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## Social Media Strategies for Advocacy and Targeted Communications

Version 1.0

A simple and easy-to-follow guide that civil society organisations and individuals can use to improve their ability in the use of social media strategies.

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## Credits and Acknowledgements

### About the author

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## Characteristics of a good social media campaign

What makes a good social media campaign? Before we even start, it is important to note that a social media campaign is only one part of a wider strategy. It is rare to find a campaign that has achieved its aim purely through the use of social media or other online tools – they form just one, albeit important, component of a modern communications and engagement process.

In a field like digital campaigning, where the trends, tools, strategies and platforms change on a daily basis, it's sometimes hard to pin down the factors that contribute to a 'win'.

Looking at all the factors involved in creating a campaign, there are three areas that need to be incorporated in order to make it a success:

### Sustainability

Your campaign should have the capacity to be semi-self-sustaining. It should be focussed on the local issues that actually mean something to the audience. It should be low-cost, to avoid potential budgeting impacts. Campaigns should also be self-reinforcing (in that all areas of the campaign serve to support and back-up the arguments in place) and include elements that support an audience in creating and improving the campaign from within.

### Effectiveness

A campaign should have a long-term strategy and/or aim that goes beyond the simple 'online ask'. It should utilise appropriate technology, tools or platforms for the relevant audience. It should fit within a wider campaign and support that campaign.

Example: the online portion of a campaign targeting political corruption could have a simple online ask of 'click our tweet and sign the online petition'. But this online petition does not stop at the website – the petition is printed in major newspapers, used in public appearances as a prop and presented to members of Parliament.

### Reproducibility

Campaigns should always have the ability to be reproduced for other means, or themselves reproduced from existing campaigns that are already out there. This may include reproducing for different audiences, countries, cultures, issues, campaigns or problems. Even if the specifics of the initial social media campaign cannot be translated for renewed means, individual elements can be applied and worked upon.

Example: campaigns against corruption have existed for hundreds of years, and the psychological arguments that are used are likely the same. You can take these arguments and apply them to social media updates. The India Against Corruption campaign takes existing calls for increased government accountability and transparency and builds a support base via Facebook and other platforms.

## Defining the goals

Before beginning even the formation of your social media strategy, you must identify the overarching goals, aims and objectives of the wider campaign. What is the issue you are addressing? What are the indications of change? What does success look like? Once you have that initial framework, you can identify the specific goals and objectives of the social media components.

How will you measure this success? Each individual campaign you undertake will have different aims, objectives and outcomes, and it's important to pick the most relevant measure.

### Reach

The number of people that you are talking to. If your aim is purely to get a message out there, then a simple number of eyes that have viewed the content will give you the analytic you need.

Example: 1200 people saw your Facebook post.

### Interest

How much your audience has been driven to share, like, retweet or comment on your content. This takes reach and refines it slightly to those members of your audience that were interested enough to engage with you in some way.

Example: Of the 1200 people who saw your Facebook post, 300 shared and 600 people liked it.

### Influence

Are you simply using social media as a communication medium to drive people to a secondary action? This could be an online petition or other ask.

Example: Of the 1200 people who saw your Facebook post, 700 clicked through to find out more information on your website.

## Mapping the audience

Who do you want to talk to? How do they interact with you, their peers, their government, their media? What are their habits, their likes, their dislikes, their passions?

Before you start communicating to your audience, you have to know who they are. Spend a bit of time in researching and documenting who these people are, what is known about them and how to contact them. Compile all this information into relevant formats.

### Key audience

Start with the basic demographics of the people you most want to talk to – are you talking to women of a particular age living in a particular community? What are some assumptions and stereotypes that are known about them? This might be anything from their usual hours of being contactable to what kind of recreational activities they enjoy doing to other common characteristics about them.

### Allies

Who might support you in your aims and objectives? Who could you potentially recruit to spread word about your campaign? These could be other organisations, individuals, government representatives, community leaders or celebrities.

### Media

Look for journalists and bloggers who are already working on the issues that your campaign aims to address. They may support or combat you, but regardless it is helpful to know who you are dealing with. Do not limit this list to pure journalists who work for mainstream publications – include commentators, communicators and people who hold positions of increased connectivity to the public.

### Opponents

Identify the main opponents to your campaign – those that are already actively working against your aims, or those who are likely to start opposing what you are planning to do. This could be an organisation or corporation that you plan to campaign against, a political party or even elements of the media. Pre-empt your opponent's strategies and work out whom you might be called upon to argue a point of view with.

Example: mapping the audience for a campaign to combat animal cruelty identifies the primary audience as current pet owners, largely middle-class homeowners between 30-50yrs old. Sympathetics also fit into this category but there is also a large category of teenage girls who are not pet-owners but support the cause. Supporting media include local newspaper journalists as well as investigative journalists, and the chief opponent is a large organisation that runs a number of pet breeding facilities.

