Harnessing the Conversation:

Raising Awareness of the Weatherization Assistance Program Using Social Media

NASCSP
National Association for State Community Services Programs

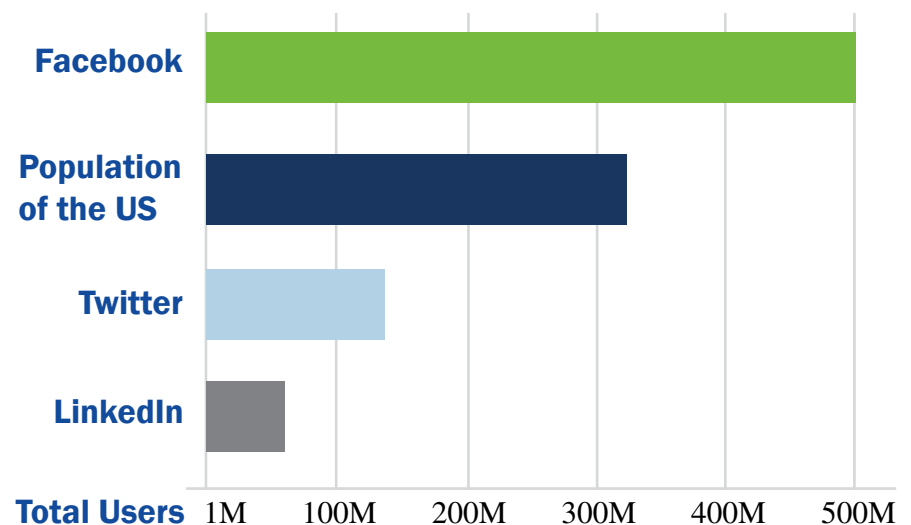WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

In a relatively brief amount of time, the internet has revolutionized the way we access information. Now, an overwhelming majority of Americans go online regularly for work and leisure.

In recent years, social media quickly has become a large and still-growing sector of the internet landscape. Social networking websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and LinkedIn are now among the most highly trafficked on the internet.

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

Total Users	1M	100M	200M	300M	400M	500M
Facebook						
Population of the US						
Twitter						
LinkedIn						

Just as remarkable, the past several years have seen a surge in online journalism. Blogs, in particular, have become a key tool Americans use to monitor news and current events. More and more, Americans turn to blogs for political commentary, breaking news, and lifestyle coverage.

Together, social networking and blogs are often referred to as "social media" – which is broadly defined as online media outlets that allow for peer-to-peer interactions. These interactions can range from commenting on a friend's update to posting a video and from joining a discussion about a blog post to creating a profile on Facebook.

Why Social Media

As internet use grows, more people are turning to various social media outlets for information about issues and causes they care about. These issues can range from signing petitions and making online donations to seeking out opportunities to volunteer. Nonprofit organizations have responded to this demand by steadily increasing their presence on social media channels, invoking strategies such as launching an organizational blog, or building Facebook pages and Twitter profiles.

For the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP), social media presents a range of opportunities. Chief among them is to provide a stream of positive information about WAP. Since the unprecedented increase in funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, there has been some negative press that needs to be combated. Social media allows the network to drive multiple success stories of weatherization and deliver these directly to journalists, the public, and policymakers. For many nonprofit organizations, forays into online social media may seem to be a daunting undertaking. At first glance, social media can be fraught with danger. It often seems that in order to make social media work, nonprofit organizations must invest considerable resources for a questionable return – often with the further price of relinquishing control over their core messages.

The key to overcoming these hurdles is to leverage social media in a deliberate, strategic fashion. To that end, any organization must ask itself – and answer – a few central questions.

WORKSHEET – SOCIAL MEDIA ASSESSEMENT

1) What are your organization's key strengths and resources that will influence its social media efforts?

   a. What platforms are your staff members already familiar with?

   b. How much time can be allocated to social media?

   c. What assets (written materials, photographs, video, experienced spokespeople) does your organization have access to?

   d. What are your key messages? How have you communicated them recently?

2) Who are your key audiences for social media?

   a. Who is a member of your key audience? How old are they? Do you have a geographic focus?

3) What are your organization's core goals for social media?

   a. What do you want people to know about your organization from social media?

   b. What do you want your key audiences to do after learning about your organization?

4) How comfortable is your organization with the "social" aspect of social media?

   a. What will your organization's policy be toward negative comments?

   b. What is your organization's privacy policy and does it cover social media?

   c. How does your organization feel about your content being redistributed through social media channels?

Once your organization has answered the questions above, the next step is to select social media platforms that best suit its strengths and goals. While there are thousands of social media platforms online, this resource guide will cover the following four core social media platforms:

1. Facebook

Facebook is currently the leading social networking website worldwide with approximately 500 million users. Founded in 2004, Facebook describes itself as "a social utility that helps people communicate more efficiently with their friends, family, and coworkers." WAP's core values are well represented on Facebook: over 5,000 users associate themselves with the term "green living" and nearly 19,000 with "sustainability."

2. Twitter

Twitter is the leading microblogging website where users post brief, 140 character updates known as "tweets." Founded in 2006, Twitter describes itself as "a real-time information network powered by people all around the world that lets you share and discover what's happening now." On Twitter, there were over thirty posts a day on energy efficiency and over a hundred in 12 hours on poverty-related issues.

3. Blogs

The so-called 'blogosphere' is nearly as varied as the Internet itself and ranges from professional media operations such as *The Huffington Post* and *Gawker Media* to personal online diaries read only by the writer and his or her closest friends. Weatherization and green topics are discussed on many top blogs, such as **http://treehugger.com** and **http://change.org**.

4. YouTube

In 2010, YouTube announced that over 2 billion videos had been viewed on its site since its founding in 2005. Bought by Google in 2007, YouTube describes itself as "the world's most popular online video community, allowing millions of people to discover, watch, and share originally-created videos." On YouTube there are over 5,000 videos on energy efficiency and nearly 1,000 on weatherization specifically.

Other Social Media

There are literally thousands of social media platforms available online. Some other popular platforms in the U.S. include:

- **FourSquare** – a relative newcomer, FourSquare is a geographic-focused social networking website that allows users to "check in" at locations ranging from the grocery store to the office. Some nonprofit organizations with location-based sites are starting to explore FourSquare, but its long-term viability is still an open question.

- **LinkedIn** – a professional social networking site that allows users to post resumes and interact with business contacts. Nonprofit organizations can create a page that features an organizational description and staff members, volunteers, and former staff can link their profiles to the organization's.

- **MySpace** – formerly the leading social networking website, MySpace has declined in popularity. Requiring an investment of staff time similar to blogging, MySpace is no longer seen as an effective outreach tool for nonprofit organizations.

- **Ning & Custom Social Networks** – some organizations have used Ning or custom social networking tools to create their own internal social media platform. Due to small adoption rates, the benefits of this approach rarely outweigh the time and costs required for startup.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FRAMING

It's been said that he who frames an issue, wins an issue. To frame your issue, you need to position it at a broad level and talk about core concepts that resonate with people's deeply held emotions and worldviews. For example, rather than speaking about specific weatherization services and products (insulation, new windows, new heating, and cooling systems), your message should revolve around creating a healthier environment through energy efficiency. Broad, sweeping statements like: "All Americans should live in a safe and healthy home with affordable and efficient heat in the winter and cooling in the summer" help link your issue to concepts that resonate with audiences on social media platforms – security, equity, and opportunity.

Framing an issue around broad values allows you to control your message and get ahead of any misinformation or damaging media campaigns. Frames can be asserted in the headlines you choose when posting content to Facebook and YouTube, as well as in keywords you use when tweeting.

