

Brian Elmer's Presentation to the R.O.A.R. Seminar, Surrey, October 13, 2012

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## What is social media?

It's being said that if your organization doesn't have a social media presence—you don't exist -- in terms of public awareness.

The term "social media" identifies various methods of interaction between people via the internet where those people create and share content they themselves have created.

According to the online encyclopedia called Wikipedia, in this year, 2012, social media became one of the most powerful sources for news updates through platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

Those "platforms" or social media technologies are in many and varied forms and include internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, micro-blogging, podcasts, photos and videos.

An article from 2010 in Business Horizons identified six different types or classes of social media:

1. collaborative projects (for example, Wikipedia)
2. blogs and microblogs (for example, Twitter)
3. content communities (for example, [YouTube](#))
4. social networking sites (for example, Facebook),
5. virtual game worlds (e.g., [World of Warcraft](#))
6. virtual social worlds (e.g. [Second Life](#)).

Social media network websites include sites like Facebook, Bebo, MySpace and LinkedIn—one that's especially used to network by the business and corporate world. Twitter is used as a social media network as well although it also fits under the micro-blog category. A relatively new platform is called Pinterest, which is largely based upon people posting pictures in "pin up" fashion to tell their story. That could be a good one for our dance recreation because of the colour, movement, fun and laughter involved in dance.

The invention of mobile devices that access the internet has presented the opportunity for immediacy of information on-the-go. Young people particularly appreciate the ability to communicate instantly, whether its linking up with friends, making plans or sharing the latest top video on YouTube.

As the B.C. Square and Round Dance Federation's marketing volunteer, I've established and maintain on behalf of the Federation a Facebook page, two Twitter pages, a YouTube page and a blog page. Of particular note is that I am just concluding a paid social media advertising campaign for our Federation. Starting in

mid-July, I began with Facebook ads then built the campaign to include Google Adwords and YouTube. My budget was \$3,200.

Personally, my wife and I have our own Twitter page and I maintain a YouTube page for our dance club.

The intent of this time today is to detail what social media tools are in place and how they can benefit the advancement of the square and round dance recreation. We should also support contra and clog dancing which are dance forms we generally embrace as well.

## Facebook

As mentioned earlier, Facebook is in the category of a social networking site. According to Social Bankers – a global social media and digital analytics company, 55 per cent of Canadians use Facebook, representing 18.58 million of us, making our country #13 of all countries having Facebook access.

Facebook allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch. It is free to become a registered user. As you enter content on your Facebook page, you're creating a timeline where the newest information plots above the old.

Other people with their own Facebook pages can visit your page and you can visit theirs. You can activate what they call a "Like button" if the material pleases you. The Like button is a feature where users can like content such as status updates, comments, photos, links shared by friends, and advertisements. When a user clicks the Like button, the content appears in his/her friends' news feeds – I notice that the contributions of others appears under the heading "Recent Posts by Others." The button also displays the number of users that liked each piece of content, and may show a full or partial list of those users. Facebook describes liking as a way for users to "give positive feedback and connect with things [they] care about."

In order to buy Facebook advertising for the B.C. Federation, I had to establish a Facebook page. You'll see our provincial page if you enter into your browser the address [www.Facebook.com/BCSquareandRoundDanceFederation](http://www.Facebook.com/BCSquareandRoundDanceFederation).