## Identifying the targets

Your target in a campaign is somewhat different to an audience. There may be some overlap, but the target is the 'end-game' person, organisation or group that will most impact on the achievement of your overall aim. This is broadly split into three types:

### Single positive change target

A single target usually takes on the form of a politician, community leader, head of an organisation or other important figurehead. This person has the personal power to make change happen. This person is usually best targeted from multiple angles, with other targets utilised to bolster support.

Example: the climate minister of the New Zealand government has the power to push other parliamentarians to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol. In conjunction with the Prime Minister, they are the best person to target in a campaign aimed at achieving this aim.

### Community target

This usually involves the formation of an 'education' campaign, aimed at increasing knowledge, understanding and/or support for an issue. Your role becomes largely the disseminator of information across a number of platforms, engaging in conversation with people and informing them about the facts, figures and issues.

Example: A campaign in Brazil aimed to decrease the social stigma associated with using condoms. Free condoms were distributed with instructions to share via Facebook where and when the condom is used. By connecting with the audience's friends on Facebook, the campaign was able to both spread the word while also enabling participants to talk about a perceived taboo topic in an open forum.

### Single negative change target

A negative change target is different to the above example, in that you are aiming to change their existing 'bad' activities into 'good'. This could be a company's illegal trade practices, or a media organisation's biased coverage of an issue.

Example: a newspaper reports incorrectly that your supporters illegally blocked logging trucks from entering a forest, when in fact the logging company was breaking the law by operating in the area. You ask your supporters to contact the newspaper via Twitter to express their disappointment at such biased reportage.

This type of target could also involve disrupting active opposition campaigns. By empowering your supporters to seek out and engage with an existing campaign presence, you can attempt to subvert their attention away from their own aim to deal with your interruption.

Example: an anti-gay rights church group start a Facebook campaign to rally support against a gay marriage Bill before Parliament. Your supporters subvert their messages by reposting them with positive gay rights messages, and the church is forced to respond to these interruptions.



## Write out your messaging

Your messaging is essentially everything you intend to say that will back up, support and make your campaign. It is the well-thought-out argument and conversation that you will employ to achieve your aim. This could be anything from a poster slogan, to a large research document, to a tweet or Facebook update. It is very important to get your messaging right before you get to the stage of communicating it.

### The narrative for success

Start by writing out what success for the campaign looks like. Try and visualise the result of your work coming to fruition. What has been achieved and what impact has it had?

Example: a group of people in Cambodia are being pushed off their land to make way for large-scale logging operations. A narrative for success would see their voice being heard by consumers of the products produced as a result of the logging. The company listens to the concerns of their customers, investigates the logging operations and halts operations until an amicable agreement can be reached. A further win could be that the company changes internal practices to negate the incident happening in future.

### The elevator pitch

Commonly referred to as 'the elevator pitch' (so named because you must deliver it to a person you just met in an elevator, before the elevator reaches your floor), this is the two sentence synopsis of your campaign. If you can truncate your message into this, you'll be better prepared to have others doing the same for you.

Example (extending from above example): logging in Timor Leste is pushing people off their land. 'Company name' is involved in this, and need to change their practices.

### The FAQ

Preparing a frequently asked questions (FAQ) is helpful in all communications. Try and identify all the potential questions that could be directed towards you and write down appropriate answers to each. Be aware that some answers may differ depending on audiences, and you may have to produce more than one 'level' of FAQ. Reference to appropriate external sources where necessary.

Example: an FAQ around citizen journalism in Egypt may include questions about the safety and security of participants, or about the international human rights law that could apply.

## Resourcing your campaign

Social media and digital communications are relatively new fields, and the traditional models of job roles and expertise are much harder to apply. It is better to identify on skill-sets to ensure that all elements of your campaign are covered.

### Areas of responsibility

Start by defining each area of responsibility. This may be a thematic one, such as one person to work on climate change issues. It could be demographics-based – eg you have three different types of target audience, and therefore you assign three people, one to each audience. It could be platform based, such as one person to use Twitter and another to use Facebook on behalf of a campaign. Clearly working out areas of responsibility will avoid overlap, duplication or conflicts.

### Look at skills sets

It is likely that the people who make up your team have a varied list of skills sets that may not line up with their job titles. Do an audit of your staff to identify who can do what, and try to align these with what is needed to be done. You may have someone who was hired as a policy adviser but is actually a very accomplished graphic designer in their spare time. You could utilise this person to produce graphics for online ads/images.

### Timeframes and workloads

Social media was not created for activism, nor centralised campaigning. It was created as a personal communication tool, and as people communicate at all hours of the day, you need to recognise this and take necessary measures. It's also important to recognise that you cannot be expected to work non-stop on your campaign, and so working out important timeframes and appropriate workloads is integral to a sustainable campaign.

Your overarching campaign plan should include important dates or schedules, so use these as your starting point. Then look to your audience demographics for key communication periods that you need to be active. Distribute responsibilities based on these factors and then re-evaluate workloads to see if any staff are taking on too much responsibility and adjust accordingly.