Values that resonate on social networking sites include:
- *Safe Homes*
- *Health*
- *Green Living*
- *Job Security*
- *Opportunity*
- *Equity*
- *Economic Security*

It is important to support these core values with concepts and data points that work for weatherization programs. Examples of supporting points that map to weatherization's core values include:

- WAP uses state-of-the-art diagnostics and techniques that are the leading best practices and standards. (*Safe Homes*)
- Weatherization gives families a warm and healthy environment. (*Health*)
- WAP makes homes more environmentally friendly by reducing their carbon footprints. (*Green Living*)
- Weatherization creates high-quality green jobs that cannot be exported. (*Job Security*)
- Weatherization makes home energy more affordable, allowing low income households to devote more resources to education, nutritious food, and securing better jobs. (*Opportunity*)
- Weatherization gives all Americans, regardless of income, an added layer of protection against the volatile fuel market. (*Equity*)
- WAP allows all recipients to more easily afford their utility bills and avoid falling into debt from energy costs. (*Economic Security*)

TOOLS

facebook

Facebook is currently the leading social networking site on the Internet. It is also one of the fastest-growing web properties online, gaining over 100,000 users since February 2010.

Facebook

Founded: 2004

Users: 500 Million

Website Worldwide Rank (traffic): 2

Harvard University students Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes, and Eduardo Saverin founded Facebook. It served as an online platform for students to meet each other, keep in touch, and share information. Since then, it has ballooned into a multi-billion dollar business with a global reach.

Facebook allows users to keep in touch with "friends" – which can include family members, coworkers, acquaintances, and classmates. Each user creates and maintains an individual profile and can post updates. Updates can be text, pictures, links, or video showing what the users has been doing, thinking, or watching. The user's friends can then comment on those updates. Successful updates often generate many comments and spur online discussions. Users can also become "fans" of businesses, brands, as well as – most importantly – causes and nonprofit organizations. By becoming a fan, users signal to their friends that they support your organization's cause. Nonprofit organizations can also send messages to their fans, invite them to events, and users are able to read an organization's updates. Facebook has a history of changing the privacy policy for its users without advance notice. Many of these changes have been received negatively by its users and the press. While privacy issues remain a top concern of Facebook users, this has not impeded Facebook's growth.

What It's Good For

Facebook's intuitive interface and centralized design means that setting up a page for a nonprofit organization is both simple and straightforward. Its huge user base and constant media attention also means there is a very shallow learning curve – chances are good that many staff at your organization already use Facebook extensively. There is also very little education that you will need to do for your audience.

Facebook has many strengths. For nonprofit organizations, these strengths include the following:

Awareness Building

As Facebook continues to grow in ubiquity, a nonprofit page ensures that users will be able to find your organization. A page will allow your organization to connect with your supporters where they spend their time. It will also give your organization a further opportunity to spread the word about the benefits of the Weatherization Assistance Program.

Driving Conversation and Feedback

Given Facebook's comment features, its users are comfortable and willing to provide feedback on an organization's updates. Fostering conversations through open ended questions and provocative updates is a key method to keep your Facebook fans engaged with your organization.

Driving Traffic

Current research suggests that Facebook users are becoming more comfortable leaving the confines of the site to read links, information, and articles. Nonprofit organizations can take advantage of this flexibility by creating updates that feature links back to their website.

Event Attendance

Facebook's event tools allow you to spread the word easily about upcoming events to fans of your page. While it does not offer ticket sales functionality, for free events it can be a good way to track attendance. In order to be effective, an organization must have a large group of local supporters who have already become fans.

Fundraising

Currently, it seems unlikely that Facebook will ever become a core part of a nonprofit organization's fundraising strategy. However, Facebook does allow 501(c)(3) organizations to create a "Facebook Cause" which will allow fans to solicit donations from their friends on behalf of organizations they support. Given its low response rates, this should be seen more as another avenue for awareness building rather than a source of operating funds for your organization.

What It's Not Good For

While Facebook can be a powerful tool for nonprofit organizations to engage supporters, it has significant drawbacks and challenges which nonprofit organizations must overcome in order to be successful.

Message Control

Engaging in a robust conversation online is a double-edged sword. It is critical to gauge your organization's comfort level with your message being reinterpreted by hundreds if not thousands of individuals across Facebook's platform. It is also important to have clear guidelines for dissenting opinions and a firm plan for dealing with off-topic and offensive comments.

Online Advocacy

While some peer-to-peer fundraising is possible on Facebook, online advocacy remains a core deficiency in Facebook's architecture. Time and again, Facebook's users have proven unwilling to leave the confines of the platform to sign petitions, make phone calls, or other advocacy-related activities.

Consistency

Facebook's suite of tools are subject to change without advance notice. This can present a challenge for staff tasked with maintaining and updating a page. While Facebook's core functionality (user profiles, friends, updates) tend to stay constant, the way that users interact with organizations and pages often changes. It is important to stay abreast of changes by monitoring Facebook's official blog: http://blog.facebook.com/.

Tone

Facebook users are used to interacting with their friends, who often share (or overshare) the details of their day-to-day lives. As an organization is it important to strike a balance on Facebook, maintaining a professional standard while creating a warm and conversational tone. Updates to fan pages should be brief, open-ended, and written in a way that spurs online discussion. Asking questions, referencing current events, and linking back to your organization's website will help your fans stay engaged.

Posts & Comments

It is important to monitor comments on your organization's updates and respond as appropriate. While it is never a good idea to engage in a heated back-and-forth with angry users on any online forum, you can consider

providing links to reputable, external sources that refute wildly incorrect information. Often, Facebook pages become self-correcting with your most supportive users taking it upon themselves to correct false comments. Be sure that you have ample information available to your supporters if this begins to occur.

Staffing

In order to maintain a robust presence on Facebook, we recommend that an organization plan on devoting approximately 2-3 days to set up a page, define the strategy, and solicit a core group of fans. After that, the pages should require approximately 2-3 hours of staff time per week. This time typically breaks out in the following ways:

- 1 hour – creating 1-2 updates per week and linking them to relevant content
- 1-1.5 hours – monitoring comments and participating in conversations

twitter

While not the largest social networking platform, Twitter has attracted a great deal of attention and popularity due to celebrities using it as a promotional platform.

Twitter

Founded: 2006

Users: 190 Million

Website Worldwide Rank (traffic): 10

Twitter grew out of a meeting of employees of the San Francisco-based podcasting organization, Odeo Inc. Since then, it has become a leader of so-called "microblogging" where users post very short updates frequently.

Twitter allows users to post 140-character updates, known as "tweets." These tweets are

text-only but often have links to external websites, including blogs, photos, video, and articles. Unlike Facebook, aside from the name and what the user adds to the profile, there is no functional difference between a Twitter profile for an individual and an organization. Users can connect with other Twitter users by "following" them. Unlike Facebook, this is not a reciprocal relationship – there is no technical requirement for a user to follow an individual who follows them.

Twitter grants users, including organizations, significant leeway in designing a profile page that matches their brand. The short update length is a double-edged feature – it both makes many updates easy but also means that each tweet lacks the nuance of longer-form media.

What It's Good For

Twitter's low-impact structure and short updates allows for considerable flexibility for nonprofit organizations. Some of Twitter's core strengths include:

Broadcasting Messages

Due to the way Twitter connects users, it is possible for organizations with many followers to push out a message to its followers without the back-and-forth conversation of many other social mediums. Twitter also allows users to "retweet" messages verbatim, which means that your tweet can travel far beyond the confines of the group that follows your profile.

