



Social Media Guide for Politicians

By Kerstin Welter



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FOREWORD

Social Media has finally arrived in politics in Africa. Just a few years ago it was hard to convince party bosses that they should set aside funds and resources for social media. Some might have been worried to share control, others were simply not familiar with the new technologies. Now we see social media as an essential tool in many campaigns. But again it is not sufficient just to set up a Facebook account and wait for victory in the next elections – social media is a tool that should be used but without being driven by it.

We need to use social media without social media misusing us!

The scandal around Facebook might only be the tip of the iceberg, but it shows how important it is to control the data we give away. Like we control our data, we should be aware that dealing with social media as a party or as a politician carries with it a far bigger responsibility than for an individual who uses it. Inappropriate posts or retweets of information that have not been cross-checked can cause havoc in communities and whole societies.

Be relaxed about social media. Work with people who are savvy in the new technologies and handle them in a responsible manner.

We at KAS Media Africa have observed the changes in the field very closely. We know that a booklet like this might be overtaken by technology only months after it has been published. We, however, wish you success as you use these new means of communication to reach many of your followers more quickly and more effectively than ever before.

Christoph Plate
Director KAS Media Africa





CHAPTER 1:

GET CONNECTED – BUT WITH A PLAN

The phenomenon of social media is here to stay. It’s a must-do and a must-have if you want to participate in any debate that goes beyond your living room. So don’t get left behind or left out – newspapers and leaflets are no longer the first options when it comes to reaching people, especially the youth. Most of them use the internet as their primary source for just about all types of information. As such, you need to have an internet presence and you must be ready to interact. As with face-to-face communication, engaging in social media is not a one-way conversation but is a back-and-forth exchange of facts, thoughts, opinions, beliefs and arguments – like a giant ping-pong game. You need to know how to play the game if you are to be heard and listened to. As the ping and pong get faster you will sometimes be too slow, miss the ball and occasionally dodge it to avoid being hurt. So, get to know your tools, develop a specific social media strategy and adhere to it – and meet your constituency online.



<https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

What are your goals?

Whatever social media you decide to use, it is important to first define your goals and the channel best suited to achieve these goals.

Ask yourself:

- Who is your target audience?
- Do you want to raise awareness about your party and attract new voters?
- Do you want to spark or rectify a debate about an upcoming election or a political opponent?

While you might want to do all of this, it is important to work out your primary goal for each of the social networks you use. All activity should revolve around this goal, point to it and be implemented in your general strategy.

Then be creative and keep it interesting.

Your voters will probably be spread across various social media platforms and will notice if you keep posting the same information over and over. They would likely prefer seeing different aspects of a well-connected and tech-savvy political player on the different platforms.

What resources do you need?



Engaging in social media will require some resources – concentration, continuity and manpower. The good news is that while you can spend a lot of money on social media activities, you don't have to. As with most other things, your social media budget should grow with your popularity and your political influence. However, setting up a social media presence does not require paying big fees, launching a fancy advertising campaign or hiring staff.

Get going with the most useful and ubiquitous tool at hand: your smartphone.

The built-in camera will easily allow you to take pictures and create videos and social media apps will allow you to upload content from anywhere – rallies, party meetings or spontaneous encounters with your constituency.

You will also need time to update your accounts, to follow other users and to get to know the rules for effective social media use.

This applies in particular when looking at the speed at which new platforms pop up, change or shut down. Still, the most important resource for getting involved in any social media might be your curiosity to find out what the communication tools have to offer and how they can change your voter contact.

Two things are essential when starting your social media presence – a smartphone and time.



What should you pay attention to?

Social media platforms are a blessing in many regards – but they can follow you like a curse if you are not constantly on your toes, particularly if you are using the social media channels for more than private chitchat. As soon as ‘hot topics’ such as politics come up, you will have contenders, trolls and haters, liars and maybe even spies join the debate (See more on the problem of virtual mudslinging and fake news in chapter 8). In addition, communication over social media must keep within the law if you don’t want to attract unwanted attention or in the worst case scenario, face detention.

You must cover your back. Know your country’s media laws and expect the unexpected anytime!

Percentage of Individuals using the Internet

	2000	2005	2010	2012	2014	2015	2016
Angola	0,11	1,14	2,80	6,50	10,20	12,40	13,00
Benin	0,23	1,27	3,13	4,50	6,00	11,25	11,99
Burkina Faso	0,08	0,47	2,40	3,73	9,40	11,39	13,96
Congo (Dem. Rep.)	0,01	0,24	0,72	1,68	3,00	3,80	6,21
Côte d’Ivoire	0,23	1,04	2,70	5,00	19,27	21,89	26,53
Ghana	0,15	1,83	7,80	10,60	25,52	31,45	34,67
Kenya	0,32	3,10	7,20	10,50	16,50	21,00	26,00
Mozambique	0,11	0,85	4,17	6,00	9,24	16,93	17,52
Namibia	1,64	4,01	11,60	12,94	14,84	25,69	31,03
Nigeria	0,06	3,55	11,50	16,10	21,00	24,50	25,67
Senegal	0,40	4,79	8,00	10,80	17,70	21,69	25,66
South Africa	5,35	7,49	24,00	41,00	49,00	51,92	54,00
Tanzania	0,12	1,10	2,90	3,95	7,00	10,00	13,00
Uganda	0,16	1,74	12,50	14,10	16,90	17,83	21,88
Zambia	0,19	2,85	10,00	13,47	19,00	21,00	25,51
Zimbabwe	0,40	2,40	6,40	12,00	16,36	22,74	23,12

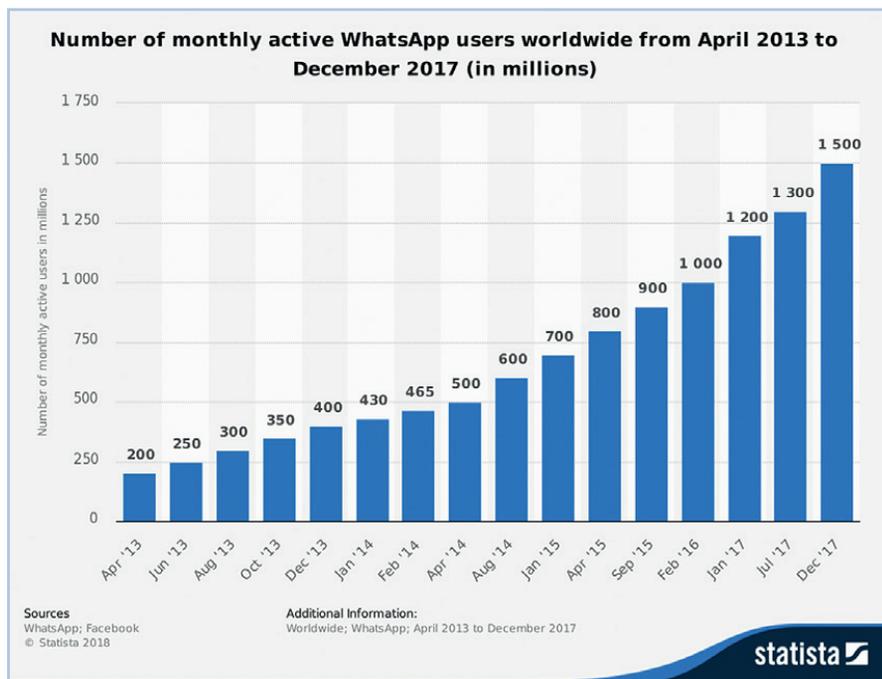
Source: International Communication Union 2016

CHAPTER 2:

WHATSAPP



WhatsApp has become the number one tool for communication and messaging across the globe. Launched in 2009, it has exploded in terms of user numbers – more than one billion people worldwide use WhatsApp daily, more than 50 billion messages are sent via the application every day, and these numbers are still growing.



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/260819/number-of-monthly-active-whatsapp-users/>

In most developing world countries it's the most affordable and preferred way to stay in touch, be reachable and access all sorts of information. To give more people, especially the poor, access to these benefits, WhatsApp cut its yearly subscription fee in its first years and made it available for free.

In late 2017, a business platform of the app was launched. And here is where it gets interesting: with WhatsApp Business you can reach your target audience on a large scale and make them immediately aware of current topics or your specific agenda. In addition more young users or voters – in the case of political communication and election campaigns – can be reached than with 'old school' means like pamphlets and meetings. The private channel

seems to beat the more public exchanges of Facebook or Twitter. Hence, using WhatsApp for the purpose of reaching your constituencies is imperative.

Getting the message across

Mobile networks have opened up new possibilities for people who didn't and still don't have access to landlines or DSL/fixed Internet, as is the case in most African countries. Now all you need is a smartphone. Often mobile network providers offer the use of the text messaging service for free and would charge data costs only when it comes to sending videos or using the call function. The apps encrypted messaging has proven to be a vital communication tool for people in dangerous situations or to bring about change by connecting people with 'revolutionary' ideas. For this reason, it has been blocked in a number of highly restrictive countries.

On an individual level, the app works by allowing you to send and receive messages. Its group function allows you to create broadcasting lists that allows you to reach up to 256 people with the same message – there are (illegal) tricks and hacks that work around the maximum number of participants limit but its best to stick to the legal way.



Benefits of broadcasting lists

With broadcasting lists, the recipients are not aware they're actually in a list. They get the message from one single contact and their answers are directed only to the creator of the list, not to all participating in it. So as always with the use of social media: think about what you're aiming at first.

Debate? Create a group. A group, unlike a broadcast list, allows participants to see each others messages and comment on those. If you create a group, be aware that you are the administrator of that group and responsible for moderating the comments made. This can be time-consuming and potentially stressful.

Inform? Create a broadcasting list. Or more than one. There is no limit to the number of lists you can set up. Then get creative and invent a WhatsApp story by making sure you're not bombarding people with text messages. Include pictures, videos, documents, links...whatever brings your message across and isn't boring.

A downside of broadcast lists is that it requires you and the recipients to save your phone number in each others address books. Potential 'subscribers' would have to signal their interest and answer you in a message, using a certain keyword for example. Now you can save their numbers and add them to a broadcast list. The same workload applies to the content, each list needs to be fed with it individually. In short: manpower is needed.