### Trust your staff

As stated before, social media is a personal medium, and so the individual personalities of your staff must be allowed to shine through. As a result, you have to trust that your staff will be fully capable of using their own personal judgement in communicating the message. Most social media platforms are also incredibly quick, and any delay in communication could have a negative impact on your audience. An internal sign-off protocol might be relevant for media requests, but it won't necessarily work for responses to tweets. Trust your staff to make the appropriate decision. If you can't trust your staff, then re-consider their involvement or provide the necessary training prior to commencing a campaign.

Example: a gay rights group in Indonesia wish to target young people on Facebook and educate them about current laws, inequalities and issues. Since their campaign

is focussed on one platform only, they have segmented their targets into two demographics: under 18yr olds in urban areas, and 18-24yr olds in urban areas. They have appointed two staff members to take responsibility for communicating with these two groups, supported by one researcher, one media person and one campaign lead overseeing the whole project. Furthermore, the two staff members have split their responsibilities on a daily basis for who will place ads, monitor keywords and engage with celebrities. As they know that 18-24yr olds primarily use Facebook in the late afternoon, they have prioritised this time and ensured that someone is always working then to monitor social media and send out communications.

## Using social media platforms

Given the wide number and range of social networks available, it is not possible to outline the specifics of each in this guide. Therefore we have opted to provide information over two of the largest and most popular: Twitter and Facebook.

### Twitter

Emerging in 2007, Twitter has become a dominant force in the world of social media. It is heralded as one of the first major 'microblogging' platforms, so named because of the 140 character limit placed on its messages. Originally designed to work with mobile messaging services such as SMS, the rise of internet-enabled smartphones has meant that Twitter is now largely internet-based.

It is best to think of Twitter as a loud conversation in a crowded room. Many people are talking at once, sometimes to one other person, sometimes to many. Some people are eavesdropping, and saying something when they wish. Others are generally talking to themselves. Everyone has something to say and the onus is on the listener to decide whom to pay attention to.

Twitter enables you to talk to individuals as well as many. It allows you to give information to people who specifically want to hear from you, as well as gather information or research from sources important to you. Most importantly, it allows supporters to have a genuine personal connection to your organisation, campaign or individual staff.

### Managing your account

There are a number of technical ways to manage an account:

#### *Using Twitter 'natively'*

Twitter as a service can be accessed via a number of ways, devices and methods. Core to this is through the Twitter website [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). Users can follow tweets from others, post their own, reply, 'favourite' and 'retweet'.

#### *Using a smartphone*

There are a number of ways that users can engage with and utilise the Twitter service outside of the main Twitter website. Through the use of an Application Programming Interface (API), Twitter allows external companies to 'tap into' Twitter and provide differing functionality. Some products use this to provide a better user interface (eg Tweetdeck), some use it to connect their own services to Twitter (eg Instagram).

A lot of current generation smartphones now come with integrated Twitter functionality, however the standard procedure is still to download and install an application, then use your Twitter login details to access Twitter through that application.

Some smartphone application examples:

- Tweetbot - <http://tapbots.com/>
- Retweets! - <http://ow.ly/fXt5H>

### *Desktop and web-based applications*

The same added functionality argument applies to some applications designed for desktop and laptop computers. These add extra features or better user interface designs to Twitter.

Some third party applications examples:

- Tweetdeck (now owned by Twitter) - <http://tweetdeck.com/>
- Hootsuite - <http://hootsuite.com/>

### **Utilising Twitter as a campaign tool**

There are a number of ways to use Twitter for advocacy or campaigning means.

#### *Twitter as a direct lobbying tool*

Increasingly, politicians, heads of state, celebrities and CEOs of companies have a personal account on Twitter, and can therefore become direct targets of co-ordinated mass advocacy campaigns.

Example: in 2011, 14yr old Faizan Rafiq Hakeem was arrested in Kashmir and held without trial. Amnesty International launched the #freefaizan campaign, asking supporters to send messages directly to Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's on Twitter. As a result of this lobbying, Abdullah agreed to review the case.

#### *Twitter as a news service*

Many news outlets now use Twitter as a broadcast medium. By following these accounts, you can instantly be kept up to date of top stories and breaking news. More importantly, we are sometimes seeing Twitter break news quicker and more effectively during disasters and humanitarian events. A warning: this does occasionally create problems of confirmation and authenticity.

Example: in August 2012, a 7.6 magnitude earthquake hit off the coast of the Philippines. The United States Geological Survey received reports of the earthquake via Twitter users located in the Philippines one minute and seven seconds after the seismic event, and now uses Twitter as part of its verification and confirmation system.

#### *Twitter as a broadcast method*

Using Twitter to spread a message is probably the most commonly employed strategy.

#### *Engaging and interacting with Twitter*

Slightly different to the above, Twitter also allows for direct, live interaction with supporters, audiences, targets and opponents. It is important to remember that services like Twitter are built for this interaction, and to use it to genuinely converse with people. Make sure you respond to questions, engage in conversations,

Example: a campaign aimed at spreading information about the dangers of GMO products could spawn questions and criticism. Responding immediately to these requests on Twitter could go some way to increasing the effectiveness of your campaign.

