



Make it Yours

Using social media

Social media is a great way to share news, views and information. Never before has there been so many ways to communicate with others – it's exciting, powerful and engaging. It allows users to interact, comment, share videos, photos, to communicate and to collaborate. It's accessible on mobile technology - not just the home PC - and allows us to reach more and more people. So if you're not already familiar with some of the social media platforms, give them a go! Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat are the most popular social media platforms in the UK.

Facebook

The most popular social networking site with over 2.4 billion users worldwide and 35 million in the UK. You can create personal profiles and become 'friends' with people while organisations and businesses can create pages, everyone can create and engage with groups. You can join groups to talk to likeminded people and share messages with people publically and privately through Messenger. Facebook is simple to set up and maintain although there is a time commitment in terms of keeping your account updated regularly and responding to posts or messages left by others. Your content needs to be interesting and varied, frequent and timely and also credible and authentic.

YouTube

Is the top website for video uploading, sharing and viewing. There are 1.9 billion YouTube users, with 23 million in the UK alone. Over a billion hours of YouTube videos are watched daily; anyone with access to the internet can upload and share videos from private individuals to professional YouTubers as well as organisations and businesses. YouTube is owned by Google and acts as a video search engine – with people searching for everything from explainer videos to inspirational videos for exploring locations around the world. As an individual you can subscribe to YouTube channels and customise your own experience to see the content that interests you, YouTube will then make recommendations of other videos to watch based on user's preferences. A YouTube channel requires regular, high quality video and audio and interesting stories to be successful.



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Instagram

Instagram is the fastest growing social network of all time; it is a simple photo and video sharing app that you can only use via smartphones and tablets with cameras. Instagram was launched in 2010 and already has 1 billion users worldwide; 14 million people use it in the UK. Instagram tends to have a younger demographic to Facebook and Twitter and sees 95 million posts shared daily. Instagram encourages you to follow accounts and use hashtags to search and explore content, similar to Facebook and Twitter users have a profile and a newsfeed but unlike Facebook and Twitter, Instagram puts imagery (photos and videos) above text. You can also use Instagram's photo filters and editing functions to customise or enhance your photos and videos.

Twitter

There is an estimated 883 million users on Twitter and 13 million users in the UK, Twitter is still a popular social network but its growth has levelled out over the last few years. Twitter is a micro-blogging site, where you choose to follow people, hashtags and trends and receive messages from other users. Users post short, snappy messages up to 240 characters and can include photos, videos and website links. Twitter works best for communicating immediate and timely messages, it is considered a good source of up-to-the minute news. It attracts an older demographic of user and tends to be used most often by professionals across the private and public sectors in the UK. It is also the place to connect with local, regional and national media such as journalists and digital influencers. Twitter is about sharing opinions, and while sending tweets are relatively simple, monitoring feedback and sending replies can be timely. Twitter also relies on the use of hashtags and tagging of twitter accounts.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a newer social networking app most popular with a younger demographic, it allows you to send messages as photos and videos with friends and the public, with a short life span over an app on a smartphone. You can apply filters to your photos and videos which you can then upload as a Snap to friends (or followers) who can only see that message twice before it disappears. Snapchat's disappearing content makes online interaction feel more human and a little more grounded in the present moment. Businesses and organisations tend to use the Stories feature where they send photos and videos that can be viewed by followers publically for 24 hours only before they disappear.