

VisitCanberra

# Social Media Playbook



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# Introduction

## WHO THIS PLAYBOOK IS FOR?

You actually. All of us really. Welcome to the social world. It's here to stay and you're in it already.

It's about creating content for social media channels. The ideas in here will work for sole practitioners just starting out or large marketing teams already in the know.

Social media is valuable to your marketing, your communication with visitors, customers and clients.

At VisitCanberra, we are passionate about socialising our capital. We've seen first-hand just how connected and social our visitors are thanks to the Human Brochure. It's vital that we all connect and socialise with our audience.

## WHAT THIS PLAYBOOK DOES

This playbook is one big bunch of ideas to get you thinking about what to create, what to share and how to do it. The ideas are prompts to generate ongoing relevant content and converse with people through social media.

Browse this in the same way as you probably do already online, leave it for a while and come back later, or use it every day.

Send us suggestions and refinements and we'll keep playing together.

## BEFORE YOU PLAY: 3 TRUTHS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

- There are no experts in social media.
- Social media is about human interaction. Be human. Be playful.
- Everyone changes. Everything changes. Play with change.

*Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.*

Benjamin Franklin

Honestly, it's just common sense and fair play.

## IT'S PLAYTIME: PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Get involved. Grab a piece of paper. Write down randomly all the things you loved about playing as a kid. Write down any games you invented as well. Seriously. Go do it.

**Now! Off you go...**

How did you go?

Keep those things you wrote handy. You just started the basis of a content strategy and calendar. More on that later.





# social media

## THE NEW PLAYGROUND

Social media is a playground full of excited kids, play equipment and plenty of noise and colour.

People like Facebook, Google, Twitter, Pinterest own the playground equipment. They provide the free play platforms and, in exchange, they let us offer games and stories to make playtime more fun.

The things we say, show and share are our pieces of content.

Play well and people will repurpose your content, trade it around the playground and if it's popular enough, it will spread like wild fire. Play with old games in old ways and your content may only get a nod from a few people.

Having followers who like your content is great. Having followers who exchange meaningful content is awesome.

## TO SHARE IS HUMAN

Just as your content is your capital, shares are your means of trading content and creating an economy. The value and shiny appeal of your capital will determine how much it will be shared and your return on investment.

## HOW WE PLAY

VisitCanberra has a progressive managerial and ministerial outlook and investment in social media. We are committed to working with you together, as a whole destination, to meet our visitors online with the same excellence and innovation as we do offline. We had to make a start, as our visitors are savvy, connected and social.

## THE PURPOSE OF PLAY: DEFINE GOALS AND STRATEGY

Why are you playing in social media?

Define your purpose in social media. Do it with meaning and for an outcome. Don't just hang out or loiter just because other kids are playing. That is just creepy.

Clearly for any business, a return on investment is a given.

Some examples include:

- Increase in likes or followers to establish a subscription based communications channel
- Driving traffic to a website or portal to offer sales and service
- Brand awareness and education
- Increase search results in places where people in your target market are looking
- Another channel to reach and interact with your target market or new business
- Increase in reach through new global opportunities



Measuring the return on investment is tricky and no common framework of standard key performance indicators or metrics exist. Common measures include likes, shares, traffic referral, time on site, visits to landing pages, interactions, repins, retweets, content generated and many more. Pick the one that's right for you.

## ROLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS

Here are some typical roles social media plays in business thinking:

### Help desk

You simply listen in and answer questions, queries and concerns about your product or experience. Usually it is the most inactive or ad hoc approach favoured by organisations that have a presence, but little in the way of interaction. This is a safe, risk-averse approach.

### Entertainment

Mostly crowded by actors, musicians, consumer brands and major products. You provide content, competitions and conversation starters around your product or experience that people already identify with and love. It's a place where like-minded people gather in your name. Generally, the highest followed pages on Facebook and Twitter.

[www.fanpagelist.com/category/top\\_users/view/list/sort/fans/page2](http://www.fanpagelist.com/category/top_users/view/list/sort/fans/page2)

### Education

You simply share things of perceived value to learn about your industry or peripheral learning about your product or experience. For instance, you may sell fashionable shoes but you post about jogging tips, deportment and health.

### Conversation

You simply start conversations and by some unknown mystical factor of social media, you get people responding by what they deem to be interacting, interesting and relevant.

## News

You simply push out or republish news in your industry or consumer sector.

## Sales and offers

You use your social media to promote straight deals, offers, group buying choices, competitions and giveaways.

Have a good look at the top 10 in each of those categories and read their posts and tweets. What do they do well? What kinds of content do they share? These are the best places to keep on top of trends and initiatives.

## CLAIM YOUR PLACE

Like website addresses, secure your name in social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube and Foursquare.

## THE NEW KIDS IN THE PLAYGROUND

The telephone revolutionised social connectivity. Telephones are based on one-to-one communication and costly to connect long distance. Then, some clever kid started the internet. Now we all connect to virtually anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Most people use social media to connect with friends, learn something, make discoveries, stare at cats with melon hats, or to share their lives.

Then people arrived with stuff to sell. They're marketers. Just like us.

Marketing and business is the new kid in the playground. People want to play with business and us marketers but they play by their rules and in new ways we have to learn. People know all our marketing tricks. People are more socially empowered than ever before. Never underestimate the power of crowds.



**Denis Zaruba** To you all dear participants... To be able to win the competition you must be a GEEK. If you don't have Twitter and all this stupid shit then you are the losers and you don't even get to the draw you are immediately OUT! Which is completely stupid because then 500 GEEKS who don't know how to communicate get to go on a trip. Wow! How boring is that?! Finally I am happy to stay in Sydney and am glad to say fuck boring Canberra with only GEEKS! PS: to all the geeks people don't forget your iPhone, smartphone... otherwise you'll have to pay for your own trip! What a stupid dumb competition... And to finish, if you have all this stupid shit like Twitter etc... then you have to get the most status updates possible to win the draw... In fact to resume it the more shit you write the more chances you get to win... How stupid and ridiculous is that game??? I let you think about it...  
3 hours ago · Unlike · 1

### HOW BAD CAN IT GET?

If you play on social media, you must be prepared for outbursts like this. There is no point pretending that language and reactions like these (people who were unsuccessful in their Human Brochure applications) do not exist. It is a shock when it happens, but just be human about it.

Marketing has changed forever. No longer can we shout at crowds. The new playground rules are authenticity and one-to-one, open, transparent and highly public conversations! Everyone is listening and watching. Everyone is learning faster than ever before.

This is a social sphere first and always, not a designed marketing channel.

Socialise. First. Last. Always.

Ah yes, for those who still skipped the playtime exercise and were too grown up to write down what they loved about play, battle on, play another day and get on with grown up things.

*Grown-ups love figures... When you tell them you've made a new friend, they never ask you any questions about essential matters. They never say to you 'What does his voice sound like? What games does he love best? Does he collect butterflies?' Instead, they demand, 'How old is he? How much does he weigh? How much money does his father make?' Only from these figures do they think they have learned anything about him.*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*



**Visit Canberra MT @ F Sinatra** --> Mistakes, we've had a few. But then again, too many to mention. We did what we had to do and saw it through. We did it our way.



**F Sinatra @VisitCanberra** Mistakes? Get over them. We all make them when playing new venues. Never be scared of anyone or anything...





## WHY PLAY IN SO MANY PLACES?

Your customers, clients and people play in many places. There's too many to list here, but do some basic searches and listening (monitoring) and find out where people are congregating with your interests. Choose channels that are showing good growth and that align with your main type of content.

For example, if your content is visual, consider a photo-sharing site like Instagram or Pinterest. If you have witty one-liners and other kinds of content then consider Twitter or Facebook to invite or promote conversation.

As the crowd grows in each of these platforms, and if they have an interest allied to what you do, they will begin to find you in search.

Most importantly, social media is a commitment like any other marketing effort and is growing in value daily. Even if you are inactive in some channels, someone else may take your place (cyber squatting) and it is difficult to get it back in some channels.

It is best to own your property in a channel even if it is inactive than to chase it up from someone who is cyber squatting on it.

Finally, the data and insights on the people who follow you on social media are useful. Through the ever-improving analytics of most channels, you can gain an insight to your followers and their demographics. For online advertising you may do, it is one of the most accurate ways of targeting people online.

## Hashtags

These are words or phrases preceded by the # hash symbol. Hashtags are a convenient and quick way to label content to be indexed in search. They are also great ways to aggregate content so people can follow events, trends and topics of interest. If enough people use the hashtag, you begin to trend and people start to pay attention to what's going on.

## IT'S PLAYTIME: PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Do a quick search on hashtags related to your business, industry and interests. If you can create a unique hashtag, then do so as it is often best to own tags for later use or activation.

Make a big list of hashtags that relate to your business or attraction. Hashtags will only grow in use as a powerful index for search. Get in now and claim yours. To claim, simply use it in a tweet if it is new and you will have established its use.

Avoid ridiculously long or silly phrases like  
#gonnagetmyselfsomegreathashtagstonight

# Who you will meet

## PROFILES OF TYPICAL ONLINE USERS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER

How you converse in social media should be relaxed and natural. It is useful to appreciate reasons people use social media to help craft your content for your purpose and your audience.

