

# Being Safe and Social on Social Media



Presented on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017  
by Michelle Ptack, Development Associate  
Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation

Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation  
1049 Lake Street, Suite 204, Oak Park, Illinois 60301  
708.848.1560  
[www.oprfcf.org](http://www.oprfcf.org)



## ***Table of Contents***

Selected Social Media Terms	<b>pp 3-5</b>
Email Safety	<b>pp 6-7</b>
Email Etiquette	<b>pp 7-9</b>
Texting Best Practices	<b>p 10</b>
FaceTime and Skype Best Practices	<b>p 10-11</b>
<b>Social Media Cheat Sheets</b>	
Facebook	<b>p 12-14</b>
LinkedIn	<b>p 14-15</b>
Twitter	<b>p 15-16</b>

## Selected Social Media Terms

---

A **Blog** is an online journal that's updated on a regular basis with entries that appear in reverse chronological order. Blogs can be about any subject. They typically contain comments by other readers, links to other sites and permalinks.

**Chat** can refer to any kind of communication over the internet but traditionally refers to one-to-one communication through a text-based chat application, commonly referred to as instant messaging (IM) applications.

**Facebook** is a social media platform founded in 2004. The site connects people with friends, family, acquaintances, and businesses from all over the world and enables them to post, share, and engage with a variety of content such as photos and status updates. The platform currently boasts around 1.49 billion active users.

**Facebook Privacy settings** – Settings that allow a user to decide what content other users are able to view, and who is able to contact them.

**FaceTime** (like Skype) is Apple's video and audio calling service. It uses your Wi-Fi or cellular data connection instead of traditional phone lines. You can use it from any iPhone, iPad, iPod touch or Mac, to call anyone else using any one of those devices.

**Friend** is the term used on Facebook to represent the connections you make and the people you follow. These are individuals you consider to be friendly enough with you to see your Facebook profile and engage with you.

**Handle** is the term used to describe someone's @username on Twitter. For example, HubSpot's Twitter handle is @HubSpot.

A **Hashtag** (or hash tag) is a community-driven convention for adding additional context and metadata to your tweets. Similar to tags on Flickr, you add them in-line to your Twitter posts by prefixing a word with a hash symbol or number sign (#). Twitter users often use a hashtag like #oprfcf to aggregate, organize and discover relevant posts. Hashtags allows users the ability to search for content.

**Instant messaging** (IM) is a form of real-time, direct text-based communication between two or more people. More advanced instant messaging software clients also allow enhanced modes of communication, such as live voice or video calling.

A **Like** is an action that can be made by a Facebook user. Instead of writing a comment or sharing a post, a user can click the Like button as a quick way to show approval.

A **Mention** is a Twitter term used to describe an instance in which a user includes someone else's @username in their tweet to attribute a piece of content or start a discussion.

A **Permalink** a permanent static hyperlink to a particular web page or entry in a blog.

A **Post** is an entry on social media. Parameters for a post can vary from platform to platform.

A **Reply** is a Twitter action that allows a user to respond to a tweet through a separate tweet that begins with the other user's handle (@username). This differs from a mention, because tweets that start with an @username only appears in the timelines of users who follow both parties.

A **Retweet** is when someone on Twitter sees your message and decides to re-share it with his or her followers. A retweet button allows them to quickly resend the message with attribution to the original sharer's name.

A **Selfie** is a self-portrait that is typically taken using the reverse camera screen on a smartphone or by using a selfie stick (a pole that attaches to your camera). Selfies are commonly shared on social media networks like Twitter, and Facebook using the hashtag #selfie.

**Skype** (like FaceTime) is a free program that allows for text, audio, and video chats between users. Additionally, users can purchase plans to place phone calls through their Skype account.

**SMS** stands for Short Message Service, a system that allows the exchange of short text-based messages between mobile devices.

**Social media** are works of user-created video, audio, text or multimedia that are published and shared in an online social environment, such as a blog, podcast, forum, wiki or video hosting site. More broadly, social media refers to any online technology that lets people publish, converse and share content online.

**Social networking** is the act of socializing in an online community. A typical social network, such as Facebook, allows you to create a profile, add friends, communicate with other members, and add your own media.

**Tagging** is a social media functionality commonly used on Facebook that allows users to create a link back to the profile of the person shown in the picture or targeted by the update.

A **Tweet** is a post to the social networking platform Twitter. While tweet is a noun, the verb can be “tweet” or “twitter.” (RT stands for retweet: Users add “RT” to their own tweet if they are reposting something from another person’s tweet.)

