

Creating a Better Facebook Page and Twitter Account— The Basics and Beyond

Facebook

Glossary of terms

- ∞ Friend – A person you connect with via Facebook who can see your profile and what you post.
- ∞ News Feed – A stream of constantly updated material from users you follow or “Like” on Facebook.
- ∞ Profile Photo – A photo that is in the upper left hand corner of your page. This photo will appear next to your comments or when you share something with your audience.
- ∞ Cover Photo – a banner-like photo located at the top of your page.
- ∞ Wall Posts – A post made to share information relevant to your page. These posts will show up in your followers’ news feed.

What is a Page?

A Facebook Page is a public page for businesses, organizations and brands to share their stories and connect with people. You can customize Pages by adding apps, posting stories, hosting events and more. Engage and grow your audience by posting regularly. People who like your Page will get your updates in their news feeds.

What is the difference between page and profile?

A page is a public forum that allows others to comment on activities, widely used for brands. A profile is for personal use. In order to interact with another profile you must “friend” that profile first. Profiles will “like” your brand page to interact with it.

How do I add administrators to my page?

It’s important to make sure that more than one person is an administrator for a page. If one person is not available to run the page, someone else should be able to access the page.

Steps to adding an administrator:

- ∞ Before you start make sure that the current administrator's profile is friends with the person you would like to add as an administrator.
- ∞ Go to the brand page and click on edit page and then Admin Roles.
- ∞ Type in the name (or email) of the person you would like to add as an administrator.
- ∞ Choose what admin role you would like them to have.

Twitter

Glossary of terms**

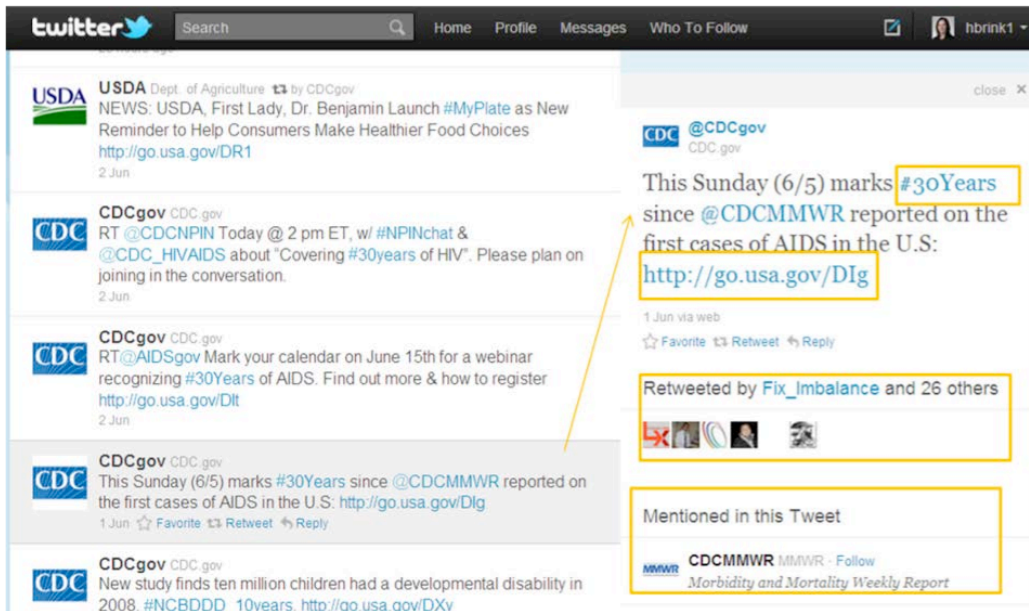
- ∞ Username (or handle) – Twitter users identify themselves by their username or “handle”. George Mason University’s official username is @GeorgeMasonU
- ∞ Message (or tweet) – Messages are composed of up to 140 characters of text or links.
- ∞ Retweet – If a tweet (or message) from another Twitter user is relevant, the retweet function allows you to repost the same message to your account. The retweet is used to pass on news or information that you find valuable or that you wish to share with your followers. The retweet is how information is spread quickly via Twitter.
- ∞ Mention – Twitter enables users to automatically link to each other by putting the @ symbol in front of the user name in a tweet.
- ∞ Hashtag – Similar to a mention, a hashtag is created automatically when you put the # symbol before a word (or phrase). Using a hashtag enables other people to join in a larger conversation on a topic or find information quickly. Mason uses the hashtag #gmu when space allows.

What is an Account and How Do I Set One Up?