QUIET OBSERVERS	Like to skim, know what friends are up to, follow general interests, keep profiles private, not heavily engaged but online to establish a presence.
CASUAL ONLOOKERS	May have interacted with your brand and purchased from you, like to share content with friends, happy to recommend and share their knowledge, visit sporadically to see what's going on, sometimes engaged and even disruptive.
SOCIAL BUYERS	Seek best deals and offers, not loyal to any one brand, want latest trends, often share great content, want to be 'first' to share with their friends, make recommendations and boasts based on experiences, early adopter of new technology, like competitions and giveaways.
SOCIAL DISSENTERS	Openly shares reviews, criticism and complaints, demand responses, may push frustration publicly, post direct to your page and review sites, consider their critiques and reviews as a public service, offer a great opportunity to learn about customer service.
TROLLS	Create trouble, incite others to complain, create campaigns against brands and businesses, difficult to deal with publicly, may draw you into online stoushes, uses platform as soapbox to push personal issues and agendas.
SOCIAL ADVOCATES	Love your brand and experience, share your posts and content with friends, enter competitions and cheer loudly for you.
SOCIAL LOYALISTS	Stand by you through all weather, jump in to moderate and defend criticism on your behalf, provide feedback with high praise and gentle support for continual improvement, recommend you to all they encounter online and offline, regular visitor, member or customer regardless of competitors.
FAMILY AND FRIENDS	Interact as a means of well-intentioned or genuine support, regularly attend events and like posts and content, often feel impulses to share content or post to your channels on an ad hoc basis.
SAVVY SELF PROMOTERS	Posts regular content to spruik to your followers, shares images, blog links, product offerings and new deals, asks for shares directly to support theirs or other people's content or causes, responds well to shares and recognition.
NEWBIES	New to social media, stretching their wings with clumsy activity and well-meaning (but misdirected) efforts, adopts push marketing techniques to promote their venture, often not aligned and seen to be spam.
FUNNY ONES	Genuinely clever, witty, playful and impish, looking for ways to subvert, repurpose and share your content. Very popular and influential. Harmless unless you take offence when they'll begin to really make fun of you.

## WHO ARE THE COOL KIDS?

You can also search for influential people to follow using:

- Tweepz [www.tweepz.com](http://www.tweepz.com)
- Twellow [www.twellow.com](http://www.twellow.com)

Or measure them based on their social media influence through:

- [www.klout.com](http://www.klout.com)
- [www.kred.com](http://www.kred.com)

## WHAT ARE THEY SAYING ONLINE?

Social monitoring is a growing trend that allows people to search and tally posts, comments, tweets, images and content based on keyword search. Some systems are immense and very costly as used by major global brands to listen in on conversations and monitor what people are saying and how they are responding to trends.

These monitoring tools also offer what they call sentiment analysis, a simple way to guesstimate if people are saying positive, neutral or negative things about you. Sentiment analysis is still clumsy and requires a lot of fine-tuning, but in time it will improve and be a useful tool.

Many global brands use social monitoring to listen for customer service issues as more people are taking to venting frustrations with brands online and socially rather than waiting on hold on an outdated phone switchboard that 'values your call and appreciates your patience' but is designed to wear you down and diffuse the complaint. Big brands are learning fast that they need to be highly responsive and adaptive to customer needs.

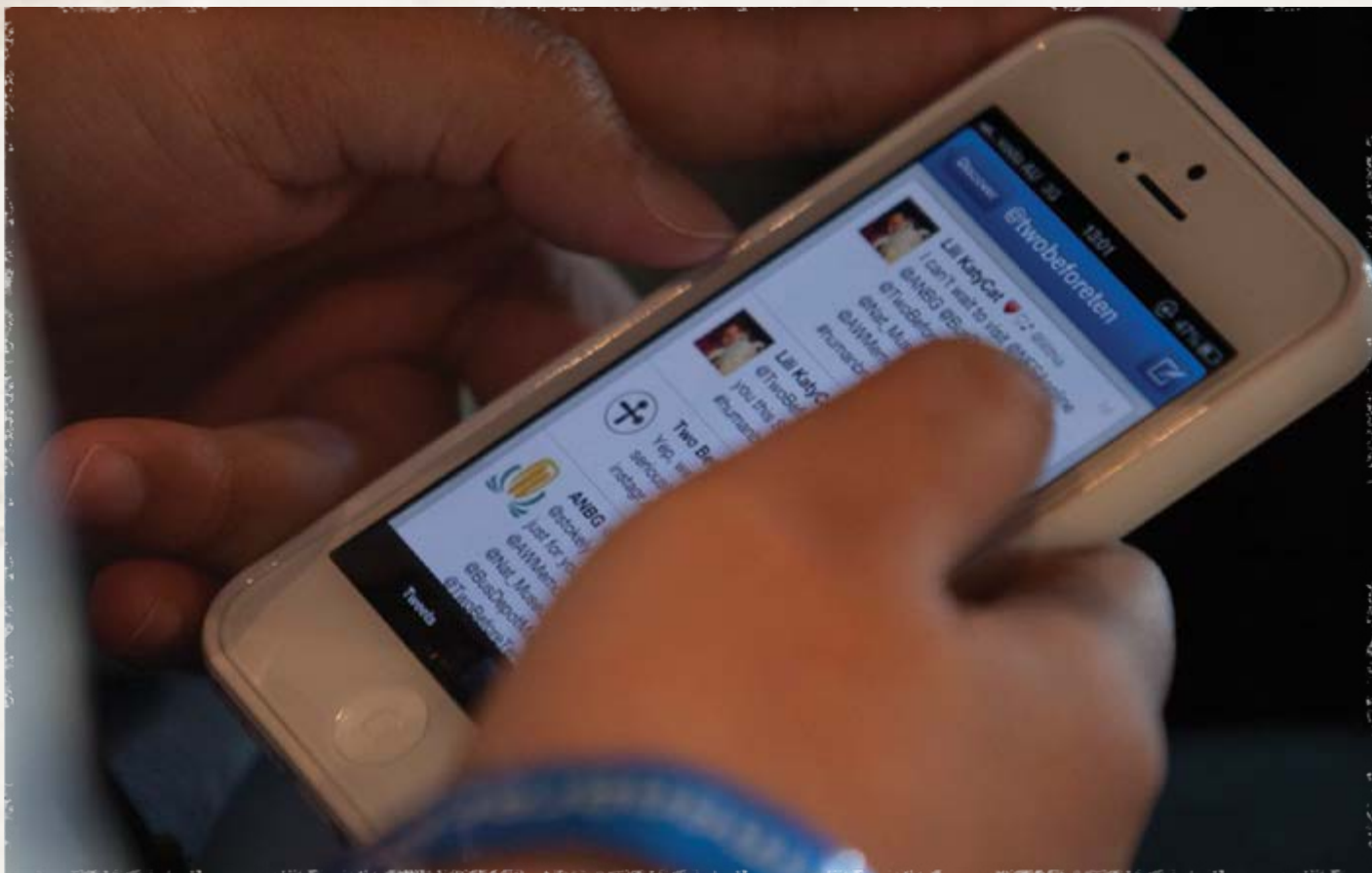
Some simple, free social media monitoring can be found through:

- [www.socialmention.com](http://www.socialmention.com)
- Google Blogsearch [www.google.com.au/blogsearch](http://www.google.com.au/blogsearch)
- Technorati [www.technorati.com](http://www.technorati.com)
- Boardtracker [www.boardtracker.com](http://www.boardtracker.com)
- YouTube [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)
- Twitter advanced search or Tweetdeck [web.tweetdeck.com](http://web.tweetdeck.com)

## PLAY SAFE

Social crowds are fickle and no social media platform is immutable or protected from decline. Some will continue to thrive and some will decline in popularity. Who can tell what the next big thing will be? The key is to be social, and keep a healthy long-term view on how much you invest in effort and expense, independent of the platform





## PLAY NICE

So let's get this straight, social media is all pretty rainbows, cute kittens and easy convivial chatter generating loyal advocates who will be evangelical about engaging with you and cultivating endearing sentiment.

Yeah right.

What happens when things get lost in translation? What happens when something goes wrong, or we say something dumb? What if someone says something bad about us?

If you messed up, say sorry. Forget trying to bluster, divert, blame or spin. Be honest and sincere.

People smell old school spin a mile away and will mobilise quickly to crowd you out. You'll even make the news for all the wrong reasons.

Sometimes people do get on soapboxes and, like all social systems, they want to make a gang in the playground and be the tough kid.

Your biggest hurdle is learning to engage with dissenters and bullies. Here are some tips:

- Acknowledge and respect people, they feel heard. Be human, not corporate. People more readily attack corporations but tend to behave differently with an individual.
- Don't delete things. That is a last resort. If content breaches your fair play rules, or contravenes the law, ensure you have provided ample time for the perpetrator to remove it before you do.

- Don't ever pull something down just because you don't agree with it. Even a whiff of censorship will mobilise angry crowds.

The unforeseen circumstance of people who blast others on social media is that their bad day at the keyboard is preserved for eternity and posterity. Just like those embarrassing pictures people post without thinking of the consequence.

## IT'S PLAYTIME: PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Do two searches online for your business or attraction. Do one in Google and one in Bing. Where do you appear in order of ranking? What ranks highest out of all your current online channels? Is it your website or social media channels and which ones (if any)? This is the best indication of how easily people can find you.

Now repeat the searches for the sector you are in, then for the experiences, you offer (i.e. mountain bike adventures, budget accommodation or art exhibitions).