My goal is to keep the page as promotionally-oriented as possible, focusing on events and activities province-wide. Also, it will serve as a guide to clubs, showing what can be done in the way of publicity. You'll currently see on our page:

- a large photo depicting a floor full of square dancers
- an article with picture and a link regarding successful online news publicity through press releases submitting regarding a Central Okanagan Youth Club and a club celebrating Square and Round Dance Awareness Week
- an article about seeking club publicity the year around that includes how Awareness week can be a reason for publicity; a picture of the B.C. Proclamation is included
- a writeup and link to a YouTube video that shows an actual new square dancer session in progress at an Interior club
- a promotion with a beach photograph telling of the Plus and Advanced Square Dance "Mini-Festival" at Parksville in July

- a photo of a couple round dancing with an explanation of what round dancing is
- an article, photo and links to pictures and video of the recent Othello Tunnels Campout and Dance

One way that the dance community can use Facebook to its advantage in promoting our recreation is for all of us to have personal Facebook pages. Then we can all “Like” the Federation’s page and it can like you. Then, those who like your page, such as friends, relatives, co-workers, will hopefully become interested in the fun we depict in our dance activity. Furthermore, as a square or round dancer, you can include lots of positive information about your dance experiences on your Facebook page. It’s rather a snowball effect.

## Twitter

When Twitter was established, its designers said that its purpose was to tell in short messages, called “tweets,” “what are you doing?” Young people took that a little to the extreme and produced messages like “taking the garbage out after Mom yelled at me again.” Afterward, Twitter became focused on “what’s happening?” Although many messages are still trivial, many are not and it can be a very interesting and useful communications tool.

The real wonder regarding Twitter is that it is instant text messaging that can be particularly valuable in urgent situations or emergencies. During the recent forest fire in Peachland, it was used extensively to communicate alerts and evacuations, road closures, the locations of emergency housing facilities, etc. I even saw one message that provided a link to the actual online police communications radio where details could be heard way before any media broadcast.

Twitter comes under the category of blogs and micro-blogs which are like editorials in the newspaper. It is a micro blog that’s called “micro” because it’s limited to 140 characters, including spaces. It’s rather like a bulletin board only having space for the who, what, when and where. Twitter messages, though, can include links to photos or web pages, including videos. When you include a link, it uses up no more than 19 of your characters, unless your link is shorter. You can have a long, drawn out link address but Twitter will “truncate” it for transmission and only consume 19 of your precious characters.

Obtaining a Twitter page is free. Also, anybody can view your messages, called tweets, by going to your home page at [www.Twitter.com/\(your name or “handle”\)](http://www.Twitter.com/(your name or “handle”)). They cannot interact with your messages unless they have their own Twitter account.

Regarding interacting, Twitter has a feature called the “follow.” It means that, if you have a Twitter page of your own and you’re browsing the pages of others, you can click on “follow” to have their messages post on your page as well. It literally means that you are following all their tweets. If they like your tweets, they can follow you too. You can “unfollow” if you become bored with anybody’s tweets.

That feature is great if you have a hobby or interest, like square or round dancing, where you welcome relative messages.

Another available feature is called “retweet.” If a particular message strikes you as valuable enough to repeat, you can re-issue it as a fresh message.

Similar to Facebook, Twitter messages simply pile up in a timeline, with the latest tweet on top, including tweets from all those you follow. As a day progresses, your timeline will grow but you can scroll down-down-down to catch everything that you may have missed. You can access just the tweets that you've sent on your Twitter home page if you want to see what you said.

I've heard it said that Twitter is like a stream of running water. Whenever you feel like it, you just look in at the stream's edge and see what "floats by!" It can be fascinating, especially when you notice others following your account because they are interested in what you post.

Twitter offers a feature known as a "hashtag" which, simply by means of placing a number sign (#) before a word or phrase, allows anybody using Twitter to search for all listings with that hashtag. This can be very useful for dance club promotion because, for instance, promotional Twitter messages can be hash-tagged #Chilliwack. Then, whenever someone using Twitter searches for news, events and happenings with that hashtag, your message should appear with all others containing the hashtag. Such a message might read:

*(a Twitter message cannot exceed 140 characters, with spaces)*

Loads of fun/laughter coming in Jan. at #Chilliwack when sessions in today's style of square dancing begin!  
Details: [RhythmReelers@gmail.com](mailto:RhythmReelers@gmail.com)

