

# McHugh & Novak

## Networking: Using Social Media and Technology

By

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### Introduction

Networking is usually thought of as an activity you do in person, perhaps with a drink in one hand and business cards easily accessible in the other. Indeed, these in-person conversations can lead to deeper connections that can help you excel in your career, find a

new job, learn a new skill, or help solve a problem because you have the right contact with the right expertise in your network.

Given that in-person networking is so valuable, is there a place for social media in a conversation about networking? To answer that question, the authors would like to share the story of how they met:

When Liz Novak started working at an association, she joined Jack McHugh's LinkedIn™ Group (Association and Nonprofit Publishing) for association publishers. In January 2016, when Liz was considering rebranding her association's flagship publication, her CEO asked her to reach out to other associations to learn about the process from people who have been through it already. As part of this environmental scan, Liz posted a question to Jack's LinkedIn Group, and the two started corresponding. Two years and several collaborations later, the two still haven't met in person, but have developed a rich, mutually beneficial connection and enjoy working together and talking to each other, all thanks to LinkedIn. Our intention with this article is to help you find similar connections in your life to enhance your personal and professional development.

This paper will be the third on the subject of networking—a subject vital to career success and personal success, too. Our first two papers were:

- N-1 *Networking Tips and Techniques*, 2017, 5 pages
- N-2 *Networking Your Way to Success*, 2016, 3 pages

Both are available at [http://johnbmchugh.com/free\\_pub\\_guides4.htm](http://johnbmchugh.com/free_pub_guides4.htm)

## What Is Networking?

Networking, as we will use the term, is the human connection between people for their mutual benefit. Networking is based on the premise that anything good, beneficial, important, or life-changing in your professional life is based on your personal connections with the right people.

In our first two networking papers, we stressed the human dimension of networking; namely, the one-on-one personal connection to another person. Now that we have stated our belief that the human dimension is the basis of effective networking, let's move to the exciting developments that have extended the reach of networkers; namely, the use of social media platforms and technology.

## What Is Social Media?

On page 379 of *The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law 2015* is this useful definition of social media: Social media “refers to tools that allow the sharing of information and content and the formation of communities through online and mobile networks of people.” This publication is a resource for the responsible use of social media, particularly on pages 379-399, even though its target audience is primarily journalists.

## Social Media Guidelines

Social media is both a great unifier and a great divider. Think about the fun of being part of an event— for example, the ASAE Annual Meeting — and tweeting your observations and insights

using the event tag, then seeing others at the event comment on and share your tweet. This is an example of enriching the experience and helping you connect with others at the event. Conversely, it's important to remember that the written word on its own doesn't include your tone and, therefore, can easily be misconstrued. To help you avoid the pitfalls that are too easily inherent with using social media, the following guidelines should be kept in mind.

*#1: Stop and think before you post anything on any social media platform.* “I really didn't mean that” is a disclaimer we hear frequently. We ask, “Why didn't you slow down, stop and think, and then write what you meant?”

*#2: Keep your reader in mind.* Ask yourself these questions: Who is my reader? What do I want the reader to think and feel after he/she reads my post?

*#3: Avoid any language that is coarse or insulting.* If you are angry or agitated, cool off before you post anything.

*#4: Ensure your post is grammatically correct and free from typos.* Have you proofed and corrected typos in your post? While abbreviations and sloppy grammar may be acceptable when texting friends and family, your social media posts are going to a wide audience and you want to be careful about the image you're projecting.

*#5: Remember, all of your posts, emails, and text messages are archived and constitute a “paper trail” and are discoverable if there are legal proceedings.* Just follow the news and read about any Department of Justice investigation regardless of the partisan implications. Also keep in mind that it's common for hiring managers to search the online presence of their job candidates, so you want to make sure that you are projecting a professional image of yourself.

*#6: Unless you carefully control who can see*

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*your posts, avoid political commentary.* Regardless of how you feel about politics and politicians, realize that only about 50 percent of the general public agrees with you. Why would you want to alienate that other 50 percent of the population? Unless you're running for office or make a living with political commentary, you're much better off avoiding it entirely. A possible exception could be if your Facebook account is locked down and you are careful about who sees your posts. However, security settings are often overridden after updates to social media apps, so it's always a good idea to check to make sure that your privacy settings are still what you want them to be.

