



Online Guidance for Groups

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Why Go Online?

Since social distancing has limited some of our in-person social interaction, we know some of you have been finding it difficult to connect with existing member, and engage new ones, but staying socially distanced doesn't mean cancelling plans- just adjusting them a little! Going online is important for a number of reasons, including:

- Helping you to maintain active membership through continuing to provide a service to your members (and encourage memberships!)
- Ensuring reach to members and engaging a wider group of people in the Society and it's Committee, a great example of this is Pro Bono's 'Pro Bono from Home', a series of Instagram takeovers to introduce members to Committee and other projects within the society.
- Combatting social isolation and loneliness by building a community and support network amongst your members. For example, groups such as Nursing and Midwifery Association, and Archery have run an 'Isolation Programme', to fill the gap of cancelled sessions and keep activities running for members. As well as this, VetSoc have a great example of building community in their 'VetSoc Community Page' by posting and sharing positive content.
- Learning new skills which can be carried into the future.

Building a community online can seem daunting at first, but hopefully this guide will help you to get started!

Online Events and Activities

There are so many things that are still possible as long as you and your members have an internet connection. We've seen lots of student groups take on this challenge and come up with some great ideas for connecting with their members online using the above platforms. They might even be useful for your next TryIt session! We've collected some ideas together below:

Quiz

- Quizzes are a great way to get everybody involved in an activity, especially when there might be a little less to talk about since lockdown! Every person for themselves, just allocate a quiz-master ahead of time to prepare the questions, and get going! Here are some great [quiz round ideas](#) if you're struggling.

Committee Meetings

- Probably an obvious one, but staying in touch with your committee is super important. You can also use video conferencing to facilitate meetings and [icebreaker sessions](#). Maybe you could even organise some 'meet the new committee' Q&A's to share with the rest of the Society.

Games night

- A lot of games can work even if only one of you has the game, for example, [Linkee](#), or even [JackBoxParty](#) if you can share your screen. There are even games which need nothing at all, such as Charades, or ones which you can make yourself, such as [Scattergories](#), or [Pictionary](#).

Competitions

- Why not link all of your activities together to make a 'league'? Not only might this encourage members to keep attending, but will help with a structure and purpose for your events. A great example of this is Women's Football's Corona Cup!

Fundraisers

- You could also run fundraisers for a chosen charity or the NHS, for example, setting a challenge to achieve between all of your members and taking donations for your efforts. UoN Netball did a 680km run, walk or cycle!

Remember- meeting up doesn't need to be about a big event either. You can just meet up and chat! For example, Lifesaving have been having 'Sunday brunch catch-ups' as a means to keep in touch, and see how everybody is doing.

There are loads of resources and [articles](#) online that can give you some further ideas, just give it a browse! Remember though, if you are running an event online and are having external speakers, make sure you fill out an [event form](#) at least 3 weeks in advance.

Streaming to your Members

Live streaming is a way in which you can deliver real time online content and engage directly with viewers. Live streams normally have a personal presentation feel, being based on one person's delivery, but with the viewers able to shape the content being delivered. A recording of the live stream is often uploaded so that viewers can watch back at a later date.

Live streaming is booming in popularity with the likes of [Joe Wicks' daily PE classes](#); [live nature channels](#) and gamers [streaming Fortnite](#). They're super useful when you want to deliver a session, but don't need (or maybe just don't want!) to have the participants on video or audio.

Some of the most common and popular ways to livestream are via [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Platforms for Group Activity

Here are some popular platforms you might want to look at when deciding how to connect with your members digitally. They have different benefits and features, so think about which might work best for you and your group.

Microsoft Teams (recommended!)

[Go to Microsoft Teams website](#)

- Good for: Storing files in various 'Teams', good for creating content for 'Committee' and the 'Society' separately. Lots of linked apps. Screen sharing. Recording. Live subtitles (English only). Live note-taking. Integrates with Outlook.
- Not good for: Can only see up to 9 people on screen, although it does commit to improving this soon.
- Access: Automatically have an account with your University email, all other emails of the same domain (@nottingham) are already pre-loaded, just [download](#) and go! Also available as an app.