Making it easier

Typing on a phone can be quite tedious so make use of WhatsApp's browser version or its desktop app to send and receive WhatsApp messages on your computer.

To use WhatsApp Web go to web.whatsapp.com on your computer and to Settings -> WhatsApp Web on your phone. Scan the QR code displayed on your desktop screen using your phone's camera until they connect. Keep in mind that both WhatsApp Web and the desktop app will only work if your phone remains switched on, is connected to Wi-Fi, and is near the computer.

Play it safe

If you're (net)working in an unstable political situation, in a highly restrictive country or handling a very sensitive topic, it's crucial to control what information unknown users can see. You could be added to a group chat with people you don't know for example.

To be on the safe side, go to Settings -> Account -> Privacy and change Last Seen, Profile Photo and Status to My Contacts. This means only users saved in your phonebook will be able to see your profile information and when you were last online.

WhatsApp Business

From a marketing perspective, it's way too much effort to communicate with a large number of users via the regular app. WhatsApp Business aims to ease that burden by giving users the opportunity to interact with companies or organisations over a channel they use daily and by being able to speak to people in a technically more easy way.

The Business app lets you set up a more sophisticated profile and provides useful tools like sorting, saving and reusing frequent messages, sending automated messages as well as collecting stats on the account, such as open and click rates.

Remember though, the more personal nature of WhatsApp has to be reflected and respected when using it for campaigning purposes. Mass messaging in this environment can do a lot of damage to your image. The more your messages seem to come from a reachable human being instead of an info-robot, the more interaction you will get.

As with a private WhatsApp account, you need a number to connect your business account to. That means, with a sim card and a phone you can be reached round the clock.

To start engaging with people, they need to add your business account number to their phone's contact list. WhatsApp provides a click-to-chat link to your website, email signature, or social media pages in order for people to start a conversation with you or your party.

Messaging rules to follow

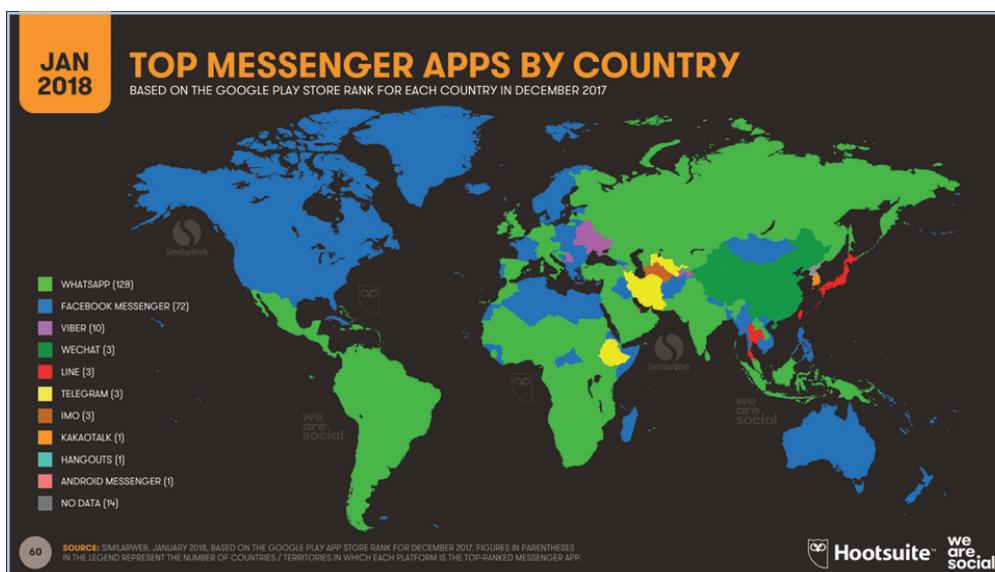
Make it clear from the start what kind of messages and topics users can expect from you. If your agenda plays out in a number of different sectors, create different broadcast lists with different contact numbers that can be subscribed to separately.

No subscriber wants to read through long and winding texts on their phones. Keep messages simple and short – containing a catchy introduction, relevant pictures, videos or links and a concluding sentence – anyone who wants to dig deeper will follow the web links.

Don't flood users with information. Remember that they are receiving dozens of other private messages too. Send a maximum of two to three messages a day or, if there is nothing to inform them about, no message at all.

Keep in mind that a messaging tool like WhatsApp means near-instant replies, so make sure you have the resources to manage the chats. Clarify who is responsible for sending and answering messages in your team.

WhatsApp in Africa and the World



<https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>



CHAPTER 3:

TELEGRAM



While WhatsApp (still) ranks first on the most-popular list of messaging apps it's not the only service of its kind and by far not the most secure with regards to the possible interception of the messages sent – that's why a pair of Russian developers decided to found Telegram in 2013.

Telegram operates as a non-profit organisation and is free to use.

The app focuses on speed and security. Messages sent with it are effectively safe and can be set to self-destruct.

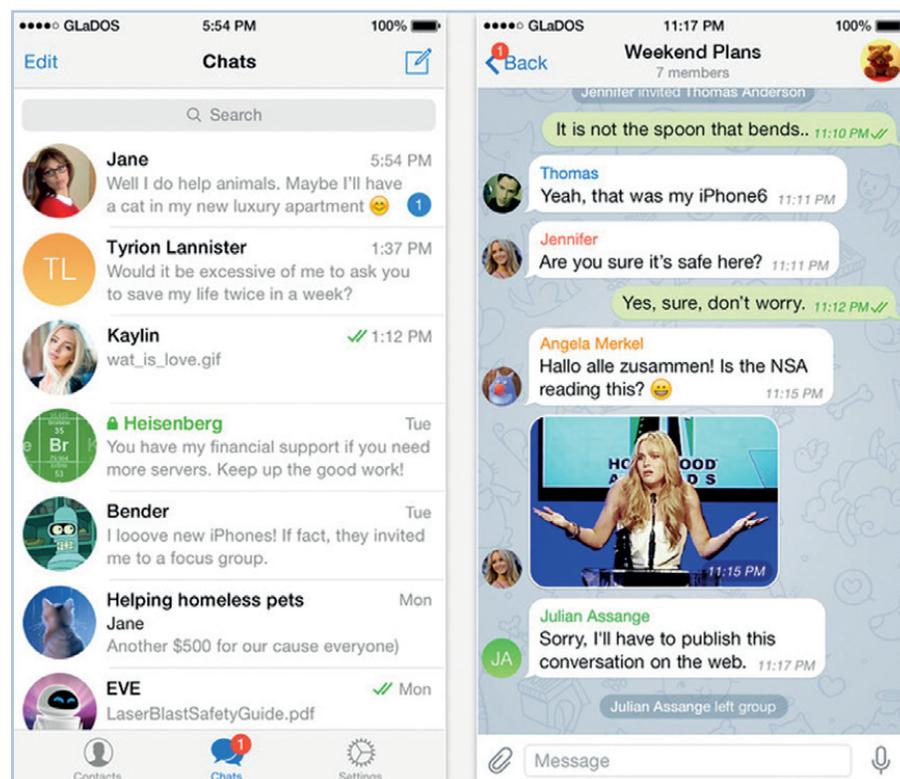
At first glance, Telegram looks very much like WhatsApp – from setting up the account with your number and profile to sending and receiving same-time messages that contain pictures, videos, audio notes, links, documents and files of all types up to 1.5 Gigabytes in size.

Telegram uses the same double checkmarks next to each message to show that it has been sent and received. Furthermore, there is the option of group chats which you will probably use most.

Telegram claims to be faster than WhatsApp and its security measures are far more enhanced. Users have the option to start a new "secret chat", a special type of conversation that is not saved to the cloud server and works with specific encryption using an image as an encryption key. By comparing your encryption key to the one your secret chat partner has got, you can effectively verify that your conversation is secure. In addition, you can set a self-destructing time limit – from a few seconds up to a week – for the content within your secret chats.

These security features are meant to prevent anyone from attempting to eavesdrop on a chat, making Telegram an attractive option if you are based in countries

with restrictive or autocratic governments. For additional privacy, you can hide message previews from the notifications and set up a passcode in order to protect your chats even if someone takes your phone. Voice calls are end-to-end-encrypted as well.



Building your Telegram network

As most people you would want to address are unlikely to be on Telegram you have to send them invitations first. Telegram will send the contacts you invite a text with a link to download the app. Once they have downloaded the app, you can begin communicating with them by creating groups and broadcasting channels. This works in very much the same way as WhatsApp, with one big difference – there is almost no limit to the number of participants. Up to 100 000 members can join such a group or channel.

Since communication with large groups can become very tricky, there are some functions provided by Telegram that make it easier to maintain order. You can trace communication by replies, mentions and hashtags. In addition, there are some advanced admin-rights to keep spammers and chat-trolls at bay by, for example, limiting their right to comment.

Public groups you create can be joined by anyone who knows the URL, as a result, these could be included in a newsletter to collect feedback and to engage subscribers in discussions. Everyone who joins these public groups can view the entire chat's history. Keep in mind that group chats are not encrypted.

As the founders of Telegram believe in freedom of speech and thought, they won't take down any content that is against local restrictions, like criticising the government. Their cloud servers are based around the globe so it would need several court orders from different jurisdictions to force Telegram to give up user data to third parties.

Features, beyond security, that favour the use of Telegram

- One account can be run from multiple phones, it synchronises in same time mode;
- It features self-destruction of messages, albeit only in the 'secret chat' mode;
- There is no limit to the number of participants in groups and channels for news and alerts;
- 'Bots' (specialised tools) can be set up to manage group communication. There is even a platform for developers that allows users to build these tools;
- 'Last seen' statuses can be hidden for specific people. This means blocked users will only get an approximate indication of the last time you were online; and
- By disabling image downloads in the app's settings, the images that get sent to you do not have to end up in your phone's gallery.

Telegram takes up very little space on your phone as the data is kept in a cloud, a virtual storage. Just remember to regularly clean your phone's cache.

