



Growing a JGS: USING SOCIAL MEDIA

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Social media is a term that refers to Internet-based tools to communicate. Fortunately, most of them are relatively easy to use, and many are free.

Blogs: a blog is just a specialized web page (in fact, the name 'Blog' is short for 'WeB log'). A Blog is usually focused on a particular topic and consists of a series of posts that are (typically) short in nature and organized by topics. The newest post is displayed first, and older posts are archived (but still searchable and viewable). What makes a blog different from an ordinary web page is that the reader can add comments to posts they have read. The disadvantage of blogging is that the writing must be done consistently so that members come to expect the posts. The writer must have something to say of value and to write reasonably well. This task can be time consuming. Blogger and [WordPress](#) offer free blogging. You can learn how to set up a blog on Blogger [here](#).

Facebook: [Facebook](#) is a great way to reach those interested in genealogy and some chapters even use it as a substitute for a newsletter. A society officer with a Facebook account can set up a Facebook 'page' (also referred to as a 'fan page') and those interested in the page can then click the 'Like' button to receive posts from the society in their news feed. There are many features on a 'fan page'. You can put out news of events or other news about your society and a lot more. As an example, go to FamilySearch's [Facebook fan page](#). You may choose to create a Facebook Group to have greater dialogue with members. You can screen the members that you allow in a group. Read about the [differences](#) between a page and a group and how to [set up a group](#).

Instagram: [Instagram](#) is a free online photo-sharing application and social network platform owned by Meta (Facebook). It allows users to edit and upload photos and short videos through a mobile app. You can read about how to benefit from this platform as a nonprofit [here](#). Instagram focuses on a younger population with more than half of its global users age 34 or younger. So, keep this in mind if you are trying to reach a younger population.

YouTube: [YouTube](#) is a site that allows Internet users to share short videos about just about anything, including chapter news and information as well as genealogy stories. Anyone with a smart phone can make a video ad or presentation for your society and post it to YouTube and easily embed it in your chapter website. You can also record a talk on Zoom and then post it to a YouTube Channel.

Flickr: [Flickr](#) is a website for pictures and images. Currently run by Yahoo, it is a great repository for photos and images a person has taken or owns that can be made available for people to find, and use. If you have a chapter event and don't want to put all the pictures on your website or Facebook, Flickr is a good alternative. Google indexes a great majority of the images so they can be found easily in a Google search. You can retain copyright, or if you wish you can put images into Creative Commons, which means

they can be used on other sites by others. Flickr can also be a good resource for images for blogs or websites and allows you to access those identified as free of copyright restrictions.

Podcasts: A podcast is an on-line audio recording. Podcasts could be a useful technique for getting original content on-line for any society. You may want to record a meeting or a special presentation for later review by your members. Here's a link to [how to create a podcast](#).

TikTok: A JGS can use [TikTok](#) by posting short videos about their meetings and society events. This [article](#) can help you get started with your first video.

X (formerly Twitter): [X](#) is a service where you type short messages, called 'tweets' to broadcast a message about something you want others to know about. For family history and genealogy, societies can set up accounts to send out quick notes about upcoming events and other matters. As of this writing, the future shape of this service remains uncertain since its acquisition.

There are lots of other forms of social media that a JGS can consider, but the ones above are a good starting point.