**Twitter** is a popular social network, unveiled to the public in July 2006, that lets members post updates of no more than 140 characters. People have begun using Twitter in interesting ways to point to news stories, to raise funds for charity, and other unexpected uses.

**Wi-fi** (or wifi) stands for wireless fidelity, a simple system allowing enabled devices to connect to the Internet within short range of any access point without cables or adaptors.

A **Wiki** is a website that allows collaborative editing of its content and structure by its users. One famous example is Wikipedia.

**Viral** is a term used to describe an instance in which a piece of content - YouTube video, blog article, photo, etc. - achieves noteworthy awareness. Viral distribution relies heavily on word of mouth and the frequent sharing of one particular piece of content all over the internet.

## Email Safety

---

1. **Spam.** Your email platform likely has a folder marked “spam.” This is where anything that is considered suspect will end up. For the most part, this screening process is fairly accurate, but occasionally a good email will end up there. Check your spam folder at least once a week to make sure you aren’t missing something that you actually want.
2. **Phishing.**
  - You can do a Google search to learn about the latest phishing scams to research the latest scams
  - Anything that tells you you’ve won money or prizes or asks for private information like social security number, birthdate, credit card or password info through an email is very likely a scam. Do not click any links or reply with this information.
  - Report phishing scams via secured bank and financial institution websites.
3. **Clicking Links.** Never click on links in messages from people you don’t know or that may seem suspect. Links can lead to websites asking for personal information or can unknowingly download malware to your computer. *(It’s a good idea to have software on your computer that can combat malware. Reputable companies in this industry are McAfee and Norton, though others can come standard on new computers.)*

**Items that might end up in a spam folder should be considered suspect unless you can confirm that it actually came from a reputable source.**
4. **Safely peruse.** Beware of phony websites. These sites may have an address that’s very similar to a legitimate site, but the page can have misspellings, bad grammar or low resolution images. If you suspect a site may not be legitimate, double check the URL, or use a program like McAfee SiteAdvisor (a free download), which protects you against risky sites.
5. **Shop safely.** Don’t use the checkout feature on a site unless it has the “https” in the URL address and a padlock icon in the address bar. Also, using a credit card that offers fraud protection is safer for online purchases than a debit card.
6. **Password strength.** Instead of using a password that can be easily guessed, like your initials, last name, birthday, or any other information about yourself that is readily available through a Google search, try using a combination of letters, numbers and

special characters instead. *Phrases are good too.* To make them easier to remember, you can use special characters like \$ in place of the letter s, ^ in place of the letter a, etc. to create familiar words. For example, Susan Smith might use a password like: \$u\$@n\_\$m!+h

7. **Keeping track of passwords can be a safety concern of its own.** The best way to organize your passwords is to keep a *handwritten* list of the sites, usernames and passwords in a place where you can easily access it.
8. **Regularly change passwords and don't use the same passwords for critical accounts.** For more tips on how to create strong passwords, go to <http://passwordday.org>
9. **Watch your internet connectivity.** There is an onscreen indicator on your computer that lets you know if you are connected to the internet. You can use this icon to determine if you are on a familiar internet or WiFi connection. On your cell phone, you should set the phone for WiFi use, vs LTE to minimize overage charges. Always make sure that you are on a secure WiFi connection before checking banking information or using a credit card to make a purchase. *(Some free WiFi connections could put you at risk.)*
10. **Keep up to date.** Make sure software updates are set to happen automatically to best protect your computer. Use the manufacturer's latest security patches to make regular updates and make sure that you have the software set to do routine scans for security threats.  
*(Windows 10 does automatic updates; most other systems can be set to do the same.)*

---

## Email Etiquette

---

Netiquette is the word used to describe the way you should behave when online. Here are a few best practices for using email, texting and social media messaging:

### 1. "Reply All"

Do NOT "Reply to All" unless the situation absolutely calls for it. If a party host, for example, is asking his guests their menu preferences, the entire group doesn't need to know that one guest wants chicken and the next guest is allergic to dairy and so

on...and you aren't likely to want to read the responses of all 30 guests on the email plan to eat either! However, when it is warranted, it can be valuable. If 5 people are trying to find the best date to get together, it's important that everyone sees what those dates are to move the conversation forward.

Before you reply to any email, make sure you know who you are replying to in order to avoid embarrassing situations. Be familiar with the To, CC and BCC fields, and how they are best used.

## **2. Know Your Audience**

Not everyone in your address book needs to receive everything you that you decide is important enough to forward. Email has the most impact when it is personal.