WHATSAPP VS TELEGRAM

Twenty First Tech 2015

WhatsApp	Telegram
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Users Calling Services Available Mute Specific Users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster More Secure Superior Document Transfer Free for Life More Stickers & Emojis

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

<http://twentyfirsttech.com/2015/12/15/telegram-vs-whatsapp-which-is-better/>

CHAPTER 4:

FACEBOOK



Facebook is all about networking. There are currently over 2 billion people active on Facebook every month, half of whom log in every day. Africa alone has 170 million Facebook users – and the number is growing. For many people, checking Facebook is part of the rhythm of their day with most accessing the network on their mobile phones. For many, it’s the place where they collect information that is relevant to them.

Being on Facebook allows you to benefit from two basic human characteristics – people are inherently social and they like to exchange information. Once you get people’s attention with your content, it’s the best advertising in the world. And it’s free!

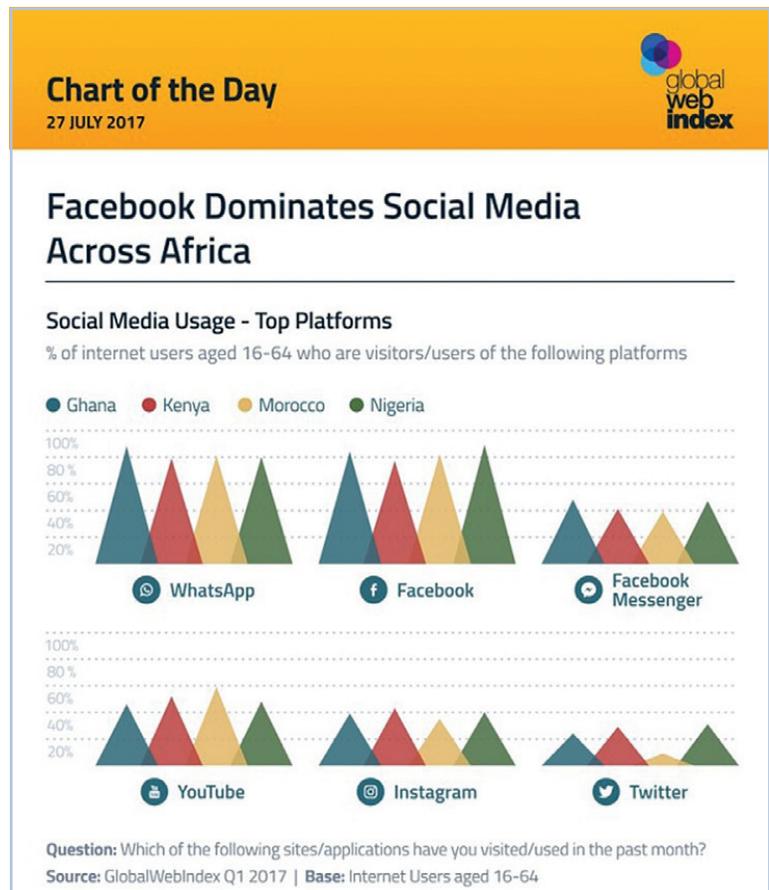
Social networks are about people, and Facebook allows you to portray yourself not only as a politician but also as a sports fan, an art lover, a father, a mother, etc. Getting people to see your human, more relatable side may influence how they respond to the facts and opinions you promote. As such, it is not enough to post only party-related or political comments. Be interesting, witty, motivated, nice, even sad sometimes – but be something!

Getting started – A Facebook Page beats the private profile

First, go to www.facebook.com and register to open an account. Facebook offers two types of accounts: a private profile, which connects you to friends, and a professional Facebook Page, that connects you with fans. You must have a private account before Facebook will let you open a Facebook Page.

A private profile limits you to 5,000 friends. This means that a maximum of only 5,000 people will see what you post. Since you do not know how popular you will become in the future, given the growing use of social media, go ahead and set up a professional page.

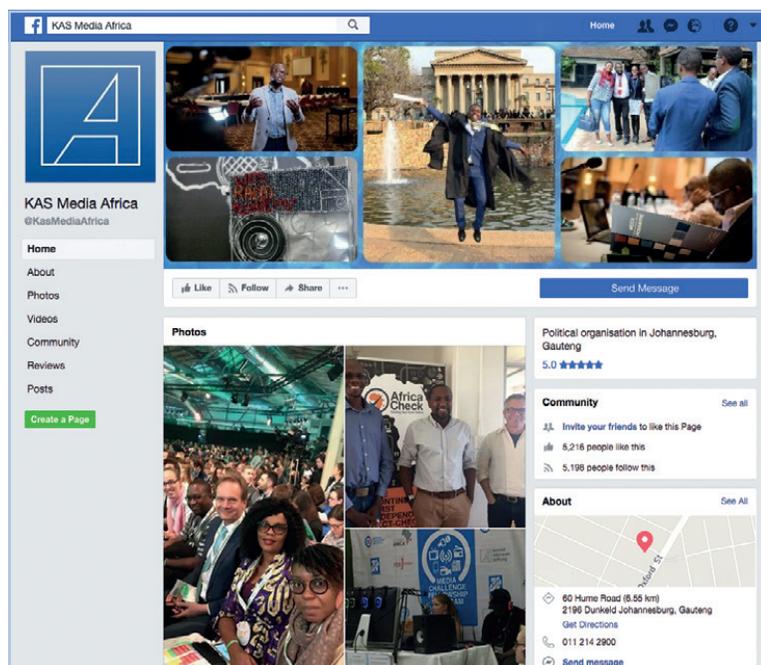
Unlike private accounts, Facebook pages feature marketing and analytical tools that allow you to monitor your outreach. In addition, you can select several people to be Facebook Page administrators – so no need for 24/7 shifts on your computer or smartphone. Don’t get confused: what you want are fans and not followers. Fans have a relationship with your page, they can turn off or prioritise notifications for when you post and they can be analysed and advertised to with certain tools. Followers just see what you post.



<http://www.netimperative.com/2017/07/africa-social-media-trends-facebook-dominates-youtube-twitter-struggle/>

Be memorable – cover photos and profile pictures

The cover photo is the first thing people see when visiting your page. Choose it carefully! Preferably, use a photo that represents your party, depicts one of its events or embodies your (political) outlook. In addition, choose a logo or a picture of yourself to use as a profile image. This will give your page a 'face'. Note: changing this 'face' from time to time raises the attention of your fans.



Your photos should show aspects of your life within the party and should send relevant and intended visual messages. They can also highlight upcoming events or make a statement about current affairs. Whatever photo you choose, make sure it fits Facebook's measurements. (Perhaps include the measurements)

Watch your back – change the security settings

Security settings and privacy settings are crucial for defining who can post on your page, who can see the posts and who can comment on them. A Facebook Page comes with default security settings, usually the bare minimum, so be sure to change these as soon as possible. Only you or specifically assigned people should be able to post on the page. Select the option allowing for multiple administrators to give access to the page to specific people.

Keep your posts visible to everyone who follows your page, but only allow fans to comment or to add or tag photos – this will save you a lot of time dealing with pointless comments. Moderation lists in your settings will enable you to block comments that contain unwanted keywords. In addition, activate the spam filter. All blocked comments will appear there and you can review, remove or approve them.

While it is imperative that you remove comments that are unlawful or posts that cross the line, you will no doubt always have to deal with exasperating or even infuriating comments. Be sure to respond to these comments in a respectful way and answer them directly. If somebody won't stop commenting in an offensive manner, you can block this 'special' fan from posting further comments on your timeline.

As with WhatsApp, you have to determine editorial responsibilities – you must keep track of your timeline and private messages so that you do not miss out on anything that is being posted or commented on.

Remember, the net doesn't forget. Be aware that Facebook collects your data and will have a detailed profile of you over the course of time. Even things that you hide from your timeline will still appear in Facebook news feeds or searches.

Being on Facebook means keeping track of your timeline and private messages so that you do not miss out on anything that is being posted or commented on.

The perfect timeline – do’s and don’ts for posts

The whole point of having a Facebook, as well as other social media presence, is to improve the outreach and reputation of your party. This does not mean, however, that you should limit your posts to political sloganeering or being critical of your opponents. Instead, posts should highlight your general accessibility, show your concern for voters and showcase your expertise on certain issues. All of which would help boost your popularity.

Before you post anything, ask yourself: what do people need to know about my party’s politics, approach and aims? When giving this information, make sure your posts fit the tone of the community you are engaging with. Never bore your fans – mix policy, opinion and your position on current debates with humorous findings, funny videos or private details. This will make your page more personal. Be careful, however, not to share too much information and don’t get too personal.

If you find something interesting on someone else’s page or, for example, on a news website, you can share that with your fans. Post links and references to other members of your party as well as to the content of political partners.

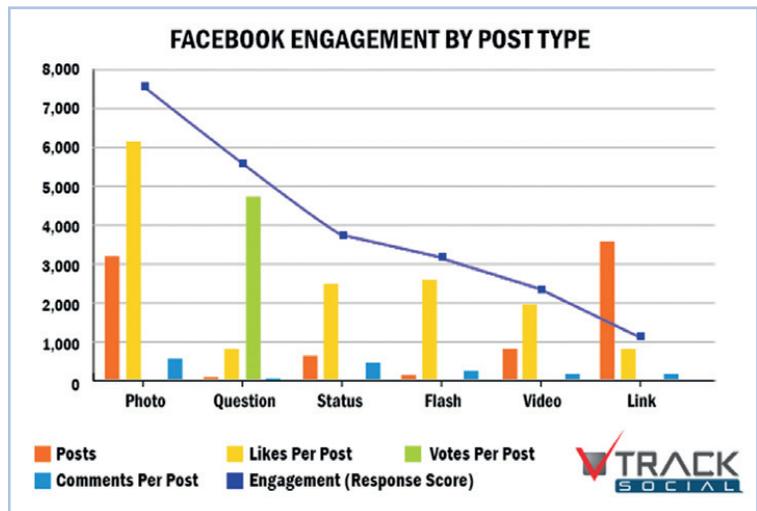
Posts that initiate a conversation with your fans and other users build loyalty and create an opportunity to generate new fans. Social media users are used to commenting on anything, sometimes even too much and without reflection. You can, nevertheless, start a conversation or prompt feedback with a survey or a quiz. Ask a relevant question on a current topic, see how your fans and potential voters answer and start a discussion.

