Creating a Facebook presence

The online social network Facebook has become the most popular of its kind in recent years. As well as allowing individuals to keep in touch with their friends, it is also used extensively by groups and organisations of all sizes to promote their events, exhibitions and performances, to provide a means of communication between their current members and supporters, and to attract new participants from all walks of life.

This briefing will explain the principles of using Facebook and the reasons your arts group may wish to do so. It will concentrate on the basic processes of registering on the site and setting up a simple page, whilst emphasising the importance of protecting your personal and private information.

Note: occasionally, Facebook changes certain features or the way things look on the site, and this may affect how you sign up, alter your settings, create a page, etc. This briefing is correct at the time of going to press, but if you find that things have changed, please get in touch with us at info@communitydance.org.uk

A. What is Facebook and why should we use it?

Facebook is a social network – an Internet site where you can create a 'profile'. A profile is a part of the site that's about you, and which you control – it includes information about yourself, your hobbies and interests, photos, etc. From there, you can link up with people you know and interact with them in various ways, such as messaging them, chatting with them, inviting them to events, 'tagging' them in photos, etc.

Organisations can create pages to showcase their work so people can then become fans of them. Fans can interact with the organisation's page by writing on the wall (like a bulletin board), posting photos, commenting on the posts of others, etc. They also receive updates about the organisation's activities on their news feed (the screen that appears each time you visit Facebook).

Foundation for Community Dance has a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/communitydance. You have to be signed up to Facebook to be able to interact (post comments, etc.), but anyone can view the page.

Facebook is a great platform for promoting your group, for a whole number of reasons:
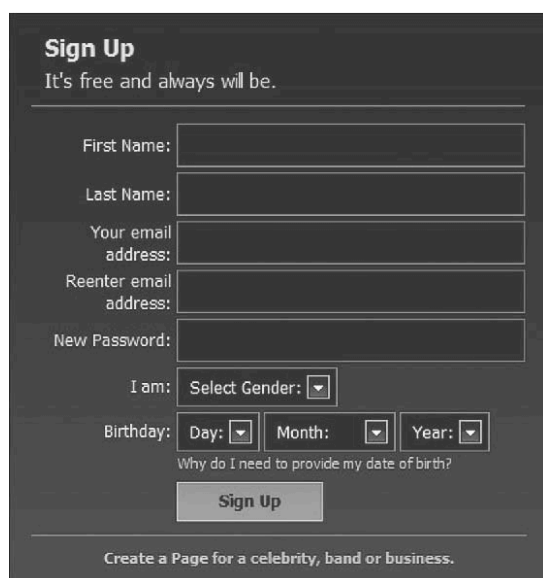
- There is a ready-made audience of millions of people that are easy for you to reach (in July 2010, the UK had 26,543,600 Facebook users – a staggering 43 per cent of the population, and it's growing all the time*)
- Many people are familiar with Facebook pages and know how they work
- It is easy to set up a page for your group and is less daunting than setting up a website
- You can post links to your own website if you have one so that people can find out more information
- You can post events on Facebook, invite your friends and ask them to indicate whether or not they are planning on attending
- It's free!

* Source: Nick Burcher at www.nickburcher.com/2010/07/facebook-usage-statistics-by-country.html
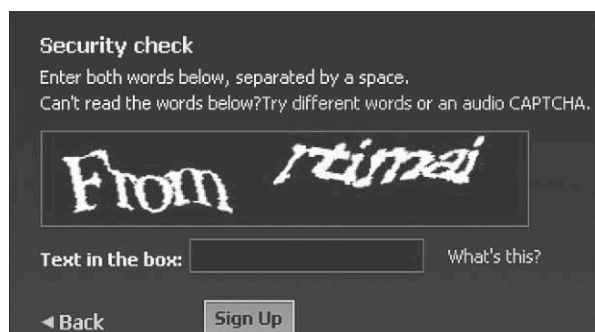
B. Signing up to Facebook

If you haven't already got a Facebook account, the first thing you will need to do is create one. This needs to be under your name as an individual (e.g. Joe Taylor) and not your group name (e.g. Newcastle Dancemakers). Don't worry about any of this information being made public without your consent – you have full control over who sees your details (see the section on privacy). If you're using Facebook already, you can just login with your existing username and skip to Section C.