Engaging with Constituents & Like-Minded Organizations

Twitter's short update length makes frequent updates easier. When leading up to an event or occasion, this feature can be particularly effective, as you can dribble out multiple 'teaser' posts linking back to your website.

Connecting with the Media

Many journalists use Twitter to source articles, research upcoming projects, and pursue leads. By following journalists that cover your organization's issues, it is possible to create more earned media opportunities that transcend Twitter as a social media platform. For example, if you follow a reporter from the *Washington Post* who tweets about her upcoming story on green jobs and you respond, you just might find your organization in an upcoming *Washington Post* article. For weatherization in particular, this can allow you to become a source for stories highlighting the positive aspects of WAP.

Providing Real-Time Updates

Nonprofit organizations can also use Twitter to keep their constituents in the loop on time-sensitive matters. For large events, rallies, or hearings, frequent Twitter updates can keep individuals engaged who could not otherwise attend in-person.

What It's Not Good For

Nuance

Twitter's character limit means that long, or nuanced messages are not possible. In order to excel at Twitter, organizations must become extremely good at conveying complex concepts in a concise manner.

Occasional Users or Resource-Strapped Organizations

Twitter users expect regular updates – at minimum one post per week, but ideally closer to one post a day. While the short posts make this easier, organizations who cannot commit the staff time and resources outlined below will have a hard time effectively using Twitter.

Tone

Like Facebook, Twitter users use the platform to share personal details of their lives. Thus, organizations should strive to match that by creating posts that have a personal tone. For many organizations, an even better option may be to designate a spokesperson who will use Twitter on their behalf.

Posts & Comments

Twitter allows users to reply or comment on each other's posts using the @ symbol. These replies then appear on your organization's homepage. Depending on the type of comment, it is often a good idea to reply to those comments and engage the users in a conversation. Like Facebook, it is important to have clear policies in place for engaging with negative comments and hostile users.

Staffing

Like Facebook, in order to maintain a robust presence on Twitter, we recommend that an organization plan on devoting approximately 2-3 days to set up a profile, define the strategy, and solicit a core group of followers. After that, the pages should require approximately 1-2 hours of staff time per week. This time typically breaks out in the following ways:

- 1 hour – creating 3-5 tweets per week and linking them to relevant content

- 0.5-1 hours – monitoring comments and participating in conversations

The ubiquitous video sharing platform owned by Google, YouTube boasts over 425 million unique visits a month and countless off-site views using YouTube's embeddable video viewer.

YouTube allows users to upload videos they create. It also allows users to comment on other user's videos, highlight videos as favorites, and embed videos in external websites. Media organizations, such as television channels, movie production houses, musicians, and theater companies often use YouTube as a way to distribute clips and promote upcoming programs, concerts, or events.

Through its nonprofit program, YouTube allows organizations to build customizable profiles called channels. In addition to uploading videos, organizations can add logos, branded colors, and positioning messages on their channels.

While a stable platform, organizations must be sure that they own the rights to all parts of uploaded videos as YouTube administrators will delete videos they feel violate copyright without warning or explanation.

What it's Good For

Sharing Video

Unlike other social media, YouTube is a specialized platform for sharing video content. As such, it is an extremely powerful tool, allowing organizations to distribute their content, both over YouTube's site and on other websites using the embedded video feature. Organizations with significant video content have had great success using YouTube to distribute their content.

What it's Not Good For

Online Community

While YouTube does provide commenting features similar to Facebook's comments, YouTube's community tends to be less robust than other social media platforms. In particular, since any YouTube user can comment on any video, staff members must be extremely vigilant to ensure that all comments are constructive and not offensive.

Video Content

The tone of videos on YouTube vary widely. However, the strongest nonprofit videos on YouTube are those that genuinely reflect an organization's mission. Professional video recording software and access to a professional studio is not required to post content on YouTube. In fact, high production values and scripted actors are often seen as advertisements, rather than as a clear expression of an organization's mission. We recommend striving for video content that shows your program's work in action, highlights the people helped, and/or interviews key volunteers and staff discussing their connection to weatherization and anti-poverty efforts.

Staffing

Of all the main social media platforms, YouTube requires the highest level of staff time. Applying for a YouTube nonprofit channel will take 1-2 days of staff time. However, in addition to dedicated time, YouTube requires an approval process for nonprofit organizations which can take up to 1-3 months after the application form is submitted.

The time necessary to create a video for YouTube can vary extensively. At minimum, plan on a staff member taking at least 3-4 days to design and draft the video's concept, shoot the video, and do any necessary postproduction and editing work.

After posting, the videos require little upkeep, but a staff member should expect to spend approximately a half hour a week reviewing comments.

BLOGS

The term "blog" was coined in 1997 as an abbreviation of the phrase "web log." Blogs are a type of website where entries, or posts, are displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs grew organically out of bulletin boards, email lists, and other early forms of online community.

Blogger · WORDPRESS · LIVEJOURNAL · tumblr.

Top Five Blogs

1) HUFF POST

2) TechCrunch

3) Mashable — All That's New on the Web

4) GIZMODO

5) GAWKER

About Blogging

Blogging allows organizations the most control over message, design, and tone. Popular open-source or free blogging software such as WordPress and Blogger give organizations access to sophisticated technology at negligible cost. Blog templates can be extensively customized and built to replicate the look and feel of an organization's website.

Of all the social media platforms, blogging requires the highest level of staff time investment. It also requires extensive written copy, compelling visuals, and often multimedia items. Given these issues, creating an organizational blog is often is not a cost-effective social media solution for small-to-mid-sized nonprofit organization, unless they already have many of these resources in place.

Instead, we recommend the following strategies.

Blog Outreach

For many nonprofit organizations, a well-placed mention in a widely-read blog is worth significantly more than a month's worth of posts on a little-read organizational blog. Bloggers should be engaged in much the same way an organization engages traditional journalists. While traditional media materials such as press releases and advisories are often less effective, the following strategies are often effective.

Maintaining Lists

Create a list of bloggers, including those that cover energy, domestic poverty, and green living/the green movement. By commenting on their blogs, sending them emails on good stories, and presenting your organization as a resource, you can start to cultivate an ongoing relationship.

Leverage Relationships

When an issue arises that you would like coverage on, send the bloggers you have built a relationship with a quick note rather than a full-blown press release. The note can link back to your organization's website, a media article, or another online resource you'd like the blogger to write about.

If At First You Don't Succeed…

Bloggers are much like journalists in that they pick and choose the leads they follow. If you don't get any hits on the first message you send out, think about how you can strengthen the next one – add more compelling content, link to images, video, etc.

Remember that whatever you send bloggers is considered "on record." Unlike journalists, bloggers will sometimes post pitches, releases, or emails they find egregious or offensive. Be sure not to send anything to a blogger that you are not comfortable becoming public knowledge.

Collaborative Storytelling

Another effective blogging strategy is to build a story arc on anti-poverty efforts that transcends any individual organization.

The National Association for State Community Services Programs (NASCSP) maintains a blog for weatherization-related issues at **http://waptac.org/Blog/**. Creating one central hub for all related stories will ensure that weatherization services have more stature nationwide.

You can send stories to NASCSP that include:

- Program successes and highlights
- Innovative techniques and examples
- Problem solving and pushing the program past traditional applications
- Interviews with weatherization beneficiaries
- Interviews with program officers, weatherization technicians, or local community leaders
- Interesting weatherization-related news, events, or media
- Weatherization-related photos or video

Stories and content should be forwarded to **info@waptac.org**.

