Using social media to enhance discoverability

Social media can be an important way to promote your book to the wider community. This can be an even more effective strategy when coming from an author or editor as an expert in the field. Below are some of the social media channels that SAGE recommends for promoting your work or book and other channels that will offer a direct way to reach your readership.

Twitter

Twitter is one of the simplest social media channels to use for promotion and is an ideal way to reach new audiences and engage with the broader research community.

Facebook

Facebook has evolved over time and now is a great place to create personal connections with others based on common interest. Join groups or like pages around your interests, areas of expertise, school, or workplace. Additionally, users can join groups organized by city, workplace, school, college or university. You can also join and create groups according to your interests or areas of expertise.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is not just for career opportunities. It is a global network of professionals with over 500 million members. You can include links to your book when you create your profile, as part of the summary of your professional expertise and accomplishments, or on your feed.

Instagram

Instagram provides an opportunity to create interest in your research through visuals. Infographics, short videos, or visual storytelling of the research journey can be shared on this platform. This platform is also unique because link sharing is not allowable in a post, only in your bio. Because of this, focus for Instagram is on engagement within the network instead of driving traffic to your research.

YouTube

We are seeing an increasing amount of traffic to our book sites via **YouTube** as students use video as an initial way of researching a topic. If you already have video content relating to your specific book, please let us know and we will try to use this in the promotion of your book.

Kudos

Kudos is a free third party service that allows authors to explain, enrich, share, and measure the impact of their book. **Visit the Kudos website for more information.**

Blogging

Blogging is both a form of academic writing as well as an effective way to reach new audiences and increase the discoverability of your book. SAGE runs a variety of blog sites to share topical and thought-provoking articles, interviews, videos, and features to engage with the academic community. If you think your research would be a good fit, contact your editor.

SAGE Perspectives Blog

This blog focuses on highlighting topical and interesting research published in SAGE books and journals. The blog includes posts from authors across a wide range of subject disciplines and research areas.

Social Science Space

This online social network features blogs with the most current thinking from key players in social science. It is an active forum for discussions, a resource centre with free videos, reports and slides that support these discussions, as well as funding and job opportunity notices.

MethodSpace

The purpose of this online community is to connect researchers to discuss methodology issues and controversies, discover and review new resources, find relevant conferences and events, and share and solve methodology problems.

Academic social networking sites

These social communities are a way of meeting and conversing with people who share the same research interests. These sites offer an immediate way to monitor what other people are looking at in your field of research or as a way to commission papers around online conversations you think are interesting.

Other channels

There are other options to draw attention to your latest work: email your networks or post on listservs and institution, society, or personal websites about your recent publication, and add your book to your course reading list (if appropriate).

Recommended reading
Social Media for Academics – Mark Carrigan

$SAGE books
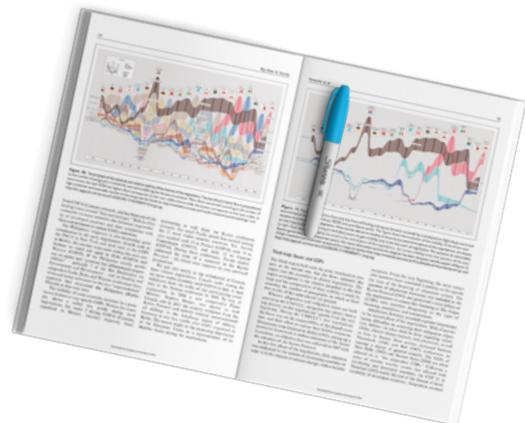
How to use Facebook

These guidelines are to support our authors and editors who wish to manage their own Facebook page. The document explains how to set up the page and best practices in using the page to communicate and engage with your target audience.

Setting up a Facebook account

Facebook offers users the option to set up a Facebook page or a Facebook group. SAGE recommends setting up a page rather than a group as the page offers greater functionality. This document is written specifically for use with a page, but some of the guidelines can apply to both types of account.

Learn more about whether a page or group is right for you.

Action Steps

1. Become a member
   a) If you have not already, become a member of **Facebook** and become familiar with the community.
   b) Update your profile – it should read like a simple CV with some personality. This is a very informal medium, so you can mention your favourite hobby alongside your recently published paper and your weekend trip alongside your favourite researchers.
   c) Your page will be more successful with the more personal contacts, or followers you have on Facebook. Start by looking up colleagues within your institution, expand to people you know within the professional societies you belong, and search their "friends" list for additional ideas.
   d) Update your personal status at least 3 times a week, write on your friend's walls, and comment on posts/photos/articles.