Everything you share via social media contributes to your public image. It is, therefore, important to be aware of WHAT you post, HOW OFTEN you post and THE WAY you do it.

Successful posts have the following characteristics:

Short: The more social media accounts, the shorter the attention span and the quicker you should get to the point of the post. Various social media stats show that 10 to 60 characters work well when posting a link or picture. With text, you have around 400 characters before Facebook shortens the text with a ‘Read More’ indication. Still, you should be done by half of that.

Relevant and fun: Posts have to attract interest. After all, they’re just one click or scroll away from disappearing into the abyss of your fans’ timelines. What’s on the minds of the people you are trying to reach? What should be on their minds? Give your fans access to exclusive information and encourage them to share your content.



Data source: TRACKSOCIAL <http://tracksocial.com/blog/2012/06/optimizing-facebook-engagement-part-1-text-links-photos-or-videos/>

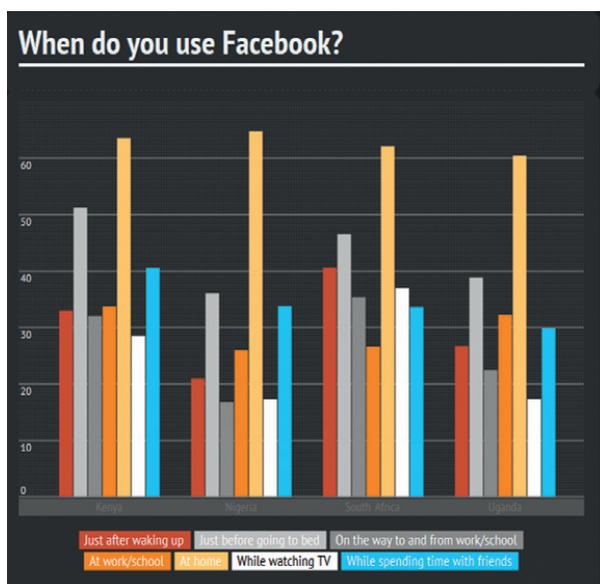
Moving: Are there any moving pictures that can enhance the post? Simple GIFS, short (live) videos or even 360-degree videos, will boost the attention your fans are paying and the number of likes you get.

Regulated: Don't 'stalk' your fans. Too many posts will eventually become annoying. Besides, when you flood your timeline it is difficult for fans to discern the relevant information from trivia.

Friendly and conversational: Posts are not press releases. It's not about announcements but about sharing content that other users can refer to and react to. Get the tone right. Ask questions or seek input.

Regular: Post at least two to three times a week in order to stay relevant to the people who like your page.

Timely: Post your content at times when the people you want to reach engage most with Facebook. That depends on their age and occupation. 'Facebook Insights' gives you an idea of when most of your fans are online. Promote upcoming events and breaking news with your posts.



Source: [jana.com](http://www.jana.com/blog/facebook-in-africa/) <http://www.jana.com/blog/facebook-in-africa/>

Blurry pictures and jumpy videos should be considered a no-no. Facebook gives you the option of live videos – videos which are uploaded and streamed on your timeline the moment you take them. Live videos perform very well because Facebook prioritises this timely content in the newsfeed and notifies your fans about it. But be sure that the images you post convey the intended message and are engaging for your fans – videos of more than two minutes length are rarely watched through to the end. Furthermore, keep in mind that most users scroll through their timeline and don't click on a video to play it with sound. So, the images must speak for themselves and hold the viewer's attention. Random panning of party members singing motivational songs at a rally will only last for so long. Have your smartphone ready when attending a party event, take meaningful videos and pictures and upload these from the spot. Post a few really good ones instead of too many. Ensure that your videos are optimised for mobile viewing as this is the most likely form in which your fans will watch them. You can also store certain pictures to be posted at a later date when they convey an intended message. Of course, you can combine a picture with a link, and give some explanation or additional reading. Never forget though: do not pretend and do not be seen to be posing.

Professional: If you have a private Facebook account, think carefully about what you post there too. All of it will be connected to your position in the party. Don't share too much personal information or anything that can embarrass you or be used against you – once you click 'post' you can't take it back.

Speak through (moving) pictures

According to Facebook, photo albums, pictures and videos get 180%, 120% and 100% more engagement respectively. That's because visual images appeal to our emotions, they create a first impression and are quickly taken in and better remembered, as compared to text. Take advantage of this – use good infographics, photos and videos or GIFS as much as you can.

Blurry pictures and jumpy videos should be considered a no-no. Facebook gives you the option of live videos – videos which are uploaded and streamed on your timeline the



An important step before uploading photos and videos on Facebook is to ensure that you are allowed to do so. Is there somebody clearly discernible in the images who might not want it published? Are copyrights involved? The same goes for any non-picture content that you share. Ignorance is not a defence. Rather, double-check the source and what's possibly behind it.

Your account tells you a lot – unravel the mysteries of your success

Your main goal should be to reach as many people as possible via social media. It is, therefore, crucial that your fans share and spread your content. Facebook offers a wide range of tools to analyse how well you are accomplishing this goal. User activity on your page is logged and collected. This includes who views your page, who likes your content and who shares it.

Page Insights is a valuable tool to help improve your Facebook marketing and customise your posts according to the data collected from your page. The 'Insights' tab can be found on the top of your Facebook page. There you can see, among other things, who your fans are, their ages and their locations as well as their engagement with your posts, videos and live videos. You will see which posts are successful, which are shared the most, etc. By regularly viewing the metrics related to your page you will better understand what content your fans are responsive to and when. It may also indicate the regions where you should be working harder to gain more fans and supporters.

Page Insights is available once 30 people like your page – the more fans you have, the more accurate the data. The 'Build Audience' button on your admin panel can help you get more fans by creating advertisements to promote your page. Check out these tools and use them.

Be your own marketing department – Ads on Facebook

Facebook is a giant data collector – use it for your benefit. Encourage your Facebook followers to join your other social media accounts by sharing your latest newsletter, along with a sign-up link or the phone number to connect to a WhatsApp broadcast list.

There are more options to access the exact people you want to win over.

Use Facebook Ads to target them by demographics, location or interests. A Facebook Ad could, for example, be used to promote an existing post or you can create a new advert, e.g. a photo or video or a slide show including a link. It is up to you to define who this message should reach.

With its tool 'Ad Manager' Facebook offers different campaign objectives – engagement or reach, among others. You should concentrate on one or two depending on what you want your ad to accomplish and on how much manpower you've got to curate the ads. It might be wise to start with a narrow audience, for example, people who are interested in, for example, 'land reform' or 'first-time voters' and broaden the categories slowly. Analysis of these criteria will again be found under Page Insights.

Importantly, advertising on Facebook is inexpensive compared to regular advertising campaigns in newspapers, magazines and on billboards. Also, you can choose how to pay. One option is to pay per thousand impressions. This means you pay for every time the ad appears on the Facebook timeline of a user that fits in the target group. Another option is to pay per click. This means you pay only when people from your target group actually click on your advert, irrespective of the number of times it has appeared.

The Ad Manager tool allows you to set a budget per day or for a given period of time and allows you to schedule your campaign. Facebook will indicate an estimated audience size beforehand. When using multiple adverts, Facebook will automatically allocate your budget towards the higher performing advertisements. The Ads Manager will tell you how well the adverts are doing in terms of reach, frequency, clicks, etc. There are some detailed guides for the Ad Manager to be found online.

Make your ads creative and catchy

Include moving pictures and grab the viewer's attention right from the start. Share information that people are likely to pass along. Invite people to join the events you promote on your page.

CHAPTER 5:

TWITTER

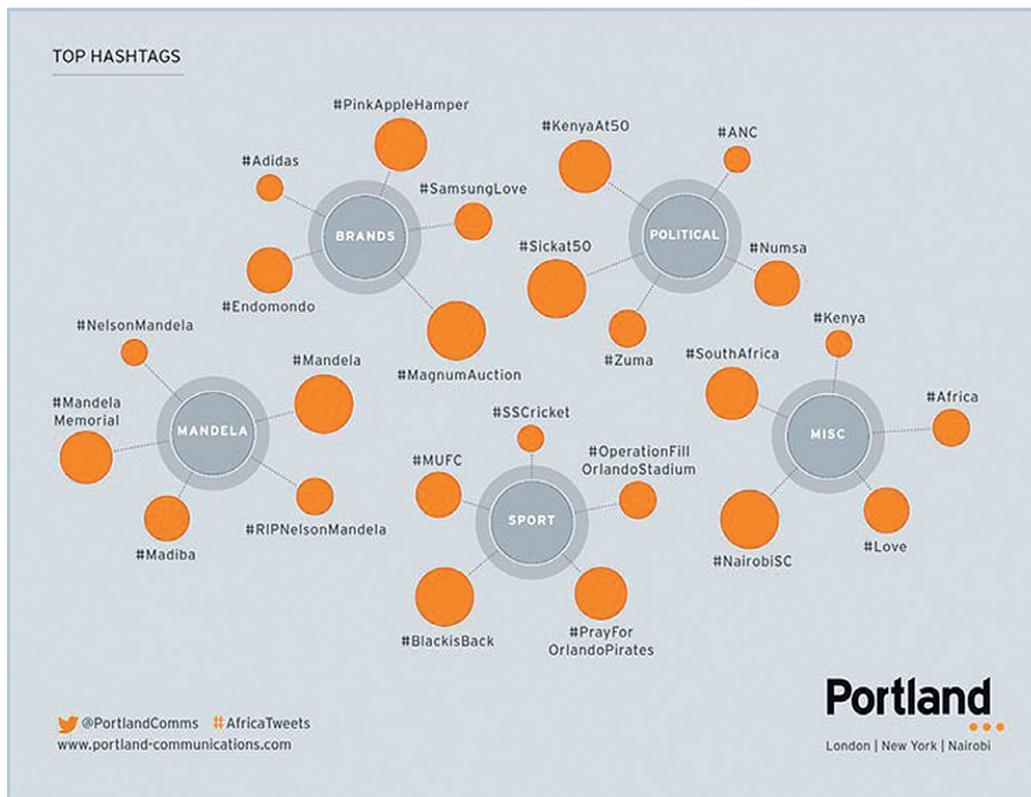


Twitter is basically a microblogging service – it is the tool to use when you want to get or spread as much information as possible within a very short time.