If you haven't had a look at your property or business on Foursquare or Trip Advisor you had better do that right now. People are saying things about you whether you like it or not.



# Planning your playtime

## HAVE A PLAYFUL STRATEGY

A strategy is something that lasts for at least a year. A good strategy brings gradual, solid and enduring outcomes.

Strategies in social media include:

- Long term follower growth
- Shifting perceptions about destination product or experience
- Increased results in search across the web
- Content generation
- Entry into new markets and support for products or experiences.

A tactic, on the other hand, is something you do at intervals to spice up your strategy. Tactics are like icing your cupcakes differently to attract renewed or new interest.

Tactics in social media include:

- Competitions, giveaways and polls
- Promotion of particular events and seasonal offers
- Playful ways to grow followers and fans
- Advertising or promoting content to increase awareness and gain new followers.

A careful mix of tactics with a good strategy is like embarking on running a marathon and having the means to make short sprints along the way. Slow and steady is the strategy based on your purpose and quick bursts or sprints are the tactics for keeping your pace moving along.

## IT'S PLAYTIME: PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Write your purpose and goals in social media very clearly on a sheet of paper.

Get some big sheets of paper, some coloured pens and brainstorm.

Stay within those goals as you generate ideas and story angles for your content.

If you haven't brainstormed ideas, a good background to start can be found here: [www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html](http://www.mindtools.com/brainstm.html)

Now you have a whole range of choices for your content calendar. Do this exercise regularly and fill your calendar up ahead of the year, season, campaign or event.

## WHAT IS SOCIAL CONTENT?

Content is loosely made of images, words, sounds, videos, or anything else you can display or publish through traditional or digital media.

Content comes from all places and some are from the most unlikely sources. With the rise of technology the ease of processing video, images and the use of smart devices, the world has never been as inundated with content as it is nowadays. Everyone is a publisher. We are individual media channels. With so much choice and clutter of content online, relevance will be the deciding factor that keeps content appearing top of search.

## THE COST OF PLAY

The main expense in a content plan is creating your own content. Images and video are premium content. You can easily share other people's images through your channels, but always have a source of your own premium images and videos for others to share. Use sparingly if you are on a tight budget. The next expense is human. Having someone to monitor and administer social media is best with a team approach. Train multiple people to operate your channels, as you would share phone calls through a switchboard.

CONTENT ACTIVITY	FINANCIAL OUTLAY	ADMIN EXPENSE	PEOPLE EXPENSE
Create	✓	✓	✓
Curate		✓	✓
Converse		✓	✓

## FINDING YOUR VOICE

What you share with an audience is merely a substitute for what you would say and show in person.

If you get overwhelmed by articulating brand essence, brand voice, brand character and brand attributes, just substitute the word person for brand. Be human.

Ask yourself 'would I be comfortable saying that in person in a social setting?'

If you create content in teams or assign it to someone else, make sure they speak your language and tone in plain words with genuine sincerity and authenticity.

Smiley faces and abbreviations are entirely up to you. Used sparingly they can be effective or clarify tone. Used too liberally, they become like that kid that just throws sand all around the sand pit; gritty but a bit too chaffing.

## STUFF I WISH PEOPLE HAD TOLD ME FIRST

- Be authentic, responsive and natural
- Make sure offline equals online and online equals offline in everything you do
- Define the tone and personality of your social media. People want to know what your personality is. Brands are no longer factories or offices. Brands are made of real people with real lives
- Avoid using bureaucratic speak and corporate jargon — this may be your native language, but it is not theirs. If your posts are boring and stuffy, people will expect boring and stuffy when they arrive
- Be real and humble
- Ask questions regularly. Wonder out aloud. Involve people in choices or decisions. Humility is much better than public humiliation
- Be responsive
- Plan ahead. Map out busy and quiet times. In busy times, amplify what is popular and happening right now. At quiet times, either reminisce about the good times and ask for responses, or lead into the next big thing coming along
- Share insights and exclusives. Show behind the scenes, sneak peeks, alternate views. Share the favourites of guides, celebrities and sports stars, managers, curators, the best places to eat nearby, the best rides or how to dodge a queue
- Ask yourself what would you want to know about your favourite brand, attraction, shop or activity?

## THE ART OF CONVERSATION

Social media has one communication advantage; you own a venue where people can converse with you (and with each other) about what you do and what interests them. Consider it hosting a function or drop in centre and you'll play fine.

It's simple to see how people respond and what content engages them in conversation. They're strangers as individuals, but familiar types as a group. Often they will respond very differently to what you would prefer personally. Leave your own preferences at home and begin to listen, observe and learn.

You must practice the qualities of adapting, refining, changing and playfulness. As soon as you have what appears to be a formula, everything will change around you.

Do not become haphazard, ad hoc or indifferent. Ever. People will stay away. In droves.

## SENTIMENT

There are heaps of free articles telling us that funny things get shared more than sad posts, or that injustice and people's anger spreads faster than happiness. Your sentiment and goodwill is based on your conversational tone and what kind of response you want to invoke. Your audience sentiment is how well you host and maintain that conversation.

*Either write something worth reading  
or do something worth writing.*

Benjamin Franklin

In this case, involve people by having genuine space for a two-way conversation and refine as you go.

## RESPONSE

If you ask a closed ended question (yes /no answer), you can generate easy reactions. Good examples are 'are you left or right handed?' 'Morning or night person' 'savoury or sweet' These are no brainers and people react accordingly.

Response is something else. A good response rate is about considered thought and takes more effort and interest than quick answers and instant reaction.

If you want to learn more about your audience then learn with them, ask interesting questions but keep them short in scope. Explore the balance you need between reaction and response.

Experiment with closed and open-ended questions and learn from how people respond to your content. Like any playtime, variety is healthy and stimulating.

## THE MYTH OF VIRAL

People love to use a term called viral (they mean contagious but that's harder to say and it sounds better when they can attribute it to some outbreak and transmission).

Content is not a communicable disease! We humans are quite bizarre when it comes to what we will pass on and what we deem irrelevant. When it happens for you, then work out what it was that spread and was communicated. That will be of great value to your play.

## MAKE PLAYTIME REGULAR

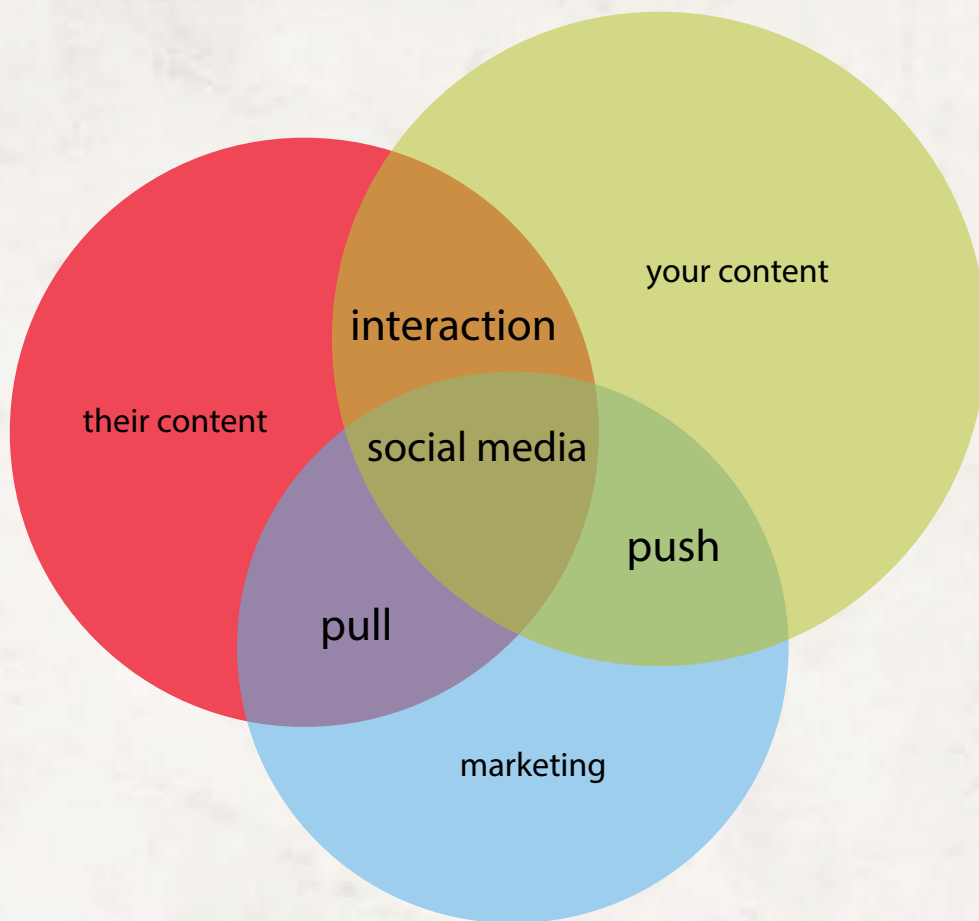
The best adage for social media is to be consistent. Whatever cycle you choose, consider your channels as media outlets and whatever your publishing cycle is, stick to it. You can always ramp up, but being sporadic and off-cycle just says you are haphazard and is a great way to reach no one! Plus, a sustained presence will also lead to longer term results in online search.

