

# GETTING TO KNOW SOCIAL MEDIA

**Lindsay Wright, Digital Media and Resources Lead** in the Diocesan Board of Education, has produced the following advice about social media that may be useful for parishes.

The advice can be read for general information by parishes but has a particular slant towards younger people.

It gives some insight into the main current social media platforms: what they are, what they do etc; some general points on how to use social media and it also includes a section on the importance of safeguarding in a social media context.

To begin with, here are some interesting current facts and figures of social media in general:

## GENERAL FACTS AND FIGURES

Here are some interesting current facts and figures of social media in general:

- On average people have 7.6 social media accounts\*
- There are 3.499bn active social media users\*
- Social media users grew by 202m between April 2018 and April 2019\*
- Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp handle 60bn messages a day\*
- 81% of teenagers felt social media has a positive effect on their lives.\*
- People aged 55-64 are more than twice as likely to engage with branded content than those 28 or younger\*
- 96% of people that discuss brands online do not follow those brands' owned profiles\*

People, on average, have multiple social media accounts in order to connect with people, companies, and organisations, discover what's going on in the world and communicate with others.

This is continuing to grow and isn't showing signs of slowing down and more people from across different age groups are joining the online world.

## TWITTER

### Overview

Twitter was set up in 2006 and when a US Airways flight crashed into NYC Hudson river in 2009 a photo posted on Twitter broke the news before traditional media. For the first time the relevancy of social media was highlighted.

## Facts and Figures

- 330m monthly users\*
- 80% of the users access it via their mobiles\*
- Estimate 25m of the active users are actually bots\*
- 6000 tweets every second (500m tweets a day)\*
- Tweets with images receive 18% more click throughs and 89% more likes \*
- 34% users are females and 66% males\*\*14.1m UK users\*\*

## What this means

Twitter has the lowest number of users of all the main platforms, yet this is where a majority of world leaders and organisations place themselves.

How are you going to get a true idea of what's going on in the lives of the people we're serving if you're sitting on a place where they aren't? You should never be on Twitter because it's the first social media platform you think of, or because you think it's the thing to do. Only go on if people you wish to communicate to are on there and come off if they are not.

The UK has a large amount of users on here, and importantly, our parishes and teachers are on here too.

## FACEBOOK

### Overview

Launched in 2004, initially only open Harvard students, it expanded to Universities over the next couple of years before finally being open to all users over the age of 13 with a valid email address in 2006. It is the largest social media platform outside of YouTube, used primarily for sharing events, community discussions, venting about things that you've just seen or expressing your current emotion.

## Facts and Figures

- 2.375bn monthly active users\*
- 47% of users access via a mobile\*
- 83% of parents on Facebook are friends with their children\*
- Half of the internet users who do not use Facebook themselves live with someone who does.\*
- 45% of people get news from Facebook\*
- Users spend an average of 20 minutes a day on the site.\*

- 40% of users don't like any brand pages meaning paid adverts are the only way to reach them.\*
- 500 million daily views on Stories.\*\*
- 43% females and 57% males\*\*
- Images account for 75-90% of Facebook advertising effectivity/performance
- 85% of Facebook users watch videos with the sound off, with 80% of users annoyed with videos auto-play sound, it gives them a negative impression of the brand.\*\* we must think about this when producing content.
- 74% of Facebook users visit the site daily.\*\*

### **What this means**

Facebook is huge. Whether you like it or not from a personal level, when it comes to businesses having the opportunity to connect, reach and engage with people, it doesn't make sense to not be present.

Users spend on average 20 minutes on the site every day. 'Stories', a multipurpose content sharing feature on Facebook, is another method of communicating to people on Facebook. It doesn't appear on their wall, they are image or video based and go away after 24 hours.

It's a great way to engage with people about events that are happening there and now such as a great song at a worship event, a planning meeting or bizarre traffic hold-up! It can be used for teaching, but the core behind Stories is relational, allowing people a window into your world so they can get to know you, which hopefully then leads to trust.