[How to use](#)

[Fun things to do on teams](#)

Zoom

[Go to the Zoom website](#)

- Good for: Can be used for interactive video calling for free for up to 100 participants for up to 40 minutes. Easy to use. Whiteboard, annotation, desktop and app sharing features. Can schedule through Outlook.
- Not good for: Should not be used as a file store. Some questions around privacy of users. Can only 9 people on screen.
- Access: Web browser and phone app
- Security: Complex passwords required, Encrypted site, as a US company alignment to GDPR is adequate

Download the Zoom application and click "Launch meeting." Click "Invite participants" and either email them or add them from your Zoom contacts.

Skype

[Go to the Skype website](#)

- Good for: Up to 50 people can chat together with video, screensharing, chat. Can be scheduled from Outlook calendar. Real-time translator. Voicemail feature.
- Not good for: Should not be used as a file store due to potential security risks.
- Security: The password should be set as complex and unique to any other platform account, encrypted, as a US company alignment to GDPR is adequate
- Access: Installed programme or phone app.

Google Hangouts

[Go to Google Hangouts](#)

- Good for: Up to 25 people can join a video Hangout and up to 150 people can join a voice-only Hangout. Simple, easy access. Works with Google Calendar.
- Not good for: Can be difficult to track chat and video at the same time.
- Access: Web browser and phone app
- Security: Secure encryption

If you have Gmail, that means you already have a Google account you can use to set up Hangouts for free. Go to hangouts.google.com and click "Start a new hangout." You can invite other people by their Gmail addresses or by emailing them a link.

GroupMe (for messaging)

[Go to Group Me](#)

- Good for: creating group chats with various people, even if they don't have the app.
- This free app is designed specifically to aid group chats. It comes with the ability to sign up using your phone number or just email. Moreover, if a contact isn't on GroupMe, they can join the conversation over SMS, ensuring that nobody is left out of the chatter. GroupMe also comes with a web client at groupme.com, so you have the option to talk to your friends and family without ever needing your phone

Social Media and Promotion

There are SO many social media platforms to choose from, but it often boils down to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as platforms which can be used as a professional space to inform members and other students about your student group and its activities, as well as answer queries. Each platform has different pros and cons depending on what you want to use it for, check out the table on the following page for some of these.

Some other platforms you might use as a group are

- Snapchat, good for sharing 'stories' with followers and creating meaningful and continuous engagement with followers.
- TikTok, good for creating and sharing relevant (and often hilarious) videos, fun and relevant- but probably not that impactful in terms of engagement!

Try to include a web platform handover between old and new committees each year, this could include passwords, posting schedules, tips on how to use the platforms, and any other relevant information.

How to Boost Engagement on Social Media

- There are so many ways to boost your social media engagement, for example, check out this link on the [best times of day to post](#) for different sites.
- As well as picking the right time, including pictures and videos in posts is proven to improve post engagement. We are encouraging groups to film a short video introducing their group, ready for Welcome, which can be shared across social media- and hopefully even included on the SU website! Keep your eye out for more guidance and info on this soon.

Remember though, not all of your members will have access to social media, so make sure you use other methods of communication and promotion, such as emails, to make sure you capture as many people as possible.

Why not also tap into some of the opportunities for promotion we already have at the SU? Once we're back in the building, there are various promotional screens which can be used to promote your activities. Why not also get in touch with one of our incredible media SRS', such as [NSTV](#), [URN](#), or [Impact](#), who might be able to give you an opportunity to interview, or promote one of your events to their audience?

