

The PayPal Official Insider Guide to

# SOCIAL MEDIA

Make money  
through viral  
marketing



Brian Proffitt

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**PayPal**<sup>™</sup> / Press

## **The PayPal Official Insider Guide to Social Media**

**Brian Proffitt**

This PayPal Press book is published by Peachpit.  
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Berkeley, CA 94710  
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Find us on the Web at: [www.peachpit.com](http://www.peachpit.com)  
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Cover and Interior Designer: Charlene Charles-Will  
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ISBN 13: 978-0-321-80480-8

ISBN 10: 0-321-80480-5

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed and bound in the United States of America

*For Jhett*  
*Live long and fight on*

# Acknowledgments

## **AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My wife likes to say that I'm the kind of geek that you can take to parties. Which, I suppose, means that I'm just social enough that I can talk to people without their eyes glazing over in a wash of conversation about mobile phone platforms, Linux kernel headers, and the intricacies of display drivers.

I credit her, along with three fabulous daughters, for keeping my nerd aura down to a minimum, by showing me that there's more to life than circuit boards. Knowing that lets me broaden my horizons and enables me to write books like this.

The teams at PayPal Press and Peachpit get a big helping of thanks for providing their time and insights into producing this book.

Finally, my editor Marta Justak gets my highest praise for her professionalism and expertise. She makes my words better, and makes book writing more of a joy than a chore.

## **PAYPAL PRESS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We applaud PayPal Product Managers Tanya Urschel and Keith Koenig, whose great subject-matter expertise was matched only by their dedication; Janet Ball, our Marketing Manager, whose thorough knowledge of social media provided invaluable research; PayPal Press Managing Editor Matt Jones, whose expert content strategy ensured top editorial quality; Production Editors Raji Nayak and Karen Richards, whose diligent teamwork mastered our ambitious schedule; and John Heisch, our Illustrator, whose astute artwork enhanced the value of this book.

PayPal Press would also like to thank the following team members for their creative talents and constructive contributions: Janet Isadore, David Hershfield, Sarah Brody, Jonah Otis, Smitha Koppuzha, Cynthia Robinson, Cynthia Maller, Anjali Desai, Eunice Louie, J.B. Coutinho, Jamie Patricio, Sudha Jamthe, and Perrine Crampton.

## Foreword

Shopping has always been an inherently social endeavor—whether it’s serendipitously finding a great deal at a local boutique or going on a mission with a close friend to find the perfect accessory for a big event. Human interactions and shared experiences are a vital part of the appeal of shopping. And it’s no surprise that today these same experiences have moved online, thanks in part to the rise of social media.

The explosion of consumer interest and participation in social networks has naturally and quickly moved into social commerce. Transacting within social networks is predicted to rise from \$5 billion in 2011 to \$30 billion by 2015. What’s more, analysts predict that by 2015, companies will generate 50 percent of Web sales via their social presence and mobile applications.

PayPal thrives at the heart of this emerging social commerce era. Our mission is to define the future of shopping and paying, allowing anyone to pay anytime and anywhere. And we’re doing this by making *paying* more social. Already, you can find PayPal in numerous group buying and group gifting apps, powering “social shopping malls” on the most popular social networks, and on millions of mobile devices that share shopping experiences, local deals, and more.

Ever-more retailers are experimenting with new ways to utilize social media to connect with customers and drive sales. At PayPal, our core social media tenets include listening, participating, and adding value. After all, at its core, social media is about building deeper connections with people. We’re committed to helping our customers seize the social commerce opportunity. This area will see significant innovation in the coming years, and PayPal will be a driving force.

—Amanda Pires  
Senior Director of Global Communications  
PayPal

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## Introduction

“Social media” is not new. Human community and conversation have been hallmarks of civilization for thousands of years.

Throughout history, when differing groups (families, tribes, or other units) of people would meet, shared commerce would often be the basis of their communication. What did one group have that the other needed? What would be accepted for trade?

This is how social communication has worked over time among many cultures. Some cultures may not have liked each other, but they would often find a way to talk and trade, despite their differences. In fact, trade often became the reason for communication, as trading tribes became communities that ultimately expanded and grew into our present society.

