

A BASIC GUIDE TO USING SOCIAL MEDIA

What you will learn

This resource is intended to be an introduction to social media for people working within the refugee and migration sector who are new to social media platforms or for those who have not used it in a professional capacity. It is particularly targeted at people working at a small, grassroots level. The resource aims to help people become better informed about the main social media platforms, and how each of them can be used to reach different audiences. It also acts as a guide to using social media more strategically and how to employ the features, techniques and platforms for different organisations.

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Why use social media

Social media is an important tool in communications. It is a powerful way to attract and engage an audience with your messages and campaigns. While it can feel overwhelming at first, there are a few simple principles which can help you use social media strategically and effectively.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN INSPIRE ACTION AND CREATE CHANGE

As well as thinking about how to attract more followers, it is important to consider what action you want your audience to take. Is it to give money, volunteer, support a campaign or spread the message about your work? Having clarity about what you want to achieve and building an engaged audience will help you to achieve your digital objectives.

Lots of political campaigning happens online, whether that is emailing an MP or getting the public to put pressure on the government. If you already have an audience on board, when you need people to take action like signing a petition, social media will help you to spread your message more widely, more quickly.

On social media, it is easy to join in with campaigns run by larger organisations such as Together With Refugees, Reunite Families or Lift the Ban, and become part of a bigger movement for change. It all adds to the pressure and people power of campaigns for change.

CASE STUDY

Cartoons Not Cruelty set up a petition and an Instagram account to campaign against the Immigration Minister's decision to paint over murals in children's asylum centres. The petition attracted huge attention and got over 120k signatures. The campaign struck at the right political moment with an issue the general public were angry about. It was timely, engaging and powerful. The campaign also then inspired its audience to take other actions and continued to engage them with the issues.



Why use social media (continued)

BUILD UP YOUR PUBLIC PROFILE AND NETWORK WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Having a social media account is a great way to connect with other grassroots and larger organisations who will support you. Maintaining an active presence is a great way to get known in, and beyond the sector. By tagging other organisations, commenting on their posts, liking, reposting or sharing their content, not only will you help promote their work but also draw attention to your own. Post on your platforms regularly to ensure you keep your audience engaged. Stay tuned to what others are doing, keep connected and active so you can continue to build up your profile.

SHOW OFF YOUR WORK AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Social media is a brilliant way to show off the work which you do and highlight your achievements. It's important to show your funders, donors, volunteers, clients and supporters what you are doing – and why you are doing it. You can show photos of events, news articles about your projects or quotes from your client base. Anything which highlights all the great work which you are doing.

Your most loyal audience online (the ones who like all your posts!) are most likely to be your core base of supporters. Engaging them is key to keeping them interested in your work and helping them to inspire others to get involved.

Your core base are significant advocates of your work and campaigns – so make sure you get to know them and the kinds of social media content they like. Spending some time looking at your most popular posts is a good way to start thinking about what is working for you and your audience.



Why use social media (continued)

CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

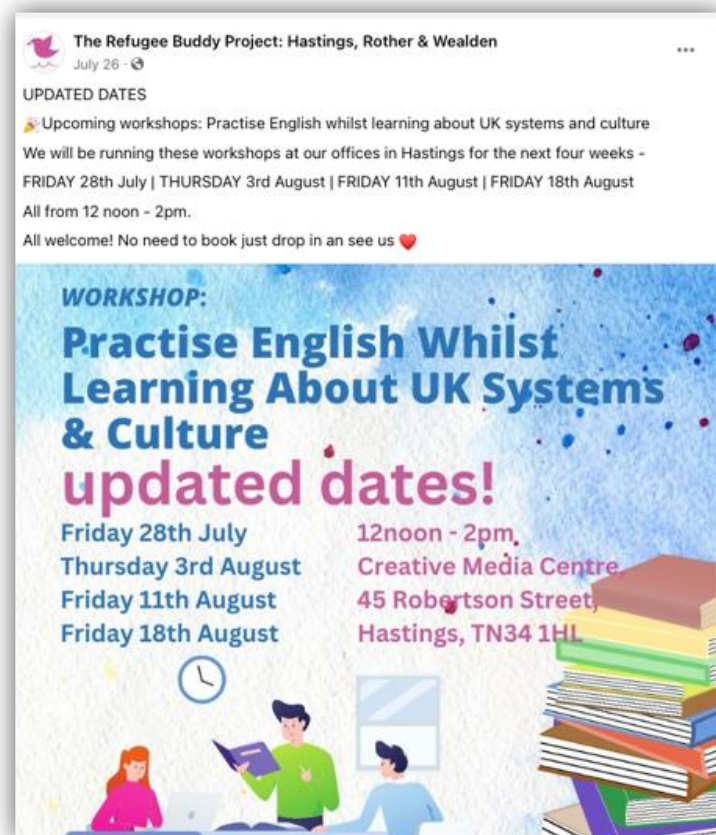
Social media is a great way to connect with other local groups as well as people who might want to engage with your services or volunteer with you. Facebook and WhatsApp groups are a particularly good way to connect with other people in your local neighbourhood. It's worth spending some time researching and connecting with these groups, so you can tag them in posts or comment on their content. It all helps to build up your online presence.

