

# GETTING SMART ON



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# Introduction

Authored by Caroline Vander Ark & Jennifer Aalgaard



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Thanks to technology, the communication world as we know it is changing quickly. Traditional communication efforts are being amplified, and often replaced, by the use of new media and social media. With resources like Facebook and Twitter, companies have the ability to reach a wide-audience quickly and differentiate messages across several platforms. Today's social media channels are also creating opportunities for two-way communication, rather than the one-way communication of traditional media in the past. Allowing schools, districts and companies to reach their audience and have meaningful communication online has revolutionized how communication departments view social media.

Social media channels are a great way to not only learn but share resources and amplify your impact as a teacher, school leader, or edupreneur. No matter the social media channel you choose it's important to be clear, concise, and credible. Our team has a quality over quantity strategy when its comes to building a strategic plan for the use of social media. We urge organizations to choose a few social media channels and develop a strong strategy that reflects your organization's existing communication and marketing plans. Each channel should share a consistent branding presence but have a differentiated message (or image) based on the type of platform you are using.

Once each channel has met your desired outcomes, explore other channels and continue to refine your strategy to meet your audiences' needs. It is better to have a few well managed channels, rather than try to participate in every channel infrequently. Your audience will appreciate consistency and depth of resources provided.

"Getting Smart on Social Media" is a guide to help you use all the social media channels effectively and strategically. You will learn the tricks of the trade on how to use Twitter, Twitter Chats, Pinterest, Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn like a pro. As you read this guide, share your feedback, thoughts and contributions using #SmartBundle across all the social media platforms.

# To Tweet Or Not To Tweet: There Really is No Question

Authored by Jennifer Aalgaard, Communications Manager for Getting Smart  
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Ask not what you can do for Twitter, but what Twitter can do for you. Many people in the education field – students, teachers, administrators, even parents – question the benefits of participating in Twitter. There are incredible benefits, if you use it right. Twitter can motivate, question, and engage your thoughts, beliefs, and methods. Twitter is a great tool to learn and share what you are doing and amplify your impact as a teacher, school leader, or edupreneur. We can share what we have for lunch or what movie we saw, but at its best, Twitter is a tool for educating the world on complex topics in just 140 characters. So, how do we leverage this tool in the best way? Here are 10 tips on how to make your Twitter presence relevant, intriguing, and expansive.

1. **First impressions are important.** Your Twitter handle and profile are typically **the first thing people** see when looking at you on Twitter. Your profile may make or break if they follow you. Make it count.
2. **Tweet more than you think.** On average **500 million tweets** are sent each day. You are competing with those messages. Tweet 6 – 10 times a day and make it special.
3. **Your Tweet is your headline.** You have **140 characters** to grab someone's attention. Aim to educate, entertain, and inspire, not just inform.
4. **If you like it put a hashtag on it.** Using **hashtags** immediately makes your tweet searchable. Research the right **#EdTech hashtag** to reach the right audience.
5. **If you follow them, they will come.** What is the best way to increase your followers? Follow more people, but make sure they are the **right people**.
6. **Get your words out there.** You work hard on great blog content, you should share it, often. Tools designed to **auto-share your blog** are a great option. Don't forget to include the handles of those you reference in your tweet. It'll likely get retweeted, which means? Greater reach!
7. **Timing isn't always everything.** Don't have time to tweet 6 – 10 times per day? Use a scheduling program. **These tools** help you get your **well crafted messages out** around the clock. Take advantage. Fair warning, it won't replace the instant tweet about breaking news or a great retweet.
8. **Share "evergreen" content.** Not all your tweets have to be about what happened that day, or week, or month. **Evergreen content** is a video, article, or blog that is designed to be relevant for weeks, months, and years. Don't be afraid to share this information. It is never a bad idea to re-share good, relevant information.
9. **A retweet can go a long way. Why retweet?** It is a great way to get the attention of important people in the space. Show them you appreciate what they have to say, and they will likely follow you back.
10. **Videos, podcasts, and photos.** Oh My! Twitter has provided this amazing opportunity to **view multi-media** in your feed. Show your stuff! Insert relevant videos, photos, podcasts, and infographics to your tweet. It WILL grab follower's attention.