Just Google Hubspot for one of the best search and social media strategies ever. They have each of their channels front and centre on page one of search results. Take your pick — they're all Hubspot. Now Google yourself.

What comes up on page one for you?







#### HOW DOES CONTENT RELATE TO SOCIAL?

Social content from a marketing perspective is shown in the diagram above. Interaction forms the basis of how effective your content is. Marketing is new to the social conversation and is generally considered "push" when you deliver it to people and "pull" when you receive it from your followers and share what they have to contribute.

#### PUSH ME PULL YOU CREATURE

In the old days, we would find crowds or audiences thinking they were gathered in our name and wanting to know the features and benefits of our product or services. We'd then 'push' our messages on people getting excited over weird metrics like how many 'eyeballs' we'd gained. It was all fun and games.

Then someone got poked in the eye with the burnt stick. Going for eyeballs is not so cool anymore. Game over marketing.

Pull marketing is the fancy new word for sharing other people's content and using the power of the crowd to collaborate on a whole and genuine experience rather than just push out your message devised for nameless crowds of old.

#### REPURPOSE

Create a content stream that can be repurposed for many needs. For instance, is there a way that you can do an annual review, have enough episodes or posts to create a publication, a user guide, or collection of content that your online community can benefit from?

Review your social and digital presence.

Have a look through what is happening online and in social media.

- What kinds of posts work best for you (most likes, shares, interaction)?
- Have you responded to questions — what are people asking the most? Why might they be asking those questions?
- Have a look at your website and learn what pages people are visiting the most. Consider complementing those top pages with relevant allied content through social media.
- Google your business — what results come up?
- Search in alternate engines like all these [www.thesearchenginelist.com](http://www.thesearchenginelist.com)
- Find out who's blogging about you or your industry
- Review what questions are most frequently asked about you through all your customer service channels
- See what others in your industry or sector are doing both locally, nationally and internationally.



## SHARING: THE FREE LUNCH vs BUYING FROM THE TUCK SHOP

### Free lunch

Once upon a time, you could share content. It would arrive to everyone as a yummy homemade sandwich. That's organic content. It spread naturally and had no artificial enhancers. Today, it only goes to those people who regularly interact with you. That is unless it is a cat that has a cheeseburger. Get used to your regular content going stale or discovered days later in the bottom of your satchel still lovingly wrapped.

On Facebook, organic content reaches less than 15% of followers.

That's disconcerting after you have worked to build so many followers.

On Twitter, posts disappear down the feed because some guy called Bieber got his first set of lace-up shoes laces and everyone is tied up chatting about it.

### Tuck shop specials

Ask any social media platform wanting to become a behemoth and they'll say, 'There's no such thing as a free lunch'.

Naturally, they have a way you can reach most of your followers. You have to pay to serve everyone a sandwich and only as sample packs. This is paid content.

The rule of thumb is. Create organic content first. Then promote it if you need to get it out beyond your usual followers.

It does spread everywhere and you can choose who gets what based on their preferences and interests (called segmenting your followers). This is handy for marketers. It does get annoying when at little lunch someone finds a big snack they did not order with no way to return to sender.

Paid or promoted content needs to be engaging and relevant otherwise you will get a good deal of complaints or comments that can sometimes outweigh your efforts to promote what you have on offer.



## PLAY TO GET SHARED

Approach your social media content with a long-term view, by thinking of yourself as a media channel. People will converse with you and about you when you have relevant, updated content that is engaging.

It's not about who has the catchiest jingles, million dollar budgets and viral videos. Neither is it about just posting media releases and product listings and trusting people will read what you feel is important.

Good content is about story telling — just as you would make interesting conversation. Drop the sell and provide the means for people to listen and learn about you. Most of all, understand that in the modern age when we all have equal access to the internet, people love to be seen, heard, valued and respected. Find out who the most popular bloggers are. Study how they play and explore a few of their approaches in your content.

Vary the channel and timing. Share content through all your channels in the best format for that channel. Share it at different times through your calendar or event. Are you sharing a snack, a meal, a banquet? Play with menus and where or when to serve each course.





## THEM

Things to ask for

Images

Blog posts

Responses

Evaluations

Advocacy

Visits

Membership

## US

Reasons to create content

Inspire

Promote

Learn

Share

Design

Commemorate

Respect

Entertain

Sell

Laugh

Converse

Crowd source

Recruit

Educate

## PUSH MARKETING OFTEN SUCKS

Anything that pushes a deal or sales are ads. People are immune to many ads or they tend to get cranky if you slip them in. If you must, make them as little as 10% of your regular content. Make it a real deal and don't dilute it. There are plenty of places to advertise online other than through your premium channels.

A common strategy nowadays is to use advertising to amplify your content or to direct traffic to your website rather than use social media just for your advertising. Use advertising to drive people back to interesting content. Another way to think about it is whether you need to advertise an offer, or promote your conversation and invite people to join in.

Explore these idea prompts for exchange between your brand or business and real people. Keep exchange real, make the purpose clear and be upfront of what the exchange is; people are wary of lazy approaches that get labelled as 'cash for comment' or poorly incentivised ways to generate content. If you do incentivise, make sure you have simple and clear terms and conditions that respect everyone's copyright and creativity.

## A WORD OF REALITY

Many people 'like' or follow pages on a wide variety of social media platforms. Very few return to those pages. If they don't regularly interact with content from those pages, they lose content. With such a constant flurry of content, your posts may just move down a feed and be completely missed. A realistic expectation is that only around 10% of your followers will see your posts. Naturally, you can pay to have more fans or followers receive your posts.

# It's playtime!

## HOW TO GET GOOD CONTENT

The best outcome is to share and post user generated content. It is a simple matter of building a long-term strategy to collect, curate and share content people generate about you. Here are some steps.

Let them know you are willing to publish their content. Invite people to post on your wall. Best approach is to do it by invitation. If you have a volume you'd like to obtain as a steady stream, consider ways to incentivise that align with your organisational values.

### Image sources

Tap into sources of images from photo libraries or creative commons. Share and pin interesting images on your Pinterest or Facebook pages (and always give credit and links to the source). Often a great image and mention can be a good conversation starter as people love to share their images on platforms broader than their own circles.

### Video sources

Link and embed great examples of video relating to your business, attraction or experience. There's room for someone to aggregate a great source of video in one place. Get a work experience student or intern to help do a landscape survey of what is out there relating to you or allied interests. Learn what people watch and study how they make popular videos before embarking on your own. A good story, well told, beats a million-dollar production any day.

## PLANNING AHEAD AND KEEPING UP

Hands up who has a full-time, dedicated social media person? Two of you. Okay. That's normal. The simplest way to keep the content flowing is to sit down with that piece of paper you started with that lists what you like about play, the results of the search and brainstorming ideas you generated and create a content calendar. We've even made a basic template as a spreadsheet for you.

## THE CONTENT CALENDAR

It's a simple diary/schedule with a pre-prepared post to publish on any given day. It helps you to get out of the daily grind of wondering what to do, helps with a strategy, like frozen dinners, you have no need to go hungry, just thaw and serve.

### Playing on swings and roundabouts

Everything you do has a cycle. Say you provide tours. You have to market them, take bookings, prepare equipment, advise people on what to bring, conduct your tour, then follow up on how it went. Time and time again. Each step in that process cycle is a content opportunity.

For our Visit Canberra channels, the way we approach content is to get into the minds, habits and stages people go through when planning a vacation. This also works for people visiting somewhere like a business or attraction, or booking accommodation or even choosing a meal at 6pm on the day they are here.

The journey of a thousand miles sometimes starts by dreaming which shoes to wear before taking the first step!

A good way to think about this is to consider a modified planning cycle. (See chart 1.1)

This diagram is a useful way to keep content moving through phases and cycles people go through when they are planning a trip away or a visit to you and your business, attraction or experience.

The blue cycle shows stages in travel planning to the destination, planning a visit to see you, what they can do with you when they arrive and then what happens when they get home.

The pink cycle shows ways to consider what content you might create to keep that cycle moving along and generating touch points for communications, points of conversation and ways to incentivise sharing of the content.

When planning content, consider what steps you progress through online and offline with your business hat on. Now repeat the steps to prepare wearing your visitor hat. Finding those connections can lead to engaging and useful content.

During the recruitment stage of the Human Brochure, we kept the conversation all around the excitement of packing for a trip away or what event to book or place to visit.

The questions also served as a focus group and gave us valuable insights into things we needed to prepare for. Who would have known chargers are a common item forgotten when travelling? Do you have recharge stations at your venue?