### *The celebrity factor*

It can sometimes be useful to recruit the services of celebrities who are active on Twitter, asking them to use their increased reach to further the campaign. Approach these people privately, provide them with the reason, aim and objectives of your campaign along with pre-written message they can send out on their own account.

Example: a campaign to support the arts in the developing world asks Stephen Fry to tweet a message supporting the campaign. They provide him with background information about the campaign, along with a number of pre-prepared tweets he can use.

## Specific functionalities of Twitter

### *Retweeting*

Retweeting is simply the process of resending an existing tweet to your followers. This does not necessarily constitute endorsement of the original statement – instead think of it as saying to your followers ‘I think this is interesting and/or relevant to your interests.’

There are two ways to retweet someone’s tweet. The original method still works, and is done by simply placing ‘RT’ in front of their initial message along with their username. The new method is simpler, and just involves clicking a ‘retweet’ button, but this method does not allow editing of the tweet itself.

Example: in early 2012, the anti-bullying documentary *Bully* was given an R+ rating by the US censors, effectively banning it from reaching its target audience of under 18yr olds. A Twitter retweet campaign was organised to show public outcry at this decision, garnering 500,000 signatures on a petition, which was used to leverage a reclassification of the film as PG13.

### *Hashtags*

Hashtags simply enable similar conversations to be grouped together. Think of them as quick searches within Twitter. Instead of searching for all tweets that mention the word ‘climate’, you can simply click on the tag ‘#climate’ and be shown the collective conversation. Please note that hashtags cannot include spaces or special characters.

Hashtags are used in two distinct ways: for specific events (eg #COP16 for the Cancun climate talks), and for popular ongoing conversations (eg #IvoryCoast for humanitarian problems in the Ivory Coast)

Example: in April 2012, Amnesty International shared documents pointing to abuses by Iraqi and Kurdish forces against peaceful protesters, using the hashtag #iraq. This tied their message into wider discussions about the ethics of the Iraqi situation.

### **Username**

Your Twitter username is whatever you choose (subject to availability), with an @ symbol before it. By using this @ symbol when referring to other Twitter users, you alert them to the fact that you have mentioned them. This is important in showing you are engaging within the community. The native Twitter website and most applications do this automatically when you click 'reply'.

### **Lists**

Follow a lot of people on Twitter, and sooner or later you will have too many to make sense of. Twitter lists solve this by curating users together. You can use this to group people together that you specifically want to observe, like journalists who cover a particular topic, or a group of politicians. You can also use it to show the reach and size of your campaign, by grouping together all the organisations who work on a shared issue. Lists can be public or private, meaning you can curate them entirely for your own benefit, or you can provide them for others to use.

Example: if you are working on environmental issues related to tar sands in Canada, you might pull together a list of Canadian reporters who have written articles about the topic. You could also curate a list of Canadian members of Parliament who have constituents in affected areas, as well as other organisations who campaign on the issue.

### **Direct messages**

Twitter provides a private messaging function, with some limitations. You can only direct message (DM) a person who is also following you. Some users do not regularly check their messages, nor have notifications turned on for new messages.

### **Twitter cheat-sheet**

@	Symbol used to indicate a username. Used in a tweet to notify that user that they have been mentioned. Example: @BarackObama
D	Used to send a direct message. Place in front of a username to privately message them. Example: d @Guardian
#	Symbol for hashtag. Place in front of a word to join in conversations utilizing the same word. Example: #humanrights
RT	Abbreviation for "re-tweet". If you read an interesting message by another user and wants to spread it to one's followers the cited message is preceded by 'RT @' and the username of the user who authored the message. Example: RT @DigiActive
HT	Abbreviation of 'hat tip.' If one wants to credit another user for a thought or a reference, include HT along with their username. Example: HT @CNN

## Facebook

The largest social network in the world now tops out at over 1 billion users, and has secured a place as one of the major ways that people communicate with each other over the internet. It can also be a powerful tool to affect change.

### Profiles vs Pages vs Groups

There are a number of differing ways that users can engage with each other and interact on Facebook:

#### *Profiles*

Every person on Facebook has a profile. They are a personal reflection of the user, allowing them to fill out detailed information about themselves, connect to others, 'like' pieces of content, RSVP to events and other interactions.

#### *Pages*

Pages are much more useful for campaigners on Facebook. Originally, pages were introduced to Facebook as a way for brands and companies to engage with users but have expanded to become anything that is not an individual. Most companies will have a Facebook page, as well anyone who has a 'public' profile separate to their private life (eg celebrities). It has most of the functionality of a profile but does not require two-way acceptance for people to 'like' or 'follow' the page. Pages also include detailed analytics on its followers interactions. You will access your page by logging in to your profile.