CONVEY PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Use your social media posts to let your clients and volunteers know what you are doing when. You can let them know when your services are open, what events you have coming up and what you can offer. Make sure you keep your social media profiles updated regularly so that people can stay informed, and your audience engaged with your work.

CONSIDER:

- How do you currently use social media? What is working well?
- Who is your target audience?
- How could you improve what you do, taking into account the resources and skills you have?
- Imagine your social media platform in a year's time. What are your hopes for it?
- Decide one goal for your social media platforms that you could work towards in the next three months.



Using social media strategically

Regardless of which platform(s) you work on, use social media strategically and consciously. Always keep in mind the resources which you have available to you and your organisation's capacity. Keep the strategy realistic.

Purpose/Goal	Audience
<p>What do you want to achieve? What are you trying to do?</p> <p>What goals do you have?</p> <p>What strategy will you use to be successful?</p> <p>Is it to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• get people to attend your events?• share/spread the word about your event and the cause?• encourage support for your work? <p>In your strategy, include the resources which you have including staff and/or volunteer time, budget and any equipment which might be needed such as a camera or editing software.</p>	<p>When considering strategy, it is very important to think about audience.</p> <p>Who are you talking to and why?</p> <p>Who is your audience? Think about different demographics and the areas of interests they have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use networks you already have; friends, family, local groups, etc. These will be your core supporters and carry your message wider. Keep them happy!• Think about how best to reach out to new audiences. Be imaginative and consider your communications from their point of view. What will grab them?• If there is the option, try reaching out to local celebrities or social media influencers who might celebrate and share your work.

X (Formerly known as Twitter)



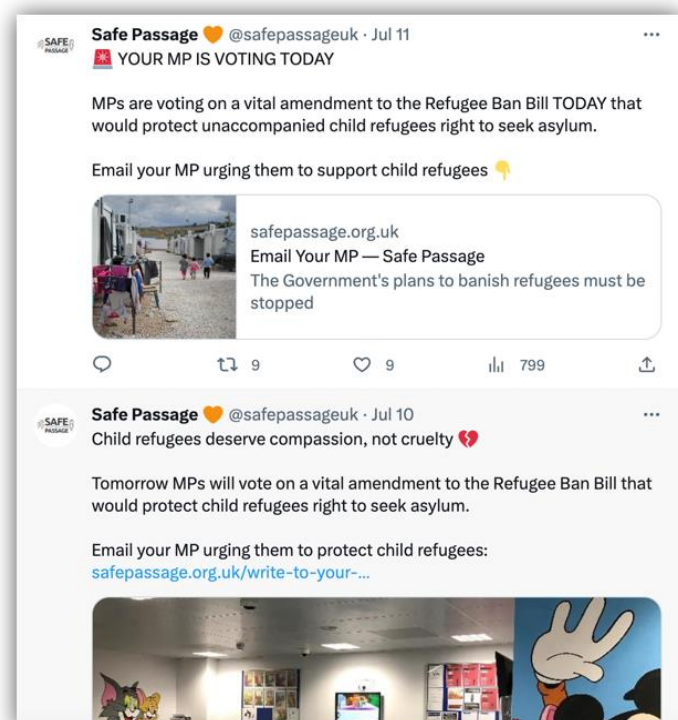
- Twitter is now known as X but lots of people still refer to it by its original name!
- The audience are working age professionals
- Lots of journalists, politicians and other influential people use the platform, and you can engage directly with them
- The refugee and migration sector is very active on X
- Each post on X is only 280 characters, however you can link posts together and these are called 'threads'
- It is a fast-moving, news-reactive platform. News breaks and unfolds on X. People can respond immediately leading to debates which can escalate quickly into unhelpful arguments, online hate and division
- Premium Subscription offers enhanced features at different levels which include features like the blue tick, longer posts and video uploads and reduced ad content
- Changes are happening rapidly on the platform which can be hard to keep up with. Keeping a diverse portfolio of digital communications including having different social media platforms, newsletters and a clear, accessible website is important in this fluctuating landscape.