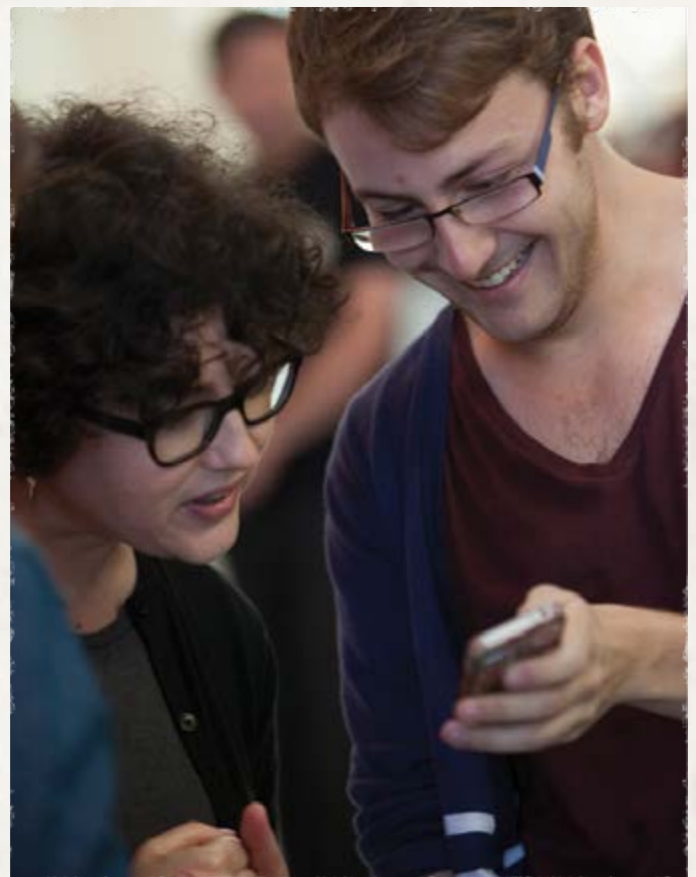
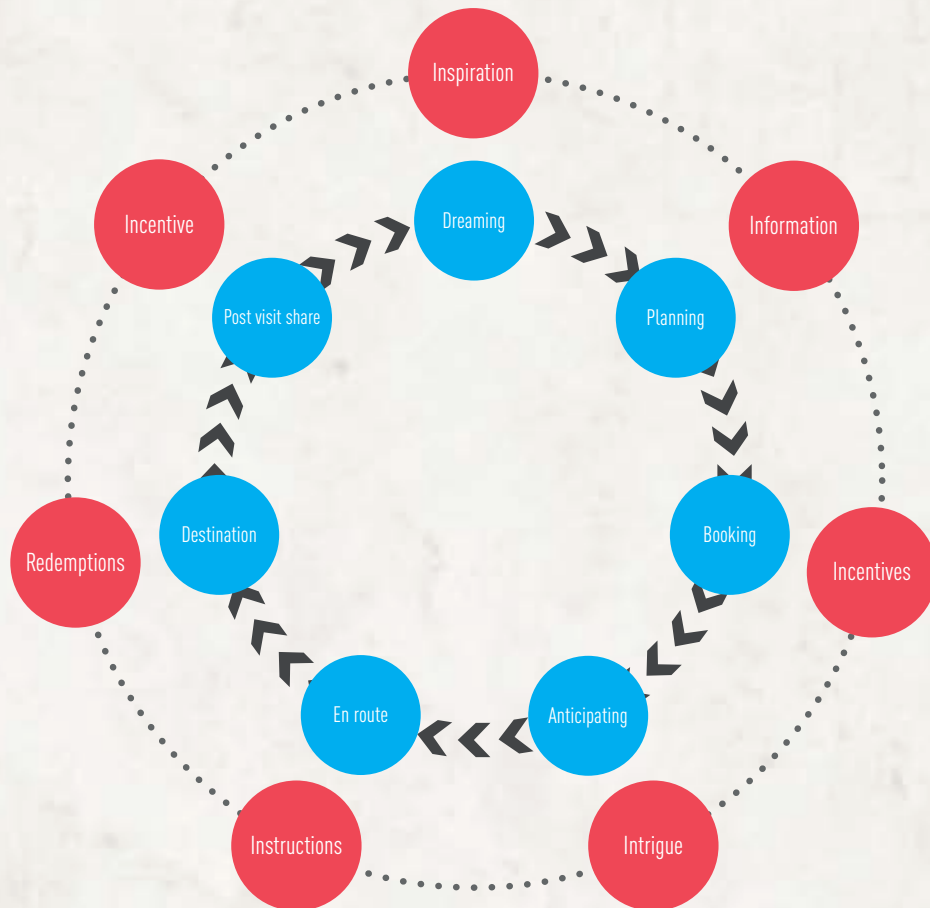




Chart 1.1



### The content planning cycle

Move through each stage and explore what content can be relevant for angles and subjects in your content.

<p><b>DREAMING</b></p> <p>What is aspirational and inspirational that you have on offer? How can you elevate the everyday without the hype?</p>	<p><b>EN ROUTE</b></p> <p>Real time practical things like directions, parking, ticket availability, alternatives, check-ins and deals, any restrictions, weather, alerts, delays, contingencies.</p>
<p><b>BOOKING</b></p> <p>Do you have clear directions, listing on Google maps, distance to accommodation, clear offers, cross promotion partners, prices, availability, suggested itinerary, any myths to bust, general knowledge, interesting tidbits and facts that increase awareness and lead people toward a visitation outcome?</p>	<p><b>DESTINATION</b></p> <p>Clear signage, way finding, free Wi-Fi, check-ins, hashtags and handles for social media channels clearly displayed, photo guidelines, copyright restrictions, customer services, photo-taking guides, visitor services, on site specials, bundled deals and partners, recommendations — add your human touch to everything!</p>
<p><b>ANTICIPATING</b></p> <p>Can people book online, share the deals they just booked or send to a friend?</p> <p>This includes what people would be thinking as they prepare to visit: what to expect, anything to bring, what to leave at home, services nearby, basics like access, parking, bus routes, ancillary things like where to get food, shopping, gift shop, things to look out for, insider tips, latest news, exclusives, behind the scenes, links to all blogs and channels, access to in-house expertise, research, what to do before and after they visit, what's around you, things of similar interest, what others have liked, news about your industry and what's on more widely around them when they arrive.</p>	<p><b>POST VISIT SHARE</b></p> <p>How and where to share, what's the return or exchange, conversation starters and responses to visitor feedback, aggregating content from multiple sources, community building, invite reviews and comments/feedback, help desk, suggestion box — show people you generally care about their visit.</p>



#### VISUAL STORY TELLING

Your images will need to fit a range of size formats. These include long banners, squares, rectangles and even little thumbnails. Have a look at how an image can be cropped or scaled to suit a typical range of image shapes. Consider your social media channels when you head out to make images, or hire someone to take them for you.

## VISUAL STORYTELLING

Images and video are the most valued content. A good picture no longer says 100 words. Visual content entertains, invokes moods, kindles memory and supports your written claims. 'Show me don't tell me' is a great start when it comes to visual content.

Making images is easier now than any time in history and it's only going to get easier.

Here's some things to consider when creating images or commissioning others to make them for you.

Make sure the imagery works at various sizes and aspect ratios.

Keep it simple. Keep it real. Treatments (the special effects we put on images) date fast, so keep an original version of your images in case you need to update treatments. Better still, work out your in-house styles and treatments and make them your identifiable brand look and feel.

If in doubt, find an image from the creative commons like Flickr or Pinterest and ALWAYS give a link back to the source.

You can also encourage followers to share their images through your channels by several means:

- Direct posts on your walls or feeds
- Curated processes where they submit images you sort and republish
- Competitions where you choose a winner from entry (subject to permits and terms and conditions you will need to arrange).

Moving pictures are the next big thing. Video is authentic; it has sound and can show and communicate a great deal. You can capture great video on your smart phone these days so there is no reason not to capture and share what you do, what happens, simple guides and interviews.

Here's a great local example:

Destinations East Hotel Canberra  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua0twadjcgk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua0twadjcgk)

Watch Youtube to study what gets the most views. This will give you some clues as to what works and you can apply those features in your video content.

Keep an eye out for the following when watching the most popular online videos:

- Length – is it long like a TV episode or short like an ad?
- Do they have an introductory logo or website at the start or end?
- What's the take home message?
- Is it pure entertainment?
- What did you learn from watching it?



## TIPS TO KEEP YOUR PLAY FRESH AND RELEVANT

TELL US ABOUT YOU	Your history and why you started
	Your purpose or mission in a playful and meaningful way
	Things you should know to make your visit worthwhile
	Places to rest, reflect and relax
	Popular family activities and age ranges best suited to each activity
	Proximity to food, drink, accommodation
	Modes of transport to get there — the coolest way to get there
	Where to park cars, bikes, kayaks, helicopters etc.
	Educational materials available
	Where to find information before you come
	Special interests and in-house expertise (who can serious researchers, collectors or professionals talk to on their visit? Where can people get extra skills or do courses related to your activities?)
	Special access opportunities, access to collections, special deals
	Special content and information for bloggers and influencers

ASK ABOUT THEM	Ask your followers what they think, like and feel
	Involve them in non-critical planning activities
	Consider guests blogging or creating material for you
	Invite response and feedback on what you do and how they like to engage with it
	Invite them to share their content
	Feature them in campaigns and marketing (with permission)

WAYS TO INCENTIVISE AND REWARD	Loyalty programs with boost for frequent fans
	Special access to launches and events for fans and influencers
	Joint forums (where fans and experts or in-house staff come together online)
	Open house where people can come by invitation and create content on your behalf
	Fan galleries (featuring user generated content) on a regular basis each week
	Competitions (harder to run and people expect ever-increasing prize value. Games of chance require permits, games of skill are exempt)
	Grants, stipends and scholarship-style approaches to commission digital and social artworks, content libraries and video

## BUMPER COLLECTION OF PLAYFUL IDEAS TO CUT OUT AND MAKE YOUR OWN

Invite bloggers to your next opening or launch. Share the word through expanding content generation.

