

# Social Media Guidelines

## for Young Reporters



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## What is social media?

Social media is a way for one person or a group to meet up with other people on the Internet. It allows people to be part of an online community:

- Meet new friends and find old friends
- Share information
- Find people who have the same interests as you
- Have interactive discussions/debates
- Share media you've produced (audio, photos, videos, articles)
- Promote who you are

## How can I use social media to share my work?



As a group of young reporters you can use social media to promote your audio content, shows, the outreach activities that you host and get a response from your listeners using social media channels.



Social media is also a great resource to gauge nationally trending topics and views so that you can create responsive shows and be on the pulse of what people are talking about.



As a youth reporter group, you are not using social media to chat to friends. You are using it to share who you are as a group and what you are doing.

- First you need to decide what exactly your aim is as a youth reporter group
- Once you have defined who you are, you can register on social media platforms (you will need an email address to register for all platforms)
- You can use the social media platforms to share:

- ★ Who are you
- ★ What you do
- ★ Connect with people that are doing similar work
- ★ Connect with people who are interested in youth media or the issues you cover
- ★ Start discussions around topics
- ★ Share advice or experiences of being a young reporters group
- ★ Share the media you produce (photos/videos/podcasts/articles)
- ★ Create hype and a build up to an interesting show topic or outreach event



# Key social media platforms youth reporters use

## Facebook

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)



Facebook is a social network with about 1.9 billion active users per month from countries all around the world.

If you had to compare Facebook to a real-life situation it would be like a community centre, a place where you go to not only to catch up with friends and to make new ones, but also to meet people who have the same interests as you.

Facebook also allows you to get the latest news and discover new things. Facebook provides you with an opportunity to build an online community with other users, friends, listeners, brands and organizations. Users build their credibility and strengthen their online community with:

- posts that share information with all users
- updates - short public announcements on what your group is doing, or details about your shows
- multi-media posts - sharing media you have produced

### How to:



As a young reporter group, with the aim of wanting promote who you are, what you are doing, and interacting with your listeners, creating a **Facebook Page** is a great start.

A Page allows you to publicly share information and interact with users. Followers can 'Like' your page and get updates of your activities.

# Twitter

www.twitter.com



Through short, 140-character posts (called tweets),

Twitter provides users with a way to quickly and efficiently get a message or information out to a large online community.

If you had to compare Twitter to a real-life environment, it would almost be like the cars that drive through town with loudhailers.

Users build their credibility and strengthen their online community by:

- Creating a username whereby people can quickly identify who you are
- Tweeting (sending out information specific to what you do as a youth reporter group)
- Tweeting to other users, by including their username/handle in the posts (who are interested in the same things)
- Retweeting (amplifying posts that speak to who you are and the issues important to your group)
- Direct messages (sending a private message to a person who follows your tweets)

## How to:



Again, as with Facebook, you are registering as your youth reporter group (not in a personal capacity) so the twitter name you choose needs to identify who you are as a youth group.

Once you have created a twitter profile, start following organizations or people that have the same interests as you, and join in conversations they are having. Send out frequent tweets that fit the profile of who you are as a youth reporter group and what you are doing. Try posting three to five times a day to start!

# Instagram

[www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com)



Instagram is a mobile phone photo editing and sharing application (app), and is currently one of the most popular social networks worldwide. It has 700 million monthly active users and is still growing.

Instagram was primarily designed for mobile use, but it now has a web presence too. By taking a photo with a smartphone, you can choose a filter and edit the photo (cropping, adjusting colors, changing the lighting, and more) to make it something extra special to share.

You can build your online community, by sharing photos or short videos about your activities regularly, so people stay interested. You can link your Instagram account to your Twitter and Facebook accounts so each time you upload a photo to Instagram, you'll have the chance to share it with your other communities too.

## How to:



You create an Instagram account, in the same way you would on Facebook or Twitter. Then, during the Instagram posting process, you can select if you would like the photos or videos to also appear on your Facebook and Twitter profiles for all your friends and followers to see. Your account will also have a newsfeed that you can scroll through, so you can see all the best moments from the people you choose to follow.

# WhatsApp

[www.whatsapp.com](http://www.whatsapp.com)



*WhatsApp* Messenger is a free instant messaging service for smartphones.

It uses the Internet to make voice calls, video calls, and to send text messages, images, videos, documents, user location, audio files, phone contacts and voice notes to other users using standard cellular mobile numbers. More than 1 billion people in over 180 countries use *WhatsApp* to stay in touch with friends and family, and it is the most popular instant messaging app currently on the market.