# Get Smart About Twitter Chats

Authored by Megan Mead, Project Manager and Math Contributor at Getting Smart  
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Whether you call it a Twitter chat, a meet and tweet, or a Twitter party, you should read one, join one or better yet – start one. Consider this a beginner’s guide to Twitter chats. These directed conversations, compiled of 140 character tweets, are easy to participate in and a great way to get information to and from a targeted group of people.

Before you dive head first, get comfortable with the idea:

**Get Tweeting.** If you don’t already have a Twitter account, start by signing up. [Twitter](#) has huge potential to expand your voice, when used correctly. Check out these 10 tips for leveraging the power of Twitter: [To Tweet or Not To Tweet, There Really is No Question](#).

**Check Out Chats.** Get familiar with the sorts of dialogue that happen within this space by searching [hashtags](#). There are several “chats” happening all-day, everyday through hashtags. These are great avenues to get information out or to ask specific questions to a large and pointed audience. Some examples used for education are:

- |                                   |           |               |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| #EdTechChat                       | #LrnChat  | #HistedChat   |
| #EdChat                           | #MathChat | #SSChat       |
| #Blendchat                        | #EngChat  | #LiteracyChat |
| #PBLChat (project based learning) | #SciChat  | #SpedChat     |

Join the Conversation. Live [Twitter chats happen regularly](#) and are promoted mostly through social media channels. Look for something that interests you and jump in. It is a great way to get ideas on everything from best practices, to engagement ideas, to tips on professional development.

And when you are ready to start your own, here are 10 key questions to consider:

- 1. What will we be tweeting about?** This is an opportunity to position yourself or your company as a thought leader. Come up with a topic that will be informative and questions that will foster good conversation. Think through what the intended outcome of the chat will be. What information are you looking to gather?
- 2. What hashtag will be used?** Hashtags help to categorize your tweets and will be the defining factor that allows people to tweet to your chat. Hashtags should make sense and align to the topic of conversation, but they should also be a reasonable length. Remember that tweets are limited to 140 characters, the longer the hashtag the less characters that the author has to get their point across.
- 3. What time/date will the chat be hosted?** And how long will it last? Choose your time carefully. Ensure it is accommodating for your intended audience and works for several time zones. Will this be a regular event? If so, pick a time people will easily remember and is fun to promote. Keep it short and sweet, 30 – 60 minutes is ample time to get a quality interaction going.

4. **Who will moderate the chat?** Make sure that you have a point person who is armed and ready with questions to ask to keep the conversation flowing. Be responsive and attentive. It is very important to actively, and quickly, respond to the participants. Favorite tweets, retweet, and ask direct questions so that the chatters know that you are actively engaged. Keeping the conversation going is important, don't rely on the participants alone.
5. **What will a successful conversation look like?** Think through the purpose and the goals of the chat and then build a set of questions for interactions that will help meet those needs. Think through how you want the conversation to look and feel. Will conversation be driven by pointed questions or will there be a general topic that people are contributing to? Make sure that you begin the Twitter chat introducing both the topic and the format.
6. **How will you get the word out?** Once you know what you are talking about and when you will be discussing it, it is important to think about how you will promote it. Utilize Facebook, Twitter, Google + and all other social media forms to get the word out. Don't forget to be clear and concise in the topic that you are covering as well as the date and time of the chat (and make sure to signify the time zone, would hate to miss out on conversations from the other side of the country). Use hashtags in your promotion that are popular among the groups that you are trying to reach. Here are 50 hashtags for connected educators that are a great way to get the word out to a lot of people and help to make the tweets searchable. Post to pinterest boards and Google + groups that might be interested in the topic.
7. **What tools are available to help with efficiency?** There are TONS of tools available to help track + monitor hashtags (and therefore your twitter chat). Hootsuite is a great tool to easily monitor hashtags and allows you to tweet at the same time. Embed the Twitter search widget to your website. Not only does this allow you to further promotion of your site, but it also helps the audience stay organized.
8. **How will we share the information once the chat is over?** Hopefully you have gathered a wealth of information, now what do you do with it? How do you make sure that you the conversation is available for participants and others? Storify is a great tool that helps archive the information and creates an easily way to share the story of your "meet and tweet."
9. **Did it go the way you wanted it to?** The nice thing about an informal event like a Twitter chat is that the stakes don't need to be high. Think of it as a learning experience that you can constantly alter and refine. What went well? What would you have done differently
10. **When is your next chat?** Keep chatting, there are TONS of benefits to leading a Twitter chat. Not only is it a great way to build a community around a specific topic, but it can also help an individual or a company position themselves as thought leaders.

