## Social Media Platform Comparison

**Key channel trends & features to inform your story sharing process**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLATFORM</th>
<th>KEY FEATURES</th>
<th>DEMOGRAPHICS</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
<th>STORY TIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **FACEBOOK** | • Subscribe feature allows users to follow people without becoming their friends; personalities (like ED, board president, etc.) can post content with a personal voice to complement organization’s official page  
• Emphasis on visuals; prime real estate on every profile is devoted to visual content, from the cover photo to ones within the timeline  
• Hashtags (with unique URLs) allow for content and conversation aggregation  
• Facebook Insights offers strong snapshot of user demographics and behavior  
• “Donate now” button currently being tested among large nonprofits  
• Recent changes to the newsfeed make it harder to reach followers without promoted content/ads  | • Highest usage among ages 45-54  
• 65% of users are age 35 or older  
• Unlike Twitter, average age of users is getting older  
• Among U.S. users - 53% female, 46% male  | • Go-to source of information for significant portion of key audience  
• Rewards quality content (visuals, video) with higher engagement  
• “Donate now” button—if widely deployed—can bridge gap between Likes and donations  
• Analytics help take guesswork out of what types of content resonate and what times to post  
• Relatively inexpensive ads and promoted content  | • Brands and organizations compete with friends for attention in the newsfeed  
• Difficult to keep up with rapidly changing rules for content  
• Content only seen by a small percentage of followers when it’s first posted, which can make serial storytelling difficult  
• Most engagement happens on Facebook itself; users don’t leave the platform  | • Take advantage of visual opportunities—swap profile and cover pics often to reflect current stories and campaigns; share images with text calls-to-action overlaid  
• When repurposing content, find a new angle (add a picture, link, etc.) to keep on top of newsfeed changes  
• Shares (and visibility among friends of followers) are key to building reach; encourage people to tag themselves in pictures when possible and pay attention to data from Insights about what people like, share and comment on most  
• When sharing stories from website, blog or newsletter, take the time to craft (and test!) multiple compelling headlines  
• Disable auto-posting from newsletters, Twitter, Instagram, etc.; it's worth the extra time to customize the messaging  |
| **TWITTER** | • 140 characters or less  
• Powered by searchable/connected hashtags  
• Drives people to external sites  
• New redesign with emphasis on images (both in content and in profile design), pinned Tweets, and highlighting of most engaging Tweets  | • Virtually equal usage among genders  
• Most popular among ages 18-29  
• More urban/suburban users than rural  
• High levels of usage among African Americans  | • Text-based (for easy on-the-go updating)  
• Real-time engagement opportunities  
• Hashtags are easy to create  
• Trending topics are easy to tap into when relevant  | • Fast-paced, might be hard to follow a longer story told through several Tweets  
• More anonymous; less authentic in some cases  
• Fewer features for organizations (no events, apps, etc.)  | • Learn lingo/jargon (including memes and hashtags) to be a valued member of Twitter community (good nonprofit hashtags include: #nonprofit, #fundraising, #npetech, #sm4np, #philanthropy, #donors)  
• Use URL-shorteners (like bit.ly) to save space and increase measurement power  
• Share visual content  |
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| **TWITTER** (continued) | • User in more control of how to view Tweets  
• Fast-paced and works well with live events  
• Movement toward more visual features | • 80% of YouTube traffic comes from outside the U.S.  
• YouTube reaches more U.S. adults ages 18-34 than any cable network  
• One billion viewers worldwide per month  
• 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute | • New pinned Tweets feature does downplay relevance of being in real time  
• Because the amount of content available is so large, your videos can be difficult to find  
• Distracting advertisements, questionable related video links at the end of your video  
• Any video can attract unwanted attention and/or comments from “trolls” | • Monitor often and look for opportunities to engage with people  
• Have a personal voice | • Upload compelling thumbnail images for your videos (rather than using the default ones)  
• Include a standard tagline in all video descriptions to highlight your mission  
• Offer helpful links such as information about your organization, how viewers can get involved, & where/how to donate  
• Don’t forget to include a call-to-action to subscribe, share or like the video as a form of support  
• Stay relevant by uploading videos consistently & refreshing your channel's programming on a regular basis  
• Consider creating and sharing serial content—a series of videos around a particular issue related to your organization  
• Have a policy for responding to negative comments |
| **YOUTUBE** | • Organizational channels allow you to create libraries of videos  
• Videos can be grouped into themed “playlists”  
• Nonprofit program gives customized and enhanced branding and fundraising opportunities, including ‘donate’ button on video, annotations that link to your website, campaign goal bars, and on-screen banners and calls-to-action, among other features  
• Useful resources developed by YouTube include its “Playbook for Good”  
• Easy to use, powerful analytics help pinpoint who viewers are and where they’re coming from, and how they’re engaging with your videos | • 80% of YouTube traffic comes from outside the U.S.  