2. Research other pages to get a feel for them

Search for other pages, for example **Andy Field's page**. For more scholarly examples, take a look at these pages:
   · **SAGE Publishing**
   · **Social Science Space**
   · **American Sociological Association**

3. Create a Facebook page

Read Facebook's instructions on **how to create a page** and follow the steps. Add photos, descriptions, and a few posts.

4. Add a cover photo

Facebook cover photos appear at the top of each page. The recommended image specifications are: a JPG file, 820 pixels wide by 360 tall, and less than 100 kilobytes in size. For images with a logo or text, you may get a better result uploading the image as a PNG file. Facebook terms state that cover photos cannot contain price or promotional information, contact info, calls to action or references to any Facebook features, such as 'Like' or 'Share'.

5. Upload a profile photo

The profile photo is a 170 x 170 pixel image. Design is important as it overlaps the cover photo on the page. Facebook recommends using a logo - your book cover for example.

6. Utilize the timeline functionality – promote your book's history

Backdate your Facebook page to include any key dates in your history, such as publication date, previous edition information, or key dates for any other books you have authored or edited.

You can find further info on how to backdate new posts **here**.

7. Highlight key posts

Pinned posts keep important stories at the top of your Facebook page timeline. To pin a post, click the edit button on the right-hand side and select "Pin to Top of Page".

8. Manage the workflow

It may be wise to assign multiple administrators to your page. Finding fresh content on your own can become challenging. Set clear expectations of how often each administrator should update the page.

9. Provide fresh content

Keep your page up-to-date by posting a minimum of three times a week, and no more than once per day. If your book is suitable for course adoption, then instructors are likely to be considering their reading lists between March - May. It would therefore be a good idea to make sure that you are increasing visibility of your book by posting more frequently during this time.

Along with information about your book, consider posting general information about your field. This can include links to relevant blogs, photos, and thoughts/messages from your colleagues. The new Facebook timeline layout is very visual so consider posting images and photos from conferences and events.

10. Create a fan base

Invite all your contacts to like your page. Let your members know about your page through existing media (newsletters, web site, etc.). Once you have some followers, it's easier to get more as news of your page spreads virally.

11. Promote your Facebook page

Speak to your SAGE editor to promote the page as part of SAGE marketing communications. We can link to your page from our existing social media channels, your biography page on the SAGE website and relevant email campaigns. Facebook also has numerous widgets and banners to allow you to promote your content on other websites.

12. Maintaining and growing a follower base

Keep your followers happy by offering them useful and relevant information, a place where they can connect with other followers, applications they can use, and special updates just for them.

Encourage interaction with your posts: ask questions or set up surveys to encourage your community to engage. If there are questions that your Facebook page cannot answer, provide contact information for where your followers can get this information.

Remember, the more users interact with your page, the more News Feed stories for users' friends are created, magnifying awareness of the page.

Here is a helpful list of content ideas to help you get started and stay on track:

- Promotion of key features in your book
- Trending news that relates to the book's aims and scope
- Key industry news
- Feature on you as the author, or on any contributors to the book
- Promotion of any online resources for your book
- Links to order inspection copies or to buy
- Author/editor/contributor awards
- Feedback and photos from conferences/seminars you have attended – this could include a small write-up and recap of panel discussions, receptions, conversations with notable professionals in the industry, etc.
- New journal articles that link to your book and its content
- Media hits that feature your book, you as the author or any contributors

- Press release content that SAGE has released on behalf of your book
- Interviews with authors, editors or contributors

13. Using hashtags to increase the discoverability of your posts

When posting updates to Facebook, add hashtags to key words or phrases. Any word or phrase that is added as a hashtag automatically becomes clickable. When a hashtag is included in a post, clicking on it will pop out a feed that aggregates others posts that have been tagged with the same phrase. This will make it easier to find what other people are saying about specific topics and events, something that people have typically gone to Twitter to do over Facebook.

14. Track and analyze your page activity

On your page, locate the "Insights" link in your left navigation. Insights gives you access to the admin and stats areas of your page. You can see recent page activity, how many likes you have, how many people clicked on each link, where your followers are located, and more.