HOW-TO GUIDES

SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PROFILE

Pages are the main way that nonprofit organizations maintain a presence on Facebook. Pages need to be maintained by an administrator, who is a Facebook user. This user can be either the main staff person tasked with updating the Facebook page, or a dummy profile created for the sole purpose of being the administrator of the Facebook page. (Creating a profile on Facebook is a very simple process requiring only an email address.) Make sure you allow mail from Facebook to get through your mailbox filters.

Once you have created a profile page, you will be emailed a confirmation link. Click the link and you will be redirected back to Facebook.

SETTING UP A FACEBOOK PAGE

1. Log on to Facebook.com using the account of whomever will be the page's administrator.

2. From the main homepage, click the "Create a Page" link located on the bottom right-hand corner.

3. You will be given two options "Official Page" or "Community Page." Under "Official Page" choose create a page for a brand, product, or organization. A drop down menu will appear with a few options. The two options that will be relevant to your organization are either "Government" or "Nonprofit." Choose the one that best fits your organization.

4. In "Page name" put in the name of your organization. If possible, do NOT use the acronym – write out the entire name.

5. Click the box next to "I'm the official representative of this person, business, band or product and have permission to create this Page" and click the "Create Official Page" button. [Note: make sure a staff person has been assigned to create this page and given authorization to use either a general email address or their work email address to set up the page.

Your page should look like this:
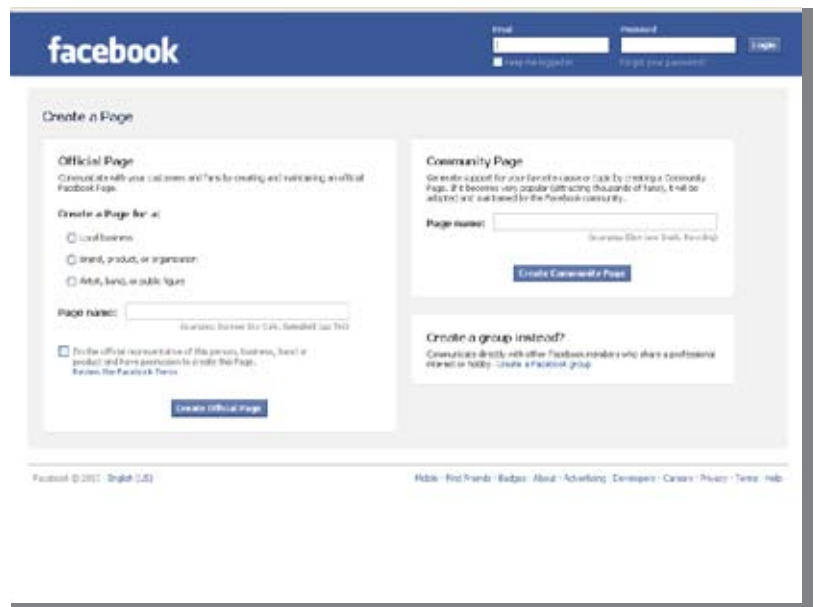
Profile Picture

On the top left-hand corner you will see a giant question mark – that is where you can upload a profile picture. Roll your mouse over the question mark and a button that says "Change your Profile Picture" will pop up. Click the button and a few more choices come up. Click on "Upload a Picture" and choose your organization's logo.

In order to best fit into Facebook's design, we recommend that you use a square or nearly-square execution of your logo, or center other shapes on a white background.

Here's the image we uploaded for NASCSP's Facebook page:
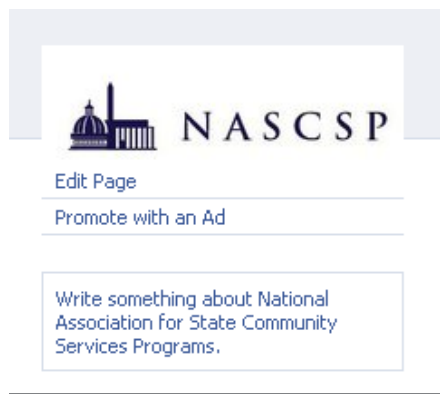
Tabs

Back on the main page, you will see your organization's name. Underneath that, there are a number of tabs: Get Started, Wall, Info, Photos, Discussion. Click the "Get Started" tab.
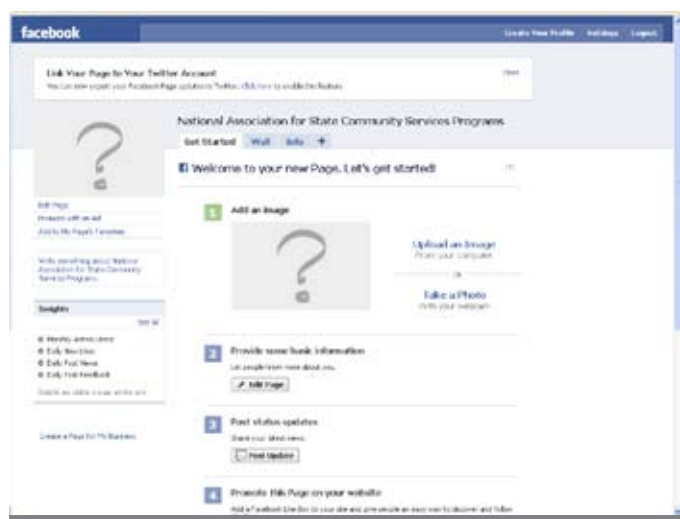
You will now see a few options: Provide some basic information, Post status updates, Promote this Page on your website, Set up your mobile phone, Send status updates to your Twitter followers. Let's start with "provide some basic information."

Provide Some Basic Information

1. Underneath "Provide some Basic Information" is a button that says "Edit Info." Click on the button. Your screen will now look like this:
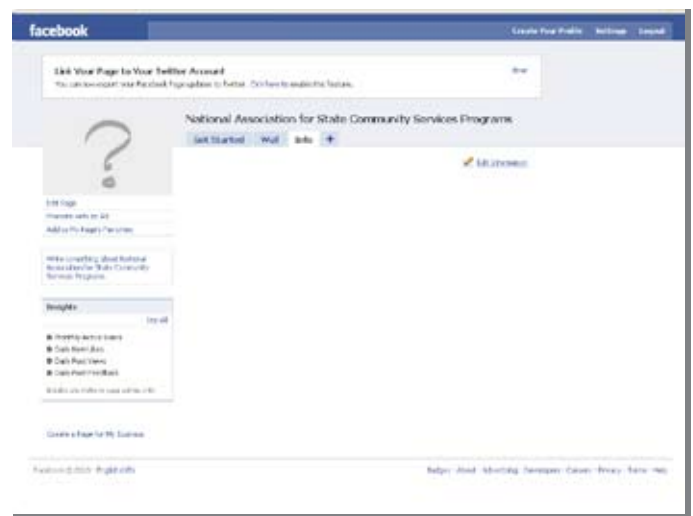
You may have noticed how the "Info" tab at the top is now highlighted. The "Edit Info" button redirected you to this tab. In the future, you can edit your info by clicking the "Info" tab at the top.

2. Put in the year your organization was founded and click "Save Changes."

3. Once you've clicked "Save Changes" a new field will open up where you can put in more detailed information. There are four text boxes: Website, Company Overview, Mission, Products.