Twitter is a message-distribution system that allows users to post continual updates of up to 140 characters detailing their activities for followers or providing links to other content. The verb is to tweet, tweeted. A Twitter message is known as a tweet. (AP Style Guidebook)

Beginning to Use Twitter

The anatomy of a Tweet**



Above is a screenshot of a Twitter account. On the right is the most current Tweet of this account (@CDCgov). The yellow boxes show:

- ∞ A hashtag (#30Years).
- ∞ A mention of another CDC profile (@CDCMMWR).
- ∞ A shortened URL (http://go.usa.gov/DIg).
- ∞ A list of Twitter users who retweeted this CDC tweet.

Selecting a user name

- ∞ Limit your account name to 13 characters.
- ∞ Think first and foremost about searchability. Search engines such as Google and Twitter's own search engine will pull up accounts based on key word relevance. Do not try to be clever and cutesy. Pick something obvious and relevant. That's how people can find you and follow you.

Places to get profile photos/use of Mason logos and photos

- ∞ Stick to simple graphics that represent Mason's brand. Do not try to use Mason's logo or a departmental logo, as the letters and words will get cropped in thumbnail versions on other place around the site.
- ∞ Images taken by University photographers can be found on <http://gmu.smugmug.com/>

Shortening URLs

- ∞ Most Twitter posts include a link where the reader can get more information about the post. Web site URLs are often almost as long or longer than your 140-character limit on Twitter, so there are several ways to shorten these links.

- ∞ If you are posting from the Twitter web site, Twitter will sometimes shorten your link for you.
- ∞ You can also try web sites like Bitly.com or tinyURL.com that allow you to shorten long hyperlinks and then copy and paste the shortened link to a tweet.
- ∞ Be wary of clicking on other links on Twitter, as some can be spam or contain malware or software viruses. Do not click on a suspicious link. Only click on links that come from trusted, verified accounts and have specific and clear information in the post.

Adding photos

- ∞ Click on the text box where you would compose your tweet
- ∞ Click on the tiny camera icon below the box
- ∞ Find the photo you want to upload from your computer. Make sure the photo isn't a large file; Twitter will not allow you to upload photos 3 MB or larger.
- ∞ Once you have attached the photo, give a description of the photo so your followers have some context.
- ∞ Do not post photos that you do not have copyright to or permission to use.

Hashtags (#)

- ∞ Hashtags are used to categorize your tweet and to allow people to find tweets on a specific topic. The most popular hashtag that George Mason's official account uses is #gmu.
- ∞ If you see a hashtag, you can click on it and it will show other tweets that have used that same #.
- ∞ On Fridays, you will see many accounts use #FF. #FF stands for "Follow Friday," a hashtag used to recommend accounts for others to follow.
- ∞ We recommend not using more than two hashtags in one tweet.

Tweet Deck and following/followers

- ∞ Tweet Deck is a great tool to use to schedule tweets ahead of time and monitor and manage your account.
- ∞ Tweet Deck can be customized to include searches on keywords that you want to monitor conversations about (i.e. "George Mason" or #gmu or "Mason Homecoming" or "Final Four")
- ∞ Tweet Deck is available at www.tweetdeck.com

When To Create a Page/Account

Facebook Pages

- ∞ Better used for long-term purposes—a hub for your department, group, center or college.

- ∞ Create if you are willing to take the time to build up followers and maintain **regular**, **current** and informative content.
- ∞ Ask yourself: will this page have an end time or goal in sight? If the answer is yes (i.e., you are creating a page for a Homecoming Dance or a campaign that ends in three months) then a page might not be the best route.
- ∞ Be willing to interact with your audience and engage them.

Facebook Event

- ∞ Best used if created in conjunction with an already existing page
- ∞ Use if your event has a finite end time or specific day/deadline.
- ∞ Use to invite people and get RSVPs

Twitter Account

- ∞ Better used for long-term purposes—an account for your department, college, group or center
- ∞ Must be willing to consistently push new and interesting content to your users.
- ∞ Use if you want to engage in and contribute to conversations and interests that your group, college, center, etc. follows

Think that a Facebook or Twitter account is not in your best interest? Or you don't have time to create something new for your event/news? Consider partnering with an already established account to push your message out to their followers. Ask nicely and include a concise and interesting post suggestion with relevant links that the administrators of these pages can use. For more information about how to request a post via the official Mason Facebook page or Twitter account, contact Tara Laskowski, tlaskows@gmu.edu or Beth Pullias at bpullias@gmu.edu or see the checklist with tips on advertising your news with these pages.

** Taken from the CDC's Guide to Writing for Social Media (April 2012)