

Social Media Terms from Wikipedia

Alerts: search engines allow you to specify words, phrases or tags that you want checked periodically, with results of those searches returned to you by email. You may also be able to read the searches by RSS feed. This form of search allows you to check whether you, your organization, your blog or blog item has been mentioned elsewhere, and so to respond if you wish.

An **archive** may refer to topics from an online discussion that has been closed but saved for later reference. On blogs, archives are collections of earlier items usually organized by week or month. You may still be able to comment on archived items.

Blogs are websites with dated items of content in reverse chronological order, self-published by bloggers. Items – sometimes called posts - may have keyword tags associated with them, are usually available as feeds, and often allow commenting.

Here's a longer explanation: Traditional websites have pages as their main building blocks, with an address link (URL) for each page, and menus to provide navigation between them. Blogs are websites where the items of content - for example text, photos, video, audio - have URLs plus other ways of identifying them by keywords - known as tags. This means you can search for individuals items on the Net, and also pull items out of their sites and remix them through feeds and aggregation. Blogs are generally designed in journal format, with most recent items at the top of a page, and written in a conversational, personal style, giving the author an authentic voice online. Blogs can offer readers the opportunity to comment on, and link to items. Because blog items can be made available from the site in a stream of content - known as an RSS feed - you can subscribe to them and read them through a newsreader or aggregator. That means you don't have to visit a blog site to read it - you can pull the content to your desktop or a single website aggregator. Blogs are easy to set up, and update. Their disadvantage is that items can get buried under the growing heap of new content unless the author provides some signposting.

*****Bookmarking** is saving the address of a website or item of content, either in your browser, or on a social bookmarking site like del.icio.us. If you add tags, others can easily use your research too, and the social bookmarking site becomes an enormous public library. If groups agree the tags they'll use, it makes collaborative research much easier.

Bulletin boards were the early vehicles for online collaboration, where users connected with a central computer to post and read email-like messages. They were the electronic equivalent of public notice boards. The term is still used for forums.

Collective intelligence has been [defined by George Pór](#) as the capacity of a human community to evolve toward higher order complexity thought, problem-solving and integration through collaboration and innovation. For a network to develop this “mind of its own” there needs to be a willingness among members to share and collaborate.

*****Comments:** blogs may allow readers to add comments under items, and may also provide a feed for comments as well as for main items. That means you can keep up with conversations without having to revisit the site to check whether anything has been added.

*****Commitment:** the “social” aspect of social media means that tools are most useful when other people commit to using them too. Commitment will depend on people’s degree of interest in a subject, capability online, preparedness to share with others, degree of comfort in a new place, as well as the usability of the site or tool.

Online **communities** are groups of people communicating mainly through the Internet. They may simply have a shared interest to talk about ... or more formally learn from each other and find solutions as a [Community of Practice](#). Online communities may use email lists or forums, where content is centralized. Communities may also emerge from conversations around or between bloggers. While communities do emerge organically, some community-building is necessary if there are specific goals to achieve.

Community building is the process of recruiting potential community or network participants, helping them to find shared interests and goals, use the technology, and develop useful conversations. A number of different roles may be involved.

*****Content management systems (CMS)** are sometime described as the Swiss Army knives of social media. They are software suites offering the ability to create static web pages, document stores, blog, wikis, and other tools. CMSs have the advantage of offering comprehensive solutions - but can be challenging to configure, and each of the different tools may not be quite as good as a stand-alone version. Unless you have some technical skills, they are best suited for situations where you can employ a web developer to work with you, and provide some continuing support.

*****Control:** social networking is difficult to control because if people can't say something in one place they can blog or comment elsewhere. That can be challenging for hierarchical organizations used to centrally-managed websites.

Conversation through blogging, commenting or contributing to forums is the currency of social networking.

*****Crowd sourcing** refers to harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of those outside an organization who are prepared to volunteer their time contributing content and solving problems.

Cyberspace has been widely used as a general term for the Internet or World Wide Web. More recently blogosphere has emerged as a term for interconnected blogs.

Email lists, or groups, are important networking tools offering the facility to “starburst” a message from a central postbox to any number of subscribers, and for them to respond.

Face-to-face (f2) is used to describe people meeting offline. While social media may reduce the need to meet, direct contact gives far more clues, quickly, about a person than you can get online. Online interaction is likely to be richer after f2f meetings.

Feeds are the means by which you can read, view or listen to items from blogs and other RSS-enabled sites without visiting the site, by subscribing and using an aggregator or newsreader. Feeds contain the content of an item and any associated tags without the design or structure of a web page.

Friends, on social networking sites, are contacts whose profile you link to in your profile. On some sites people have to accept the link, in others, not.

Instant messaging: (IM) is chat with one other person using an IM tool like [AOL Instant Messenger](#), [Microsoft Live Messenger](#) or [Yahoo Messenger](#). The tools allow you to indicate whether or not you are available for a chat, and if so can be a good alternative to emails for a rapid exchange.

