

Facebook

Purpose

This document has been designed to assist and provide information to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) employees and contractors on the requirements for planning and design, and best practices for participating and engaging on the social networking site Facebook.

Please note that using a personal Facebook account to post messages on behalf of the agency is not allowed.

Background

Facebook is a social network service and website launched in February 2004 that is operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. As of July 2010 Facebook has more than 500 million active users, which is about one person for every fourteen in the world. Users may create a personal profile, add other users as friends and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, or college, or other characteristics. (From Wikipedia, accessed 11/16/2010)

The official CDC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/CDC) launched in May 2009 to share featured health updates and to develop an active and participatory community. This channel can be used to promote health messages and should be considered for use before new channels are created.

For consultation on creating an activity or promoting a campaign or event within one of CDC's official profiles on Facebook, or to create a new activity or space in a social networking site, please contact EMB within the Division of News and Electronic Media (DNEM) at SocialMedia@cdc.gov.

Communications Strategy

Participation in Facebook and other social media tools are intended to be part of a larger integrated health communications program or project developed under the leadership of the Associate Director of Communication Science (ADCS) in the Health Communication Science Office (HCSO) of CDC's National Centers. HCSOs are responsible for the coordination and guidance of health marketing and communication activities of their respective centers which includes communications science clearance, strategic planning and research and evaluation.

Clearance and Approval

Postings: Any posting of information (new content or response to messages) must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by your HCSO office.

New Accounts: All new accounts should also be cleared by your HCSO office. Please see below under "**Recommendations for starting a New Facebook Page**" for more information. Approval is also required by OCISO (see security requirements) and the

Division of News and Electronic Media (DNEM) at the Office of the Associate Director of Communication (OADC). DNEM reviews new accounts to ensure that appropriate terms of services are utilized and that the account names reflect best practices and do not conflict with other CDC names. Please send any new account requests to SocialMedia@cdc.gov

Consultation

The Electronic Media Branch (EMB) of OADC/DHEM is available to provide assistance and consultation on the planning and development of social media tools. Please refer to Process section on page 5 of this document for additional information, or you can contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov.

Security Requirements

Due to security concerns related to participating in social networking sites, all participation must occur off of the CDC network, such as an off-network laptop with a wireless Internet card or other wireless Internet service, if available. To avoid security risks, do not use unapproved third party tools that require you to provide Facebook usernames and passwords. Please refer to the [Social Media Security Mitigations](#) for more detailed security information.

Best Practices and Recommendations

Before starting to develop a Facebook page or posting please consider the following:

1. Understand the difference between a Facebook page and an individual Facebook profile: Facebook pages for organizations and businesses are different from individual user profiles. Facebook pages do not have an inbox or messaging capabilities. Facebook pages are moderated by page administrators; these individuals must logon to Facebook using their personal Facebook page in order to post content on the page or monitor comments. Page administrators do not receive notifications when users take action (such as becoming a fan or creating wall posts) on an agency page.
2. Clearly Define the Objectives: Do you want to highlight content, spark action, or encourage awareness of an issue? Clearly defined objectives for a Facebook project can help you create text with the most appropriate videos or photos. Clearly defined objectives will also help you determine the best Web page to link to. For example, most CDC.gov home page features (Health & Safety features and/or Data & Stats features) are posted to the main CDC Facebook page daily. The Facebook link helps drive traffic to the feature page and to deeper CDC content pages.
3. Can You Reach Your Target Audience(s) via Facebook?: As with any communications activity, it is important to define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages and graphics that resonate with your audience and prompt them to take action. For the most part, a Facebook page will reach members of the general public, although there may be some instances when healthcare providers, public health professionals, or other audiences are targeted.

