

PILOT TRAINING
SPEAK UP: SOCIAL MEDIA AND
COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING FOR
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE PRACTITIONERS



KING ABDULLAH BIN ABDULAZIZ
INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR INTERRELIGIOUS AND
INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Impressum

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SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY AND COMMUNICATIONS FOR DIALOGUE PRACTITIONERS

Introduction

The word ‘media’ derives from the Latin ‘medius’, meaning ‘in the middle’. It retains that meaning in the context of 21st-century mass communications, even if this simple essence is obscured by the world’s busy fixation with particulars. ‘Media’, for the purposes of this training program, refers to tools, pathways and principles people employ to communicate with each other across geographical, cultural and religious boundaries. It is the tissue in the middle between message and audience—the material through which that message is transmitted.

This media training program will address two categories of modern public communication: “Earned Media” (traditional, collective-run outlets such as newspapers, television channels and the websites they produce) and “Social Media”—the galaxy of new, internet-based communication tools like Facebook and Twitter designed specifically to be operated by individuals and to foster conversation among them.

Earned Media (EM) and Social Media (SM) can no longer be regarded as entirely distinct phenomena but rather have become two parts of one piece, due to the rapid development of communication technologies over the past 20 years. Information broadcast on television, for example, is today heavily influenced by ideas originating in SM, even as the Facebook and Twitter musings of any individual often feed on stories published in newspapers and other EM outlets.

For better or worse, this means that no effort to enlighten any public on any topic through media—no attempt to deliver a message to large numbers of people—can be considered complete or even effective today unless it uses a thoughtful mix of EM and SM. Each of these tools uniquely enables, or amplifies, the other and it is this EM-SM ‘symbiosis’ that is the main source of the power of any successful media effort in our day. For dialogue practitioners, the benefits of understanding and employing this EM-SM complementarity in conveying ideas to large numbers of people are clear. This training on how to engage media is the key to participating in the conversation, sustaining a robust argument and making sure that argument is heard by the right audience.

The media training curriculum is structured logically and practically with a view to achieving results that can be put into action immediately. Both the Earned Media and the Social Media components begin with a brief overview of guiding principles and definition of some basic terms (because it requires a little bit more technical know-how, the Social Media

section also includes basic SM account set-up instructions). Both then segue quickly into practical matters—how to apply the principles unique to each type of media in a range of specific situations common throughout the world. These matters are discussed in generic, ‘faith-neutral’ terms with the focus being on providing training in ‘universal standards’ that individual dialogue practitioners can then adapt to suit their own purposes and audiences accordingly. Emphasis is also placed on supervised ‘learning-by-doing’ to ensure participants are able smoothly to apply abstract concepts practically.

Dialogue practitioners who take part in the media training program will conclude it having acquired two new valuable pieces of education:

1. Clear understanding of the basic principles and policies defining how EM and SM work in the world today, both individually and as part of an organic whole;
2. Practical knowledge of how to adapt and apply these principles effectively using appropriate, specific tools in the service of a comprehensive, strong and sustainable media plan.

Participants will receive a firm and clear grounding in basic skills allowing them to take advantage of the most effective mass media opportunities and enabling them to transmit their ideas and convictions to the widest possible audiences in the world, and to sustain that communication over time. Perhaps more importantly, participants will learn how to use those skills not just to talk but also to listen and to engage constructively in conversation across religious, cultural and linguistic barriers that until now have largely impeded human communication.

MODULE 1

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

Social media is where the global conversation happens today. It is where news breaks, where people share experiences and opinions, where they talk about important issues and specific people and where that conversation is engaged. Social media can be used to monitor what people are saying about other people and about matters of religion and faith. It is where people with common interests come together, quickly become acquainted, share views and influences and join conversations large and small in a spirit of goodwill, intellectual curiosity and constructive learning.

In specific terms, social media refers to the array of online social networks and applications—Facebook and Twitter are two popular examples—designed to foster real-time communications and information-sharing through the internet between and among people all over the world. Social media does not replace other forms of media, but it is already an integral part of that tapestry. It is a megaphone for every person. Before long, one-third of the people on earth will be sharing ideas learned on social media with the two-thirds who do not have social media access. Just as a radio report, a TV show or a newspaper can spark dinner table conversations, social media provides the fuel for conversations at the coffee shop, at the workplace, in the schoolyard, at the proverbial water cooler, as well as at the dinner table.

Throughout the world, members of the press are using social media for research, networking and reporting. Lawmakers in most countries are meeting constituents on social media. And business and community leaders are using it, too. Social media has become the global conversation marketplace. Even in places where only a small portion of the population is using it, online social media directly influences conversations across offline social networks.

Effective navigation and use of social media as a force for successful dialogue requires understanding of how to employ this tool strategically. This goes beyond basic operating instructions and drills down into why social media is uniquely valuable and how that value can be used effectively to achieve goals in communicating with and influencing people. This training starts with the basics, but quickly gets into the whys and advanced hows of social media.

UNIT 1

Getting started on social media

KEY TOPICS

- Introducing major social media and how they are used
- Setting up social media accounts (primary, secondary, support)
- Privacy and security settings

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and function of social media
- Understand what is meant by primary, secondary and support accounts on social media, and how these interact
- Create accounts on major social media platforms

SETTING UP SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Before signing up for any social media channel, it is necessary to create an email account. The Gmail service is the easiest to use, but virtually any email address will work (except for Google+ and YouTube). It is best to use your primary email address to set up the social media accounts, as important social media notifications will be sent to it.

Primary accounts on Twitter, Facebook & YouTube.

Primary accounts on Twitter, Facebook & YouTube. The first step to getting started on social media is establishing what are called “primary accounts”. These are called primary accounts because they are the social media channels that have the biggest reach and most utility for dialogue practitioners. Twitter and Facebook are typical primary accounts because they have broad international reach. Facebook has more than a billion users and Twitter users include most of the international press, government officials and social influencers. YouTube is the most versatile social media site for sharing videos and is the world’s second most popular search engine (behind Google) because it is where people go to find videos. YouTube videos are also easily shared on all other social media platforms.”)

Twitter

Twitter is a “micro-blogging” social media network. Posts shared via Twitter are limited to 140 characters (including spaces), thus it is micro-format, rather than medium- or long-format. Tweets (Twitter posts) are displayed on users’ profile page and in followers’ timelines in reverse chronological order (newest to the top), just like blogs. Tweets can include links, images and videos, as well as text (within the 140 character limit). People viewing tweets can easily respond to them in public and/or share them to their own networks (followers). To sign up for a Twitter account go to www.twitter.com.

1. Enter the user’s full name, email Getting started address, and a password.
2. Click Sign up for Twitter.
3. On the next page, select a username
 - a. Usernames are unique identifiers on Twitter
 - b. Maximum 20 characters, shorter is better
 - c. Choose a username or use one we’ve suggested.
 - I. Your real name is usually the best username, if it is available.
 - II. If it is not available, try using a middle initial or first initial and last name.
4. Make sure to double-check name, email address, password, and username, and save them in a separate document as well. Then click on the Create my account button to finish creating a Twitter account.
5. Once the account is created, Twitter will prompt several optional steps for getting started.
 - a. Twitter offers an opportunity to “follow” a few friends, popular brands or people. These steps can be ignored by clicking the Skip this Step button.
 - b. Twitter will also show if some of your friends are on Twitter by checking your online address book (optional). In order for this to happen, your contacts need to be in one of the following web-based email services: Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, or AOL. Additionally, only users who have allowed their accounts to be found by email will be displayed.
6. Twitter Settings: The next step is to configure the settings. Be sure to click the save button before switching any tabs in this section to avoid losing changes.
 - a. On the Twitter home page, click on the Settings link (in the Gear Icon menu at top right corner:).
 - b. Click on Account in the left hand menu and adjust the time zone & country (then Save Changes).

- c. Click on Security and Privacy in the left hand menu. Make sure that
 - I. “Protect my updates” Is UNCHECKED
 - II. “Add location to your Tweets” is UNCHECKED
 - III. Then Save Changes
7. Click on Email Notifications in the left hand menu and uncheck all (experiment with these, but they can be overwhelming, too).
8. Click on Profile.
 - a. Upload a square profile photo and rectangular cover photo. Twitter suggests the following dimensions for profile and cover photo:
 - I. Profile pic: 400 x 400 pixels
 - II. Cover photo: 1500 x 500 pixels
 - b. Edit the rest of the profile info
 - I. Add a website or blog link (if available)
 - II. Add a 160-character bio. The bio is very important. Make sure to include all the key words that will help people to find you and help others identify you as an interfaith dialogue practitioner.