## INSTAGRAM

### **Overview**

Launched in 2010 and bought by Facebook in 2012.

It doesn't display feeds chronologically; this is important to remember as something you posted may not appear on a follower's feed straight away. They also introduced Stories (in 2016).

Instagram TV was established in 2018, it allows users to upload longer videos to encourage more in-depth video content. Instagram provides a variety of ways to communicate to people through its different functions, creating appeal to a range of age groups.

It is a place to seek inspiration, discover new products and items. Shops exist on Instagram that don't exist anywhere else and through Stories people can keep up with what's going on. It's entirely image-led; only videos and photos allowed.

Hashtags play a fundamental and vital role in posts on Instagram, more so than other platforms, smart use of hashtags and tags increases your reach beyond your followers.

## **Facts and Figures**

- 1bn monthly active users\*
- 500 million daily users\*\*
- Instagram stories daily active users are 500 million\*\*
- Biggest demographic group are males between 18-24 years old, while 75% of all users are aged between 18 and 24.\*
- 90% of users are younger than 35\*
- 3.5bn likes a day\*
- 63% of Instagram users use the app every day\*
- Curry is the most popular Instagrammed food in the UK. Overall it's pizza.\*
- Engagement with brands is 10 times higher than Facebook, 54 times higher than Pinterest and 84 times higher than Twitter.
- Photos see more engagement than videos\*
- 52% of users are female and 42% male\*\*
- Posts with a location get 79% more engagement\*\*
- 60% of people say they discover new products on Instagram.\*\*

## **What this means**

The age demographic of Instagram is low; if you are wanting to target young adults, then this is the place to be. People engage more with brands (aka organisations) on Instagram than any other platform, and with 60% of people discovering new products on Instagram, it shows you how much people are seeking information and information.

People research things, they want to discover new things here; when it comes to being able to equip, resource and empower people this is the biggest platform in which to do this.

This, however, only comes through relational work, people must trust you and in order to do that they must get to know you and like you.

This means you can't always advertise; you wouldn't have a church service where the only thing in it are the notices, but in order for people to attend the events you talk about in the notices they must like and trust what you do.

# SNAPCHAT

## Overview

Dismissed by older people and embraced by younger generations, it's now one of the major social media platforms. Originally called Picaboo, it launched in 2011, and rebranded to Snapchat later in the year. It's used in a similar way to Facebook, to send messages with and to share events, what's happening etc. However the method of doing it differs to Facebook as it's heavily video led.

## Facts and Figures

- 60% of users are under 25, but in the UK it's even higher, with 77% being under 25\*
- 61% are female and 38% male.
- 190m active daily users\*
- On average people spend 34.5 minutes per day on Snapchat.\* Generally people will spend more time on this app than Instagram\*\*.
- Peak time is Saturday\*
- Users mostly use the app to message each other\*
- 37.5% of UK Smartphone users are on Snapchat.\*\*
- Active Snapchat users will open the app 20 times per day\*\*.
- 95% of the users say the app makes them feel happy.
- The UK is among the highest audiences.\*\*

## What this means

They are a UK-based company which is looking to target young people. Snapchat contains the largest percentage of young people out of all the platforms, and the UK rank highest in that age bracket.

It's also the only platform where the UK sits in the top three of countries who use it.

Therefore, if you want to talk to young people in the UK online here is where you do it. It has an incredibly high daily active users who also visit the app multiple times during their day.

It is an exciting opportunity to speak to young people and gives you extra time to communicate important messages.

# TIK TOK

## Overview

Tik Tok is about posting really short videos. It launched in 2016 and is growing at a huge pace. People are predicting it will crumble like Vine did, but it isn't showing signs of doing that yet.

It was formally called Musical.ly so many think it's a lip-syncing app, but it's much more than that. Very popular with Gen Z, it has had a few controversies, in particular in regards to child privacy laws, but it has responded to that by increasing security measures and launched online safety campaigns, working with other organisations to make sure measures are put in place to keep users safe. Users create 15-60 second videos which loop and are vertical in shape. There's a huge amount of editing that can be done within the app itself saving time and technology.