• YouTube reaches more U.S. adults ages 18-34 than any cable network  
• One billion viewers worldwide per month  
• 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute | • No limit to how many videos you can upload for free (but there is a 15-minute time limit on length)  
• Nonprofit program has tons of useful, underutilized features for storytelling and measuring engagement  
• Any video can attract unwanted attention and/or comments from “trolls” | • Requires an understanding of good visual content  
• Optimized for mobile viewing; not suitable for printing or displaying in larger formats  
• Gap in information dissemination | • As with Twitter, learn lingo/jargon (including memes and recurring hashtags) to be more easily found among existing Instagram users  
• Import images you didn’t take with your phone for more content variety  
• Experiment with uploading promotional photos to advertise events, fundraising campaigns, etc. |
| **INSTAGRAM** | • Visual storytelling via photo and short video creation and sharing with network of followers  
• Fully integrated with Facebook, Twitter and other major platforms  
• Unlimited photo uploads  
• Video length: between 3 and 15 seconds (longer than Vine) | • More popular among women  
• Equal among Apple and Android smartphone users  
• Ages 35 and under  
• Most popular among urban users | • Allows for powerful showing (rather than telling) of impact  
• Filters can make so-so images look more compelling  
• Quick and easy to integrate with other platforms (and re-purpose content) | • Requires an understanding of good visual content  
• Optimized for mobile viewing; not suitable for printing or displaying in larger formats  
• Gap in information dissemination | • As with Twitter, learn lingo/jargon (including memes and recurring hashtags) to be more easily found among existing Instagram users  
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| **INSTAGRAM** (continued) | • Engagement through Likes and comments  
• Searchable within the community using hashtags  
• Users favor quality over quantity; relatively smaller amount of daily photo uploads as compared to other sites | • On-the-go posting via mobile phone good for behind the scenes stories, events, volunteer days, etc. | | | • Utilize at events, especially to show prep work/behind the scenes details |
| | **BLOG / TUMBLR** | • Blogs can be either hubs for content that can be syndicated outward, or as collectors that showcase content others have created  
• Flexible storytelling platforms that allow you to pull in various other types of content (photos, videos, text, audio, etc.)  
• Engagement is built in  
• More casual storytelling voice; it's not your website, so language can show personality and authenticity  
• Tumblr is a specific type of blogging community that features short bursts of content  
• It's searchable within the community using hashtags on posts  
• It's mobile-friendly for easy uploading via an app  
• Among the most engaging social media sites, in terms of average time spent on the site and average page depth  
• 50% of content are photos | • 77% of internet users read blogs  
• 75.8 million pieces of content are blogged each day on Tumblr  
• Tumblr demographics: 67% of users are under age 35; skews slightly female (54% vs. 46%); nearly half of users have a college education; particularly popular among Hispanic internet users | • Engagement is built in (and expected)  
• Easy to integrate blogs into your website  
• Allows for versatile content  
• Good for search engine optimization (companies that blog have 97% more inbound links, which is important in search engine rankings)  
• Trustworthy source of content (81% of U.S. consumers trust advice/info from blogs)  
• Tumblr allows for less intensive content – easier to curate or produce  
• Easy to update on the go; excellent for behind-the-scenes type stories  
• Searchable—people in the general Tumblr community can discover your content if you use good hashtags | • Bandwidth-intensive to plan for and develop consistent content  
• Content can appear stale quickly (since everything is time-stamped)  
• Readers need strong reasons to engage (and blogs look sad with no comments)  
• Tumblr demographics are very specific; if your audiences don’t intersect with them, you’re better off having a regular blog  
• Much Tumblr activity takes place on the platform itself; there’s a strong community aspect, like Facebook. This can be isolating/confusing for non-native users.  
• Need to integrate into your website to get over the barrier of user unfamiliarity with platform nuances—and this requires design support | • Plan ahead for blog content; create an editorial calendar that ties in with themes, holidays, etc.  
• Build “share this” feature into your blog—and then give readers a reason to share  
• Take time to craft headlines that are shareable and Tweet-worthy  
• Encourage conversation by posing questions  
• Incorporate multiple perspectives into your blog—volunteers, staff, board, clients—to encourage variety and sharing within those individuals’ networks. |