*WhatsApp* is free which has made it very popular with youth. With updates over the years, this app has allowed people to create chat groups to communicate with bigger groups, and not just one-on-one chatting.

## How to:



WhatsApp can be freely downloaded onto your mobile phone, which has made it very popular with young people. This app allows you to create one-on-one 'chats' with your friends, and group chats which allow you to communicate with bigger groups.

This app allows you to create a space to communicate with other youth reporters, your community and the radio station.

So you can also use it as a form of social media to share your stories, your shows and outreach activities.



YouTube is a video-sharing website where users can upload, share, and view videos. YouTube provides a platform for you to showcase original videos on work you are doing with people from all over the world.

YouTube is a great way to share the story of who you are and the work you are doing through videos you upload for people to watch, like and comment. It also provides links that you can use to share your videos on Facebook, Twitter and your blog.

Users build their credibility and strengthen their online community by:

- Creating a channel with a name that immediately identifies who you are
- Uploading videos that directly relate to who you are and what you are doing as a young reporter group

## How to:



All you need to do is register with YouTube, and start uploading and organising videos to your channel.

Remember to add some information explaining what your videos are about and providing links to your Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in the description box. Use tags to make your videos easier to search for.

# Best practices for using social media

## ★ You should have a plan and a purpose for each social media platform you register with

Stay away from personal information or opinions – this is not about you, it is about your youth reporter group, what your group stands for, and what you are doing together. Do not put up how you're feeling for that moment or day if it's not related to your youth reporter experience. Posting updates like, "I'm bored" will lose you credibility.

The same applies to photos/videos, use only what is representative of your group in the best light and relates to the work you're doing. You're telling a story on each platform - keep people engaged with what happens next!

## ★ Link all social media platforms

Each of the social media platforms you are using should work together to amplify your group's story and reinforce its purpose. This way your friends and followers can connect and share your content with others in their network. But try and stay away from posting or sharing the exact same information on all the different social media sites.

## ★ You are there to interact and engage with people

Share useful information, be part of conversations, interact with your followers and friends. You're not on social media sites just to brag about who you are. You are a youth reporter group and have expertise and interest in youth reporting, so share articles you find online that relate to topics you're dealing with or presenting. Share what you have learned or are learning, or what you have achieved.

## ★ Don't bombard users

Do you get irritated with friends or family when they tell you the same things over and over or force you to listen to them all the time? Well the same thing applies in social media communities. Don't flood your followers with messages, or updates that clog their newsfeeds. Be conscious of what is too much information in any given day!

## ★ Online Etiquette

There are rules and good practices when it comes to communicating on social media platforms. You should always be considerate and respectful in how you share information. Here are some basic social conventions:

- In your posts or comments, do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, political or other beliefs, gender, disability, age or medical condition, in particular HIV.
- Always represent others like you would want to be represented. Don't send pictures, videos or texts through WhatsApp, Snapchat or social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram that puts someone in a bad light.
- Don't use aggressive language or swear words, and be aware that capital letters could be perceived as aggressive.
- Don't post intimate pictures of someone else or yourself
- Don't post controversial messages with the aim of upsetting people.

## ★ Roles and responsibilities for regular posting

As a group you need to decide who is posting on your social media channels, and how often it should be. You can rotate this role in your group, but it should always be clear who takes the responsibility, so it is not forgotten. Your followers want to stay updated with your activities, your shows and any other news.

## ★ Keeping your audiences

When you setup your specific social media account for your youth reporter group, be aware of the names the previous young reporter group used. It is best to keep the name and account consistent across different years, so that you don't lose followers or leave certain followers behind when you create a new account.

## ★ Share content regularly

You need to be updating your Facebook page/Twitter account on average a minimum of twice a week, to keep people interested and keep interaction active and constant. If you don't, your group of followers and friends will lose interest and your community will not grow.

## 11 tips on creating great posts on Facebook



### ★ People click on visuals

A picture is worth a thousand words! Always try create posts that have an image attached or something visual or graphic, like adding text to a bright colour background. Make sure the photos you post are the best quality you can get and relevant to your post, for visually stimulating engagement. Videos are great too! Hosting an event or outreach? Broadcasting live? Preparing for a radio show? Try posting a live video on Facebook to show what's happening and how youth radio magic happens!

### ★ Short but Sweet is best

Keep it short and clear. Facebook posts that are 10 words or less get the most attention from users. Add an image to that and you have a powerful post. If you are sharing news about an upcoming show, or outreach event, include **where** it took place, **what** happened, **who** was it with and **how** did it go.