In Western cultures today, however, the need for face-to-face communication has faded somewhat. The advent of the telephone and the automobile redefined the nature of communities. But while modern ways may have changed the structure of the community, we have not done away with our need to be together. After all, we still love to socialize.

We see this now in the popularity of new social media, as technology enables us to connect to each other and form social groups not based on material survival alone but on other, more personalized interests. Today’s technologies allow communities to form as “instant” networks of people who discover they have much in common to share. Parents exchange child-rearing tips through like-minded community websites. Doctors conduct combined research—in real time—with peers linked at other labs. Teachers run virtual classrooms with children across the globe.

We are still trading—only now the common currency is information.

For PayPal, which helps facilitate faster, easier, safer commerce online, social media is yet another opportunity to assist its customers. Organizations today have exciting new ways to share profitable opportunities through social media and viral marketing. PayPal recognizes this, and helps serve merchants who are eager to fully utilize social media to grow their businesses.

In *The PayPal Official Insider Guide to Social Media*, you will learn the following:

- How to navigate the social media landscape
- The best way to plan and implement a social media branding strategy
- How to create content for social media networks
- How PayPal tools provide an effective ecommerce solution that works with your social media strategy

This book will help retailers understand the basics of social media and how to engage and prosper in conversations with their customers.


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4

# Mapping the Social Media Landscape and Key Websites





A vertical orange bar is positioned on the left side of the page, extending from the top to the bottom. It has a gradient, being darker at the top and bottom and lighter in the middle.

The social media landscape has grown far beyond sites like Facebook and MySpace. All sorts of social sites and mobile apps are available to enable communication through words, images, and videos. While nearly all social media outlets encourage connections through some kind of interaction, the content of that communication—the currency, if you will—can change, depending on what service you are using. Before exploring how to capitalize on social media for your business, it's best to familiarize yourself with the social media landscape.

The key thing to do when looking around the social media landscape is to listen. Hear what people are taking about and what interests them. You may learn about something new before it becomes the next best thing since sliced bread.

## Getting the Lay of the Land

What's interesting about media is that it was always a part of our social lives. People talk, people listen... sounds pretty social to us. But until recently, all media was a one-way proposition. The ascension of sites like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Flickr has brought us true social media: a huge, always-on conversation using text and multimedia that anyone can watch and join.

All of these social media sites, and others, are more than just fun ways to share your life with friends and family (though they're good at that, too). Social media provides an incredible outlet for your business to reach your customers. Just as communication between a business and its customers used to be one-way and one-dimensional—you placed ads, you talked to customers individually—businesses now have the capability to connect to as many customers as they'd like, using tailor-made messaging that can reach their audience on personal computers and smartphones.

More importantly, the conversation is now two-way. You can talk to your customers, and they can talk to you. Sometimes that conversation isn't always fun, but it's an honest part of your business, and with the right tools and attention, even the most disgruntled customers can become allies if they know you're listening.

Each social media site offers these conversations in its own way, using content as the currency of communications exchange. Many times that currency is the written word, but sometimes it's video, music, or images.

In money, currencies all work the same: you give someone something with value to receive something back of equivalent value. So it is with social media: no matter what the currency of the content, the trading of knowledge and shared lives is really what's going on. To use it best for your business, all you need to do is use the right currency.

## Make Friends with Facebook

By now, the story of Mark Zuckerberg's creation of arguably the most popular social media site on the planet is well ingrained in our culture: young, brilliant, and ambitious college student founded a website in 2004 originally intended to give Harvard and other college students a way of tracking their classmates.

The site, Facebook, would go on to dominate the social media landscape and indeed the Internet itself, providing an easy-to-use portal for all levels of users. This ease-of-use helped enable users of any technical skill set to congregate and share news, photos, and videos about themselves as well as participate in shared experiences like games and surveys.

Because of its one-stop-shopping nature, there are many Facebook users who do not wander much beyond the virtual walls of the Facebook site, save to view the occasional link offered up from friends and colleagues. This, more than anything else, is the biggest draw for businesses and advertisers looking to reach out to Facebook's own estimated 750 million users (250 million of them mobile users), who are spending 700 billion minutes a month on Facebook, which comes out to the equivalent of 1.3 million person-years. Per month.

