

GLOSSARY OF BASIC SOCIAL MEDIA TERMS

App: Short for “application.” Software designed to help people perform an activity on a phone, computer, or handheld device. Apps range from Web browsers and games to specialized programs like digital recorders, online chat, or music players. Number of apps has grown quickly for use with smartphones.

Benchmark: A standard or point of reference against which similar things can be compared or judged.

Blog: Type of Web site that is an online journal, with regular additions of new material. Blogs are written by individuals who provide material (post, blogpost) on any subject. Blogs can contain text, photos, videos, and podcasts. Entries and responses can be saved (archived). Newest entries are presented first.

Bounce rate: Percentage of visitors who enter a site and leave it (bounce) rather than continue to view other pages within same site.

Bulletin board: Early online tool, where users connected with a central computer to post and read e-mail-like messages. The term is still used for forums.

Chat room: “Talking” on a Web site, with a number of people adding text items one after the other into the same space at (almost) the same time. Differs from a forum because conversations happen in “real time.” Also called chat group.

Click analysis: Collecting, analyzing, and reporting data about which web pages users visit—and in what order.

Embedding: Adding code to a Web site so that a video or photo can be displayed while being hosted at another site.

Facilitator: A person who helps people in an online group or forum manage their conversations. A facilitator may help write a set of rules, find topics to talk about, gently keep people on topic, and sum up. Also called a moderator.

Forum: Discussion area on a Web site, where people can “talk” in the form of messages. Forum discussions happen in one place and can be managed and facilitated. Forums differ from online chat groups in that conversation does not occur in real time and messages can be saved (archived) at least temporarily. Also depending on the set up, a posted message may need to be approved by the moderator before it becomes visible. Also called message board.

Instant messaging (IM): Direct text-based chat with one or more persons, using an IM tool.

Integrated marketing: Bringing together all the communications methods into a unified program that has the most effect on users.

Key performance indicator: A metric that can be used to decide whether you are reaching your goals.

Link: Highlighted text or images that, when clicked, jump you from one Web page or item of content to another.

Message board: Online place where people meet to discuss ideas, ask questions of one another, and get support. People post messages (threads) on the forum or message board in hope of gaining more information or starting a conversation.

Metric: Type of measurement used to track some part of a program.

Multi-channel marketing: Using many different ways to reach a user.

One-to-one Internet chat: Any direct text-based one-on-one chat.

Online community: A network of individuals who talk with each other through social media tools and sites. Members have a shared interest to talk about, learn from each other, and find solutions. Online forums, chat groups, and blogs are parts of online communities. Also called online group.

Peer-to-peer: Direct contact between two people of same age, status, or ability, with each connected to other people, thus opening the opportunity for further sharing and learning.

Podcast: Online audio or visual content on the Internet that also can be seen or listened to offline. Content may be seen and heard by many at the same time. Also called webcast.

Referrer: The location (URL) from which a visitor clicked a link to get to your Web site.

Social media: Any online tool that allows people to produce, publish, and share content online and relate with one another. Social media tools include blogs, podcasts, videos, microblogs, wikis, etc.

Social networking web site: An online community that brings together people with similar interests. Large sites, which host many communities, offer a place where people connect with one another online and share content. Examples of communities include:

- **Facebook:** An online community for people to connect or reconnect with others. Enables people to share videos, pictures, and information about themselves. One of most-used, fastest-growing social networks.
- **Flickr:** Online site for storing, sharing, and commenting on photos.
- **LinkedIn:** A professional online community used to network with fellow professionals; an online resume-sharing site.
- **MySpace:** A site where people can meet others with similar interests, creating online communities by sharing videos, photos, and personal information.

- **YouTube:** An online site for uploading and discussing videos. Videos can also be embedded from YouTube onto other social media sites such as blogs or social networks.

Support group: A group of people with common experiences and concerns who provide support for each other online. May be moderated or not; sometimes moderation is by a health professional. Also called online support group.

Thread: A piece of conversation. On an e-mail list or Web forum, each thread will be defined by messages that use the same subject. On blogs, they are less clearly defined, but grow through comments and trackbacks.

Twitter: Social network where members post updates of no more than 140 characters.

- **Tweet:** A post or entry made on Twitter.
- **RT:** Retweet; repost something from another person's tweet.
- **Hashtag:** Similar to regular tags, these are keywords associated and assigned to an item of content with a hash mark (#) attached to the front of the word. Hashtags make it easier to follow a topic of interest being talked about on Twitter.
- **Twitter Search:** A search engine that filters out real-time tweets.

Web 2.0: Term often used to describe Web-based information channels that include content created by users and that make it easy to share information.

Web analytics: Measurement, collection, and analysis of Internet data.

Webinar: A presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar transmitted over the Web. Usually one way, with members registering in advance and participating in real time over the Internet.

Wiki: Web site or software that allows anyone to edit, delete, or modify content that has been placed on the site, including the work of previous authors.