

Teens & Social Media in School & Public Libraries: A Toolkit for Librarians & Library Workers

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Created by:



For more than 50 years, YALSA has been the world leader in recommending reading listening and viewing for teens.

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How Social Media Facilitates Learning in Schools & Libraries

What is social media? It is a term commonly used to refer to a variety of web-based tools used to connect, collaborate, and create web content and experiences. Websites that allow visitors to send email, post comments, build web content or take part in live audio or video chats are all considered to be social media sites.

Social media has many positive uses in schools and libraries. It provides an ideal environment for teens to share what they are learning or to build something together online. The nature of the medium allows teens to receive feedback from librarians, teachers, peers, parents, and others. Social media helps to create a sense of community (as do the physical library and school) and in this way are already aligned with the services and programs at the library and school.

Schools and libraries are working to integrate positive uses of social media into their classrooms, programs, and services. By integrating social media into educational environments, teens have the opportunity to learn how to be safe and smart when participating in online social networks. They also learn valuable life skills, as these social technologies are tools for communication that are widely used in colleges and in the workplace. Here are a few examples of how teens are being introduced to the positive uses of social media technologies:

- * An author creates a blog or Twitter account as a way to reflect on the reading and writing experience. Teens who enjoy the author's work keep up on what the author is writing and thinking through the blog. The author's blog is used as a research source and as a way to communicate with the author about books, reading, and writing. See <http://www.twitter.com/barrylyga> and <http://halseanderson.livejournal.com>
- * A school librarian works with teachers to create a LiveBinder as a pathfinder of resources on a particular topic. Students can add and annotate resources they locate. Together, the librarian, teacher, and students collect a rich resource that can be used for homework projects. See [Van Gogh: The Bedroom](#).

Literacy & Social Media

Social media gives teens meaningful ways to use and improve reading and writing skills. All social software requires teens to read and write. Reading and writing skills are used when a teen:

- * creates a profile on a social media site such as Facebook;
- * posts or comments on a blog;
- * writes about an idea on Twitter;
- * adds or edits content on a wiki;
- * searches for social content; or
- * consults peers online as a part of research

This is why these technologies are referred to as the "read/write web."

Developmental Assets & Social Media

When schools and libraries help teens use social networking tools safely and smartly, they also help teens meet their developmental assets as defined by the [Search Institute](#).

When teens:

- * Learn how to use blogs, wikis, Facebook and MySpace within an educational context they learn about **boundaries and expectations**.
- * Are able to use social media tools in learning they have a **commitment to learning**.
- * Have the opportunity to communicate with peers, experts, authors, etc. via online social media they develop **social & cultural competence**.
- * Work with adults and peers on developing social media resources and sites and teaching others how to use these resources and sites they are **empowered**.
- * Have a voice in the future of the school or the library by using social media they gain a sense of **personal identity and value**.
- * See how librarians and teachers use social media, they are presented with **positive role models**.

- * Students studying a specific period in history create a fake Facebook wall as a way to write content from the perspective of a historical figure. While working on their wall, students have the chance to talk about how to post on Facebook safely and intelligently. They gain literacy skills as they analyze their writing from the point of view of a historical figure. See <http://tinyurl.com/fakefbwall>.
- * A public library creates apps that teens can use on their own Facebook pages. The apps provide teens with tools they can use to search for information for homework projects, find library events, and collect resources for projects and leisure reading. Teens get to use high-quality tools while working within an environment in which they are comfortable. See <http://homeworknycbeta.org/get-the-apps>.
- * A librarian in a public library works with teens to teach them how to create videos. In the process teens learn media literacy skills while gaining insight into video creation and publishing. The teens post their videos on YouTube and have the opportunity to talk about how to be safe while in the YouTube environment. See <http://tinyurl.com/smdutubeexamp>.
- * A high school library creates a website for members of the school community to access resources and connect with each other. See <http://galloway.ning.com>
- * A teacher uses Google Docs for a writing assignment so students can easily access their documents from outside the classroom and collaborate with classmates on their writing. See www.google.com/educators/p_docs.html
- * Teens paste lyrics from a favorite song into Wordle. They then analyze the language in the song and consider what the repetition and use of words implies about the lyrics' meaning. See [www.wordle.net/gallery/wrdl/262858/Stairway to Heaven](http://www.wordle.net/gallery/wrdl/262858/Stairway_to_Heaven)

- * In the library, teens learn to use Glogster to create posters that highlight the personalities of their favorite book or movie characters. While creating the Glog, the teens have opportunities to talk about issues related to the copyright of images, music, and video as they add these formats to their posters. See <http://cjc88.glogster.com/lee-book-report>.