Facebook

Facebook is the world's largest social network, with more than one billion users worldwide, 81.7% of whom are outside of the United States and Canada). There are Facebook users in nearly every country, though the percentages of their populations on Facebook vary. Facebook is commonly used to create personal communities of family, friends and people with common interests within the larger Facebook population. It is also used to create networks for organizations and brands. To sign up for a Facebook Profile, go to www.facebook.com. Facebook accounts must be created with the user's real name. Accounts using fake names will be suspended automatically upon discovery by Facebook. To sign up, enter full name, email and date of birth. After opening the account, follow this series of steps to personalize your Facebook page.

1. Facebook profile: Edit the profile. Click on the My Profile button to see all of the editable sections. All field do not have to be filled out; in fact, they can be left blank if preferred. Remember, Facebook is public, so think before inserting personal information.
2. Add profile picture and Cover photo:
 - a. Click on the Picture tab to upload a square picture that other people will be able to see as your profile picture.
 - b. The cover photo is the larger image at the top of the Profile, right above the Profile picture. Click Add a Cover and then choose whether

- to upload a new photo or pick a photo from an existing photo album. The selected photo can be repositioned by clicking on the image and dragging it up or down. Click Save after repositioning it.
- c. The profile photos need to be 160X160 pixels and the cover photos needs to be 851X315 pixels.

YouTube

YouTube is a video sharing channel. YouTube accounts include a YouTube Channel for uploaded and shared videos. The videos can uploaded from a computer or smart phone. The Channel can also display videos found on other YouTube channels that are added to the Playlists. These videos can be shared via other social media channels, as well as embedded on a blog or webpage. Users can open an account at www.youtube.com with a Gmail address and the full name.

1. Upload original videos and share them with others
2. Share videos found on other YouTube Channels with the audience.
3. Formatting/Describing uploaded videos
 - a. Video title: Maximum 100 characters, they should work as Tweets
 - b. Video Description: up to 5,000 characters.

Secondary accounts

on Tumblr, Google+, Pinterest, etc. There are other social media websites that may be useful. Among those available anywhere in the world are Tumblr, Google+ and Pinterest. There are also social media sites that serve specific countries, like Weibos in China (which maybe accessible where Twitter is not). Some of these sites are being closed down (like Orkut, which is popular in Brazil, and will be closed by its owner, Google in the next few months). Deciding whether or not to use any of these additional social media sites depends on time constraints and audience preferences. If a key target audience is on one of these social media networks, it is worth joining it, time permitting.

1. We suggest creating accounts on some additional social media channels such as:
2. **Tumblr:** A social blogging platform that allows its users to post and upload text, video, images, etc., to their own personal blogs: www.tumblr.com/login
3. **Pinterest:** A social media site that lets users share photos on virtual bulletin boards. It's a tool for collecting and organizing the images that inform and

inspire. And it is good for driving clicks to content on other websites:
<http://pinterest.com>.

4. **Google+**: A social network that connects people with others to share information, photos, videos, etc., (similar to Facebook): plus.google.com/.

Supporting accounts on bit.ly and Tweetdeck or Hootsuite

These accounts provide supporting services to help use social media more effectively. They track statistics that measure the effectiveness of the Tweets and links shared via social media. They help monitor what people are saying on social media and make it easier to respond

1. **Bit.ly** shortens links and tracks how many people click on them.
Log into Bit.ly with your Twitter account.
2. **Tweetdeck.com** and **Hootsuite.com** are alternative ways to use Twitter (instead of using Twitter.com website).
 - a. We suggest creating a Hootsuite or a Tweetdeck account, especially for people using more than one social media channel.
 - Hootsuite and Tweetdeck are two of many tools referred to as a “Social Media Management System” or tool.
 - They help keep track and manage many social network channels.
 - They are used to monitor what people are saying about key issues and religions and allow immediate responses.
 - Hootsuite displays updates from multiple networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Google+ and post comments or reply directly.
 - Tweetdeck only works with Twitter. It manages multiple Twitter accounts, but is extremely useful even for just one account.
 - b. Both can be used with a Web browser, Tweetdeck also offers a downloadable app for your computer.
 - c. Both let you set up columns for reading subsets of tweets
 - Direct messages to you
 - Public @mentions of you
 - Timeline of tweets from people you follow
 - Keyword and hashtag searches
 - Twitter lists
 - Support multiple Twitter accounts
 - Hootsuite also has its own link shortener called Ow.ly
(so there is no need to use Bit.ly)

UNIT 2

Common terms – This unit includes a basic list of common terms used in social media

KEY TOPICS

- Introducing and explaining Twitter common terms
- Introducing and explaining Facebook common terms

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to

- Understand and use major key terms on Facebook
- Understand and use major key terms on Twitter

Like most new technology, social media has its own jargon, terms commonly used to describe what people do on social media. Some of these terms are unique to social media. Other terms have specific social media-related meaning that differs from common usage. For example, outside the realm of social media, we put handles on bags— but in the “Twitterverse”, a “handle” refers to a username. To effectively use social media, it’s important to know what these common terms mean and how they are used.

Twitter

1. **Handle.** A username, indicated by the @ symbol before it (e.g. @Name)
2. **@Mentions.** The @ sign is used to identify, mention or reply to other users on Twitter. For a specific person to see your message, include their @handle in the message. Even if they are a follower, they may miss it otherwise.
 - a. Example: Join 200 relig/spiritual leaders for spirit/faith-based action #dialogue on #climatechange, 12/3/14: [@reporter @ICNY](http://buff.ly/1CrkRzu)
 - b. Retweet (RT). A tweet that someone else wrote that is shared with your followers. There are 2 ways to retweet:
 - Automatic: This is the retweet function built into Twitter. Tweets are automatically shared with the retweeter’s audience as if it were passed through.

- Manual: To manually retweet, copy and paste the tweet into the tweet test field and add “RT @Name” at the beginning of the tweet.
 - Hootsuite and Tweetdeck offer an “Edit” button when selecting Retweet, which formats the retweet.
 - Manual RTs allow adding a comment or hashtag to the tweet to provide context or to target RT to a specific audience.
- **Direct Message (DM).** A private message to another Twitter user. That user must be following the other user to send a DM to him/her.
- **Follow.** Opting in to receive someone’s tweets in the Twitter feed. Following someone also allows them to send to the other user a DM.
- **MT.** A “modified tweet,” meaning the retweet has been slightly edited for length or content. Preserve the meaning of a tweet when modifying it for an MT.
- **Hashtags:** A keyword in a tweet that is linked to a search of tweets containing that keyword.
 - Hashtags are designated with “#” in front of the keyword (e.g. #keyword).
 - Hashtags are meant to “tag” a Tweet topic or community.

Hashtags

1. Hashtags aggregate topic conversations
 2. Long-term use of a hashtag creates a Twitter community
 3. Example: A Tweet about an interfaith religious article or issue can be tagged #religious and/or #dialogue.
- **Trends.** A list of the currently most popular keywords, phrase and hashtags that appears on Twitter’s front page.
 - **Lists.** Twitter List is a way of curating Twitter users and dividing them by what they have in common. Twitter Lists can be public or private. When the Twitter lists are public, they are curated the public.

Facebook

1. **Profile:** A Facebook Profile is a Facebook account for an individual using his/her real name, not for a business, nonprofit or any other organization. Among the activities available on a personal Facebook Profile are:
 - a. Sharing photos, videos links
 - b. Adding friends and communicate with them
 - c. Posting comments on others Facebook walls
 - d. Connecting “Like” organizations, brands

