



# Join the Conversation

*Facebook, Twitter and other social media can change how you communicate about and market your yearbook*

Is social media just another thing to track, update and add to your already crammed “to-do” list?

Or can it make your life easier and your yearbook more relevant to your readers?

More and more, yearbook programs across the country are embracing the immediacy of social networking to connect to a wider school audience.

Let’s face it. Social media is where the kids are.

Using Facebook, Twitter and other social media venues makes it easy to listen to, engage with, and empower your students to take actions that will increase yearbook buzz and help drive sales.

Social media venues can also help you gather content for the yearbook and stay connected with your yearbook staff.



# Using Facebook for gathering and reporting yearbook content

## Why Facebook Matters

*Facebook is the most widely used method of communication and networking for teens and for the general population. It's also the world's leading social media site.*

*Facebook offers yearbook programs a free communications and awareness-building portal that directly connects you to yearbook buyers. It allows you to find smaller audiences that are much more likely to care about what you're doing.*

*It can help you reach buyers and learn what makes them tick. It can also help you uncover what people are saying about your product so you can learn how to improve their experiences with and perceptions of the yearbook.*

*Facebook matters because the expectations of yearbook buyers have changed. How you interact with them must change too.*

## "You need to be on Facebook"

*While that is most likely true, before you dive headfirst into launching a Facebook page, it's important to examine the compelling rationale behind engaging in social media and the basic steps to doing it well.*

*We've asked advisers around the country to share how using Facebook and other social media has positively impacted their yearbook programs. Their insights can help you understand and leverage this valuable resource.*

**Jim Roller, yearbook adviser, Fort Dorchester High School, North Charleston, SC and his *The Patriot* yearbook staff took the social media plunge early.**

In March 2009, Roller and his staff launched their first Facebook page and their program now has two—the original page which is just shy of reaching 100,000 hits since its inception—and a fan page. They also created a separate website for the yearbook where students can go for more information about the book. Roller and his staff use Twitter and text messaging to reach their core audience, too.

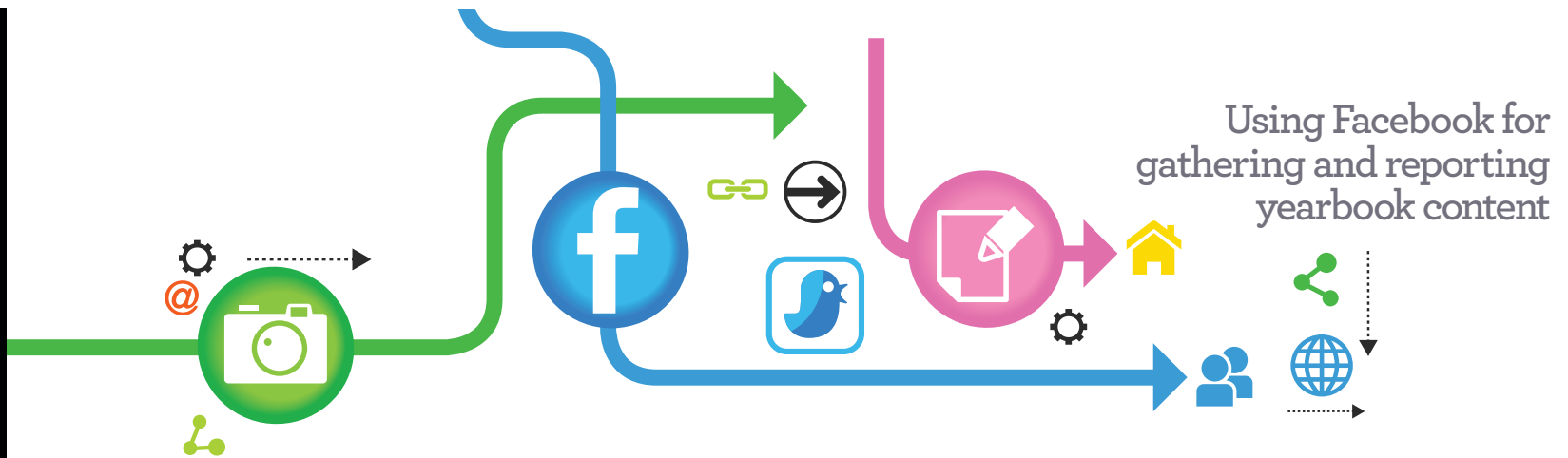
"All Facebook updates automatically go out through our Twitter account," Roller said. "This year, I have also employed a free text messaging service to send out important updates. Students and

parents can opt in by sending a text to a certain number. They are then added to our pool of subscribers."