#### *Groups*

Unlike pages, which are usually centrally controlled and largely one-way communication, groups are a space for multi-user engagement. They can be open, private or completely hidden. Users can share links, photos, comments and have detailed conversations. Groups can be a powerful tool to creating community amongst a group of like-minded individuals.

### The 'like'

The 'like' is at the core of Facebook's interaction with the world. You 'like' this article on CNN. You 'like' the band REM. You 'like' that your friend posted an image of an elephant. All of these likes are attributed to your Facebook account, and stored in chronological order to create your 'timeline'.

The 'like' has fast become a key analytic in assessing the success of a campaign. It can be very useful in gauging the popularity of a piece of content, but can also skew results away from a larger, more important aim.

### Utilising Facebook as a campaign tool

#### *Facebook to build community*

Facebook users are brought together by their friends lists. Both users have to accept in order to be connected, and as a result the connections between users form a sort of trust bond. You can tap into this trust in order to spread your message by empowering your supporters to share with their friends.



Example: at the age of 31, Sameer Bhatia from San Francisco came down with acute myelogenous leukemia. Doctors told him there was a 1 in 20,000 chance of finding a compatible donor. Sameer's friends decided that all they had to do was get an additional 20,000 South Asians on to the San Francisco donor register. They formulated an online call to action that utilised the interconnectivity of Facebook. In 11 weeks, Sameer's supporters registered 24,611 South Asians into the bone marrow registry and found a match for him. In addition to this, 7,500 people yielded 80 matches for other leukemia patients.

### *Using Facebook to target opponents*

As with Twitter, an increasing number of individuals and organisations have a Facebook presence, and this can provide the opportunity to target communications and/or community directly at them. By taking the conversation to the space owned by the target organisation or person, you can capitalise on the public embarrassment and transparency that it creates.

Example: in 2010, Greenpeace targeted Nestle on Facebook over the company's involvement in the deforestation of orangutan habitat for production of palm oil. Their supporters were asked to visit Nestle's Facebook page and leave a message condemning the company's practices.

### **Analytics**

Facebook provides some powerful built-in analytics reporting, called Insights. This can be accessed only through pages (not profiles). This report gives you data on number of likes over time, potential reach (the total possible number of people you could reach via your fans) and the number of people currently talking about your page.

### **Ads**

Facebook provides advertisers with a huge amount of personal information they have extracted from their individual users, making advertising on the site incredibly accurate to specific demographics. Any piece of profile information (sex, age, location, interests, associations etc) can become a factor in targeting the most receptive audience to a piece of advertising.

Example: a campaign aimed at increasing awareness of sexually transmitted infections amongst young people might choose to target Facebook users between the ages of 15-20.

## Other social media platforms

Twitter and Facebook are highlighted in this guide to their status as the most popular social networks, but there are countless others that can also be employed in a social media campaign.

### *Google Plus*

Google's own social network is known as Google Plus, or Google+. Adapted from the somewhat failed venture of Google Wave, Plus incorporates the central Google account that sits at the base of all of Google's other services (YouTube, Gmail, Google Docs etc) with the standard 'sharing' functions that Facebook employs. Whilst not as widely-used as Facebook, it still enjoys enough popularity to warrant use in a social media campaign.

### *MySpace*

One of the original social media platforms, MySpace suffered a severe decrease in usage with the rise of Facebook and Twitter. It maintained some relevance throughout this period by focusing on providing an easy way for bands and musicians to share their music and information. Recently, MySpace has undergone a redevelopment and redesign and has pitched itself primarily at a younger audience who are interested in music and popular culture.

## Supporting platforms – image, video etc

While social media platforms provide the mechanism for connecting, sharing and interacting, they do not allow for the creation and storage of materials very well. Therefore, it is best to use a few other services to hold campaign materials and then share them on social media.

### *Flickr*

Flickr is a photo storage service, allowing for huge numbers of photographs and other images to be catalogued, organised and displayed. Images can be accompanied with captions, location information, links and other information.

Example: Oxfam Australia share their 'Oxfam Pic of the Week' every week, sourcing one image from their archives and accompanying this with a caption. This image is uploaded to Flickr and then shared via Twitter.

### *YouTube*

YouTube is Google's video storage site. Videos can be uploaded to YouTube and then either directly linked back to at youtube.com or 'embedded' into other websites (meaning viewers never leave the website to view the video).

Example: the very successful Old Spice videos were uploaded to YouTube, embedded on the Old Spice website and then shared via Facebook and Twitter.

### *Pinterest*

Relatively new to the scene, Pinterest allows users to curate image-based links to content they find on the Internet. Most content on Pinterest is

hosted elsewhere and simply linked to on user's 'pinboards'. The interface is incredibly visual and is used by people to pull together 'boards' on topics such as food, art, craft, news and others.

### **Mapping software**

If your campaign has location-based information, it can be helpful to map this out to show the relationship between events, incidents and other information. Free tools enable you to plot out locations, areas and regions, then embed them into websites. The popularity of online mapping in campaigns has led to the creation of specific tools for advocacy.