2. **Page:** A Facebook Page is for a business, nonprofit, any other organization. Individuals can also create a Page to complement their Profile (the Profile is for personal network interactions and the Page is for public engagement). In order to set up a Facebook Page, a personal Facebook Profile is required.
3. **Group:** Facebook Groups are forums for discussion. These groups can be either public or private. When creating a Group, add anyone to it (they can leave the Group at any time). Members of a Group can post messages to all group members on the Group Wall to inform them or mobilize them about certain issues. Join Groups that talk about issues you care about; post questions, and interact with Groups' members.
4. **Newsfeed:** A selection of activities (posts, likes, RSVPs, comments) by your friends, as well as Pages you have Liked and Groups you are in, will appear in a Timeline on your Facebook Homepage.
5. **Wall Post:** On Facebook a wall is a section on a Facebook Profile, Page or Group where others can post messages, links, images and videos. The wall is a public writing space so posts can be seen by anyone who visits the Profile, Page or Group. Anyone can respond directly to a Wall Post.
6. **Message:** Private messages can be sent to anyone through Facebook in real time.
7. **Like:** Clicking Like on a Facebook Page is the way to become a fan of the page and subscribe to its Wall Posts. Notifications of the posts on that Page are delivered via the Newsfeed as long as a user periodically clicks on them. Wall Posts can also be liked (text, link, photo or video), as well as any comment under a Post. A small percentage of a Facebook user's friends will be notified when Like is clicked on their posts via their Newsfeed. Your name may be displayed on a Liked Page, in advertisements about that Page or in social plugins next to the Liked content. Updates may appear in your Newsfeed and the Newsfeeds of your friends from liked Pages. Your connection to the page may also be shared with apps on the Facebook Platform. Pages and Posts can always be unLiked by clicking on the Like button of that Page or Post again.
8. **Comment:** Comments can be added on any Facebook post, unless it has restricted privacy settings.
9. **Share:** Any status update, photo, video or anything else posted on a Facebook Page or Profile can be shared to your own Profile, to a Page you manage, to a Group you belong to or to a friend's Profile.
10. **Tag:** Simply put, tagging identifies someone else (or a Page) in a post, photo or status update. A tag may also notify that person that they have been mentioned or referred to in a post or a photo, and provide a link back to their profile.

11. **Hashtag:** The Facebook hashtag is similar to a Twitter hashtag. Click on the hashtag to get redirected to a feed of other posts using the same hashtag. Every hashtag on Facebook has its own unique URL. Search for a specific hashtag from your search bar, for example, #InterfaithIssues or type facebook.com/hashtag/xxx into your browser (replace the x's with the tag being looked up).

UNIT 3

Creating effective posts for social media channels

This unit explains how to craft an effective message for different social media channels.

KEY TOPICS

- Differentiating message format for different channels
- How to craft a message on Twitter
- How to craft a message on Facebook
- How to craft a message on YouTube

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Understand how to craft messages based on what social media channel they use
- Understand how to craft good Facebook messages
- Understand how to craft good Twitter messages
- Understand how to craft good YouTube messages

Anatomy of a message (format & channel)

Social media is all about sharing messages (news, opinion, facts, etc.). Messages come in several length formats, depending on which media channel is being used. Given the various constraints on the length of message, crafting an effective message is different depending on the media channel used. For example, the same message would need to be composed differently on Twitter at 140 characters than in a blog post, which has no character limit.

1. Micro-form: The Gist (short-form, soundbite, tweet)
2. Short-form: Brief Explanation (elevator pitch, Tumblr, Facebook or Google+ wall post)
3. Medium-form: Blog (blog post, Tumblr, “charticle”)
4. Long-form: Report/Essay/Speech (article, lecture, sermon)
5. Visual (infographic, image or video via Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Tumblr, Snapchat)

Anatomy of a Tweet – Good

**Join over 200 religious & spiritual leaders
for a dialogue about spirituality & faith
based action on climate change:
buff.ly/1CrkRzu**

Reply Retweet Favorite More

1. What's good about this tweet?:
 - Descriptive
 - Focused on action
 - Trackable link
2. What's missing?
 - Date
 - Targeting @Influencers

Anatomy of a tweet – Better

- Include logistics info: date/time, event hashtag, etc.
- Shorter is better
- Use a subject hashtag: #ClimateChange
- Use a community hashtag: #dialogue
- Mention @Ally or @Opponent to engage in dialogue
- Mention @Reporter/ @Blogger to get media coverage

Anatomy of a Tweet

- New Tweet Text:

Join 200 relig/spiritual leaders for
spirit/faith-based action #dialogue on
#climatechange, 12/3/14 bit.ly/1CrkRz
@reporter @KAICIID



- Still long, but much more info included
- #Dialogue community included with this hashtag
- #ClimateChange issue hashtag loops in people interested in the topic
- @reporter (or @blogger) alerts press
- @KAICIID loops in ally (or opponent) to engage

Key elements to work into a tweet (not all elements are needed in all tweets)

1. Compelling text that says what your audience needs to know
2. Hashtag that targets key audiences
3. Shortened, trackable URL (if sharing content)
4. Your hashtag (if the tweet is about your event, project, etc.)
5. @handle of specific person(s) you want to alert
 - a. May be included at the end of the tweet like a “CC/Carbon Copy” in a memo
 - b. May alert a member of the press or blogger who covers the topic of your tweet
 - c. May alert another dialogue practitioner to loop them into the conversation
 - d. May alert a religious expert or leader to loop them into the conversation
 - e. May refer to someone who is the topic of the tweet so readers can see who they are and they can see they are being discussed
6. Date, time & city (if promoting an event)

Anatomy of a Facebook Post (or Google+) – Sharing a Link via Status Update

The Internet Advocacy Roundtable is hosting a discussion on August 21st, from 12pm-2pm on The Metrix of Social Media. Social media strategist Beth Becker and our own director of digital strategy Alan Rosenblatt address which metrics of social media really matter when it comes to understanding and engaging your audience. This monthly event brings together all levels of thinkers from many industries and creates a lively discussion where experts and novices join together to learn. To find out more, check out the link below or follow @IARoundtable on twitter.

10th ANNIVERSARY!! The Metrix: Which Data Pill Will You Swallow? (#IAR)

OUR 10th ANNIVERSARY!! Internet Advocacy Roundtable: The Metrix: Which Data Pill Will You...

51 people reached

Like Comment Share

Boost Post

What's good about this post?

- Posting a link via Status Update is the best way to get people to click on the link
- When people Share a Status Update with a link, only the link is shared, not the comments in the post.
- In this example, an event is being promoted and the goal is to get people to click on the link and RSVP
- Post explains what the event is about and who is speaking
- The post includes Date/Time/Location so people will know before clicking if they can attend
- The post includes 2 calls to action (Find out more info AND follow event on Twitter)

Anatomy of a Facebook post – Posting a picture with a caption



What's good about this post?

- Posting a Photo/Video on Facebook wall is the best way to get messages shared
- When people share a Photo/Video, the caption (message included with the Photo/Video) is also shared.
- The caption includes a couple key points the audience should know about the image and the articles it comes from
- A link to the article where the image comes from is included in the caption so people can click to it.
- Organizations (or people) that are likely to be interested in the post (and therefore likely to share it) are tagged in the caption.

Anatomy of a YouTube Video

- When posting a video to YouTube, be sure that the title, description and tags are written to make the video easier to find and understand.
- The title of a video should be short (about 100 characters, including spaces) and be written so that it works well as a tweet (says what people need to know

about the video).

1. YouTube automatically uses the title when a video is shared to Twitter
 2. Sometimes, including a Twitter #hashtag in the title helps it get shared more on Twitter
- The description of the video (the larger field below the title) should tell viewers what the video is about; it should include the key message from the video.
 - Add keyword tags to the video to help people find it in the YouTube search engine.

Unit 4

What to say on social media?

This unit covers why it matters what a person says on social media and how it said. Social media is noisy and the message has to stand out from the crowd to be noticed. The more useful, the more insightful, the more clever, the more timely a message, the more likely it will be noticed. The previous unit focused on how to craft social media messages-- this unit focuses on what to say.

KEY TOPICS

- Who is the primary voice of an organization/person?
- What are the different things a person can share through social media?
- How can a person engage with others through social media?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Know how to use social media channels based on the style and role trainees want to play
- Know how to use social media channels on a daily basis and for special circumstances
- Know how to use social media channels to engage with others

- Know how to recognize the “other side” on social media
- Know if and when to engage with the “other side” on social media
- Know how to live-tweet an event

Style & Role

A person should always think about what kind of “voice” and in what style and format they want to use when engaging via social media. It is always easiest to use one’s own, authentic voice. But some people play multiple roles in their communities and may want to adopt only one of those voices for social media.

1. Think about what “voice” you want to use, but be flexible using it depending on circumstances
2. Think about your perspective/role. Is your role the
 - Authority?
 - Convener?
 - Negotiator?
 - Reconciler?
 - Calming influence?
 - Cheerleader?

“Go to” things to share

Here is a list of the items to regularly and easily share via social media.

1. These are some things to regularly share on social media:
 - a. Daily message
 - An inspiring quote (good to pair with your take on the quote)
 - “Did you know?” (something interesting about relationships across religions or interesting fact about religion)
 - b. News & commentary
 - Share an interesting news story
 - Comment on an interesting news story
 - c. Events & special occasions
 - Promote upcoming events
 - Comment on upcoming holidays or other special occasions

Live tweeting events

This is an explanation of what live tweeting events mean and tips on how to do it successfully. If you are attending or hosting an event, consider live tweeting it (and encouraging others to do so, as well).

