

# Author Directions: Navigating your success in Social Media

5 Key Tips for Authors Using Social Media



# Introduction

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As an author, you are the face of your work, and the information you share on social media can help you gain exposure and encourage your work's sales. When used effectively, social media can be a powerful tool to help spark interest in your work, convey crucial information in real-time, and foster genuine, direct connections with your readers and potential readers.

With new platforms appearing seemingly every day, the social media realm is constantly growing in richness, nuance, and depth. It can be difficult to tell where to begin. How much time should you spend building your social media presence, and which social media platforms are worth the effort it takes to maintain a following?

The goal of this snapshot is to encourage and empower you to participate in social media as a way to connect with your readers and promote your work, but keep in mind that your efforts on social media are in addition to (rather than in place of) the social media promotions that are done by Taylor & Francis on your work's behalf. Taylor & Francis operates over 60 social media accounts that focus on a variety of subjects and appeal to diverse audiences. You can reach an even wider audience by connecting with Taylor & Francis on social media!

### 5 Key Tips for Authors Using Social Media:

1. Choose your social media channels
2. Create a presence
3. Link networks
4. Listen, respond, and realise
5. Plan your content

## Choose your Social Media Channels

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*You may already be familiar with three of the biggest players in social media: Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. What are the strengths of these platforms, and are they right for you?*

Start by considering who you'd like to reach and what types of interactions you want to have with your readers. Your conclusions will help you choose the platform (or platforms) best suited to your goals.

Facebook is a great way to connect with people you know and encourage them to advocate for you and your work by sharing your content. It allows you to share photos, short text excerpts, upcoming events and appearances you may be planning to attend, and links to relevant content (for example, articles related to your work or posts from your blog).

Twitter allows you to communicate information concisely. While at first glance Twitter may seem overwhelming, making the most of your profile and paying attention to the hashtags that categorize content will help you find your community. You can share links to your work, post in real-time from



conferences or events you are attending, and connect with people interested in your field(s) of expertise. Think of Twitter as an ongoing, fast-paced conversation that you can join at any time.

LinkedIn is a business-focused social network, allowing users to post their professional work history (Heinze et al.). Build your network by adding colleagues in your field, joining relevant groups and sharing updates pertinent to your field. For authors, LinkedIn is perfect for maintaining your professional identity, networking with peers, and promoting your work.

## Create a Presence

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*When building your brand, a social media presence is essential. Your social presence will expand your reach and help your audience find you, interact with you and your work, and share your news with their networks.*

A key starting point for a successful social media presence starts with your name. In order for your name to rank well in search engines, your social profile name should appear in the most familiar way that users would search for you (Heinze et al.). Make it as easy and intuitive as possible for people to find you.

The more you interact on social media, the richer the experience you'll have, and the more visible your profile will become.



### Facebook

- **Create an account:** Visit [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) and follow the prompts to create your account – the information you will need to enter includes your name, date of birth, gender, email address, and mobile number. Create a unique password that you will be able to remember, and click “sign up.” Facebook will send you a confirmation message; follow the instructions in that message to complete your account registration.
- **Build a page:** You can create a page for yourself as an author or one for your book. To do this, select the “Create Page” option from the menu and choose the appropriate type of page – “People” for yourself, or “Books & Magazines” for your book. You can also visit [Facebook.com/Pages/Create](https://www.facebook.com/Pages/Create) and select the appropriate sub-categories. Follow the prompts to create, edit, and manage your page.
- **Remember:** Facebook is an excellent way to build your community online, but it can be all too easy to veer off-track. Keep the goal of what you want to promote – whether it’s yourself as an author or your book – in mind when sharing content. You do not necessarily need to generate all the content you share yourself. A great way to engage with the Facebook community is to share relevant posts from other pages or members.



### Twitter

- **Create an account:** Visit [Twitter.com/SignUp](https://twitter.com/SignUp) and enter your name and email address. Choose a password and username, and click “create my account.” Keep in mind that your readers will

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have an easier time identifying you if you choose a username that is close to your full name. Twitter will send you a confirmation email containing a link; follow that link to complete your account registration.

- **Develop a following:** After you create your account, you can start following other accounts that relate to your interests and encouraging other users to follow you. As you begin to follow more accounts, Twitter will tailor its follower recommendations to your patterns and preferences.
- **Need some more guidance?** Read these tips on getting started with Twitter.
  - Show your interest in a topic by retweeting others' posts. You can either retweet directly using the retweet button, or weigh in on the topic yourself by writing your own post, writing "RT@username" (ex. RT@JohnSmith) and pasting the content of the original tweet you want to reference.
  - Weigh in on a conversation by responding to others' tweets. Be sure to always include the username of the person you are addressing in your response (ex. @JohnSmith).
  - Hashtags (the # symbol) on Twitter are keywords that help categorize related posts by topic or conversational thread. Using a hashtag in your tweet means that your post will appear along with other tweets that use the same hashtag – making your content part of a larger conversation. You can also create your own hashtags, but just be cautious of overdoing it. Listing 10+ different hashtags is overkill – one or two is best.
  - Use the "More" button to cross-post your tweet on other social media platforms or embed your tweet in your website or blog.