## **3. Keep Emails Short**

## **4. Properly Format Your Email Replies to Avoid Confusion**

Include the original message you are replying to below your new message and signature line. Do repeat, in as few words as possible, questions from the original email that you may be answering.

If you reply to the reply of a reply, you can remove old, now unnecessary, messages from the bottom of the thread.

## **5. Write Good Email Subject Lines**

Don't use confusing subject lines or try to get your entire message into the subject line. The standard rule of thumb is to limit your subject line to 30-45 characters or less...but make it something relevant to the conversation so that the recipient can easily search for your message later if necessary.

## **6. When in Doubt, Send Plain Text Email, Not Rich HTML**

Not everybody can receive fancily formatted emails. Fonts are different from computer to computer and the virtual stationary can become the victim of a different email platform's varied formatting. When in doubt, stick to plain text. *(Email platforms vary. The format of yahoo isn't the same as the format of Gmail or Hotmail or Comcast.)*

## **7. Do Not Forward Email Hoaxes.**

Before you send the latest shocking "news" out to your whole address book, make

sure the original information is accurate. Stories about celebrities, politicians, or current events are very prone to exaggeration or complete invention! Make sure you FACT CHECK before you send, using About.com (search Urban Legends), Skeptoid.com or Snopes.com.

### **8. Explain Why You Are Forwarding**

To avoid having recipients think your email might be spam, send a brief explanation along with a link or attachment. *(Some email platforms will place an email containing just a URL in the spam folder.)*

### **9. Talk About One Subject Per Email**

Help make email inboxes less confusing and easier to search. Try to talk about one subject per message only. For another subject, start a new email.

### **10. Punctuation, Grammar and Capitalization Matter...in Emails too**

Since you are unable to set a readers pace or a conversational tone in text, these tools become critical to readers as the *only* way of inferring what you meant to say. Sarcasm rarely reads well to someone who doesn't share your sense of humor.

ALSO, ALL CAPS IS READ AS IF THE SENDER IS SHOUTING THE MESSAGE!

### **11. Use Acronyms Sparingly**

With text lingo so prevalent, it can be easy to fall into the habit of using shortcuts, but not everyone knows the latest acronyms...spell it out for clarity.

### **12. Always remember that anything you put in writing can be shared, and even retrieved *despite* having been deleted.**

## Texting

---

While all cell phones are designed for making phone calls, they are primarily used for texting. Texting allows a sender to create a short message (*character limit varies from phone to phone*) to send to another device.

Texting is the preferred method of communication for most people under the age of 40.

Reasons that people prefer texting can include:

- The message can be read and responded to at the recipients convenience
- Messaging can happen 24/7
- Texting allows for an automatic record of the conversation

Texting best practices:

- Keep it short
- Ask yes or no questions whenever possible
- Call the other party to handle more complex conversations

## FaceTime & Skype

---

### 1. Check your internet connection.

- If you can, use a wired connection.
- If you're using a WiFi connection, the closer you are to the router, the better signal you will get.
- Close any other programs that might be using your connection.

### 2. Check your computer.

Your computer's hardware and software can affect your call. For best quality:

- Use the latest version.
- Check that you have the minimum requirements to run the program.
- Make sure your computer is up-to-date and you've downloaded any operating system updates you need.
- If possible, use a headset or a separate microphone and speakers.

### 3. Check your Skype settings.

Go to **Tools > Options** to check your audio and video settings.

### 4. Make a free test call (on Skype)

You can practice making a call and check that your speakers and microphone are working properly. Just type **echo123** into the search field in Skype to get started.

### 5. Make sure you can reach your friend.

If the person you're calling isn't already in your contact list, add them, and check that they're online and available.

**Skype users only** - Are you calling a landline or mobile number? If so, you'll need enough Skype Credit or a subscription to call.

### 6. Get comfortable.

Choose a quiet, comfortable spot in a well-lit room. For best video quality, use a light-colored background and make sure you don't have bright lights right behind you. For best audio quality, limit background noise so that your voice can be clearly heard.

## Social Media

---

There are LOTS of social media platforms!