X (continued)

Make effective use of X by:

- Showing off your expertise in your subject area – you will know more than most of your audience including journalists and politicians!
- Using it to campaign – targeting MPs and other people in positions of power
- Keeping up-to-date with fast-changing and relevant news
- Engaging and interacting with other organisations
- Tag, reply, comment, repost, quote with comment, use hashtags, follow trending topics, follow the right people who could help you to build your supporter base and increase your influence
- Monopolise on events and days like #RefugeeWeek, International Migrants Day and other popular ones like World Poetry Day, Women's Day etc.
- Scheduling content on a platform like Buffer, Hootsuite or Sprout Social.



Facebook

- World's largest social media platform
- Meta owns Instagram and Facebook
- Older audience: 35yrs+
- Prioritises meaningful conversation. Algorithm favours posts with lots of comments and pushes popular posts up people's news feeds
- Works well with communities connected by interest or geography. People interact who know each other or who are closely connected
- Great for local, community engagement
- Lots of features can be used: fundraisers, events, live videos, closed or public groups.



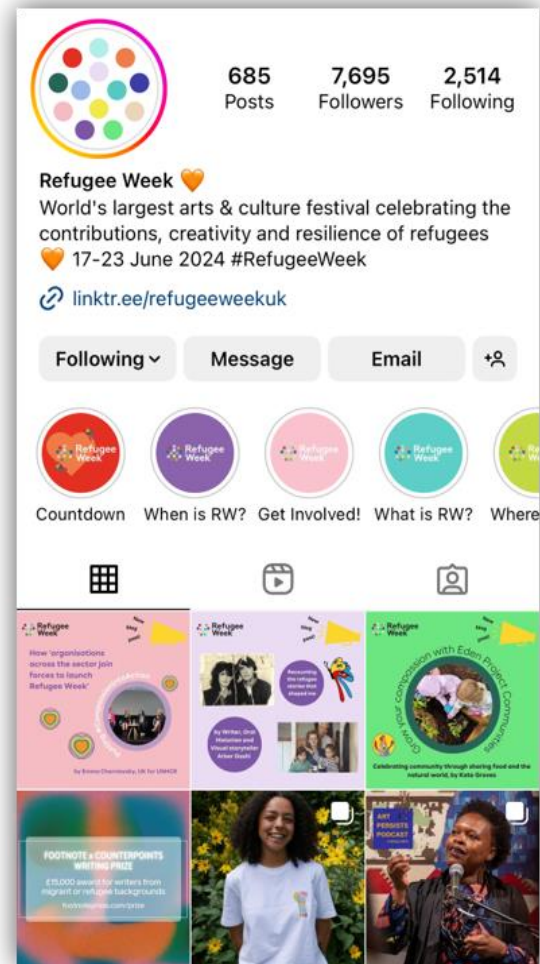
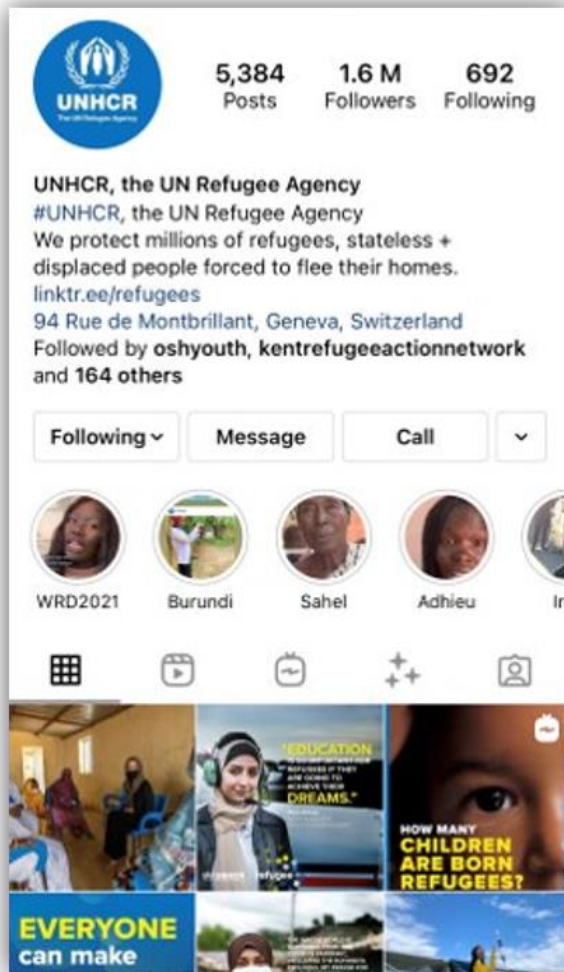
Facebook (continued)

