If you would like to see what your blog looks like so far, just click on the View Blog box at the top of the page. The image shown in Figure A.44 is what we found. As you might imagine, there are no posts. If you choose to add a post here, you can do so by selecting the **New Post** link at the top right of the screen, or you can just return to the Blogger “home page” which is where you were before you chose to view the blog and then select New Post there.



Figure A.44 Blog with no posts

When you choose the *New Post* link, on either page, you come to a screen that should resemble the one shown in Figure A.45. The Blogger post page provides you with a lot of options. Many of them resemble traditional word processing options, often found in programs such as Microsoft Word. Moving your mouse over the icons will tell you how they can be used. Of particular interest to many first-time users are how to add text, photos and videos. We will take a look at each.

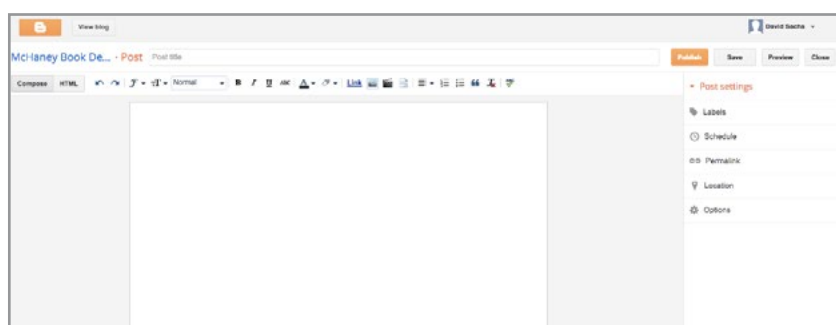


Figure A.45 Blogger Post Page

As you will notice in the image below, there are many options that will permit you to play with the text in your blog. You can change font sizes, font selection, font color, background colors, and more. Here is what we created, before saving and publishing the blog post (Figure A.46):

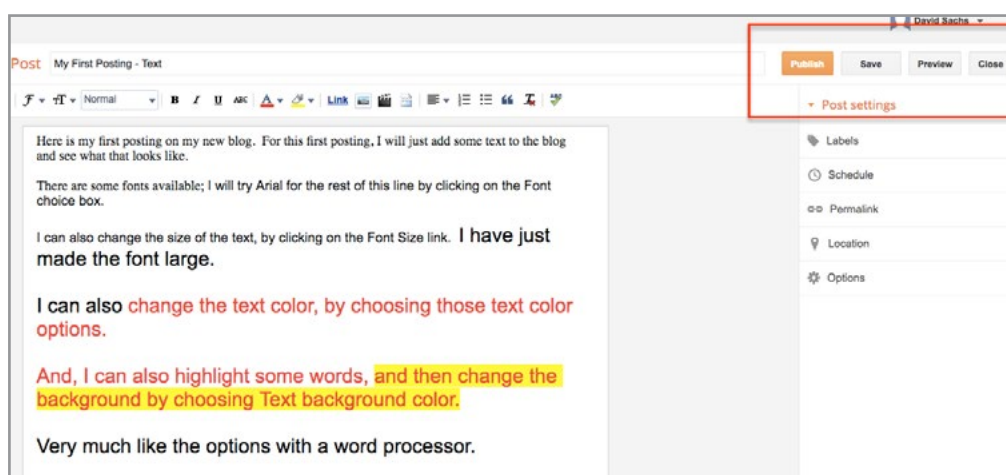


Figure A.46 Creating first blog post

As you will see in the box highlighted above, you have several options once you are done. You can publish, save, preview or close your blog posting. Preview is useful if you are half way done and want to see how your post is going. If you feel as if you have finished, then just choose **save** and then **publish**. This should take you to the “publish screen” as we will call it, shown in Figure A.47.



Figure A.47 Blogger Publish Screen

Note that you have a chance to view the blog, and, if you do a slow mouse over on top of the name of your posting, you will also see that you can Edit, View, Share or Delete that first posting. We have chosen to View the first posting, in the blog, and this is what it looks like (Figure A.48):



Figure A.48 First posting as viewed in the blog

Bloggers often want to add photos to their blogs, in addition to just text. In this next post, we will do just that. Choose **New Post**, which will return you to the Blogger New Post home page. Note the **insert image** icon (which is a hyperlink) at the top of the page. Using this will make it quick and easy for you to add photos to your blog. Here is where to find that link (Figure A.49):

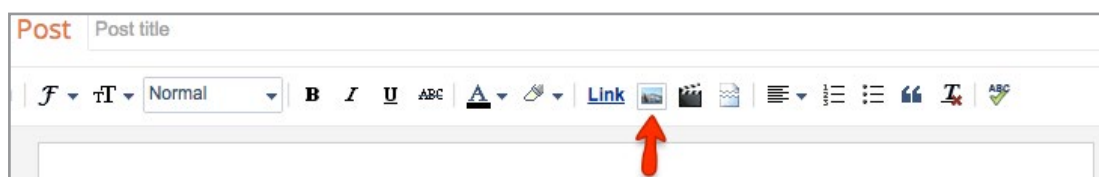


Figure A.49 Insert Image Icon (hyperlink)

Once you click on the **insert image** icon, you will be provided with many choices about where your images will be coming from. Here is the selection (Figure A.50):

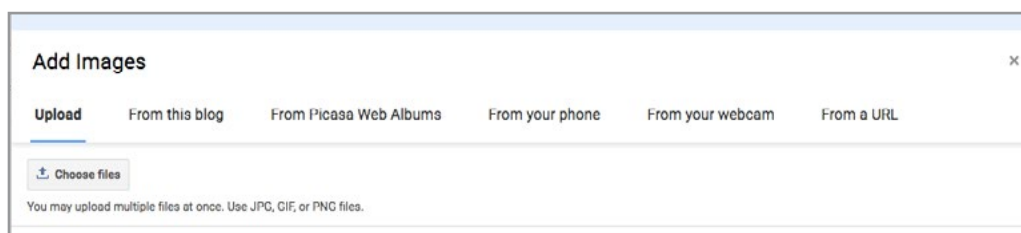


Figure A.50 Add Images

Note that you have six different ways to add images to Blogger. Picasa (which is owned by Google) is one of the choices, but the other options are really yours for the choosing as well. Select whichever choice works best for you. I have chosen to add three photos of Basset hound puppies. I uploaded them to the Blogger Posting page, gave the page a title, saved the page, and then published it. Here is how the blog now looks (See Figure A.51):

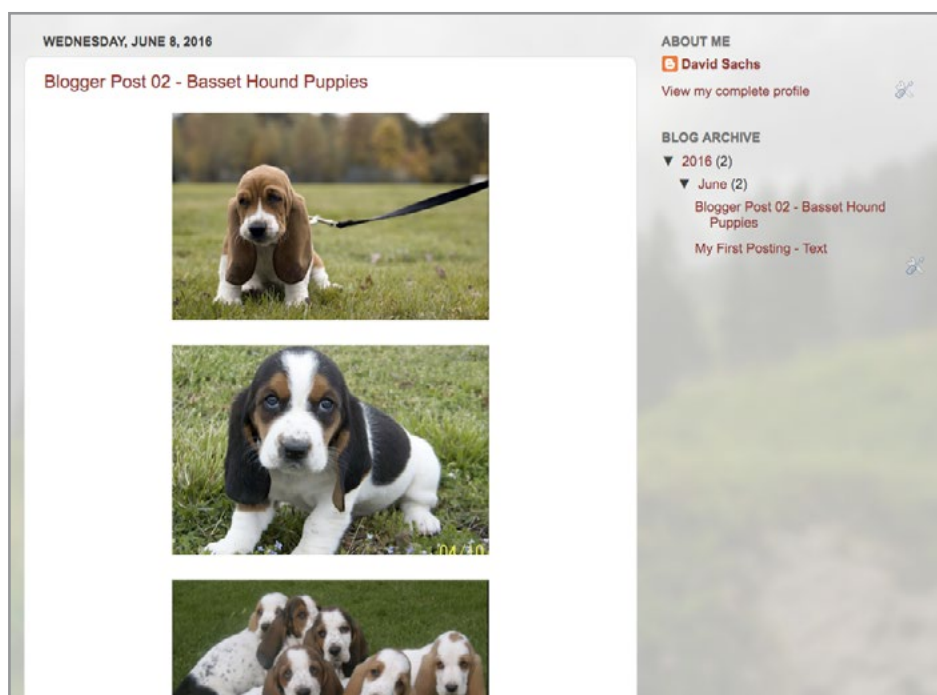


Figure A.51 Blogger Post02 – Photos

Note that the blog archive shows the blog postings, listed in reverse chronological order – with the most recent post first. Both posts are available to individuals following the blog, just by selecting them. So, now that we can add text and photos to the blog, let's take a look at **how to add videos**. We will again choose New Post, which takes us back to the Blogger Posting page; this time we will select the **Insert a Video** Icon. See the image in Figure A.52:

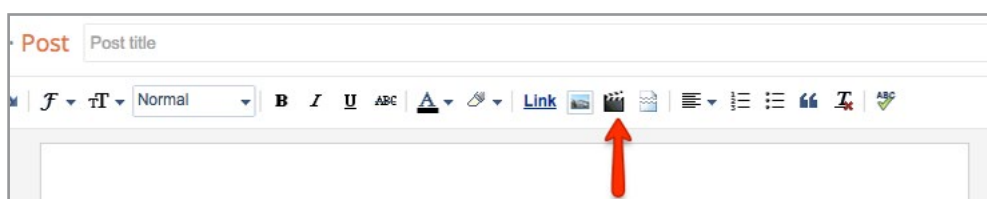


Figure A.52 Insert A Video Icon

Once you select the Insert a Video icon, you should see a screen that provides you with several options for how you might **Add a Video** (Figure A.53):

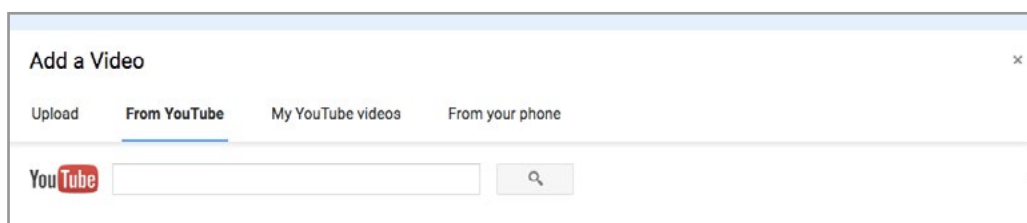


Figure A.53 Add a Video Options

Note that you can upload your own videos, or you can choose a video from YouTube or from your YouTube channel. Since YouTube is owned by Google, this becomes a very quick and easy process if you choose a video that is located on YouTube. For this exercise, we chose to add a video from YouTube called **Do You Speak English?** Once we selected it, we chose select, then saved the blog and then published it. Here is what the resulting blog post looks like (See Figure A.54):



Figure A.54 Blogger Post03 – Posting a video

A.8.2 BLOGGER OBSERVATIONS

As you have probably seen by now, Blogger is a relatively straight forward Web 2.0 application. For the most part, the posting options are clear and rather easy to use. There are some more advanced features, beyond the scope of this introduction, but for individuals who are interested in having a blog, and updating it quickly and easily on a regular basis, Blogger provides many wonderful options, at a very reasonable cost.

A.8.3 BLOGGER ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

How to Start a Blog on Blogger:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2QvwgaECps>

Good intro to Blogger and also to blogging – and in particular, how to use Blogger and a blog for a home based business:

Blogger Getting Started Guide (from Google)

<https://support.google.com/blogger/answer/1623800?hl=en>

These resources were mentioned earlier. They have nice clear information, presented by Google.

8 Key Steps to Blogging Mastery by Jeff Bullas:

<http://www.jeffbullas.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/8-key-steps.pdf>

A book, provided FOR FREE by Jeff Bullas about how to use blogs successfully. Particularly useful for those who might be interested in using their blog for business:

How to Create a Blog on Blogger

Nice short (3 minutes) video about how to get started with Blogger. This video does a good job of reinforcing ideas that were covered earlier in this section.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rA4s3wN_vK8

A.9 LINKEDIN

Wow – \$26.2 BILLION and 400 MILLION USERS. Microsoft, in June 2016 paid \$26.2 billion for LinkedIn – and we are told that 433 million individuals, all over the globe, use LinkedIn on a regular basis. LinkedIn was founded in 2002 – and is used by business professionals (and recruiters) all the time. It is a social network that has earned tremendous respect in industry – and is available in 24 languages. It will be really interesting to see how their purchase by Microsoft will (or will not) change LinkedIn during the coming years. As noted earlier, during the past few years, LinkedIn has purchased SlideShare and also Lynda.com, so those social media and Web 2.0 resources are also now part of Microsoft. Let's take a look at LinkedIn and see what's going on here...

A.9.1 GETTING STARTED WITH LINKEDIN

The **LinkedIn Join Now** page is quick and to the point, as you can see in the image below. Just provide your first name, last name, email and a password, and you can join LinkedIn as shown in Figure A.55.

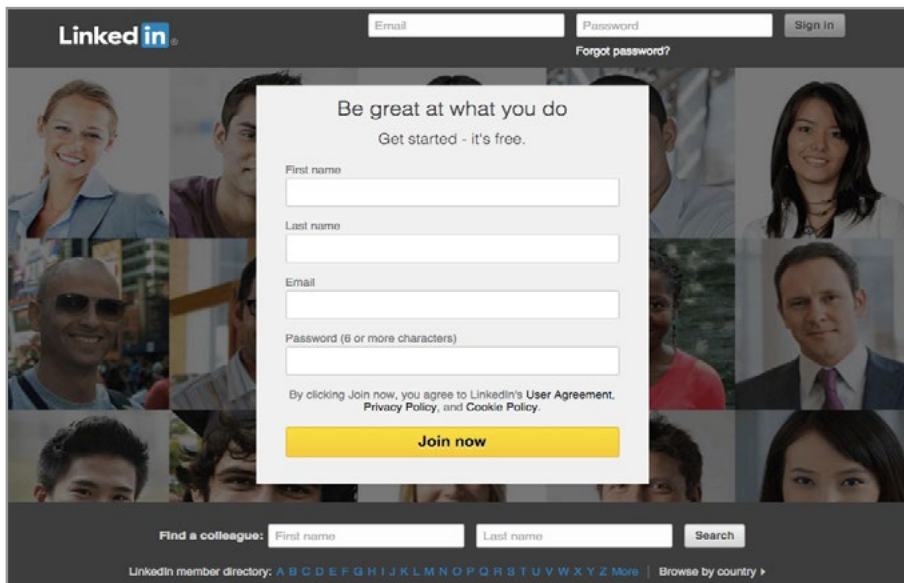


Figure A.55 LinkedIn Join now page

As you will see, as soon as you enter this rather minimal set of information, LinkedIn begins to help you to set up your profile. These next two screen shots show the questions; they are rather innocuous, and will serve to help you to contact others in your chosen profession, or other colleagues who might already be on LinkedIn. See Figures A.56 and A.57.

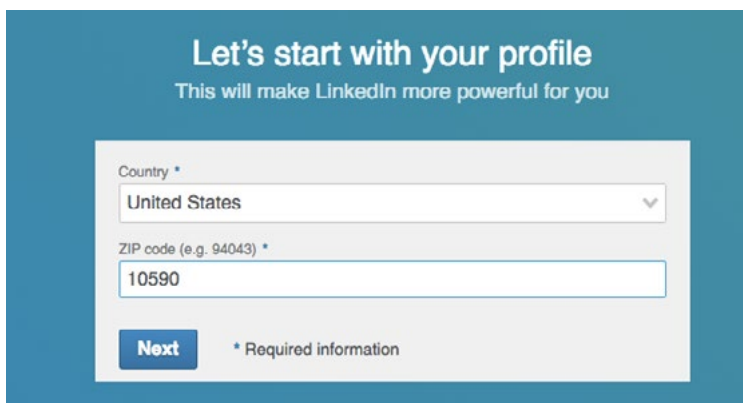


Figure A.56 LinkedIn Profile Page01



Let's start with your profile
This will make LinkedIn more powerful for you

Are you a student? * Yes No

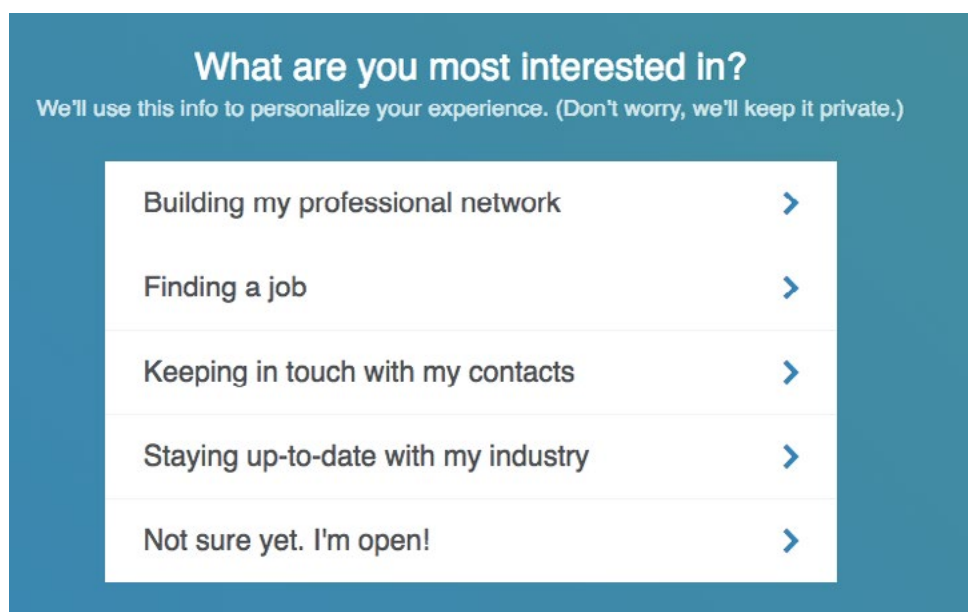
Job title *

Company *

Next * Required information

Figure A.57 LinkedIn Profile02

So far, the questions are relatively easy – and make sense, for someone who might be interested in joining a professional network. Next, they will ask you about your interests, but as you can see, you also have an option to “pass” on this question, should you choose (See Figure A.58).



What are you most interested in?
We'll use this info to personalize your experience. (Don't worry, we'll keep it private.)

- Building my professional network >
- Finding a job >
- Keeping in touch with my contacts >
- Staying up-to-date with my industry >
- Not sure yet. I'm open! >

Figure A.58 LinkedIn Interests Page

But then the questions become more inquisitive. And, as you will see, now LinkedIn wants access to your address book. In order to let them help you to find people, LinkedIn requests access to your address book. There are lots of disclaimers, but it is true that this question makes some people nervous. And, some of the nervousness is driven by the fact that we all know people who on a regular basis are asked if they wish to contact others on LinkedIn – or suggestions appear in email asking to make contact with others. Clearly the line between privacy and openness is pretty thin at this point. You will have to decide how you wish to proceed at this point. **IMPORTANT** – Note that there is a “skip” option over on the right-hand side – in very light grey – and not nearly as obvious as the “continue” button on the left; so you do have an option here if you choose. See Figure A.59.

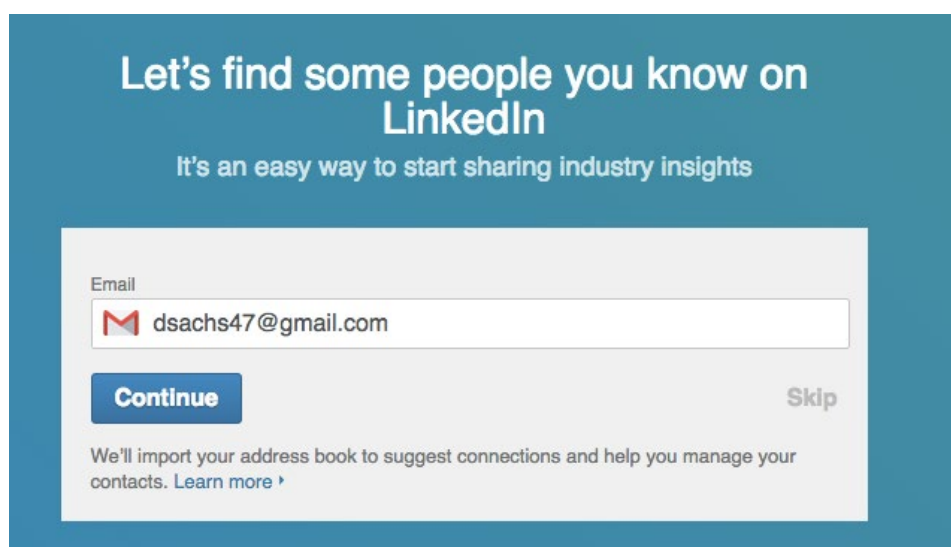


Figure A.59 LinkedIn – Let’s find some people...

As you will see in the image shown in Figure A.60, you CAN choose to skip the “import your address book” option – by choosing Skip – but when you do so, notice that LinkedIn provides a special box that is definitely encouraging you not to do so.