*#7: If your employer has a social media policy, be sure you adhere to it.* The policy may be limited to the employer's social media outlets, but if you are in a high-profile position and have any name recognition whatsoever, it's best to abide by your employer's social media policy in your personal accounts, unless you are certain that they are locked down and your posts are only available to people who you know personally and not professionally.

## **Social Media Platforms**

There are a variety of social media platforms available for networking purposes. We won't list all of them, but will comment on those that provide the most return and exposure to working professionals. Social media platforms are in flux and will continue to evolve. It would be difficult to engage in all social media platforms and do them well, so it's important for you to determine which social media will pay the most dividends for your purposes.

### *LinkedIn™*

LinkedIn has been characterized as a "glorified resume distribution service." It's a valuable resource for job seekers, who can use it to research a company before applying for a position. Ideally, you will have developed your

network well before you need it as a job seeker, so you may be lucky enough to find someone at that company with whom you have a common acquaintance. Reach out to your contact, ask them to introduce you to the contact at that company, and ask them to put in a good word for you. Liz Novak used this approach when applying for a technical writing position – something that had been part of a previous job but she'd never officially worked as a tech writer in the past – and it was how she got her foot in the door. After four interviews she lost out to a much more experienced technical writer, but without that referral from LinkedIn, she never would have made it to the first interview. Another positive feature is that LinkedIn serves as a self-updating Rolodex. However, even though LinkedIn might save you a trip to a conference, it will not replace the deeper connections you will make in person.

### *Twitter™*

At times, it seems like Twitter is like passing around notes in a high school classroom (to paraphrase Jon Stewart). However, if you master hash tags and make a habit of filtering your feed to show the subjects you truly want to follow, you'll waste less time on the "white noise" that's Twitter and gain more value from it.

## **Pam Boiros on Social Media and Networking**

To provide an additional perspective, we asked marketing expert Pam Boiros of Bridge Marketing a few questions about social media.

*Can you give a succinct definition of social media?*

Social media is any online platform or site that enables users to create their own content and make it available to others. Like everything with social media, there are varying definitions. In this classic article, Blogger Heidi Cohen offers [30 different definitions](#). We are in a participation revolution – there is no such thing as one-way communication anymore, everything is

potentially an online discussion. This phenomenon is affecting every aspect of life: work, play, travel, politics, and more. And although the terms are sometimes used interchangeably, *social networking* is very different from *social media*.

*OK, then what is social networking?*

Social networking is the action of building and expanding your contacts through an online platform. A key aspect is the network effect — the connections you have or that you make to connect you to even more people. For example, if you have more than 1,000 connections on LinkedIn like I do, the number of second and third level connections you have multiplies out to the millions. Literally, there are millions of people from whom you are only one or two degrees separated.

There is some interesting research on this topic — [Mark Granovetter's](#) theory of the “Strength of Weak Ties” was fascinating to me and is highly relevant to social networking, as has been discussed on many [blogs](#).

*People seem to use primarily three brands of social media for networking purposes: LinkedIn™, Twitter™, and Facebook™. Can you suggest a hierarchy of social media in terms of their importance to networkers as far as exposure, effectiveness, reaching a business/professional and audience, and return on investment?*

Yes, these are the big three. For now, at least. There are many other social networking sites including Pinterest™, Snapchat, and other specialty sites specific to certain occupations and industries (for example, Sermo for physicians) that are worth keeping an eye on as well. But focusing on the “big three” for the moment, each is unique in a number of ways:

- **LinkedIn** is the best example of a professional social network. It is changing how organizations recruit talent, how job

seekers pursue their next opportunity, and how business connections are made. LinkedIn was acquired by Microsoft in 2016 which was a major validation of the company and their value in the talent economy. The connections are relatively strong, and the depth of your “connections’ connections” is the real power of LinkedIn.

mindful individuals. Unlike the other two examples featured here, LinkedIn is the only service which offers options for paid premium services. The options vary, and the plan that works best for you depends on your professional objectives. If you are looking for a new job or are an independent consultant, the Premium level is well worth the investment (US\$60 per month as of 2018). If you are in a sales role or responsible for recruiting talent into your organization, a premium subscription is absolutely indispensable.