1. Promote event and use event #Hashtag in advance
2. Tweet your notes and reactions to what is said at event (always use event hashtag)
3. Engage others at event on Twitter (retweet them, respond to them, ask them questions)
4. Follow-up after event (follow all event tweeters, continue conversations, deepen relationships, build your network)

Engaging with others

There are times when responding to or engaging with other people on social media is advisable:

1. Positive comments: highlight it by sharing and responding
2. Negative comments: CONSIDER responding (more on this later)
3. Initiate engagement by asking and answering questions (mention people by @name when possible)

Recognizing the “other side”

This is a methodology for classifying opposing voices on social media and determining if it makes sense to engage them.

1. Before engaging in dialogue with detractors, haters & trolls...
2. Know the difference:
 - a. Detractors disagree with you
 - b. Haters dislike you because you disagree with them
 - c. Trolls are trying to get you to lose your “cool” and get angry
3. Detractors and haters may be persuadable, trolls are not.

Engaging the “other side”

This is a list of suggestions on how a person can effectively and with minimal risk communicate with an opponent.

1. Decision rule:

- a. If the other person can be persuaded to change his/her mind, always consider engaging.
- b. If his/her mind cannot be changed, consider using a debate with them to persuade onlookers.

2. What to say:

Win them over emotionally first (otherwise they will rationalize away any dissonance)

- a. Then use facts and logic
- b. If stronger words are needed, always do it with humor and a light heart

UNIT 5

Growing your network

This unit explains how to build a network on social media, and how to best engage with it. A good social media network is one that includes many influencers, experts and people truly interested in the same topic. It includes people who are important to reach. Just having a large audience is not the same as having a good network.

KEY TOPICS

- Why a social media network is important
- How to give value to that network
- How to get new followers on social media
- How to create deeper relationships with your network

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Understand the value of their social media networks
- Know how to work with their networks and use communications through social media to sustain relationships with them

On social media, a good audience is a network

1. Don't talk at them, talk with them
2. What makes it "social" is a reciprocal exchange of value

Give the network value to get value from it

1. **Useful information:** Post content that shares something insightful, includes interesting information, data, pictures, and is of value to your audience
2. **Conversation:** Social media is a dialogue. It's a way for people to talk about anything in public, ranging from current events to philosophy to entertainment. It is very important to engage in conversations with social media networks; to "be social"
3. **Sharing others' content with your network:** Make sure to always share good content from others. This is valuable to your audience and to the person who originally posted the content. It increases the chances the original content poster will also share your content.
4. **Recommending other people to your network:** Social media is all about networking and connecting people. Find a new interesting person? Suggest to your network that they also follow that person Explain why this person has something interesting to say.

How to get new followers

Social media audiences should consist of both quality (most important) and quantity (less important).

1. **Follow them – Let others know they are interesting by following them.**
 - a. Converse with them: Every good new conversation starts with listening. Listening to and monitor key audiences via social medial enables us to understand what messages and content are working and share it with them.

- Twitter: @reply, @mention
- b. Facebook: tag them in posts, reply to comments, post & comment on their profile or page
2. **Recommend them:** When following somebody interesting on social media, make sure to recommend them to your audience. Mention that they are influencers and in which topic.
- Twitter: retweet (RT, MT), #FF (friend follow)
 - Facebook: Like, Share
3. **Deepen relationships w/ your network:** Once connections are made on social media, continue to converse with and recommend them in order to deepen the relationships.
4. **Give to others what you would have them give to you.**

UNIT 6

Finding people to follow

This unit explains how to find people, especially influencers, to follow and connect with on social media. This is very important because these potential influencers could become champions for promoting your messages and content (extending your reach and influence)

KEY TOPICS

- Basic steps to find people to follow
- How to use and navigate Twitter lists to find people to follow

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Understand how to find new social media followers
- Understand how to leverage Twitter lists to find new followers in social media

First steps

This is a series of steps to find and connect with relevant Twitter users and Facebook pages.

1. The best audiences are influential & will influence on your behalf
2. Good research helps find good connections on social media
3. Start with a list of influencers known from other places
 - a. Research their Twitter names & Facebook pages
 - b. Google “Their name AND Twitter”
 - c. Search on Facebook
 - d. Follow & friend them

Digging deeper into Twitter (Lists)

This is a series of steps for using Twitter lists to find key people to follow.

1. Create short list of great people/orgs to follow on Twitter.
2. On their Twitter profile:
 - a. Check what lists they are “member of”
 - b. Follow people on those lists

Navigating a Twitter List



1. Subscribe to the List
2. Toggle among tweets, members & subscribers
3. Read bios of List members
4. Follow individual members

UNIT 7

Targeting

This unit explains how to make sure the right people see important Facebook posts.

KEY TOPICS

- How to effectively tag people and organizations in posts on Facebook
- How to effectively use tagging to respond on comments on Facebook
- How to effectively and properly use hashtags to target audience on Facebook
- How to effectively use posting on others' pages and profiles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Target people in Facebook posts

Tagging people and organizations in posts

Tagging people on a comment thread only gives them a notification. On the other hand, tagging people on notes, videos, and photos gives them a notification and puts the tagged post on their walls or timelines. This means that these posts can be seen by people on their network, depending on their privacy settings.

1. We can tag people or pages when we want to promote a site, video, product, idea, article, etc.
2. However, if when tagging friends, do this sparingly, since it might result in spamming friends' walls or timelines with unwanted information.
3. Also, always tag friends on posts they'd actually be interested in. Informative or inspiring posts are usually be appreciated.

Tag to respond to comments

Responses to Facebook post comments can go unread, especially when there are a lot of comments. Tagging people when replying calls their attention to your response.

Hashtags

When hashtags are used properly, they can be powerful tools in targeting the right people on Facebook. They can really help expand your reach to people who are looking at posts in your topic. Especially, hashtags are a great way to help people interested in niche topics find each other and find the conversation.

Posting on others' Pages and Profiles

is another good way to deliver your message or interesting content to the right people. Use this sparingly and respectfully.

UNIT 8

Measuring success

It is crucial to track and measure the impact of posts being shared. Social media is about engaging with your audience and targeting the groups to influence them on certain issues. The goal is to gain influence in a specific sector, or about a specific topic. Don't try to tap into every conversation and every community—do not spread your message too thinly. Also, be sure to listen to your audience. It's important to [drive the conversation](#), but also to [pay attention](#) to the interests of your audience.

KEY TOPICS

- Key measurements of success

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Know how to evaluate their own social media performance

Engagement

It is essential to interact with followers, Facebook fans and friends individually through social media. Post interesting content, content that your audience will want to Like, Comment on and Share. Have in mind the goal of creating a community-centric attitude. And to do that, listening to what your friends, fans and followers say is essential. Even when getting negative comments and feedback,

try to reply back with a positive comment or make sure to admit when making a mistake and giving wrong information through social media.

Facebook Likes, Comments & Shares:

It is very important to consider a number of things when it comes to engagement through Facebook.

1. Of course the total number of likes on a Facebook Page and the total number of Likes received on a Facebook comment are important.
2. However, it is more important to get Likes, Comments and Shares of your Facebook posts.
3. When updating Facebook pages to let readers know about a new article or a new study on interfaith issues, include a statement or question that refers to a specific point from the article to drive more clicks, Likes, Comments or Shares.
4. To make a Facebook page more engaging, share content in a variety of forms. Experiment with photos, videos, links and questions, then track the engagement in Facebook Insights (see below more about Facebook Insights) to see which types of posts generate more engagement.
5. Learn from top-performing post. Top performing Facebook posts are the ones that receive the most interaction on a Facebook page. This includes post that received the most Comments, Shares and/or Likes.
6. Always try to create “evergreen” content. This is something to remember for your website and blog (if any). Evergreen content is the type of content that will always be relevant to your audience. It is the type of content that is always fresh, not bound by time (forever “green”.)
7. And ALWAYS include some call to action at the end of your posts... ask a question, ask people to do something (like your page, like your post, share your post, RSVP for an event, etc.)

