

## SOME COMMON SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

### *This is not an exhaustive list*

#### 1. Blogs

Blogs (“web logs”) are online diaries or personal websites where the owner will publish regular posts and comments are invited. Blogs use a conversational style of documentation; often blogs focus on a particular ‘*area of interest*’; some blogs discuss personal experience. WordPress is a popular blogging tool.



Example: <http://www.dominicanablog.com/>

#### 2. Internet Forums / Message Boards

2.1. Similar to Blogs, Internet Forums (sometimes called Message Boards) contain messages and comments, but posted by the public or by members registered with the forum. Areas of the forum are usually organised by topic into different sub-forums, and contributors can usually start discussions on new topics.



Example: <http://www.reddit.com/>

Example: <http://www.mumsnet.com/>

#### 3. Twitter

3.1. This is the most common micro-blogging site, where users publish short messages known as tweets. Users can choose to follow other users, meaning they receive a stream of updates made by the people they are following. Private and public messages and photographs can also be sent between users.



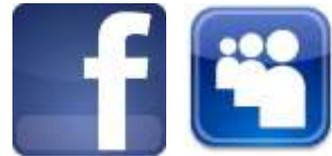
3.2. Twitter instantly connects you to the people, news and events you care about, you can get updates from your friends and post your Tweets to Facebook.

3.3. Messages can be “tagged” using “#hashtags” to indicate their topics. The most popular topics are said to be “trending”.

Example: <http://twitter.com/archdiocglasgow>

**4. Facebook / MySpace / Google+ / LinkedIn / etc.**

**4.1.** Facebook is the most popular social networking site worldwide. Users can build a network of friends, find people with similar interests and background to them, organise events and social gatherings, send messages and join campaigns.



**4.2.** Users can select the level of privacy they wish to have, but the mechanisms for doing this received widespread criticism for being complicated and confusing.



**4.3.** LinkedIn is primarily used for business networking.



**4.4.** Other social networking sites include Ning, MySpace, Bebo and Google+.

Example: <http://www.facebook.com/SCIAF>

Example: <https://plus.google.com/+BBCNews>

**5. Picasa / Flickr / Pinterest**

**5.1.** These share photographs via programs running on your computer, tablet device or smartphone, or via websites. Users upload pictures and can categorise and share them with others. You can also search for photos uploaded by other users on a particular theme.



Example: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/vatican/>

Example: <https://picasaweb.google.com/home>

**6. YouTube / Vimeo**

**6.1.** These are video sharing websites. It is free and easy to upload videos from a computer or mobile phone. Most video is searchable and publicly accessible.



**6.2.** Videos can be grouped into channels, e.g. by topic.



Example: <http://www.youtube.com/vatican>

**7. Skype / FaceTime / Google Hangouts**

**7.1.** These programs permit groups of people to talk to each other and share live video.



**7.2.** These can be a lot cheaper than international telephone calls, so are often used for keeping in touch with distant friends and families.



**8. BlackBerry Messenger**

**8.1.** Also known as BBM, this allows messaging between users of BlackBerry devices, either to individuals or groups. Users can send pictures, voice notes (audio recordings), files, map locations and other information.



**8.2.** Messages are normally transferred directly between users without being stored centrally, making it relatively difficult for authorities (or parents) to view data afterwards. Because of this, BBM is commonly linked with "sexting" (sending explicit text / photos / videos) though other mechanisms for this practice exist.

**8.3.** The system gained further notoriety for its use by organisers of the riots across England in 2011.

**9. Foursquare**

**9.1.** Foursquare is a location-based social networking website for mobile devices, such as smartphones. Users "check in" at venues using a mobile website, text messaging or a device-specific application by selecting from a list of venues the application locates nearby.



**10. Alternative Reality Games (ARGs) and Online Role-Playing Games (ORPGs)**

**10.1.** Sometimes also categorised as MPORPGs (Multi-Player Online Role-Playing Games) or MMORPGs (Massively Multi-Player Online Role-Playing Games). These allow participants to take on alternative persona and interact online, either via web sites or via games installed on computers or smartphones.

**10.2.** Interaction can vary from text-based messaging to voice and video. Game players can appear as animated cartoon characters known as “avatars”, mimicking real life or taking on fantasy characteristics.

**10.3.** Game play can be strategy-based, such as building cities (e.g. The Sims), escapist (e.g. Second Life), violent (e.g. Call of Duty).



**10.4.** Participants can invest vast amounts of time and effort developing their online characters, which can become worth considerable sums of real money, and are sometimes bought and sold. People have been sued in real life for damages inflicted on the “value” of online characters.

**10.5.** Some games are attractive to children, e.g. The Sims, but adults may also participate.



**10.6.** In some games, the characters can engage in offensive or even sexual behaviour. Real lives have been ruined by actions within online alternative realities, e.g. a couple divorced in real life citing sexual activity between the husband’s online character and another female.



## **11. Some other social network mechanisms...**

**11.1.** File Sharing – Google Docs, SkyDrive, Dropbox, Evernote; these and many other similar programs allow uploading and sharing of documents, photos, videos, etc.

**11.2.** Chat Rooms – like Internet Forums (text), Skype (voice / video), but communication takes place instantly and the “conversation” is not usually stored for later playback.

**11.3.** Dating Sites – nowadays used by busy professionals as much as by “lonely hearts”, individuals submit personal profiles and are matched with likely partners.

**11.4.** Geocaching - a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices such as smartphones. Participants navigate to a specific geographic location to find the “treasure”, which may or may not have monetary value.

**11.5.** GPS Assassins – a geocaching variant where, instead of hunting treasure participants locate and “attack” each other in real life, e.g. using water pistols.