Example: In 2008, post-election violence in Kenya was reported and mapped on the Ushahidi platform, which allowed for quick public attention and reaction.

Example: the project Violence Against Journalists in Afghanistan collects reports of violent attacks against media professionals and maps them across the region. This includes data from the past 10 years, and allows patterns and hot-spots to be identified.

### **Instagram**

Instagram is entirely mobile-based, and allows users to apply photographic effects to their photos and then share them amongst friends. Instagram accounts can be linked to automatically share on Facebook and Twitter at the same time.

Example: Greenpeace Australia Pacific share their 'Green Pic of the Day' every day on their Instagram account.

## **Web services**

Even though this guide is focussed on social media platforms, it is important to note that supporting resources, information and communication channels will likely be needed on websites that support your campaign.

### **Email**

Email remains the dominant communication channel for most of the global north – this may be different in varying countries. Email can be used to bridge the gap between social media's speed and the realism of the physical world.

Always ensure that your email communications work in synchronicity with all other parts of your campaign, including social media. This could mean making sure that similar messaging is sent out on Twitter and Facebook when an email is sent. You should also include social media 'share' buttons within your email, to help increase the reach of your message.

### **Websites**

A succinct, concise, well thought out website is essential in any digital campaign, regardless of the fact that you may intend to only employ social media to undertake the campaign. It can serve as the 'home' for all

information related to your campaign, as well as providing context to materials shared on social networks and other sites.

### Online actions

These online 'actions' usually take the form of a simple form field attached to a petition or letter. Supporters are offered the chance to add their name to a shared statement, or to edit and send their own message of support/outrage towards a target. Online actions can be a very powerful way of showing mass support for an issue. Ensure that actions are concise, easy to undertake and simple to use.

### Blogs

While your website should hold concise, comprehensive information about your campaign, your blog should be treated as an ongoing record of what you are doing. This can be a section of your website, or a standalone site – either is fine. The important thing is to maintain your blog; keep posting to it, keep updating it and treat it as a diary of activities. Over time you will be able to refer back to your blog as a record of progress.

### RSS Feeds

Most blogs and websites will produce an RSS feed, which allows supporters to subscribe to your updates. Once they have added your feed to an RSS reader such as Google Reader, they will be notified when you have new content. RSS feeds can also be used to push your content to other platforms/websites. They can be very useful to spread your message and ensure supporters are kept updated.

### Offline

Online campaigning, including social media, rarely works without a direct connection to the offline world. Most civil society campaigns have a real world application, in the form of legal, societal or institutional change, direct action or other physical manifestation of change. It's important to keep that linkage in mind when implementing a social media campaign.

## Monitoring the conversation

Social media is an ever-increasing form of communication amongst millions of people, and as a result can be a powerful source of information about people's interests, thoughts, feelings and inclinations. You should ensure that amongst all your work to spread messages you are also listening attentively to what is being said.

### Search

Do a simple search for the topics you are working on. Find out what people are already saying, who else is working on the issue, where the broad consensus towards a resolution might be or where potential issues of conflict could arise. Use Google Alerts to set up keyword search alerts that will notify you via email when certain words are referenced on websites, blogs, news or social media.

### Give credit where credit is due

You are attempting to be part of a wider conversation, so recognise that you are not the only player in the field. Look to what others are doing and point to it alongside your own work. Ensure that you always reference who these others are – retweet, credit, link to, promote. Being part of a network of like-minded individuals and organisations will all come around, as they will also then credit you back when appropriate.

Example: your campaign focuses on the ethical treatment of coffee workers in Indonesia. You discover that another organisation has completed a report on the same topic, and released it online via Twitter. You also talk about the report on Twitter, referencing the original organisation and giving them credit for completing it.

### Crowd-sourcing

Sometimes, the power of social media can be in producing a lot of information from many sources. This information can be used to initially collect and then duplicate reports can confirm. Crowd-sourcing information in this way can be used very effectively to both collect information but also to provide a sense of shared community for supporters.

Example: during the protests in London in 2011, activists used mobile messaging, Facebook and Twitter to organise, including sharing information about location of police 'kettling' (boxing in people to arrest them). As more information was shared, reports could be confirmed and plans changed to avoid violent clashes with police.

### Keep yourself and others safe

There are situations where the use of social media for campaigning can create security risks, either for the person initiating or driving the campaign, or for those that take part within it. Care should be taken to ensure that this risk is addressed, minimised and monitored.

Example: a UK based group set up a Facebook page encouraging Syrian citizens to share their stories about corruption, intimidation and brutality. Syrian army personnel monitor these conversations and identify people to be brought in for questioning.

## Responding to criticism

As previously stated, it is important to be ready for questions, clarifications or criticism. Social media is an immediate medium, and so demands quick responses where possible.

### The public FAQ

Use your prepared FAQ where possible as a first point of reference. Point obvious question-askers directly to this publicly available document where possible. Allow them to see standard questions and answers to main issues related to your campaign and come to their own conclusions.