4. For website, include your organization's official website and links to other social networking sites.

5. In company overview, include some basic information about your organization and what it does.

6. Mission: add your company's mission statement here.

After you're done, you should have a page that looks similar to this:

7. Save your changes and click the "Info" tab on the toolbar again. This is how visitors to your Facebook page will see the information.
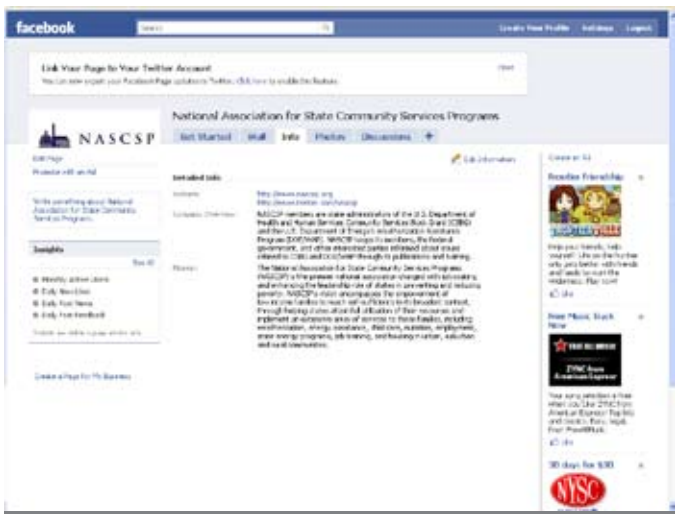
Post Updates

On Facebook you don't need to use **bit.ly** to shrink links or worry about 140 character limits (for more about bit.ly, see page 19, section "Making Links Shorter"). That said, you should still aim for short and concise messages.

To post an update with a link: Write your text in the box. To add the link, click on the link button underneath the text box and paste or type your link and click "Attach." If there are multiple pictures on the page you posted, you will have the option to choose one of them as your thumbnail for the post or choose no thumbnail at all. Follow the same procedure to post a link without text, a video, or pictures. See below:

To delete an update, scroll over the update. On the right-hand side a button that says "Remove" will pop up. Click it and the update will disappear.

Promote this Page on Your Website

Clicking on this will create a "Widget" code that your webmaster can use to put it on your website.

## Send Status to Your Twitter Followers

Both Twitter and Facebook have made it possible to connect both of your accounts so as to cross-post from both sites, meaning, any tweet you post on Twitter will also show up on your Facebook page and vice-versa. This allows you to use the same content to reach both audiences.

"Write Something" Box

This box, located underneath your profile picture, is another space which allows you to provide more information about your organization. You can choose to write in it or leave it blank.

Insights

Underneath your profile picture, you will see a box that says "Insights." This box functions like a web analytics tool which tracks traffic on your Facebook page. You'll be able to monitor how many users joined per day, how many visits you've had, and how many people have responded to your posts. You can export your insights into an Excel spreadsheet by clicking the "Export" button on the top right-hand corner.
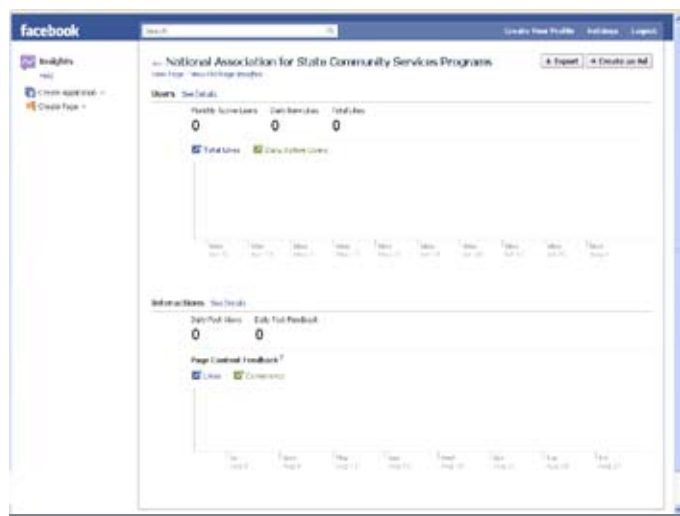
HOW TO FIND FACEBOOK FANS

Unlike a Facebook profile, where you are able to "add a friend," you cannot "request someone to become a fan" of your page. If you try to add someone as a friend, they will see your dummy Facebook profile (the one you set up in order to create your Facebook page). You are also not able to search for users in order to make them fans.

There are ways, however, of attracting people who will be interested in your fan page. Here are some ways you can promote your Facebook page:

1. Put a Facebook widget or a link to your Facebook page on your organization's website.

2. Tell your Twitter followers or followers on your other social networking sites about your Facebook page.

3. Visit Facebook's "Promoting your Page" section, which has tips about ways you can attract fans to your Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/ help/?page=1029.

Another great way to attract fans is to place your Facebook profile badge or url on other outgoing communications. These can include email signatures, email newsletters, print newsletters, and other print materials.

FACEBOOK URL

Unlike Twitter where you get a Twitter.com/ yourorganizationhere URL, in Facebook you aren't able to get a Facebook.com/ yourorganizationhere URL until you have more than 25 fans. Until then, your URL will be something like Facebook.com/pages/Your-Organization-Here/extra numbers.

For more information on Facebook's best practices for nonprofit pages, visit http://www.box.net/shared/tgft7ujmsp.

SETTING UP A TWITTER ACCOUNT

1. Go on to Twitter.com and click the yellow "Sign Up" button on the right hand side.

2. Once you click "Sign Up," you'll be redirected to the sign up screen which looks like this:

3. You will then be prompted to enter information about your organization. In the field "Full Name," put in the name of your organization, not the name of the staff members responsible for maintaining the account. If the full name of your organization does not fit, use a commonly-understood abbreviation or acronym.

   Similarly, for the field, "Username," type in a short form of the name of your organization or its acronym. You will use your username to log onto Twitter and it will also be your organization's personal URL on Twitter.

   For example, NASCSP's Twitter username is NASCSP and its URL is http://www.twitter.com/nascsp.

4. Choose an easily remembered but secure password.

5. In the field "Email," add a valid general contact email address (i.e. info@ yourorganization.org) that is checked often. If your organization does not have a contact email address, feel free to use the business email of the staff member responsible for updating the account.

6. Click "Create My Account." Twitter will then verify the account by sending a confirmation email to the account you specified. Click the link in the email to verify the account and you'll be redirected to your Twitter homepage.

Congratulations! You have created a Twitter account!

TWITTER HOME PAGE

Home

Now that you're on Twitter, whenever you log in, your homepage will look similar to the screenshot below. At the top of the page, there is a rotating question – usually "What's happening?" or "What are you doing?" – followed by a box where you can write text. This is where you enter your update or "tweet" (more on tweets below).
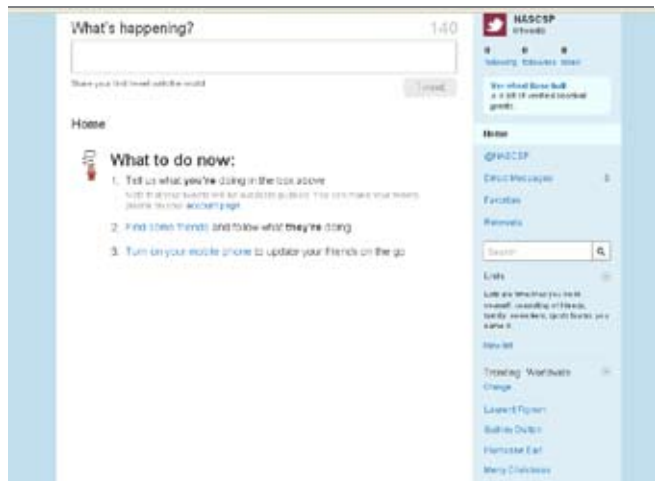
Your Feed

Below the text box, you will see a large white space that is labeled "What to Do Now?" This is your feed. Your feed is where you can read tweets from the individuals and organizations with whom you connect. The feed is updated in, or near, real time, so you can track the latest developments across your Twitter connections.