He sees texting as an ideal method of contact because "Students always have their phones with them!" Roller's staff uses social media to communicate with students about picture day info, yearbook sales, requests for photos and more.

"I also have a special group made up of current yearbook staff members who are on Facebook," Roller said. "This is invaluable for communications."

Allison Acosta, *The Patriot* editor-in-chief, added: "We primarily use social media to update students on the yearbook status. We also use it to gather content, such as quotes. The key benefit of using social media is that we can reach out to a large percentage of students."



**Mitch Eden, yearbook adviser, Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, MO and his *Pioneer* yearbook staff started using social media two years ago, but it really took off during the 2011-2012 school year.**

“We use Facebook daily and Twitter occasionally to ask students for sound bites, photos and ideas to enhance coverage in the book.”

When the St. Louis Cardinals won the 2011 World Series, his staff put together student stories and photos for a spread in the book. “Much of the gathering came via Facebook,” he said.

This past February, the staff also started using Pinterest, a social photo-sharing website that allows users to create and manage collections of theme-based images.

*Pioneer* managing editor Megan Werner added that Facebook allows the yearbook staff, to connect with a wider range of students than they would normally be able to reach. “It also gives the students a place to tell us their stories if they want.”

**“Social media allows our book, our program, our kids to be visible weekly, daily in the lives of our student body. That buzz is now constant, not just on distribution day.”**

Kirkwood students can use the yearbook’s Facebook page to become more involved with the book, preview photos, copy and designs.

“Social media is where our audience is at,” Eden explained. “We have to have a presence there. Social media allows our book, our program, our kids to be visible weekly, daily in the lives of our student body. That buzz is now constant, not just on distribution day.”

**Gerry Appel, yearbook adviser, Abraham Lincoln High School, Council Bluffs, IA and his *Crimson and Blue* yearbook staff have had a Facebook page for a couple of years.**

At the end of 2011, Shannon Holmes, *Crimson and Blue* editor-in-chief, also created a Facebook fan page with her sports page editor.

They use Facebook to sell their book, gather content and communicate with one another. Several times their Facebook page has put them in touch with people they can interview.

Holmes said, “We use it to let the

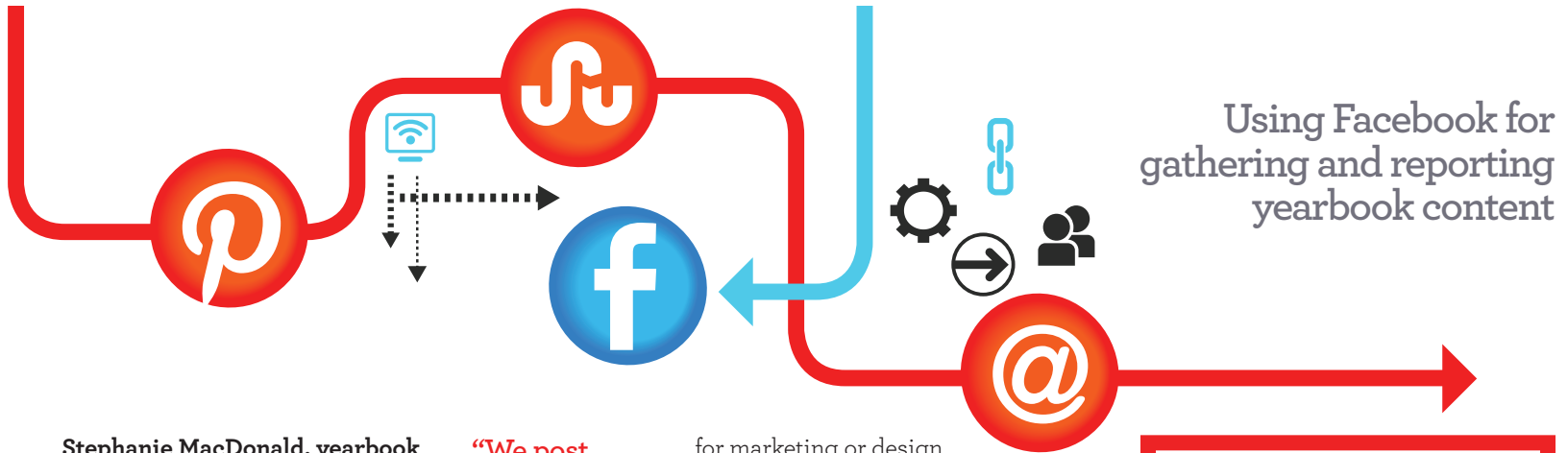
**Using Facebook for gathering and reporting yearbook content**

student body know what’s happening in yearbook, or, for example, to let them know about times for Yearbook Group Photo Day or to let parents know about senior ad requirements. More than once we needed to know if someone in our school was, say, addicted to McDonalds, and we would get some students who we eventually covered in our book.”