Over 300 million users are active on Twitter every month, daily use stands at around 100 million. According to Twitter, 80% of the users engage with their accounts from their mobile phones. If you had to choose only two social media accounts, Twitter should most definitely be one of them. Research by the communication agency Portland found that Twitter is widely used for political conversations, especially in Africa. Almost ten percent of the most popular African hashtags in 2015 related to political issues and politicians, compared to two percent of hashtags in the US and UK. Therefore you are sure to find the attention you want for political topics on Twitter.

Mastering Twitter requires a different approach to Facebook. You have the choice – do you want to collect information and only be a passive user or do you want to become an active Twitter user? Either way, you will need to learn the platform’s jargon. Don’t panic, you will get used to it once you understand how it works and with regular use.

The first step, again, is to create an account, using a profile picture that immediately connects you to your party and is easily recognisable. For example, wear a shirt or scarf sporting your party’s colours or featuring the party logo. Alternatively, use a thumbnail portrait combined with your party logo. You will be asked to create a username – your Twitter handle. This name must contain fewer than 15 characters and is always preceded by the @ sign.



Source: Portland / howafricatweets.com

Collecting information

You don't have to actively tweet to get value from Twitter. With all the information provided, it's pretty simple: take a look and follow the conversations that interest you. Fill up your account by following interesting Twitter users. Search for newspapers and magazines and political parties. Don't forget popular experts or bloggers, your favourite sports teams or celebrities. Searching is done by typing in the relevant Twitter handle – e.g. @ followed by the name you are looking for, for example, @tutulegacy.

Once you have found the right account, hit the 'follow' button. This means you subscribe to the postings – the tweets – of that account which will now appear on your timeline. You will be alerted to every new tweet.

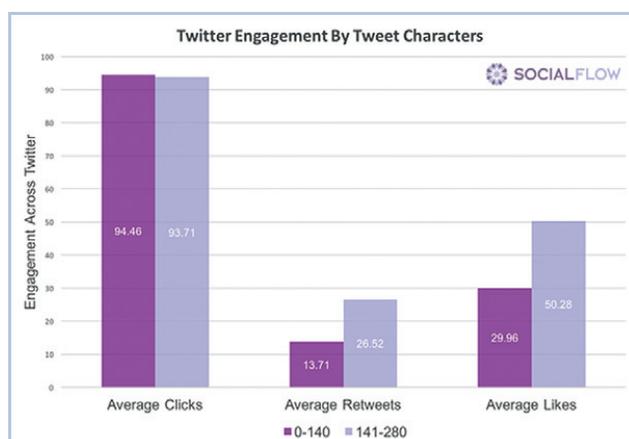
If somebody subscribes to your account, you get a follower. This follower can see what you post and who you follow. Your timeline is updated every few seconds, so, if you follow a lot of people, it can get confusing keeping track of the tweets. Twitter offers lists to organise your subscriptions by grouping information that belongs together. Your lists allow you to switch easily between categories, for example, 'News', 'Sports' or 'Music'. Based on your subscriptions, Twitter will also recommend other people or groups to follow – look at these profiles, they might be of value.

Even if you are not an active Twitter user, others might talk about you or your party, for example: 'I like the latest speech of @username'. These are mentions. There is a 'Mention' tab on Twitter that allows you to see the conversations that others have with or about you – check it regularly.

Active tweeting

When you are politically engaged it is not enough to simply publish content and hope for the best. You need to know how to tweet, what to tweet, and how often to tweet.

When Twitter started every tweet was limited to 140 characters. Now it is 280 characters. But you should still strive to be as concise and to the point as possible. The shorter and clearer your message, the more likely you are to increase your response rate.



<https://www.cnet.com/news/twitter-users-like-longer-tweet-data-shows/>

Direct messages to other Twitter users only work when their Twitter handles are used. Send a tweet beginning with @xyz and it will connect your message automatically with the user you want to address. When you want to refer to something that another user has written, include his or her Twitter handle in your tweet. The person will then see your comment.

Adding links will make your posts more meaningful. They also work as a teaser to an article. Make sure there is a space before the URL that makes it clickable. Some URLs, or web addresses, are just too long – that's why Twitter will automatically abbreviate your link to only 19 characters. This function is offered on other websites as well, for example, goo.gl or bit.ly

When you want to inform your followers of a specific event or issue or draw their attention to someone else's tweet, you can retweet their tweet – that's like forwarding the relevant post to your followers. To do so, click the retweet button or use the code RT in your tweet to tell others that it is forwarded. You can ask your followers to retweet your content in order to spread the word.

To tweet or not to tweet

Only interesting tweets are successful! These will bring you more followers as they get commented on and retweeted. Your tweets need not always be about your opinions or beliefs; they should be varied and should refer to current developments, interesting stories or upcoming events. Don't forget some fun now and then. Whenever you tweet, be sure to verify your sources and never retweet a link to something that you haven't read yourself!

You must use hashtags to take part in discussions. A # sign in front of the keyword connects your tweets with those of others commenting on the same topic. By using a hashtag you can also start a whole new thread that can be seen by potentially every Twitter user. In addition, tweets with hashtags get more responses – but only if you don't use more than two in a tweet. Avoid broad concepts, for example, #elections. Opt for something relevant to the subject you are tweeting about and the message you are intending to spread.

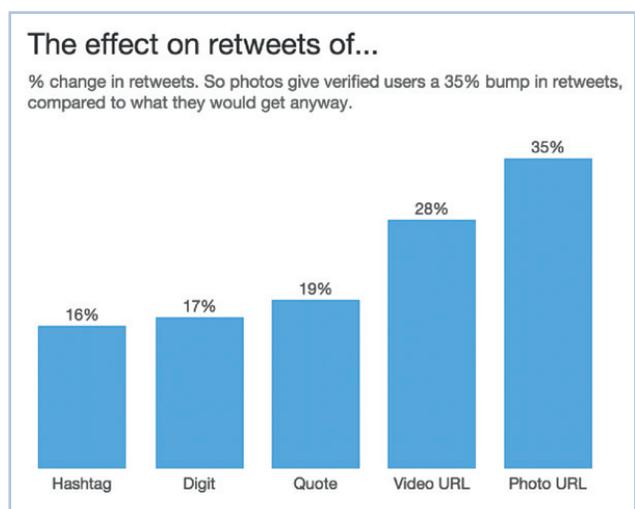
Again, photographs make a big difference. Brain studies have shown that we forget 90% of information after three days. However, if that information is paired with a picture, we'll remember 65%. And: Tweets with photos get much more engagement than tweets without. Your pictures must, however, contain a message and be authentic. Whenever you use photographs that you did not take, or which show other people, be sure to check that you are not violating any rights.

Post content that you think is beneficial to your followers and voters. The more your posts refer to them and their concerns, the more likely they will react. Only about a quarter of your tweets should be posts that blatantly advertise your party's plans or what you are doing right now.

Tweeting less than once every two days is ineffective. On the other hand, tweeting more than ten times a day can be annoying. Research has shown that as tweet frequency increases, response per tweet decreases. The exact tipping point depends on the subject and the nature of your tweets – you have to find this out by trial and error.

Use statistics to determine when your followers are most likely to check their accounts during the day, and tweet accordingly. Make use of scheduling software (such as www.hootsuite.com or www.buffer.com) to publish pre-written tweets at a specific time.

Your audience will probably not be first-language English speakers, so be sensitive to this when tweeting. For example, with topics regarding culture or education, you could send one tweet in different languages and invite your followers to do the same when engaging with your tweet.



<https://blog.bufferapp.com/longer-tweets-coming-twitter>

Organise your account

The longer your list of subscriptions, the more overwhelmed you will feel. Twitter, therefore, offers the option of creating lists to get a better overview of the accounts you follow instead of having them all appear in one column. You can group, for example, tweets from parties in your country, from NGO's and the news channels you follow.

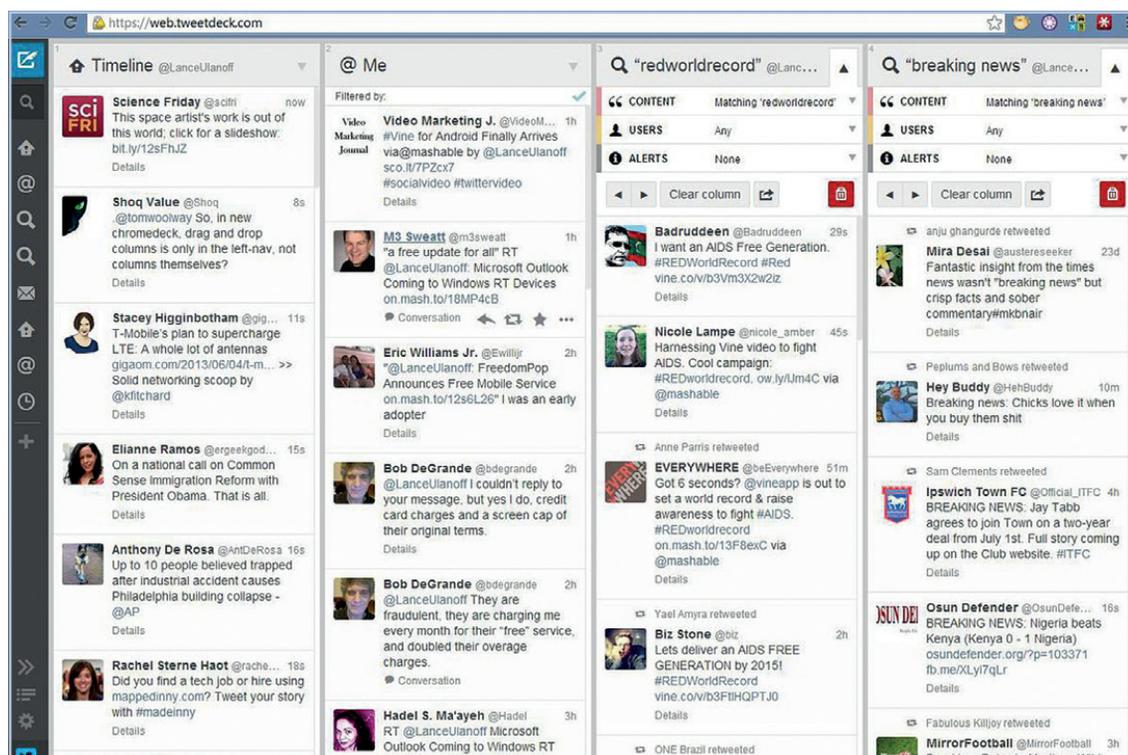
Additional help comes from a number of applications, some of which have a paid pro-version with even more sophisticated features. Tweet Deck and Hootsuite are two amongst these management tools for structuring your account, evaluating trending topics and making life as a Twitter user a lot easier. Other options are Socialoomph, Buffer or Mavsocial.