To the right of the feed, you'll see a few labeled numbers which look like this:
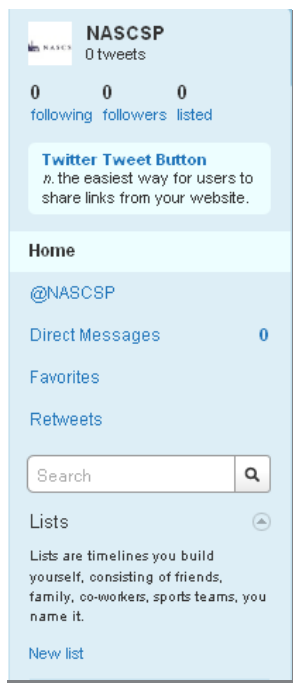
Underneath your organization name, you'll be able to see how many tweets you've posted. Underneath that you'll see three different numbers and underneath those numbers reads:

Following - the people or organizations you have connected with. These tweets from these organizations or people are what appears in your feed.

Followers - people or organizations who are following you, and thus your tweets appear in their feeds.

Listed – refers to how many lists your Twitter profile has been added to.

About Lists: Twitter users can create "lists" which group other Twitter users. For example, NASCSP has created two lists: one for state WAP providers and another for CSBG organizations, so it can add those organizations' Twitter profiles to the list.

Underneath the numbers you'll see Twitter's dashboard of view options.

@Username

When you click @Username, you will see other Twitter users' mentions of you or comment directed to you. You can also reply to them by clicking "reply" underneath their tweet.

Direct Messages

Direct messages are private tweets between you and other Twitter users who you follow. You cannot send a message to someone you do not follow or who does not follow you.

Favorites

If you like another user's tweet, you can mark it by hovering over their tweet and clicking the little star button that shows up on the bottom right-hand corner of their tweet. Other users can view which tweets you have listed as a favorite.

Retweet

"Retweet" is an option that allows you to share another user's tweet with your followers. When you retweet something, that retweet shows up in all of your followers' feeds, regardless of whether they are following the person you retweeted from or not. People to retweet

would be policymakers, organizations that you have partnered up with, or anyone who has mentioned something your organization did.

A Twitter user can also retweet your tweets and you can also see who has retweeted you, regardless of whether you follow them or not.

The central aspect of Twitter is, of course, sending out tweets. The text box on the top of the homepage is where you input your tweets. The key to typing tweets is making them short and concise. You'll notice the number 140; this refers to the maximum number of characters each tweet can have, including punctuation and spaces. As you type or paste text into this box, the character count will go down, showing you how many you have left.

Creating Tweets

Brevity is the key to a good tweet. To increase your space, be sure to use acronyms, clear abbreviations, and short, snappy sentences.

As you read Twitter, you'll notice other users often add links into their messages. Since URLs are often long, they may take up most, if not all, of your 140 characters:

Making Links Shorter

Twitter is currently rolling out a process that will automatically "wrap" URLs, shortening them to a manageable length. Twitter's process will also ensure that the links that you click on in other user's tweets are safe and free of spam. This service is being rolled out to all profiles in the fall of 2010.

In the meantime, if your profile does not yet support wrapped URLs, a number of websites like *is.gd* and *bit.ly* have sprung up to shorten URLs. By clicking on a bit.ly link, users will be redirected to the pages you intended for them to go to. We particularly recommend bit.ly, as it will index all of the links you have put in the past. Using our link from the tweet above as an example, let's make it shorter with bit.ly.

1. Go to **http://bit.ly**.
2. In the text box marked "Shorten with bit.ly," put in the link you wish to shorten.

3. Click the "Shorten" button.
4. Underneath the "Shorten with bit.ly" text box you will see a green text box that says "Your Link" with an arrow pointing to a link. This is the shortened version of the original link you put above.

5. To copy the link, roll your mouse over the link. A button will pop up that says "Click to Copy." Click the button. Now go back to Twitter and hit CTRL + V to paste it into the Twitter text box.

Here's what our new tweet looks like:
Our new tweet is now 59 characters long and we have 81 characters to spare!

When you are ready to tweet your message, click the "tweet" button. The tweet will be published in your profile and come up in the feeds of your followers, all in real time.

For more information on how to use Twitter, visit Twitter's "Business Twitter 101" page: http://business.twitter.com/twitter101/.

OTHER SETTINGS: CUSTOMIZING TWITTER

At the very top right-hand corner of your browser window, there is a toolbar that has the following options: Home, Profile, Find People, Settings, Help, and Sign Out. This is Twitter's main toolbar.

Home

Whenever you click "Home," it will take you to your main homepage (which is the page you are on right now).

Profile Tab

Whenever you click "Profile," you will be able to see what your Twitter profile looks like to other users. You will be able to see all of your tweets.

Find People Tab

Clicking "Find People" will allow you to find organizations and individuals by name, Twitter username, or by email address. Please note that not all individuals or organizations allow you to search by their email address.

Settings Tab

The "Settings" tab allows you to do everything from changing your password to changing your profile picture. Below we will go through the process step-by-step.

1. **Account**

   When you click the "Account" tab, you will see a few options including your name and username, email address of the account holder, time zone, language, tweet location, and protecting tweets.

Here you can change all of that information but must scroll down and click the "Save" button to save the changes.

2. Password

As the tab suggests, you can change your password here. You need to know your current password in order to make the change.

Here you can tweet directly from your mobile phone. We don't recommend this option for organizations as it requires a staff member's phone number to sync Twitter from that person's mobile phone.

Notices

Here you can choose to receive or not receive emails from Twitter which let you know when you have a new subscriber, when someone has sent you a direct message, or email updates from Twitter.
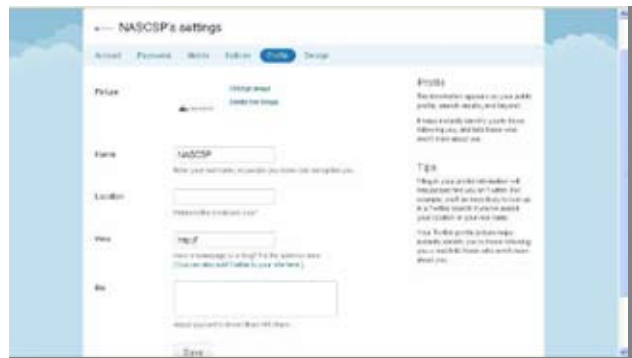
Profile

Here is where you are able to tell your followers a little bit about yourself. This information is featured in a box on the right-hand side of a Twitter user's profile.

Use your organization's logo as the profile picture. In the event the picture is too large and much of the logo gets cut out, you will need to resize it in order for it to fit.

We suggest you fill out all of the fields you can. Twitter only allows a few characters in the "Name" field so use an acronym if your organization's name is too long.

Similarly the "Bio" field only gives you 160 characters to write something, and this includes spaces and punctuation marks. Short and concise are the two things to keep in mind when using Twitter.

Make sure to save all of your changes.

Here is what our profile looks like once it has been updated:

Design

In the "Design" tab you can change your background image and the colors of your text and your links to match your organization's branding. We suggest you use either a solid color for your background image and not change the colors for text and links.