Example: The question 'why are you campaigning on this issue' can be accompanied with a clear answer as to what you perceive to be the problem.

### The private FAQ

There will always be some issues that you may not wish to make public unless prompted. These should be stored in a private document that your staff have access to when asked. Ensure this document is kept up-to-date and relevant by revisiting it frequently.

### Spokespeople

When organising your staffing structure, you should have also identified official spokespeople for your campaign. These could be campaign staff, the head of the organisation, a chief researcher or even celebrity supporters. Use these people as public voices to counteract criticism where needed.

Example: a target company of your campaign attempts to stir up concerns around the legality of your campaign. The head of your organisation could tweet responses that prove otherwise.

### Trolling

A troll is someone who intentionally posts antagonistic, offensive or inflammatory comments. This is done purely to illicit a response and is sometimes employed to distract your campaigners from their actual work, or to enrage supporters and draw them into arguments. The best tactic to deal with this is to monitor conversations, identify suspected trolls and have in place a policy that outlines steps including warnings, deletions, banning and potential censorship of troll-like comments.

### Use your support

As your campaign grows, so will your supporter base. These people clearly agree with your aims, and should be empowered to support you in times of criticism.

Example: an antagonistic opposition to your campaign decides to refute all of your arguments by commenting on your Facebook posts. You may choose to ignore this for a period, not providing an 'official' response and instead give your supporters a chance to defend the argument for you.

## Evaluation

The most powerful aspect of using digital tools such as social media is the hard data collection that is possible, usually collected and displayed live. It is important to monitor this data, collect it, compare it and use it to both evaluate the effectiveness of your campaign and inform improvements on future work.

## Analytics

The data collected by various social networks is known as analytics, and can provide clear, quantitative data for your campaign.

There are a number of different measures that can be used when analysing data:

### Facebook 'likes'

The number of times a piece of content has been 'liked' on Facebook. See above section on Facebook.

### Twitter 'retweets'

The number of times a single tweet has been re-shared on Twitter. See above section on Twitter.

### Click-throughs

The number of times a link has been clicked, and the viewer gone through to view the website content.

### Shares

The number of times a piece of content has been re-shared on Facebook. See above section on Twitter.

### Views

The number of times a piece of content has been viewed by visitors.

### Other specific analytics

Some social networks employ specific measures, but these are usually just adaptations of the above terminologies. For example, Pinterest refer to 'shares' as 'pins'.

## Third-party analytics

Whilst some social media platforms provide a lot of data on your interactions with them (Facebook being a prime example), most do not allow for more than surface understandings of reach, spread and another analytics. At the time of writing, Facebook has only just announced the release of Facebook Graph Search, which allows for extremely niche and targeted search results to be undertaken on their platform.

Alongside this, some companies produce services and software that can provide more detailed analytics than those native to social networks.

A few examples:

- Google Analytics - <http://www.google.com/analytics/>
- Sprout Social - <http://sproutsocial.com/>
- TwitSprout - <https://twitsprout.com>

## Benchmarking

Collecting data on your campaign can only be useful if you have a starting point from which to compare. There are a few ways to do this, which will make it easier to track effectiveness over time.

### Starting point

Mark where your campaign is at the starting point of your efforts.

Example: as evidenced by Google blog search results, mentions of your campaign's issue of rape justice in India received very attention before your campaign launched.

### Periodic comparisons

Commit to undertaking surveys, re-evaluations or studies into your campaign at regular intervals on similar areas, to enable easy comparison over time.

Example: every two months, mentions of the above rape justice issue are tracked on blogs, social media and news sites.

### Competition comparisons

Look at others working in the same issue and attempt to extrapolate where they are in terms of their effectiveness. This will allow you to better compare your own success.

Example: another organisation working on the same rape justice issue in India is receiving, on average, 200 likes on every piece of content they post to Facebook. In comparison, yours is only achieving 100.

## Qualitative feedback

Alongside the data that analytics provide, you should collect as much qualitative information as you can. This could take the form of success stories, supporter feedback, anecdotal evidence or other narrative

Example: a supporter emails you with a story of how they became involved in your campaign originally by seeing a tweet from a celebrity endorser. This piece of information could be used to argue for increased focus on obtaining celebrity associations.



### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning**

Taking all of the above monitoring, evaluation and learning forward into future work is the ultimate goal. It's therefore important to properly write up all of this information into a format that makes sense to both yourself and other staff. Find a specific format that works for you, but keeping to the below clear categories in all reports should help clarity and uniformity.

- Data
- Evaluation of data
- Key learnings
- Recommendations

## Education

Digital campaigning, particularly when utilising social media, is an ever-changing environment. New platforms, tools, methods and strategies are constantly evolving, and there is always time to learn more about what you are doing, and particularly what you could be doing. It's therefore important to keep up your education on these matters.

### Further reading

**Mashable** – a news site devoted to the use of social media. Can be somewhat heavy on content when you first start, but nonetheless a goldmine of information on digital campaigns, online marketing techniques and best practice in the field.

