Glossary of social media terms

**Analytics:** Analytics is data that helps you track the performance of your social media content. Analytical data could include page views, time on page, clickthrough rate, and engagement rate.

**Algorithm:** An algorithm is a set of formulas developed for a computer to perform a certain function. This is important in the social sphere as the algorithm sites like Facebook and Google use are critical for developing content promotion strategies.

**Application Programming Interface (API):** An API is a documented interface that allows one software application to interact with another application. An example of this is the Twitter API.

**Avatar:** An avatar is an image or username that represents a person online, most often within forums and social networks.

**Bitly:** Bitly is a free URL shortening service that provides statistics for the links users share online. Bitly is popularly used to condense long URLs to make them easier to share on social networks such as Twitter.

**Bio:** A bio on social media refers to a short bit of explainer text that explains who the user is. To see some examples, check out this roundup of some of the most amusing bios on Twitter.

**Blog:** Blog is a word that was created from two words: “web log.” Blogs are usually maintained by an individual or a business with regular entries of content on a specific topic, descriptions of events, or other resources such as graphics or video. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.

**Blogger:** Blogger is a free blogging platform owned by Google that allows individuals and companies to host and publish a blog typically on a subdomain. Example: yourblogname.blogspot.com

**Bookmarking:** Bookmarking online follows the same idea of placing a bookmark in a physical publication - you're simply marking something you found important, enjoyed, or want to continue reading later. The only difference online is that it's happening through websites using one of the various bookmarking services available, such as Pocket, or right within your browser.

**Chat:** Chat can refer to any kind of communication over the internet but traditionally refers to one-to-one communication through a text-based chat application, commonly referred to as instant messaging (IM) applications.

**Clickbait:** Clickbait is a term to describe marketing or advertising material that employs a sensationalized headline to attract clicks. They rely heavily on the "curiosity gap" by creating just enough interest to provoke engagement.

**Clickthrough Rate:** Clickthrough rate is a common social media metric used to represent the number of times a visitor clickthrough divided by the total number of impressions a piece of content receives.

**Comment:** A comment is a response that is often provided as an answer or reaction to a blog post or message on a social network.

**Connections:** The LinkedIn equivalent of a Facebook 'friend' is a 'connection.' Because LinkedIn is a social networking site, the people you are connecting with are not necessarily people you are friends with, but rather professional contacts that you've met, heard speak, done business with, or know through another connection. Connections are categorized by 1st degree, 2nd degree, and 3rd degree.

**Conversion Rate:** Conversion rate refers to a common metric tracked in social media that is the percentage of people who completed an intended action (i.e. filling out a form, following a social account, etc.).

**Creative Commons:** Creative Commons is a non-profit corporation dedicated to making it easier for people to share and build upon the work of others, consistent with the rules of copyright. It provides free licenses and other legal tools to mark creative work with the freedom the creator wants it to carry, so others can share, remix, use commercially, or any combination thereof.

**Crowdsourcing:** Crowdsourcing, like outsourcing, refers to the act of soliciting ideas or content from a group of people, typically in an online setting.

**Ebook:** An ebook is an electronic version of a book. However, most ebooks are not actually available in print (unless you print them). These are typically published in PDF form. For marketers, ebooks commonly serve as lead generating content -- people must fill out a form to receive their ebook copy.

**Employee Advocacy:** Employee advocacy refers to the act of employees using their own social presence to increase the reach of the company and its content.

**Emoji:** Emojis are small cartoonish images that can be sent along with text in social media and private messages.

**Endorsement:** An endorsement on LinkedIn refers to an instance in which another LinkedIn user recognizes you for one of the skills you have listed on your profile.

**Engagement Rate:** Engagement rate is a popular social media metric used to describe the amount of interaction - likes, shares, comments - a piece of content receives.

**Facebook:** Facebook is a social media platform founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. The site connects people with friends, family, acquaintances, and businesses from all over the world and enables them to post, share, and engage with a variety of content such as photos and status updates. The platform currently boasts around 1.49 billion active users.