- * A librarian in Maryland works with her teens to use blogs, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media sites to create an Alternate Reality game as part of the teen summer reading program: www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6708200.html. Teens use technology to find clues and solve the answers to puzzles in this game.

Tips for Talking with Legislators about Social Media

Before You Visit Your Legislator

- * Do your homework. Find out what legislation is pending and be aware of what it says and where the person you are going to talk to stands on the issues related to social media in relation to youth.
- * Gather personal stories relating to the issue from your teen library patrons and their parents to share with the legislator.
- * Visit or contact your legislator as soon as you hear about pending legislation.
- * Find out about legislation on the ALA web site at <http://capwiz.com/ala/home>.
- * Find out about federal social media or networking legislation at Open Congress, <http://www.opencongress.org>

Even though librarians are respected members of the community, the competition for the attention and time of elected officials is great, as is the competition for funding. It is important that librarians reach out to elected officials and educate them about the needs of libraries and library patrons.

- * Communicate via phone, e-mail, fax, or in person. If you're hoping to meet with a legislator in person, set up an appointment in advance. (By the way, don't be disappointed if you end up communicating with someone from the legislator's staff.)
- * Be polite, respectful, professional, and friendly.
- * Introduce yourself, identify your job title, and state your purpose.
- * Stick to the point: communicate *one* message: the benefits of social media for teens.
- * Use specific examples from your own work with teens to illustrate your

point. If you're meeting the legislator in person, you might even be able to take a well-spoken teen and/or parent with you who can talk about the benefits of social networking.

- * Ask for action. For example, ask the legislator to vote against any legislation that attempts to restrict or ban social networking sites in libraries. Or ask the legislator to support any legislation that supports social networking and Internet access, like the E-rate.
- * Offer to provide additional information about social media. Take such materials with you if you're meeting the legislator in person.
- * Listen carefully and courteously.
- * Invite the legislator to visit your library. Provide a calendar of events.
- * Remember to say "thank you."

Educating the Community about Online Social Media

In the media, there are many examples of how social media has played a dangerous role in teen lives. However, positive examples of how this technology supports teen literacy skills and developmental growth are not always so readily available. For that reason, librarians should play an active role in educating parents, teachers and other members of the community about the positive benefits of social media in teen lives. The following examples of how you can educate your community provide a starting point. When planning, be sure to enlist your Teen Advisory Group (TAG), teens that spend time in your library, or teens in the community to help you plan and implement the ideas suggested below.

Teens & Their Digital Footprint

What is a *digital footprint*? It's the path that someone leaves in the digital world by signing up for sites and posting images, videos, comments, and other information. Teens and adults need to be aware of the ways in which their use of technology leaves a digital footprint. In order to help teens learn more about the topic, read the recent Pew Internet and American Life report on Reputation Management and Social Media available at www.pewinternet.org/Press-Releases/2010/Reputation-Management.aspx

Tools for Digital Storytelling

Google Search Stories

<http://www.youtube.com/user/SearchStories>

Tell a story via Google searches and search results. Teens type in search terms and the format for results - images, maps, etc. Google performs the searches and transforms the entire search strategy into a movie.

Scratch

<http://scratch.mit.edu>

Teens use the Scratch software program to create stories they can then upload them to the Scratch website where others can comment and collaborate.

Storify

<http://storify.com>

Collect video, photos, and text from Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr and put them together to create a story.

VoiceThread

<http://voicethread.com>

Collaborate on a story by adding text and narration to images uploaded and organized on VoiceThread.

- * Convert online resource guides and pathfinders to wiki or LiveBinders format so that students and teachers can collaborate on their creation. Wikis and LiveBinders give users of information the chance to add their own ideas about tools and resources they find useful in the research process.
- * Use social media technologies as an access point for your library's services. Create a Facebook space as a place for adults and teens to learn about programs and materials. Set up a blog where adults and teens read about what's going on in the library and can add comments about programs and materials. Develop a booklist wiki where adults and teens can add titles of books on specific themes.