### ★ Let the young people speak

Followers love to hear what people think, especially youth. Ask young people questions and let their voices be heard in the post, either through direct quotes or audio comments.

### ★ Finding facts

Use the radio production guide fact sheets that CRF provides to find quotes and facts to share with your followers. While we've done a lot of research already, you can use the resources to continue learning more about the topics too. You can use social media to inform, teach and inspire people about different issues. Show your followers and friends that you're not only an expert, but that you care about them.

## ★ Create 'Shareworthy' posts

What makes a post 'shareworthy' is when people find enough value in the content to share it with friends, family and colleagues. An interesting video, a powerful statement or fact is often what friends and followers will share.

## ★ Connect with partners - tag people

One of the best ways to get your posts seen by more people is to use **tagging**.

Tag partners, funders local businesses, NGOs and sponsors when you share something. This will make it easy for the post to be seen, re-posted and shared in their network. You tag someone by adding the '@' symbol before their username on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

## ★ Create 'data-friendly' posts

Many South Africans look at social media sites from their cellphones. Data is expensive in this country, especially for young people and students! So when you post something, especially big files or videos, think about who you want to see it.

## ★ Sharing Videos

If you want to share a video, upload it directly to Facebook and share from there. Facebook loves videos but it doesn't like sharing content from YouTube. If you're sharing videos that you've created yourself the best bet is to **upload them directly** in the post. Twitter is great for featuring short recorded or live videos. You can also record and post videos through Instagram.

## ★ Time of Day

When you share your post is an important factor. **Time your post sometime between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m.** Most people are active at those times, with peaks right after 9 a.m. (when people arrive at work), 12 p.m. (lunchtime Facebook -time), 5 p.m. and before bed at 9 p.m. or later. Saturdays are also a popular time for Facebook use as well.

If you only post once a day, think about posting later at night when your readers are the most active on Facebook. When in doubt, keep an eye out for when posts get more attention (through likes, comments, shares, etc.). Is it in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening? Always be prepared to adjust to changes and updates on social media.

## ★ The day you post is important

While users are on Facebook everyday there is one day that stands out.

**Sunday** is the day the platform sees the most active users. Sharing posts in the week is great, but you might have more people reading your news on the weekend. Try out different days and see what is successful.

## ★ Call your community to action!

A call to action (CTA) is a message that encourages your friends and followers to do something. Think of CTAs as invitations to your online community to listen to your radio shows, watch your videos, read your blog and check out your photos. Here are some examples of using calls to action in a post: “Listen to our latest radio show on teen pregnancy right here!”, “Ever been behind-the-scenes at a radio station? Check out how we get ready to broadcast!”, “Watch how our team comes together to create a radio show!”, “What does radio mean to you? Tell us in the comments below!”, etc. Ideally, a CTA should be in every single post.

## Brief HOW TOs you might not know

### How to attach Soundcloud link to a post:

In order to share your radio show on social media, you need to upload your show to Soundcloud. Keep in mind that it's a good idea to keep the original audio file on your computer and/or on a USB drive or hard drive. Once your audio is uploaded to Soundcloud, it is easy to share on Facebook or Twitter for your followers to listen to if they missed the show on the airwaves.

- Upload your show to your Soundcloud account
- Click on the show you want to share
- Copy the URL link from Soundcloud
- Paste this link into a Facebook Page post.
- A preview image will be created automatically by Facebook. All you need to do is describe the show.



### How to encourage audience feedback:

During your youth reporter show at your radio station, it is always a good idea to encourage audience participation and feedback. In addition to inviting listeners to call in, you can ask listeners to share their ideas and comments on Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. You will need to give the name of your Facebook Page; your Twitter account and a specific number for listeners to send a text message. Texting might often be easier for listeners, as they can do it quickly and more anonymously.

### How do I share a video?

If one of the youth reporters or facilitators has a smart phone with a good quality camera, you can make a short video of the action in studio while your show is being broadcast. You can share this short video (30 to 90 seconds) on Facebook and Instagram to give your followers a taste of the feeling and atmosphere in a recording studio. Remember the tips about it being short and sweet!

## How do I schedule posts?

Did you know that you can prepare a Facebook post, and choose when it gets released? If you want to invite people to listen to your show, but don't have time to share the post on the day, you can schedule the post beforehand and it will be shared at a time you choose.

- Once you have written your text/added a photo/added a link, click on the drop-down menu on **Publish**, and choose **Schedule**.
- There you can choose a date and time.
- Click on Schedule, and your post will be released automatically at the date and time you chose!