The hashtag option makes online meetings possible. Clubs, associations or the Federation could conduct some meetings that way. It's done by opening two Twitter windows on your screen. One window is your home page and the other window is a Twitter search window that looks for a particular hashtag. We could be tweeting from this meeting around the province right now. Every tweet we type must contain a certain hashtag for search purposes. We could choose "#ROAR." Our tweets could read like the following:

@brian – This meeting's boring – where you goin for supper? #ROAR

@lyle - We love hot Thai food – there's a place in Langley! #ROAR

@brian – ahh! They caught me tweeting – gotta go! #ROAR

A computer window showing a Twitter search for all hashtags including #ROAR will show all those messages.

Realizing the value of Twitter for communication relative to dancing in our province, I acquired a Twitter page for the Federation with the purpose of posting dance information and, especially, urgent messages. When the Festival planned for Prince George was cancelled on short notice last year, a message (called a "tweet") was posted on our Twitter page. Again, that opportunity for instant communication is priceless. That initial Twitter account is serving as a bulletin board, reflecting Federation happenings and interesting activity around the province. It only follows the second B.C. Federation Twitter account and no others. See it at:

[www.Twitter.com/bcfeddanceneews](http://www.Twitter.com/bcfeddanceneews)

A second Twitter account was established with the desire that we in the B.C. square and round dance community start up a dialogue that not only promotes our dancing but also shows we're normal people who enjoy a glass of wine, a nice vacation, grandkids activities, etc. The plan is that if you follow that page, it will follow you. It has the potential to build and build to a large number of followers and a large number that it will follow in turn. See that interactive page at: [www.Twitter.com/bcfedlive](http://www.Twitter.com/bcfedlive)

## The Dance Connection Blog Page

While Twitter is a micro-blog, there was a desire to create an opportunity for the B.C. dance community to write in more depth on a subject. An internet blog is rather like an editorial that you might read in the newspaper. It's usually an opinionated article on a particular topic, sometimes in praise, sometimes in criticism. Usually, there is a "Comments" section to a blog page where people can leave their thoughts on the subject.

We have created a blog page, with opportunities to contribute in categories of specific dance styles, like square dancing, round dancing, callers & cuers, clog dancing, etc. The page is titled: "Celebrate, Discuss, Suggest, Inspire! A Blog Space About Square Dancing and its Related Dance Forms."

See articles currently in place on subjects like the need to address the dance needs of the Baby Boomers and another in praise of round dancing at: [www.Blog.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.Blog.squaredance.bc.ca)

## YouTube

YouTube is in the social media category of “content community.” The service was founded in February of 2005 and it is intended to allow people around the world to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. Those people now number in the billions.

The Federation’s Summer social media campaign included the posting on YouTube of the Canadian Square and Round Dance Society’s 30 second commercial (public service announcement) “If You Like To Walk... Square Dance!” Placed on YouTube only in late August, it already has achieved an amazing 2, 269 views. See that by going to [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com) then type into search “If You Like To Walk... Square Dance!”

While our clubs probably won’t have polished commercials to place on YouTube, they should consider taking video at special club events and posting it on YouTube.

The Westsyde Squares of West Kelowna learned that professional U.S. square dance caller, Tom Roper, takes video of his dancers when they’re on the dance floor at his Mesa dances. He posts that video on YouTube and claims that those dancers tell others to see the fun they have and end up bringing newcomers.

Assisted by myself, we in the Westsyde club took video at the first, second and third new square dancer sessions and posted it on YouTube. It probably didn’t result in newcomers but it certainly raised the excitement and moral of the new dancers. One woman had her long-time Ontario girlfriend watching her dance and it resulted in the Ontario lady exclaiming to her friend: “first day of square dancing, first hour of instruction and you’re already on YouTube!”

The first video posted has had 296 views; the second received 165 so far.