- * Inform—perhaps via an audio or video podcast—educators, parents, and community members about how social media tools allow for schools and libraries to integrate technology in meaningful ways, with and for teens, at low (or no) cost. Information could include overviews of the technologies, interviews with teens about their use of technology, interviews with experts in technology and teen development who discuss how the technologies support teen growth and literacy development, and so on.
- * Create and distribute an information sheet for adults which provides information about the positive aspects of social networking as well as Internet safety tips and that includes annotated lists of resources. You can also post the information on your library’s website, blog, wiki, or on Facebook. Consider integrating screencasts in your library’s web presence that provide step-by-step visual directions on how to use social media sites and how to successfully set social site privacy settings.
- * Sponsor a scholarly presentation, or series of presentations, for local educators and concerned adults by experts in the field of developmental assets, teen print literacies in the world of technology, and social media. Ask speakers to focus directly on how social media technologies can have positive benefits for teens.
- * Create your own social presence with Twitter – www.twitter.com. Invite teens, parents, school faculty and administrators to join communicate with you via Twitter as a way to learn how the tools work and to discuss issues related to social media in teen (and adult) lives.
- * Host an evening that focuses on how social media is being used in higher education and business. Invite faculty from a local college or university to talk about how they use social networking technologies with students to facilitate the teaching and learning process. Invite business leaders to talk about what social networking technologies their employees must know how to use in order to be successful in their jobs.

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Educating Teens about Social Media

You can help teens use social media successfully and safely by sponsoring programs and services that focus on these technologies. The following examples are available to help you get started. Show these examples to your students and Teen Advisory Group (TAG) and see which one(s) they feel are important to offer in your community. Have your teens help plan and carry out the events. Remember that social media sites often have minimum age requirements and be sure to honor those.

- * Offer a class to teach teens how to use the programming software, Scratch. As teens create with Scratch and upload their work to the Scratch website, you can facilitate a discussion about Internet safety issues, the importance of guarding against identity theft, online etiquette, and so on.
- * Host do-it-yourself sessions for teens where they learn about a variety of social media technologies. You might have a session for photo-sharing technologies, another day for video creation technologies, another day for image editing. During each of the sessions you can talk with teens about how to make decisions about safe use of these technologies.
- * Work with teens to produce audio or video book trailers. As a part of the process, have teens write outlines of the content they want to cover and talk with them about whom they want to make the book trailers available to.
- * With teens create a library book and media wiki as a means for recommending resources to library patrons. Train teens on how to update the content of the wiki and talk about how to evaluate the quality of information on wikis and other types of resources.
- * Take photos at the library and have teens upload and tag them on Flickr or another photo-sharing site. As a part of the uploading and tagging process, discuss safety and privacy concerns with teens and decide whether or not the photos should be private or public. As they tag the photos, ask them to consider what the best ways are to describe content in order for others to find them.

Tools for Video and Images

Animoto

<http://animoto.com>

Upload still images and videos, add music, and create a book trailer for a favorite title.

Flickr

<http://flickr.com>

Create a library Flickr account and post and tag photos from events.

YouTube

<http://youtube.com>

Watch speeches from the President, search Library of Congress primary source content, and view footage from the Smithsonian Museum.

Tools for Reading & Literacy

Copia

<http://thecopia.com>

An app for computers and devices for reading and note-taking. Notes can be shared inside books with friends.

Goodreads

<http://goodreads.com>

Let others know what you are reading and discuss books with friends.

Twitter

<http://twitter.com>

Host book discussion groups on Twitter for real-time virtual conversation on teen books.

Wordle

<http://wordle.com>

Create word clouds in order to help demonstrate the meaning of books, speeches, articles, and more.

- * Use Flickr as a platform for creative writing exercises with teens. Upload your own, or teens', photos to Flickr and then have teens tell a story with the photos through captions that they add.
- * Have teens create screencasts on how to setup Facebook privacy settings. As a part of the process have teens create outlines of the script they will use for the production. Ask them to investigate all aspects of Facebook privacy settings before creating the screencasts and talk with them about what they think is important to discuss in the screencasts and why.