TweetDeck

The app (found at www.tweetdeck.com) displays your subscriptions in multiple timelines. It, therefore, provides a better way of monitoring and managing tweets. You can access your Twitter account via the app and can send and receive tweets via TweetDeck.

TweetDeck allows you to:

- Set up customisable columns of people you follow, mentions of you, direct messages to you, lists and favourites;
- Save searches with keywords and hashtags;
- Shorten URLs for the links you want to tweet;
- Filter all your columns to include or exclude specific words or tweets from certain users; and
- Schedule tweets for time-lagged publication.





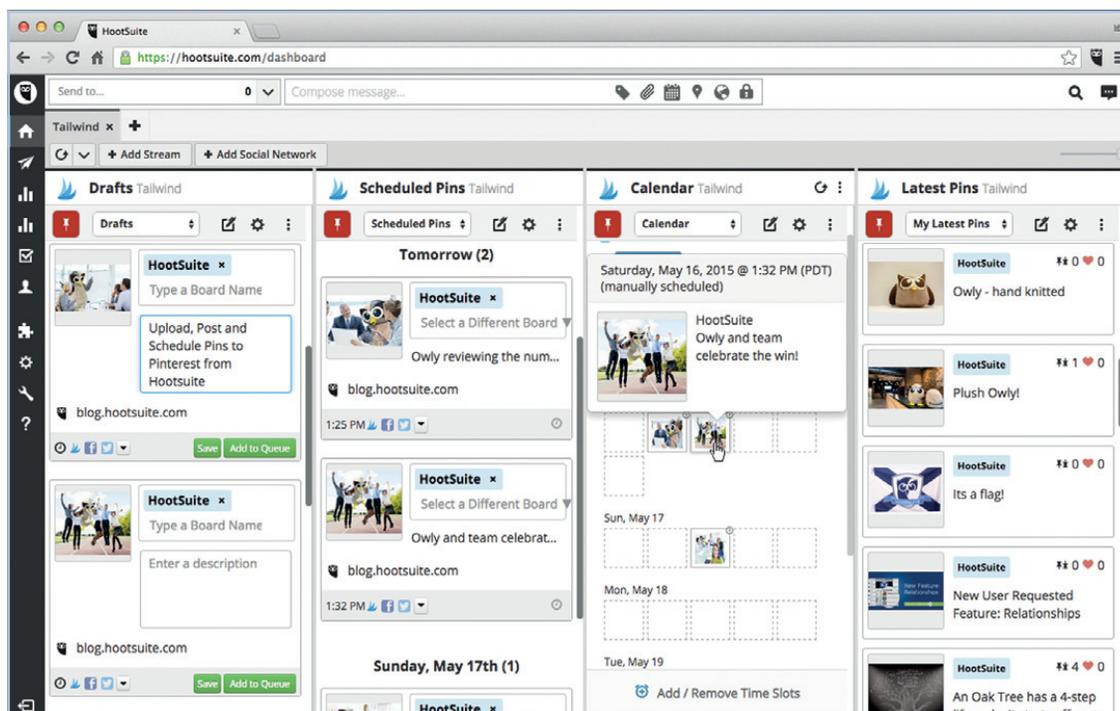
Hootsuite

Keeping up with continual posting and connecting with your fans or followers on different platforms can be very time-consuming. One of the most extensive applications to manage not only your Twitter account but up to three different social profiles of your choice from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube is Hootsuite. The free version allows you to manage three platforms at the same time, while the pro version, at a cost of 20 Euros a month, allows you to manage up to 50 social profiles simultaneously.

Benefits of Hootsuite:

- Provides one platform from which you can schedule posts or respond and monitor your social profiles and their feeds;
- Allows you to curate and discover new content on different social media platforms by creating search streams using hashtags, location or keywords to find things you want to share with your subscribers;
- Allows monitoring of post engagements and successes with analytics.
- With a browser extension, content can be scheduled to be posted or forwarded from a webpage directly; and
- Content can be added from a cloud, for example, Google Drive or Dropbox, that all of your team has access to.

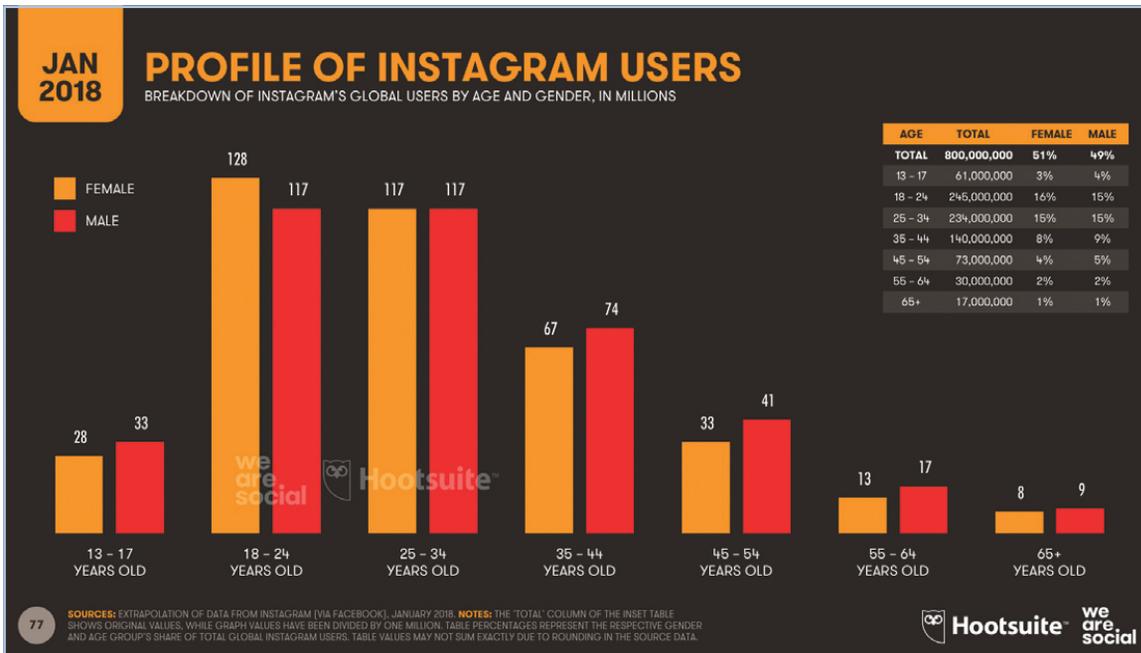
With the flood of information shared and posted on Twitter every day you should still try and discern what's important for you and your agenda. Search tools help a lot with that. Twitter has several built-in tools and there are several third-party Twitter applications. Twitter's search tools are good, but have one significant limitation – they don't go far back in time. To search tweets sent six months ago or last year you'll need a third-party Twitter search tool. These might be updated or change as fast as social media is evolving but current effective tools include Social Mention, Talkwalker, and TweetReach.



CHAPTER 6:

INSTAGRAM AND YOUTUBE

Your social media strategy will be affected by the content you generate most. If you have a lot of visual content, and people in your team who are good at putting their message across in pictures or videos, then either Instagram or YouTube might be your channel of preference. Again, before you create an account ask yourself what your objectives are. Sparking discussion? Stick to Facebook or WhatsApp – on Instagram and YouTube it’s all about visuals! Here, users and all kinds of ‘brands’ come together to share pictures and videos and tell their ‘brand story’. So, if your main aim is to create awareness for your party, the personalities behind it and its historic moments, then you must definitely create an account on these platforms.



<https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

INSTAGRAM



Instagram started as a photo-sharing app in 2010. Today it has half a billion users and a very high engagement rate. Like WhatsApp, it is now owned by Facebook (which gives you the possibility of cross-advertising) and a big hit, as it’s visual, mobile and easy to use. Young users particularly love the app and its playful features. Using Instagram will most likely help to inspire people, get them excited by capturing emotional moments and building a digital community. Keep in mind that emotion comes with attachment and that works better if you try and personalise your content as much as you can. After all, politics is about people, isn’t it?





Know your icons

Like Facebook, getting started is about building a network of accounts you follow and to consequently get other people to notice and follow you. After you've created an account, go to the person-shaped icon (at the bottom right corner of your screen) and set up your profile. Again, use a meaningful picture which connects you and your party: a logo, a symbol, a specific, well-known candidate. Then give all the other information potential followers will need to find out more about you. Include a link to your party's website or a specific landing page of your choice.

Instagram will now give you the option to find followers through your contact list, Facebook account, Twitter account, or by manual search. Therefore, you will need to provide Instagram with your Facebook or Twitter account information (your email address and relevant password) before you'll be able to select followers from either of these platforms. You can choose to follow suggested Instagram users by tapping the Follow button next to their name. Doing this allows you to see their posts on your homepage.

The magnifying glass icon

Use the search function for names and keywords to find more accounts to follow and connect with.

The heart icon

Find information about your account's activity here. This is where all of your in-app notifications will appear, that is, photo likes, comments, friend requests etc.