# Time to Take Interest in Pinterest

Authored by Jessica Slusser, Project Coordinator for Getting Smart  
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Pinterest has taken the social media world by storm. It started out as a community called “pinners” bookmarking their favorite recipes, clothes, workouts, and party planning ideas by “pinning” them. Pinterest has now evolved into a social media channel that can expand thought leadership, increase brand recognition and authority, and expand overall reach. It’s being used by individuals, businesses and schools across the country.

If Pinterest isn’t part of your social media strategy it should be. There are over 48.7 million users active on Pinterest, many of which include education leaders and administration pinning over 500k education related pins a day. Pinterest allows users to find quality ideas, real world examples of concepts for the classroom, and a one stop shop for all things edu. From innovative social studies ideas to engaging higher ed students, educators are using this media channel to find tips, tricks, lesson plans, and creative ways to engage students. If you’re not contributing to the resources available you’re missing out on important opportunities to make connections and drive traffic back to your site.

Here’s five tips to get started on a successful Pinterest account for your organization:

- **Set-up a Business Page.** [Pinterest for Business](#) offers users free analytics that will measure the number of pins, repins, impressions, and clicks your boards attract. All you have to do is verify your website and start pinning your favorite resources. Have employees that would like to easily contribute to your boards? You can invite employees or other thought leaders and business partners to contribute to your boards, making curating pins easy and collaborative.
- **Use Rich Pins.** A fairly new tool allows pins that [include extra information](#) within the pin. Whether you’re helping pinners create a reading list or invite them to an upcoming event, rich pins help get more information packed into each pin, making them more useful to your followers.
- **Use Captivating Descriptions and Hashtags.** As Pinterest users are scrolling through their feed, they’ll decide to pin or share your content based on the photo you choose and your description, so be captivating! Make your followers want to learn more or take action and use hashtags within your description. Hashtags make your pins more easily searchable to all of Pinterest’s users.
- **Add a Pin It Button to Your Website.** Adding this [small button](#) to your website and mobile app will help readers easily share your blogs, resources and other content.
- **Diversify Your Boards.** Your followers don’t want to see a constant stream of brand specific or sales driven pins. Make sure you’re diversifying your pinterest board by including pins from a variety of resources.

# Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn! Oh My!

Authored by Jennifer Aalgaard, Communications Manager for Getting Smart  
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We've talked about [Twitter](#), [Twitter Chats](#), and [Pinterest](#). But what about those other social media tools out there? For any social media strategy, the questions are the same, "How do we use social media to engage with our audience?" and "How do we communicate our story effectively?" The answers to these essential questions give your organization a purpose for engaging online in the first place.

While social media can help your brand achieve many goals, it's not a solution for all difficulties. For a social media presence to be successful, it must have a clear purpose behind every action. Below are some tips and tricks on how to be successful on Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn for edupreneurs.

## Facebook

**Getting to Know You.** Knowing who you are reaching out to will help determine when are the best times to reach them. Are they teachers, businesses, foundations, etc. They all interact with Facebook at different times. When you learn their patterns you have a higher likelihood to reach them. If you don't know who your audience is, your first step would be to [identify them](#).

**Plan. Do. Check. Adjust.** Measurement is the key identifying success. Your goals should be clear, reasonable, and quantifiable. How many likes, comments, and shares you would like to see each month. You can easily track these through Facebook insights, or through other [management tools](#). By keeping track of your progress you can easily see what tactics are working and which aren't so you can adjust as you go along.

**Staying Alive.** Make sure you are creating and posting regularly. Facebook should be posted to 1-2 times per day. So, to ensure you are getting your content in front of you audience's eyes, create a [content calendar](#) that outlines your plan for at least a week. You should align these posts with your marketing strategies, upcoming events, etc.

**Something to Talk About.** Your post is seeing some great engagement and comments. Now what? Respond back! Customers like to see that posts on Facebook are not being done by a machine, so if they make a comment, they expect to hear a reply — quickly. [When should you respond?](#) Always, even to a negative comment. Your fans are watching if and when you respond to any comment. If you don't, those that are feeling the same way will see the lack of response and create their own opinions. Be in control of the message.

