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# A Few Good Tools for Measuring and Monitoring Social Media

By Andrea Berry and Chris Bernard, August, 2011

Sure, you're on Facebook. Twitter, too. Maybe you have a blog. You put a lot a lot of work into keeping them fresh and updated with pertinent, interesting posts. But aside from the few comments you get now and again, how do you know if anyone is listening to what you have to say?

You think hard about your social media strategy, posting interesting links relevant to your mission, working to expand your network and engage your constituents and create a solid, online reputation for your organization. You want to monitor your efforts and measure your results. Knowing whether your efforts are paying off can help you adapt your posting strategy to better meet your goals.

Monitoring your social media activities means listening to what people are saying to you, about you, and in your area of interest. Measuring them means counting, calculating and quantifying those activities into useful metrics that will inform your actions. These are separate and distinct practices that rely on each other to succeed. Finding the right tools to meet your needs in this area can save long hours of work.

When it comes to the big three of social media—Facebook, Twitter and blogs—this can be done for no cost whatsoever, or for a significant investment. It all depends on what you want to track and measure. Every day, more and more tools join a substantial number of choices already on the marketplace.

We talked to a number of social media experts to find out which tools they use, and which they recommend. We then condensed their advice into this article.

## Gathering Data

The process of gathering data, as well as what data you gather, differs for each channel. In Facebook, you focus on three main areas: likes, comments and links on posts, and shares. If someone "likes" your page, you know they're listening to you. When followers add comments to your posts, you've made the conversation two-way by engaging them. And when they share your posts with their Facebook friends, you've expanded your audience.

Gathering this information helps you understand what people are doing on Facebook, and how to tap into it. Twitter is similar—engagement is a more accurate measure of your influence than follower count. Do followers retweet your posts, or share information of relevance and interest to your organization and constituents? Measure engagement against the time you spend on the site to get a sense of the channel's value.

Blogs are a great way to share expertise and knowledge while getting your organization's name out into the world. Who is reading yours? What keywords brought them there? What sites did they come from? Such information can help you figure out what readers want.

There are a number of valuable tools to help with each of these goals, ranging from free to more than $1,000 a month. They'll track almost anything, but simplicity is key. You can do plenty with a couple of well-considered free or affordable tools, and you're better off being smart about what you're collecting.

## Non-Specific Tools

In fact, you might already be using tools that will work perfectly well for limited monitoring—for free. Your favorite search engine—Google, Bing, Yahoo! or others—can provide a glimpse of where your name is popping up online, and help you find conversations to join. This is basic monitoring at its simplest.

Another simple but useful tool, **Google Alerts** will email you online mentions of keywords—for example, your organization's name. Set as many alerts as you want to clue you in to mentions on blogs, websites, other people or organizations' Facebook pages or

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Twitter accounts, or in the media.

Though **Google Analytics** was designed to track traffic and referral data, it can also help you better understand your blog's audience, and monitor traffic to your website from all your social media channels. What posts interest readers enough to click through?

Finally, most social media channels offer some built-in or third-party way to analyze your activity. Facebook Insights is a reasonably powerful tool available to any organization whose page has at least 30 fans. Twitter platforms like **Hoot Suite** and **Tweet Deck** provide basic metrics. **Backtype** offers a free online keyword monitor. And most blogs can be effectively measured with a combination of the blogging site's built-in metrics, **FeedBurner** and web analytics.

# Aggregating Tools

For more streamlined or automated monitoring, an entire group of aggregating tools on the market help keep an eye on multiple aspects of your social media efforts—many of them, like those mentioned here, for free.

**Social Mention** aggregates any mention of keywords from more than 100 social media sites. Similarly, **Nutshell Mail** tracks your brand's social media activity and delivers a summary to your email inbox on a schedule you set.

**Rowfeeder** creates reports by tracking keywords, hashtags (discussion threads marked with a # in Twitter) or usernames on Twitter and Facebook. **Addict-o-matic** searches the web for the latest news, blog posts, videos and images based on your keywords or name and creates a page with what it finds—you can customize the page, and bookmark it for future use.

# Monitoring Dashboards

Monitoring dashboards let you see the big picture of your social media presence by displaying a number of different metrics or similar items in a single place.