**Fans:** Fans is the term used to describe people who like your Facebook Page.

**Favourite:** Represented by the small star icon on Twitter, favouring a tweet signals to the creator that you liked their content or post.

**Finsta:** Short for "fake insta" this term describes one's secret or fake Instagram page that's hidden from their employers.

**Flickr:** Flickr is a social network for online picture sharing. The service allows users to store photos online and then share them with others through profiles, groups, sets, and other methods.

**Forums:** Also known as a message board, a forum is an online discussion site. It originated as the modern equivalent of a traditional bulletin board, and a technological evolution of the dial-up bulletin board system.

**Follower:** In a social media setting, a follower refers to a person who subscribes to your account to receive your updates.

**Friends:** Friends is the term used on Facebook to represent the connections you make and the people you follow. These are individuals you consider to be friendly enough with you to see your Facebook profile and engage with you.

**#FYP (For Your Page):** #FYP is a hashtag that TikTok users place in their videos to prioritize their content on other users' "Your Page" feed. This feed algorithmically sends users content from people you follow or related to hashtags you might be interested in.

**Geotag:** A geotag is the directional coordinates that can be attached to a piece of content online. For example, Instagram users often use geotagging to highlight the location in which their photo was taken.

**GIF:** GIF is an acronym for Graphics Interchange Format. In social media, GIFs serve as small-scale animations and film clips. (Check out this round up of reaction GIFs used to illustrate our excitement when Facebook announced that they were supporting their functionality.)

**Google Documents:** Google Documents is a group of web-based office applications that includes tools for word processing, presentations, spreadsheet analysis, etc. All documents are stored and edited online and allow multiple people to collaborate on a document in real-time.

**Groups:** Facebook and LinkedIn offer a Groups feature where people in similar industries or with similar passions can join a group and discuss topics related to it.

**Handle:** Handle is the term used to describe someone's @username on Twitter. For example, HubSpot's Twitter handle is @HubSpot.

**Header image:** A header image refers to the large photo displayed at the top of your profile on Twitter. The header image is also commonly referred to as the banner image on LinkedIn or the cover image on Facebook.

**Hashtag:** A hashtag is a tag used on a variety of social networks as a way to annotate a message. A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a “#" (i.e. #InboundMarketing). Social networks use hashtags to categorize information and make it easily searchable for users.

**HTML:** HyperText Markup Language (HTML) is a programming language for web pages. Think of HTML as the brick-and-mortar of pages on the web. It provides content and structure while CSS supplies style. HTML has changed over the years, and it is on the cusp of its next version: HTML5.

**Impressions:** An impression refers to a way in which marketers and advertisers keep track of every time ad is "fetched" and counted.

**Insights:** Many social media networks, like Facebook or Instagram, offer insights pages to their business account holders. These pages often allow the user's to see valuable analytics about their page and how they're performing compared to similar pages.

**Instagram:** Instagram is a photo sharing application that lets users take photos, apply filters to their images, and share the photos instantly on the Instagram network and other social networks like Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and Foursquare. The app is targeted toward mobile social sharing and has gained more than 300 million users.

**Instant Messaging:** Instant messaging (IM) is a form of real-time, direct text-based communication between two or more people. More advanced instant messaging software clients also allow enhanced modes of communication, such as live voice or video calling.

**Klout:** Klout is a measure of social influence. The service allows users to connect various social accounts such as Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, etc., and then provides every user with his or her Klout score. The score is out of 100 -- the higher the score, the more influence it estimates you have in the social world.

**Like:** A Like is an action that can be made by a Facebook or Instagram user. Instead of writing a comment or sharing a post, a user can click the Like button as a quick way to show approval.

**Link Building:** Link building is an aspect of search engine optimization in which website owners develop strategies to earn links to their site from other websites with the hopes of improving their search engine ranking. Blogging has emerged as a popular method of link building.

**LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site with over 380 million members in over 200 countries and territories. Founded in December 2002 and launched in May 2003, it is mainly used for professional networking.

**Live streaming:** Live streaming is the act of delivering content over the internet in real-time. This term was popularized in social media by apps such as Meerkat and Periscope.

**Lurker:** A lurker online is a person who reads discussions on a message board, newsgroup, social network, or other interactive system, but rarely or never participates in the discussion.

**Mashup:** A content mashup contains multiple types of media drawn from pre-existing sources to create a new work. Digital mashups allow individuals or businesses to create new pieces of content by combining multiple online content sources.

**Meme:** A meme on the internet is used to describe a thought, idea, joke, or concept that's widely shared online. It is typically an image with text above and below it but can also come in video and link form. A popular example is the "I Can Has Cheezburger?" cat meme that turned into an entire site of memes.

**Mention:** A mention is a Twitter term used to describe an instance in which a user includes someone else's @username in their tweet to attribute a piece of content or start a discussion.

**Native Advertising:** Native content refers to a type of online advertising in which the ad copy and format adheres to the format of a regular post on the network it's being published on. The purpose is to make ads feel less like ads, and more like part of the conversation.

**News Feed:** A news feed is literally a feed full of news. On Facebook, the News Feed is the homepage of users' accounts where they can see all the latest updates from their friends. The news feed on Twitter is called Timeline.

**Newsjacking:** Newsjacking refers to the practice of capitalizing on the popularity of a news story to amplify your sales and marketing success.

**Permalink:** A permalink is an address or URL of a particular post within a blog or website that remains indefinitely unchanged.

**Pinterest:** Pinterest is a photo sharing social network that provides users with a platform for uploading, saving, and categorizing "pins" through collections called "boards." Boards are typically organized by theme, such as: Food & Drink, Women's Fashion, Gardening, etc. Users can "pin" and "repin" content that they like to their respective boards.

**Podcast:** A podcast is a series of digital media files, usually audio, that are released episodically and often downloaded through an RSS feed.

**PPC:** PPC is an acronym for pay per click. Pay per click is an online advertising model in which advertisers display ads on various websites or search engines and pay when a visitor clicks through. Bid-based PPC involves an auction in which advertisers compete with other advertisers by setting the max bid -- or highest amount they're willing to pay -- for each click. Each time a visitor triggers the ad spot, the auction process pans out to select which ad will be displayed.

**Quantcast:** Quantcast provides website traffic and demographics for websites. The tool is primarily used by online advertisers looking to target specific demographics.

**Real-Time Search:** Real-time search is the method of indexing content being published online into search engine results with virtually no delay.

**Real-Time Marketing:** Real-time marketing is a strategy that requires marketers to publish timely content as news breaks.

**Recommendation:** A recommendation on LinkedIn is a term used to describe a written note from another LinkedIn member that aims to reinforce the user's professional credibility or expertise.

**Reddit:** Reddit is a social news site that contains specific, topic-oriented communities of users who share and comment on stories.

**Reply:** A reply is a Twitter action that allows a user to respond to a tweet through a separate tweet that begins with the other user's @username. This differs from a mention, because tweets that start with a @username only appears in the timelines of users who follow both parties.

**Retargeting:** Retargeting is an online marketing and advertising technique that allows marketers to display ads to people who have visited their website or are part of their contacts database. For more on how a retargeting campaign works, check out this beginner's guide.

**Retweet:** A retweet is when someone on Twitter sees your message and decides to re-share it with his or her followers. A retweet button allows them to quickly resend the message with attribution to the original sharer's name.

**RSS Feed:** RSS is a family of web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blogs and videos in a standardized format. Content publishers can syndicate a feed, which allows users to subscribe to the content and read it when they please from a location other than the website (such as Feedly or other RSS readers).

**Search Engine Optimization:** Search engine optimization is the process of improving the volume or quality of unpaid traffic to a website from search engines.