To change the background color, scroll down and click "Change design colors." Click the "Background" box and choose your color. If you want to use an image for your background, click "Change background image" and upload the image you would like to use.

Help Tab

As it suggests, you can search for topics related to issues you are having with Twitter.

Sign Out

Click this to log out of Twitter.

How to Get Started on YouTube

Since YouTube is a service provided by Google, your organization will need to set up a Google account to get started on YouTube.

Create a Google Account

1. Go to http://www.google.com/accounts/Login and click the "Create an Account" button in the lower right hand corner.

2. Fill in all of the fields. You can substitute your organization's name or acronym for the "First" and "Last" name fields. Make sure the username you choose is easy to remember.

3. Click "I accept. Create my account." You will be redirected to your Google Account homepage.

4. Setting up a Google account creates a Gmail address. You can use the Gmail address to receive email for YouTube views.

Creating a YouTube Account

1. Now go to YouTube.com. Click the "Create Account" link in the top right hand corner.

2. Fill in all of the fields. If your organization uses an acronym, make your acronym your username. Click the "I accept" button on the bottom.

3. You will be redirected to a page that says "Do you already have a Google Account?" and two columns, one for "Yes" and another for "No." Since you already created a Google account, Google Account username and password into the "Yes" column and click "Sign in."

Creating a Nonprofit YouTube Channel

YouTube allows nonprofit organizations to apply to become a part of the YouTube Nonprofit Program. This allows nonprofits

several benefits not available to normal users including:

- Premium branding capabilities and increased uploading capacity
- The option to drive fundraising through a Google Checkout "Donate" button
- Listing on the Nonprofit channels and the Nonprofit videos pages
- Posting a video opportunity on the YouTube Video Volunteers platform (a relatively new feature for YouTube's nonprofits) to find YouTube users who will create a video for your organization

To apply for the YouTube Nonprofit Program, go to **http://www.youtube.com/nonprofits** and click on the yellow "Apply Now" box.

From there, you will be taken to a brief form that will ask you questions about your organization, your mission and your tax ID status.

Once this form is filled out and submitted, YouTube manually reviews them. This process can take anywhere from one to three months.

CUSTOMIZING YOUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Once you have an approved nonprofit channel on YouTube you can customize it. Under the "Get Started" column, click "Customize your Channel Page."

You will now be redirected to your channel page. Underneath the "YouTube" logo in the top left corner you will see the following tabs: Post bulletin, Settings, Themes and Colors, Modules, Videos, and Playlists.

Post Bulletin

Click the first tab, "Post Bulletin." This is similar to a status update or a tweet; you are letting your viewers know what is new and what is going on. You can write an update in the "enter message" field and attach one of your YouTube videos in the "Enter YouTube video URL here" field.

Settings

Here you will see your YouTube URL and you will be able to add a title and channel tags as well as choose a channel type and whether or not you want the channel visible to the public (yes).

Your page title can only be 30 characters long. If your organization name is longer than 30 characters, use an acronym.

Tags are keywords users use to search for content they want. The more tags you add, the easier it'll be for users to come across your page and your video. Include the name of your state and categories that your organization's work falls under.

The "Channel Type" option is automatically set to 'nonprofit' for approved organizations. If you start customizing your channel before receiving nonprofit status, select one of the other types from the dropdown list. Once you receive nonprofit status you can update this section.

Themes and Colors

You can change the look of your YouTube page in this tab, including fonts and colors. When you click the tab, you can choose one of the ready-

made themes or you can make your own. To make your own theme:

1. Click the "Show Advanced Options" link.

2. Choose your fonts from the drop down menu. To choose the colors for background, text, and borders, click on the little box left of the text box that has #000000 written in.

3. To choose an image as your background image, click "Delete" in the Background Image part and upload a picture from your computer.

4. Click the "Save Changes" button on the right-hand corner of the pane with the "Hide Advanced Options" link.

Modules

Modules are boxes on your channel which show whose pages you subscribe to, people who subscribe to you, friends, and a comment box where people can write comments to you. You can choose which ones you'd like to make visible by clicking in the box until a checkmark appears. Un-clicking the checkmark will make that module invisible to visitors. Click the "Save Changes" button once you are finished.

Videos and Playlists

You can customize which videos you want your page's visitors to see in this tab. All of your videos and playlists will be displayed in a column on the right-hand side of your page. For now, you should use the default options YouTube provides.
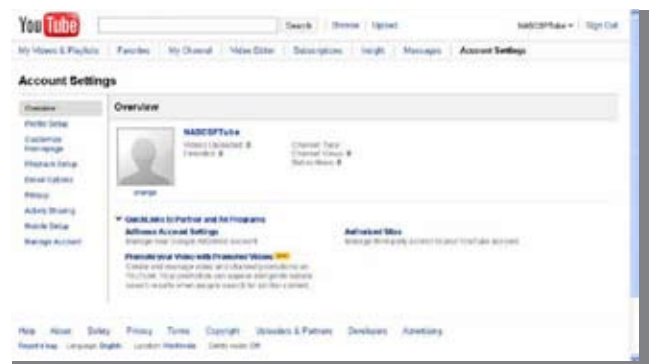
Other Account Options

Next to the "Sign Out" link on the top right-hand corner of your YouTube page, you will see a downward pointing triangle next to your username. Clicking your username, a menu will pop up listing a few options: My Channel,

Inbox, Account, Subscriptions, My Videos, Favorites. The "My Channel" option will display your homepage as well as the tabs we touched upon above.
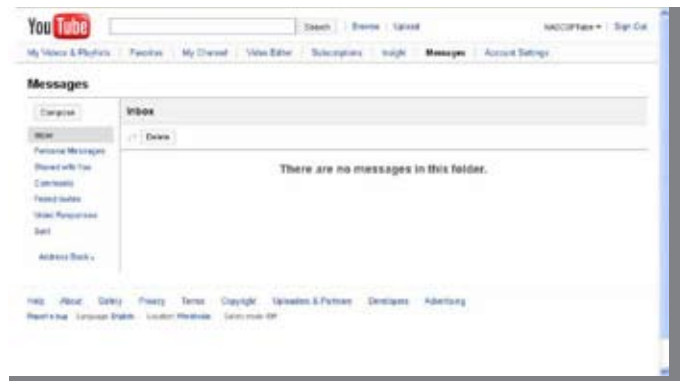
Inbox

Here you will be able to see the different ways YouTube users can contact and connect with you. Users can send you "Personal Messages," similar to email messages, which you can reply to. Anytime a user leaves a comment on your video, you will be able to see them in the "Comments" section. You can reply to users comments and these comments will be public, similar to a tweet you replied to on Twitter. You can also delete comments users have made and you can even disable the comments section in your video, which will make it so users cannot post comments on the video (more on that in the "Upload a Video" section below).

Account

Here you will be able to add information about your organization, change your profile picture, change your email options and privacy settings, choose how you want to share your activities (i.e. cross-posting with other social networking sites), and manage other account options.

1. "Profile Setup" is where you can put information about your organization, change your profile picture, add a description about your organization, choose a location, etc. It is similar to the "Info" tab in Facebook.

2. "Customize Homepage" shows you what tabs you can view and edit when you sign into YouTube. In addition to the tabs we described above, you can add "Most Popular," which shows you your videos on order of popularity; "Insight Map," which shows you where around the world your videos are being watched; "Insight Chart," which shows you the analytics and demographic information of YouTube users who are watching your videos.

3. "Playback Setup" allows you to choose how you want to view YouTube videos depending on your connection type. Unless you have a slow connection, you can leave the default options YouTube has chosen for you.