[www.mashable.com](http://www.mashable.com)

**DigiActive** – a collective devoted to producing guidebooks on digital technology for activism. Now defunct, but a quick Google search will reveal their various (slightly out of date) guidebooks and background information stored around the internet.

**Meta Activist Project** – a think tank devoted to the study of digital activism.

[www.meta-activism.org](http://www.meta-activism.org)

**Electronic Campaigner's Forum E-list** – spawned from the Electronic Campaigner's Forum held every year in the UK, this global email list is made up of digital campaigners and communications from the not-for-profit sector. A great source of peer support and research.

<http://fairsay.com/networks/ecampaigning-forum>

### Monitor other organisations

One of the easiest ways to see what others are doing with their social media campaigns is to simply look at their pages and profiles. Subscribe to their email lists, 'like' them on Facebook, follow them on Twitter. See how their supporter engagement strategy is being implemented and attempt to take learnings for your own campaign from this.

## Example campaign: Women's Education in Pakistan

To illustrate the previous chapters in this guide, we will now go through the initial formation of a campaign scenario. Please note that this campaign scenario is to not comprehensively planned and is intended to give you a taste of how to start a campaign plan. The information for the scenario needs to be more thoroughly researched, however what you will read below should clarify elements of the campaign planning process. Thank you to Bilqees Ismail from Khwendo Kor and Rowan Reid for contributing to this scenario.

### The issue

In Pakistan in general and in rural areas in particular education for boys is prioritized vis-a-vis girls, because it is perceived that boys must be equipped with educational skills to compete for resources in the public arena; while girls have to specialize in domestic skills to be good mothers and wives, hence, education is not that important for girls. Girls do not have many choices for themselves that could change these patriarchal realities of their lives. Gender division of labor enforces women to primarily specialize in unpaid care work as mothers and wives at home, whereas men perform paid work, and come out as breadwinners. This has led to a low level of resource investment in girls education not only by their families but also by the state.

### The goal

The goal of the campaign is to increase female enrollment in primary schools.

### The targets

Targets are the people who can directly make decisions and actions that will affect change.

In this example, the targets include: parents and family elders, local and tribal leaders, politicians and various layers of Government.

### Key audience

Our key audience here is who we primarily communicate to. Their voice is likely to be the one most listened to by our eventual targets (above).

In this example, the key audience could also include the following groups: school age girls, mothers, women's groups, community leaders, and journalists. Each of these more specific audience groups could be used to influence the corresponding target groups. If the journalists and the media portray the education of girls as being broadly acceptable in general Pakistan society, then the level of resistance to change will be diminished.

### Allies

These are other people or groups who can be called upon to provide support in the campaign.

This could include: Pakistan coalition of education, alliances, organizations working in education, women and men organizations, successful women, village education committees, progressive politicians and progressive religious leaders, and the media.

### Media

Several media outlets have covered the issue and could be approached to garner more attention/coverage. In general, progressive and mainstream media are fairly tolerant and broadly supportive of female education. However, alternative media is quite divided, some are quite conservative while others are extremely supportive.

### Opponents

Key opponents to the campaign and associated issues need to be identified.

In this example, this could be Taliban elements and some religious groups who hold a negative attitude of some of the more vocal and active community members who speak on this topic.

### Messaging

When looking at the messaging of a campaign, look to the above audience understandings to best structure an effective approach.

In this example, we could explore developing the following types of messages:

- Present female education as assisting in income and wealth creation whilst upholding religious tradition. The message shouldn't just focus on the empowerment of women but also the empowerment of families and communities to extract themselves from poverty.
- Present examples of women who have had an education and they have helped build their communities without disrupting its religious and cultural fabric.
- Counter the fears that providing girls with education will see them running away from their families, having a lifestyle that brings shame on the family and community. Examples of women who have an education and also maintain their faith would support the argument that female education is not in conflict with the religious practice.

### Resources

Having formed the messaging, we now have to make the actual products that will be employed.

In this example, we could produce powerful visual posters and infographics that present data on the benefits of enabling women to obtain an education. Videos can also be used to profile women who have an education, are successful and continue to be committed to their community and their faith.

The distribution strategy will need to ensure the materials produced are exposed to the key audience above.

### Concluding Comments

The messages and the resulting posters and videos should be tested with members of the key audience to ensure they are effective.

A strategy for engaging journalists and the media will be required. As mentioned above, the media can play a significant role in this campaign's success. Make sure a spokesperson is identified, and that a public and private FAQ is prepared to address criticism.

It's also important that a strategy be implemented to monitor the impact of the posters and videos. This may include focus group interviews at various stages of the campaign. Polling and surveys to analyse attitudinal change could also be important.

If support for womens' education achieves a tipping point, then the campaign may need to change, or a new campaign be established to advocate for policy change.

Finally, it's important that though monitoring and evaluation of the overall campaign be conducted, to identify strengths and weaknesses and inform future campaigns.