Links are the highlighted text or images that, when clicked; jump you from one web page or item of content to another. Bloggers use links a lot when writing, to reference their own or other content. Linking is another aspect of sharing, by which you offer content that may be linked, and acknowledge the value of other's people's contributions by linking to them.

*****Lurkers** are people who read but don't contribute or add comments to forums. The one per cent rule-of-thumb suggests about one per cent of people contribute new content to an online community, another nine percent comment, and the rest lurk. However, this may not be a passive role because content read on forums may spark interaction elsewhere.

***A **newsreader** is a website or desktop tool that acts as an aggregator, gathering content from blogs and similar sites using RSS feeds so you can read the content in one place, instead of having to visit different sites.

Open-source software. Wikipedia offers this [definition](#): Open-source software "refers to any [computer software](#) whose [source code](#) is available under a [license](#) that permits users to study, change, and improve the software, and to redistribute it in modified or unmodified form. It is often developed in a public, collaborative manner".

Permalink is the address (URL) of an item of content, for example a blog post, rather than the address of a web page with lots of different items. You will often find it at the end of a blog post.

Photo sharing is uploading your images to a website like [Flickr](#). You can add tags and offer people the opportunity to comment or even re-use your photos if you add an appropriate copyright license.

A **podcast** is audio or video content that can be downloaded automatically through a subscription to a website so you can view or listen offline.

A **post** is an item on a blog or forum.

Presence online has (at least) two aspects. One is whether you show up when someone does a search on your name. The second is whether you use tools that show you are available for contact by instant messaging, voice over IP, or other synchronous methods of communication.

*****Profiles** are the information that you provide about yourself when signing up for a social networking site. As well as a picture and basic information, this may include your personal and business interests, a "blurb" about yourself, and tags to help people search for like-minded people.

Proprietary* software, unlike Open-source software, is owned by someone - whether Microsoft or an individual developer. Some proprietary software may be free, and some open-source software may be sold. The issue is the terms under which the underlying code is available.

*****Readiness** is a check on whether you - or your organization - are prepared to engage with social media. An obvious issue is whether you feel technically confident - but a further issue then is whether as an individual you are ready to "find your voice" online, or whether as an organization you will be comfortable with an open and non-hierarchical environment. Everyone will have different preferences on how to engage online, so it may be best to lurk, explore, and try small steps.

*****RSS** is short for Really Simple Syndication. This allows you to subscribe to content on blogs and other social media

and have it delivered to you through a feed.

Searching for information on the Net is done using a search engine, of which [Google](#) is the best known. Specialist search engines like [Technorati](#) concentrate on blogs. As well as searching by word or phrase you can search on tags, and so find content others have keyed.

*****Social networking** sites are online places where users can create a profile for themselves, and then socialize with others using a range of social media tools including blogs, video, images, tagging, lists of friends, forums and messaging.

Tags are keywords attached to a blog post, bookmark, photo or other item of content so you and others can find them easily through searches and aggregation.

Threads are strands of conversation. On an email list or web forum they will be defined by messages that use the same subject. On blogs they are less clearly defined, but emerge through comments and trackbacks.

*****User generated content** is text, photos and other material produced by people who previously just consumed.

*****Video** Many digital cameras and mobile phones take videos good enough to view on the Net. Sites like [YouTube](#) and [blip.tv](#) now make it easy to open an account, upload and share your videos. These sites will also provide some unique code for each video so you can, if you wish, embed the video in a blog post. Short interviews that “capture the moment” work well, particularly if you provide a text summary so people can easily decide whether or not to view.

***Your **voice** online Social media enables you to extend your voice by increasing your reach across the Net, and doing that in the way that suits you best. You can write - or if you are a visual person you can upload photos or other images and invite comments. If you prefer talking, use Voice over IP, or perhaps record and upload a podcast, capture interviews and events on video. Your voice can be focused on your blog ... or be available on other sites through your commenting, linking and use of social media websites.

Web 2.0 is a term [coined by O'Reilly Media in 2004](#) to describe blogs, wikis, social networking sites and other Internet-based services that emphasize collaboration and sharing, rather than less interactive publishing (Web 1.0). It is associated with the idea of the Internet as platform.

*****Web-based tools:** [Google](#), [Yahoo](#) and a host of other commercial organizations provide an increasing range of free or low-cost tools including email, calendars, word processing, and spreadsheets that can be used on the web rather than your desktop. Provided you are happy to entrust your data to these organizations - and are always online when working - you can reduce your software costs significantly and forget about upgrades.

A **wiki** is a web page - or set of pages - that can be edited collaboratively. The best known example is Wikipedia, an encyclopedia created by thousands of contributors across the world. Once people have appropriate permissions - set by the wiki owner - they can create pages and/or add to and alter existing pages. Wikis are a good way for people to write a document together, instead of emailing files to and fro. You don't have to use wikis for collaborative working - they can just be a quick and easy way of creating a web site. Although wikis are easy to use, that doesn't mean everyone in a group will commit to their use with similar enthusiasm.