- * Give teens the chance to connect with favorite authors, artists, musicians, and so on via Twitter, Facebook and personal blogs. Teens can search for the spaces and blogs using common searching tools and then comment on the blogs and sites of those with whom they connect.
- * Build a library Facebook Fan page with teens. Have teens meet to plan the space, including what it should look like and include. Work with them to build the site, and develop guidelines for blogging, commenting, and making friends on the site. As a part of this project, talk with teens about how to decide whether or not to accept those who want to friend them on Facebook. Add value to your Facebook presence through links to online safety and library resources. Make it possible for teens to add your catalog search on their Facebook accounts.

Additional Resources about Social Media & Libraries

FOR LIBRARIANS & EDUCATORS:

YALSA Social Media

YALSA provides a variety of social media resources including:

- * YALSA Blog - <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog>
- * The Hub - <http://yalsa.ala.org/thehub>
- * YALSA Wikis - <http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa>
- * Twitter - <http://twitter.com/yalsa>
- * Facebook - <http://facebook.com/yalsa>
- * Blip.tv - <http://yalsa.blip.tv/>

Berkman Center, Harvard University, ReBorn Digital

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/taxonomy/term/147>

A series of videos created by Berkman Center interns on topics such as privacy, learning, and safety in the digital world.

danah boyd | apophenia

www.zephorias.org/thoughts

The blog of social media researcher danah boyd who frequently discusses topics related to teen use of social media including reputation management, privacy, and bullying.

Enhancing Child Safety and Online Technologies

<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/pubrelease/isttf/>

The final report of the Internet Safety Technical Task Force highlights how socio-economic conditions have an impact on safe use of technology by children and teens.

Ito, Mizuko, et al. **Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out**, MIT Press, 2009.

<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=11889>

This volume is the culmination of a three-year study focused on youth's social and recreational use of technology.

NeverEnding Search

<http://blog.schoollibraryjournal.com/neverendingsearch>

The blog of high school library media specialist, Joyce Valenza, which frequently covers teens and social media topics.

Palfrey, John. **Born Digital: Understanding the First Generation of Digital Native**.

Basic Books, 2008.

A look at challenges and positive ramifications of technology use by digital natives.

Pew Internet in American Life Project - Teens

<http://pewinternet.org/topics/Teens.aspx>

The Pew Internet in American Life Project frequently releases reports on teen use of technology.

Tapscott, Dan. **Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World.** McGraw-Hill, 2008.

Tapscott looks at what the world is like for those that have grown up with technology as a part of their daily lives.

FOR TEENS

Born Digital Videos

www.youtube.com/user/digitalnatives#g/c/43558371DB96CC9A

A set of videos about social media identity, safety, privacy, and more.

Facebook Privacy Guide

www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php

The ins-and-outs of using Facebook's privacy settings, straight from Facebook.

That's Not Cool

www.thatsnotcool.com

Your cell phone, IM, and social networks are all a digital extension of who you are. When someone you're with pressures you or disrespects you in those places, that's not cool.

Social Networking Sites: Safety Tips for Tweens and Teens

www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/tech/tec14.shtm

A short and useful list of reminders for staying safe on social networking sites (and online in general). Includes a list of resources for finding out more.

FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

SafeKids.com

www.safekids.com

The Connect Safely blog with information and resources about how to keep teens and younger children safe and civil online.

GetNetWise

www.getnetwise.org

Sponsored by the Internet Education Foundation, GetNetWise provides resources and information to help educate adults and young people's privacy and safety online.

A Parent's Guide to Facebook

Presentation Tools

Glogster

<http://edu.glogster.com>

Create virtual posters that contain images, videos, text, and audio.

Prezi

<http://prezi.com>

Interactive presentations that can include animations, images, and text.

Tumblr

<http://tumblr.com>

Collect images, videos, text, and audio on a Tumblr site in order to create a portfolio of projects.

www.connectsafely.org/Safety-Advice-Articles/facebook-for-parents.html

The Connect Safely guide understanding Facebook and helping the young Facebook users in their lives.

FOR EVERYONE:

Connect Safely Comprehensive Directory of Online Safety Resources

www.connectsafely.org/Directories/internet-safety-resources.html

What it says - a pretty darned comprehensive list.

iSAFE

www.isafe.org

Provides curricular materials and resources about Internet safety, with areas of the site targeted to parents, educators, kids & teens, and law enforcement agencies. There are free online tutorials for young people and adults as well as printable newsletters and other resources.

NetSmartz

www.netsmartz.org

A program of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, provides resources about Internet safety for parents, educators, kids, teens, press and law enforcement agencies.