### LinkedIn

- **Create an account:** Visit [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com) and fill in your sign-up information, including your email address, full name, country of residence, and postcode. Verify your account by clicking the link emailed to you by LinkedIn.
- **Complete your profile:** Personalize your profile by adding your current details such as job title, company/institution, and industry. Add a cover photo and profile picture – keep in mind that these pictures will represent you, so make sure the images are appropriate, professional, and representative of the way you would like other professionals to see you.
- **Build your network:** LinkedIn may ask if you want to automatically connect with contacts in your email address book that are also using LinkedIn. If you have professional contacts in your address book, this option is a quick way to get your network started. Join as many groups as you'd like that are relevant to your field. LinkedIn will suggest connections with people who have details in common with you. Keep in mind: to connect with a new contact, you must have first-degree connection in common, such as a shared company/institution, person, or group. If you want to connect with someone and you are not a first-degree connection, send a direct message to the person to request it.
- **Remember:** Like all social media channels, the more you interact on LinkedIn, the richer the experience you'll have, and the more visible your profile will become. Try to post at least weekly updates or share relevant information in your field regularly. Also, engage when others in your network post updates.

## Link Networks

*Linking all your networks together across the social platforms you use will allow your followers to easily engage with you and find out more about the work you do.*

Feature your social media channels on your blog or other sites with which you are affiliated to create a seamless experience for your followers. This simple step helps your readers get to know you – and your work – better. Linking all the networks you are associated with allows followers of, for example, your Facebook page to discover your blog or read articles you have written.

An effective and easy way to showcase all your networks is to add your social media usernames and website URLs to the “bio” or “about me” sections of your social profiles. Include links to your blog or university webpages, other social media channels, as well as the link to buy your book from Routledge.com.

As URLs for blogs and websites can be quite long, you can shorten them using services such as [Bitly](#) or [TinyURL](#).

Your audience has chosen to follow you because of your unique perspective and expertise, and sharing the different opportunities for people to connect with you will help expand your reach.



## Listen, Respond, and Realise

*It is important to LISTEN to conversations happening in your social media timeline, RESPOND to engagement from others, and REALISE your intentions when communicating.*

### Listen

Keep your finger on the pulse of the conversations and trends emerging within your social networks. By using social media, you will encounter people you might not have otherwise had the chance to connect with, so take this opportunity to learn from their perspectives.

### Respond

Conversations on social media are meant to be a two-way street, so don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions, thank people who retweet or share your posts, or send people direct messages when you feel the situation calls for it. When people reach out to you on social media, hold up your end of the conversation and stay involved to keep the discussion moving.

Show your appreciation for other people's great work by leaving positive comments or sharing content you feel is interesting or well-done. People may return the favour and help spread the word about some of your posts.

Social media is an opportunity for you to connect and network with people relevant to you and your work.

## Realise

Remember why you're on social media – to connect and network with people relevant to you and your work. While social media is great for expanding your reach, it can be all too easy to get carried away. Try to focus on following people who share your interests. By being selective with the people you follow and aiming for quality over quantity, you will naturally make more meaningful connections, eliminate clutter on your newsfeeds, and reach the people who will be most enthusiastic and interested in your work.

## Plan your Content

*Developing a presence on social media can be overwhelming, but planning your posts ahead of time can help you maintain control of what you share and ensure the right message is getting out at just the right time.*

If you are looking for a few social media post ideas to get you started, consider:

- Sharing your book's publishing date, or the dates of any relevant conferences or promotional events you will be attending
- Drawing attention to positive reviews your book receives from relevant websites or magazines (note: you can't use Amazon reviews, because Amazon owns them)
- Writing a post (or perhaps several posts) about why you decided to write your book
- Sharing relevant content posted by other users, with or without your commentary
- Linking to blog posts (either written by you or by someone else in your field) that you think would be of interest to your followers

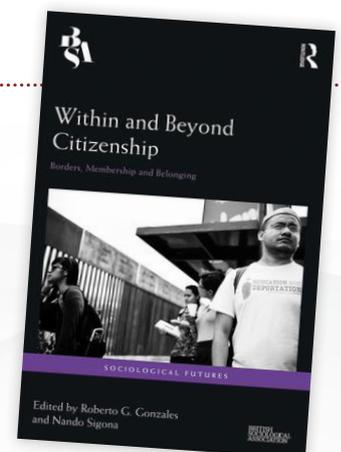
Once you are comfortable with the social media platforms you have chosen to use, you may want to consider adding a multimedia approach to your strategy through channels such as Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, or Flickr. These social media sites focus on images and video. Don't forget to also share the content you create on these new channels on your blog, website, or other social media sites!



## Conclusion

This snapshot is meant to help you find your voice and grow your community on social media. Whilst it may seem daunting with so many voices out there, there are plenty of people who will share your interests, and having an effective social media strategy is your opportunity to find them and tap into that audience.

Co-editor of the recently published book, *Within and Beyond Citizenship: Borders, Membership and Belonging*, with Roberto G. Gonzales, Nando Sigona has some valuable advice on the responsibility of academics using social platforms:



"I see the dissemination of my work to different audiences, inside and outside academia, as an essential part of my job as an academic in a state-funded university. Reaching different audiences requires us to think creatively at how we communicate our research. I have run an academic blog ([Postcards from...](#)) since 2008 and regularly share my thoughts through Twitter (@nandosigona), engage with mainstream media (which at times can be stressful) and often write columns for online media like The Conversation and OpenDemocracy. Besides these more 'traditional' channels, I have also experimented with theatre and short videos. Sometimes visibility may expose one to abuses...but there is also much to gain. My [TEDx talk](#), for example, helped me to build links with academics and activists on migrants' rights in the US and internationally... [S]ocial media can help to develop a public profile and make one's work more visible, with it comes also more responsibility as what you do and what you say it is accessible to a larger audience."

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