Those videos remain in place on the Westsyde Squares YouTube channel. A third production from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3 free sessions will be posted shortly. Find them at: [www.YouTube.com/WestsydeSquares](http://www.YouTube.com/WestsydeSquares)

## Interactivity/Cross Promotion Opportunity

The thing about establishing various social media formats in the promotion of our dance recreation is that you can cross-promote between formats to be even more effective. For instance, a good promotional post on Facebook can be referenced in a tweet on Twitter that includes a link to your Facebook page. Likewise, if your dance club has a featured video on YouTube, your Facebook and Twitter pages can be interactive with that by suggesting people go to YouTube and watch the fun video. The possibilities are many and varied.

## Advertising New Dancer Sessions on Facebook or Google AdWords

The “new frontier” for paid advertising of our dance lessons is certainly social media. The biggest reason to consider placing ads on formats like Facebook or Google is that they can target your new dancer prospect very well. You select the cities in which your ad is to be seen, the sex and age range of those to who you want to appeal and you can even select areas of interest that are most likely to grab your prospect.

The ads themselves only grab attention and encourage prospects to “click” for more information. Then, you have to have a destination for that click, called a “landing page.” Club web sites are logical but, ideally, it

should be a specially-designed web page that gives your new dancer prospect all the exciting details about getting involved in our recreation. Advice on this can be sought from Brian Elmer at [brian@squaredance.bc.ca](mailto:brian@squaredance.bc.ca) or the Federation's webmaster, Phil Douziech, at [info@squaredance.bc.ca](mailto:info@squaredance.bc.ca)

## A look at the Facebook portion of the B.C. Federation's Summer 2012 Social Media Campaign - Co-ordinated by SQUAREUPB.C.

Five market-segmented paid advertisements ran on each of Facebook and GoogleAdWords and another on Google's YouTube. The ads only appeared in cities (and surrounding areas) where new square dancer sessions were offered this year. For the purpose of sampling the scope of the effort and the resulting "analytics," here is information about just the Facebook campaign.

### Facebook analytics:

"Take Me Dancing" campaign, targeting Baby Boomer women aged 48 to 66.

Ad appeared before human eyes 1,836,866 times, 713 people were interested enough to click on the ad to get more information at a cost to us of 72 cents per click (28 cents per thousand people, called CPM) and were transferred to the promotional "landing page:" [www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.TakeMeDancing.squaredance.bc.ca)

"Yes! Learn to Dance Now" (Dancing 30 Somethings) campaign, targeting men and women aged 30 to 47  
Ad appeared before human eyes 1,757,953 times, 354 people were interested enough to click on the ad to get more information at a cost to us of 99 cents per click (20 cents per thousand people, called CPM) and were transferred to the promotional "landing page:" [www.Dancing30Somethings.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.Dancing30Somethings.squaredance.bc.ca)

"Better Health" campaign, promoting the online health-oriented brochure

Ad appeared before human eyes 790,899 times, 209 people were interested enough to click on the ad to get more information at a cost to us of 99 cents per click (25 cents per thousand people, called CPM) and were transferred to the printable tri-fold health brochure:  
[www.BetterHealth.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.BetterHealth.squaredance.bc.ca)

"Dancing Keeps You Young" campaign, targeting Baby Boomers

Ad appeared before human eyes 843,877 times, 234 people were interested enough to click on the ad to get more information at a cost to us of 85 cents per click (24 cents per thousand people, called CPM) and were transferred to the 10-minute promotional video on YouTube at: [www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca](http://www.DancingKeepsYouYoung.ca)

"Kids Love to Square Dance" campaign, targeting children aged 13 and over up to adult (parents) aged 40  
*This campaign ends October 16, 2012, so the following is up-to-this point:*

Ad appeared before human eyes 1,260,621 times, 245 people were interested enough to click on the ad to get more information at a cost to us of 92 cents per click (18 cents per thousand people, called CPM) and were transferred to the promotional "landing page:" [www.KidsLoveToDance.squaredance.bc.ca](http://www.KidsLoveToDance.squaredance.bc.ca)