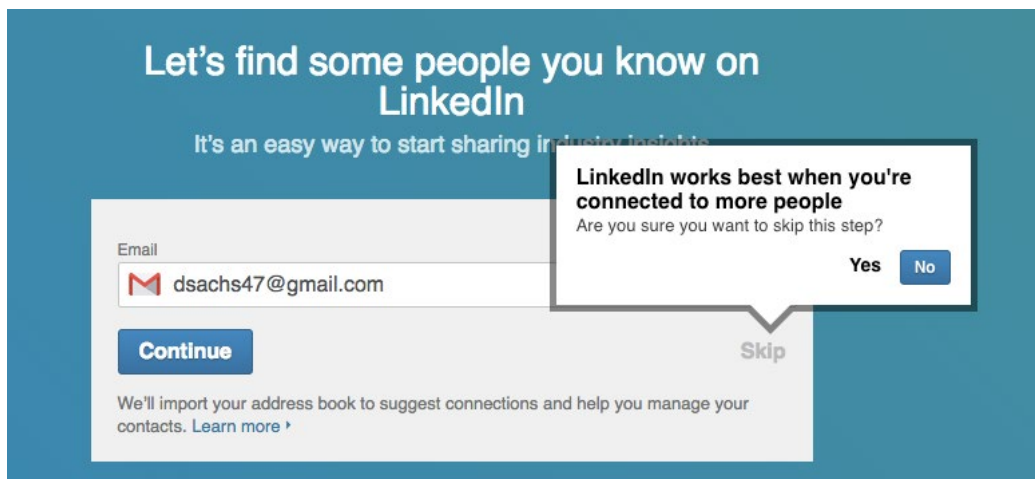


Figure A.60 LinkedIn find some people – skip option

LinkedIn will not penalize you if you do not provide them access to your address book, but they clearly are trying to encourage you to let them do so! Once you have made your choice, you are asked to confirm your email, as shown in Figure A.61.

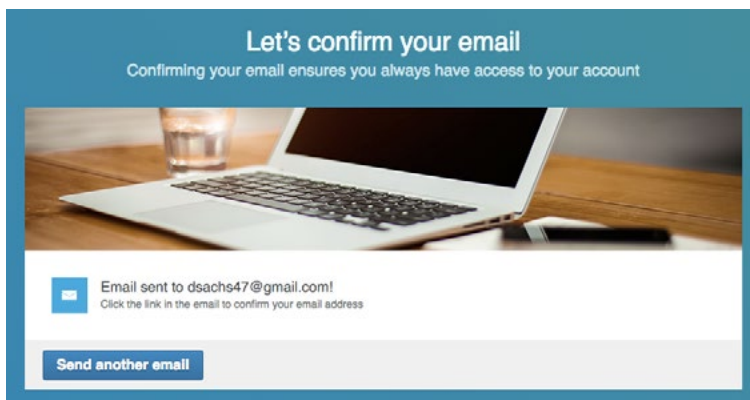


Figure A.61 LinkedIn confirm your email

As soon as you confirm your email, LinkedIn will ask you about the topics that you might wish to follow, that relate to your industry. There is obviously no “right answer” here – the choices are ones that might be of interest to you, and they can easily be changed later if you wish. See Figure A.62.

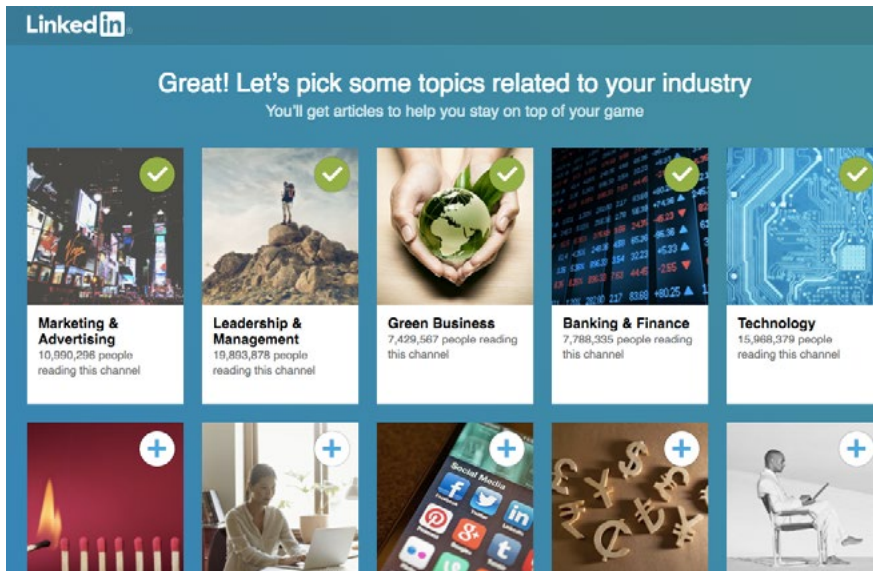


Figure A.62 LinkedIn topics of interest

Then you will have a chance to follow (or not) some leaders in industry, as shown below. Note that you could choose to follow all of them, or just skip this option and continue. See Figure A.63.

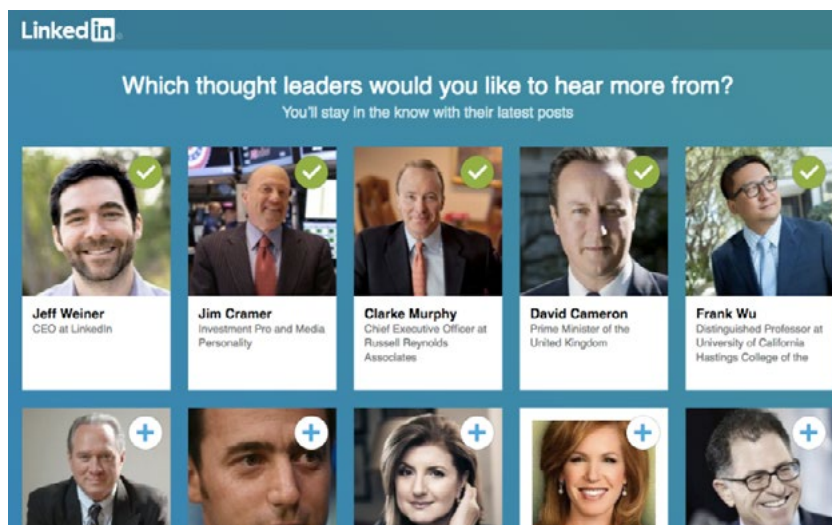


Figure A.63 – LinkedIn Thought Leaders

Once you have made those choices, you will have a chance to choose where and how you would like to be connected to LinkedIn. Given the times that we live in, you will notice that these are mobile options – in which you can choose to have text messages sent to you and/or, you can download the app for your mobile device. The choices are yours, as shown in Figure A.64.

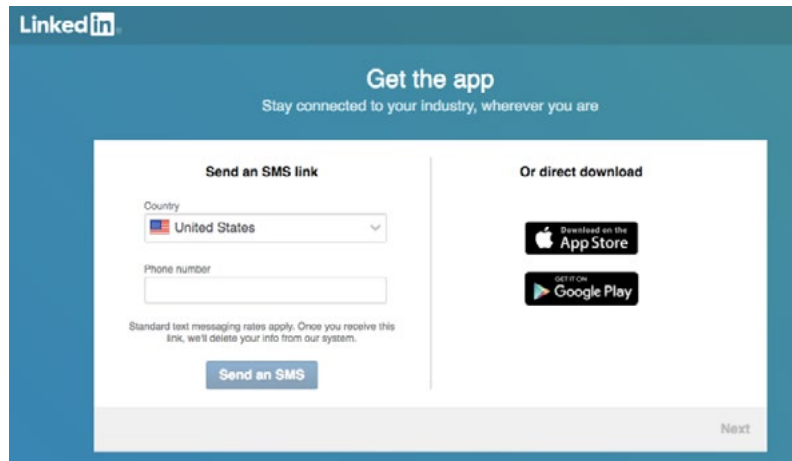


Figure A.64 LinkedIn Mobile Connectivity Options

Once you have completed these final choices, you will be taken to your LinkedIn “home page” as shown in Figure A.65. As you can see, this page that was just created is rather minimal, and LinkedIn does a really good job of prompting you to complete the conversation. **It is EXTREMELY important that your LinkedIn profile contains a “business like” photo.** As well, it is quite useful for you to include your education; many good connections are made that way. And, as you will note at the top of the page, you can immediately begin to search for people, jobs, companies and more. And, of course, LinkedIn will continue to urge you to upgrade your membership to Premium! Several of the additional resources included at the end of this section, do an excellent job of walking you through all of these many options.

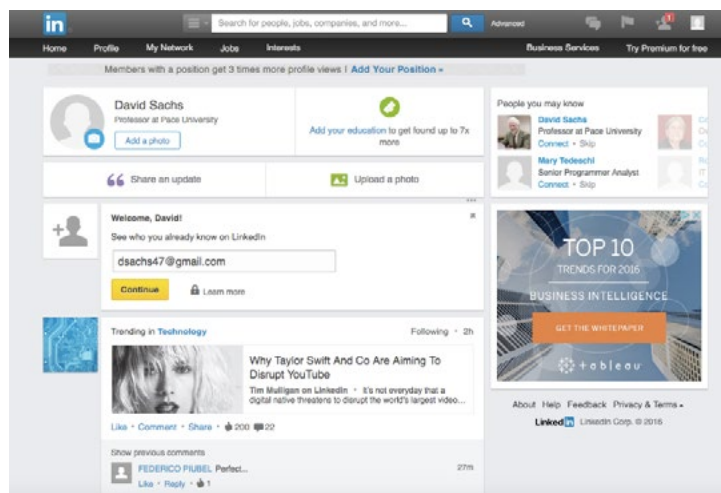


Figure A.65 LinkedIn “Home Page” after choices have been made

A.9.2 LINKEDIN OBSERVATIONS

LinkedIn is an amazing social network, that has dramatically changed the way businesses work together, and how individuals can search for and find jobs within industry. Students who are “made” to set up a LinkedIn profile are often thankful for having been made to do so. They know that it is something that they ought to do, and they know that they should have done it, but somehow they never got around to it. Many of our graduating seniors and soon-to-graduate juniors are intrigued and amazed at how much information can be located using LinkedIn – and what a great resource it can be as they prepare to enter the world of work. And, with the addition of Microsoft to the discussion, along with the already present SlideShare and Lynda.com resources, you can see how LinkedIn can be an extremely important part of your social media/Web 2.0 tool kit. Try to find time to look at the LinkedIn resources; they are excellent and do a great job of expanding upon what we have already covered.

A.9.3 LINKEDIN RESOURCES

The Powerful Code You Need to Stand Out On LinkedIn

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/the-powerful-code-you-need-to-stand-out-on-linkedin/>

From the folks at makeuseof.com who continue to provide such valuable resources. This is an excellent article that offers lots of great tips.

Up and Running with LinkedIn:

<https://www.lynda.com/LinkedIn-tutorials/Up-Running-LinkedIn/383249-2.html?srchtrk=index:1%0Alinktypeid:2%0Aq:Up%2Band%2Brunning%2Bwith%2BLinkedIn%0Apage:1%0As:relevance%0Aa:true%0Aproducttypeid:2>

This is an excellent video, chock full of useful information (from Lynda.com obviously). Takes about 2 hours to watch it all, but well worth the time.

LinkedIn 80/20 – Getting More Results with Less Work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvNUz0apSjU>

Again, a video that might take some time to watch (about an hour) but it is worth the time and effort to do so. Lots of good “tips and tricks” for LinkedIn users.

APPENDIX B: APPLICATIONS OF WORDPRESS

A blog can be a fundamental component of any business and can provide a mechanism for developing a public, identifying face. This appendix provides details regarding the creation and maintenance of a business blog using WordPress. Setting up a WordPress blog is relatively straightforward and can be done in a number of ways. As mentioned in Table 2.5, many hosting services provide installation wizards and features that will enable a subscriber to set up and use WordPress. It is also possible to develop a blog directly on the WordPress website. This example installation takes that approach. Using the WordPress.com website provides only a subset of the features offered to those who host their own application or who subscribe to a hosting service that provides WordPress. But for illustrative purposes, WordPress.com will work well. To start, visit the WordPress website at: <http://wordpress.com/> as shown in Figure B.1.

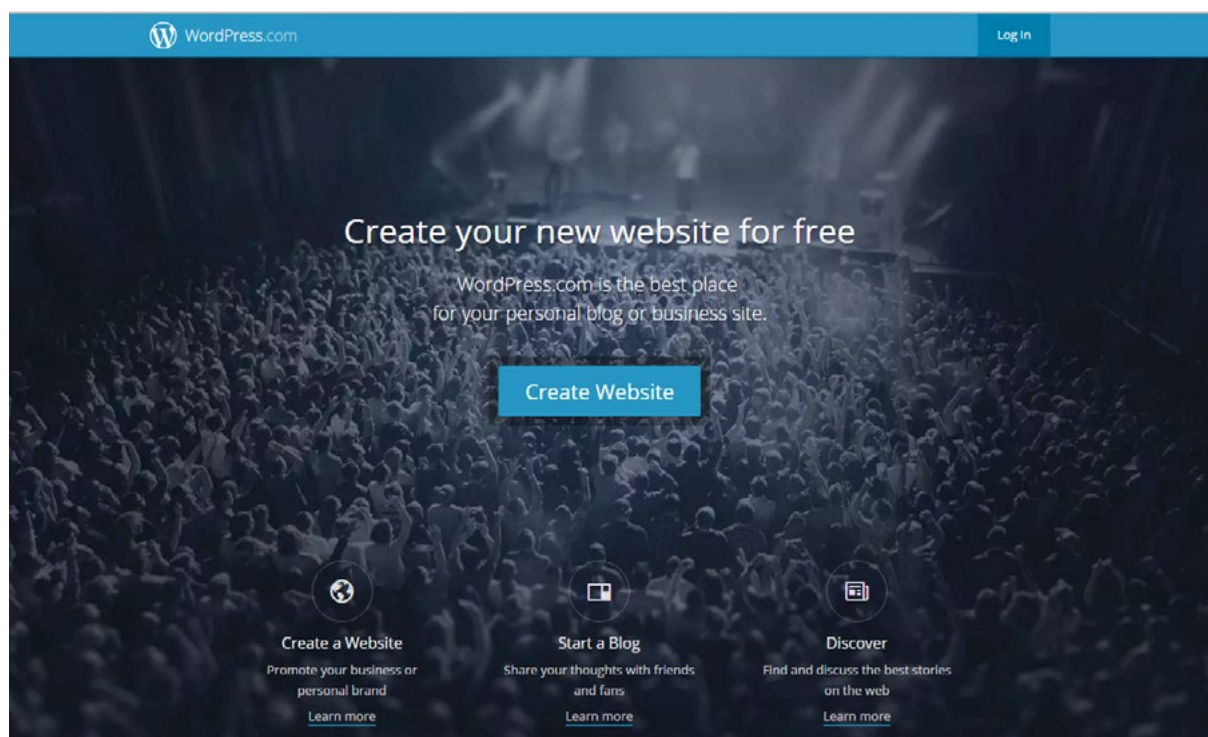


Figure B.1 WordPress.com Website for Starting a New Blog

Press the 'Create Website' button to begin the process. You will be prompted to provide information about your new blog including its main purpose, whether you want a free site using a WordPress domain name or are willing to pay extra to acquire a custom domain name and other features. Figures B.2 through B.6 provide a partial view of the registration and set up process.

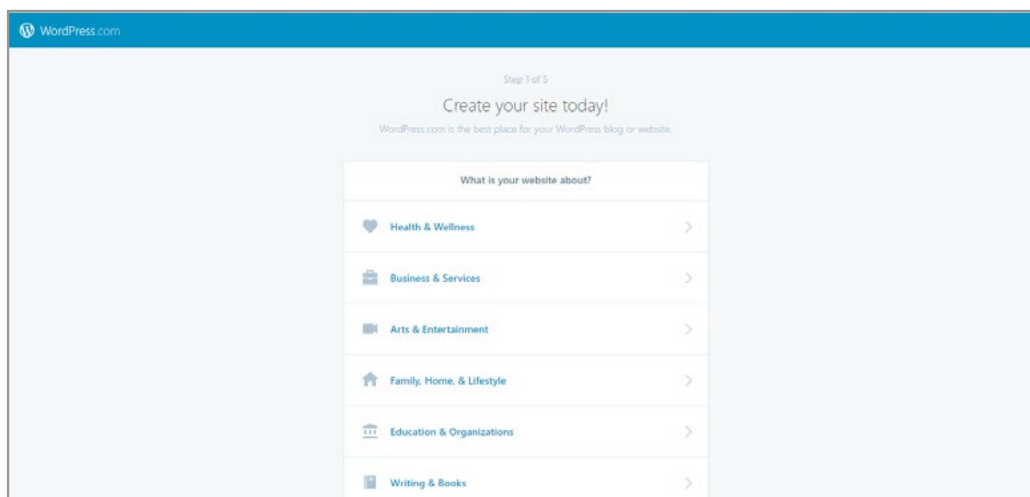


Figure B.2 General Purpose of WordPress Website

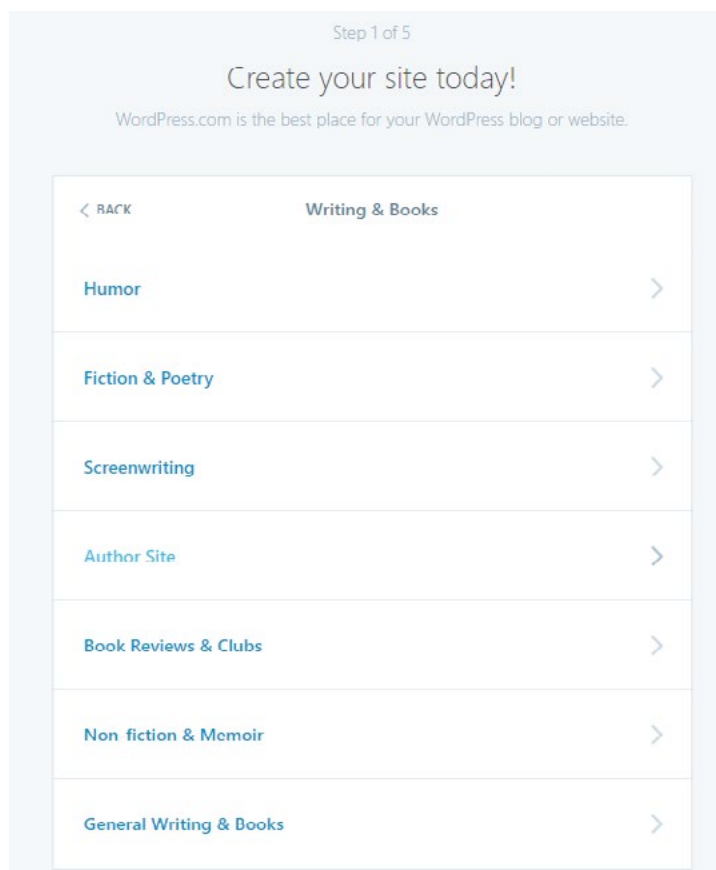


Figure B.3 More Specifics about WordPress Blog

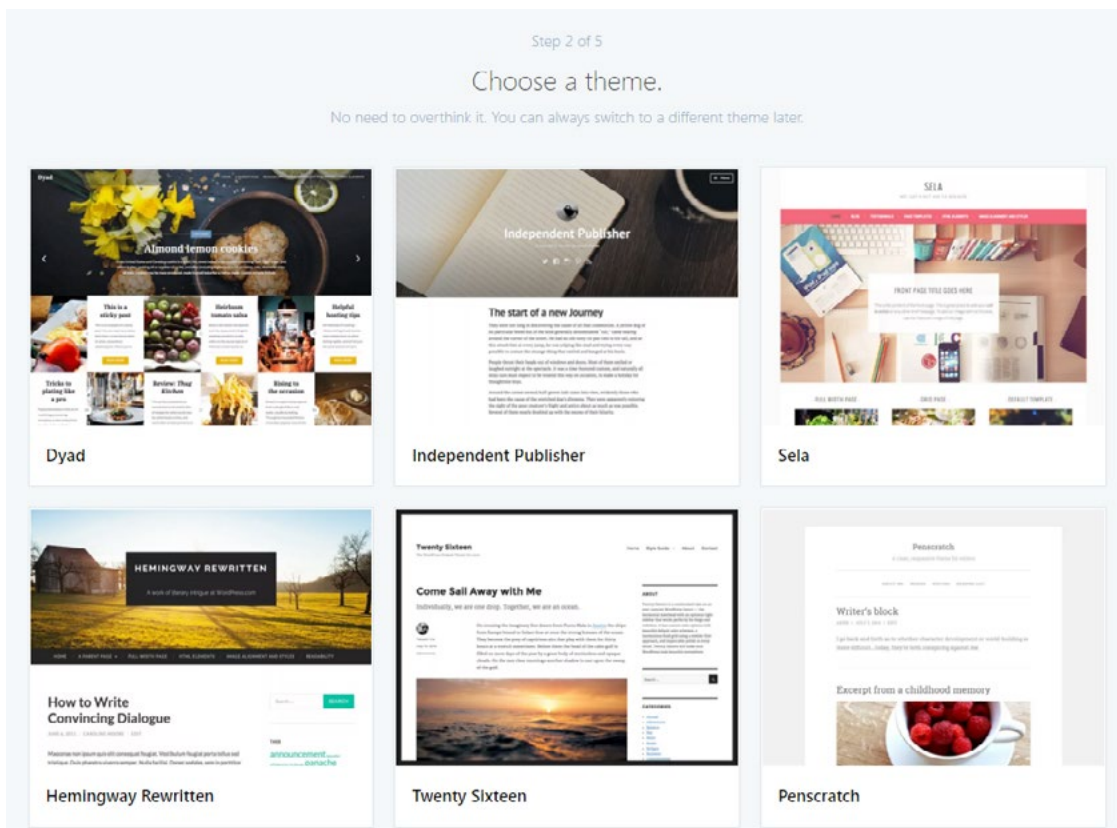


Figure B.4 Choosing an Initial Theme for WordPress Blog (Can be Changed or Customized Later)