### PayPal INSIDER

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#### PayPal's Relationship with Facebook

Facebook has quickly emerged as one of PayPal's largest customers, generating millions of dollars in Transaction Processing Volume (TPV) and revenue. PayPal is offered as a payment option for both Facebook Credits and Facebook Ads. Facebook Credits is Facebook's virtual currency that can be used to play games and acquire digital goods on the Facebook network. In addition, Facebook

Credits can also be used to purchase other digital media, such as movies and music.

Facebook Ads offers users and merchants the ability to expand their customer bases by using PayPal to purchase advertising space on the Facebook network, giving them access to Facebook's community of over 750 million users.

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Facebook's social media currency is as broad as it comes. When it was first launched, it was all about the easily updated user status. Then it was messaging and news feeds dedicated to the user's friends. Photos were always a part of the Facebook experience, but later videos would be added. The latest feature addition to Facebook is video calls.

Because of the dynamic nature of Facebook, software developers are able to plug their own additions into Facebook. The most well-known examples involve the games that populate the Facebook ecosystem. But these additions also contain a large number of business-oriented tools—including PayPal, business pages, and SlideShare—that can be used to enhance your customers' experiences immediately.



**NOTE:** There are many great Facebook apps available for business... the landscape is ever-changing. A search on any search engine for "Facebook business apps" will yield the latest information on what's out there.

PayPal is one such business that has a business page on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/paypal](http://www.facebook.com/paypal)), demonstrating one way that such a page can connect to customers.

With such a wide variety of communication methods available, Facebook is nearly the perfect place to get started on a social media campaign.

## Direct Your Action on YouTube

With few exceptions, most social media sites have a narrow way of enabling user communication and sharing. But "narrow" doesn't mean "limited," as you will plainly see.

YouTube is a great example of how diverse a single line of communication can be. Launched in 2005, YouTube provides users with an easy way to upload and store their personal or professional videos for all the world to see.

The site became (and has remained) a huge success for many reasons, partly due to the simplicity of its function and partly because video capture technology has become so widely available. Dedicated video cameras are relatively inexpensive, and it's impossible these days to find a cell phone *without* a video camera. Couple that with an easy-to-use site, and it's easy to see there's your instant hit.



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**NOTE:** YouTube has a special place in PayPal's heart, as the popular video site was founded by three former PayPal employees: Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim.

The business implications of YouTube are very strong and have many benefits: imagine creating marketing materials and uploading them to the video-hosting site. But it can go further than that because videos can be used to educate customers on how to use products or connect customers to staff members, store locations, or special promotions.

You can also plug YouTube functionality into your website, letting your website visitors see and even upload videos directly to your company's YouTube channel. This feature gives your business the capability of running things like video contests from within YouTube or from your own website.

## Twitter Your Business

Twitter is part of a movement called microblogging. Twitter is another example of "narrow" content, as it involves the written word only, and downsizes it even further—you only get 140 characters per message (or "tweet"). Millions of people have taken this reductionism to a whole new level, conveying many ideas and messages in their tweets.

Or, said in Twitter-speak: Twitter, microblogging can boggle. Text-only, with just 140 characters/tweet. With right skills, though, many ideas and messages can be sent.



**NOTE:** “Going viral” doesn’t mean a case of the cooties, but that transcendental experience obtained when your social media content is shared exponentially across the Internet. It is, in social media terms, awesome.

The idea behind Twitter’s creation was simple: enable phone text messages to be shared and displayed on the Web. Because of texting’s 140-character limit, the same limitation was applied to Twitter messages. Tweets are read mostly by a Twitter user’s followers, though the general public can view tweets as well, especially if a particular tweet is retweeted and shared virally throughout the network.

The nature of tweets is like any other human conversation. Much of the information being shared may be rather useless, except to the person doing the tweeting (“Eating breakfast. Cheese omelet.”). On the other hand, it can be informative, such as breaking news, or in some cases actual live posts from historical events, like the Arab Spring protests in 2011.



**NOTE:** Tweets can be imbued with hashtags (#), which enable tweets to be organized around specific news, people, or events. In this way, a Twitter user can follow and participate in an extended conversation on the Olympics, for example, by setting up a filter to view all messages tagged with #olympics.