- **Facebook** often gets the most attention in the social networking sector. It has the largest number of users, globally, and in a little more than 10 years has become one of the world’s most recognized brands — a household name with everyone from tweens to grandparents. On Facebook, the connections are personal — people connect to their family and friends, and tend to “like” products and organizations that are closely aligned to their personal interests. However, as the balance between work and life is continuing to blur often personal connections and work connections overlap and can strengthen using a social site such as Facebook.
- **Twitter** is both the broadest and — at the same time — the most limited, due to its 280 character limitation per post. The connections made on Twitter can be loose and tend to be ephemeral. Since Twitter uses the “follow” model, any Twitter member can follow anyone else, and there

- is no implicit or explicit two-way relationship. From what I have seen, Twitter users follow a wide range of other users spanning across their personal and professional interests. A colleague of mine once said, “Twitter offers the illusion of an audience” — and that’s true. Posting something to Twitter can be seen by virtually any other user, but will it be? Also, because of the relative anonymity, Twitter has become infected with countless “bots” and “trolls,” user accounts with a questionable background with even more questionable motives.

The marketing opportunities using social media and social networking are endless and have become quite sophisticated in just a few short years. The ability to reach specific people, with highly targeted advertisements, based on myriad criteria is possible on all of the social networks. Both B2C (business to consumer) and B2B (business to business) brands are leveraging the advertising opportunities on various social networking sites.

### **Attorney David Koehser on Legal Considerations and Social Media**

The following Q&A is excerpted from an interview I did with Dave in 2010 with some updating.

*Is there anything different when it comes to using protected works in social media when contrasted to an all-print world? In other words, how do copyright and trademark play out in social media?*

The same rules for copyright and trademark infringement apply, regardless of the medium. Any reproduction, distribution, display or performance of a copyrighted work without the copyright owner’s consent constitutes copyright infringement, and any use of an existing trademark or a mark that is similar to an existing trademark in a manner which is likely to confuse others into believing that the user’s goods or

services are affiliated with or endorsed by the trademark owner constitutes trademark infringement.

*How does fair use apply to the use of copyrighted material in blogs and other social media?*

Fair use will apply (or not apply) just as it does in print media. The use of a limited amount of copyrighted material may or may not qualify as a fair use, depending on the context. Uses for commentary, criticism and news reporting are likely to be given more leeway in this regard than uses for other purposes. For example, quoting a sentence or two from a book for purposes of reviewing that book on a blog will generally qualify as a fair use, just as it does in print. However, simply copying someone else’s work for purposes of conveying the same message and avoiding having to create anything new and original will generally not qualify as a fair use. As is the case with print or any other media, fair use determinations will continue to be made based on the facts and circumstances of each individual situation.

*Are there other non-intellectual property legal issues to be aware of when blogging—for example, things like libel or trade secrets or invasion of privacy?*

As is the case with copyright and trademark law, the same rules apply, whether the statement is made in print or on a blog. Thus a defamatory statement will still be defamatory if made in an online environment; disclosure of information which the disclosing party was obligated to keep confidential will still give rise to liability; and posting photos or information that violates a person’s right of privacy will still be grounds for legal action.

However, there are at least two unique considerations with respect to blogs:

(1) Material posted on a blog will generally be accessible worldwide. Thus even if the posting would not violate defamation, privacy or other

laws in one state or nation, the same may not be true in other states or nations. For example, some states extend privacy and publicity rights beyond death, while others do not.

(2) The ability to act and react immediately in an online environment tends to make posters lose their inhibitions. Thus people may get carried away and post things online that they would never publish under the more deliberate review processes typically required for publication in print.

The anonymity of the Internet can also give rise to problems. If you maintain a blog and allow persons to post to that blog, you may find anonymous or pseudonymous posters posting defamatory statements, or statements that violate another person's right of privacy or confidentiality. You may be liable for these postings unless you comply with the applicable provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which require that you: (a) designate an agent to receive notices of infringing materials posted on your site and register that agent with the US Copyright Office; and (b) respond to any notice received by following the removal procedures set forth in the DMCA.

However, even if you comply with the DMCA and thus reduce or eliminate any potential liability for copyright infringement, your reputation may still be damaged if you or your blog become associated with the sentiments expressed in the postings or with the posting party. In addition, the DMCA only applies to claims for copyright infringement; it does not exempt you from claims for trademark infringement, defamation or infringement of any right of privacy, publicity or confidentiality, any of which may arise from postings on your site. For these reasons, if you allow others to post to your blog, you should carefully monitor all comments submitted before allowing them to be posted on the site.