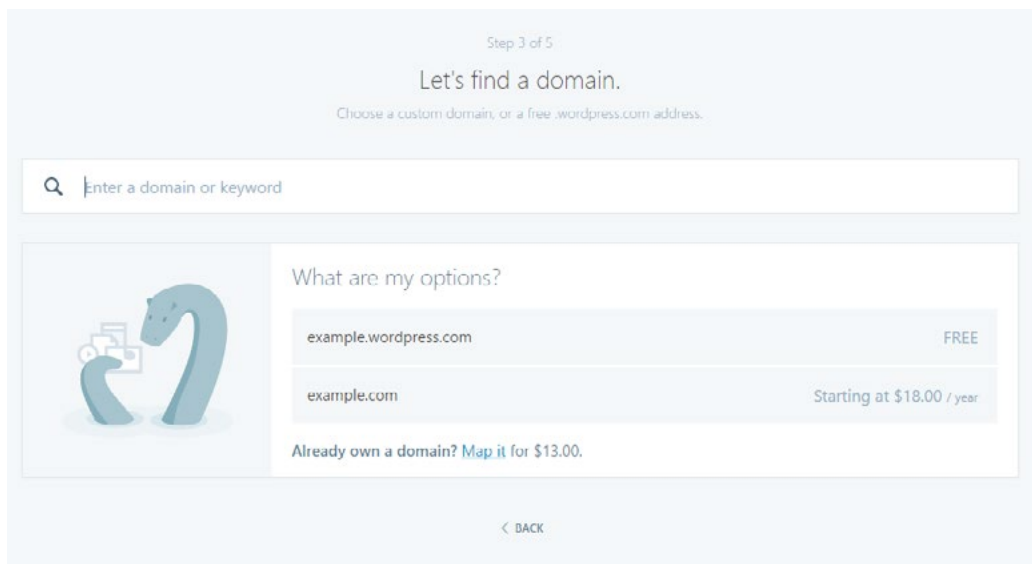


Figure B.5 Obtaining Free or Paid Domain Name for WordPress Blog

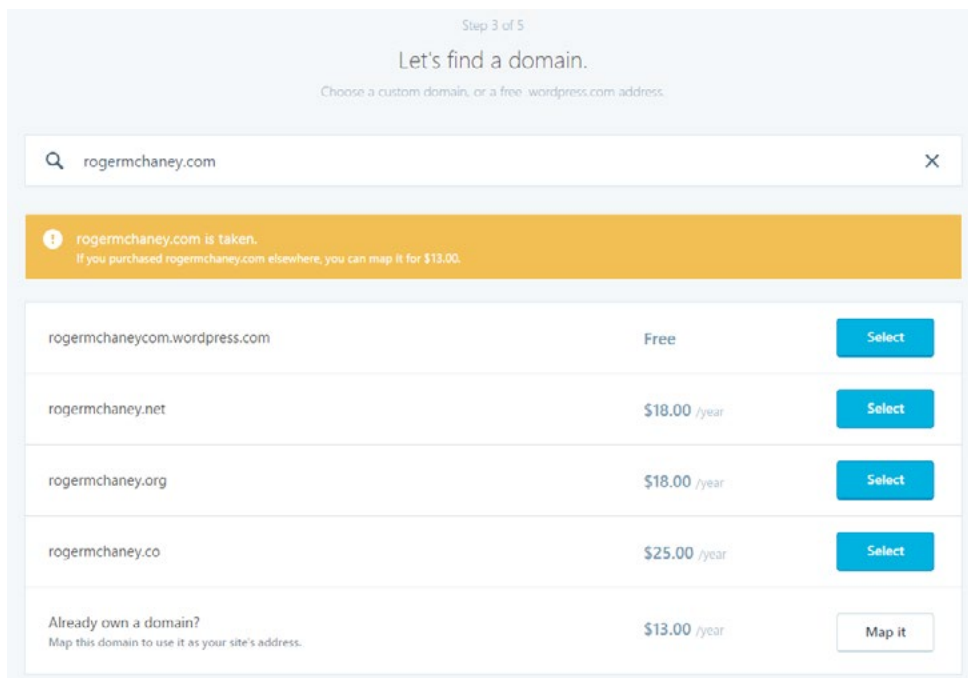


Figure B.6 More Options for WordPress Blog Domain Name

After filling out the required initial information, you will have the choice of getting a basic site for free or paying for added features. See Figures B.7 through B.9.

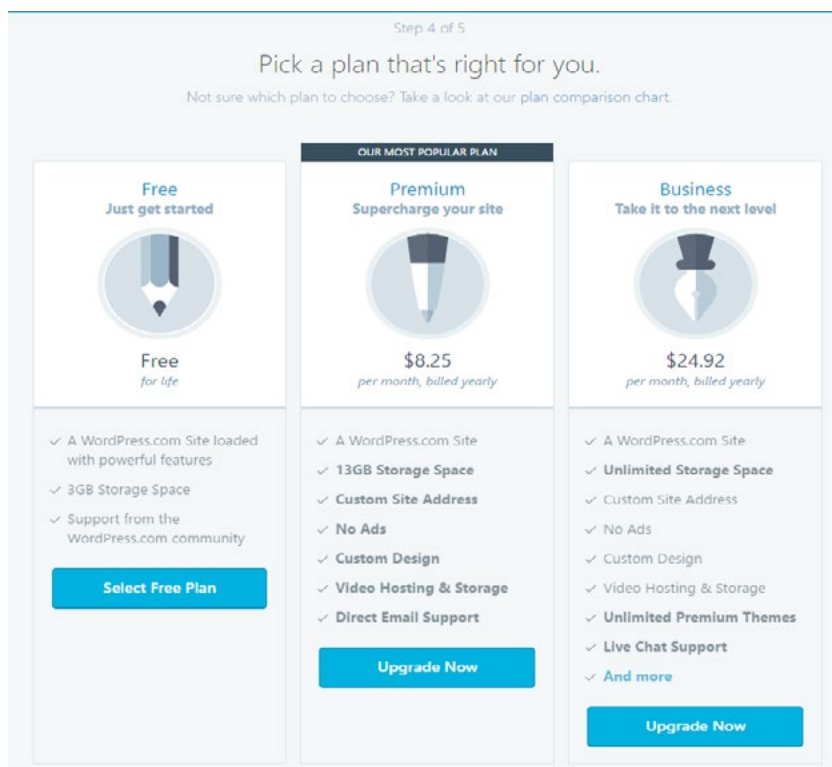


Figure B.7 Selecting a Pricing Plan for WordPress Blog (Can be Upgraded Later)

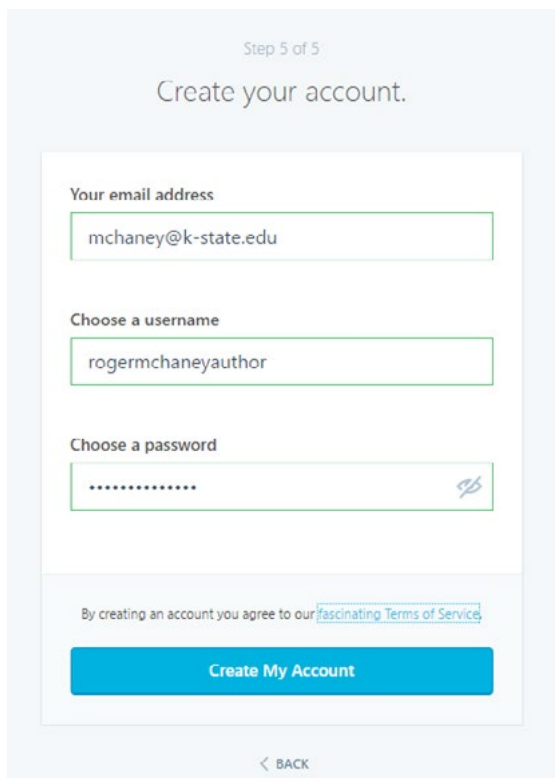


Figure B.8 Creating Account Login Details for WordPress Blog

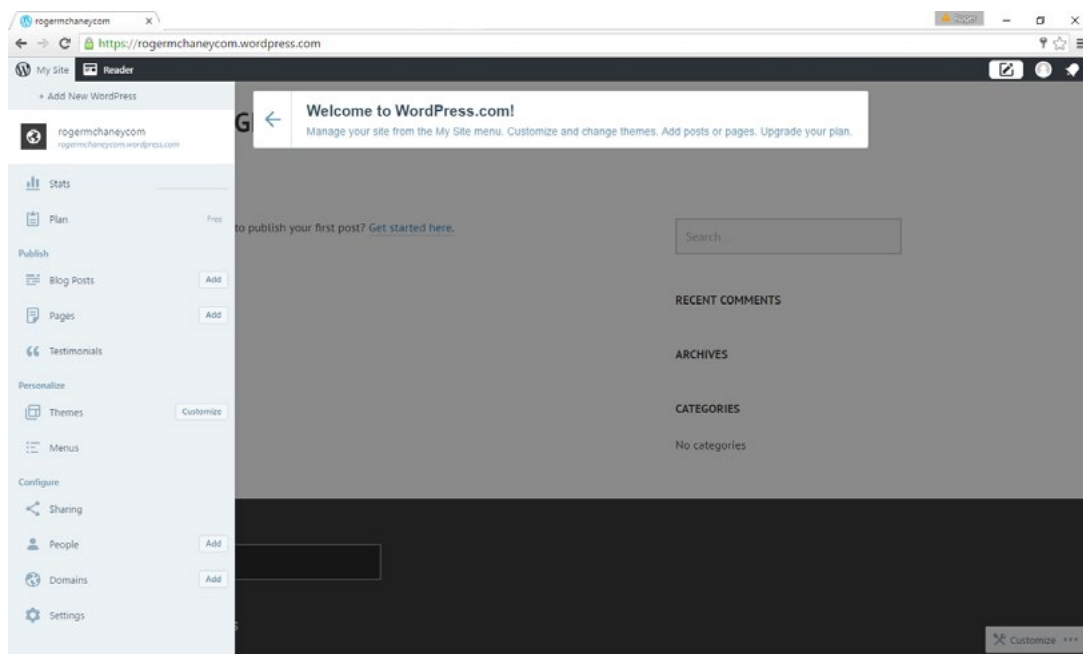


Figure B.9 Initial Entry into WordPress Blog Content Management System View

WordPress will verify your account email address and collect additional information as shown in Figures B.10 and B.11. Be sure to check your junk and clutter email folders for the verification message if it does not appear in your main inbox.

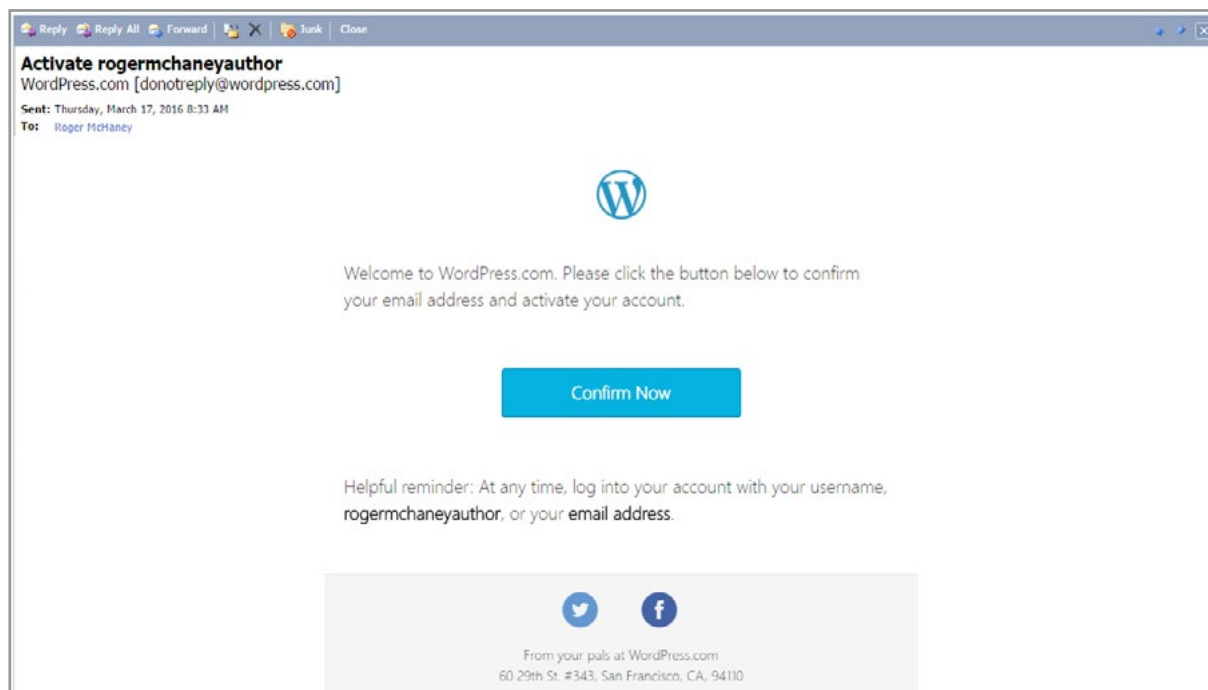


Figure B.10 Email Verification and Additional Information

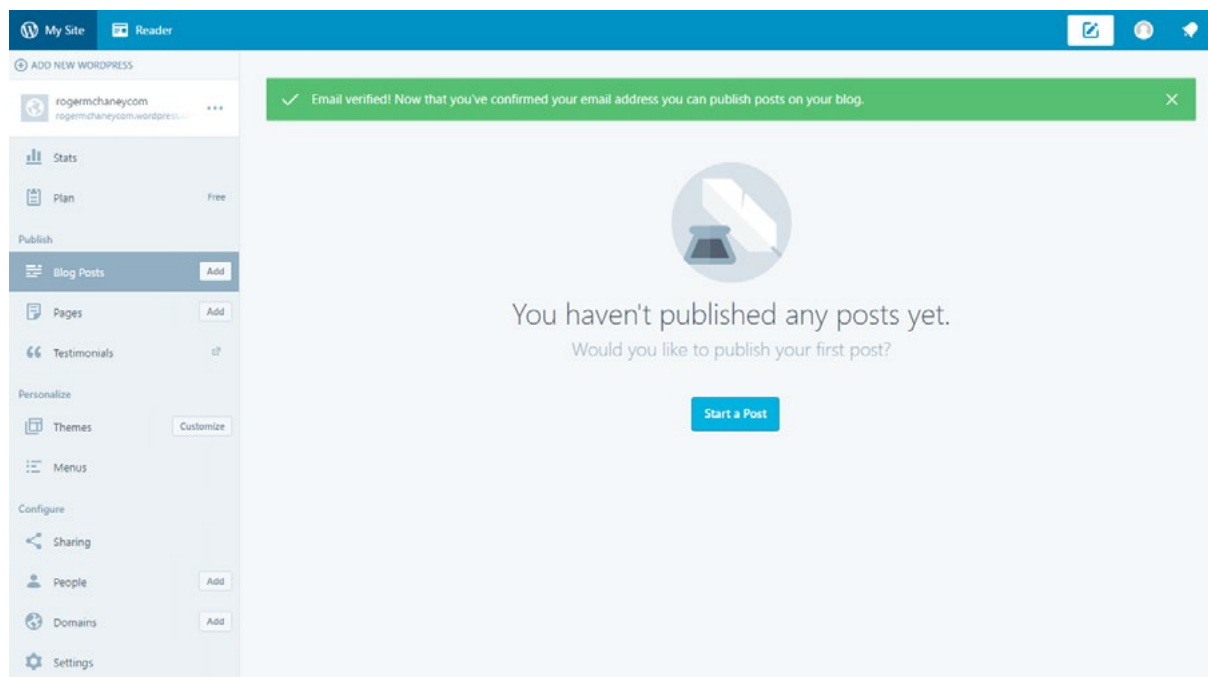


Figure B.11 Verification Message

The blog is now ready for customization and for posts to be added. The WordPress blog can be customized from the dashboard. New posts can be added, settings can be changed, Widgets can be activated, and the appearance can be modified.

B.1 CUSTOMIZING A WORDPRESS BLOG

A WordPress blog can be customized with options and features specific to the needs of a business. Figure B.12 provides a view of the new page visible by default upon logging into WordPress.com. This is a ‘behind the scenes’ page visible only to the blog owner. Other links on this page provide tools for: editing or creating blog posts and pages; personalization options for themes and menus; configuration options for sharing, interacting with people and updating domains; and other settings. Figure B.12 shows the default blog example in its current state prior to customization. We have added a theme but have not yet added widgets, pages, posts or any other customization.

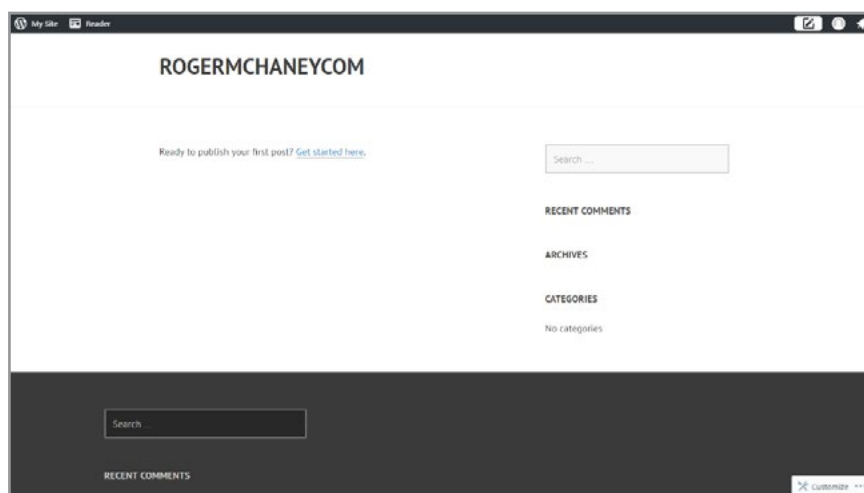


Figure B.12 WordPress Blog Prior to Customization

B.1.1 WORDPRESS READER

Another feature of WordPress is Reader. Upon logging into WordPress.com, you will generally be taken to the Reader which provides a place where you will find new posts from other WordPress and other blog sites that you follow (See Figure B.13). Reader displays these posts in chronological order and provides tools to help you track your comments and replies. Reader displays an excerpt of each post, available images and provides links to enable likes, comments, shares, or direct visits to the blogs. You can customize this page by following blogs of interest.

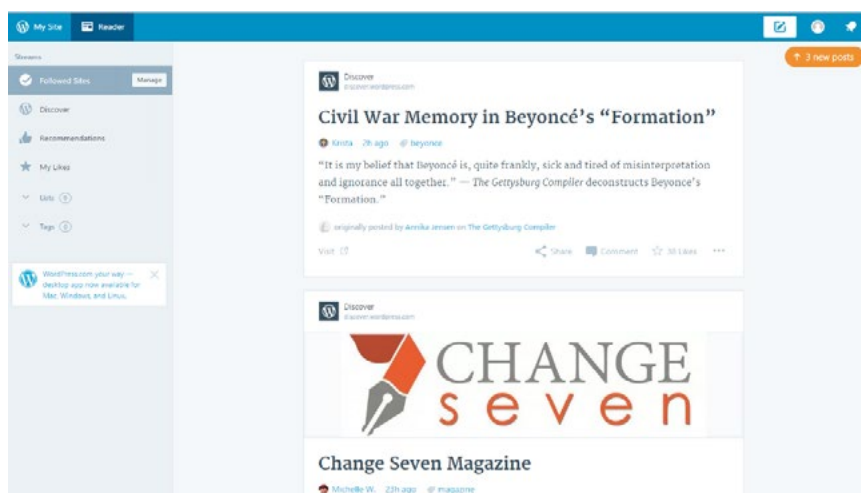


Figure B.13 WordPress Reader

By pressing on the 'Manage' button under followed sites, you can add blogs you wish to track (see Figure B.14). WordPress has added several sites to your page already. These can be removed if you wish.