**Don't Use That Tone With Me.** You know your audience, you know what you want to say, now HOW do you say it? How do you want your business to be perceived by your audience? Are you funny, witty, serious? How you write your message is just as important as what the message is. Your [voice and tone](#) can set the stage for how your audience engages with you. The key is to be consistent and aligned with who your audience is.

## Google+

**What Ya Waiting For?** If you are not already on Google+, **what are you waiting for?** Just having an account helps position yourself in Google's search engines more favorably. Posting and linking on the page does even more! We all know the importance of search engine placement, so why not leverage every opportunity to get premier real estate on Google and start a page.

**The Missing Link.** The great thing about Google+ is it welcomes placement of links throughout your page. Take advantage of it! These links tie into searches through Google and directs potential customers directly to your website.

**Hovercard is Not Just in the Movies.** The hovercard is your digital business card on Google+. This is a tool that, when used effectively, can create a targeted audience within Google+ and enhance your brand. Creating the perfect hovercard isn't difficult, but critical to your business. As with **setting up personal Google+ profiles**, you can influence what people see when they mouse over your business name in Google+. They might do this when searching on a topic or simply responding to a post. So you'll want to have a compelling, short tagline.

**Make Yourself Seen.** Getting people to circle you is crucial. Being in more people's circles, or having more Google+ followers, improves your position on regular **Google searches**. The easiest way to increase followers is to add a badge to your website. Including an **interactive badge** helps people follow you while on your site and they don't even have to go to Google+ to do it!

**Be Interesting.** Stand out from the crowd with interesting, even quirky posts. On Google+, especially, the more quirky the post, the more likes (+), comments, and shares the post sees. So if there's any way for your business to do something unconventional, it will help people **become interested in you**.

## LinkedIn

**Engage the Like-Minded.** LinkedIn connects business and professionals to others in their industries. Share the content that relates to that industry and to **generate buzz and credibility**. You don't have to share posts every day, but a few times a week is a good starting place.

**Showcase Your Stuff.** LinkedIn has this great extra piece called Showcase Pages that gives you an opportunity to **dive deeper into your company's services** and spotlight any products. Laid out similar to a Facebook Business page, it is another tool to reach a targeted audience.

**Group Think Isn't Always Bad.** Create discussion groups and engage regularly. You can customize groups to **potential partners and customers**. A discussion with a partner would be very different than a discussion with a potential customer. If you aren't ready to start one, join one. But don't join a group to just join a group. Make sure they all have a real purpose and a strong audience you want to target.



# Conclusion

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Getting Smart helps edupreneurs amplify their impact with **biz dev, marketing, public relations, and social media services**. We provide services from giving general guidance and support, to managing blog content and social media pages. Interested in learning more? Visit our **consulting page** and shoot us an email, or Tweet!

There are incredible benefits to social media, if you use it right. As you've read in this guide, Twitter can motivate, question, and engage your thoughts, beliefs, and methods. Its a short, quick way to communicate with your audience and join conversations. Through Twitter chats organizations are able to build a presence, join thought leadership discussions and engage with their audience.

Pinterest can provide a platform for you to develop and strengthen your brand and position yourself or your business as a leader in the Education space. By sharing content in an organized visual manner you are providing another opportunity for your audience to share your resources.

Facebook, Google+, and LinkedIn give an opportunity to amplify your website, community engagement, and services. Facebook gives you the chance to post longer content and allow for richer discussions compared to other social media channels. In addition to being a great way for people to find your company information online, Google+ easily incorporates the use of YouTube videos and Google Drive resources. LinkedIn is not just a place to find a new job, it is important to build network connections and share thought leadership messages.

Now its time to dive into your own social media strategic plan. Pick a few channels, build a strategy, test out messaging and stay flexible. Your audience, the channel, and branding will constantly need adjustment, so your plan should be too! As we've mentioned throughout this resource, remember to be clear, concise, and credible. When used together, all these channels give any teacher, school leader, or edupreneur the opportunity to make an impact, be relevant, build a network, and communicate with your audience. Ready to share your tips or ask a few questions? Use #SmartBundle to join the conversation online!