**Selfie:** A selfie is a self-portrait that is typically taken using the reverse camera screen on a smartphone or by using a selfie stick (a pole that attaches to your camera). Selfies are commonly shared on social media networks like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook using the hashtag #selfie.

**Skype:** Skype is a free program that allows for text, audio, and video chats between users. Additionally, users can purchase plans to place phone calls through their Skype account.

**Snapchat:** Snapchat is a social app that allows users to send and receive time-sensitive photos and videos known as "snaps," which are hidden from the recipients once the time limit expires (images and videos remain on the Snapchat server). Users can add text and drawings to their snaps and control the list of recipients in which they send them to.

**Story:** A Snapchat, Facebook, or Instagram story is a string of videos or images that lasts for 24 hours. Users can create stories to be shared publicly or just a customized group of recipients.

**Social Media Monitoring:** Social media monitoring is a process of monitoring and responding to mentions related to a business that occur in social media.

**Social Proof:** Social proof refers to a psychological phenomenon in which people seek direction from those around them to determine how they are supposed to act or think in a given situation. In social media, social proof can be identified by the number of interactions a piece of content receives or the number of followers you have. The thought is that if others are sharing something or following someone, it must be good.

**Social Selling:** Social selling is a sales concept in which representatives leverage the power of social communication to engage with prospects by answering their questions, providing helpful content, clarifying information, etc.

**Tag:** Tagging is a social media functionality commonly used on Facebook and Instagram that allows users to create a link back to the profile of the person shown in the picture or targeted by **the update.**

**Thread:** A series of comments or discussion posts on a post or in a subreddit.

**TikTok:** TikTok is one of the fastest-growing social media platforms of all time, The app, beloved by Gen Z, is like Vine in that it highlights bite-sized looping videos that can also have musical overlays.

**Trending Topic:** Trending topics refer to the most talked about topics and hashtags on a social media network. These commonly appear on networks like Twitter and Facebook and serve as clickable links in which users can either click through to join the conversation or simply browse the related content.

**Troll:** A troll or internet troll refers to a person who is known for creating controversy in an online setting. They typically hang out in forums, comment sections, and chat rooms with the intent of disrupting the conversation on a piece of content by providing commentary that aims to evoke a reaction.

**Tumblr:** Tumblr is a microblogging platform that allows users to post text, images, video, audio, links, and quotes to their blog. Users can also follow other blogs and repost other users' content to their own blog.

**Twitter:** Twitter is a real-time social network that allows users to share 140-character updates with their following. Users can favorite and retweet the posts of other users, as well as engage in conversations using @ mentions, replies, and hashtags for categorizing their content.

**Twitter Topics:** A recently launched Twitter feature that allows users to follow specific topic categories from marketing, to politics, to birdwatching. Once users follow topics, they'll see more content related to these categories on their feeds.

**Twitterverse:** Also referred to as the Twittersphere, Twitterverse is a nickname for the community of users who are active on Twitter.

**User-Generated Content (or UGC):** User-generated content is content - blogs, videos, photos, quotes, etc. - that is created by consumers. Marketers typically tap into their audience in an online **setting to collect this type of content to support a campaign or initiative.**

**Viral:** Viral is a term used to describe an instance in which a piece of content - YouTube video, blog article, photo, etc. - achieves noteworthy awareness. Viral distribution relies heavily on word of mouth and the frequent sharing of one piece of content all over the internet.

**Vlogging:** Vlogging or a vlog is a piece of content that employs video to tell a story or report on information. Vlogs are common on video sharing networks like YouTube.

**Webinar:** A webinar is an online seminar or presentation that is hosted by an individual or a company. Most often, the host requires attendees to fill out a form before granting them access to stream the audio and slides. In marketing, webinars are held to educate audiences about a particular topic while opening the floor for a discussion to occur on social media using the webinar's unique hashtag.

**WhatsApp:** WhatsApp is a messaging, phone, and social media app that allows people to connect