Social Media guide

Social media can be a really powerful tool, but only if you understand how, when and why to use it, and make sure you integrate it with more traditional forms of communication. Hopefully this guide will begin to give you a few ideas how can do that.

Facebook

The most useful tools you can make use of as a society on Facebook are **groups** and **pages**, but they fulfil very different purposes for a society or campaign. Here's how to make the most of them.

Groups

Groups are relatively straight forward- a group is simply a place where different members of your society can get together and organise, share interesting content and chat. On the left-hand side of your newsfeed should be a list of the different groups you're already part of- at the bottom of this list just click 'Create Group'.

The important thing to bear in mind with groups is the different privacy levels: a '**secret' group** is one that cannot be found by searching for it: people can only discover it by being added to it by someone already a member. This is best for a group that is going to be discussing private matters- if you set up a group just for your committee members to share documents and discuss direction, this might be the one for you.

A '**closed' group** is one that will come up if people search for it, but to join the group and be able to post content in it, someone will have to be approved by a current member of the group.

An '**open group'** is one anyone can search for and join, with no barriers to entry. If you were setting up a group for all of the members of your society you'd probably want it to be either a closed or open group, depending on how exclusive you wanted to be.

Another important point for groups is **admin rights**: basically, if you set the group up you have the ability to change anything about the group: the name, the photo, who's a member, deleting posts etc, but you can make other people (perhaps the rest of your committee) admins too. You can do this by clicking on the 'Members' tab on the bottom left of the photo on the group page and then clicking on the cog-wheel icon next to a member's name.

It's important as an admin to keep an eye on what's happening in the group and be mindful of spam posting (post that have nothing to do with your society) or abusive comments/posts. Whilst free speech

is a core value in our movement, members shouldn't have to deal with online abuse- it's up to an admin to remove these comments and a member if necessary. Having a clear commenting guideline (i.e what you won't tolerate) somewhere in the description of the group would be helpful to navigate these issues.

Adding members is simple: just type their name into the bar on the right-hand side when you're on the group page. Who can do this (just admins vs any member) will depend upon the settings of your group, which you can play around with by clicking on the three dots button on the bottom right of the cover photo and selecting 'Edit Group Settings'.

To make the most out of groups post updates in them regularly: events that are coming up, questions to inform the direction of the society (you can **create a poll** by clicking on the 3rd icon along at the top of the status box) but also interesting articles and videos too, to help develop a bit of an online community to compliment the offline one.

Pages
So groups are primarily for individuals already involved with your society to organise and network, while pages are more useful in promoting your society and reaching out to those not so involved.

As with groups there should be a section called 'Pages' on the left-hand side of your Facebook feed: click on the 'Create Page' tab here. Key things in setting up the page are profile picture (your society logo, if you have one, is probably a good bet) and which audience you particularly want to target (local area and those interested in 'student life' 'humanism' etc might be a good start). Once you're up and running, there's a few tools to be aware of that can help you make the most impact with your page.

Scheduling posts can be a huge time saver, as well as a way of ensuring your page is staying active even if you're really busy with other things. Essentially, the scheduling option allows you to post something as your page, but choose the date and time when this post will actually go out. This means that if you know you have a busy week ahead you can spend 20 minutes on Monday morning scheduling a few posts and then you don't have to worry about it for the rest of the week.

This is great as it's important to make sure you're keeping your page up to date: there's nothing worse than someone interested in your society searching for you on Facebook and seeing that you haven't posted anything for weeks. Scheduling posts can help with this, making sure you have a good variety of posts spaced out over a period of time.

Scheduling a post is simple: just type out your post as you normally would on your page, and then, instead of hitting the 'post' button, select the drop down arrow on the right-hand side and select

'schedule' (you can also save draft posts through this menu and work on them later). Once you've done this all you have to is select the time and date you want the post to go out on and hit 'Schedule'.

If you're stuck for things to post, a good source of interesting articles and information can be the national Humanists UK page, and the national Humanist Students one too- you can follow their links and post them with your own personal message, or simply directly share them from these pages. However, make sure you're posting plenty of stuff relevant to your society and local area too!