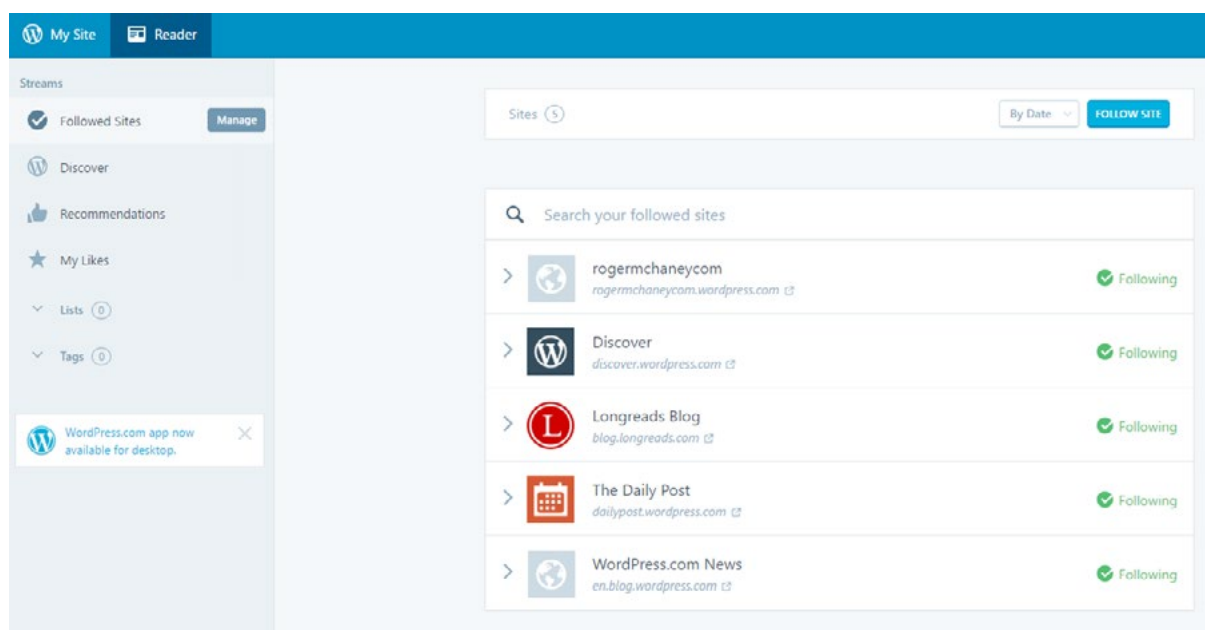


Figure B.14 Following Sites on WordPress Reader

B.1.2 CUSTOMIZING A THEME ON YOUR BLOG

The theme is a good place to begin customization of your WordPress blog. Most themes provide options for customization including selection of a header image, font and style choices, and different ways of arranging the widgets. In order to move from Reader to your WordPress blog, press the 'My Sites' link shown next to the arrow in Figure B.15.

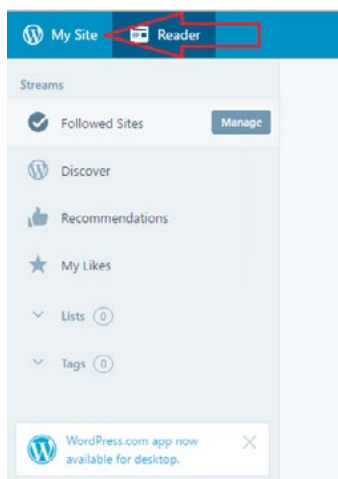


Figure B.15 To Customize Your WordPress Blog, Go to My Site

Figure B.16 shows where to begin the theme customization process.

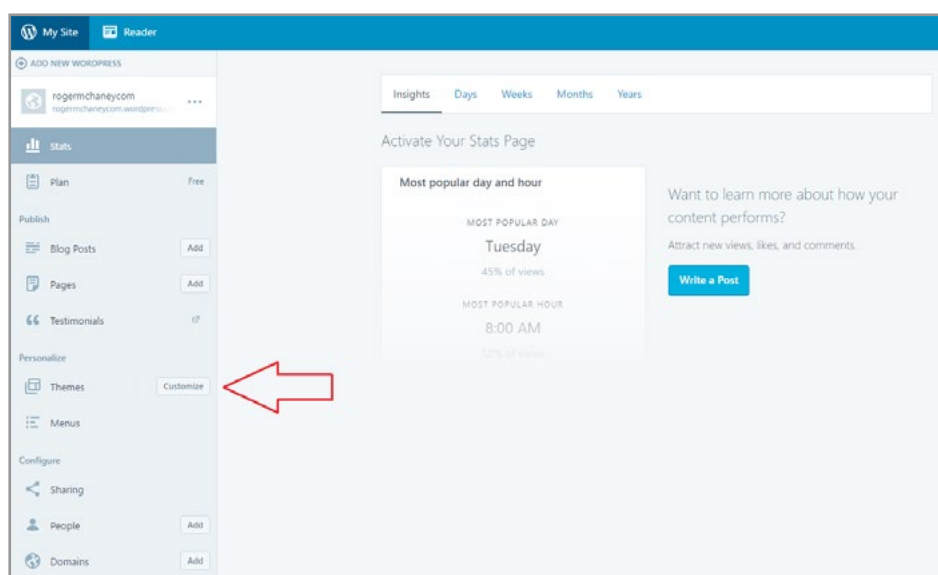


Figure B.16 Customize Your WordPress Blog Theme

The theme customization page will appear, providing a variety of options which can be modified to tailor the page to suit your purposes. For the current example project, we will customize this page to provide information about a book, *The New Digital Shoreline*, by author, Roger McHaney. Figure B.17 provides the starting points.

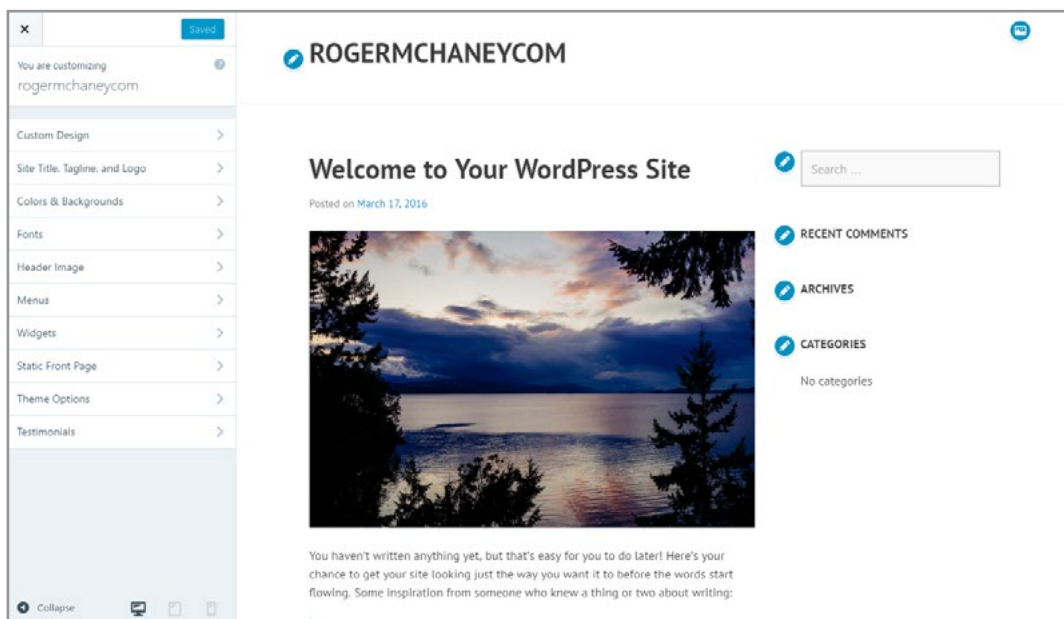


Figure B.17 WordPress Site Default Appearance

Each of the areas on the theme customization page provides an opportunity for the blog site to be tailored. We started with the page title and modified the ‘ROGERMCHANEYCOM’ to ‘ROGER MCHANEY, AUTHOR’ as an example. See Figure B.18.

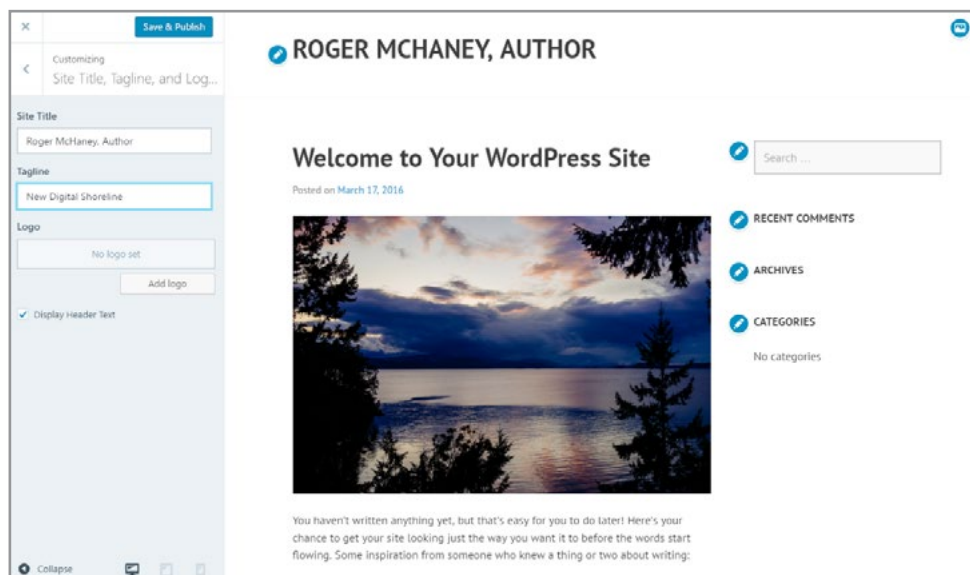


Figure B.18 WordPress Site Page Title Modified

Next, we visited ‘Themes’ and selected ‘Argent’ because it contained relevant options, including the ability to add a custom header image. After activating it, the new theme is in place. See Figures B.19 and B.20.

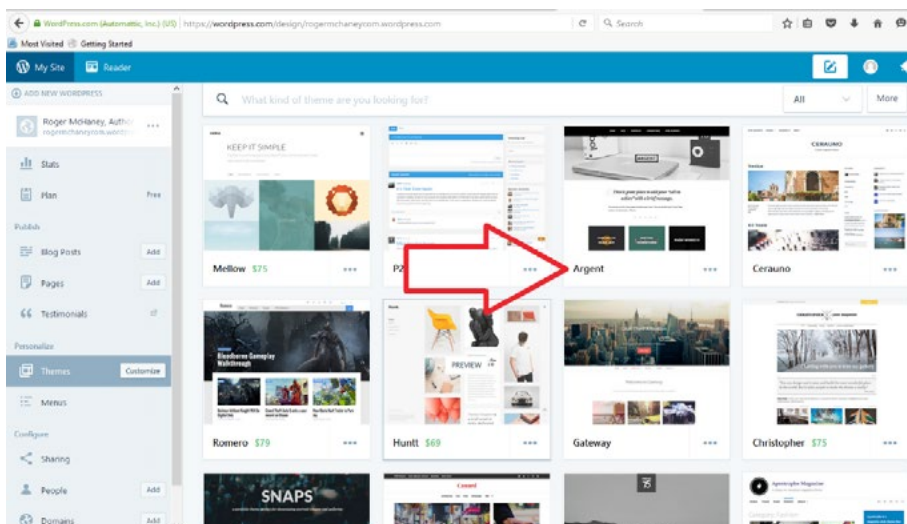


Figure B.19 WordPress Argent Theme

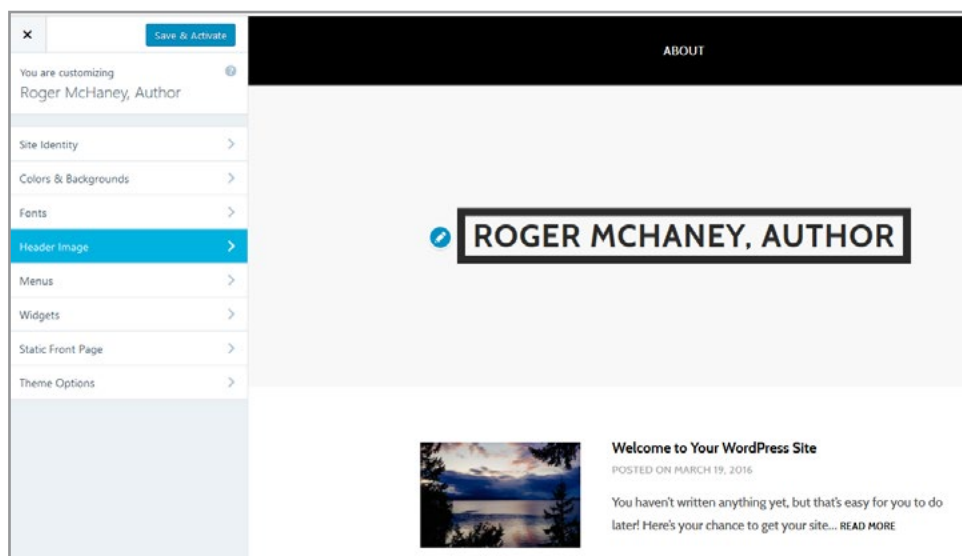


Figure B.20 WordPress Site After Selecting 'Argent' Theme

Most themes can be customized. To do this, select the customize button under the 'Theme' category. It is found in the personalize segment of the dashboard menu (Figure B.21). Depending on your current WordPress screen and theme, your menu choices will vary allowing you to customize various elements of the theme.

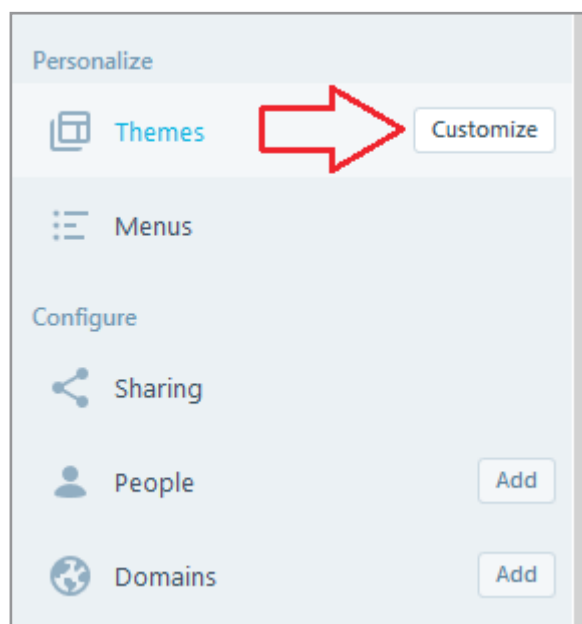


Figure B.21 WordPress Theme Customization

Customizing a theme has the direct benefit of making a business site unique. Each theme available to WordPress users may have thousands of adopters, so adding features that further the unique goals of a business site is crucial to create a sense of identity. The *Argent* theme allows a user to customize the blog header image and style. Some themes permit this and others do not. Additional theme customization options (depending on the one selected) may include: background image, background color, header text, font color, and other style choices. Changing the header image is a good way to enhance business identity. In order to create a custom header, select the *Header Image* under the *Customize* button on *Themes* as shown in Figure B.22. Your theme may have pre-installed images. If so, one of these can be selected and saved. However, to ensure a truly custom appearance, uploading a custom image is a better idea. A custom image can be obtained from a site of open content images (such as CreativeCommons.org or from appropriately licensed images at Flickr.com) or can be photos taken with a digital camera and uploaded from your local computer.

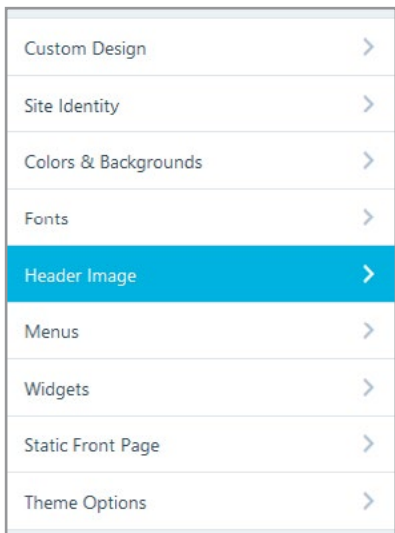


Figure B.22 Creating a Custom Header Image

For instance, Figure B.23 provides an example of downloading a Creative Commons licensed photo that is available for commercial use. It was discovered using the ‘advanced search’ option in Flickr and the settings shown in Figure B.24.

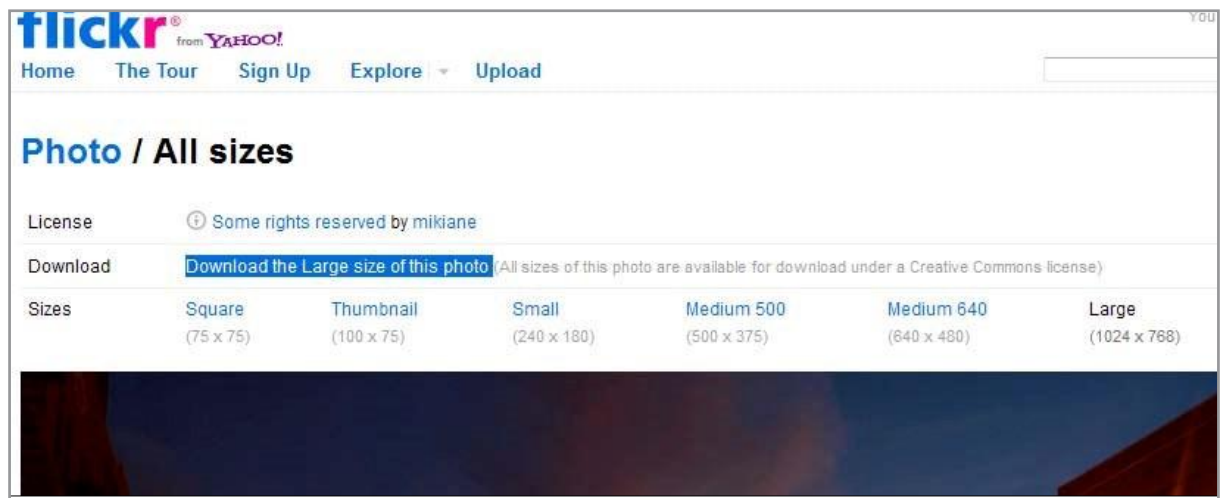


Figure B.23 CC Licensed Flickr Photo for Commercial Download



Figure B.24 Settings Using Advanced Flickr Search for Commercial Download

A photo can be added to the blog to create a custom header. Figure B.25 shows a file upload control. It was used to find the downloaded image on the local computer and then add it as the blog header image.



Figure B.25 Uploading a Photo for a Custom Header

Since the uploaded image is larger than the header size, WordPress provides a tool to crop it directly in the Web interface page. After selecting the desired portion, clicking *Crop Header* will ensure that the selected part is displayed on the blog (See Figure B.26).

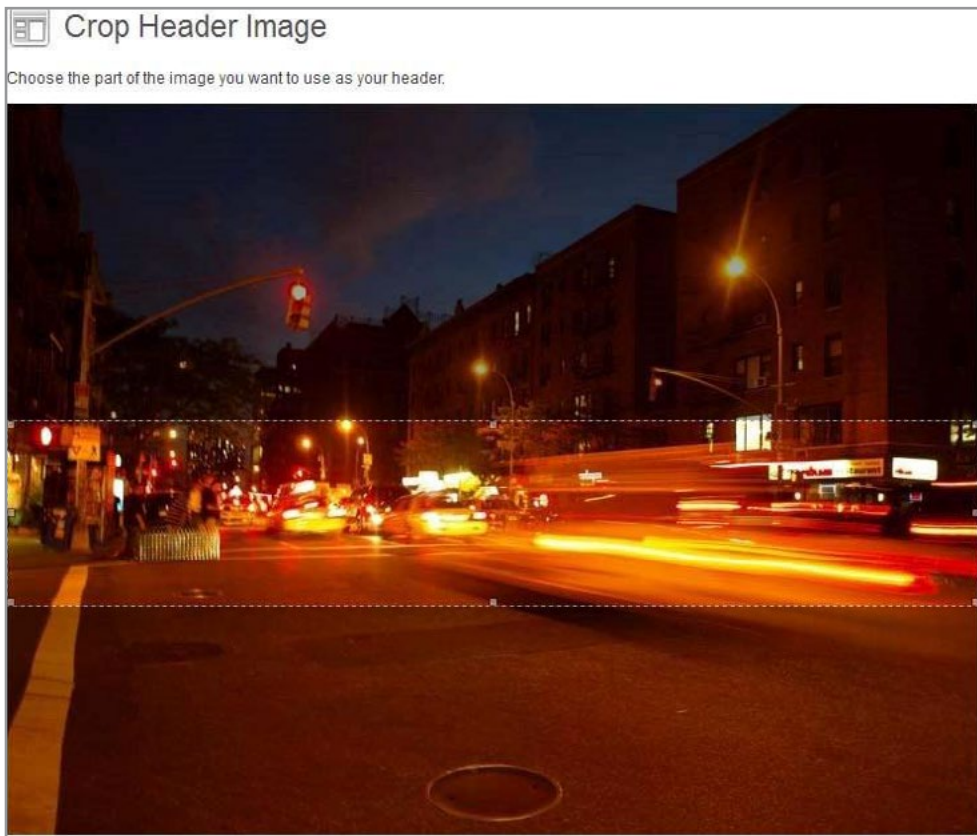


Figure B.26 Cropping the Photo to Fit the Header Size

After cropping the image, the blog can use the image as the header. See Figure B.27.