4. Identify the Best Platform: Should you request a unique Facebook page (see page 5) or have content posted on the CDC Facebook page? It is best to create an evergreen Facebook page or group instead of creating a page or group around a short-term event. For example, instead of creating a page or group for National Influenza Vaccination Week, we recommend either creating an event hosted by the CDC Facebook page or developing a Facebook group around a specific topic.
5. Draft Content Appropriate for Social Media – In most cases, the general public (or a segment of the general public) is the intended audience for Facebook posts. Therefore the text posted on Facebook should be short, simple, and easy to read.
 - Each post or status update can be a maximum of 420 characters including a link.
 - All text should be positive and encourage the viewer to take action or visit the CDC Web site for more information.
6. Include Accessible Video
Video files can be embedded from YouTube onto Facebook pages. It is recommended that videos are embedded directly from the CDC Streaming Health YouTube channel so that they can be played within Facebook in an accessible manner. This allows for cross-promotion of the CDC YouTube Channel and for the ability to obtain accurate metrics. Since many YouTube applications developed by outside groups may not be 508 compliant, they are not recommended for use on CDC's Facebook pages. All videos must be captioned ([Captioning Guidance](#)) and should follow the best practices listed in [Online Video Guidance](#)
7. Identify the Best Web Link – All Facebook posts should include a single URL to direct the user to the CDC.gov Web site for more information. Please contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov for additional guidance in writing Posts for Facebook.
8. Translation: Facebook profiles and posts can be developed in other languages and can be geo-targeted to fans who speak that language. This work will need to be done in conjunction with Multi-Lingual Services or another in-house translator. For additional information, please refer to <http://intranet.cdc.gov/nchm/dhcm/MLS/index.htm>. (This site is only available to internal CDC staff and contractors.). OADC maintains the CDC en Espanol Facebook page and Spanish-language content can be posted on that page.
9. Branding – All Social Networking Profiles will be branded with the CDC logo.
 - Co-branding and the use of additional logos may also be incorporated. Please refer to the CDC Brand Identity standards for additional information. <http://brandidentitystandards.cdc.gov/>.
10. Promotion: Promoting a Facebook presence is strongly recommended. Programs have promoted their Facebook presence in the following ways:
 - Include a thumbnail and link on high-profile topic-specific pages.
 - Include a thumbnail and link in campaign materials.
 - Send content-specific GovDelivery email updates.
 - Send emails to partners and grantees.
 - Post a promotional message on the CDC eHealth and other Twitter accounts.

- Develop a Facebook ad. (This will cost money.)
- Work with EMB to promote your page on the CDC Facebook page.
- Contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov for additional assistance.

11. Disclaimers and Policies: Standard disclaimer text is needed on every government Facebook page. This disclaimer text is:

“For official information go to www.cdc.gov/. Disclaimer: Posted comments and images do not necessarily represent the views of CDC.”

Comment and privacy policies are needed to be written for each Facebook page or group to meet the requirements of each Website. An official comment policy should be included as a link or a post on each Facebook profile. To view the comment policy for the CDC Facebook page, please go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Tools/CommentPolicy.html>

12. Comments: Comments should be moderated regularly.

- Remove (but record) comments that violate [CDC commenting policy](#). Post corrections rather than remove comments that are inaccurate or not reflective of CDC science. (Removal of comments that are inaccurate or opinionated, but not in violation causes lack of trust in the site and has proven to be a practice that encourages backlash by the community.)
- All comments should be collected for FOIA and Records Management.

13. Evaluation: Social media activities should be evaluated and may include reviewing metrics, identifying lessons learned, and determining whether the effort successfully met project goals. The Electronic Media Branch (EMB) is able to provide metrics, specifically:

- Facebook Insights – this includes total number of fans, number of active fans, number of new fans, number of unsubscribed fans, total and active fan demographics (age, gender, location, language), number of interactions (comments, likes).
- Omniture SiteCatalyst Web analytics – includes clickthroughs from CDC.gov links posted to Facebook back to CDC.gov.
- Metrics manually collected from Facebook pages – this includes number of comments and likes per post (or other piece of content, including images, videos, etc.) and percent feedback (Facebook feature that displays the percentage of comments/likes per number of impressions for each post).
- Cross-promotional metrics: for example, views of videos on Facebook that were embedded from the CDC YouTube Channel.

Please contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov with any specific questions about metrics collection and evaluation.

Process – Why Should I Highlight Content on the CDC Facebook Page:

1. Complies with Federal Terms of Service.
2. Established page with existing network of fans.
3. Posts content 2-4 times daily on a variety of health and safety topics.
4. No non-Facebook advertisements on the page.
5. Moderated daily (off-network); moderator removes comments that violate the CDC comment policy.

Process – How do I Highlight Content on the CDC Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/CDC)?

1. Contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov to schedule a post. Each post should be scheduled a minimum of two weeks in advance, however reasonable exceptions will be made in cases of need/emergency.
2. Develop and clear the text (420-characters max) and the CDC.gov link, photo, or video that you are including with the text.
3. Determine if there is an image coded in the metadata of the webpage.
4. If the topic is potentially controversial or may prompt emotional posts, draft possible responses/additional informational posts.
5. If topic is potentially controversial, identify SME or communication specialist to monitor Facebook on day(s) of posting(s).
6. Please contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov if you are interested in developing a Facebook application, advertisement, or event.

Process – How do I Respond to Comments on a CDC Facebook Page?