	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
Overview	Equal engagement* with posts that contain text, images or both (making it the most flexible platform). It has a story function but this is rarely used/viewed.	An image-focussed platform that requires you to share an image with every post but text is optional. Its story function is a great way to share temporary content (and save it in the "Highlights" function if you want).	Focusses on in-the-moment updates, making it great for sharing updates before or during an event. However, this platform has the lowest student engagement* of the three.
Videos	A great platform for sharing videos of all types. Videos will be posted at their best quality when "scheduled" or "premiered" through Facebook so they have time to load their full quality before being posted.	Videos of <1min in length are easy to post in the same way as images. Videos of >1min need to be uploaded as an IGTV post. This works in the same way but means that followers can only watch 1min of the video in their feed* before watching the full video through IGTV.	A great platform for sharing videos of <1min but not longer videos.
Livestreams	It's easy to livestream a video through Facebook and the live comments section allows you to engage with viewers in real time. After the livestream, your video will be automatically saved to your Timeline. Be careful, though, as there is a delay between the comments section and video.	The story feature on Instagram allows you to go live and respond to viewer comments in real time. However, you can only livestream in the same video for 60mins. After the livestream is over, the video will stay on your story for 24hrs but it will not be saved automatically for future viewing.	Twitter has the ability to livestream but this isn't a very popular feature so engagement* would likely be low.
Targeting Audiences	Facebook is the most flexible app, allowing you to post publicly, in groups (that can be public or private) and in private messages. This allows you to tailor your messages depending on who you want to see them.	Instagram allows you to set your account to either "public" (i.e. anyone can follow it and its posts) or "private" (i.e. you have to request to follow it and see its posts). You have to be a follower of private accounts to see their posts. It also has the "close friends" function when posting stories that allows you to share information with specific people but this works best on personal accounts rather than accounts for groups or organisations. There's also the option of messaging specific people individually.	Twitter's privacy settings are similar to Instagram's and allow your account to be "public" or "private", meaning you can control the audience of your posts. It also has a private messaging function for contacting individual accounts.

Online Conduct

Having an online presence is great, but as we all know, what goes online- stays online. Be cautious about what you post on your social media channels, as this is there to stay even if you delete it later. Here's some [guidance](#) about posting online safely, but ultimately it's important to just think twice before posting and seek guidance from others' if you're not sure whether something is okay or not!

Groups and Chats

- It's always worth remembering that 'private' group chats are not always as private as you think they are! Remember that once you've sent something, it's there to stay. What you may think is 'banter', may be really damaging to somebody else, especially through [micro-aggressions](#), so have a read up on this.
- Keep your groups and chats closed to paid members only (remember to add new members regularly). This might require a bit of admin work to check, but will likely be well worth it in terms of protecting your members.
 - A great way to keep this going is to start a new group every year.
 - Ensure group admins to accept check and only accept requests from paid members. [See how to do this on Facebook.](#)
 - This doesn't mean that you can't advertise out to new members on Facebook, why not have a membership 'group', but create a page for students to 'like' in order to keep up to date with info and promotions?
- Set guidelines/rules for conduct when joining the group or chat. You can then reference this if you experience any issues later. [See how to do this on Facebook.](#)
- Be clear on the purpose of a group chat, is it a professional space for members of the group, or a social chat which happens to include members? Keep these separate!
- If unacceptable conduct does occur on any of your web platforms, we always encourage you to seek advice from your Development Coordinator, but here is some advice on action you might take as a committee:
 - Put a message out on the web platform where the incident has occurred, to state that the behaviour shown is not tolerated and kindly ask your members to keep the platform a safe space for students. Always screenshot any evidence, in case it's needed in future, but keep it to yourself and do not share around.
 - If the behaviour continues, consider direct messaging the person (or people) to let them know that their comments are not acceptable, referring back to the guidelines they agreed to when joining.
- If the situation has become unmanageable, you can report the incident to your Development Coordinator for advice/support. They will talk through potential ways to move forward depending on the severity of the situation, and you will have the opportunity to submit a formal complaint and provide screenshots/evidence of the behaviour if necessary. Remember that Committee members are held to the [Code of Conduct](#) and any behaviour of a Committee member which breaches this can result in an investigation.

Media Law

The serious side of media! This might seem above and beyond a post on Facebook or Instagram, but these legal issues really do come up, and it's very often by accident, so make sure you're clued up on these areas before posting!

Copyright

- Always credit the source when using links, images, videos and music in posts. If using music or pictures ensure they are licensed for re-use.

Defamation, libel, slander, malicious falsehood

- An untrue written or spoken expression which is damaging to a person's reputation, accidental or intended. Unless you can provide evidence for your point, you shouldn't publish it on social media if it could damage a person's reputation.

Privacy

- The right to privacy is protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this shouldn't be breached in the media or on social media. For example, publishing private correspondence or details of a person's personal life, their health for example.

Harassment

- Harassment and stalking can still occur within private groups or forums; be aware of this on social media and refer to the web conduct information above.

Contempt of court

- Contempt law bans the publication or broadcast, including on social media, of any comments/information which could seriously prejudice active legal proceedings, in particular criminal proceedings heard before juries. Anyone within a group could be called to be a juror, and anyone commenting in a way which could prejudice a trial could be prosecuted.