It's the fastest growing social media platform and although it may stop just like Vine, or Musical.ly, this is where the young people are flocking to right now.

## Facts and Figures

- 41% of users are between 16-24 years old\*\*\*
- 500 million active users \*\*\*\*
- Users typically spend around 52 minutes per day on the app\*\*\*\*
- They have a brand partnership with Jimmy Fallon \*\*\*\*

## What this means

This is a growing app, the UK stats are low, but are increasing at a huge speed. Teaming up with Jimmy Fallon (a US talk show host) has helped to bring the app to people's attention and also increase its longevity.

It's the app that users spend the most time on, and it's easy to see why, with amusing/interesting/informative videos which are short, you can spend a long time on there without really realising.

Content is displayed by working out a user's interests, so again hashtags are very important in your description of it. It's a brilliant way for people to get glimpses into a brand or person, getting to know them and seeing some of the behind the scenes.

Production costs don't have to be high, with a vast majority of clips are filmed and edited within the app, which means you don't need to put aside lots of time or effort to produce content. This is brilliant news for those of us who are time precious.

## YOU TUBE

### Overview

The first video uploaded to YouTube in 2005 was of the co-owner visiting a zoo. It was purchased by Google in 2006, and adverts quickly started appearing in 2007. In 2012 it live streamed the US Presidential debates, showing how important the channel has become at sharing news stories to the most amount of people at any one time.

It is the only social media which allows children to access it too, which means it's the only way to communicate to every single age range.

### Facts and Figures

- 2bn monthly active users\*\*
- 30m daily active users\*\*
- The average person watches 40 minutes of YouTube content a day\*
- More than half of YouTube views come from mobile devices\*
- 6 out of 10 people prefer online video platforms to live TV\*
- In 2015, 18-49 year olds spent 4% less time watching TV whilst time on YouTube went up 74%\*
- Ryan, the toy review boy, is the highest earning YouTuber\*
- 70% views come from mobile devices\*
- Average mobile viewing session lasts more than 40 minutes\*
- 62% of users are male\*\*
- 35+ and 55+ are the fastest growing age groups\*\* with 75% of adults turning to YouTube for nostalgia rather than tutorials or current events.
- 51% of users visit the site daily\*\*

### What this means

YouTube has drastically changed how people watch TV. Once where cook shows and similar were the only way to discover how to do certain tasks and Saturday night

entertainment was Live at the Palladium, now all the different elements of TV are right there to access whenever people want.

You can discover new music, watch as many TV bloopers as you'd like. This means the rise of YouTube stars and celebrities, such as Ryan, the kid who is famous for simply playing with toys.

You won't find them on mainstream TV but their following and influence is huge. YouTube has opened the door for people to educate, entertain and equip. It can be accessed on all devices by anyone at any time, and although it is dominated by younger age groups, older age groups are growing fast.

As a way to equip our teachers, youth workers, children's workers and children and young people themselves, this is a space we must be creative and have a place in as it's become the hub for information.

## Other Platforms

The social media world changes at a huge space, some strong and everlasting, whilst others boom in popularity before dying away. Sometimes this is due to being bought out and other times because the business itself couldn't cope with the change in demands and trends.

Regardless of where the platform is at, it's important to at least be aware of them because that's where the potential for engagement is.

- **WhatsApp:** For instant messaging, calls, and sharing of content.
- **Reddit:** It is a social news aggregation, web content rating and discussion site. Like a forum, but not. There are in jokes on here, such as 'banana for scale' and often news will break on Reddit before any other social media platform. People talk about specific content in sub-reddits. You can follow your interests, find out new things, and create global communities.
- **Pinterest:** A place for inspiration from crafts, beauty, decoration, etc.
- **LinkedIn:** Used for professional networking.
- **Periscope:** Share and experience live video streams direct from your smartphone or tablet. Use it to capture the atmosphere of where you're at or share a news story etc. Owned by Twitter.