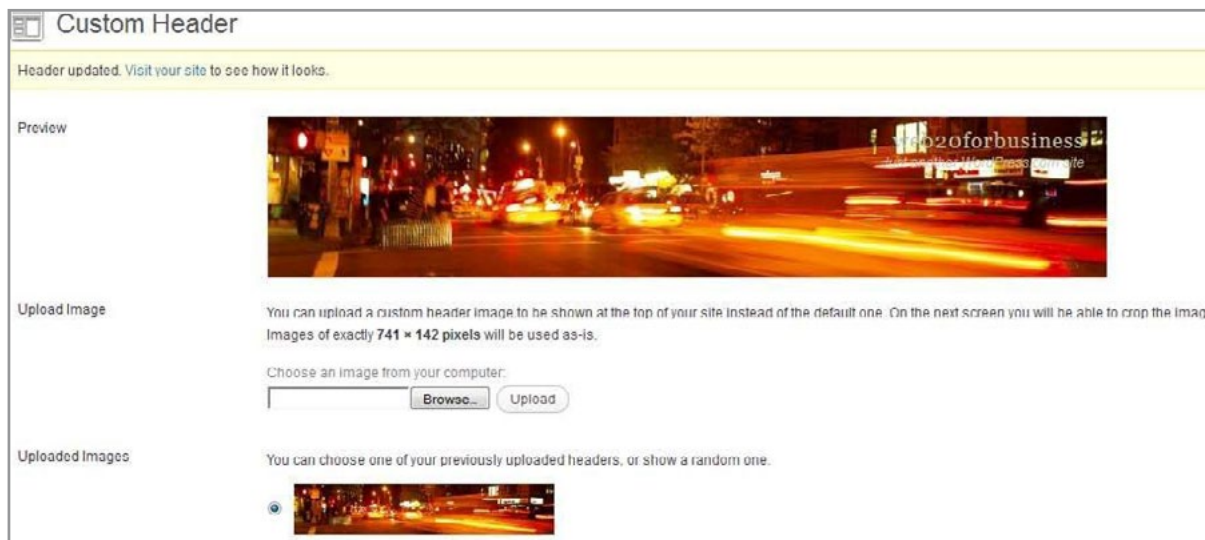


Figure B.27 Custom Header Selected

Notice that the title of the blog is barely readable in the upper right corner of the header. The default, free version of WordPress does not provide many tools for fixing this problem. Headers can be edited in more ways if your business is using a premium tool set or using third-party installations. Alternately, if the image being used is one shade of color, a complementary font color can be selected to make the title more visible (see Figure B.28). However, if the image is multicolored, it may be difficult to select a single font color that works. In this case, it may be better to edit the image outside of WordPress prior to loading it. Figure B.29 demonstrates using MS-Paint (a default accessory with MS-Windows) for adding text to the photo. Any photo editor can be used to do this. In order to get the title looking as desired, several attempts might be necessary.



Figure B.28 Choose the Header Image Color

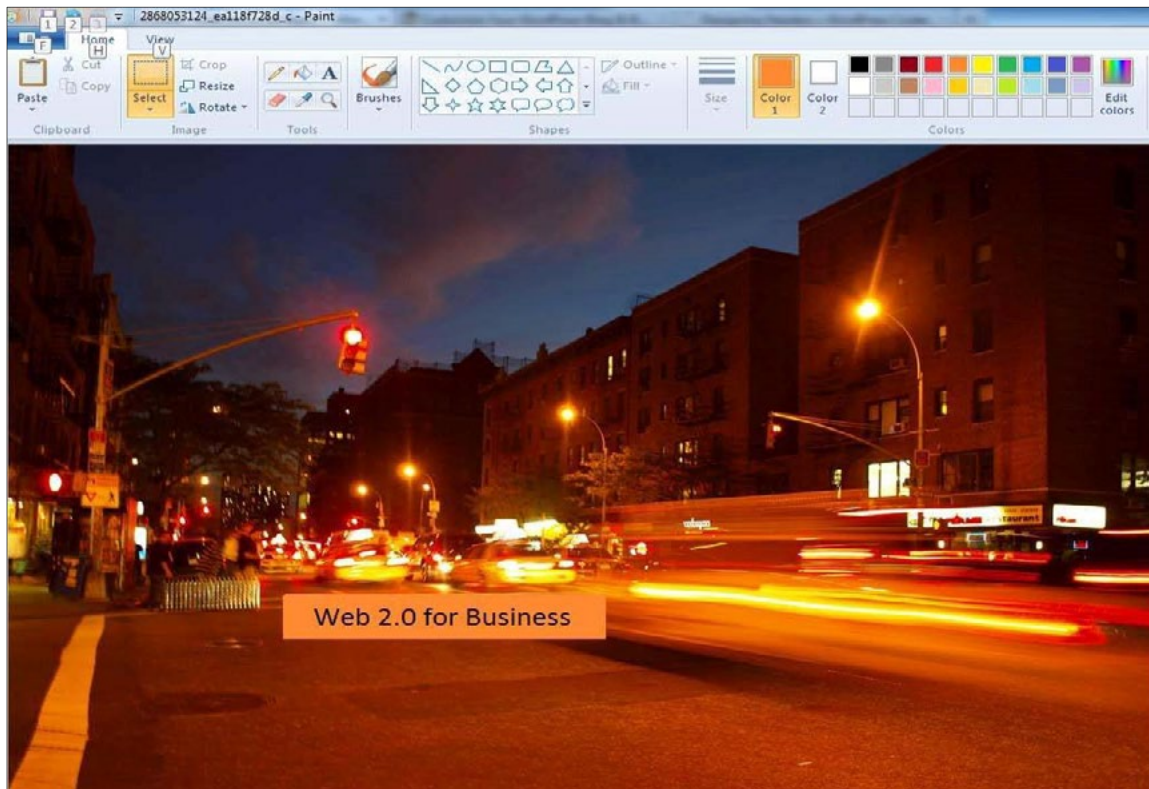


Figure B.29 Editing Image Outside of WordPress Prior to Reloading

After getting the header loaded, the ‘Display Text’ option can be disabled. This will stop WordPress from overlaying text and will only show the text that was added in the image editor. Your own image can be used for a header as well. For instance, in Figures B.30 through B.32, an image was selected from the local computer’s hard disk for use as a header. Text can be added to make the image more accessible.

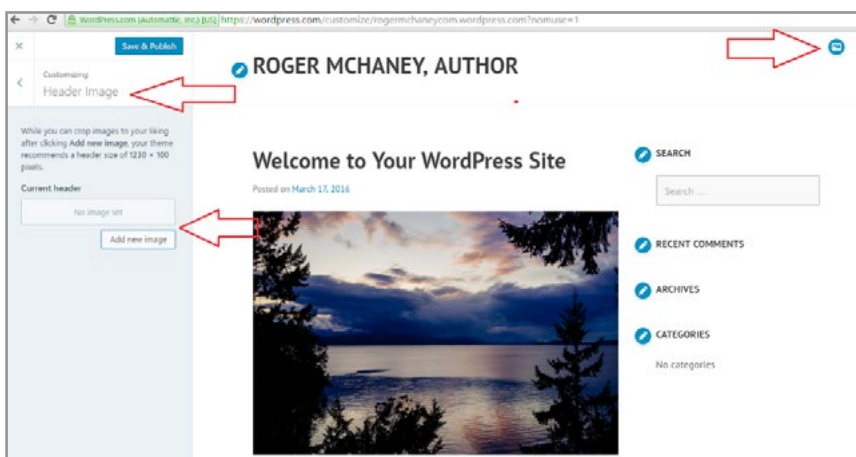


Figure B.30 Head Image Options



Figure B.31 Choose the Header Image from the Local Hard Disk

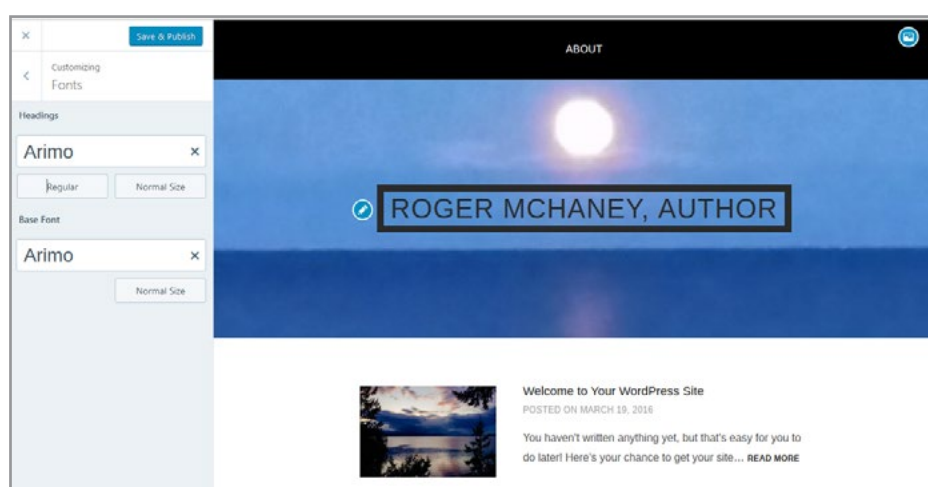


Figure B.32 Header Font Customized

B.1.3 CUSTOMIZING BACKGROUND

Customizing the blog's background is another method that can be used to individualize its appearance. Navigating to *Colors and Background* under *Customize Theme* in the Dashboard provides a couple of options. First, in some themes, an image can be uploaded and used as the background. The image has a variety of settings that permit it to be either tiled or displayed according to particular criteria. A second way to customize page background is by selecting a color value for a solid background. The color can be selected by navigating to *Select a Color* which opens a color wheel with a large number of choices in some themes or to pre-selected options in other themes. Figure B.33 provides an example from the *Argent* theme. Be sure to click on 'Save Changes' when complete. Figures B.34 and B.35 show examples of background images using another theme.

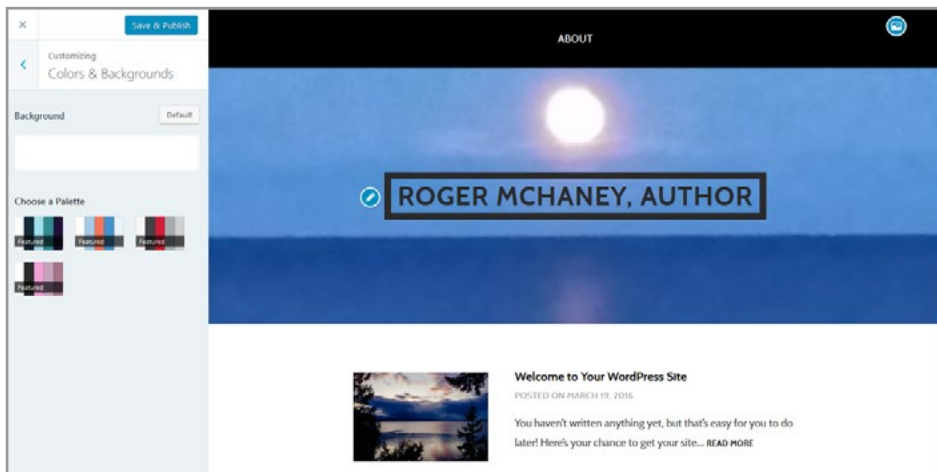


Figure B.33 Image Background Color and Other Options Set

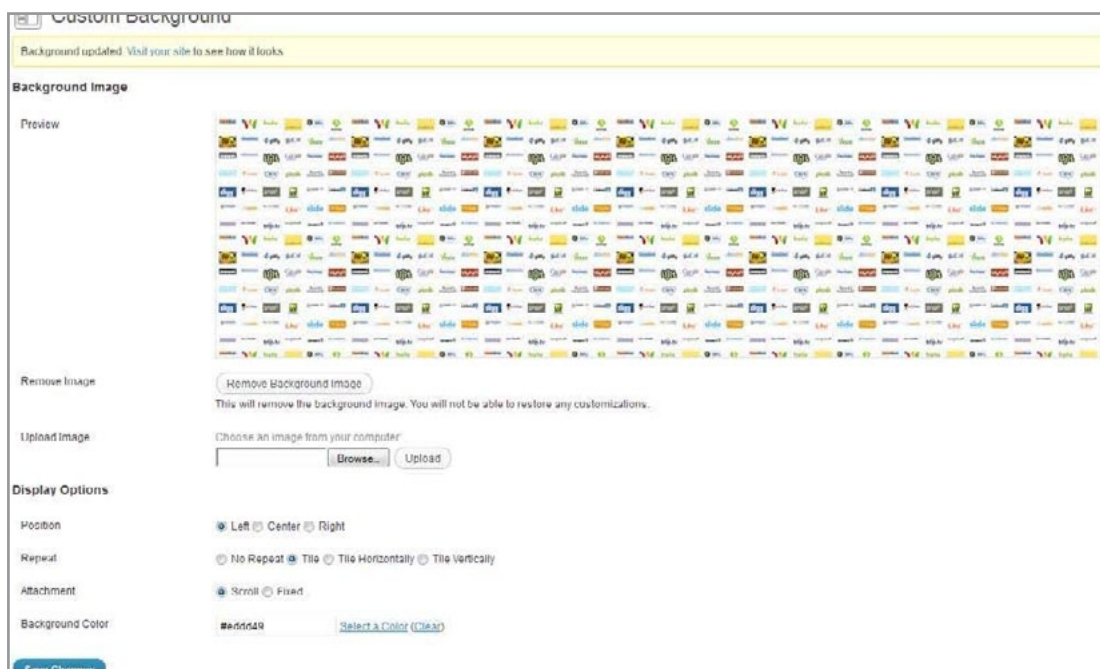


Figure B.35 Selecting a Color as a Blog Page Background

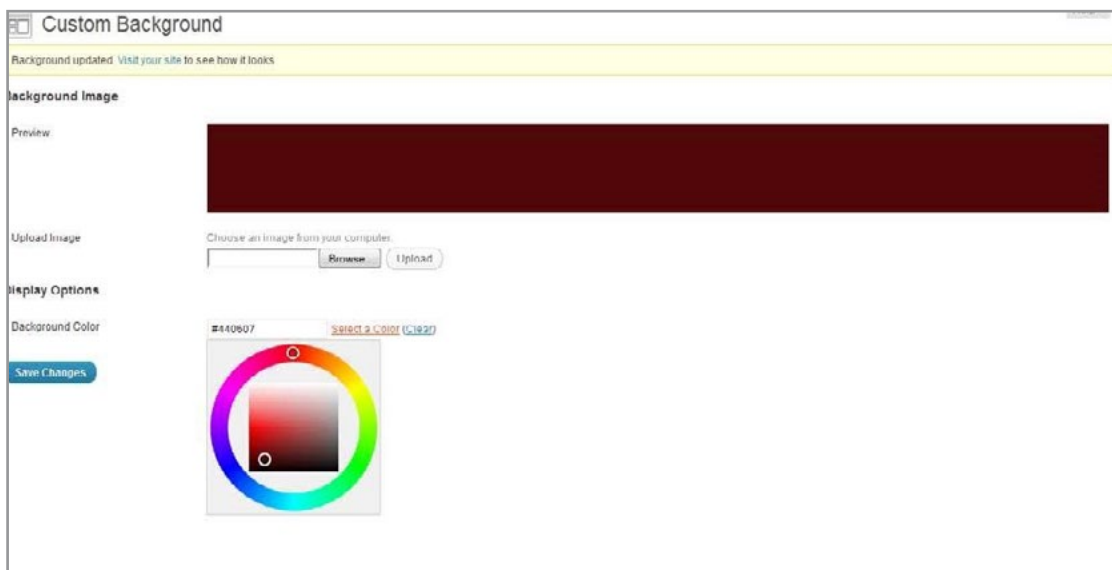


Figure B.35 Selecting a Color as a Blog Page Background

B.2 GENERAL SETTINGS

WordPress blogs allow a number of general settings to be changed including: site title, tag line (the subheading found under the title), language, time zone, date format and so on. To access some of these settings from a theme perspective, navigate from the *Customize Theme Dashboard* to ‘*Site Identity*’ as shown on Figure B.36.

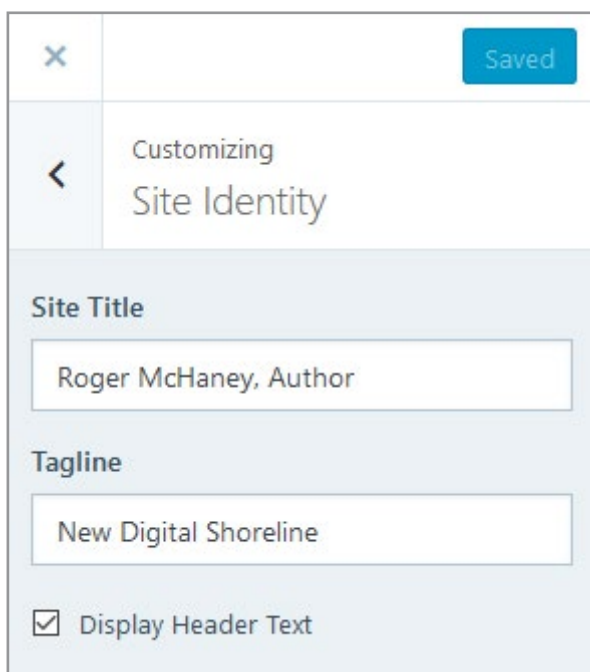


Figure B.36 WordPress General Settings from Theme Customization

More extensive setting changes can be accessed from the main WordPress menu. Figure B.37 illustrates.

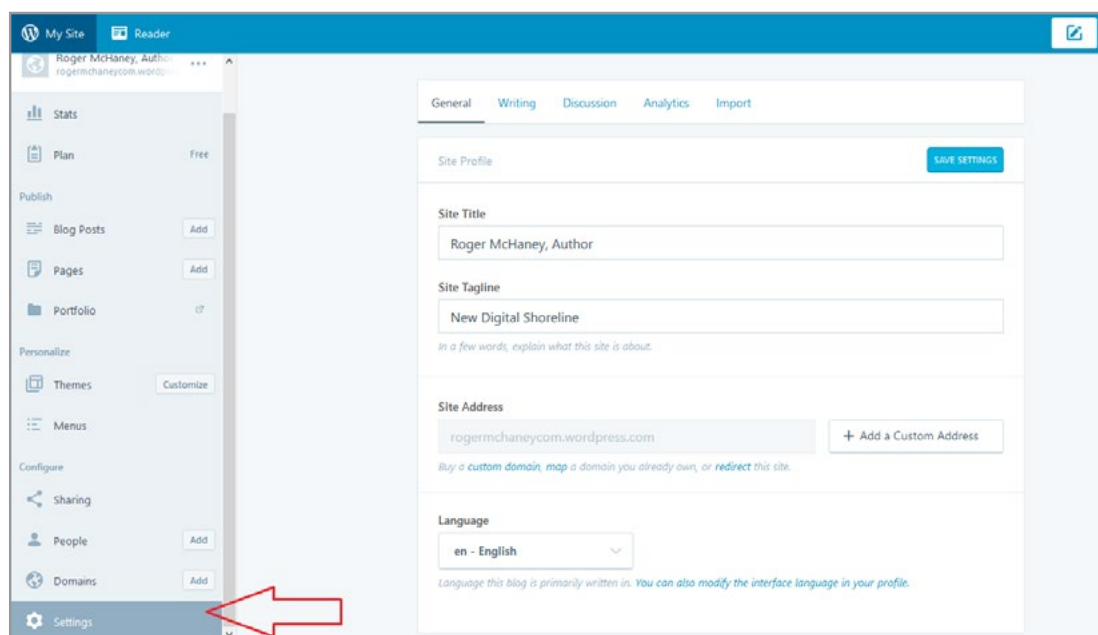


Figure B.37 WordPress General Settings on Main Menu

Another useful feature on this page is the blog picture/icon setting. An image that represents a blog can be uploaded here to provide an identity online. WordPress permits a user to upload an image that will be cropped and resized for future use. Figure B.38 provides an example of how to reach additional customization items including this process. WordPress refers to the created image as a blavatar (blog avatar). Figures B.39 and B.40 provide more detail. Figure B.41 shows how to crop a blog image.