Invite a photo walk group to document your attraction one weekend. Let them in and get them to tag their content. Show them a side of your experience you want to promote.

Get your experts online. Conduct a webinar, host 'ask a curator' or 'talk to an expert' day or even an hour through social media if well managed is a great potential outreach – have a treasure Tuesday, a Wonder Wednesday, a Travel Thursday, a Collection Fishing Friday.

Discover your advocates. Within your databases are influential or innovative subscribers. Consider a special weekend for members with accommodation packaged in exchange for some juicy content or a guest feature on your blogs.

Dare to cross promote. Share a review or insight of your neighbours. Is there an exhibition you like to visit? Where do your staff go for an after work drink? Where do chefs eat out?

Recommendations and insights are more valuable when they break down perceived barriers online.

Develop Foursquare. Discover what deals and experiences you can unlock when people check in to your attraction, venue or experience. Building a social map is fundamental to ongoing engagement and interaction.



## THEMES AND REGULAR PLAY DATES

We all have 'casual attire at work' and there is enough 'the international day of ...' to fill a calendar with content ideas related to your activity. Add value to what's happening globally or locally in your areas of expertise and interest and how you'd like to decorate or theme your social media content.

Find allied businesses, attractions or people in your interest group and invite them to join in posting around those themes. There is power in crowds and great examples include things like #FF (Follow Friday) or #TTOT (Travel Talk on Twitter) on Twitter

Consider exclusive content per channel — posts or content can easily be tailored then delivered to targeted audiences through each of your channels.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>Manager's Monday</b> Someone senior or influential shares a regular post of interest.		<b>Wednesday wonder</b> Join in the fun of wonder for a whole destination.	<b>Travel Thursday</b> Get people in the mindset to come to the nation's capital on the weekend.	<b>Follow Friday</b> Share your recommendations for pages, channels and people to follow.
	<b>Treasure Tuesday</b> Your treasures and gems, OR people post images of their treasures and have a curator or expert assess them (like an antiques road show).	<b>Wednesday watch</b> Launch or share a great video related to you.	<b>Theory or technology Thursday</b> Share science, technology, research, cool gadgets or travel research.	<b>Fashion Friday</b> What have you got ready for weekend bargain hunters?
<b>Monday memories</b> Nostalgia, archive content, family history guides (discover Mildenhall Monday for a great example).			<b>Thingamajig Thursday</b> What's that thing called again? Where to get bike parts?	<b>Friday freshies</b> Rides runs or walks to enjoy our abundant nature parks, reserves, trails and cycle paths.
	<b>Tuesday tips</b> Share recipes, fixes, training tips, travel or shopping trends, new additions or products/services.	<b>Wednesday wrap</b> The latest happenings and what to get ready for the weekend, gift ideas for weekend shopping.	<b>Tune-up Thursday</b> Essential gear maintenance to make the weekend adventures smooth and safe.	

## SCENARIOS TO KEEP YOU THINKING

### WHAT IF YOU...

Came to us with a social content plan we can tap into to promote the destination?

Let us know ahead of time what things are coming up that would be great for a whole of destination conversation? We'll share it and work with you to craft ongoing, engaging conversation.

Streamed your activity through social media web cams to let friends and fans watch the activity and see what goes on a daily basis?

Asked a curator or educator to hold a question day that could be hosted to share more of what each attraction does, to create a different outreach program and to discover gaps in collections?

Created memes, images and quotes based on your content or collection. Can you share iconic images or offer screensavers, mobile wallpapers? Can you invite followers to creatively interpret or mash up your content?

Involved your followers in decision making for exhibitions, events, or new initiatives (be explicit what you require and manage expectation) as the social crowd can be one of your best focus groups?

Invited your influential bloggers and advocates to events, and made special categories for members and friends only through social media?

Offered discounts and deals when people check in on Foursquare?

Provided in-house areas for photos and video backgrounds, made any interactive games and exhibits social friendly by enabling people to share their output of your experience (i.e. drawings, videos)?

Created content days where you invite everyone to contribute an image or video of your attraction, venue or experience to create shareable content (like wonder walls of images, videos generated from Instagram stills)?

Created fun, playful user guides like how to do Canberra in a day based on your top picks, what to do with 20 minutes spare at your experience or attraction, how to fill a day with you, 10 things you wanted to know but were too afraid to ask?

Provide a top ten of nearby things to see and do near to your venue or ideas within walking distance, on bike or by car? Shared your staff picks, hidden treasures and insider tips?

Listed exclusive products or deals you have in your gift shops, foyers, restaurants?

Created a dish or a cocktail, a dessert or a menu based on crowd sourcing – find ideal ways to use seasonal ingredients and then invite followers who submit suggestions to a special event to celebrate?

Provided walking routes near you with great views or feature art walks, bird watching and kangaroo viewing areas (popular with international visitors)?

Featured top ten rides or trails to explore by bike or the best foods to take on a bike picnic?

Suggested local cafes and hot spots for lunch, a quick snack, take away, or best meals with themes for families, cuisines or dress code to help visitors?

Featured top pubs or nightclubs and reviews or cross promotions near your venue or business?

Listed where your staff or management like to go on weekends?

Included best places for brunch around town or post visit activity?

Incorporated visitor reviews and insights into your products?

Cross promoted offers with industry? For instance, redeem your entry ticket or receipt of purchase at a partner business for a special offer or to sample other local produce or experiences.

Tweet your updates, new content, or even your events listed on other websites or in ATDW when they are published?

Crowd source images or comments to make a compilation video and then share it widely and invite people to find their content in the result?

Extend your education programs to feature a school's video on your big screen in-house or through your social media?

Create local chapters of fans you can invite to interstate events and travelling exhibitions?

Follow more people in your industry and influential social media people and join in their conversations?

Build a discussion forum or help desk on your website to answer questions about you and what you do? You then have content that drives search back to your website and you can share from there on social media.

Do some cross cultural or international research to find how your counterparts are doing it overseas? With international flights coming soon, make a head start to be ready for a global audience coming to visit Canberra.

Put down this playbook and get on with it?





## CREATIVE PLAY: WHAT TO DO WHEN STUCK FOR IDEAS

When you need to explore your content for new angles and ideas, have a play with this modified process based on Michael Michalko's Thinkertoys. It's fun.

Take your theme or idea and dive in to explore in the following ways:

SUBSTITUTE
What can you change or swap for something else similar or different?
COMBINE
What would you add to enrich it or force a connection between what seems unrelated?
MODIFY
Can it evolve, refine, or be adapted to something else or modified?
MAGNIFY
Go into detail, make it louder, enlarge it, multiply or upscale
PUT TO OTHER USES
Does it have a life beyond the post online or offline?
REDUCE / REMOVE
Is it important or just fluff, what can you simplify, concentrate, or distil?
REARRANGE
Can the sequence vary, the order change?

If you're still stuck for ideas that's OK. We've developed some tools and resources to help you get playing.

## PRACTICAL PLAY WE'VE DISCOVERED

### What works?

We have done all manner of experimentation to see what gets engagement and response over the last four years. We make no claim to have the answers, but here's what works for us.

### Facebook

Who really knows? The realist's view is Facebook also has an algorithm like Google does to keep us poring over insights and all wondering what we did wrong last time, as we scratch our heads and have another go.

The time of day you post has an effect, for sure. Some people work. Some use Facebook at work. At lunch time. Some check it before they head home. Some check it on their mobile. Some on the iPad in front of TV. Frequently. It's dependent on where they access, how they access and why they access social media within their daily schedules. You get the idea.

There is no magic time to post, just observe when you get the most interaction, then rinse and repeat until you refine what works for you. Have a look at the insights for your biggest group of followers. Take a few calculated guesses when they might be online. If women in the age range of 30-45 years are your biggest followers, keep them happy and figure out when they are active online (think kids, at the office, mobile use etc). Rocket scientists have only ever achieved one-way trips and burn up a lot of fuel getting there, so this stuff is definitely not rocket science! All this social media thing needs is careful observation and play.

Consider setting a regular theme.

We now have Wednesday wonder and Travel Thursday as an ongoing experiment to gain thought around the two days when people begin to dream about their weekends. Wednesday wonder is about light-hearted ways to ask a question requiring some general knowledge about Canberra with a subtle attempt to shift perception and misconceptions about the nation's capital.

We avoid political references (as we should), we playfully point out grammar and spelling mistakes, we like each comment to acknowledge we have read each one.

### Twitter

We mainly retweet to share news, images and positive sentiment or features of Canberra. Sometimes we link back to a post on Facebook or share links to video content, blog features or specific events from our Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) listings. We experiment with questions or share links that offer some form of interaction or engagement (like driving to Facebook, new pins, a gallery or a new YouTube video). We love sharing other people's images and comments that shift perceptions of Canberra.

## IT'S PLAYTIME: PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Jump onto YouTube and Vimeo and watch the most popular videos for your search terms you explored before. What style is most popular? What content do they contain — is it factual, entertaining, music or something else? This insight will provide great ideas for tailoring your content to make it more appealing to viewers.