Guidelines for those adding and engaging with content

Be transparent at all times

If you are communicating about your institution, you should identify yourself and your role (if this isn't clear) when you are commenting on posts or adding content. Be aware of your association with your institution in online social networks. If you identify yourself as a society member, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with others in academia or research.

Understand the risk

Individuals are personally responsible for the content they publish on Facebook, blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated media. In essence, you comment (or post on the sites of others) at your own risk. Outside parties actually can pursue legal action against you (not your organization) for postings. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.

Recommended reading
Social Media for Academics – Mark Carrigan

Engaging with your audience and/or members

Dialogue must be real – not just rehashed PR/marketing speak

When you are writing for social media, don't drop in copy from your brochure, press release or similar: write something meaningful; respond to the dialogue that is on the site; post information that will be of genuine interest to others.

Engage in dialogue

Social media is reciprocal. Don't just broadcast a message: participate in genuine dialogue with others online.

Represent your book

Respect these online channels and take the same care that you would with any other communication, e.g. an email or newsletter.

Working with the media

Social media comments may generate media coverage. Agree with your editor, prior to launching your Facebook page, how you will deal with media enquiries about a related blog posting or requests for information of any kind.

Regular communication

A site/page which looks redundant or where you are not responding to online questions/comments will cause frustration within the community it has built. By the very nature of social media, this can result in the frustrations being aired in the public domain, leading to negative publicity. Before a site is launched it is imperative that all involved understand the level of commitment they will need to make to develop and grow the community.

Responding to comments on social media sites

Prior to setting up a Facebook page you should determine who will reply to comments on your social media site. If you are managing the site but have input from others, in most circumstances the person who owns or posts comments to your Facebook account will be the person who replies.

However, should you come across negative comments about your book, it is important to know how to respond.

If you decide to delete a post, explain why. Your members will understand that healthy discussion needs some moderation; provide a short list of reasons why comments may be deleted from the page. General language is fine, something like, "comments that are off-topic, offensive or inappropriate".

Learn more about responding to negative comments.
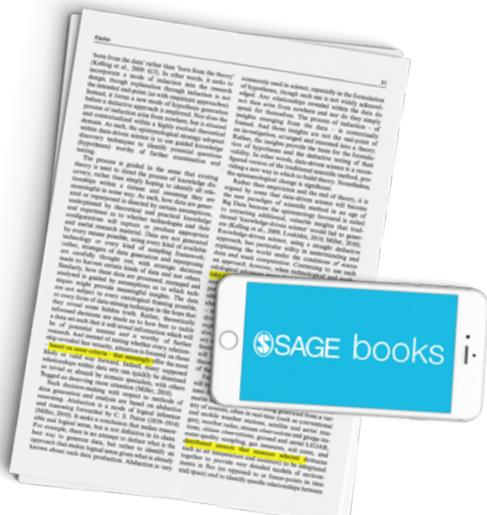
GOOD LUCK!

Using Twitter to build your profile

Twitter is a quick, immediate communication tool. It allows you to engage with real-time communication, respond to inquiries, and monitor conversations. It provides you with a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of your work and reach users outside of your normal audience. Building your profile on Twitter also means that when your book publishes you'll have a ready made audience to share the news with, which can help to drive sales.

Here are some best practices for managing postings and replying to tweets from your account:

Setting up a Twitter account

When setting up your Twitter profile you should consider the following:

- **Your Twitter Name** should reflect how people would search for you on Twitter – don't include acronyms unless that is how you are commonly referred to.
- **Your Twitter Handle** (i.e. '@...') should be short (15 characters max.) so that people can mention you in their posts – acronyms are more acceptable here.
- **Add your university or organisation URL** so people know your account is official and can easily access your content.
- **Add the name of your book to your bio** and make it clear that you are the author. You can also include your book's URL so people can easily find your book.
- **If you are using your university or organisation as your Twitter Name**, in the description briefly identify the university or organisation and then who will be running the account i.e. "Official account of [organisation name]. All tweets by [author 1], [author 2], etc."
- **Pick a thumbnail that clearly represents who you are** – a personal photo of you will be the most effective if you are tweeting as yourself.