It's also important to make sure you're not posting too often: posting something on any social media platform every ten minutes (unless you're covering a live event) can lose the reach of each individual post, not to mention that it might get on the nerves of your followers! The general rule for Facebook is between 2-3 posts a day, unless you're covering a specific event.

Advice on when the best time to post on Facebook is mixed, but broadly, between noon and 5pm on weekdays is likely to get the most reach. Posting something early in the morning or in the middle of the night will seriously lower the reach- bare this in mind when scheduling posts!

Page insights can be really useful to get a feel for how well your page is doing. You can find out a whole host of information, from how many news feeds you have reached, to how many more 'interactions' (likes/shares/comments etc) you've had compared to last week. Keep an eye on these stats regularly: they're a good way to tell whether you're posting interesting content in the right way, at the right time, and whether your social media presence is growing or stagnating.

Twitter
Your reach on all types of social media can rise exponentially, with the more people you have in your network not only giving you a bigger reach, but also making it easier to grow your network further. This is particularly true for Twitter, with its system of tweets, retweets and follows.

An easy way to grow your reach then is the 'follow/unfollow' game where you search a particular hashtag (e.g 'humanism' or 'secularism') or search through another accounts followers (perhaps Humanists UK, Humanist Students, or your SU) and follow a number of the accounts, with the hope that they will follow you back. You can then come back to the list of who you are following a few days later and 'unfollow' anyone that hasn't followed you back (unless you want to keep seeing their tweets).

Hashtags can have a practical use in reaching your target audience and extending your impact on Twitter.

Tweetdeck can be a great tool for managing multiple Twitter accounts at once, particularly useful for if you want to tweet the same thing from various accounts and for covering live events (such as society events, thereby boosting the accessibility of your events and reaching a wider audience).

The way Tweetdeck works is that you have 'columns' for each account; a column for that accounts 'home' (like the newsfeed for Facebook, where the tweets of all the accounts you follow appear), a 'notifications' column, a messages column and so on. If you have two accounts registered for tweetdeck, you'll have two of each of these appear: in the example below I'm using my account and Queen's Humanist Society account through Tweetdeck, so I have a home column for both of them, a notifications column for both of them, and so on.

You can add and remove accounts by clicking on the 'Accounts' icon in the bottom left- you'll need the Twitter accounts username/email and password to be able to add it to your Tweetdeck.

You can manage which columns appear on your Tweetdeck too. On the left-hand side of the page there's a list of icons for each column: a house for home, a bell for notifications etc. At the bottom of this list is a plus sign, and this is where you can add a column for one or multiple accounts.

Once you're all set up with your accounts and columns, tweeting and retweeting from all your accounts is simple. Just hit the tweet button in the top left corner (or retweet on the relevant tweet) and tick which accounts you want to perform this action from- then you're done!

Give it a go by following this link and entering in your account/s' details: https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/

Thunderclap is another great tool- get supporters to sign up and it will make it so that they all have a tweet (you can choose the wording) going out at exactly the same time on a given day, helping get the hashtag (if you're using one) trending. This can be useful in getting lots of people at once to share information about an event you're running or a cause you're supporting. If you're campaigning as a society, this could also be useful by targeting it at a certain account, say, your university or Vice Chancellor or local MP. Imagine getting a hundred people tweet you about the same issue at the exact same time?

Photo/Video platforms
Consider using other platforms too: Vine, Instagram, Snapchat and Youtube can be great for additional engagements, linking them up to Facebook and Twitter: videos and photos get a lot more shares, likes and retweets than other content.

Make a short video as a society explaining your campaign or event- you could even have a presidents vlog keeping members up to date with what you've been up to as a society over the past month. A less time-consuming way of doing this could be by having a society snapchat and having a 'story' of the most recent things you've been up to as a society.

If you're able to, film any events you host or protest actions you take- this makes you more accessible to members that might be distance learners or simply couldn't make a particular event but were interested in it. You could build on this by even live-streaming events (Periscope is a good site for this, or Facebook now have 'Facebook Live') and build in distance-participation by encouraging questions, comments and support via social media with hashtags and Facebook groups.

Group chat sites like whatsapp can in part play a similar organisational and communication role that Facebook groups do, helping quickly chat to a number of different society members and spread necessary info quickly, leaving room for discussion and debate too.