1. We encourage occasional commenting by CDC where appropriate; e.g., to clear up errors and answer questions or to bring the conversation back on track. However, all responses must be cleared before posting; this may create problems trying to respond to a comment in a timely manner.
2. You will need to act quickly and clear the response. Some groups have cleared text ready ahead of time based on the topic and send it to OADC/DNEM/EMB when they wanted it posted.
3. It is recommended that CDC responses be posted within 24 hours after the original post is live. CDC responses should be cleared by the POC for that specific post.

Process – Should I Develop a New Facebook Page?

Note: any new Facebook page must be cleared by your HCSO office. Approval is also required by OCISO (see security requirements) and the Electronic Media Branch (EMB) within the Division of News and Electronic Media (DNEM) at the Office of the Associate Director of Communication (OADC). EMB reviews to ensure that appropriate terms of services are utilized and that the account name reflects best practices and does not conflict with other CDC names. Please send any new account requests to SocialMedia@cdc.gov

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices



Here are some issues to consider when deciding whether to create a unique Facebook page or use the CDC Facebook page for your postings.

	Use Existing CDC Facebook Page	Create a New Facebook Page
Content	Static or infrequently updated content	Frequent topical, relevant updates
Frequency of Posts	Less than three times per week	Three plus posts per week, prefer at least daily
Level of Engagement	Disseminate messages	Engage key audience
Resources	Limited resources	Availability of staff, time and off-network internet access
Life Span	Limited, short-term events or campaigns	Long-term, ongoing campaigns or events

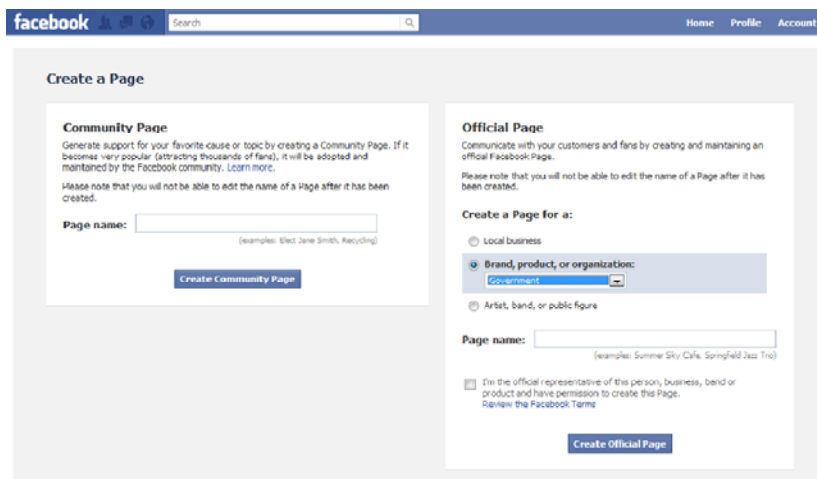
Process – How do I Develop a Facebook Page?

1. If you haven't already done so, visit www.facebook.com/government for great resources about government Facebook pages and to see what other agencies are doing; it is very helpful to see how other agencies are managing their pages.
2. Consult with EMB to setup a Facebook page, and include a Facebook proposal that includes proposed posts and content, and a promotion and evaluation strategy.
3. Remember that all Facebook activity, including researching pages, initial setup, posting content, and comment moderation should be completed off of the CDC network.
4. Before launching a page, be sure to think through your overall communications strategy and objectives; posting schedule and frequency; comment policy, including how you will collect and store comments. Complete the checklist that appears later in this document.
5. Establish a promotion plan before launching the page; encourage fans to share, cross-promote across other social media channels, and Web pages.
6. Have an evaluation and metrics plan in place prior to launch; how will you determine whether your efforts are successful?
7. Make sure you have the content and the resources (staff and time) and leadership buy-in to support the ongoing maintenance of the page and keep fans engaged; post meaningful content, include images and other multimedia content.
8. Work with EMB to setup and publish the page, make sure that default settings are set in order to meet your goals. EMB will assist in the process of removing non-Facebook advertisements from your page.
9. Facebook is not intended to be the sole channel for an agency's information. Under the Terms of Service negotiated for federal government use of Facebook, agencies agree



that “your account on the Facebook service will serve as an additional distribution channel for government information, but in no event will serve or be represented as the official site or homepage for Government Entity. To help convey this message, you will maintain the following message in a prominent location on your Facebook page: “If you’re looking for the official source of information about [Government Entity], please visit our homepage at [URL Link].” (Federal TOS for Facebook available: http://forum.webcontent.gov/resource/resmgr/terms_of_service_w_socmed/facebook_amended_tos_4.13.20.pdf).