Managing a Twitter account

Posting Guidelines

- **Post 2-3 times a day.** Frequency is important on this platform to build a good number of followers. This can include original content, as well as retweets or links to other content.
- **Tweets should be personal** and not written in the style of a press release, marketing email etc. – you are communicating directly with individuals who can respond to you immediately.
- **Brevity is important.** Twitter limits posts to 280 characters, including links. As such, you can abbreviate, write fragments, and do not have to use proper grammar.
- **Images and Videos** – posts with images and videos are much more highly interacted with, try to ensure there is a mix of posts including images, video and just text. It's best to not include text heavy images as this can lead to accessibility issues.

- **Link to content** – it is important to always link to external content within tweets, e.g. to your book on the SAGE website or other online retailers. Exceptions are when posting a question, answering someone else's tweet, or engaging in an ongoing conversation (or Twitterchat).
- **Be aware of space** – with a 280 character limit, you now have double the space to clearly communicate your thoughts. However, brevity is still king on Twitter. Start with a strong lead, and only include details that are necessary. Also remember that all links (no matter the visual length) take up 23 of your 280 characters.
- **Schedule your tweets.** Keeping an active Twitter account can be time consuming. Scheduling your tweets in advance can help minimize your time spent. While it's important to monitor your account daily for people that are reaching out to you or to post current news pieces, you can schedule your planned tweets using free resources, such as **Hootsuite**. **Twitter also has a scheduler** native to its system. Both these options will also come with basic analytics so that you can review your successful tweets and adapt your strategy.
- **Check your notifications** for people who have followed you or mentioned you in a tweet. Always respond to these notifications as this will ensure engagement and a development of your Twitter community. If there is a negative comment, refer to the "Monitoring and responding to posts" section of this document.
- **Pin your tweet** to keep important content at the top of your profile. You can choose what to pin by tapping the icon at the top right of a tweet and choosing "Pin to your profile". Note that you can only pin one tweet at a time.
- **Create Twitter threads**. With a thread you can provide additional context, or an extended point by connecting multiple tweets together. Find out how to create one **here**.
- **Create Twitter lists** that allow you to customize, organize and prioritize the tweets that you see in your timeline. Find out more on how Twitter lists work **here**.

Glossary of Twitter Terms

DM Direct Message

RT Retweet – but one that is not directly retweeted (known as a 'native retweet') and is instead sent as a tweet from your own account

TT Translated Tweet

TMB Tweet Me Back – good way of encouraging individuals or a small group to send you tweets

HT Hat Tip – a quick way to give credit to the source you are taking something from when it is not a retweet e.g. when you use a news story from The Guardian end your tweet with HT @guardian

#FF Follow Friday – a very widely recognised Twitter action carried out on Fridays, in which you recommend a set of Twitter accounts for others to follow

QT Quote Tweet - the option to add your own comments, photos, or a GIF before retweeting someone's tweet to your followers

Content Suggestions

- **Publication alerts.** Post a link to your book's webpage and share updates throughout the publication journey e.g. when the book is available to view on the website, when it is available to pre-order, and when it publishes. To further increase engagement, include an image of the book cover.

- **Articles, extracts, podcasts, and supplementary material** can be the primary resource for content for your channel.

- **Celebrate your successes.** Whether it's a book getting picked up by the media, a book award, or news about you as an author, let people know about the impact of your book.

- **Pictures and videos** are often top-clicked posts on Twitter channels. Consider taking pictures of yourself, contributors, and editors at conferences. Remember to get permission when posting a picture of anyone.

- **Discipline and industry news** are great sources of content and can solidify your channel as a key aggregator for all news within the discipline. This can be as simple as posting links to news and other research that you think would interest others.

- **Connect in person at conferences.** There's no better way to make personal connection from your digital efforts. Take notes at a conference, post meaningful quotes from the presentations, or let people know when you'll be giving a presentation or attending an event. Use conference hashtags so that your tweets can be identified by other conference attendees.

- **Use common hashtags (#)** to increase the impact of your tweet. Check #s by searching on Twitter and seeing what is being used by accounts discussing and posting content similar to your own. Avoid using #s that are actively used as part of a different subject. Capitalize hashtags for accessibility.

- **Repeat important content.** To increase book awareness and sales, repost important content one or two times spread out by several days or even weeks. There are only benefits to repeat posting of content. It will further benefit you to vary copy slightly to avoid fatigue, and place on opposite sides of the day to ensure new audiences see your post. However, do not post the same content more than 5 times in a weekly period, to ensure that you do not seem like you are spamming your followers or failing to produce new content.