## Information sources

- \*<https://www.brandwatch.com/>
- \*\*<https://www.omnicoreagency.com/>
- \*\*\*<https://blog.hootsuite.com/what-is-tiktok/>
- \*\*\*\*<https://mediakix.com/blog/top-tik-tok-statistics-demographics/>

# HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a **relationship** based medium. It allow us to communicate with others, build existing relationships, and introduce ourselves to those who have never met us. With relationship as the driver, our goals should be to be **intentional, authentic, and consistent** with our social media presence.

There are three steps that drive relationship building through social media: **Know you, Like you, Trust you.** It is only when someone trusts you that they are likely to be drawn into action e.g. come to an event, or use a resource.

These three steps are a useful guide in content creation in order to create an effective and engaging social media presence.

A reflection of these three steps in real life can be seen in a church service which has a guest speaker. The speaker cannot simply dive straight into their deeper content, especially with a new group of people.

They must start off with a section at the beginning which allows people to get a glimpse into who they are, and quickly connect with the congregation, in order for people to trust and care about the deeper theological items.

## What this means

Any church should produce a variety of content following the three steps to develop a reach that's wide and deep.

**Wide content** includes items that reach many people through more informal content that allow people to get to know you and like you, such as sharing some words on a special hashtag day, or taking a picture of your journey to a conference, or late night cutting up of shapes, or even a something to make people laugh.

**Deep content** might not reach as many people, but helps people come to know the scripture better, or equips them in their life/roles. These are items that people want to bookmark to refer back to later, or click through to join the event or download the resource.

People connect with key personalities through social media, this is important for companies in order to help build relationships.

These key personalities represent what that company is about, even when they are remaining 'on brand' and speaking the party line. It is important, therefore, that the church has a persona or presence for people to connect with.

Online content should reflect where possible the real world, so **“If we are to replicate real world online, how do we replicate something like a youth group online?”**.

Real Life		Online	
Time	Activity	Day	Content
5 mins	Welcome/Getting to know you	Mon	Getting to know you post such as sharing highlight from the weekend
10mins	Game or activity (may or may not be connected to a bible verse)	Tues	Game or activity
15mins	Talk	Wed	Short 1-2 min video talk
10mins	Prayer with possible response	Thur	Prayer response activity
5 mins	Take home (physical item, challenge or wise words)	Fri	Challenge or question to reflect on into the weekend

Here you can see how a very general youth group session is structured can be easily translated into online content.

It's recognisable as both traditional online content, and traditional youth session. Instantly this feels less daunting because it is familiar, and it provides a way for young people to get to know us and hear about God.

On the following page there is a further example of how a church may move to more online content whilst still remaining authentic and reflecting real life.

Real Life		Online	
Activity	Purpose	Platform	Purpose
Church	Y.P are either within the congregation of the church, or go away for a separate activity. Everyone is coming together as a community to worship and hear from God and encouraged to serve.	Church	Face to face is still highly valuable at this stage. Digital can and should be used to open the doors, as an accessory to your service, such as live streaming.
Midweek Bible Study	Delve deeper into big question, the Bible and walking life with God. You can signpost to the church service, but young people aren't expected to go. You value that they are hear, and for many Sunday church isn't possible. You remain a signpost.	Midweek Bible Study	Face to face is still important here, however through YouTube and Instagram you can delve deeper, but nothing quite replaces meeting with people to discuss.
Weekly youth group	Informal, highly relational, may or may not have a God slot, but y.p know the volunteers are all Christians and there remains an open level of communication about faith. Signpost to bible study and signpost to Sunday church.	<b>Instagram</b>	Informal content, games, and absolutely with a God slot, this allows you to connect with young people in a relational way. This allows you to signpost to your physical youth group. Through this presence you're allowing young people who may have never known you exist to have the confidence to step through your doors. It also allows you to have extra time with those you are already in contact with.
Detached	You are going to the young people where they are at. Many never stepping into a church. It comes with many risks, but with correct safeguarding in place you are equipped to know what to do should the unexpected happen. The risk doesn't stop you doing this activity. You must be honest, be whole relational, and entirely intentional.	<b>TikTok, Snapchat</b>	This is where the young people are, you're stepping into their world to connect. Open and honest with who you are and what you're about, but it's entirely relational. God can and should be discussed but not to the same level as Instagram. Signpost to your Instagram account so they can get to know you more.

