



We provide fun, challenge and adventure to over 400,000 girls and boys across the UK

Social media

Social media is websites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Flickr. These sites allow existing volunteers and potential volunteers (and potentially also young people) in an

These sites can be useful in building a good dialogue between people interested in Scouting and photos and videos, as well as offering real time updates on what Scouting is up to. Social media is a cheaper option than printed media.

Safeguarding

Always conduct yourself on the internet as you would face-to-face and be aware of what you say or do something in the "real" world, then don't do it online. Never provide personal details always ensure you have parental permission to use any photos of young people. Only ever use the photo or video caption and only share appropriate photos, the sort that you would be happy putting on a rule of thumb is if you wouldn't be happy for your mum – or District Commissioner – to see it, then potentially, anyone can view content on the internet.

If you sign yourself up to social networking sites you need to be aware that content is speedily updated and can change. Whatever site you choose to join, make sure you regularly check your privacy and security settings and their privacy policy. Photos can be tagged and posted on your account and comments will be made. Social media is a network rather than a broadcasting channel so people will share opinions (good and bad).

Only set up pages for events, activities or groups for which you are responsible. Once a site has been set up, update it regularly to ensure that information changes when appropriate and that members are interested.

Please note that posts on social media sites are widely accessible and can easily be passed on; a comment made on a site is not necessarily private and in keeping with the Scouting ethos. Don't use your personal email to communicate directly, on a one-to-one basis with young people.

Factsheet FS103011 [Social Networking Sites and Scouting](#) (PDF) gives further, important safeguarding information.

Effective content

There are a huge number of social media websites that are popular but, given how rapidly habits change, it is worth checking with the volunteers you want to communicate with to see what they currently use and which website provides the right set of tools for you.

Social media is a tool that works in real time, so communications need to be very relevant and timely. It is an ideal tool for seeking informal feedback, to update on successes and for sharing links of great interest. It is a good tool for discussing new, important or controversial information, so ensure that this type of communication is perhaps more formal, communication channels (e.g. face-to-face, by letter or by email) where possible. It takes time to use social media effectively. Building an interactive and engaging community that people want to be part of takes work. Ask yourself: why should users come back to my social media site?

Keep in mind that using social media can raise access issues for people who are unfamiliar with it could disadvantage members without easy access to the internet. Training and support or enabling places and improving internet access at schools or local libraries can assist people to get online. television services now also offer internet access.

Increasing your interactivity

Social media sites are typically used by people in their leisure time when they want to catch up on messages from Scouting in line with this, take a light-hearted tone and ensure messages are uplifting stories, great photos from an event or a quick reminder about an upcoming event to keep the energy

Videos, photos, polls or questions are content that is most likely to generate interest or comments. Think about ways in which your members can best engage with you. The most popular social media moments in time. So, for example, an engaging post questioning what Scouting members are doing receive most response.

Whatever social media sites you choose to use, integrate them. They will provide the most value each other and any Scouting websites, online forums or communities. So share content and links

Remember that effective social media is about having a conversation, not just broadcasting what interesting from other people's social media feeds, as well as your own. Go on the lookout for friends on Twitter. Try and engage with people to build your community.

Forward planning

The best social media is timely and responsive but can be planned to fit around milestones in your year. You may notice that your users interact at specific times of the week or day so you can use this is viewed when they are most likely to interact. Use social media scheduling tools like [Hootsuite](#) to schedule your social media content to ensure your content remains relevant and timely, even if you are unavailable day. But be aware that third party software may have different security settings and access to profiles so check out each site's policies and settings.

Remember to adopt a common-sense approach to social networking. While social network profiles are important that you keep a professional distance online. Think carefully about how any communication. Compared with a conversation in the real world, technology increases the potential for messages misinterpreted or forwarded to others. Once content is posted it is in the public domain and people can see it to others.

Have a plan. Work out the 'who, what, when, where and why'. Who will tweet, what will they post, where should you upload that video to YouTube, where should you promote your Flickr account and why are you doing it? Scouting are doing. A quick internet search shows that huge numbers of Groups, Districts and Counties. Have some objectives and goals of your own to work towards.

Moderation

If a negative comment is made on a social networking site due to a member misunderstanding a rule, be aware of all the relevant details, it is then appropriate to take time to respond politely and clearly. If a negative comment is made on the site because a member expresses their opinion, dislikes or disagrees with the comment stay visible and leave your other members to provide counter-opinions. As the administrator user views (unless the comments amount to abuse) or tell members their opinions are wrong, but do not remove the issue and balance the argument.

Don't over-moderate. Allow feedback from your users, positive or negative, and react to it. This more than being seen to remove content just because you might not necessarily agree with it. It moderation guidelines and policies in place that users have easy access to. This is also a good id help you run the social media site.

Useful links

The [Brand Centre](#) has a number of visuals and a local logo generator that you may wish to use o

Factsheet FS103011 [Social Networking Sites and Scouting](#) (PDF) gives further, important safegu

[10 Twitter safety tips to protect your account and identity](#)

[BBC News social media guidance](#) (PDF)

[Child Protection in Sport Unit. Using social networking services and social media: promoting safe](#)

[Facebook Basics](#)

[Getting started on Twitter](#)

[How to keep safe on Facebook](#)

[Safety on Facebook](#)

[Twitter Safety & security](#)

© Copyright The Scout Association 2014. All Rights Reserved.
Charity Numbers 306101 (England and Wales) and SC038437 (Scotland)
Registered address: The Scout Association, Gilwell Park, Chingford, London, Engl