1. Go to www.facebook.com and fill in your details in the box on the right-hand side.

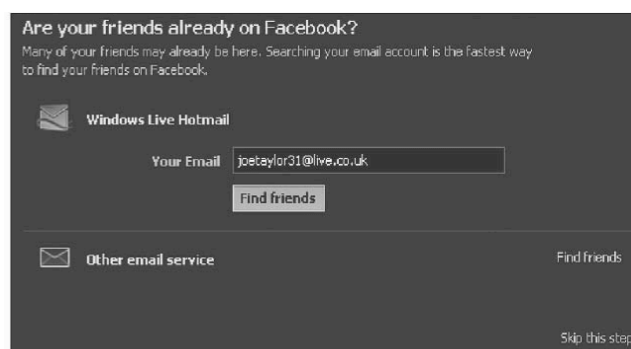When you've finished, click the green 'Sign Up' box.

2. You will then be asked to do a security check to make sure you're a human! Just type the words into the box below and click 'Sign Up' again.

Note: your words will differ from those above as they are randomly generated.

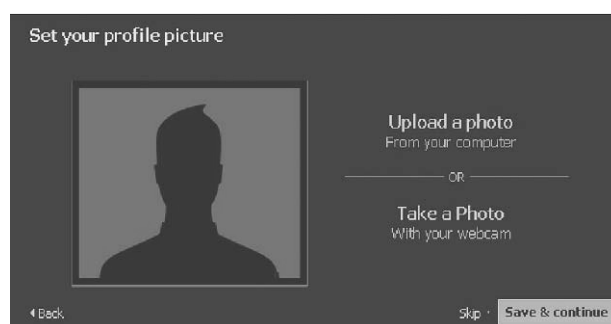3. Facebook will then offer to find people you know who are already on Facebook by going through your email address book. You can either go ahead with this or simply skip this step.

4. You will then be asked to fill in some information for your profile, but again you can skip this if you want.

5. You will then be asked to add a profile picture. It is a good idea to add a picture as it helps people to recognise you on Facebook. You can upload a picture from your computer or use your webcam to take a picture. Again, you can skip this step if you prefer.


If you choose to look for a picture on your computer, you will be able to browse through the folders on your hard-drive to the photo of your choice.

6. You will then be presented with a welcome screen that will be filled with the information you have entered so far. You can add as much or as little additional information as you wish.
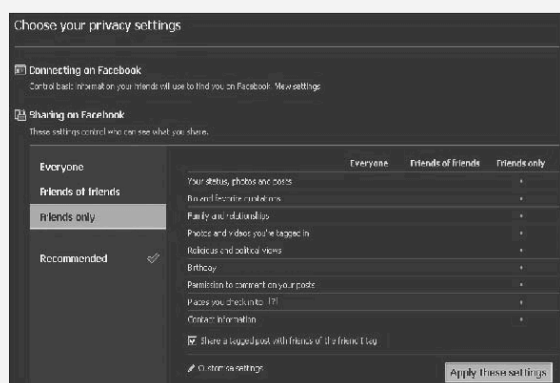
Privacy

Many people are rightly concerned about their privacy when using sites like Facebook. This needn't be a worry and it's important to remember that you are in control of any information that you share. If you don't want people to know what school you went to, for instance, then don't put it on Facebook. You can also control your privacy settings to make sure that only the people you allow can see your details. To change your privacy settings, follow these steps:

1. Go to 'Account' at the top right and choose 'Privacy Settings' from the dropdown menu. Click 'Apply these settings' to save your changes.
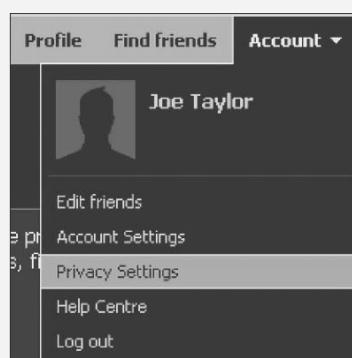
2. Under 'Sharing on Facebook' it is advisable to change the setting from 'Recommended' to 'Friends only'. This means that only people who you have chosen to be your friends on Facebook will be able to see your information – it will not be viewable by strangers.