Twitter @Mentions, @Replies, RTs, MTs, #FF:

Twitter engagement is very important for successful dialogue through social media. Rather than speaking AT your followers, it is about engaging in an open dialogue with them. If properly engaging with followers, people will:

1. Retweet you: It is when somebody retweets your tweet
2. Mention you: When somebody says something related to you and mentions you (by using your Twitter handle).
3. Favorite your tweet: When somebody “likes” your tweet
4. Gain followers: When you increase followers

5. Replies: When people reply to your tweets with their own thoughts and comments
6. #FF: #FollowFriday or #FF on Twitter is a tradition in which people send tweets recommending Twitter users they think other people may be interested in following. The tweets are usually sent on Fridays (but #FF is now used on other days too) and include the hashtag #FF or #FollowFriday. The idea is to help people figure out who to follow on Twitter by sharing usernames or Twitter handles of your favorite Twitterers, the people whose tweets you find interesting. It's all about helping people get followers on Twitter.
 - a. Simple format: #FF @name1 @name2 @name3....
 - b. Better format: #FF these #Dialogue experts: @name1 @name2 @name3....
 - c. Best: Add #FF to a manual retweet to show an example of a good tweet from the person you are recommending.

Pinterest Repin, Comments, Likes:

Because engagement on Pinterest happens through images and videos, it provides a great platform to communicate and interact with audiences. Statistics show that 80% of engagement on Pinterest is through Repins. That means use of a compelling image or video is always needed with Pinterest posts to increase the level of engagement.

1. Repinning vs. Liking on Pinterest: When on Pinterest, some images found are worth sharing with others, while some are just worth a thumbs (Like) up to show your appreciation.
2. Hitting the Like button on a pin will leave a notification on a friend's timeline about your approval. It will also post a notification to your Facebook Timeline if that feature is enabled.
3. Repinning means that you are taking an image from someone else's board and posting it to one of your own. Similar to Liking, notifications will be sent to both parties when an item is repinned.

Google+ +1, comment, share:

+1 is to Google as Like is to Facebook and Favorite is to Twitter. Comment and Shares on Google+ are the same as comments and shares on Facebook.

Conversation

As we keep repeating, it is all about talking with your audience. It is about discussing with them the issues they care about. Use social media as a platform for discussion. If you are asking questions and adding important content, your audience should be responding with additional comments, questions and thoughts. Respond back. Even when somebody disagrees, try to turn that into a dialogue through social media. Invite others to participate and create an open forum discussion.

Clicks

Are people clicking on your links? People receive a lot of information everyday through social media. To make people to pay attention to links and click on them, spend some extra time creating good and attractive content. Try to be as specific as possible with the title of an article or blog and content shared through social media. Make sure to use keywords and hashtags to capture an audience's attention.

Audience

Many people think that having BIG AUDIENCE NUMBERS is the most important measurement of success. However, on social media the quality of the audience is a more important indicator of success than the size.

1. Quality: The quality of the audience is a key to success. Having engaged and influential people in your audience will create much more success than having a large number of people who are unengaged.
2. Size: Of course having big audience in social media does matter. Bigger audiences do provide more initial reach

UNIT 9

Social media analytics tools

This unit includes social media analytical tools that are either free or relatively inexpensive. Some offer free services with an upcharge for expanded services. Analytics is the most important way to help measure success. In the current environment, analytics provide the key to understanding which channels work well and which do not.

KEY TOPICS

- Providing basic information for 11 different social media analytical tools

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- Understand the use of the different tools and how to use them

TweetReach.com

TweetReach searches any hashtag, Twitter name, URL or keyword/phrase to discover how many people it reached. For free it provides (up to) the last 50 tweets containing the search term(s). For a small fee it provides up to the last 1500 tweets. Monthly services are available for larger reports and allow advanced warning for a search query (for example, a newhashtag) to ensure exhaustive cataloguing of the results. Monthly accounts can be purchased for a higher fee and can be discontinued at will. TweetReach reports the number of people potentially reached, how many total impressions generated, how many impressions generated by each person tweeting the search term(s) and the tweet stream of actual tweets.

Bit.ly

Bit.ly shortens URLs and keeps track of how many clicks each URL received. By logging into bit.ly with a Twitter account, it reports which clicks were generated by your outreach versus other people's outreach. Bit.ly is free.

Topsy.com

Topsy is a Twitter search engine that has the entire Twitter archive back to 2006 available. It reports how many times something has been tweeted over various increments of time.

SocialMention.com

SocialMention is a social media search engine that also provides rough measures of sentiment.

Twitonomy

Twitonomy is a premium Twitter stats service that provides a range of performance statistics.

Twitter analytics

Twitter recently launched a new analytics tool to provide measurable insights into how organic Tweets perform.

FollowerWonk

FollowerWonk provides a detailed analysis of any Twitter follower or followed list. It is great for evaluating the quality of an audience. It is free until a Twitter user's audience gets too large (several thousand).

SumAll

SumAll provides weekly updates for various Twitter metrics.

LikeButton.com

Like Button is powered by the Facebook Like Button and Social Plugins. It is a great way to see the popular posts, globally and socially, on the internet right now.

Engagement.actionsprout.com/inspire

Evaluates what posts on your (or any) Facebook Page is outperforming your average post.

Facebook Insights

When logged into and viewing your Facebook Page, the Insights metrics platform is accessible. This provides a wealth of Page level and post level performance data in graphs and via downloadable spreadsheet.

UNIT 10

Additional Social Media and Content Channels

This unit presents a few other online channels that can be used to engage your network.

Blogs

A blog is a good tool for posting longer, more detailed comments about a topic. Once posted, it can be shared via social media.

1. A blog (or “web log”) is a type of website or part of a website.
2. Blogs are usually maintained by an individual or small group posting regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material, such as graphics or video.
3. Many blogs provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others function more like online diaries.
4. The ability of readers to leave comments and share the blog posts in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs.
5. Blogs allow an organization or a user to develop its own VOICE.
6. Organizational blogs usually promote a cause or a product, or talk about relevant issues with some authority.
7. Blogs connect with other blogs/websites by commenting on other blogs or linking to other blog posts.

8. Comments and links generate conversations back and forth – the key to successful social networking.
9. There is a blog for every topic under the sun – usually, multiple blogs!

Podcasts

Podcasts are an audio alternative to a blog and can also be shared via social media.

1. Audio segments produced with or without live audience.
2. One or few producers creating content for large, faceless audience (similar to broadcast model).
3. This media can be downloaded and played on personal media players (like iPods) or on computers.
4. Online radio shows also can be heard via traditional telephone – users call in to listen or participate.
5. Podcasts are downloaded automatically via RSS feeds when they are updated.
6. This can be done through iTunes or any number of programs offering media sharing services.
7. These tools are great for information sharing, emergencies, broadcasting events live and offering updates.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a good place for somebody to build a professional network. Post a resume and join up to 50 groups of people sharing similar professional interests. It is a good place to share blog posts. LinkedIn is different from any other social media channel. It is designed solely for the purpose of professional networking. It works as an online resume. LinkedIn users can only upload their profile photo and no other photo. They cannot change the colors of their LinkedIn profile (as they can do with Twitter, for example). They cannot embed videos. They can comment on and like posts. Finally, LinkedIn also has Groups. LinkedIn groups are different from Facebook groups. They are primarily professionally focused. LinkedIn accepts new group requests only from professional organizations, alumni groups, professional alumni organizations and similar groups. Every group has a manager who is in charge of accepting or rejecting all applications to join the group.

UNIT 11

Social Media Skills for Dialogue Practitioners – Conclusion

Social media offers dialogue practitioners the opportunity to engage in public conversations about religion and culture across communities and in a sustainable manner. Using social media practitioners can bring communities together, creating dialogue between religious institutions and grassroots dialogue organizations, use social media as a forum reduce tensions in a crisis and promote reconciliation afterwards.

For example, dialogue organizations can convene conversations among communities emerging from a conflict on social media. Social media can provide a safe space for the parties to share their views and listen to each other. Dialogue practitioners are able to highlight the productive conversations taking place in the social forum, even if some people are trying to poison the discussion by retweeting and sharing the comments that demonstrate common ground.

Social media also provides dialogue practitioners the ability to monitor hate speech and engage in ways that are designed to diffuse tension. In addition, practitioners will be able to counter-message hate speech, ensuring that the hate speakers' audience also sees the positive messages that undermine the hate speech.

In general, conversation about religion and culture are happening already on social media. And many of these conversations are happening across religious and cultural lines. The only way these conversations will have the sensibilities inherent in dialogical methodologies is if dialogue practitioners are participating in the same social conversations.

MODULE 1

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: FINDING THE RIGHT AUDIENCE

In this exercise, trainees will use search engines, Twitter and Facebook to find religious and cultural influencers to target for connection. The result will be a list of Tweeters and Facebook pages that trainees will then follow and engage with in order to build their own networks.

