Connecting to your Constituents with Facebook

The Opportunity

If you are a government agency, Facebook can help you connect to constituents quickly and easily.

- Over 400 million global users are active on Facebook every month
- More than 20 million people connect to Pages each day
- The top 40 US Government Facebook Pages each have more than 1.5 million supporters

The following guide provides an overview and practical tips for government organizations interested in using Facebook. Links are featured throughout the guide to help explore a specific feature or product. A list of online resources is included at the end of the guide to keep you connected to the latest from Facebook.

On Facebook: Getting Started is Easy

The first step to connecting with constituents on Facebook is to create your official Facebook Page. Pages are a free product for organizations and public figures to connect with supporters in an official, public manner. You can create and maintain a Facebook Page from your personal account. If you don't have a Page yet, please consult our detailed Pages Manual to get step-by-step instructions to create yours. Join the thousands of government organizations and politicians across the world in connecting with current and potential constituents on Facebook.

Pages Manual

Facebook Pages Manual offers step-by-step instructions to create a Page in minutes. Download it at facebook.com/government under "Resources".

Tips to help you connect

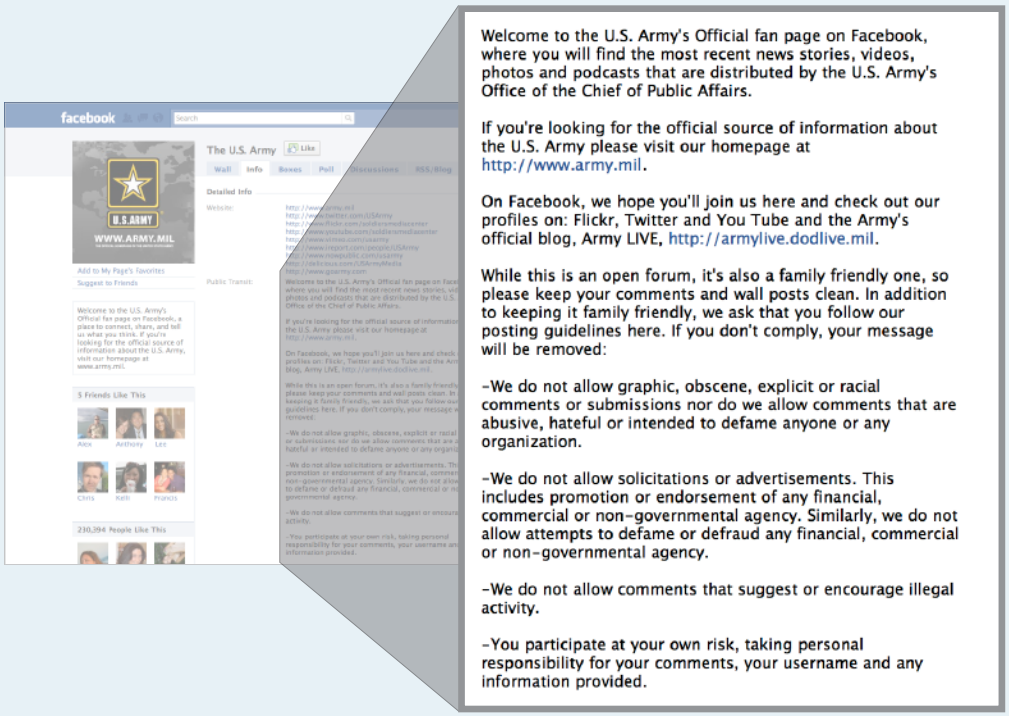
Once you've set up your Page, check out the following tips and examples to create an optimal experience for citizens to connect with your organization.

1. Encourage Appropriate Content and Behavior

Create a comment policy for your Page to publicly share the type of content and conversation you expect from supporters.

- The comments policy can be posted on the "Info" tab, under the profile photo, or in a custom tab you create on your own.
- Comment policies are an important external document outlining acceptable behavior on the Page and an important internal guideline for your team to manage and monitor the Page. See example below.

Tip #1: Encourage Appropriate Content and Behavior



US Army
U.S. Army created a comments policy to advise users of their expectations for content and posts on the Page.