Make effective use of Facebook by:

- Designing content which engages an older audience
- Communicating with your community, particularly in a local context
- Showcasing the great work which you do with photos and videos
- Interacting with other organisations and local groups by tagging, sharing, commenting and liking
- Deciding if a page or group is best for your organisation, Closed groups can be good for communicating with your client base, but a public page is better for building up your profile and reputation.



Instagram

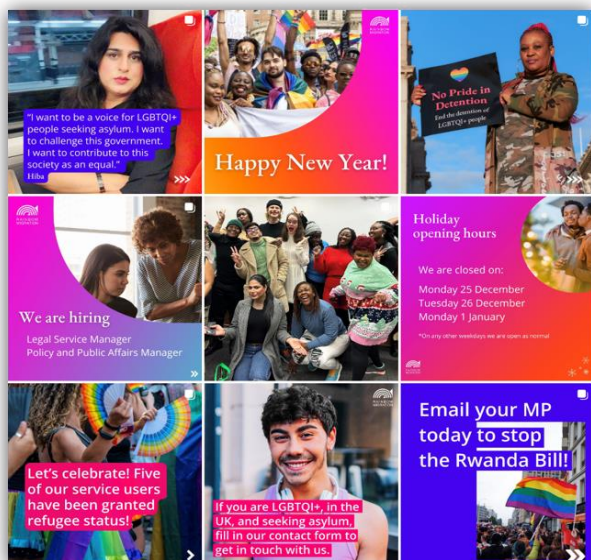


- Appeals to a younger audience. 71% of people aged 18-29 have active Instagram accounts (Source: BackLinko)
- Highly visual
- Emphasises the sharing of interests and hobbies
- A growing activist network and platform
- Focused on lifestyle and content which feels very marketable
- Social media personalities and influencers have grown out of Instagram
- Prioritises video, particularly reels which can be edited in the app

Instagram (continued)

Make effective use of Instagram by:

- Using powerful and engaging photos of people where possible
- Employing your brand colours across your profile and grid to make content look professional and cohesive. Use [Canva](#) to create simple graphics
- Drawing on the power of stories to connect with the audience
- Think about lifestyle trends which could tie in with your work: cookery, sports, poetry, comedy, art, fashion etc.
- Follow, engage and join other sector campaigns
- Develop video content using the reels tool within the app – teach yourself some Instagram video tips on YouTube!



TikTok

- The audience is even younger than Instagram! 43% of TikTok's global audience is between 18 and 24 years old (Source: Omnicore Agency)
- Fastest growing social media app
- Only has video content. Videos edited in app can be up to 3 minutes. Uploaded videos can be up to 10 minutes. Shorter videos perform best
- Music can trend as well as dance routines and other actions
- People talk direct to camera which has caused the rise of influencers on the platform. Lived experience voices can be used powerfully as well as explainer videos unpacking a complex theme
- Attracts global communities based around interest – so less UK specific
- Less local communities – but there is the potential to reach a wider, newer, younger audience
- Not many smaller migration/refugee charities on TikTok as it is labour intensive but some larger ones like UNHCR, Refugee Council and IRC have active accounts which are worth following.

freedomfromtorture
Freedom from Torture

Follow

102 Following 6042 Followers 217.7K Likes

Torture destroys lives. We won't let it.
Join the movement ❤️

linktr.ee/freedomfromtorturett

Videos Liked

Pinned 16.5K
CRIME SCENE
BIG BEN
BREAKING: This Gove...

