

Using Social Media to promote your program

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This fact sheet looks at ways that you can use social media platforms to promote your radio or television program. There are tips about online writing, profiles of different social media platforms and, because social media is constantly changing, there is a checklist of general principles that you can apply to using social media as a promotional tool.

Technology moves fast and by the time you've read this fact sheet, social networking sites will have new features. Below is a general guide to using social media, but you should visit social networking sites regularly to find out what's new and how it can benefit your show.

Writing for the web

If you're online, chances are there is a lot of different information coming your way. Due to the sheer amount of information that we read, receive, link to, download, upload and scroll through online, there are a few principles that you can apply when promoting your show.

- **Be concise.** When promoting your show, try to keep the information brief and to the point. It does depend on what you are writing. If you were posting a music review on a blog, it would be longer than a few sentences, but when promoting the show generally, or promoting a show event, only include the necessary information. For instance, if you're promoting a live set on your television program, people reading need to know when it is, what channel it's on, or where they can stream it.
- **Consider your audience.** If you are promoting a show about music in your local area, consider what people who are interested in local music would want to hear about. Post information about local gigs and the latest EPs. Keep tabs on local record labels and their new releases.
- **Multimedia.** Remember that good web design is fundamental to promoting your show. That doesn't mean you have to fill every square millimetre of your page with graphics. It just means that visual elements like pictures, videos and podcasts that are relevant to your show can add to the text.

- **Hyperlinks.** It is good to provide in-text links to relevant articles, pages and events. Try not to overload the text with hyperlinks. If there are too many links in one paragraph, the effect is a bit overwhelming, but linking is a good way to make online writing more interactive. For instance, if you were writing a paragraph for the podcast of a band interview, you could include a link to the band's website.
- **Edit your writing.** Online writing should not be sloppy. Check your writing for spelling and grammatical errors. [Lolspeak](#) is not forbidden, but if you want to promote your show professionally, paying attention to detail is important.

SYN website

The [SYN website](#) is one of the best places to use when promoting your SYN show. On the SYN website, you can create a program for your show. People who are registered on the SYN website can join your program and receive updates when you upload a new podcast or news item.

The SYN website is licenced under [Creative Commons](#). Here are some tips for using the SYN website to promote your SYN show:

- Encourage people to register for the SYN website, so that they can follow their favourite shows.
- As the online nerve centre of all things SYN, this is one of the first places people will look to find your show online, provided you are promoting it on-air (which you should be). Announce the link to your SYN page when you are on-air.
- Like Facebook pages, you can create your own URL for your SYN show. Keep this as simple as possible. For instance, the link for SYN's news and current affairs program, Panorama, is [syn.org.au/panorama](#). If the link is too long or complicated, it will be hard for people to catch it when you announce it on-air.

Social media guidelines

It is common practice nowadays for stations – and other organisations — to have guidelines for social media use. When promoting your show online, the idea is to be creative and engaging and social media guidelines are generally not designed to stifle creativity.

Social media guidelines usually outline the use of logos, emphasise that show pages should relate to the show and ensure that nothing disparaging is said about the station. It is a good idea to check if your station/organisation has social media guidelines and to follow those guidelines when promoting your show online.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking site that allows you to befriend people from all over the world, creating a web of online networks. People have individual profiles, but you can also use Facebook to create a 'page' for your radio or television program. You can create events to invite people to, upload photo, audio and video, tag photographs and announce exciting features of your upcoming shows.

Creating a Facebook page for your show

A Facebook page is one of the best means of promoting a show on Facebook. A page allows you to create events, upload multimedia and Facebook users can also 'like' your show. That way, when you post information on your Facebook page, it will pop up in those users' Facebook feeds and be seen by Facebook users in *their* networks.

When creating a Facebook page for your show:

- Include a station logo on your page and a show logo (if you have one).
- Tag photos and add and tag pictures of the current hosts; that way they will appear in your other friends' feeds.
- Give your Facebook page a simple URL. If the name of your show is The Vinyl Countdown, make your Facebook page www.facebook.com/vinylcountdown.
- Announce the link to your Facebook page on-air.
- Release the latest information about interviews and events so that people will know when to tune in.
- Upload podcasts and vodcasts to the page.
- Include links to other social media/websites in your information section (i.e. Twitter/Flickr feeds).

Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging site. It is a constantly streaming feed of 'tweets' – statements, questions, links, quotes or anything else you feel like writing with a limit of 140 characters. On Twitter, you can choose Twitter feeds that you want to follow (those tweets will appear in your Twitter feed) and people can choose to follow you (and receive your tweets in their Twitter feed).

You can contact people on Twitter either through Direct Message (which is private) or through @mention, which is using @ before the name of the user you wish to mention. You can also retweet other peoples' tweets by using RT@ before the name of the user or clicking the 'retweet' option next to their tweet. Then it will appear in your feed, but be credited to the original tweeter.

Here are some tips for using Twitter to promote your show:

- Ensure that your Twitter account is public. If it is private, people need permission to follow your updates.
- When posting links, use a URL shortener like [bit.ly](#) or [tinyURL](#). This will compress your links into fewer characters and keep you within the 140-character limit.
- Use a real-time picture sharing service like [Twitpic](#), which will allow followers to view your photos.
- Sometimes it's good to respond when people @mention you. It means you are interacting with other people on Twitter instead of just posting information.