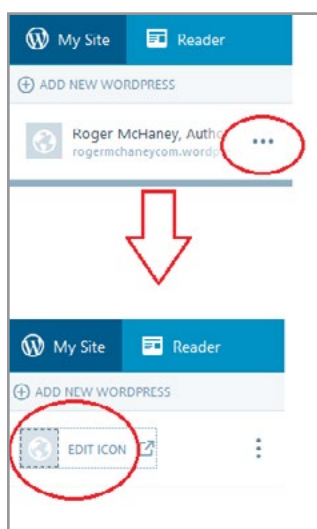


Figure B.38 WordPress General Settings

Through Edit Icon Button

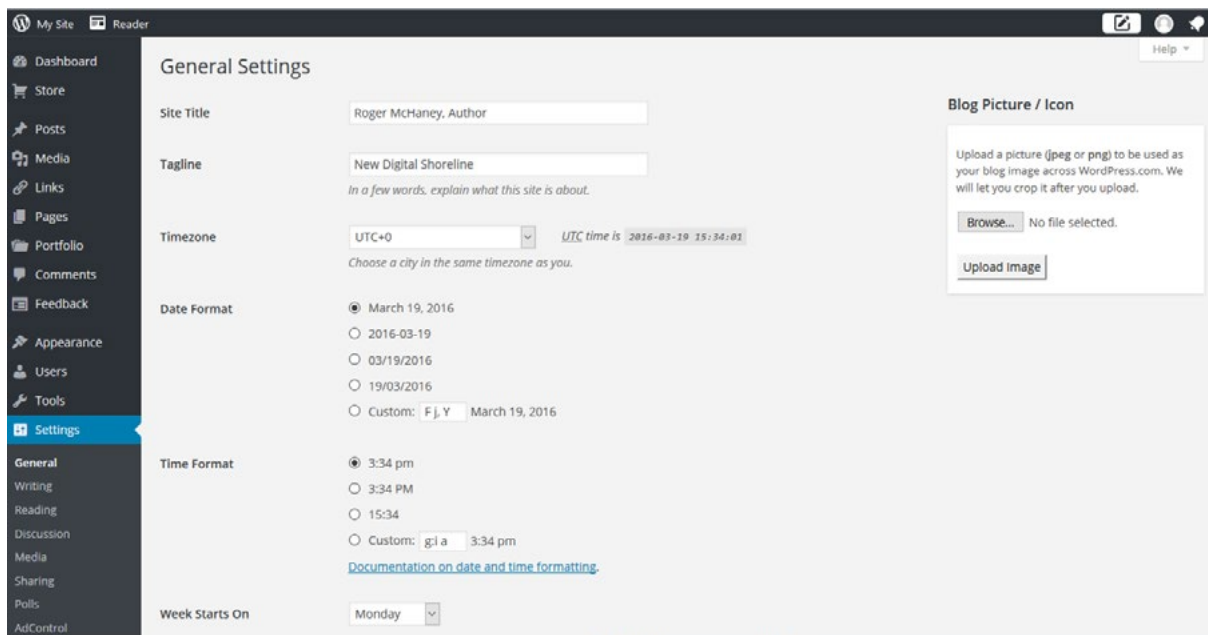


Figure B.39 WordPress Settings Including Blog Picture Options



Figure B.40 WordPress Blog Picture Upload

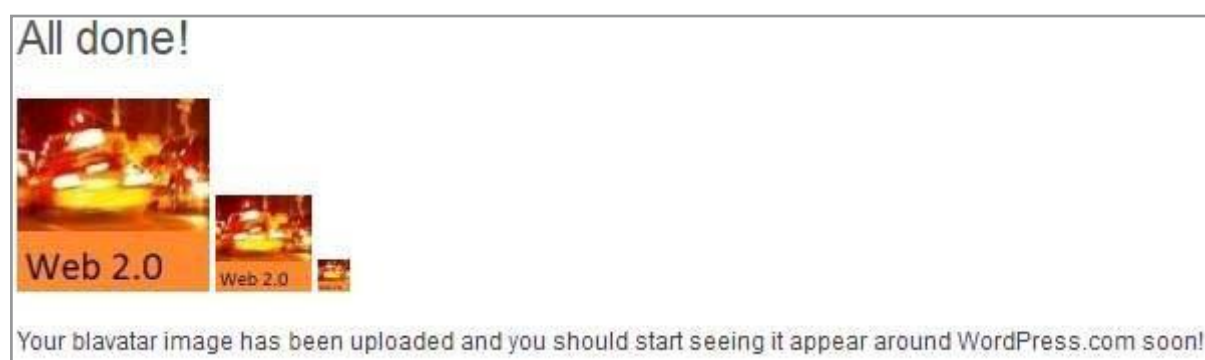


Figure B.41 Creating a Blavatar

B.3 USING WIDGETS

The power of WordPress for blogging becomes more apparent when widgets are incorporated into a business website. Widgets are add-ons used to interact with other applications and provide features that help build an audience for a blog. Widgets can be used to show recent Tweets, provide Flickr pictures, show Facebook wall entries, link to articles, and for many other things. Widgets are often provided by third-party developers. To select Widgets for a business blog, navigate to *Widgets* under *Theme Customization* on the Dashboard. See Figure B.42.

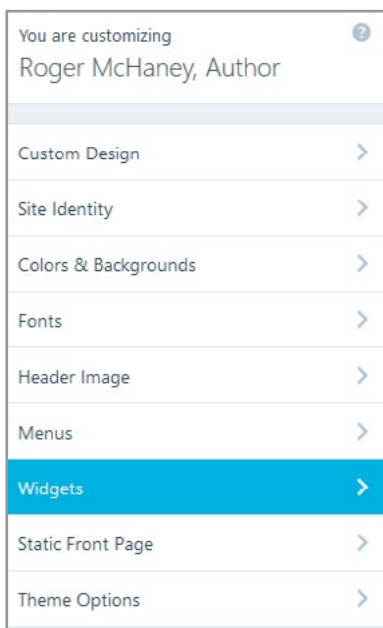


Figure B.42 WordPress Widgets

A wide variety of Widgets is available in the page that appears (See Figure B.43). The desired Widgets can be added to the blog by selecting them under the desired area. Different areas are available for Widgets depending on the current theme. Typically, Widgets can be placed on a sidebar or footer area.

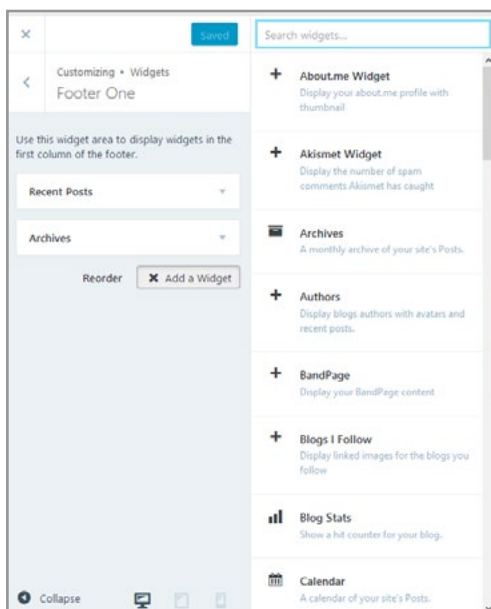


Figure B.43 WordPress Widget Selection

A selected Widget usually will require configuration. Clicking the down arrow beside the Widget's name will cause a configuration dialog box to appear. Figure B.44 shows a Twitter Widget that has been dragged into the sidebar area. Its down arrow reveals settings that enable its configuration. Be sure to click *Save* after customization.

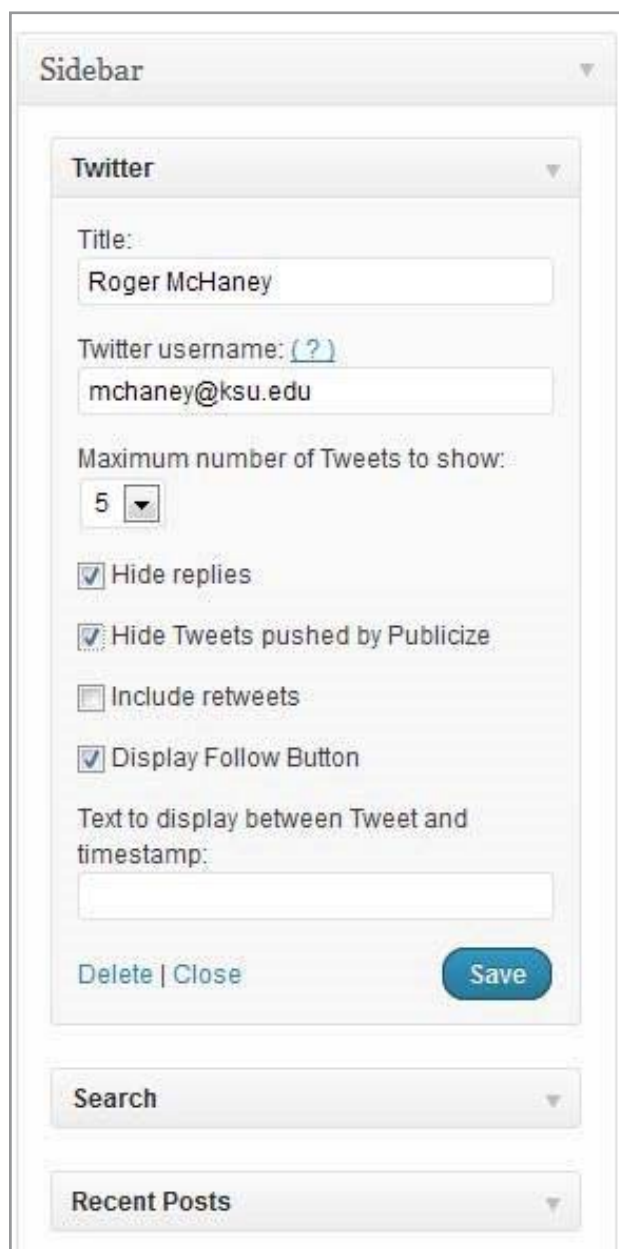


Figure B.44 Configuring Twitter Widget in Sidebar Area

The current theme had several default Widgets in place including *Search*, *Archive*, and *Recent Posts*. A *tag cloud* Widget was also added. Since no posts have been added to the blog, nothing will be visible here yet. Widgets bring the blog to life and add a dynamic, interesting interface for the readers. Additional Widgets can also be added depending on the goals for the blog. In Figures B.45, B.46, and B.47, the Goodreads Widget is configured.



Figure B.45 Goodreads Widget Selected

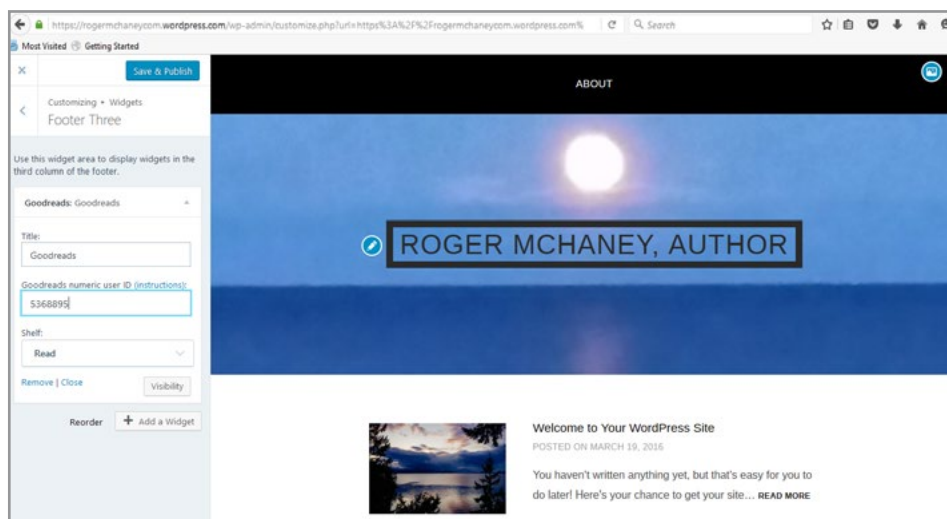


Figure B.46 Goodreads Widget Configured

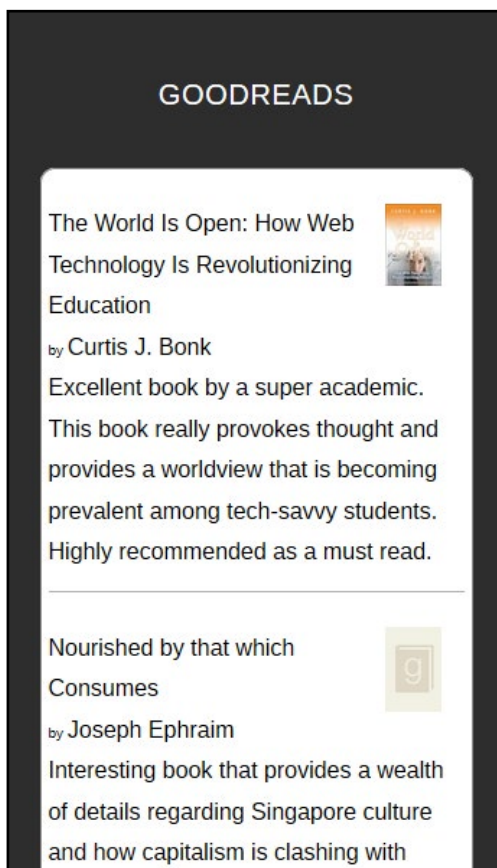


Figure B.47 Goodreads Widget Displayed in Footer

B.4 BLOG POSTS

In order to get a better feel for the blog’s overall look, it is time to add a couple of posts. To do this, navigate to ‘Write a Post’ as shown in Figure B.48.

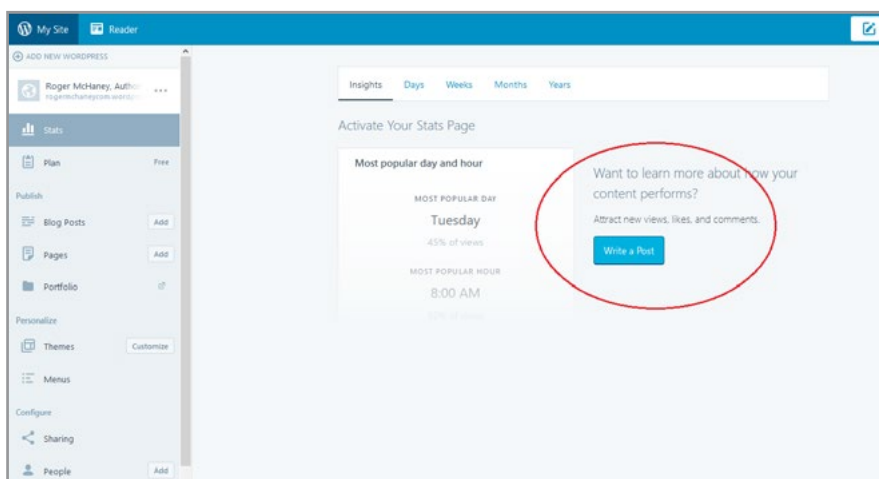


Figure B.48 Adding a Post

The text for a new blog entry is added as shown in Figure B.49. Notice that media such as images or video, polls, or forms can be added to the entry.

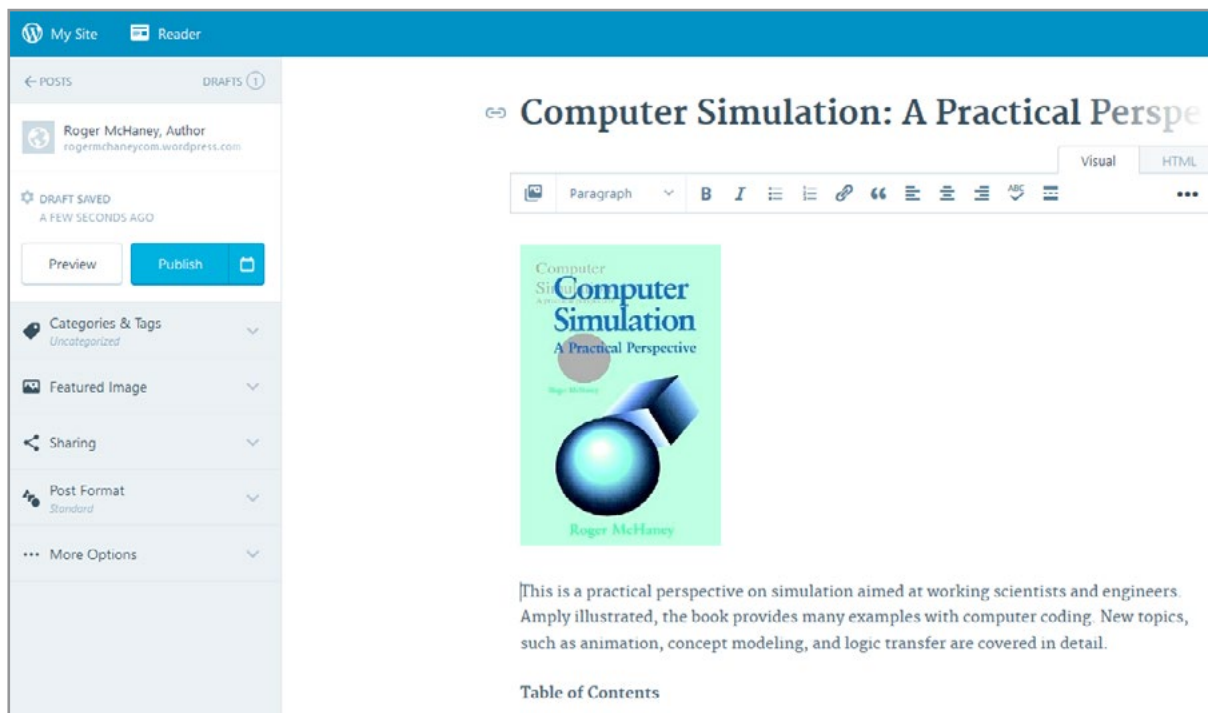


Figure B.49 Entering Blog Text

Additional editing was done to the post to make the appearance more professional. Then a category and several tags were added to make the post easier for readers to find and to help index the material. The tag cloud widget also will have content now. Figure B.50 illustrates adding a category and tags. Upon completing, the 'Preview' button was pressed. After you are done inspecting the blog post and making any needed changes, the blog post can be 'Published' (see Figure B.51).

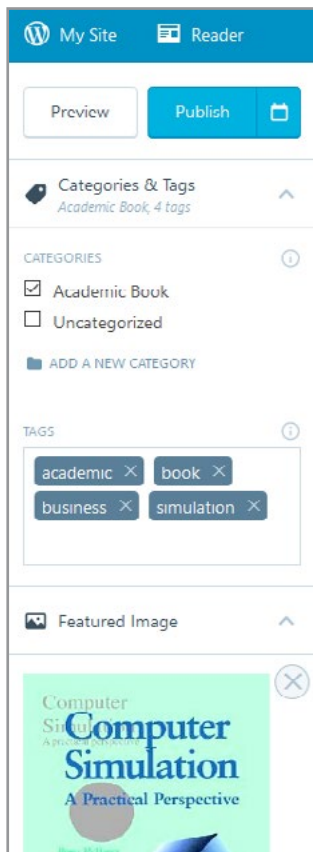


Figure B.50 Entering Blog Text

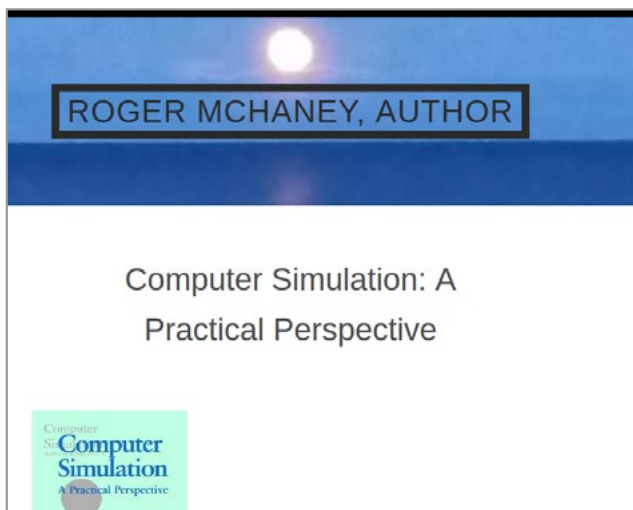



Figure B.51 Published Blog Entry

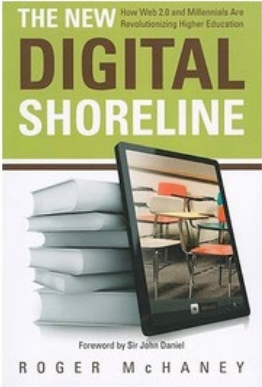
A second post was also added together with a category and tags. The theme was reviewed and changed to one called ‘Twenty Sixteen’ and updated. Figures B.52 shows the blog in its current state with 2 posts.

Roger McHaney, Author
New Digital Shoreline



The New Digital Shoreline

March 19, 2016
Academic Book, Higher Education
academic, book, Higher Education, Learning, Teaching, Web 2.0
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THE NEW How Web 2.0 and Millennials Are Revolutionizing Higher Education
DIGITAL SHORELINE
Foreword by Sir John Daniel
ROGER MCHANNEY

Two seismic forces beyond our control the advent of Web 2.0 and the inexorable influx of tech-savvy Millennials on campus are shaping what Roger McHaney calls The New Digital Shoreline of higher education. Failure to chart its contours, and adapt, poses a major threat to higher education as we know it. These forces demand that we as educators reconsider the learning theories, pedagogies, and practices on which we have depended, and modify our interactions with students and peers all without sacrificing good teaching, or lowering standards, to improve student outcomes. Achieving

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GOODREADS

The World Is Open: How Web Technology Is Revolutionizing Education
by Curtis J. Bonk
Excellent book by a super academic. This book really provokes thought and provides a worldview that is becoming prevalent among tech-savvy students. *Highly recommended as a must read*




Figure B.52 Twenty Sixteen Theme Added

B.5 ADDING MOBILE AND IPAD OPTIONS

WordPress.com provides tools for customizing a blog to run on both mobile devices and iPads. The blog owner can view the site using mobile settings. Figure B.53 provides an example of the blog with an iPad view.