Picking the one that best suits you can be confusing. For example, Instagram is great for people who take engaging or humorous photos. Pinterest is for people who like to explore recipes or craft ideas or DIY projects or other "bulletin board" type collecting. But the most popular and most versatile platform is **Facebook**. Another relevant platform for people who may still be working or consulting, or seeking volunteer or board positions is **LinkedIn**. And a fast way to connect with customer service can be through **Twitter**. Following is a "cheat sheet" for these three platforms:

## Facebook:

- Creating an account on Facebook is easy. Take the time to post a profile picture. (It doesn't have to be a picture of you...but should be something that speaks to who you are so that people can identify that it is you.) Facebook users are hesitant to communicate with someone using the default profile graphic for safety reasons.
- **Security:** Your account, your posts to the account, things you share, etc. all have security settings that allow the user to control who gets to see them. (*See the settings page in your account.*)
- **Posting:** The industry standard for Facebook is that users should post **3-5 per week**, but preferably once a day. Posting can include: original thoughts (*things you compose yourself*), photos (*that you have taken yourself or have seen*), shared posts (*things other people have posted to Facebook*), or links (*articles or videos from other sources*). A post can also be a combination of these things (however a post can have only one attachment, meaning a link, a photo or a share).

When posting, it is important to utilize features like sharing, commenting, liking...and tagging and checking in, as well. (*See below.*)

- **Liking:** Facebook give you the option to indicate your response to a post without comment. Users have the options (below each post) to choose from:



- **Sharing:** The share feature allows you to post someone else's post to your own timeline. (Some users will have this feature turned off based on their security settings.) When you click "Share" at the bottom of a post, you will see the following options:
  - "Share now" which will immediately move the post to your timeline
  - "Share..." or "Write Post" (depending on whether you are on a computer or the mobile app will bring up the post in a pop-up window, allowing you to add your own message
  - "Send as Message" or "Send in Messenger" which allows you to share the post with a friend or friends through Facebook messaging

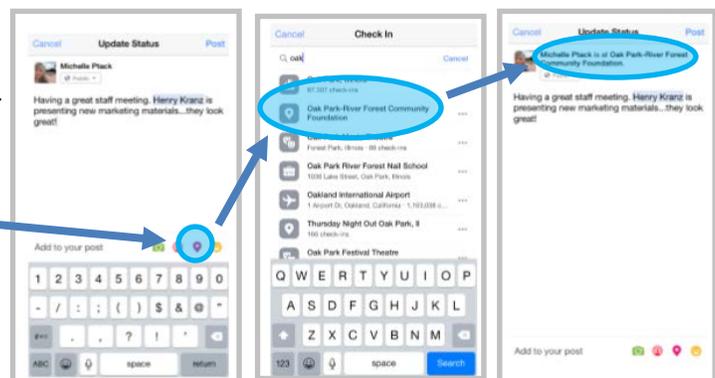


- “Copy Link” (available only on the mobile app) which allows you to copy the address to paste elsewhere (like a text message or email). Keep in mind that the link you copy in most cases will be the post address, so if the recipient of the link is not Facebook friends with that person, they may not be able to see the post.
- **Commenting:** Facebook gives users the option to comment on other user posts. Beneath each post, you will see an option to comment. You can add any message you would like to share in this box.
- **Tagging:** When creating a post, a user can “tag” another user (person, business or organization). Users are encouraged to do this to raise the visibility of the post. When another user is tagged, it puts your post in front of the other users viewing audience, thus giving the message more views. You can tag a photo or add a tag to a message by selecting from your friends list, or you can tag any user in a post by typing the “@” sign and the user’s handle (for a person it is typically their name; for organizations, the handle will appear on their page under their name; the Foundation’s is @OPRFCF)



In the example above (to the right), you will notice that in the comment posted at the bottom both Cuyler Brown and the Community Foundation appear in a blue box. They have both been tagged in this comment and will receive a notification that they were mentioned.

- **Checking In:** *(This feature will only work from the mobile app.)* When you are somewhere you would like to note to other users (i.e. a restaurant) and you are having lunch when you see a famous author (i.e. James Patterson), you can use the check in feature to select (or create) a location (in this case, the Oak Park-River Forest Community Foundation) and then proceed to type your message (such as, “I am inspired by the enthusiasm of @KristinCarlsonVogen at tonight’s Community Foundation Board Meeting”).
- **Facebook Groups:** Using a group on Facebook can be a great way to share photos and updates with a very specific group, like family members or former classmates in an extremely private setting.



- **Hacked Account:** There is a Facebook scam where a user could use your profile picture to open a new account. They may attempt to “friend” your current friends. If you suspect that your account has been hacked, visit <https://www.facebook.com/hacked> to run a system check on your current account and then report the hack through the Facebook Help Center. It’s also a good idea to post a warning on your account to ensure that your friends don’t add the phony account.