10. Additional Information Needed to set up a Facebook Page:
 - Page name - a unique page name that describes the subject matter of the account, name of the organization or contains a keyword describing the nature of the organization. (ex. – CDC MMWR, CDC Heads Up). The page name should be short and concise; it is recommended that the profile name and page URL include CDC.
 - List of page administrators – One to two individuals who will serve as page administrators and have the authority to post on the page on behalf of the page (topic). It is recommended to add SocialMedia@cdc.gov as a temporary administrator to ease page setup.
 - A list of links listed on the Info tab.
 - Image – a logo or image that represents your organization or agency.
 - Profile box text – 250-character description of the page that will aid in search engine optimization. This profile box should also include the official disclaimer text.
11. Tab content – Will you develop custom tabs for your page using FBML? If so, what content will be displayed?
12. It is recommended that the launch plan include a soft, internal-only launch where you are building your fan base to 25. Once a page has 25 fans, you can setup/claim your custom page URL and begin a larger promotion effort.
13. Consult with EMB to develop a promotion strategy across EMB managed channels (CDC Facebook page, CDC_eHealth Twitter profile, etc.)



Process – How do I develop a Facebook Ad?

Facebook Ads cost money either based on impressions or clicks. It is recommended that you determine your budget, target audience and objective before beginning a Facebook ads project. EMB is available for consultation on Facebook Ads.

Process – How do I develop a Facebook Application?

Please contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov for assistance in developing a Facebook application.

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices



Facebook Checklist for Building a Unique Page

Name:
Phone:
Email:
CIO:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Page Name (should start with CDC):
<input type="checkbox"/>	Profile box information (250 characters max):
<input type="checkbox"/>	List of URLs for Info Tab:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Posting Schedule (recommended 3 times a week)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comment Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tab Content:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Who has permission to post? (List names):
<input type="checkbox"/>	ADCS Approval
<input type="checkbox"/>	Division Approval
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media Security Package Reviewed (CDC Username):
<input type="checkbox"/>	Metrics and Omniture plan:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Promotion Plan:
<input type="checkbox"/>	First 5 posts cleared and reviewed by (Fill out table below)

Topic	Text	Characters	URL



Electronic Media Consultation

The Electronic Media Branch is able to provide assistance and consultation on the planning and development of social media tools. Please contact SocialMedia@cdc.gov.

Appendix

Technical and Other Requirements

1. Length of Posts: Each post/status update on Facebook must be 420 characters or shorter.
2. Length of Comments: Each comment posted by individuals or the agency must be 8,000 characters or shorter.
3. Collecting comments:
 - All comments should be collected for FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) and records management purposes;
 - The National Archives and Records Administration is revising its records management guidelines to include social media, so it is not currently a legal requirement, but it will save us time in the future if we do need to go back and archive comments for record management requirements by proactively archiving them now.
4. To code your webpage so the Java Script error does not appear when the link is added to Facebook, please change the meta data as follows:



- Include title and description metadata; this text must be in lower-case.

```
meta name="description" content="ENTER PAGE DESCRIPTION HERE." />
<title>ENTER PAGE TITLE HERE </title>
```
5. To include an image with the link that you post in Facebook, your webpage must be coded with inline images or code the page to include the desired images. If there are no images available, select the no thumbnail checkbox.

```
<link rel="image_src" href="ENTER THE URL OF THE IMAGE IN JPG FORMAT HERE" />
```

Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices



Examples

Example of CDC.gov Feature posts on the CDC Facebook page with highlighted technical aspects and metrics information.

CDC National Drinking Water Week 2010: "Only Tap Water Delivers"

Water is the foundation for life. Learn more about the tap water you use every day and why investing in our public water systems is essential to the future of safe drinking water!

CDC Features - National Drinking Water Week 2010: "Only Tap Water Delivers"

www.cdc.gov

Water is the foundation for life. Learn more about the tap water you use every day and why investing in our public water systems is essential to the future of safe drinking water.

41,378 Impressions · 0.10% Feedback

May 7 at 10:01am · Comment · Like · Share · Promote

26 people like this.

View all 16 comments

Daily Story Feedback?

Likes Comments Unsubscribes

- Title and Pull-out Text from Feature
- Link to the Feature with metadata and Omniture code added
- Facebook Impressions
- Likes
- Comments

Current Official CDC Facebook pages (January 3, 2010)

	CDC Edit Page Advertise Page View Insights	68,578 Fans
	CDC - Parents Are the Key to Safe Teen Drivers Edit Page Advertise Page View Insights	943 Fans
	CDC en Español Edit Page Advertise Page View Insights	2,202 Fans
	CDC Heads Up - Brain Injury Awareness Edit Page Advertise Page View Insights	1,844 Fans
	iKnow Edit Page	1,268 Fans
	MMWR Edit Page Advertise Page View Insights	1,134 Fans
	VetoViolence Edit Page Advertise Page View Insights	14,251 Fans

