

Different Social Networks

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a website that asks its users to regularly talk about what they are doing and thinking. They do this in chunks of 140 characters or less (each known as a “tweet”) which is published online. People can also use tweets to link to interesting websites, and have online conversations with other people by replying to their tweets.

You can “follow” other people on Twitter. This means that when you click the Follow button next to their name on Twitter, their tweets will appear in a chronological list called a timeline. Your **timeline** is a list of all the recent tweets from people you follow. From there, you can reply to tweets, **follow** links that others have tweeted and share your own news by tweeting.



The bite-sized conversation format of Twitter is ideal for sharing links, posing questions, having discussions and generating debate.

People posting on Twitter can also categorise their tweets in simple ways, such as hashtags (see below). This makes it easy to locate people who are discussing issues that you may be interested in as a family focussed organisation, for example, local child care related concerns, and you will be able to build a relationship with people talking about them. Using a picture of staff in your profile tends to promote better levels of engagement on Twitter (people find it more personal).

Key terms

You can find a comprehensive list of Twitter terms and their definitions on Twitter's help page at: <http://tinyurl.com/onxg6pq>

Here are a few of the most common terms.

- Timeline:** a list of tweets from people you follow on Twitter.
- Hashtag:** the # symbol, called a hashtag, is used to mark keywords and categorise topics in a tweet. For example, tweets about childcare can include the hashtag #childcare, allowing anyone to click on the hashtag, and see tweets from other users who are also talking about childcare.
- Mention:** mentioning another user in your tweet by including the @ sign followed directly by their username is called a "mention". Also refers to tweets in which your username was included.
- Reply:** a tweet posted in reply to another user's tweet, usually posted by clicking the "reply" button next to their tweet in your timeline.
- Retweet (verb):** the act of sharing another user's tweet with all of your followers. Click "Retweet" on another user's tweet, and it will be shared with everyone who follows you, showing who the tweet originally came from.



- Direct Message (DM):** a tweet sent directly to another person that only they can read. Direct messages can only be sent between two users who are following each other. To send a **direct message** to someone, simply click on their profile, then the button with a silhouetted head and shoulder image, followed by "Send a Direct Message".

What is Facebook?

Facebook is an online social networking site that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. There are a number of public features of Facebook such as:

- ▶ Pages – allows members to create and promote a public Page built around a specific topic
- ▶ Groups – allows members who have common interests to find each other and interact
- ▶ Events – allows members to publicize an event, invite guests and track who plans to attend

For organisations working with families, a Facebook Page is likely to be the most useful feature. You can use your Page to:

- ▶ Share updates through Page posts that people can like, comment on and share
- ▶ Create a dialogue with families and other agencies
- ▶ Build a network of families to target
- ▶ Understand more about your audience and what they are interested in

Detailed instructions of how to set up a Facebook Page can be found [here](#).

Facebook Insights

"Insights" is an analytics tool available on Facebook, which allows you to track your Page's performance once at least 30 people have liked it. It helps you track your "Likes" over time; interactions with your page; messages with the most impressions and feedback; etc. This will allow Page managers to learn more about what their audience wants, host better conversations, and reach more fans.

Other social networks

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing site featuring movie clips, TV clips and music videos, as well as amateur content, such as video blogging and short original videos. It can be used as a social network when people "subscribe" to all the videos of a particular user and can send them messages, or anyone who comments on a video.

Instagram

Instagram is an online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and Flickr.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional social network. Users post information on their current and past jobs, like an online CV. They then connect with people they have worked with as colleagues or done business with, to create an online network of professional contacts.

LinkedIn also makes use of groups. People with similar professional interests in particular types of industries and topics, can join groups and discuss issues relevant to their area of work.

You can search for groups of people on LinkedIn who share your interests, but these are more often used by people in the same profession. Groups that are not purely professional, tend to be quite small, limiting their use as an outreach tool.

Google+

Google+ allows anyone with a Google account to connect with other people, just like Facebook or Twitter. And like Twitter, you can search for topics of interest to you and add those to your "circles". Circles are groups of contacts, such as work colleagues or friends, that you can choose to share certain information with. For example, you can share your holiday photos with your friends circle only, which stops your work colleagues circle from seeing them.