- **Remain on subject.** People follow you for a reason. While it is important to stay personal, adding posts outside of your subject specialism may lose you followers if these posts are more frequent than the reason people are following you.

Building your Following

- **Mention a SAGE channel** that links to your article, and we will retweet your message. This will raise the visibility of your account and your book. A list of our SAGE discipline channels is available via our **frequently asked questions** on the SAGE Author Hub.

- **Retweet content** you find interesting. A retweet is not an endorsement. Note that if you tag an account at the beginning of a tweet, only people who follow both you and the account you are mentioning will see the the tweet in their timeline. To avoid this, you can add a full stop before the @ sign.

- **Connect with influencers.** If a book contributor is also on Twitter, mention them in your post when you post a link to their content.

- **Follow people that you want to follow your channel.** As a good rule of thumb, you should keep the total number of people that you follow a little lower than the number of people following you. If you don't know where to start, look at followers of other authors in your area of expertise.
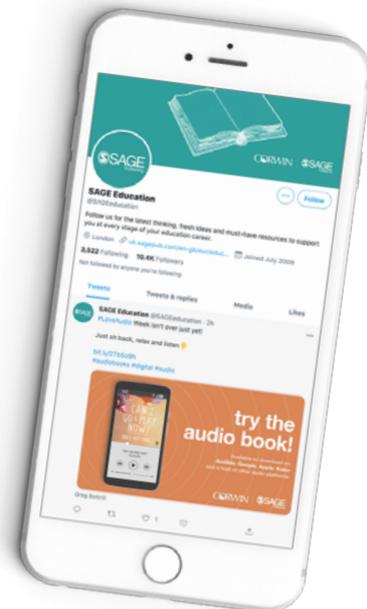
What not to do on Twitter

- **Don't ask for followers.** People ultimately follow you on Twitter because you provide value. Concentrate on your content, not increasing your number of followers. This will happen naturally if your content is of value.

- **Don't publicly thank all your followers.** The quickest way to get people to stop following you is to provide a lack of good content or engaging dialogue. Thanking each of your new followers is a nice concept, but not practical. Keep in mind that tweeting the names of those following you is not valuable content to anyone. If you really do want to thank each follower:

  · Use the direct message feature and thank them privately – this is much more personal.

  · Retweet good content they have posted and give them credit for it (the ultimate thank you!).

- **Don't worry about those that unfollow you.** Those who unfollow you on Twitter may want to connect with you on a different network, or search your info at their leisure. They will also likely reconnect with you on Twitter at a later date if you continue to build your community and provide engaging content.

Monitoring and responding to posts

- **Check your account daily** for comments or communications about your book. Depending on the frequency of the tweets from your account, you may need to check more often than daily.

- **Respond to direct messages or tweets to your account.** All these messages should be replied to. As the messages are already in the public space, i) users will see if you haven't replied and ii) it gives you a chance to address their concerns.

- **Keyword searches may reveal further comments** about your book. There is no definitive answer when determining whether to reply to these tweets – you should use your judgement based on the content of the message. Obviously, if the message doesn't make sense or it isn't clear whether they are referring to your book or a different text you may decide not to reply. If a message is clearly someone complaining about your book then you should respond to this tweet to demonstrate you are proactive in addressing such concerns. If you decide to respond by telephone or email (away from Twitter) you should reply saying you are doing this. It is important that you are seen to be replying, as the complaint will be visible in the public domain.

- **Negative comments will happen** whether or not we reply. By replying you have the opportunity to address problems and change someone's perception and you may enter an opportunity to engage in a productive conversation.

Check out these free tools to help build and monitor your community:

- **Hootsuite** – the easiest to use social media scheduler, also provides great analytics and reporting

- **CrowdFire** – great tool for monitoring your followers and easily find relevant and valuable people to follow

- **Commun.It** – An excellent companion to CrowdFire as it informs you about your Twitter "community", not just followers and following but those who have ever interacted with your tweets, tweets that mention you, etc.

- **Tweeps Map** – a tool that allows you to see the geographical location and spread of your followers

- **Canva** – a free platform that can be used to create social media images and includes free templates for you to use. Images are a great way to drive engagement

- **Free image banks** – **Shutterstock**, **Pixabay** and **Pexels** are all sites offering copyright free images that you can use in your social media posts

GOOD LUCK!

Recommended reading
Social Media for Academics – Mark Carrigan

SAGE books