The plus icon

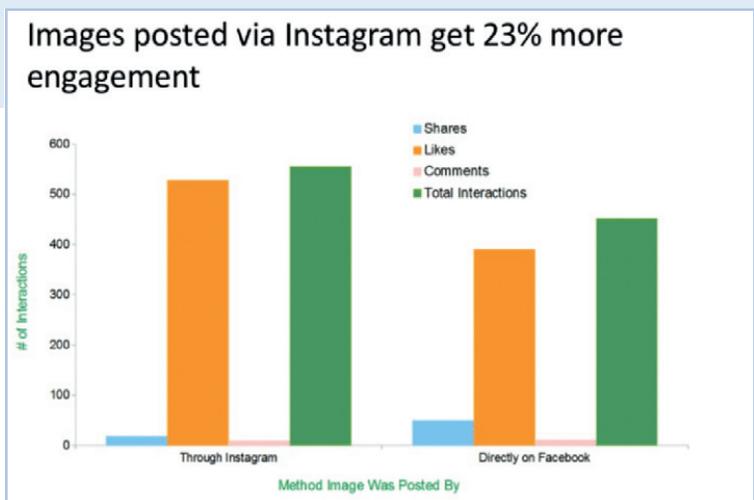
On Instagram, you can either share a single photo or video, with or without captions, links and embellishments such as filters, effects and virtual stickers. Remember, these posts are permanent. Then, there's the Instagram Story. This feature basically enables you to share multiple photos and videos in a row, and they are strung together like a slideshow to tell a story. Instagram stories will disappear after 24 hours unless you add them as Highlights or share them to your regular feed.

Useful tips

When taking a picture out of the app, tap the Boomerang option to take burst photos that loop forward or backwards.

Reply to stories with a photo or video or a sticker, in addition to, or instead of, writing a message. There are many embellishment options so play around with them to get to know them.

Post your photo to another external account, for example, Facebook, Twitter or Tumblr by sliding the relevant switch to the "On" position. Note that you will need to link your Instagram account to the other account in question before you can do this.



<https://blog.bufferapp.com/instagram-growth>

Do's and Don'ts

Filters are the reason Instagram became so popular but don't overuse them. Try and take good pictures instead. High-quality photos with a lot of colours tend to get the most reactions.

Use hashtags in your captions. It is a good way to increase your reach on Instagram but don't bloat your captions with a dozen of hashtags. Keep it to a minimum and only use keywords that are relevant.

Post on a regular basis to keep your followers interested.

Use Instagram Direct (the arrow at the top righthand corner) to connect with a specific group of users instead of posting content to everyone all at once.

Interact with your followers. Reply to their comments. Check out their accounts and like a few of their photos.

Grow your account and get new followers by agreeing to a 'shout out' with another (popular) user. This is done by posting a photo (or video) from the other account and encouraging your own followers to go follow that user in the post description – and vice versa.

Request content from followers that aligns with the message of your latest campaign, for example, or shows party members in action or maybe even depicts problems you want to tackle.

YOUTUBE



Every minute, 400 hours of video from across the world are uploaded to YouTube and five billion videos are watched every day – more than half on mobile devices. Each and every metric about YouTube makes one's eyes stretch. This is the platform you simply cannot avoid when it comes to spreading video content. YouTube has transformed from a site to watch entertaining videos to a platform where users can earn revenue, fame, respect and acknowledgement for what they have to offer the audience. There are hundreds of thousands of different channels you can subscribe to and you can comment, like, dislike and even make 'friends' on YouTube. Nowadays the uploaders of content even have catchy names: Influencers, Creators, Youtubers.



According to YouTube's representative for Sub-Saharan Africa, usage in the region has skyrocketed in the past few years. High-tech market research consultancy, World Wide Worx, puts the number of subscribers for an average YouTube channel in South Africa at 250 000 in 2017, whereas, a year before it had only been 36 000. There are localised versions of YouTube, which means that content uploaded by African users will show up first in the browsing pages of users who visit YouTube from within Africa.

If your party is unlikely to appear on television any time soon, YouTube gives you the opportunity to directly reach your constituency. The largest group using YouTube is the 18-30-year-old cohort – an important target audience.



To join YouTube, simply create an account and a channel. People will find your content through simple searches. Seeing that news and politics lead the different content categories you don't have to build an audience – users are out there waiting for you to post the kind of political information they are yearning for. Users can also subscribe to your channel and be notified each time you upload a new video. You can get new subscriptions by cross-promotion, which means posting comments about your YouTube channel on other social media accounts. Again, only publish interesting content that is easy to take in!

Even in the field of politics, visual information works well. Make behind-the-scenes clips, post exclusive interviews or short documentaries or show an emotional video of people who have benefitted, either directly or indirectly, from your party's work on one of your key party platforms.

Be creative when making the clips and edit the length of the video according to its relevance or emotional value. For example, an interview with a party leader should be shorter than a touching story about your youngest party member. Keep in mind that the average length people watch a video is steadily decreasing as the options to 'switch over' increases. Also, research has shown that approximately 20 percent of the people who start watching your video will leave after the first ten seconds. So, create really engaging introductions!

Upload new videos regularly to keep your subscribers' interested and to increase your chances of being found by users who are just browsing. As you don't have to register to use YouTube, the chances of being subjected to negative or insulting comments are higher. Monitor comments carefully and deal with problems in the same way you would if the comments were made on Facebook or Twitter.

CHAPTER 7:

OTHER PLATFORMS

Social media platforms keep popping up, creating a big buzz initially but may well be gone again within a year. This applies to the international networks just as much as it does to African social networks with programmers all over the continent constantly designing and launching new homegrown platforms. It's difficult to predict which of these platforms will last. Here are two that are being widely used at the time of printing:

Snapchat



This is a messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings and is popular especially with teens and millennials. Snapchat has lots of – often hard to understand – features and undergoes constant updating. Initially, it was designed to send photos and videos that only lasted for the few moments of receiving and watching before they would disappear for good. This was supposed to mirror the natural way of conversation where moments just pass. Updates to the original app mean you can now save photos and videos to view as often as you want provided they are saved to the 'memories' section of your account.

And that's not the only major change. Originally designed for person-to-person interaction there's now a range of different actions for the users, including sending short videos, live video chatting, messaging, creating caricature-like avatars, applying all sorts of filters and stickers and sharing photos and videos via a chronological "story" that's broadcast to all your followers. The "story" is designed to disappear after 24 hours if it is not specifically saved. This distinctive feature was copied by Instagram and has become a well-known concept for posting. Major publishers like BuzzFeed and news corporations spread their content over Snapchat for all to see (in the Discover section right of the camera icon). Like Twitter, it is recommended to first learn the Snapchat lingo, the most important verb being 'to snap'. This means to take and send a picture or video or to receive one. Lenses

are a way to make snaps funnier by adding augmented reality-based special effects and sounds, like a rainbow or sparkles and – if you start getting excited about all this fun stuff – a Bitmoji avatar, a cartoon figure you create to, for example, show your whereabouts on a world map while snapping.

Since it is all about instant visual communication, this app is definitely one to be used on your mobile phone. Like Instagram and Youtube, it will help you particularly reach a young constituency who you most likely won't reach over the classic channels and who might not even be on Facebook anymore as it's regarded as a platform for the 'older' generation.

When deciding to use Snapchat to communicate with the young voters, keep in mind that the app is constantly changing its looks and features.





You first need to really get used to using it and then serve the content in funny bits and pieces to get subscribers. This fact, and the somewhat complicated handling, is one of the reasons Snapchat is not really ideal for relevant political communication. But it will bring you subscribers/followers you might not get otherwise.

LinkedIn



This is a social network similar to Facebook but designed specifically for professionals. LinkedIn is all about connecting with other business professionals and finding new opportunities to grow careers or influence. Creating an account on this platform can be compared to a traditional networking event where you go and meet other professionals in person, talk a little about what you do and exchange business cards.

On LinkedIn, however, you add connections similarly to followers on Facebook. You converse via private message and have all of your professional experience and achievements laid out in a neatly organised profile to show off to other users. This can be useful to advertise yourself, look for jobs and participate in relevant groups in your field of interest. Here, it's ok to post text only, like blog posts – these will also show up on your profile and increase your credibility on related topics.

CHAPTER 8:

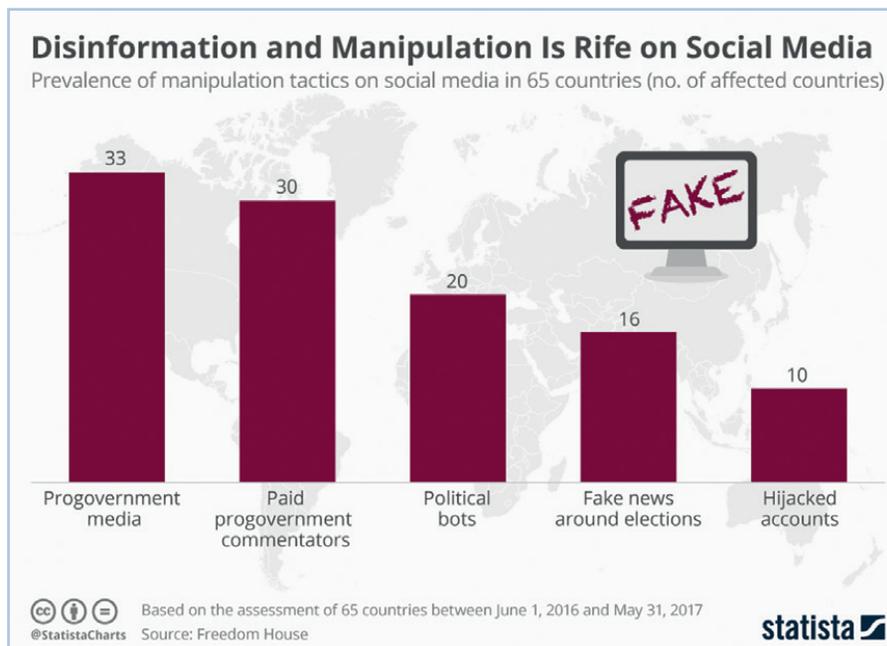
FAKE NEWS AND VIRTUAL MUDSLINGING

Social media has brought us a lot of freedom to gather, evaluate and share information we would never have known about in the time before Facebook, WhatsApp and co. The platforms are available to anyone with an internet connection. But in its strength, lies a weakness – the information comes unfiltered, and so do the reactions to it. Entertainment on social media will always mean dealing with its downside as well as doubtful characters who operate out of the shadows of anonymity. Be prepared to encounter two major problems as you reach out to voters using social media channels:

Fake News

This term cannot be avoided. 'Fake News' is widely used to generally describe any fabricated content, misinterpreted or decontextualised facts or outright lies posted as truthful information. These two words appear in almost every discussion about social media campaigns giving false information which – supposedly – led to the election of Donald Trump as US president in 2016 because many of his supporters believed the stories.