Pinned 1.3M
We just renamed the refugee "processing centre" in Manston
a Braverman
e for Cruelty
gees
BREAKING: Suella Brave...

Pinned 63.2K
Refugee schools Jeremy
Kyrle on the Government's
Rwanda plans
TALK PROTESTS OVER RWANDA FLIGHT
and Rwanda will process you
Not enough people kno...

330
How is this company
linked to profiting from
refugees pain?
Did you know that ...

11K
Jet2: stand against
forcing refugees to Rwanda
Jet2, your customers
Hey @jet2 your custo...

1187
AirTanker
BREAKING: AirTanker ...

3204
THE RWANDA
SCHEME IS CRUEL AND
INHUMANE
The Rwanda scheme is c...

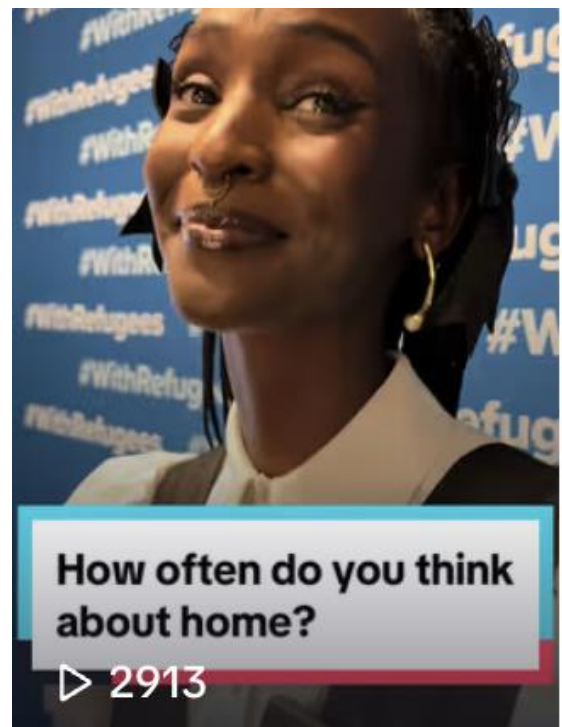
TikTok (continued)

Make effective use of TikTok by:

- Using a consistent style of video, similar camera shots, colours, text, branded colours etc.
- Having someone in your team or a volunteer who is willing to consistently be in front of the camera
- Publishing videos regularly – at least once a week
- Following and adapting trends on the platform particularly popular music
- Think of what might reach a more global audience (and consider if this is right for your organisation or campaign)
- Ensuring you have the capacity to run a TikTok account before you launch and that it has the right target audience for you.



[Freedom From Torture Campaign Video](#)



[UNHCR TikTok video](#)

Ethics, consent and safeguarding

When using real-life events and people with lived experience in social media storytelling, there are elements to keep in mind to protect the individuals involved and people close to them.

Before working on a social media story with anyone, check the following:

- If they are happy to be named and pictured, and for their words and image to appear publicly on social media sites. Make sure they understand the consequences of appearing online and remind them there might be negative comments. If they still want to go ahead, support them before and after the process
- Be particularly careful when working with people who have vulnerabilities particularly those still in the asylum system, children, people with disabilities and those who have experienced trauma
- Remind them they can remain anonymous and don't have to show their face [Our blog explains how to do this creatively!](#)

[Find a full media safeguarding checklist on the IMIX website](#)

Social Media Safeguarding

- Use the safety features provided on each social media platform. You can control who has access to you and what they see
- Remember to mute, block and report offensive comment. Anything which incites hatred can be reported to the police
- Don't engage with trolls. Report and ignore. By sharing or commenting on a negative post, it just gets more coverage.





Telling the human story of migration

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Human
Journeys



Good
Neighbours



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