Appel added, “The fan page is a great way to communicate with readers. We sometimes use the page to communicate with each other as well. This public behind-the-scenes communication shows some insight into the production of the yearbook. Sometimes we also ask our readers to contact us for stories.”

Both Appel and Holmes noted that their Facebook page would be more effective if it had more fans. “We are at the mercy of who clicks ‘like’ for our page,” Appel said.

While that fanbase grows, they use school announcements to reach a wider audience.



## Using Facebook for gathering and reporting yearbook content

**Stephanie MacDonald, yearbook adviser, Tioga Central High School, Tioga Center, NY and her *Tiogan* yearbook staff have just recently begun using social media.**

They primarily use Facebook to communicate with staff members and promote yearbook sales. But, they shy away from using social media venues to gather story ideas and information from students.

“I am not a fan of using Facebook in this manner,” MacDonald said. “Much of what is on Facebook is gossip and trivia, not actual story ideas. I also do not allow my students to use photos taken from Facebook.”

**Ava Butzu, yearbook adviser, Grand Blanc High School, Grand Blanc, MI and her *Echo* yearbook staff take a multifaceted approach to social media.**

They use Facebook and Twitter to convey information to the public via their official yearbook feeds. They also have private Facebook pages where they post information for the yearbook staff editors as well as ideas

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“We post modules of coverage that we have completed on our Facebook page as a way of hyping the coverage and encouraging people to buy the book,” Butzu said. “We use Pinterest to feature fonts, designs and themes we like and we find a lot of ideas on Stumbleupon.”

Butzu and her staff began using public Twitter and Facebook posts at the onset of the 2010-2011 school year to stay in touch with the student body. They’ve used private Facebook groups for the past two years.

“By surfing the Facebook pages and Tweets of our student body, we get ideas for events, stories and special talents that we can cover in our pages,” Butzu said. “It’s an awesome springboard.”

To gather content for the yearbook, they have assigned an editor to post polls and surveys on Facebook and to contact people for interview material and quotations.

*Echo* yearbook editor Laura Bauermeister added, “I think that we could really improve on that next year.”

### Five ways Facebook can benefit your yearbook program

1. Grow a yearbook community of friends and supporters.
2. Extend your yearbook into the social life of your school.
3. Extend the reach of your marketing and sales program.
4. Build connection and trust via conversations.
5. Build yearbook loyalty and purchases through engagement.

### Launching your yearbook Facebook page

**If you already have a Facebook profile:**  
Go to [www.facebook.com/page](http://www.facebook.com/page) to choose your page category and get started.

**If you don’t have a Facebook profile:**  
Click the “Create a Page” link to create a Profile and Page together. You must have an authentic Facebook profile to manage a page. The Profile you create will automatically be the administrator of the page.





# Using Facebook for promoting yearbook sales

Jim Roller is a true believer in using social media to promote yearbook sales.

“Social media allows you to communicate with students who would not normally be around to hear your message. Signs on the wall are largely ignored. Announcements over the intercom or via a broadcast become white noise. Speak when and where they are around to listen and you will be heard. This is what social media provides. I sincerely believe our use of social media does result in an increase in sales. I’d hate to think where we might be without those efforts.”

Gerry Appel agreed. “In a depressed economy with other options fighting for students’ attention, it’s becoming increasingly more difficult to sell yearbooks. Facebook is another tool we use to get people excited

about the *Crimson and Blue*. We are able to communicate in real time to an interested audience. Yearbook sales are up by 71 copies compared to this point last year, although this is due to a variety of factors.”

*Crimson and Blue* editor-in-chief, Shannon Holmes, sees Facebook as a tool to reach a wider audience. “We can let parents know about senior ad requirements and we can let students know about Photo Day times.”