## **Final Thoughts and Recommendation**

Social media can be a valuable tool for networking, or it can be a complete waste of time. It's up to you to decide what social media platforms fit your purposes, to participate in them responsibly, and to leverage them as needed. Social media is a great equalizer. With it, anyone has the potential to be a thought leader, but not everyone can do it well. We hope this article has given you some tips to use social media to augment your networking activities.

Although social media can't replace the value of connections you make in person and renew (in person) regularly, it can be a great way to keep track of the events in your contacts' lives between your meetings. For example, if you know a contact has, say, recently gotten divorced, you can avoid the faux pas of asking about the spouse at your next meeting. Plus it's a great way to learn more about a person before reaching out to them the first time.

With the recommendations in this article – as well as a healthy amount of common sense on your part – you should be able to use social media successfully in your networking endeavors.

## **Book Recommendation**

*Content Rules* by Ann Handley and C.C. Chapman (John Wiley and Sons, 2012)

This 294-page book stresses the development and planning of all sorts of social media content including white papers, blogs, podcasts, video, eBooks, and webinars.

*Content Rules* has value for all members of an organization, not just marketing specialists. As the authors note, "With the rise of the social web, the lines between marketing, public relations, and customer service are blurring. Your customers do not care which department's responsibility it is; they look at your company as a single entity. So as you develop a content strategy, it is critical to include the voice and

input of everyone in the company if you hope to be successful."

Well worth the price of this book is the authors' list of 18 words and phrases that "we'd like to ban from marketing, sales, corporate, communications, business schools, blogs, and board rooms."

Even though *Content Rules* has a 2012 copyright, its advice is timeless and still relevant.

### **Also of Interest**

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Both are available at [http://johnbmchugh.com/free\\_pub\\_guides4.htm](http://johnbmchugh.com/free_pub_guides4.htm)

### **About Our Contributors**

#### **Pam Boiros**

Pam began her career in publishing working for Butterworth-Heinemann, a division of the global STM publisher Elsevier. She held various sales and marketing roles from 1993-2000, including Director of North American sales. In June 2000 she pivoted to digital publishing with eBook pioneer Books24x7. During the next 12 years, focused on the Book24x7 product line, she handled product management and marketing as well as publisher relations. Books24x7 was acquired by Skillsoft, and Pam served as Vice President, Global Corporate Marketing at Skillsoft from 2012-2016. Pam is currently the principal and owner of Bridge Marketing Advisors, a firm specializing in strategic marketing planning. She holds an undergraduate degree from Northeastern University (Boston, MA) and an MBA from Babson College (Wellesley, MA).

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#### **David Koehser, Attorney-at-Law**

David Koehser is a Minneapolis-based lawyer who practices in the areas of copyright and trademark Law. Dave's website contains articles on the topics of: Publishing Law, Merchandise Licensing, Copyrights and Trademarks, and Theater and Performing Arts. Request a copy of Dave's informative quarterly e newsletter, *Publishing and Merchandise Licensing Law Update*. Dave has a B.A. from the University of Iowa and a J.D. *cum laude* from the University of Minnesota Law School. You can find his website at [www.dklex.com](http://www.dklex.com).

#### **About the Authors**

##### **John B. McHugh**

John B. "Jack" McHugh is a 40-year veteran of the publishing business. Jack has worked as an executive for Houghton Mifflin, Wadsworth, and St. Mary's Press. Jack is also an experienced association publishing executive. For seven years, he was Publisher and Director of Programs at the American Society for Quality and for a two-year period, he served as the Interim Publisher at the Project Management Institute. He is a member of the ASAE Advisory Board for Publishing, Communications, and Media Issues and Practices.

Jack's specialties include association/nonprofit publishing, book publishing, executive recruiting, journal publishing, rights and permissions, new ventures, organizational design, and social media strategy and policy.

McHugh and Liz Novak, of IAPD, are co-authoring a series of papers on **Networking Techniques**. Jack McHugh is also the manager of two LinkedIn™ groups, **Association and Nonprofit Publishing** and **The Self-Employment Forum**.

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### **Liz Novak, MBA, CAE**

Liz Novak began her publishing career in the early 1990s at *PC Magazine*. After enjoying 17 years as a magazine editor for various technical magazines, and seeing the impact of the Internet on the publishing industry, she returned to school and earned her MBA. After graduation, her freshly minted MBA landed her a job as magazine editor for the flagship publication of the International Association of Plastics Distribution (IAPD). Six months into the job, she added Marketing Director to her title and has relished the opportunities that combining the association's publishing and marketing departments have afforded her.

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