**iGoogle**, Google's free offering, creates a start page that you personalize with RSS feeds, news readers, and other gadgets, plus custom searches and access to Gmail and calendar. Similarly, **NetVibes** collects the blogs, RSS feeds, Facebook and Twitter feeds, YouTube channels and other items you select into a single page—the slogan is "Dashboard everything."

You can also create a customized monitoring dashboard by strategically using RSS feeds from your social media channels in conjunction with feeds from Google Alerts and other tools. Whether you use a dashboard or a tool that emails updates to your inbox is a matter of preference, but it's worth trying both methods to see which is the best fit for you.

# Channel-Specific Tools

Each social media channel has engendered a subset of very specific tools. Tools that pull together and calculate specific measurements can provide some of the sophisticated metrics you want from an expensive tool for free, and offer detailed insight into a small section of your social media activities to inform the focus of your efforts, or how you manage your engagement activities.

**Klout** measures your Twitter influence. **Booshaka** measures Facebook fan interactions. **BlogPulse** monitors blog trends across the web, **PostRank** offers daily engagement reports on websites or blogs, and **AllFacebookStats.com** collects general Facebook page data and calculates change rates and other complicated statistics.

# Higher End Tools

Many free tools offer expanded functionality for a small monthly or one-time fee—and once you start looking at these options, and at other tools that cost money, the market grows more broadly. Mid- and high-level tools, sometimes called social media management tools, offer a wide array of metrics and analysis not possible with the free or lower-end tools. These powerful analytics are also expensive, and can cost anywhere from $10 to more than $1,500 a month.

Small Act's **Thrive** and **Spredfast**, both at the low-to-middle-end of the scale, offer fairly comprehensive pictures of your social media activities and allow you to manage accounts, develop relationships with stakeholders and measure overall effectiveness.

At the higher-end of the price scale are **Radian 6** and **Lithium**, which measure influence, deliver comparisons to competitors and data on your market share, and provide tangible methods of improving. Both platforms offer nonprofit discounts.

# Choosing The Right Ones

Whether your organization decides to spend money on these tools or ops for the free ones, you've got plenty of choices. How do you decide?

First, determine whether social media gains would generate enough of a return on your investment to make it worth investing in the

higher-end, more-expensive tools. Consider what kind of return you need to see for them to pay for themselves, and whether there's another way to achieve it.

In either case, there's no need to go for the biggest, baddest tool right away until you know exactly what you'll need. It's less important which tools you use than that you use some at all, and that you adapt your methods and practices based on what you learn.

Spend some time planning. Determine your goals and the data you'll need to gather to reach them—what do you want to know at the end of the process? Then, select the tools to help get you there, and work them into your daily or weekly processes to make them an iterative part of the way you work.

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- Beth Kanter, **Beth's Blog**
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- Lisa Colton, **Darim Online**
- Debra Askanase, **Community Organizer 2.0**
- Maddie Grant, **SocialFish**

# Comments

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## it is good for SEO.These

Submitted by dialuz (not verified) on January 27, 2014 - 3:02am.

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it is good for SEO.These tools are helpful to monitor and measuring to social media.it is good for every  one.Thank you.

## Website Protection Tool

Submitted by **stevebrown** (not verified) on July 2, 2013 - 7:27am.

**Reply**

This article includes very good information. I would suggest you one more website security tool, website monitoring tool to Track your Website. That is **http://www.totalwebsecurity.com/**.

You can sign up for more information to **http://www.totalwebsecurity.com/pricing-signup.php**.

## Useful set of tools

Submitted by **IntelligentHQ** (not verified) on May 28, 2013 - 10:14am.

**Reply**

Some useful set of tools here, we have been developing our own social media tools so all these are really useful reasearch and point of reference!

## Social Management Tool Review Request

Submitted by **Martin Kang** (not verified) on October 10, 2012 - 7:55pm.

**Reply**

Please also consider including SocialMotus. We're a new, free social management tool platform for businesses and individuals. We're building some innovative and powerful conversion tracking and social management features including priority messages inbox, targeted Twitter followers discovery, sales conversions by posts and much more.

You can review it by signing up for free here **http://www.socialmotus.com** or emailing me for more information.

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Submitted by **www.youtube.com** (not verified) on February 28, 2014 - 5:53am.

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