One of many examples includes one of a Trump supporter who tweeted about 'Democrat's sex crimes with children' including a 'must read' link. Stories like that – compelling to click on and seemingly truthful – quickly go viral on the social web. That's because links are given the same weighting regardless of source and with a potential audience of billions of users. Fake stories often get more shares and engagement than information coming from traditional news publishers. Facebook has answered the call for action against fake news by flagging false stories with the help of users and outside fact-checkers. There are three Google Chrome plug-ins on the browser that does something similar.



It can be hard to distinguish fake news from real news, even if you consider yourself educated, wary and tech-savvy, and more so for the average social media user. Put simply: the news format is too easy to imitate and people respond more to scandalous-sounding headlines than to regular ones. This is called 'clickbaiting' – luring you into clicking onto content. Don't think you are innocent either – surely you've shared content that you didn't entirely KNOW to be true at least once?

<https://www.statista.com/chart/11831/manipulation-tactics-on-social-media/>



Here are a few helpful tips you and your social media team should follow when it comes to checking and spreading information:

- Never just share or forward stories you haven't verified. Only post content you know to be true from sources you know to be legit. There should typically be more than one source reporting on a topic or event.
- Google the sources of any quotes or figures given in the story – most fake news won't have either, a warning sign in itself.
- If the first you've heard of a particular event is from a website you're not familiar with, be wary of it. If you're not sure if it is a legitimate site, look for any red flags in its domain name, such as ".com.co" or ".lo", and check the About Us section for more information.
- Double-check pictures and videos through journalistic tools like the hoax-exposing site www.snopes.com or search for metadata like the recording date or name of the photographer: Go to exif.regex.info/exif.cgi, upload the picture or type in a suspicious URL. Don't share if the results don't correlate with the context the picture is used to illustrate.
- Be generally sceptical of stories about celebrities or politicians and don't click on stories you know are designed to make you angry. These are most likely clickbait, aimed at generating ad revenue and shares.
- If your followers or subscribers share content you can positively identify and expose as fake news let them know about it.

When people don't share your opinion ... or worse

Being a politician or representing a certain political viewpoint may make you a target for challenging or unpleasant comments. The greater your presence, the more you expose yourself to direct feedback. Know that and don't promise an answer to every comment, especially if the public outcry grows. This takes some pressure off and it won't look suspicious when only one comment (perhaps an unpleasant one) is disregarded. Be open to critical remarks, don't take comments personally and don't delete comments hastily. If the users commenting on your posts have a point, try to appreciate their perspective. You can also ask your supporters to post respectful comments of their own or give their different viewpoints on the matter.

Don't strike back, be calm!

Criticism must not be met with anger. Instead, be positive, appreciative and show that you are hearing what the other person has to say. Be factual and polite, even if the other person is downright mean.

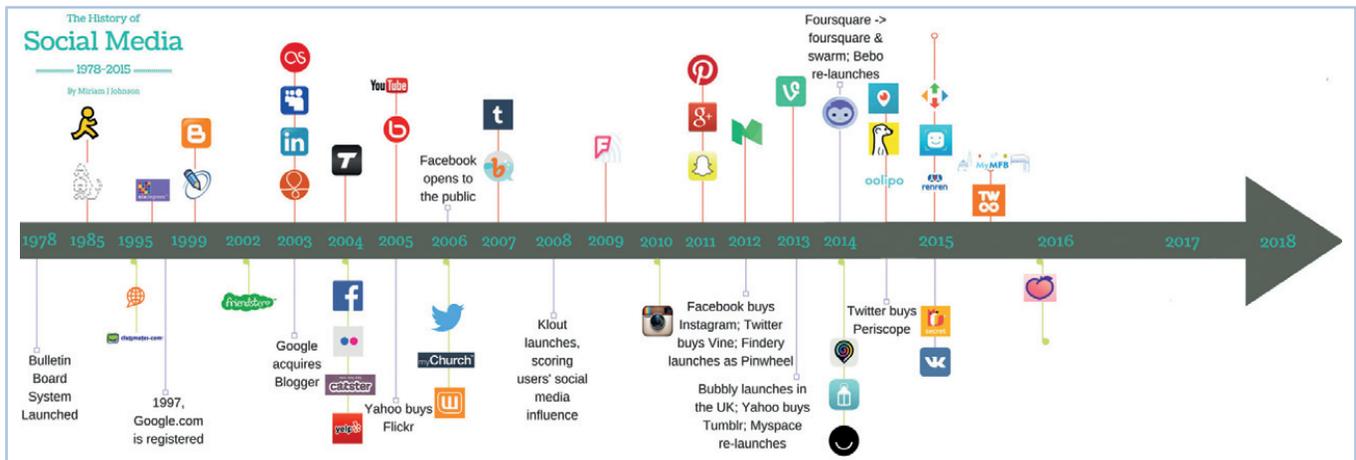
Despite all these efforts, sometimes there is not much you can do about rude comments. There are people who enjoy inciting conflict and who will, therefore, deliberately post discriminatory, inflammatory or even unlawful comments. These users are so-called trolls. Don't feed them! Don't comment on their posts, just delete them. You need to make it clear that you will not tolerate such comments. Make this resolution transparent – explain to your followers why you deleted certain posts and how you will move on. The same goes for so-called social media firestorms that may be unintentionally triggered by one of your posts. Everything you put 'out there' can be used against you, content can be spread in a split second without you being able to take it back or give the right context. So, when social media campaigns or simple postings get out of hand remember that this is fuelled by people who don't care about the actual post but are looking for an outlet to vent their anger or frustration.

Should this occur, handle the conversation proactively and stay calm while repeatedly stating your point of view. Remain polite and respectful. Consider stopping the thread only as a last resort. If you feel the conversation has reached a point of no return and is clearly getting out of control, you can block the offender or temporarily shut down further comments on the topic.

In your settings on Facebook as well as Instagram, you can block specific users from commenting or choose who can comment at all. That might be everyone you follow or no one. If you feel you have to block users, explain publicly what you have done and why in order to maintain transparency. If the posts get excessive or threatening, take a screenshot or save them to a file and consider laying charges.

In short:

- Be proactive by closely monitoring activity around your account. Apps like TweetDeck or Social Mention can alert you when someone posts something about you or your organisation, especially if you have already tagged specific keywords.
- If more than one person is responsible for the posts on your account, be sure to put together a crisis management plan so that everyone knows what to do when comments go awry.
- If things flare up, first take a deep breath, or two. Don't try to choke the discussion. Join in, and try to calm the situation down in a positive way. Don't be arrogant; show that you care and apologise if necessary and justified. Give answers to questions, however challenging they might be. Do not fight back!
- Use the best defence you can get – your followers. Adding a dot before the Twitter handle makes the discussion public so that other people can join in, for example, `.@evilspeaker`, preceding your post. However, you can only rely on the support of your followers when you have a strong online relationship with them. This highlights the importance of engaging your followers with your content at all times.
- If none of this helps (see the earlier discussion on trolls), you can deactivate your private message function or change the comments settings. This should only be a last resort as it goes against one of the main principles of social media, namely, the ping-pong game of constant dialogue.



<https://keymediasolutions.com/news/social-media/evolution-of-social-media-platforms/>

While we focused here on the larger social media platforms, this should not keep you from checking out other social networks. Think twice, however, before signing up to too many of them. Engaging in social media requires attention and effort. It is often better to focus on one or two channels and to maintain these to the best of your ability instead of spreading your message across multiple platforms when you don't have the time and resources to actively maintain them.

Don't overlook 'traditional' channels when trying to establish a bigger base with social media. Remember, the quality of your fans and followers is more important than the quantity. You need people who engage with you in real life and make real voting decisions. The place to find such people is not only online but offline too!

Advertise your social media accounts on the radio (available in even the remotest areas of Africa), billboards, T-shirts, flyers, web pages – everywhere you do campaign advertising.

Include Twitter handles, Facebook pages and Instagram accounts in your bio.

At conferences, ask your audience to live tweet about your presentation.

GOLDEN RULES

Know your goals and targets

Establish clear aims and rules for your social media accounts that all people involved in posting must stick to. Use tools to manage your accounts and evaluate your success. Check your progress and tweak where necessary.

Be honest and transparent

Whatever you post – be it on your public or private account – can be easily verified by others. Remain honest and transparent at all times – a bad reputation sticks.

Be authentic

Post according to your values and share what is on your mind. Don't pretend to be someone you are not.

Be clear

Be clear, both with regard to your intention and the language you use. Be specific with your posts and write in a way that your target group understands you.

Be conversational

Posts are not press reports: you are not talking at people but rather talking to them. Make your posts personal but never intimate, and don't say anything online that you wouldn't say to someone face-to-face.

Make it visual

Use the power of pictures and videos, but pick and post them carefully. Be sure to check the sources and rights involved.

Be active

Only constant engagement will bring you the attention needed. This goes for your posts as well as for your reactions. Don't let people wait for answers.

Post consistently

Social networks are not a one-time rally. Schedule your main posts and post additional content that is more current. Check what your audience's day looks like and post accordingly, make use of auto-scheduling apps.

Don't flood your timeline

Remember, it's only one click for your fans and followers to get rid of annoying and endless posts.

Be respectful

Don't panic when the chatter is not friendly anymore. All criticism must be responded to calmly and politely. Do not be offensive and do not let your timeline become a place for mud-slinging.

And the eleventh commandment:

Monitor what is working best and drop what is not working. Trial and error, tweak and repeat!



Kerstin Welter is a freelance journalist specialising in social and cultural issues. She is a close observer of social media trends and couldn't imagine a world without social media – for both private and professional communication. Welter holds a Master's degree in German Literature and Communications from Munich's Ludwig Maximilian University. Since 2005 she has worked on various television and radio programmes for the German public broadcaster ARD and the German international broadcaster DW and has also been an editor at the German-French cultural television channel, ARTE. Welter lives and works in Johannesburg, Munich and Karlsruhe.

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