

# Social Media / Networking - do's and don'ts

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One way to look at getting into social networking and social media is to break it into four areas... arranged here to spell **T.A.S.K.** -

- **Tools** - that which can be used in doing online social activities, specifically for social networking and new media/social media
- **Activities** - having knowledge and tools, applying them via actions
- **Social** - making friends, engaging and collaborating with others, networking with *connectors* & *mavens*.
- **Knowledge** - understanding social terms, concepts, and techniques

Every day there are probably thousands of new tools and applications available, and most advanced techniques may yet get created. It's still a developing art to "do" social activities, especially to build communities, communicate your message, get attention (including traffic and buzz), and obtain - if not measure - ROI (return on investment). While "K" - knowledge - was last in the mnemonic T.A.S.K., it is of course really first. Knowing the how-to-do part is essential, and probably starts with reading up and absorbing what you can related to your area of interest, and continues on as you figure out how that integrates in to the whole.

The sections below attempt to describe the T.A.S.K. areas in more detail. If you're new to social networking and other online social activities, the list will seem overwhelming. It is, and it's also not. If you described to your great-great-grandparents the activities you do on a daily or regular basis, it would likely blow them away... *paying a credit card bill via online check withdrawal?... changing the TV channel during halftime of a football game to avoid commercials?... replacing filament light bulbs with compact-flourescent and LED bulbs to reduce your carbon footprint?....* so, absorb what is relevant to where you are now in terms of online social discovery. There's time to learn more at your own pace.

## Tools

One way to break out tools would be:

- **Websites & online services** - This is the majority of the tools, probably, and lots of subcategories such as bookmarking services, tracking/statistics services, social platforms, translation services, etc.
- **Software** - on- or off-line - such as productivity tools - i.e. email clients, spreadsheet programs for number crunching, or contact management programs.
- **People** - including companies doing things like creating content. Could include friends, but don't call your friend a tool.

**Discussion Considerations** - What tools do effective social networkers use, and why? How do you keep up with new tools that might be 10 times more effective than what you are implementing now (such as a video uploading service that posts your videos to 10 or 20 or more sites)?

## Activities

Examples, many of which fall under social participation: Setting up & maintaining social profiles, Participating in groups, Blogging & article-posting, Microblogging, SMS/texting, Communication (email, phone, etc.), Social bookmarking, Generating "buzz" (via PR/publicity techniques), Watching videos, Creating video/audio/visual

content, Research, contributing (collaborating, wikis), developing software/applications, running a blog/SNS/service.

Overall, the activities for many will aggregate into a social media campaign - the implementation of a social media/networking strategy.

**Considerations** - are your activities supporting the social networking/media goals you have? How do you build an effective social media/marketing campaign, esp. without looking like a me-too copycat of a successful online campaign?

## **Social**

Under activities, specific activities that are social: Friending, Participating in online groups, Attending live events (in-person), 'Listening' to and/or engaging in the conversation about your topic/brand/cause/etc. [including dealing with trolls(!)], Instant Messaging, Email, Microblogging via "@" comments to others, Commenting on blogs and other sites, Participating in forums.

## **Knowledge**

Some of the subject areas that are involved in social networking/media:

### **Sites:**

- **Social Networks** - some of the more popular ones: MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Bebo, Ning; there are simplified well-trafficked sites such as Squidoo & Hubpages. Popular but not always associated in the press with social networking include Classmates Online and Reunion.com, dating sites, and sites such as Club Penguin and Second Life. Last but not least for this group - Meetup.com.
- **Social Bookmarking/News - popular ones include:** del.icio.us, Digg, StumbleUpon
- **Blogging: free or paid blog hosting** - popular ones include wordpress.com, blogger.com, LiveJournal.com, and newer twists such as audio blogs (utterz.com).
- **Blogs, for information: too many to mention, popular ones depends on your niche. (Popular blogs related to social media & web 2.0 are [www.TechCrunch.com](http://www.TechCrunch.com), [www.ReadWriteWeb.com](http://www.ReadWriteWeb.com), and [www.SocialTimes.com](http://www.SocialTimes.com) )**
- **more, to be added to later**

**other:** There is a lot more to add under the knowledge category, and time doesn't permit expanding it out right now. One source of additional information is printed books on the topics of online social media & networking. Expect 2008 to be a banner year for publishing this type of information as organizations try to figure out how to "do" social stuff online, and authors write to fill the knowledge gap.

## **Links**

**There is a separate document of links, available on the meetup website (log in if you're a member to see some documents posted for members-only).**

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