Stephanie MacDonald and her *Tiogon* yearbook staff have only been using Facebook for a couple of months.

Even though their Facebook presence hasn’t yet translated into increased yearbook sales, MacDonald sees that this social media venue offers possibilities for book sales in the future.

“I believe if we start earlier and

people continue to spread the word, we will.”

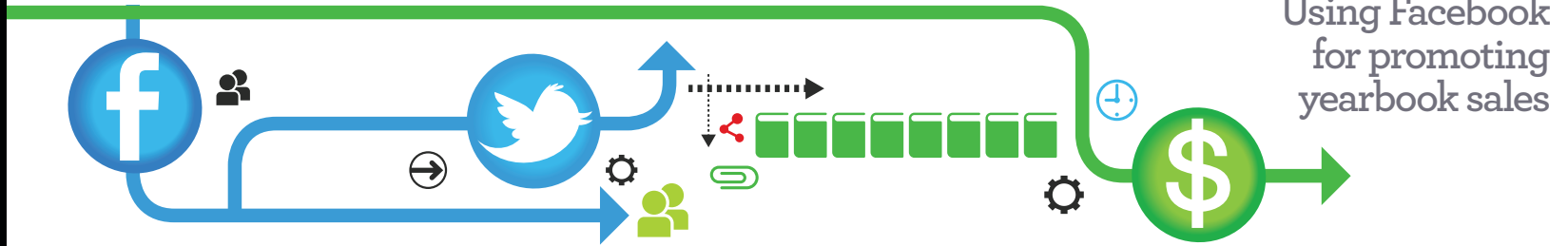
She recommended that yearbook programs start one page just for the yearbook staff and one just for yearbook sales.

“I have one for each,” she said. “The club one is only open to staff members and the sales page is open to anyone.” Stephanie added that advisers should avoid using their personal Facebook page to promote the yearbook. “That could look like stalking.”

Promoting Facebook on your yearbook program’s offline marketing efforts is a plus, too.

“Put posters up at school saying ‘find us on Facebook,’” MacDonald said. “Post it on your school’s website if it is allowed. Keep the page very professional and school appropriate at all times.”

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Using Facebook for promoting yearbook sales

Ava Butzu’s *Echo* yearbook staff sees many benefits to tapping into social media to promote book sales. “We had a window of opportunity where if people followed us on Twitter or Facebook, we would enter them into a contest for a drawing for a free yearbook. We got over 300 followers that way.”

They frequently post Tweets to their yearbook Twitter account to congratulate a team on a win or to announce an upcoming book sale or deadline. To get the word out, each staffer re-Tweets the original Tweet. *Echo* yearbook editor Laura Bauermeister added, “We also have a couple of texting campaigns where each yearbook staff member texts five friends reminding them to buy a yearbook.”

Although their yearbook program started using social media last year, this year they created a new marketing position, which has increased how much they use Facebook, Twitter and texting.

“Last year it was a casual thing,” Bauermeister said. “This year it is

constant and our sales show that it is helping.”

They use social media to share sneak peeks of the yearbook or tag someone who hasn’t bought a book in a photo.

“I think people are more aware of the cost of the yearbook and the deadlines because of our Facebook and Twitter pages,” Bauermeister said. “It’s a constant reminder. People know the yearbook theme and they have all year to get excited about it.”

Since using social media to promote yearbook sales is a relatively new phenomenon, it can sometimes be difficult to identify whether doing so translates into bottom-line results. Butzu said, “I don’t know if I can attribute this just to social networking but, since we started using social networks, we have been at least 100 books ahead of our usual sales this year.”

Mitch Eden definitely credits social media with helping to increase yearbook sales.

“Our sales have increased every year the past six years. The past two

have been increasingly difficult as we set very challenging sales goals at the beginning of the year. Each goal was met, in part, thanks to the staff’s ability to network and promote via social media.”

One of the benefits of using social media to promote book sales is its ability to provide a constant presence. Students hear about the yearbook all year long, not just at the beginning of the year or during the weeks leading up to distribution day.

Breanna Bulter said, “Through our Facebook page we have been able to easily promote yearbook sales. Students remember the yearbook all year long because we are able to get our name out there. We can post statuses about who has bought books so far and our Facebook page also shows when a student appears in a spread. Since there’s more talk about the yearbook, people remember to check if they’ve ordered their book.”

Those efforts have translated into sales success. During the 2011–2012, the *Pioneer* staff surpassed its sales goals by 20 percent.

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