



National PTA[®] Social Media: Blogging Tip Sheet

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Blogging allows your local PTAs to have a consistent stream of fresh, timely new content to tweet, share on Facebook, use in your e-newsletter, and so on. Blogs allow PTAs to tell their stories, break news, comment on breaking news, and share resources quickly. While there are no set rules for creating a blog and writing blog content, here are some guidelines to make your PTA blog effective.

Reference: Mansfield, Heather (2011) *A How to Guide for NonProfits: Social Media for Social Good*. USA: McGraw-Hill

- 1. Blogs need to make a strong first impression.** When designing a blog the template should be simple, visually powerful, and spacious. Too much clutter and multiple columns can easily overwhelm the reader.
- 2. Feature the ability to subscribe to your e-newsletter and join your social networking communities.** The upper right corner of your blog is the most valuable section of the page in terms of visibility and impact. Feature the ability to subscribe to your newsletter, a campaign, and any social networking icons in that spot. As blog traffic increases so will new subscribers, friends, followers and fans.
- 3. Blog titles are priority. Make sure the blog title is bold and engaging.** It should also include key terms and words relating to your subject matter.
- 4. Emphasize quality content.** The length of blog posts is not as important as the quality and relevance of the blog posts. Content should be important and useful to your audience. The content should engage readers and make it worth their time. Word use should be efficient—don't waste words. Only add words that support your points. Avoid fluff.
- 5. Optimize content for web reading.** People tend to scan online articles rather than read them word for word. Use bullet lists whenever possible. Boldface keywords (or people's names) to break up long sentences and paragraphs.
- 6. Allow comments but moderate them.** All blogging platforms have a notification system that allows you to moderate comments before they go live. You should allow comments but you don't have to approve them all, particularly if they are rude and disrespectful in tone.
- 7. Add share and search functionality buttons.** Make sure the blog platform you choose automatically comes with share and search functionality or that you have the ability to add a share plug in.
- 8. Use photos/videos in all blog posts.** Blog posts with images tend to get more traction. Post at least one photo per blog post if possible. You can also do a quick Google Image or Flickr Creative Commons search if you have nothing in-house to use.
- 9. Create "Top Ten" posts.** Posting a blog about the top ten reasons your PTA is awesome is a great way to showcase your organization in a short, concise and interesting way. Use top tens or top fives to give people information on your PTA.
- 10. Be consistent.** Try to blog once a week and at the same time every week. Followers appreciate consistency and routine. Even if you just describe what you are working on this week, share it with the people who have invested time in your blog.
- 11. Share your blog content.** Cross promote your blog content on your other social networks like Facebook and Twitter.
- 12. Solicit engagement from readers.** Ask people to comment and email ideas. Post polls to survey ideas. Keeping readers engaged will keep them returning.

If you want more information about how your PTA can best utilize social media, please contact our Communications Department. This tip sheet is one of many resources that National PTA offers members. Go to **PTA.org** for more!

National PTA Social Media

Facebook - www.facebook.com/ParentTeacherAssociation

Twitter - @NationalPTA

YouTube - Youtube.com/nationalpta

PTA Great Idea Bank - www.ptagreatideabank.org