Task 1: Search for influencer lists – Using Google (or any other search engine), search for phrase similar to “top religious influencers of Twitter” to find articles that provide lists of influencers. Add the names on these lists to your target list.

Task 2: Twitter List Research – Using Twitter.com, find a few known dialogue, religious and cultural influencers. Then explore the Twitter Lists they curate and Lists they are a member of to find more influencers to follow on Twitter.

Task 3: Facebook Page Research – Use Facebook.com to search for Pages related to dialogue, religion and culture to find communities and people belonging to those communities to connect with on Facebook.

ACTIVITY 2: LIVE-TWEETING EVENTS

In this exercise, trainees will practice live-tweeting an event. We will spend a brief amount of time at the end of the training reviewing the process for live-tweeting an event. Trainees will then practice this skill at the KAICIID public event following the training.

ACTIVITY 3: CLASS DISCUSSION ABOUT ENGAGING HATE SPEECH AND OTHER DETRACTORS

Engaging detractors, whether they are extreme in their views or simply skeptical, is challenging and risky. During this activity trainees and the instructor will discuss the subtleties and nuances of such engagement.

MODULE 2

COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING: EARNED MEDIA

UNIT 1

WHAT IS NEWS?

KEY TOPICS

- What is news?
- What makes reporters tick?
- What makes a story newsworthy?
- Placing news
- How Social Media and Earned Media Interact

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit, dialogue practitioners will be able to:

- Know what is news
- Understand reporters
- Appreciate newsworthiness
- Gain coverage for their issues
- Understand how social media complements earned media

INTRODUCTION

The Rwandan genocide began April 6, 1994, when the aircraft of President Juvenal Habyarimana, an ethnic Hutu, was shot down above Kigali airport. In the aftermath, an estimated 800,000 Rwandans were killed in the space of 100 days, most of them ethnic Tutsis at the hands of the Hutus.

While the death of the president may have triggered the violence, it was fueled by a propaganda campaign in the Rwandan press, which might have been avoided with targeted, accurate presentations to the media from respected community leaders, particularly those involved in moderate faith-based activities.

The primary aim of this communications training session is to equip dialogue practitioners to be able to employ the media in a positive way to advance their cause.

The primary aim of this communications training session is to equip dialogue practitioners to be able to employ the media in a positive way to advance their cause. While trainees may not face a challenge like the tragedy in Rwanda, shaping small victories for their constituents and communities is just as important, and, in today's challenging media environment, nearly as difficult.

WHAT IS NEWS?

There's an old newsroom expression: "if it bleeds it leads," which basically means that the way a story is placed in a newspaper or in a newscast depends on how graphic, sensational or scandalous it is. Hence, a local math champion will be pushed off the front page by a small earthquake in which 50 cattle die, which will be pushed off the front page by a large earthquake in which 5 people die, which will be pushed off the front page by a bombing in which 10 people lose their lives, all of which will be pushed off the front page by a scandal involving a world leader.

This is particularly true in the visual media, where pictures and video tell the story. The print media may have greater space to tell a complex story, but that is becoming more of a challenge in this era of shrinking news budgets due to declining advertising, and changing habits among consumers as a result of the Web.

Dialogue practitioners should keep this in mind as they attempt to attract media attention to their stories. Be aware of what else is going on in the news, and, most importantly, which section or reporter would be most likely to champion it to her or his editor.

Whether they work in electronic or print media, reporters are people too, and they have to wake up in the morning like anyone else; eat breakfast, take children to school, curse the traffic and disagree with their bosses. Don't expect them to be ready to hear a story simply because their sources are ready to tell them about it.

Chances of placing a story or quote can be maximized by approaching the reporter at the most opportune time.

**A story can hitchhike along with the big story of the day,
a tactic known as “newsjacking.”**

The best is always when a story can hitchhike along with the big story of the day, a tactic known as “newsjacking.” For example, if an international religious leader is coming to your community, there will certainly be a reporter covering that beat who would be looking for a local religious leader to talk about something related to the visit. Find that reporter, give him or her a few quotes about the visit, and then pivot to your issue, which might be something as mundane as raising funds for a building renovation. Even if the last sentence of a long story about the visit is a quote about the renovation, it will surely reach thousands of readers, and possibly generate some donations.

On a normal day, first thing in the morning is usually the best time to contact a reporter or editor, before the morning story meeting. These discussions set the newsroom agenda for the day, and reporters are assigned based on what editors think they will use. This is the case for so-called 24-hour news outlets, such as CNN or Al Jazeera, which are also subject to timing, scheduling, budgets and advertisers.

The very worst time to attempt a story placement is the afternoon of the last day of the work week, which journalists refer to as the “black hole” because that's where stories go to die. When there is a choice, reporters should be approached on midweek mornings.

There is no best way to reach a reporter, and many factors dictate whether to use email, telephone or such social media platforms as Twitter or Facebook. Establishing a relationship with a reporter will give dialogue practitioners the best chance of placing a story or commenting on a story when the opportunity arises, regardless of what method of communication is employed.

**Where news once broke in the traditional media, it now breaks on
Twitter, Facebook or on a blog.**

Social media have had a profound impact on news, as was explained in the previous training on social media literacy. Where news once broke in the traditional media, it now breaks

on Twitter, Facebook or on a blog. These stories are not as well vetted for accuracy as the mainstream media, which also make mistakes, so be very careful in accepting a Tweet or a Facebook post as the truth. Social media can also be a powerful tool in refuting or correcting an incorrect story. A timely tweet, in particular, may make the difference in averting a disaster triggered by an incorrect, social-media driven rumor.

Additionally, learn to use social media as an intelligence source for what reporters are covering or what they are promoting. And reaching out on social media can help develop a virtual relationship with a reporter, or influence a story on which he or she is working.

Contacting Reporters

Mobile phone is probably the surest bet, but that requires an established relationship with the reporter. Don't be shy about asking reporters for their personal telephone. But don't overuse it or share it with someone else.

Text messaging is a good method during a crisis or a big news event when a reporter is besieged with calls. Be aware, however, that a reporter may consider this text as fair game for a story if ground rules for attribution are not agreed beforehand.

Email is convenient and most reporters have it. But reporters receive hundreds of emails daily, and yours may be lost in the shuffle. Naming the news event and saying "urgent" in the subject line are useful techniques for ensuring an email catches a reporter's eye. As with text messaging, a reporter may use email text in a story unless otherwise specified.

Social Media has opened other doors for reaching reporters. Posting a news release on Facebook or Tweeting at a reporter works, but under most circumstances others will see it.

UNIT 2

CREATING NEWS

KEY TOPICS

- News outlets
- Tools and methods
- Speaking to the media

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the nuances of the news business
- Knowing how different media work
- Tips for getting noticed by each type of media
- Ground rules for interviews
- How to write a press release
- When to have a news conference

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Feeding the beast, as television producers refer to finding content for their ravenous 24-hour news cycle, has given rise to the “talking-head” phenomenon. Talking heads are the subject matter “experts” seen time and again on television news. They may be retired military officers, scientific researchers, ex-policemen, former diplomats, pollsters and the like. Subject matter “experts” don’t end up in those positions by accident. They work themselves there by creating the perception that they are thought leaders. With a clear understanding of your “personal brand,” several meaningful, lively anecdotes on hand and some cultivation of TV bookers, editors, producers and reporters, anyone can become a person that the media seeks out on a regular basis when they need someone to comment on your area of expertise.

Dialogue practitioners can't establish themselves thought leaders without real substance, such as career accomplishments, books, speeches and scholarly papers. Dialogue practitioners should promote those elements that make them stand out as leaders through the social media techniques learned in the earlier training sessions. Make sure to regularly appear on the social media streams of decision-makers in the news business. It only takes one good appearance on CNN or another major network to become thought of as a "go-to" talking head in a booker's Rolodex. Once there, they will come back over and over; and so will their competitors on other networks.

**Make sure to regularly appear on the social media streams
of decision-makers in the news business.**

PRINT MEDIA

The print media find sources among television talking heads, but their needs are a bit different when it comes to taking advantage of thought leaders. They may quote you from time to time, but frequently what they lack is someone with a deep understanding of an issue to simply explain the nuances. An interreligious dialogue practitioner can build up goodwill with a reporter -- and a chit or two to call-in for a story that really matters – if time is taken to explain a story to a reporter.

Take time to explain a story to a reporter.

This type of conversation is referred to as a backgrounder, which means the reporter will not quote you, and if he needs some type of attribution, it will be something like an "industry insider, someone close to the negotiations or senior official."