Tips to help you connect

2. Create Content Worth Sharing

Facebook Pages are a fantastic tool for broadcasting news and updates to current supporters. Use the Links, Photos, and Video applications and watch your news go viral quickly. These applications attract more "like" and "comment" interactions, which then spread to friends of supporters, attracting new supporters. For example, government organizations can:

- Share breaking news about a new law, policy or election result by posting a link to a news article on another site.
- Post Photos from a newsworthy event, a day in the life of the leaders of your organization or photos submitted from the community you support. See example below.

Tip #2: Create Content Worth Sharing

The White House
One of the most popular features on the White House's Page is the "Photo of the Day" from the White House photographer.

Tips to help you connect on Facebook

3. Join the Conversation

Facebook is a culture of conversations—government organizations have a huge opportunity to get immediate feedback on issues. Here are some tips to starting the conversation on your Page.

- Poll your constituents on your Page with a question in your status update and get instant feedback. See example below.
- Show you're listening by responding to questions in comments and wall posts.

4. Use Tools to Increase Relevance

Facebook Pages offer easy tools to help you create deeper connections with your constituents.

- Target updates to specific groups of supporters when you have news to share with a segment, such as an emergency situation or new policy effecting constituents in a specific geographic area.
- Notes is Facebook's blogging feature. You can use Notes to tell your supporters/constituents about recent news from your office or campaign, to discuss your position on various issues, to keep your supporters/constituents updated on your upcoming plans, or to share anything else on your mind.
- Tag other government agencies and politicians when you want to link connections between Pages
- Make mobile updates with photos and videos directly from your phone to your Page. See example below.

Tip #3: Join the Conversation

The National Guard
The National Guard solicits questions regularly and answers them on their Facebook Page.

Tip #4: Use Tools to Increase Relevance

The White House
The White House uses the iPhone App to upload photos on trips aboard Air Force One to their Facebook Page.

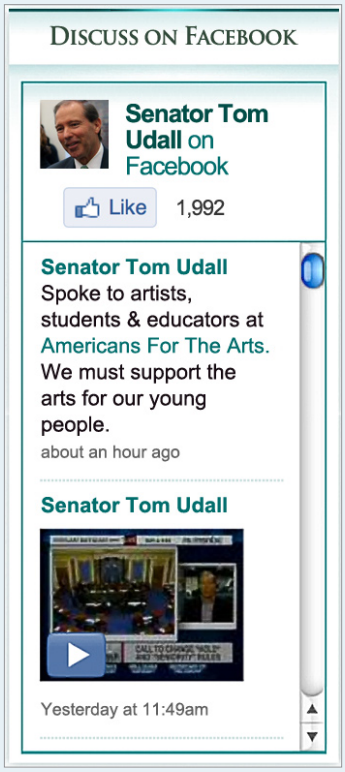
Grow Your Connections

Once you've created optimal content and updates on your Page, here are some tips for promoting your Page to grow your audience.

- Promote the Username for your Page everywhere: government website, email lists., office lobby, etc.
- Add a Like Box to your website so visitors can instantly connect to your Page without leaving your site. See example below.
- Encourage supporters to add a Like Badge to their blog or website to show their connection to your government official or organization on Facebook. See example below.

Like Badge Example

Like Box Example



Make your site social

Now you can connect with your constituents across the web, with Facebook social plugins. Using these powerful tools, you can create social and personalized experiences on your website. Below are a few key tools to consider adding to your site.

Like Button: The Like button lets users share pages from your site back to their Facebook profile with one click. See example below.

Recommendations: The Recommendations plugin gives users personalized suggestions for pages on your site they might like.

Activity Feed: The Activity Feed plugin shows users what their friends are doing on your site through likes and comments.

Discover all of Facebook's social plugins here and explore the easy ways to add Facebook to your site.

Like Button Example

Time.com
The Time.com homepage features the Like button on "Must Read" articles.

Resources

Learn more **tips and best practices** for government organizations

http:/www.facebook.com/government

Get the latest updates on Facebook Pages **product news**

http://www.facebook.com/facebookpages

Explore how other sites integrate Facebook via **social plugins**

http://developers.facebook.com/showcase

Learn how to create **affordable ads** on Facebook and reach your exact audience

http://www.facebook.com/advertising/

Connect with **Facebook's official Page** for the latest company updates

http://www.facebook.com/facebook

Use the Facebook Help Center to **get answers** on specific products and features

http://www.facebook.com/help