Flickr

Flickr is a photo-sharing website. Flickr allows you to upload your photos, connect with other Flickr users and share photos through your profiles. Flickr is particularly useful if you have a show that involves events, because you can upload a certain number of photos a month for free.

Remember that Flickr also has the option of licencing photos under Creative Commons licences. Before you licence any photos, ensure you check with the copyright owner first (the person who took the photos). For more information about Creative Commons licences, visit [Creative Commons Australia](#).

Your station might have a Flickr account that you can upload photos to.

YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing website that allows you to watch, upload and share videos. If you are promoting a television show, use YouTube to post videos of interviews, events and program segments online.

Here are some tips for using YouTube to promote your show:

- Create your own account in YouTube for your show. Your station might have a YouTube channel that you can use. This will promote both your station and your show.
- If you have a blog, website or social media profile that allows you to embed YouTube videos, embed them.
- Depending on your account, you may be able to apply a skin to your YouTube page. A **skin** is a customised graphical appearance that you can apply to websites to change the look of the site, to suit your show's specific theme. For example, [SYN's YouTube channel](#) has a skin. Creating your own skin requires more advanced web skills and it's not essential, but it's something to keep in mind.

Blogs

Blog is short for 'web log'. A blog is a website where individuals and groups can publish, or 'post', information online. You can post text, photographs, video, audio, links and any number of other things. Blog hosting services allow you create your own basic blog, usually for free.

A blog can be handy for promoting your show because it is a focal point for information. You can be creative and customise the design yourself while still including updates from other social media platforms. Remember that you can also purchase a domain name for your website, if you would like a specific address.

There are a number of blog platforms that you could use. Here are a few to get you started:

WordPress

[WordPress](#) is a content management system (CMS) used for blog publishing and websites. There is also a free blog hosting service called [WordPress.com](#) that allows you to create a blog without installing WordPress. A blog theme is a template that determines the features and appearance of your blog. There is a selection of free WordPress themes available.

In WordPress, you can use widgets to include updates from other platforms on your blog, such as Twitter and Flickr. A **widget** is like a building block for a website. Widgets display certain information and you can move them around to change the appearance of your website.

Blogger

[Blogger](#) is a free blog hosting service owned by Google. Most Blogger sites are hosted by Google under the blogspot.com domain. You can also create a Blogger site using a customised URL. Both Blogger and WordPress are better suited to long-form blogging than a microblogger like Tumblr.

Wait, what is Tumblr?

Tumblr

[Tumblr](#) works like a micro-blogger by focusing on short-form blogging. On Tumblr, you can follow other Tumblr blogs and share posts by reblogging them. It works like retweeting in Twitter. Tumblr users can re-post other Tumblr posts on their Tumblr page. The reblogged post appears on the Tumblr of the relogger and is shared with their followers. These updates appear as a stream on the user's Dashboard.

According to Tumblr, half of the average Tumblr user's posts are photographs. Tumblr has categories for posts including Text, Link, Quote, Photo, Audio and Video. The clean design of Tumblr themes suits short-form blogging and visual elements like photographs. Tumblr themes are also quite easy to customise. You can change the colour scheme and customise design features using HTML.

Weebly

Weebly is a web hosting service that allows you to create a blog or website. Weebly uses a simple 'drag and drop' system. You can add and remove video, text, audio, photographs and other visual elements, by dragging them onto your website and dropping them. Weebly is handy because you can create a basic website without advanced web skills.

General tips for promoting your show online

- Having great content is the most important part of promoting your show. You can have all the social media profiles that you want, but great content is what people come back for.
- Upload podcasts and videos of your show to your profiles and create exclusive content for your online audience.
- Ensure that all of the key information about your show – name; day(s); time; stream; host(s) – is on your social media profile but don't overload your page with too much information.
- If possible, keep the name of your profiles consistent across social networks. If your show is called Shut Up And Drive, try to use www.facebook.com/shutupanddrive, www.twitter.com/shutupanddrive and so on.
- Interact with people who subscribe to your show. Social media profiles should be like conversations. Ask for opinions and respond to comments and tweets.
- Synchronise your updates across social networks. If you have an upcoming interview, post the information on Facebook, Twitter and wherever else your show has an online profile.
- If people are reading about your show online, chances are they might stream it online. Give them the link to the stream as well as the frequency or channel, so they have multiple options for tuning in.
- Cross-promote your online profiles. If you have a Facebook page and a Twitter feed, list your Twitter feed on your Facebook page and vice versa.

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- Tag items such as photos where you can. Tagging helps to categorise your content through key words, thereby making it more searchable.
 - Use social media to announce upcoming interviews, segments, events and anything else that might entice people to tune in.

About the writer:

Mary Kozlovski, 22, joined SYN Media in 2006. She has since worked at SYN as a reporter, presenter, executive producer, project manager and is currently a SYN radio trainer. Mary has a Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications) from The University of Melbourne and her writing has been published in Farrago and Voiceworks. Mary has been a radio presenter at community stations 3CR and 3RRR.