4. "Email Options" allow you to change your email address and language preference. You can also change your YouTube email settings. These emails will go to the Gmail account you created when you created a Google account to maintain your organization's YouTube page. Unless you plan on checking the Gmail account, you can un-click all of these options and view them instead in your YouTube inbox. You can also choose to send weekly updates to people who subscribe to your YouTube channel which will allow them to receive your video updates in their mailboxes.

5. "Privacy" offers you search and contact restrictions, advertising settings, and statistics and data. In Search and Contact Restrictions, you can choose whether or not you allow users to find your channel by your email address (your Gmail address) and whether or not you only want to receive and send messages with users you have added as friends. Advertising settings gives you the option of allowing YouTube to use your account information to give you targeted advertising based on your interests. Statistics and data allows you to choose whether or not you want to allow viewers to see your video's statistics, such as how many views each video has received.

6. "Activity Sharing" allows you to choose what you want other users to know about your recent activity. Every time you "Like" or "Favorite" a video, upload a video, reply to a user's comment, or make a comment on another video, it shows up in the "Recent Activity" module on your channel page. If you don't want YouTube to track your recent activity, un-click these boxes. You can also sync up your YouTube account with your Twitter and Facebook profiles. By doing this, the video you upload on YouTube will automatically get uploaded to your Facebook page and your Twitter page, saving you the time of doing it yourself. You must have the sign in information for your Twitter and Facebook pages in order to do this.

7. "Mobile Setup" allows you to share videos from your mobile phone.

8. "Manage Account" allows you to change your password, delete your account, and view your status within the YouTube community. In order to have "good standing" on YouTube, you must verify you have the copyright to all of the materials you upload to YouTube.

Subscriptions

Whenever you subscribe to another user's YouTube page, you will see a box of their profile picture in your "Subscriptions" page. To visit their page, click on the profile picture.

My Videos

You will be able to view and edit your videos here. To upload a video on YouTube:

1. Go to **http://upload.youtube.com/ my_videos_upload**.

2. Click "Upload Video."

3. Choose the video from your computer.

4. Once the video has loaded, choose a title for your video, write a description about the video's content, and include search tags for users to be able to find the video.
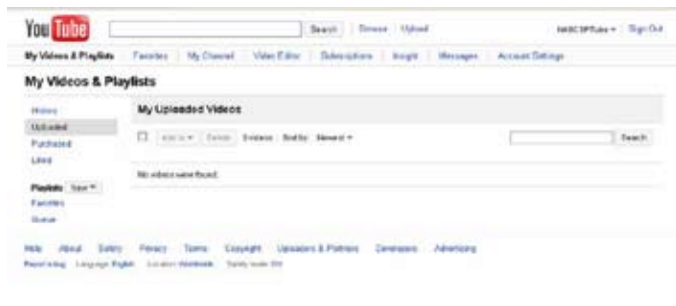
You will also see an option about "Comments." You can allow users to write comments or disable comments.

Favorites

Whenever you mark a video as a "Favorite," you will be able to see it on this page. To "Favorite" a video, go to the video's page. Underneath the description, you will see a button that says "Save to." Click it and choose the first option, which is "Favorite."
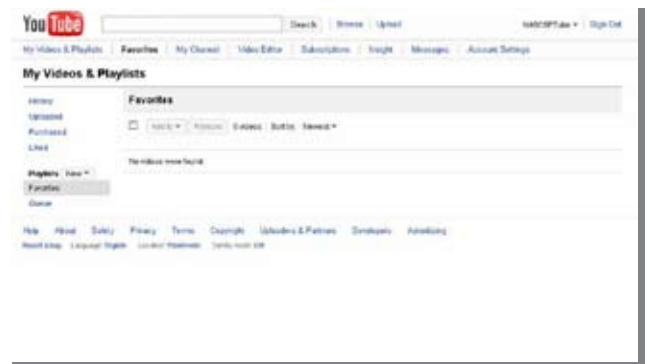
EMBEDDING VIDEO

YouTube allows any user to embed a video that is uploaded to YouTube on external websites, including blogs, social networking platforms, and organizational websites.

To do this, go to the video's page on YouTube after it has loaded. Click on the "Embed" button, that appears beneath the video.

A box will appear with HTML code in it, which can be copied and pasted into your website's or blog's editor. You can also customize the size of the video, and the border and text colors to match your website's branding, using the tools beneath the HTML code.

SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

The Chronicle of Philanthropy's Social Media blog
http://philanthropy.com/blog/Social-Philanthropy/22/

The Chronicle on Philanthropy's Philanthropy Blog offers information and useful resources to connect the nonprofit world.

FrogLoop: Care2's Online Marketing Blog for Nonprofits
http://www.frogloop.com

A blog all about social marketing and NGOs; it has timely suggestions on everything from the newest Facebook apps for nonprofits to the latest trends in online fundraising.

Mashable!
http://www.mashable.com

Mashable is one of the most widely-read blogs, providing a wealth of information about online technology, social media, and new media solutions.

Netwits Think Tank
http://www.netwitsthinktank.com/

The blog archive at Netwits Think Tank has lists of social media strategy presentations, interviews with insiders, and helpful hints and suggestions on how to use the most popular social media tools.

Network for Good Learning Center
http://www.fundraising123.org

Network for Good's Learning Center provides a wealth of resources for nonprofit organizations interested in online advocacy and fundraising. Many of the strategies discussed have a social media component.

NTen
http://www.nten.org/blog/

The Nonprofit Technology Network blog contains a wide array of information about up-to-the-minute social media, online technology, and other tech-related resources.

Oregon State Dept. of Administrative Services Social Networking Guide
http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/EISPD/EGOV/BOARD/docs/social_networking_guide_v1.pdf?ga=t

Oregon State Department of Administrative Services social networking guide for other state agencies that emphasizes using social networks for collaboration and information sharing between state agencies and the public.

Slideshare
http://www.slideshare.net/Griner/the-twitter-tutorial

Slides offering the need to know on Twitter, its usefulness in the world of social media and how businesses and organizations can use Twitter as a tool.

Social Media Guidelines for Environmental Defense Fund Employees
http://www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=52806

This is a combination of social networking user guidelines for employees for the Environmental Defense Fund that outlines media etiquette. EDF employees are encouraged to stick to fundamentals, how to represent the organization on social networking sites, and how to walk the delicate balance between using social networking for work and using it outside of work.

TechCrunch
http://www.techcruch.com

Founded by Michael Arrington, the often controversial TechCrunch blog covers social media startups, Silicon Valley news, and information about social media strategies.

BENCHMARK STUDIES:

Nonprofit Social Networking Benchmark

The Nonprofit Social Networking Benchmark is an April 2010 study conducted by the NTen, Common Knowledge, and ThePort Network that assesses trends and gives insight into ways nonprofits can better leverage social networking for marketing, fundraising, and program services. There are useful trend reports for Facebook and Twitter as well as an overview of the use of in house social networks among nonprofits.

2010 Nonprofit Social Media Benchmark Study: An Analysis for Growth and Social Engagement Methods for Nonprofit Organizations

This is a recent study by M+R Strategic Services that provides industry wide data to nonprofits so that they can measure their social networking performance. The report offers usership data from select nonprofits which breaks down and highlights the intricacy of social media sites.

The Convio Online Nonprofit Benchmark Study

More than just an overview of nonprofit presence in social networking, this March 2010 report from Convio is an overview of the ways a nonprofit can use the internet to engage their audience. It offers insightful information on unique web visits and traffic, performance trends, registration rates, email appeal and email newsletters, and success stories that nonprofits can use as comparisons and models.