Ground Rules For Talking to the Media

Be absolutely sure to establish the ground rules for attribution before starting any conversation with a reporter. And repeat them during the interview.

It's always safer to stay "on the record," which means the reporter can quote and attribute information to the interviewee.

The interviewee may want to go on "background" to convey information to a reporter that he does not want attributed to him or his organization. In that case, tell the reporter the preferred attribution, for example "Austrian diplomat", "council leader" or "a source involved in the discussion".

Do not go off the record" unless the reporter is trusted and the information is so sensitive that someone else must verify it. Many people think off the record means the reporter can't use a piece of information under any circumstance.

NEWS RELEASES

Sometimes dialogue practitioners will have an announcement, for example the visit of a dignitary, the appointment of a new leader, a rally, or the release of a report, and want to announce it to all media outlets in a community, city, region or nation. In those cases, it is not practical to contact each journalist separately. In these cases, a **press release** can be a good platform. In some cities, the Associated Press maintains what is known as a "Day Book," which is essentially a calendar of newsworthy events. Contact the closest AP office and inquire if they have a Day Book, and request that they include your event.

The best press releases are no more than one page, with the main development and a few relevant facts, a good quote from someone within your organization and a way for the reporter to follow-up for more information. One generally wants to give the journalist enough to pique his interest so that he calls, but not so much that he can write a story that relies exclusively on a press release.

Trainees should create lists of reporters they plan to send a news release via email, and there are many good software solutions tailored for this purpose, such as Radian 6, Vocus and Cision.

Some organizations will transmit a news release **embargoed** for use at a later time, but more often than not the embargo will be broken before that date. Don't send a news release out until it is ready to be used by the media. There may be some cases where an organization "leaks" it to one agency in advance, but those types of deals are tricky and frequently go wrong.

Constructing a Press Release

PARIS, France July 16 __ (This is the DATELINE format) The first paragraph should convey a general sense of the main news or news hook.

(One line between each paragraph)

"This will be the first time two such diverse groups have come together for a face-to-face dialogue," said XXX XXX, a spokesman for the XXX XXX (The second paragraph should be a quote from the main newsmaker or a spokesperson for the organization saying why this news is important.)

(The next several paragraphs should convey the facts and details.)

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

RELIEF GROUPS LAUNCH INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOL

WASHINGTON DC May 15__ In a world where hundreds of millions of people have been affected or displaced the past two years by disasters like Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines or the unrest in Syria, a consortium of international emergency response groups launched a free online training tool today that breaks new ground in coordinating relief efforts, building capacity in local organizations, explaining funding and detailing universal humanitarian principles.

Leaders of the consortium -- comprised of first response groups International Medical Corps and Concern Worldwide, along with Harvard University's Humanitarian Initiative – said unique aspects of the online course include optimization for low band width usage by local agencies in nations impacted by disasters, access to it through hand-held devices, development by and for first responders, and its reliance on simulation-based learning.

The U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance Director Jeremy Konyndyk, said, "Building a Better Response is a superior solution for training humanitarian responders because it was developed by NGO practitioners who understand that in the fast-paced, high-stress humanitarian profession, easily accessible and applied training is essential to making real progress in our work."

International Medical Corps President & CEO Nancy Aossey said the consortium's efforts focused on determining what a broad range of practitioners think are the best ways to coordinate emergency response, foster cooperation and save lives during a disaster.

"Input from groups around the world with deep operational experience was crucial to the development of this program," Aossey said. "The collaboration and insights of our colleagues were invaluable in the tool's development."

The online course offers participants a certificate from the Humanitarian Academy at Harvard University, where the platform was developed after close coordination with more than 400 national and international NGO staff and industry experts.

Concern Worldwide U.S. CEO Dr. Joseph Cahalan said, "by better understanding the system, NGO staff – and others working in the humanitarian field – will be able to participate more fully and ultimately be more effective. This program helps fill a gap in our collective knowledge, which, at the end of the day, benefits those we rush to help during emergencies."

The online tool, which can be accessed at BuildingABetterResponse.org, consists of five units: the Foundation of Humanitarian Action; the International Humanitarian Architecture, the Cluster Approach; Planning and Funding the Humanitarian Response; and International Law and Humanitarian Standards.

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PRESS CONFERENCES

Staging a press conference is another method for addressing a large group of reporters, and taking their questions.

NEWS CONFERENCE BASICS

- Announce a news conference – date, time, venue, speakers and general relevance – through a news release or Daybook post.
- Be prepared for a low turnout and select the venue accordingly. It's always a better optic if the room is so full that some attendees have to stand.
- Make sure well ahead of time that the equipment and presentations work as expected.
- Schedule the news conference well in advance of media deadlines if you can. Mid-morning often works well, and serving a beverage and something small to eat will attract reporters.
- Script every minute of the news conference, accepting that it will invariably not go as planned.
- Deliver an opening statement. Use visuals, such as photographs, charts or Power Points to illustrate your presentation.

UNIT 3

DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGES

KEY TOPICS

- Messages
- Addressing the media

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- What is a message
- How to develop a message
- Delivering your message
- Techniques for dealing difficult questions

Among the most common mistakes people make when approaching, or being approached by, the news media or addressing an audience is not having a clear agenda — or goal — for what they want to achieve. Before conducting an interview or doing a presentation, establish an agenda and goals for the encounter.

DEVELOPING MESSAGES

A “message” is simply the way in which one packages what she wants to say in a concise, direct way that can be understood by people of all ages, backgrounds and educational level. In developing an agenda, the key is to keep the main messages simple, which means no technical jargon or “insider” terminology, and then stick to those messages. When developing an agenda ask:

- **Who Do I Need to Reach? (Audiences)**
- **What Do I Want Them to Think? (Perceive about my organization)**
- **What Do I Need Them (Audiences) to Know?**
- **What Do I Want Them (Audiences) to Do? (Action items)**

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING MESSAGES FOR AN INTERVIEW

Keep four agenda items in mind:

1. What should the “headline” be? Look over the three or four key messages and find the one that best describes what should be conveyed. This helps focus the agenda. As described below, “pivot” back to the main messages when the conversation becomes difficult or goes off topic.

2. What messages should not be in the story? Be prepared to answer questions opponents or critics may raise. Are there misconceptions? Address those by coming up with messages to counter the misconceptions.
3. Are the messages appropriate to each audience? The information conveyed to a counterpart in another dialogue programme will need to be technical. However, this same information must be presented in a less technical way to be understood by most reporters, lawmakers and the public.

DELIVERING KEY MESSAGES:

1. **State the key message up front and often.** Don't wait for the interviewer to ask questions pertinent to the messages. Begin the interview with a quick overview of the organization, project or issue that incorporates the key messages. Then answer the reporter's questions. For example, "I'd be happy to discuss that, but first let me briefly explain where we are in the process of cleaning up this chemical spill. . . "
2. **Simplify, simplify, simplify.** This may well be the hardest part of delivering messages, particularly with subjects like religion or science. However, keeping it simple is the only option for reporters. Tight deadlines and limited space or airtime require reporters to simplify even the most complex subjects. If a story is not simplified for reporters, they will simplify it themselves and chances are critical information will be lost in the translation.

Simplifying messages?

- Get rid of the technical jargon and state what an acronym means (e.g., CERCLA, ATSDR, etc.)
- Rule of three. Convey three key messages per interview or presentation.
- Think in terms of 10-second soundbites. Each message should be no more than a short sentence long. This helps ensure that your message will be used in its entirety.
- Use analogies where appropriate. (Level of risk, size of a particle, etc.) Example: "Cleaning crude oil from a mangrove marsh is a lot like trying to clean a sponge used to clean bacon grease from a frying pan. . ."

3. **Dealing with difficult questions.** Do not give detractors extra air time or ink by spending too much time discussing his or her point of view. Dismiss negative questions quickly and calmly, and then pivot back to your main message—the important issue for the target audience, viewers or readers. For example, if asked “isn’t it true that the EPA has done nothing to clean up this site . . .” respond: “On the contrary, much has been achieved over the past decade . . .” then state the facts. This brings the conversation back to your area of strength.

Transitions

Remember the following words to help take control of the interview:

- FLAGS (highlights something you want the journalist/audience to remember):
The most important thing to remember... Overall...The bottom line... The true benefit...
- BRIDGES (removes you from difficult questions)
In fact...
On the contrary...
The data/numbers show...
I’m glad you asked...