Businesses have adopted Twitter in two primary ways: first, as a way to broadcast marketing messages, and second, to communicate directly with customers about their concerns. If a customer is following a business, for instance, the customer could add the Twitter ID for the business in their message, which the business will see as a “mention.” Smart businesses pay attention to hashtags and mentions that refer to them, so they can respond quickly to customers’ issues.



**NOTE:** Not every business uses multiple Twitter accounts to handle communications; often, a single account is more than enough to handle conversations with your customers.

## ...And The Rest

Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are by no means the only social media sites in existence; they are simply very popular at this time. But there are other sites out there that deserve inspection, because your business may have some use for them.

### Google Plus (or +)

Google Plus, also known as Google+, is the latest social media network to hit the scene. Currently, the site is in beta mode, with use of the site by invitation only. As soon as it went live, use of the site exploded, reaching 20 million users in just a couple of weeks, according to several technology news outlets at the time.

Google+ primarily uses the user's written comments as its social currency, but adds geolocation, photo and video uploads, and link sharing as early features. One attraction for Google+ users is its instant-update functionality and the way that connections are managed through specific categories of connection types, known as *circles*.

Businesses should keep an eye on Google+, not just because it's the latest cool thing but also because Google+ will have complete integration with all other Google products.

This means that Google+ will be tightly matched with the millions of Android phone users out there. Android phone users already can upload photos instantly from their phone cameras and make use of geolocation features. Just imagine what businesses could tap into when allowed to add their functionality and presence to Google+.

### Flickr

Flickr is a photo-sharing site that enables users to share their photos and videos with other users.

The Yahoo!-owned Flickr provides a great way for any user—personal or commercial—to easily host huge galleries of images free of cost. Businesses looking to host pictures for an online catalog or from a business event, for instance, would benefit from a Flickr account.

## Vimeo

Vimeo provides users with an easy way to upload and store their personal or professional videos. One advantage to Vimeo is it doesn't impose a time duration on the length of videos users can post.

Business that are looking to produce a lot of video content might want to examine Vimeo as a possible social media platform.

## WordPress

WordPress is one of the premier blogging platforms in the world, and it provides two key blogging services for its users.

The first is blogging software that can be downloaded and installed to work with a separate website, such as a business site. This software is free to use and very popular.

## Social Media SUCCESS STORY

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### C'est Cheese: Exploring Social Media

**Mari's first challenge is to** figure out which social networks her company should use to connect to her customers. She's already decided to use PayPal for her online payment system, and wants to use the tools that she's heard will connect directly with those networks, too. But she doesn't want to be limited to those networks alone.

Given the relative age of her customers, middle age and older, Mari is pretty sure that Facebook is going to be a good network to use to plug into those customers. But she would like to catch younger customers who are just exploring culinary products and good food as well, and isn't sure which options provide the best payoff for this group.

A lot of her customers have expressed an interest in cooking classes, but Mari's store doesn't

have the right kind of space for that. Instead, she is thinking about producing some videos that will demonstrate how to cook with some of her store's products, so she definitely will want a YouTube account.

Along the same lines as cooking classes, posting some recipes on a blog would work, too. Her store's website is already set up to be an online catalog, and she doesn't want to spend money for a redesign to add a blog. What she can do, though, is set up a free blog on WordPress.com and create a link to that blog from her main website.

Mari will take a look at where her customers can be found as the story continues in Chapter 6, "Connecting with Social Media Customers."

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The second and more of a social media service is the blog hosting provided on WordPress.com. On this site, users can set up and start entering their own blog entries—again, completely free of charge.

Hosting your business blog on WordPress is a great solution for businesses that may not have a website yet or (more likely) a website that isn't entirely configured to host a blog. The massive WordPress community can share your content (that it likes) and really get the word out fast, too.

## The Last Word

Social media is a landscape that is constantly in flux, so the sites mentioned here can change, in mission, audience, or even existence. However, they are well known as the bellwethers of social media, and can provide your company with great ways to reach out to customers of all walks of life.

In Chapter 5, “Planning Your Social Media Brand Presence,” you will begin the process of figuring out how to enter these various aspects of social media. Just because you know what they are doesn't mean you can enter social networks without a plan.

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