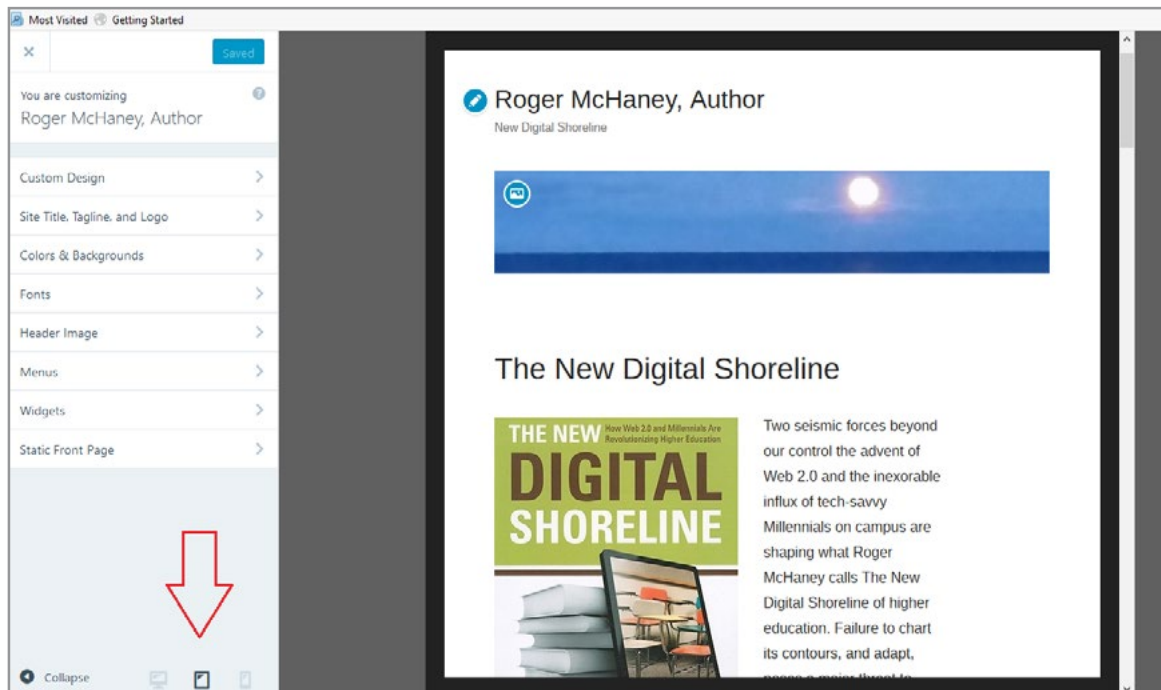


Figure B.53 Configuring WordPress Blog for Mobile Apps

To ensure that the mobile options are activated, the blog owner must be using a mobile enabled theme and go to settings where the mobile options can be turned on. See Figure B.54.

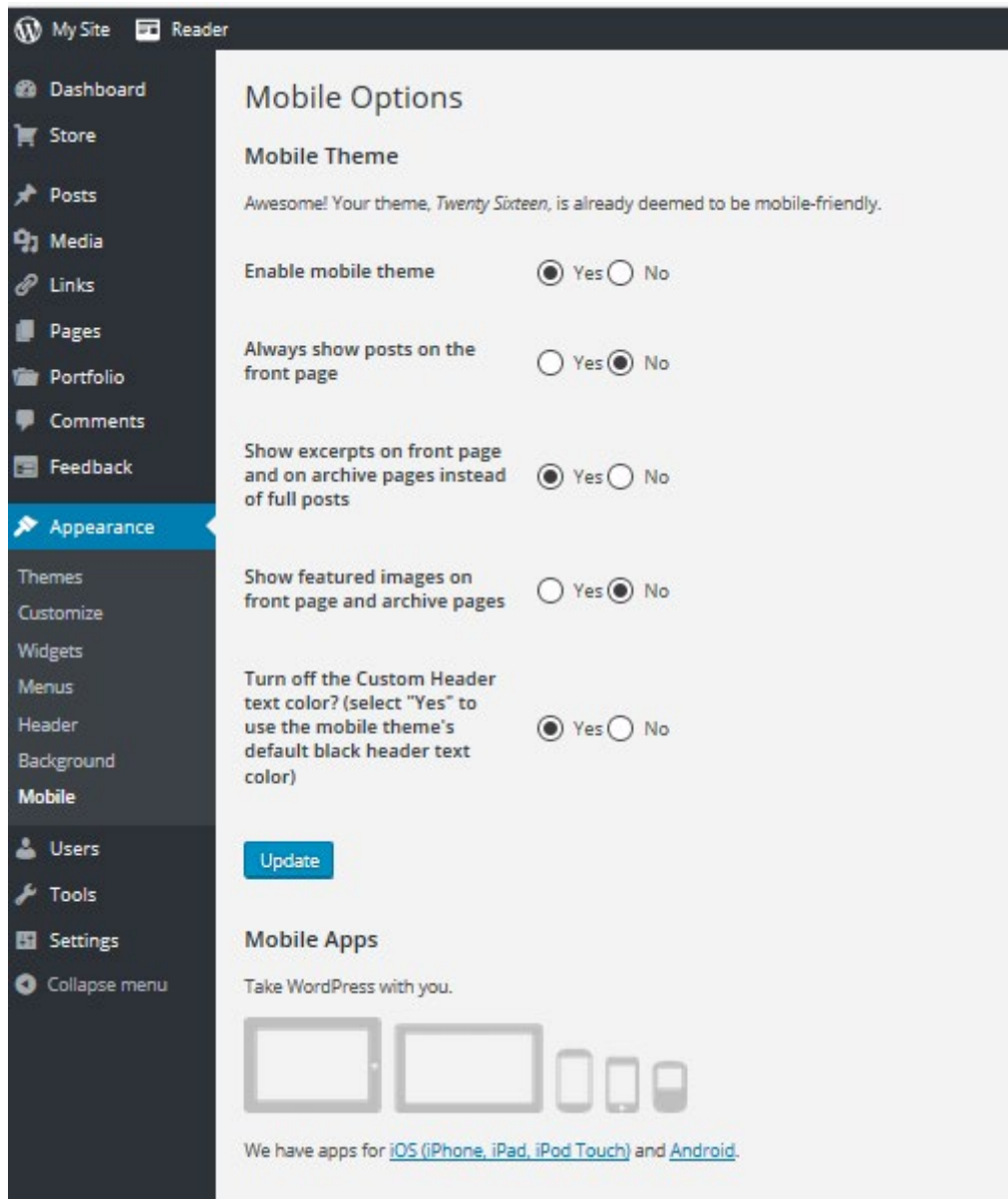


Figure B.54 Making Sure WordPress Blog is Enabled for Mobile Apps

B.6 MANAGING PAGES

In addition to posts, WordPress permits a blog to have multiple pages. Pages are different sections of the blog website and may contain information about the business, its location, its mission and so forth. The blog posts reside on a page as well (called Blog Posts). From the Wordpress.com Dashboard, the ‘Pages’ link brings up a list of the website’s current pages. By default, WordPress creates an ‘About’ page. A list of all pages is shown in Figure B.54. Pages can be used to create a more traditional website using WordPress.com as a content management system. The *About* page should be edited because it currently contains default text. Click on Edit and then change the content to represent the current business blog. Figure B.55 illustrates.

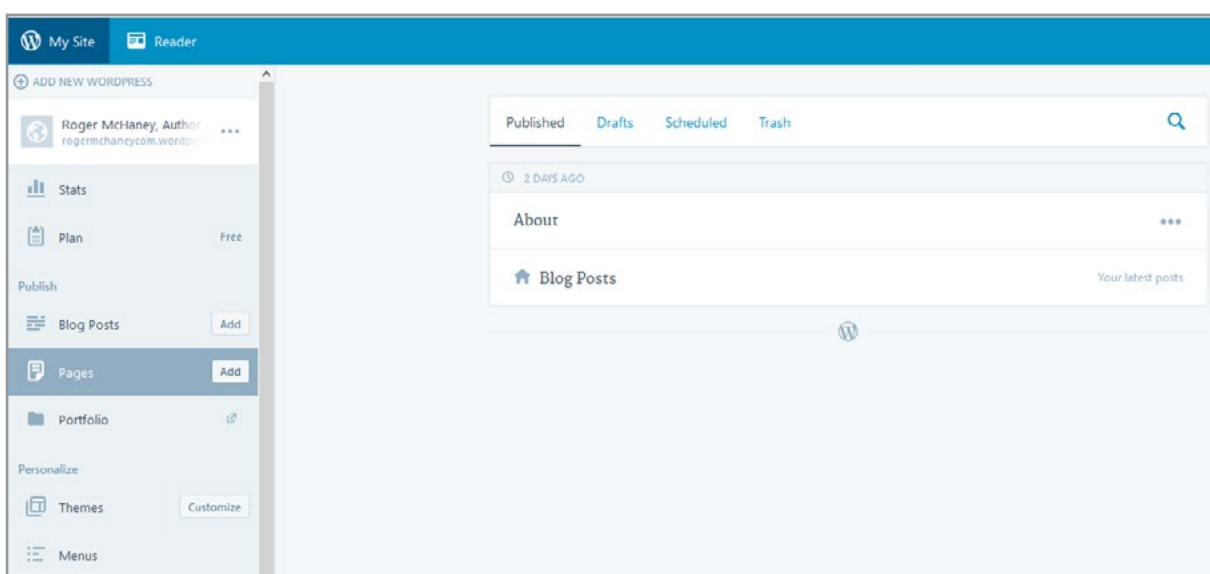


Figure B.54 WordPress Pages List

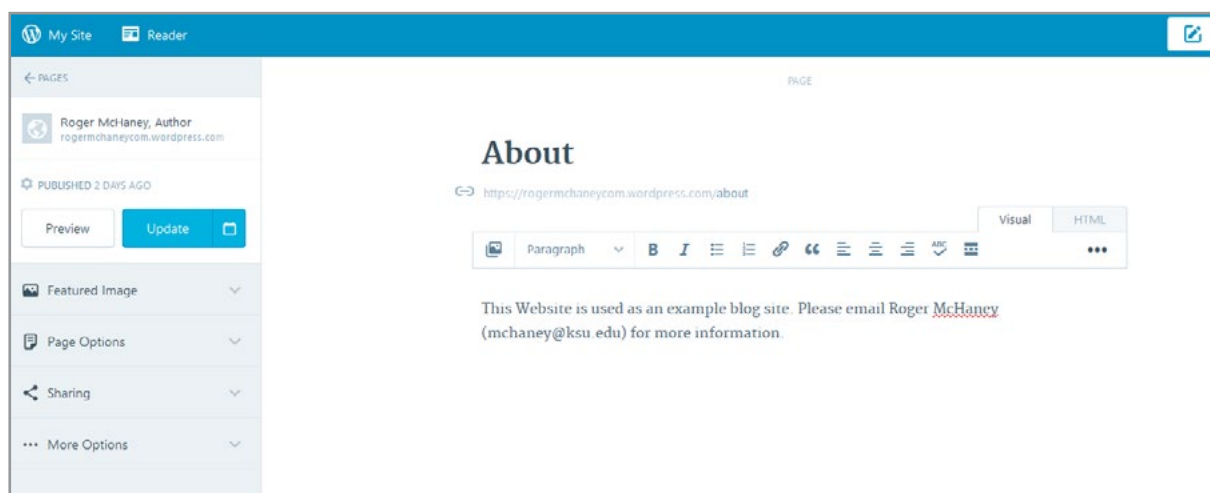


Figure B.45 WordPress About Page

Additional pages can be added to the blog website as needed by pressing on *Add New* under *Pages* on the Dashboard. Often, business blogs provide contact information and other details to help customers and potential clients connect more easily.

B.7 CONNECTING WORDPRESS WITH SEARCH ENGINES

Ultimately, in order for a business blog to become successful, potential customers, clients, and others must discover it and continue to return as regular readers. Having social media, news services, and other re-broadcasters pick up your blog feeds is also desirable. Many methods for publicizing a blog exist. The first step for a business blog is to make the site discoverable on search engines and social media websites. Open the *Sharing* page on the Dashboard under *Settings*. By default, it is set to permit indexing by search engines and to be viewable to the general public. In certain cases, a business may wish to make their blog private and use it internally with invited viewers only or keep it private until the blog has been fully developed. Figure B.56 shows the sharing settings.

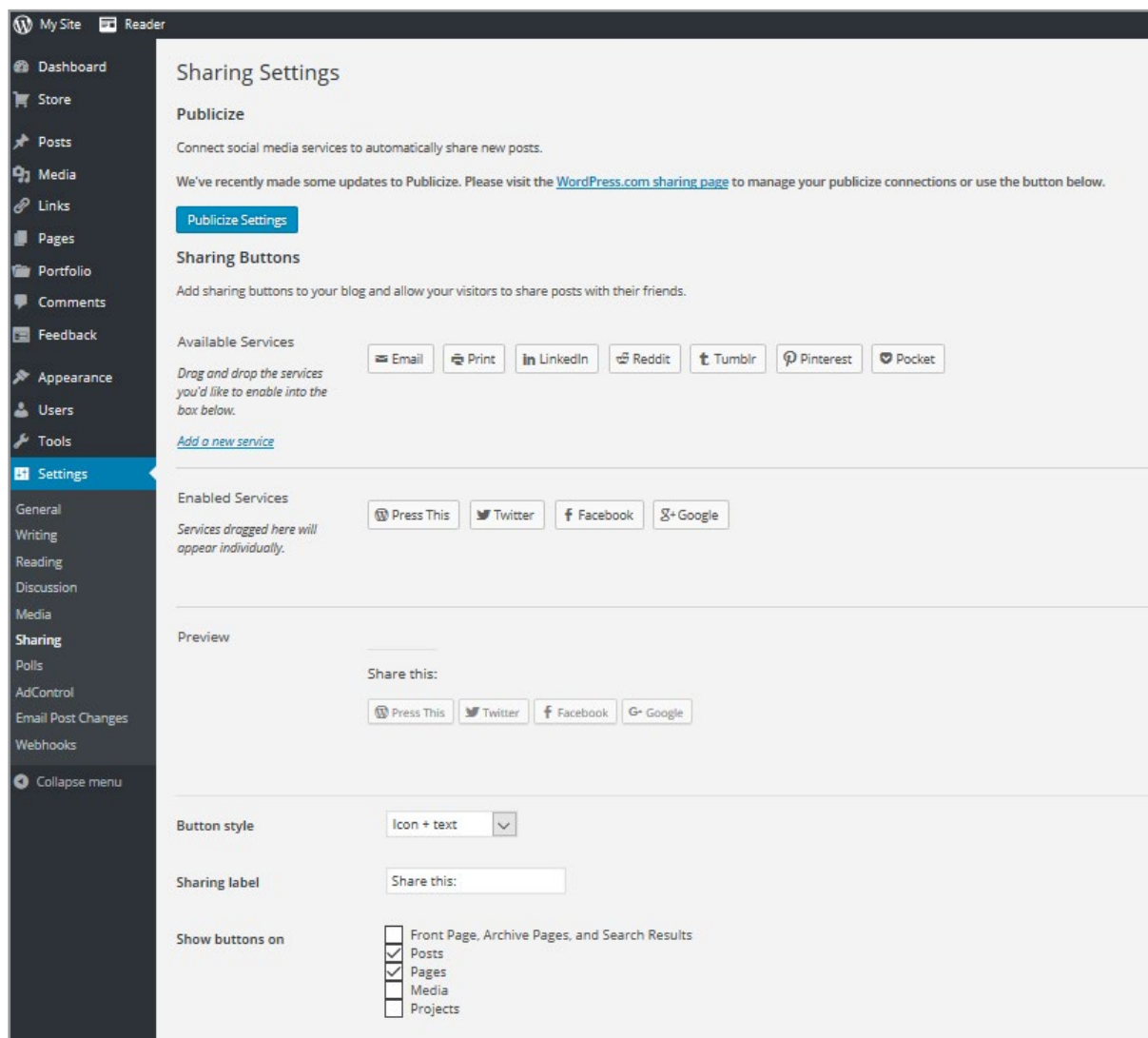


Figure B.56 Sharing Settings on WordPress.com

After ensuring that the blog is publically visible, it is important to register with WordPress’s webmaster tools. These tools help ensure that the posts are indexed by major search engines such as Google, Bing, and Yahoo. To register with the search engines, navigate to ‘Tools’ on the Dashboard and scroll midway down the page. Figure B.57 illustrates.

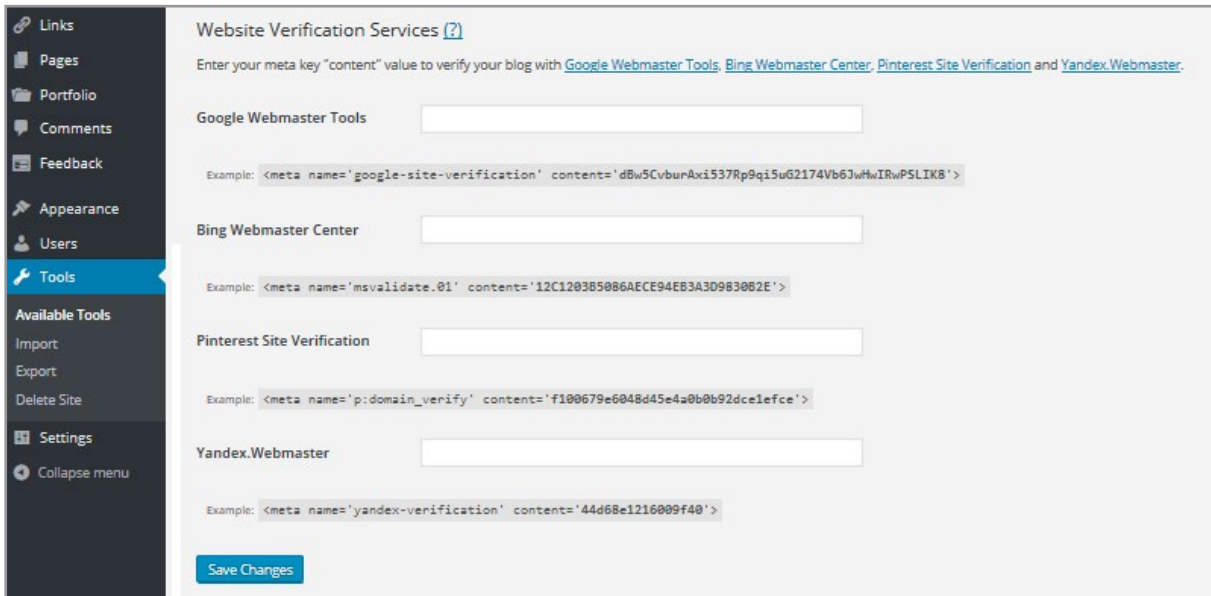


Figure B.57 WordPress Webmaster Tools

Notice the links provided under the ‘Website Tools Verification’ header. The first one links to Google’s Webmaster tools. As an example, we will register the current blog with this site. Bing and Pinterest work much the same way. In order to register a site on each of these, the blog owner will need to have an account with a UserID and Password for the service. For this example, we use a Google login to access the Google Webmaster Tools. After., the screen shown in Figure B.58 is visible. Press the red ‘Add a Site’ button and then copy your Blog Address into the textbox prompt. This tells Google’s search engine to index your site.

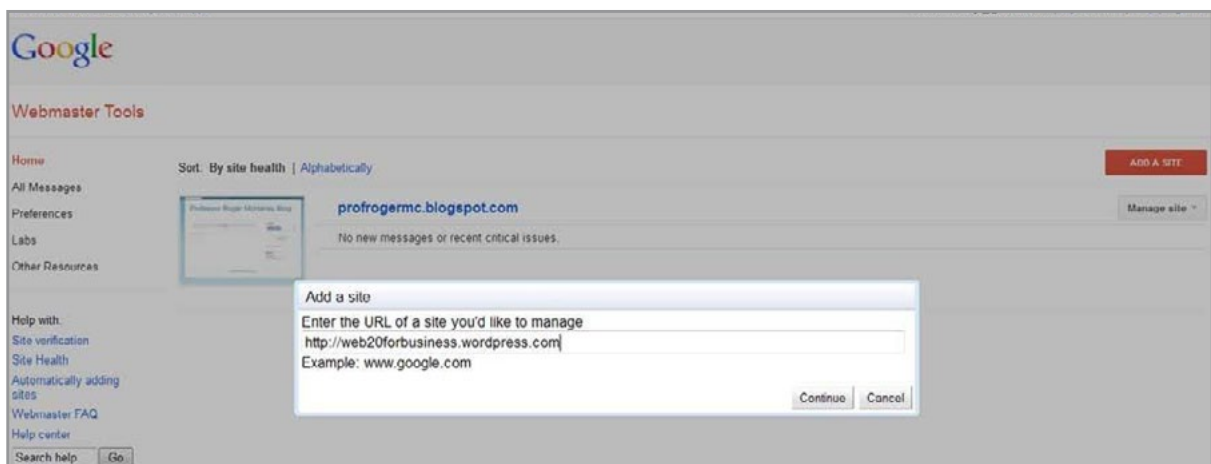


Figure B.58 Registering with Google Webmaster Tools

In order to prove that you are the site owner, Google requires that you verify ownership by adding a small piece of code to your website. The Google Webmaster Central site will provide several methods for accomplishing this. Either a small HTML file can be uploaded to your blog’s webserver (See Figure B.59) or by pressing the ‘Alternate Method’ tab, a code can be viewed, copied and added to the WordPress site (Figure B.60).