UNIT 4

INTERVIEWS

KEY TOPICS

- Media interview methodology
- Media interview philosophy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- How to prepare for an interview
- What to expect in an interview
- Nuances of dealing with different media interviews: TV, Print, E-mail

- Making points during an interview
- Dealing with controversial subjects and aggressive interviewers

While interviews, particularly when they are live on television or radio, may be stressful and potentially risky, there is no better way to advance a cause, organization or issue than speaking directly to an audience. For discussion of potentially controversial subjects, such as religion, interviews give dialogue practitioners a way to convey a message of tolerance and understanding to thousands of people simultaneously, in a way that would not be possible from a mosque, church, temple or synagogue.

The practical guidelines in this training will help one feel as comfortable as possible during an interview, and to take the best advantage of an opportunity to encourage responsible religious dialogue.

AT-A-GLANCE INTERVIEW TIPS

Following are some simple tips for working with the news media to keep handy.

In General

- **Be prepared.** Give some thought beforehand to the types of questions — negative and positive — that might be asked. Determine what three or so key points you want to make. Start off with them or find a way to make them in every interview.
- **Know what questions the reporter will ask.** Unless the interview is “live,” and few are, ask the reporter what general questions he or she will ask in the interview. This helps enhances understanding of the angle the reporter will take for his or her story and gives time to gather facts and figures, if needed.
- **Get to the point.** Don’t ramble. For print and broadcast interviews think in terms of “sound bites” — short, succinct responses that quickly convey key messages.
- **Stick to key messages.** Reporters will ask a variety of questions to “loosen up” the interviewee and get her to speak candidly about a variety of topics. Be friendly, but be firm in guiding the interview back to the subject.
- **Answer questions honestly.** Be direct. Don’t lie, mislead or misrepresent the facts. However, this doesn’t mean you have to discuss personal or confidential information. If asked about those types of, don’t be afraid to say, “I can’t respond to that.”

- Assume EVERYTHING said is on-the-record. That means everything you say or email to a reporter could wind up in a news story. Even the way you decline to answer a question can convey information to a reporter. Be careful of speaking candidly after the TV lights are turned off or as the reporters put away their notebooks. That's when many reporters get their best, off-the-cuff quotes.
- Avoid saying “no comment” — even if you have no comment. When printed or broadcast, it appears as if one has something to hide. If one really can’t respond, be straightforward and say, “I’m afraid I’m not in a position to answer your question. You will have to look elsewhere for an answer.”
- Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know.” This also goes for saying “I can’t answer that at this time.” It is far better to be safe than sorry by venturing a possibly incorrect guess to an answer.
- Avoid using jargon or technical terms. If this is unavoidable, take a minute to explain what the term means and its relevance to the public. Along these lines, explain what acronyms or abbreviations mean.
- Be polite and courteous. With a hostile interviewer, don’t become defensive. With anger comes loss of credibility.
- Honor the reporter’s deadline. Every print, radio, TV and online reporter has a deadline — even during a crisis. And thanks to YouTube, Twitter and other social media applications, news delivery is 24/7. If dialogue practitioners fail to meet deadlines or otherwise communicate with their audiences, the story is going to be developed without your input. If reporters call and one is not prepared to talk at that time, ask for their deadlines and then get back to them in a timely fashion.

TV INTERVIEW POINTERS

Television gives a dialogue practitioner the opportunity associate a face with a message, which facilitates a strong connection with the viewers. Interviewees don’t have to be film stars to impress someone in the audience. As a matter of fact, the strongest connections are often made when the viewers see that the interviewee is just a normal person like them.

- Again, think “soundbite.” Speak in whole, short sentences when answering a reporter’s question. This may mean repeating part of the question on camera.
- Relax. Granted, this may be easier said than done, but here are a few suggestions: Take a few deep breaths before speaking. Look the questioner in the eye and

respond in a natural, animated manner, just as if you were talking to a next-door neighbor. Don't be afraid of a two- or three-second pause while you collect your thoughts.

- **Quell nervous mannerisms.** This means no knuckle-cracking, smirking, twitching, nose wiping, shifting eyes, etc. Try to control the “ers” and “uhs.”
- **Ignore the camera** unless otherwise directed. While TV anchors are trained to talk to the camera, it's best to keep eyes on the questioner so that one does not appear shifty or uncomfortable, which can create a perception of dishonesty. The exception to this is when only the cameraperson is present and directs the interviewee to look at the camera or when the interviewer is off site and relays questions via an earpiece. (Ask to practice a few questions looking into the camera before the interview begins.)
- **Slow down.** Don't rush answers. It is best to appear thoughtful, confident and accurate. One doesn't want to make mistakes of fact or tone just because a camera is rolling.
- **Tame the sheen.** All of us have facial “hot spots” that appear shiny in bright light. When televised, these spots can look like perspiration, which makes us appear nervous or, worse, untruthful. Apply a small amount of translucent (non-glittery) powder to “hot spots” prior to interviews. In some cases, the television station will have someone on hand to take care of makeup and hair styling.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for a “re-take” during a taped interview.** In most cases, the interview will not be shot “live.” It will be taped for airing at a later time. Remember, TV reporters and anchors do “re-takes” all the time.
- **After the interview, make sure the sound is off.** If wearing a lavalier microphone (a small device that clips to your clothes), be sure to switch the attached transmitter to the “off” position immediately after the interview. Many a telling or embarrassing moment has been recorded when interviewees have wandered off with the microphone on.

EMAIL INTERVIEWS

Many interviews today are conducted entirely by email. Be especially vigilant of how you respond to these inquiries. Just as one would with a phone or in-person interviews, carefully assess the reporter's questions and how best to respond. Remember never put in writing anything that shouldn't appear on a blog site half-way around the world. Even though email

seems like a more precise and sure way of expressing a point of view, control of the narrative leaves a dialogue practitioner's hands the second the 'send' button is pressed. Don't underestimate the degree to which words can be taken out of context or used in the opposite way in which they were intended. **As a best practice, email is not a good tool for an interview.**

UNIT 5

Putting Dialogue in the News

KEY TOPICS

- Earned media and interreligious dialogue practitioners
- How earned media enables dialogue

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, trainees will be able to:

- What's newsworthy about what I do
- News hooks and anecdotes for interreligious dialogue practitioners
- What kind of 'talking head' can I be
- How do I develop interreligious messages

It is time to put into practice what's been taught. This training does not exist in the abstract, and it's meant to be applied in the day-to-day work of an interreligious dialogue practitioner. For the next few hours there will be several training activities in which trainees will be asked to incorporate the content of this curriculum into real-life scenarios that could confront an interreligious dialogue practitioner in the field.

MODULE 2

ACTIVITIES

MESSAGING

Trainees should use examples from their own interreligious dialogue work.

- (1) What are you talking to the media about?
 - (2) Who are you representing for the media (yourself, an organization, a candidate, some other entity)?
 - (3) What are you trying to accomplish?
 - (4) What are the three main selling points for accomplishing this thing?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - (5) What are the three questions you are most afraid of answering?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

Pitch Call

Trainees will practice the techniques – such as “newsjacking” and thought leadership – they have learned to convince a reporter or producer to cover an actual issue they deal with in their work.

Print Interviews

The instructor will conduct friendly and unfriendly interviews with volunteers from the audience. Participants will discuss the results, based on what they have learned in the training.

TV Interviews

The instructor will conduct a few filmed interviews with trainees. The group will watch and critique the recorded interview, based on what they have learned in the training.

CONCLUSION

In a world where volume of information sometimes feels inversely proportional to quality of understanding, knowledge of how to use media to deliver a message of peace and friendship is invaluable. Working in tandem, Social Media and Communications are the two components of a single, powerful material – media – for use in the formulation, delivery, amplification and sustainability of ideas, principles and beliefs.

For better or worse, modern communications technologies and new media tools are bringing the people of the world into closer proximity on many levels. Just as wonder and joy and solidarity in one part of the world can be shared instantly with another, so too sorrows and violence and hatred that once seemed confined to foreign shores now touch everyone's homeland. And with this new virtual proximity come new conversations – new human communities exchanging unfamiliar ideas across traditional boundaries with a directness and immediacy both bewildering and liberating.

There are religious leaders and interreligious dialogue initiatives shining a bright light of good even into the darkest, most sorrowful and cynical spaces on earth.

There are religious leaders and interreligious dialogue initiatives shining a bright light of good even into the darkest, most sorrowful and cynical spaces on earth. Their stories need telling as much or more so than all the tales of misery and suffering that dominate the world's daily news output. As this training program has hopefully demonstrated, it is through thoughtful engagement with communications and social media by dialogue practitioners that the good stories, too, will rise above the din and be heard and embraced by people. Media – the material in the middle between what is and what might be – is the key.