# SAFEGUARDING: BREAKING DOWN THE FEAR BARRIERS

## Keeping safe

We have an opportunity to be mentors and examples of how to live Christ-like on social media. Fear of engaging can prevent building relationships and prevents witnessing; this in turn creates a huge gap in how we can nurture, grow and walk alongside an entire generation.

With correct good practice and safeguarding guidelines in place, youth workers can have the confidence to engage in these areas.

If, as an example, you walked into a situation where the young person was intoxicated, you would have measures in place to deal with it (such as not being alone with them and reporting it to your local safeguarding officer).

These are real life general measures and help to take the fear away from face to face ministry.

There are a set of general measures that you can put in place which are transferable rather than related to specific accounts. This way, if platforms change or update their features, or new platforms come along they don't seem scary or daunting.

## Applicable to all platforms

There are some simple rules that you can apply to all your accounts:

**Multiple platform logins.** Make sure at least one other person has access to your log in details. They don't need to post anything, but they are there to be able to view what you're posting, check messages and make sure you are accountable to someone.

**Disable private messaging.** Making sure that you disable private messages is key; having this live makes you incredibly vulnerable, especially as many platforms (such as Facebook) allow people to delete messages within conversations, so it's easy to remove information that may be used against you. If your platform doesn't allow messages to be disabled and someone contacts you, then make sure to reply to the person in public, such as on their wall, so it's visible or face to face (which is preferred) to explain how you're unable to respond to their messages privately.

**Know your safeguarding officer.** You cannot help what you witness and come across in real life, and the same is true with things online, especially live. Make sure you are aware of who you need to report issues with and take appropriate action.

### **Live streaming, gaming and 24 hour stories**

Live streaming and gaming can often feel the most daunting; you're digitally meeting with young people where you don't have full control over the situation where anything can happen. This, however, is exactly what you're faced with in real life and simple common sense and safeguarding practices can be put in place here.

**Keep it public.** Never film or game in your bedroom or a private space. You would never meet a young people in your room, or private space and the same is true for your online life. Live streaming in your room has been proven to increase the amount of inappropriate activity that takes place, such as requests from those viewing.

You're also not able to be transparent or accountable to anyone as you're unlikely to be interrupted. People need to have the opportunity to overhear or accidentally walk through the room you're streaming or gaming from, that way it reduces the opportunities to make yourself or others vulnerable, and it also provides witnesses.

When you meet up in a coffee shop with a young people for a one to one, you're never alone as you're in a public space. Even private rooms have glass panels, or you have the door ajar for people to witness and hear face to face conversations,

and the same is true for these online versions. Taking pictures or filming for 24 hours stories should also be done in a more open environment.

**Plan your content.** In the same way you would plan your youth group session, you can plan what you'll do live and in your 24 hour stories. You don't need to have every word sorted, but by having a rough idea of what you'll be talking about and considering your location and imagery you'll be able to monitor the appropriateness of your content. Don't let this overwhelm, as it will stop you being spontaneous which many of these forms of communication thrive on; however always check yourself, ask why you are doing something and who it's for.

## **Age Restrictions**

All the platforms, except YouTube, have age restrictions. YouTube does, however, have a separate channel for children where age appropriate content is placed. It is good practice to never target your content at those younger than the restrictions, even if you know your young people are on those platforms. Always make sure your content is appropriate and speak with your safeguarding officer if you have any concerns.

## **Safeguarding and social media policies**

### **Church of England Policies**

[https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19_0.pdf)

### **ThinkuKnow advice – livestreaming**

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/our-views/live-streaming-what-professionals-need-to-know/>

[https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11\\_13/Need-advice/live-streaming/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/Need-advice/live-streaming/)

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/what-is-live-streaming/>

### **Safer internet advice**

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>