## Twitter:

- Creating an account on Twitter is easy. Take the time to post a profile picture. (It doesn’t have to be a picture of you...but should be something that speaks to who you are so that people can identify that it is you.) Twitter users are hesitant to communicate with someone using the default profile graphic for safety reasons.
- **Tweeting:** The industry standard for Twitter is that users should post **3-5 times per day**. The shelf life of a tweet is about 30 minutes, so you have to tweet often to be seen in most Twitter feeds.

Tweeting is restricted to 140 characters for the message (including hashtags and links), but can also include a photo or video.

When tweeting, it is critical to utilize features like tagging and hashtags to ensure that it is being viewed by the target audience. *(See below.)*

- **Tagging:** When writing a tweet, a user can “tag” another user (person, business or organization). Users are encouraged to do this to raise the visibility of the post. When another user is tagged, it puts your post in front of the other users viewing audience, thus giving the message more views. You can tag a user by typing the “@” sign and the user’s handle (the handle will appear on the profile page under their name; a user’s handle is not typically their name, so it’s wise to research before starting your tweet; the Foundation’s is @OPRFCF)
- **Hashtags:** The # character is used to sort content to be searched by users. Most large events, campaigns, movements, etc now have a hashtag already associated. There are two general strategies surrounding the use of hashtags:
  - Go big: Use a hashtag that everyone is using (#ALSIceBucketChallenge) to give your tweet its maximum audience
  - Go small: Use a hashtag that you have created (#oprfcf) to keep track of a specific group of tweets

Hashtags can also be grouped (i.e. #ALSIceBucketChallenge #oprfcf) to further segment the conversation, but still allows that tweet to be found in a search for each of the two hashtags used. It is a commonly accepted guideline that you do not want to exceed 3 hashtags per tweet.

- **Retweeting:** The retweet feature allows you to post someone else's post in your own feed. At the bottom of each tweet, you will see the following options.

To retweet:

- click on the  icon
- a pop up will appear, which will allow you to add your own message to the tweet (optional)
- when your tweet is ready, click the "retweet" button in the bottom right corner of the window



- **Replying:** Twitter gives users the option to comment on other user tweets, by clicking on the  icon. This will open a pop up box that will allow you type your message, which will appear in the Twitter feed as a new tweet (but will reference the original tweet).
- **Liking:** Twitter gives you the option to indicate that you like a tweet without having to reply to it. Simply click the  icon, and it will turn red, indicating that you have liked the tweet.
- **Reaching customer service:** Using Twitter or Facebook to reach the customer service department of a business can help you resolve an issue...or allow you to better praise a company that has done a great job! Because you are posting a comment on a VERY public forum, companies have a greater urgency to respond to you...quickly! Be sure to research the handle you are using to ensure that you are using the correct customer service department. (For example, Kraft may have both local and national customer service departments, or Walgreen's may have store specific accounts.)

## LinkedIn:

- LinkedIn is a site for professional interaction. Unlike other social media, it is designed for people to connect on a professional level, versus a social one. Users make **connections** (like Facebook "friends") with colleagues and former colleagues or people in your own industry. The goal is make qualitative connections and not strive for quantity.
- Creating an account on LinkedIn is similar to creating a resume. Take the time to post a profile picture. It should definitely be a photo of you and it should be a professional headshot style photo.

- **Posting:** Posting to LinkedIn is not like other social media. Posts should have an important professional message. Therefore, it isn't tied to a specific number of posts per week. The goal of LinkedIn is to be a "thought leader" in your area of expertise. So, it is not critical to post often, if at all, if that is not your personal goal.

When posting, it is important to utilize features like sharing, commenting, liking. (See below.)

- **Liking:** LinkedIn gives you the option to indicate your response to a post without requiring you to comment. Users have the options (below each post) to choose from Like, Comment or Share.
- **Sharing:** The share feature allows you to post someone else's post to your own timeline, with or without your own comment to the post.
- **Commenting:** Users can write a comment beneath each post.
- **Mentions:** When creating a post, or commenting on a shared post, a user can "mention" another user (person, business or organization). Users are encouraged to do this to raise the visibility of the post. You can mention another user by typing the "@" sign and the user's name, and a list of options will appear below your message. Select the user you want to mention.
- Another valuable use for having a LinkedIn account is for seeking volunteer positions, like those at the Board level. LinkedIn provides options for users to post volunteer experience to their profiles, as well as skills. Adding the phrase "seeking a board position" makes you more easily searchable in a board member search, which can be conducted by organizations in your area seeking new board members.