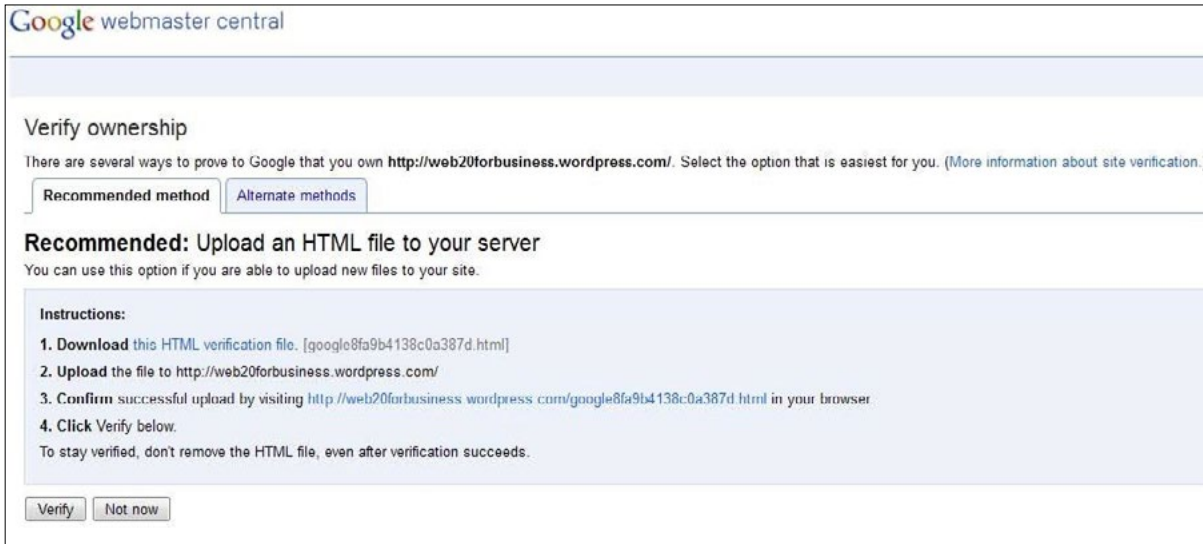


Figure B.59 Google Webmaster Central with Options for Registering Website

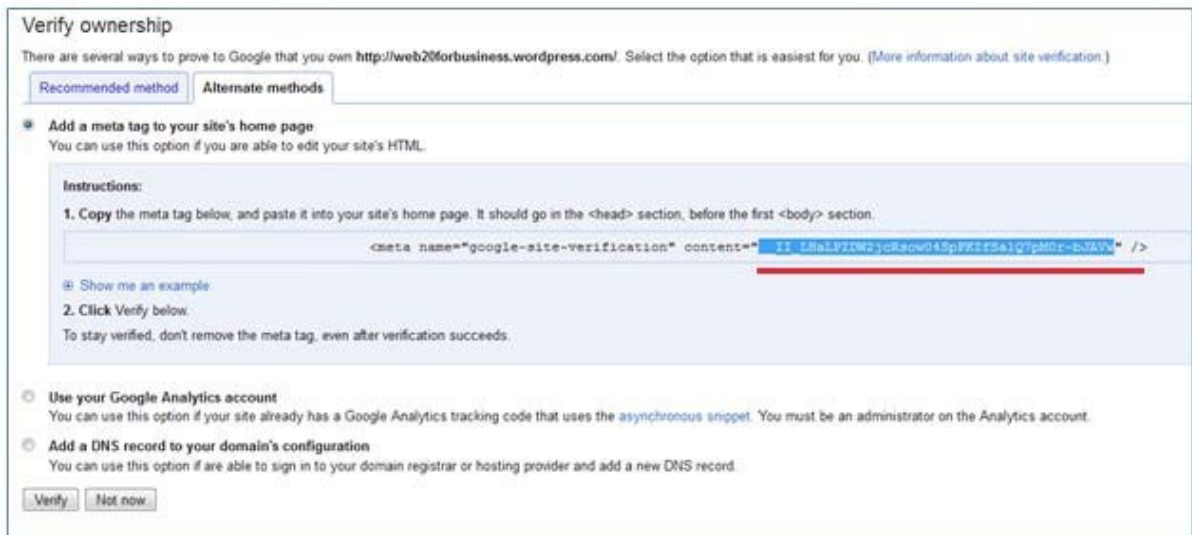


Figure B.60 Code to Copy into WordPress (See Blue Highlighted Area)

After copying the code highlighted in Figure B.60, paste it into the appropriate textbox as shown in Figure B.61. This will ensure that Google recognizes the business blog and will give you the ability to review statistics related to the Website on the Google site. Figure B.62 shows the process completed.

Webmaster Tools Verification (?)

Enter your meta key "content" value to verify your blog with [Google Webmaster Tools](#), [Yahoo! Site Explorer](#), and [Bing Webmaster Center](#)

Google Webmaster Tools

Example: `<meta name='google-site-verification' content='dBw5CvburAxis37Rp9qi5uG2174Vb6JwHwIRwPSLIK8'>`

Yahoo! Site Explorer

Example: `<meta name='y_key' content='3236dee82aabe064'>`

Bing Webmaster Center

Example: `<meta name='msvalidate.01' content='12C1203B5086AECE94EB3A3D9830B2E'>`

Figure B.61 Pasting Google Code Snippet Back into WordPress



Figure B.62 After Saving, Blog is Registered with Google

In the same way that the Blog was registered with Google, keys can be entered from Bing, Pinterest or any others offered by WordPress. This will ensure that your business blog is discovered and indexed. Remember, you will have to obtain User IDs and passwords from these other two services before registering. WordPress's signup links provide a way to get to the correct pages. Related topics will be covered in the SEO section of this book.

B.8 CONNECTING WITH CUSTOMERS

Publicity for a blog should extend beyond search engines. Social media has become an important venue for businesses to meet, connect with, and retain customers. WordPress provides a set of tools for exposing its blogs to social media. From the Dashboard, navigate to 'Settings' and 'Sharing'. A screen similar to Figure B.63 should appear.

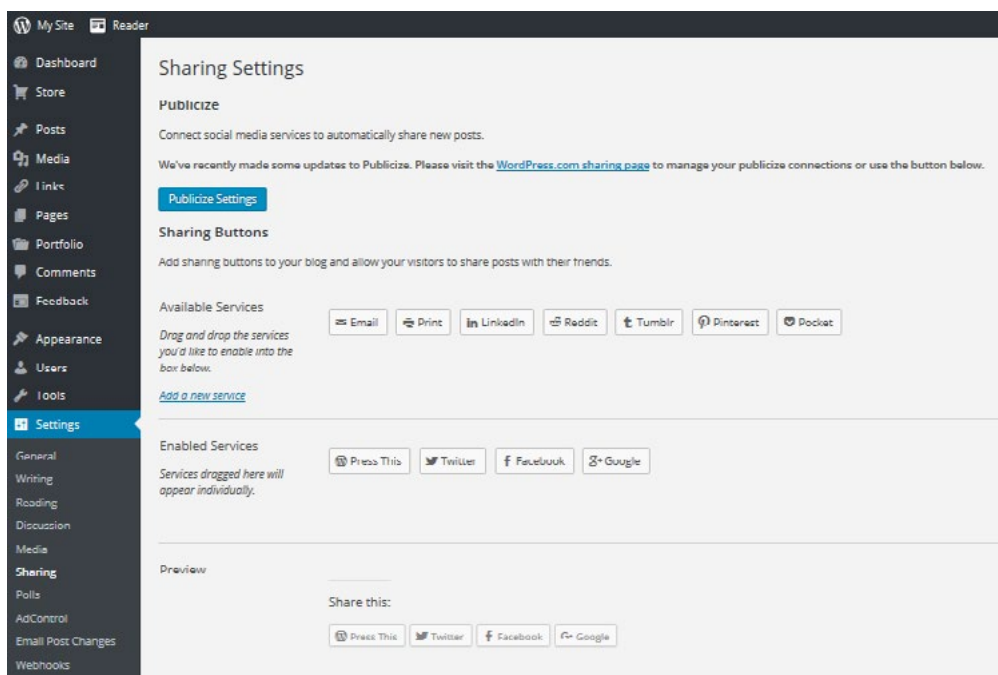


Figure B.63 Connecting with Social Media

Select the social media choice by pressing a link. For example, Figure B.64 provides an example of connecting to Twitter. WordPress will ask that you authorize the connection and then ask that you log into Twitter (through provided links). Once you have supplied a Twitter User ID and Password, the blog will be connected (See Figure B.65). Being connected to social media means that the posts on your blog can automatically be sent to anyone in your network. In Twitter, this means that you can send out Tweets inviting Followers to read the newest blog entries.

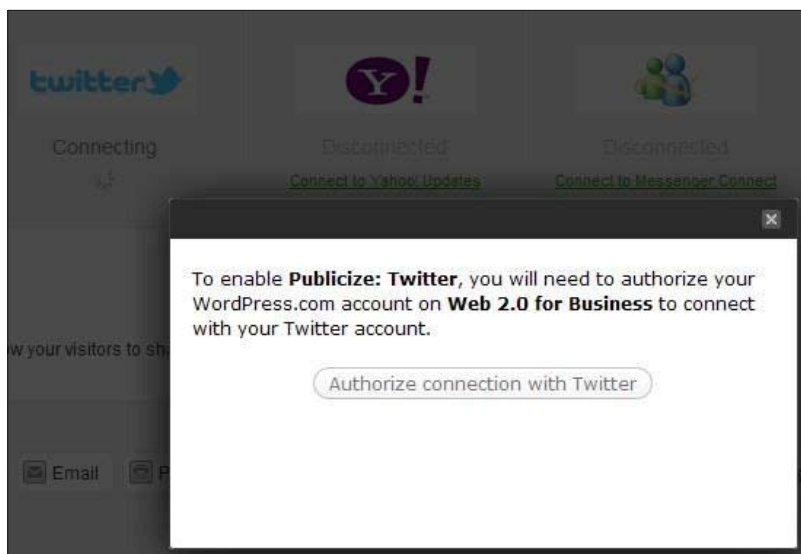


Figure B.64 Authorizing a Connection to Twitter

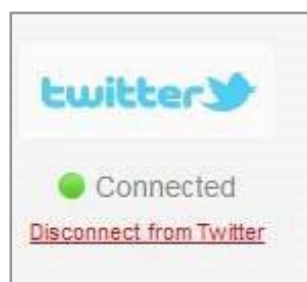


Figure B.65 WordPress Blog Connected to Twitter

The WordPress Dashboard section is called '**Sharing Buttons**' and permits users to connect blog entries with their social media. For instance, providing a 'Facebook' button will automate the process of someone sharing a link to a specific blog post with their friends. This is a powerful way to set up the ground work for developing social buzz. When an online video or story goes viral, it means that people want to share it with their friends and so much sharing occurs that it spreads rapidly through social media connections. Figure B.66 shows the '**Sharing Buttons**' section. By dragging an icon from the upper row to the lower row, a button will be placed on your blog. Figure B.67 shows that the enabled buttons for 'WordPress Press This', 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' are displayed on each blog post. Others can be added as well. Any buttons dragged into a darker gray area will display in a dropdown menu. Figure B.68 provides a view of the blog post after enabling 'Reddit', 'StumbleUpon', 'Digg', and 'LinkedIn'. 'Google+', 'Tumblr', and 'Pinterest' were enabled and placed behind a share button (See Figure B.69). Be sure to press the 'save' button at the bottom of the page to activate your changes.

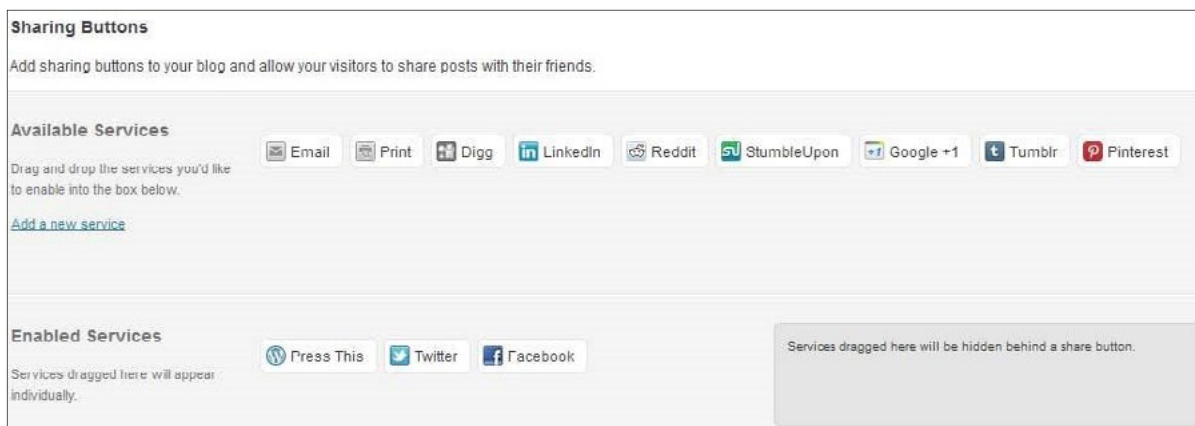


Figure B.66 Sharing Button Section



Figure B.67 Blog Entry with Enabled Social Media Buttons

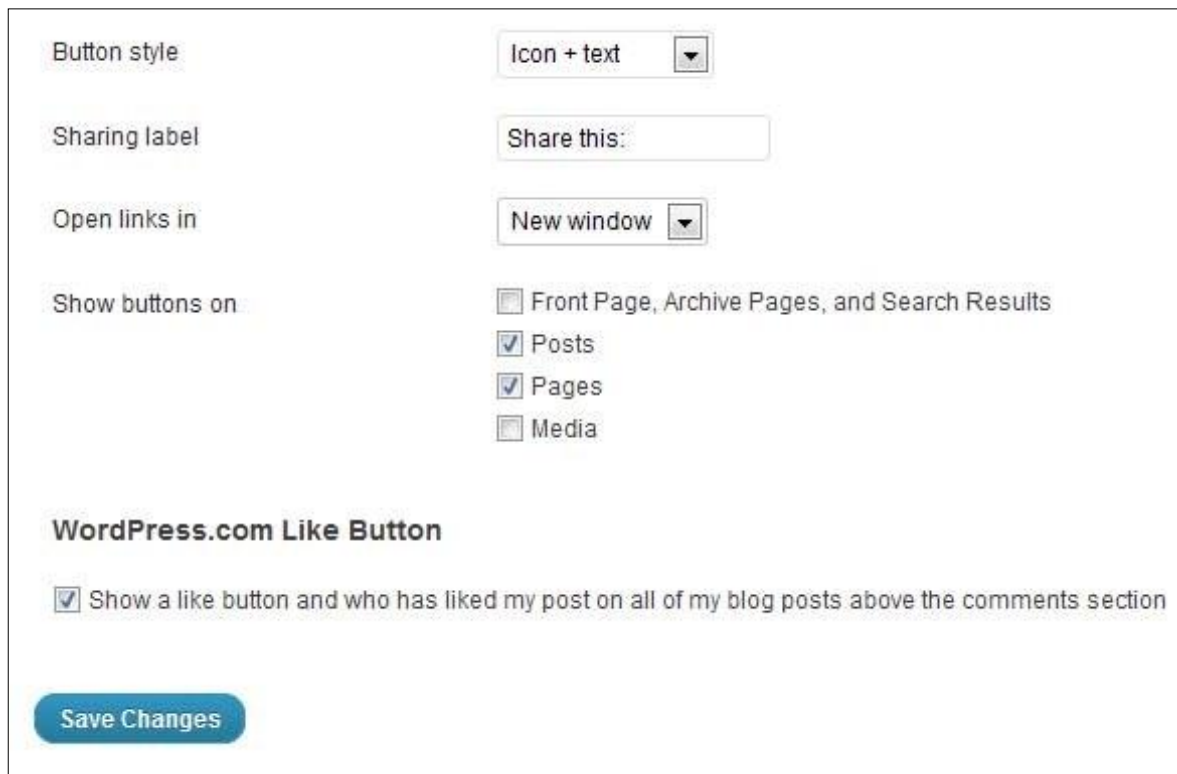


Figure B.68 More Social Media Buttons Enabled (with Several Under 'More')



Figure B.69 Enabled Services Setting in WordPress Dashboard

The bottom of the '*Sharing Settings*' page provides a few more options. *Button Style*, *Sharing Label*, whether links open in *a New Window* and where to show the *Share Buttons* can all be set (see Figure B.70). Often, it is advantageous to have links open in a new window so that readers can come back to the original page more easily.



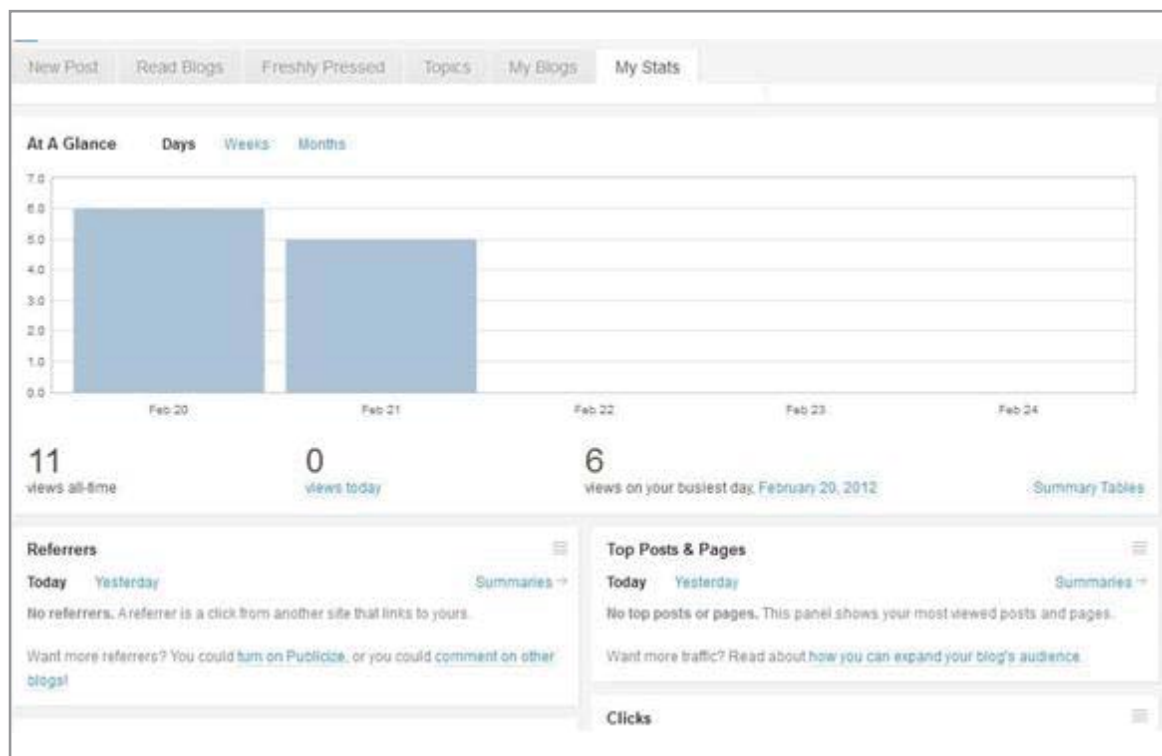
The screenshot shows the 'Final Share Settings' in WordPress. It includes the following options:

- Button style:** A dropdown menu set to 'Icon + text'.
- Sharing label:** A text input field containing 'Share this:'.
- Open links in:** A dropdown menu set to 'New window'.
- Show buttons on:** A list of checkboxes:
 - Front Page, Archive Pages, and Search Results
 - Posts
 - Pages
 - Media

Below these settings is a section titled **WordPress.com Like Button** with a checkbox labeled 'Show a like button and who has liked my post on all of my blog posts above the comments section'. At the bottom left is a blue button labeled 'Save Changes'.

Figure B.70 Final Share Settings

Connecting with search engines and social media will help build traffic. To monitor traffic, WordPress provides a “My Stats” tab on your WordPress Login Page. Several statistics are maintained, including number of visitors, search engine term referrers that lead visitors to the blog, and other information. Figure B.71 provides an example of this page.



B.9 CONCLUSIONS

This Appendix provided preliminary details on configuring a WordPress business blog. After completing the process, it becomes apparent that an eye-catching website is only part of the story. Perhaps the most important task is configuring the site to connect with search engines and customers through social media. Without the tools provided by a modern tool such as WordPress, a business puts itself at a disadvantage and fails to utilize all the free resources at its disposal. This chapter just provided the fundamentals. WordPress offers a vast set of capabilities and we only touched on several of them. Becoming an expert with WordPress goes well beyond the scope of this book but you have a good start!

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