# Further reading

## **RULES OF ENGAGEMENT: WEB LINKS TO MORE**

### Search

[www.google.com/trends](http://www.google.com/trends)

[www.google.com/trends/topcharts](http://www.google.com/trends/topcharts)

### Rules of engagement

[www.mashable.com/2010/05/18/rules-social-media-engagment](http://www.mashable.com/2010/05/18/rules-social-media-engagment)

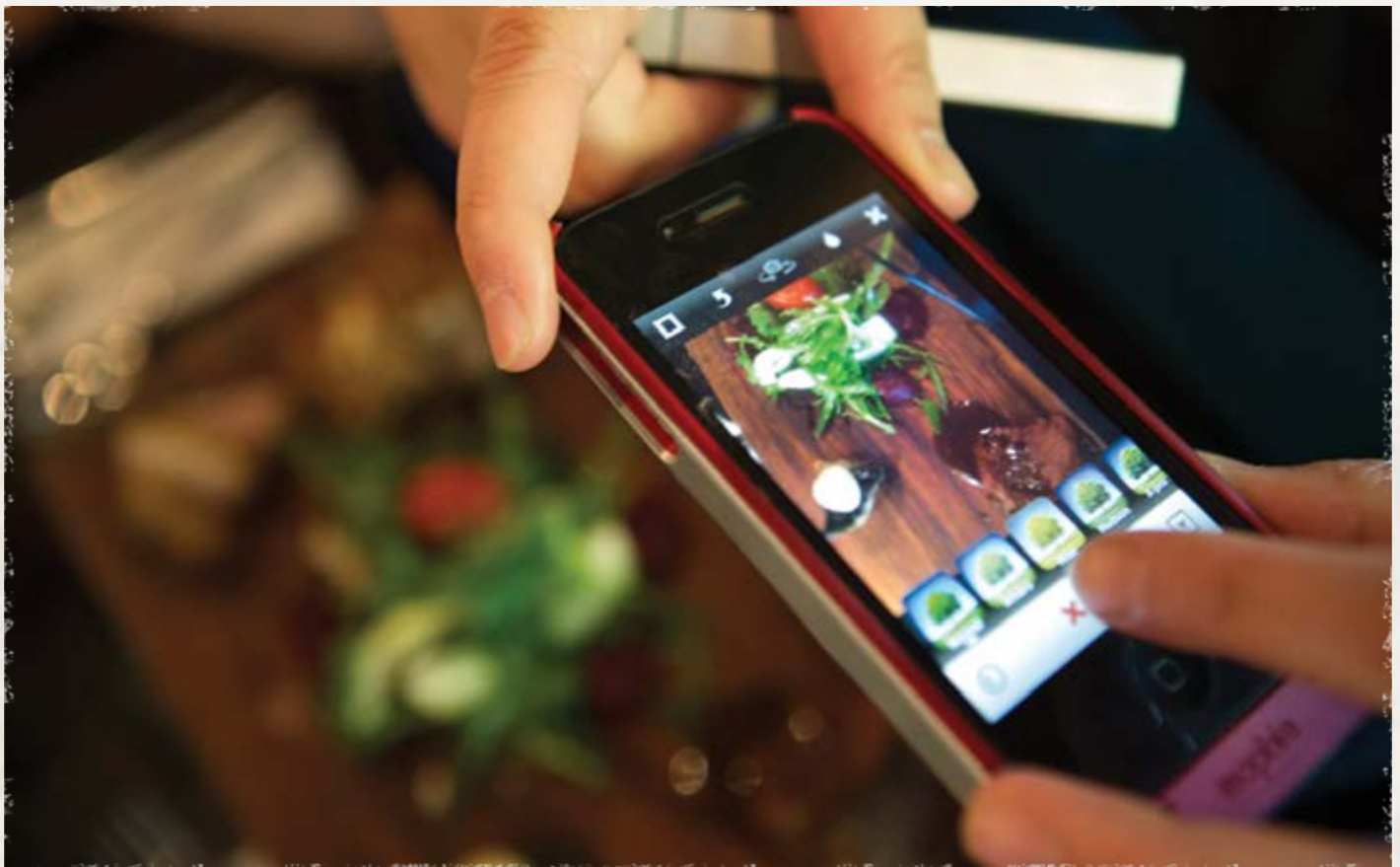
The Cluetrain Manifesto – one of the earliest and best predictions of where social is heading [www.cluetrain.com](http://www.cluetrain.com)

### Creativity prompts

[www.creativethinking.net](http://www.creativethinking.net)

[www.oblicard.com](http://www.oblicard.com)

[www.creativity-portal.com/prompts/imagination.prompt.html](http://www.creativity-portal.com/prompts/imagination.prompt.html)





# The Human Brochure – what we can all learn

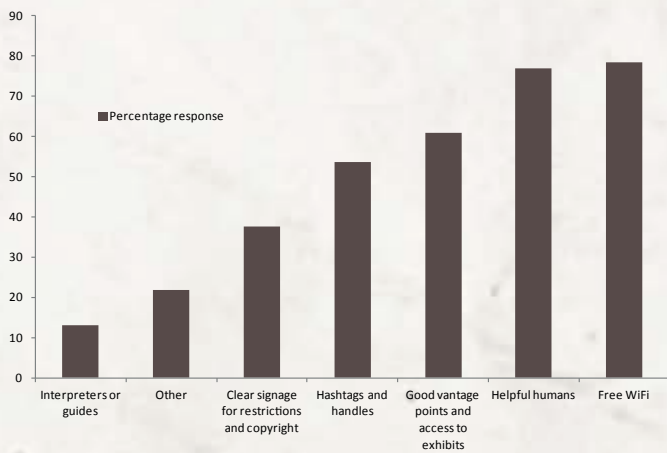
## THE HUMAN BROCHURE PLAYERS – THE HUMANS

The human brochure gave us all the best insight into how the most influential people create content when they are travelling. This insight alone is invaluable to tailoring your visitor experience to ensure you get great content.

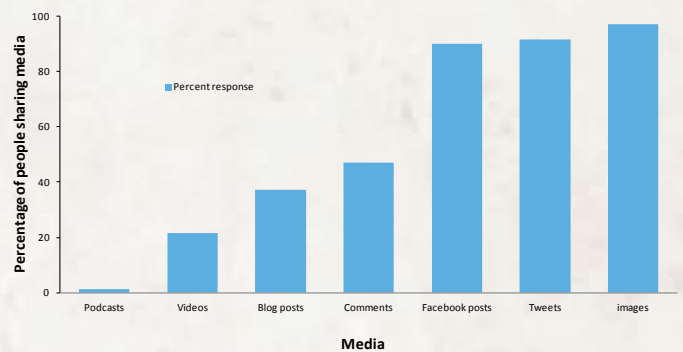
## INSIGHT

Make it simple for people to share images.  
Free WiFi, helpful staff and your hashtags are vital.

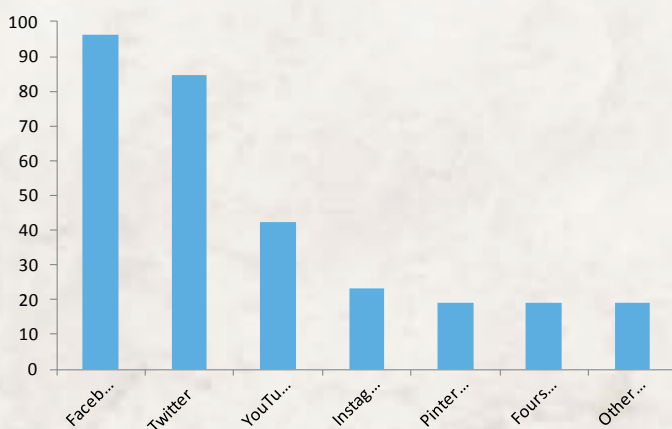
## WHAT'S IMPORTANT WHEN CREATING CONTENT?



## PERCENTAGES PEOPLE SHARING CONTENT



## SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS



## HOW DID FRONT LINE STAFF PERFORM?



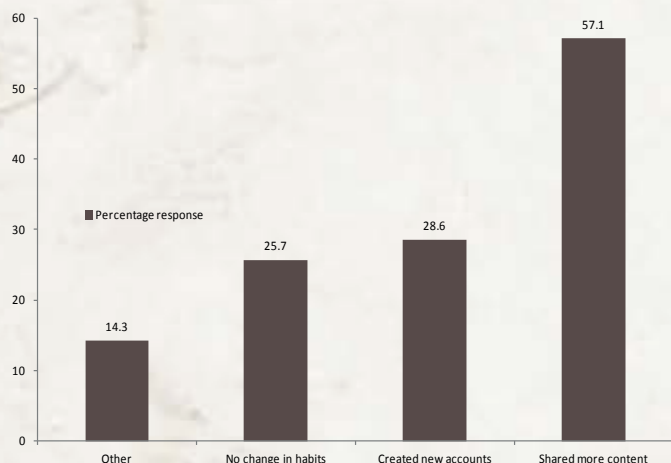
## INSIGHT

Most humans increased their use of social media.

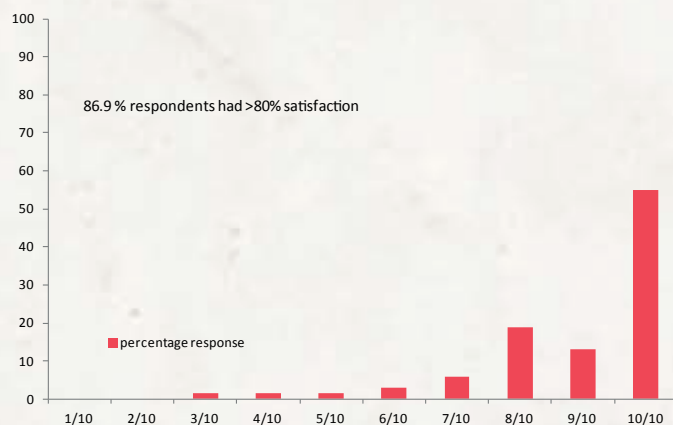
Spring and summer are preferred times to visit.

The take home message from the Human Brochure is this: What happens offline determines what is shared online. Keep it human, real and genuine offline so your content will be human, real and genuine online.

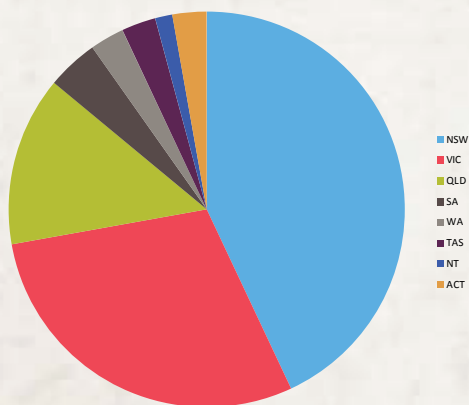
### CHANGE IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE



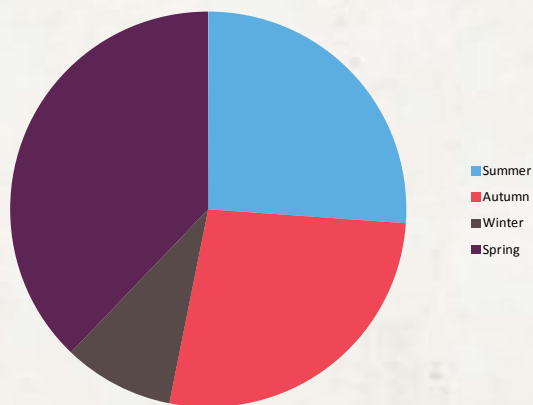
### OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH HUMAN BROCHURE



### STATE OF ORIGIN



### PREFERRED SEASON TO VISIT CANBERRA

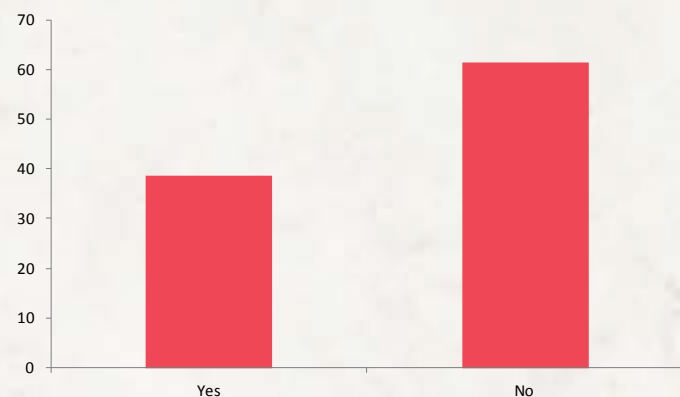




## THE HUMAN BROCHURE PLAYERS – INDUSTRY

We also asked industry involved in the Human Brochure to share their insights on social media use as a benchmark and guide to help us craft this playbook. Here are a few results of interest to share.

### CONTENT PLAN



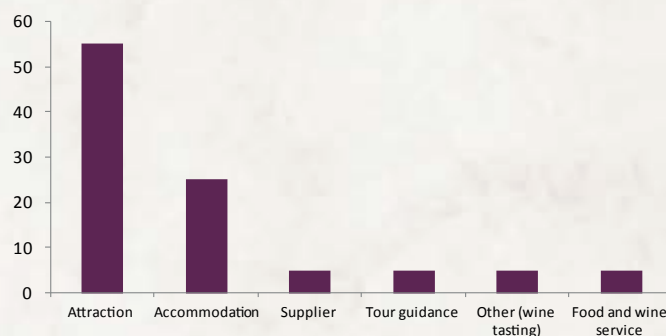
## INSIGHT

Industry has many reasons to get started in social media.

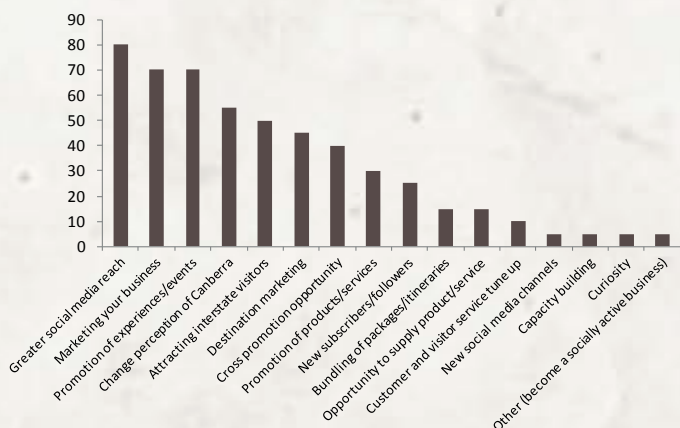
Most got involved for marketing and promotion reasons

Most don't have a content plan – that insight is the very reason for this playbook!

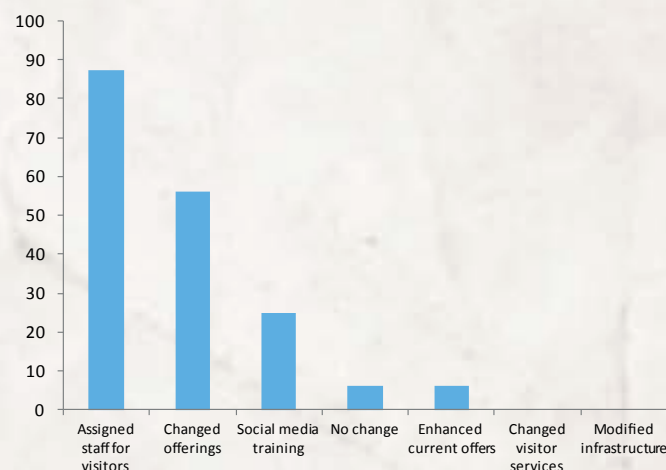
### INVOLVEMENT



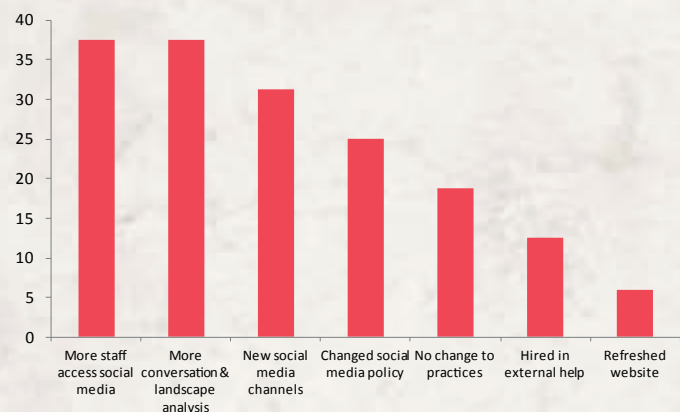
### REASONS TO BE INVOLVED



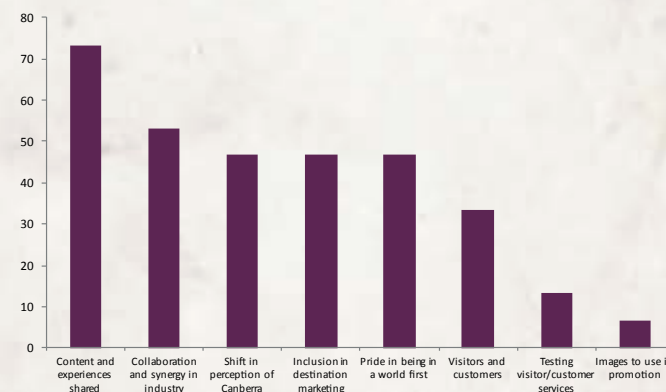
### OFFLINE PREPARATION



### ONLINE PREPARATION



### VALUE POST BROCHURE



## ARE WE PLAYING WHERE YOU ARE?

Send us all your social media channel addresses. We will follow you and converse.

Send us a list of your handles and hashtags so we can join your conversations and spread your content.

Advise us of any changes or new channels.

## TEACH US TO PLAY!

We've shared our learnings, share yours – drop us a line and share your insights, tips and improvements. There are no experts in social media, so the more we share with each other as an industry, the better we will all become.

Keep in touch with us.

**Subscribe:** Industry Link  
[www.tourism.act.gov.au/industry-link/](http://www.tourism.act.gov.au/industry-link/)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/visitcanberra](http://www.facebook.com/visitcanberra)

**Twitter:** @visitcanberra  
[www.twitter.com/visitcanberra](http://www.twitter.com/visitcanberra)

**Hashtags:** #Canberra  
#humanbrochure

For any questions asking locals use #localscan

**Pinterest:** [www.pinterest.com/actourism](http://www.pinterest.com/actourism)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/user/ACTourism](http://www.youtube.com/user/ACTourism)

**Instagram:** [www.instagram.com/visitcanberra](http://www.instagram.com/visitcanberra)





# Notes

Note to self: add VisitCanberra to my social media page