3. If you wish to further customise your privacy settings, click 'Customise settings'.

Facebook provides a good overview of its privacy measures at www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php

C. Making connections on Facebook

Finding your way around

The bar at the top of the screen will help you navigate your way around the site. Working from left to right:

 The icon that is a silhouette of people shows if you have any friend requests.

 If you have friend requests it will look like this. Click the icon to find out who wants to be your friend and accept or reject their request.

 The next icon along is your inbox, which will show you if you have any messages. This is very similar to email, in that messages are private and only viewable by the sender and recipient(s).

 The next icon shows any notifications. This will let you know if anyone has written on your wall, tagged a photo of you or replied to any of your posts.
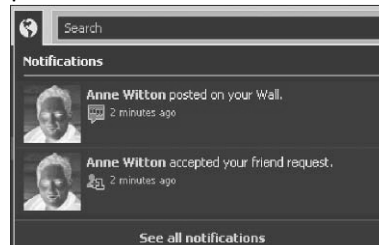
The search box is fairly self-explanatory and will let you search for friends, interest groups and pages of organisations.

 The 'Home' button takes you to your home screen, which shows a news feed of all your friends' activity. This is where you can see what people are up to, photos that they have added, etc.

 The 'Profile' button takes you to your profile page. This is what your friends see when they click on your name and this is where you can share photos, videos and news.
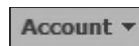
 Finally, the 'Account' button helps you manage the administration of your account.

Hopefully you will have already changed your privacy settings. You can also use this menu to sort your friends into categories and change your account settings, but the most useful features are the help centre and the log out option.

- The help centre is the place to go if you get stuck when using Facebook, or if you want to know more about how a particular feature works.
- Make sure that you log out of Facebook when you have finished, especially if you're using a shared computer.

The difference between public and private posting

Most pages, whether they represent individuals or organisations, feature a 'wall'. This is the place where you can post messages, photos and links to other pages on the Internet, as well as comment on, or 'like', other people's posts. Remember that any posts you make on someone's wall, including your own, are visible to all of their friends, or even, depending on their privacy settings, everyone on Facebook.

If you want to send someone a message of a private nature, don't use their wall. Instead, send them a private message using the messaging service accessible through the messaging icon in the navigation bar (see previous page).

Interacting with FCD's page
Now that you're on Facebook, you can interact with FCD on our page. Type 'Foundation for Community Dance' into the search box or www.facebook.com/communitydance into the address bar of your browser.

Remember that when you interact on an organisation's page, everyone will be able to see it, so make sure that what you write or post is something you're happy to share with the general public. This can be a great way to raise the profile of your group, recruit members or advertise events.

Some of the things that you might want to do:

- 'Become a fan' – you will need to do this in order to be able to post messages and photos. Simply click 'Like' next to our name

You may be required to fill in a security check, which just involves typing two randomly-generated words into a box. This is to check that you are a human and not a spamming robot!

- You can comment on existing posts – just click 'Comment' under the post
- You can also express support or agreement with a post simply by clicking 'Like', and share a post on your profile wall by clicking 'Share' (you have the option of adding your own comment when you share a post too)
- If you would like to add your own post to the wall, simply write your comments in the box where it says 'Write something...'

D. Creating a page for your group
The page you set up for your group will be the main place people come to find out about what you do.

Once you have set it up, you (and anyone else you select to be an administrator of the page) can post the group. This means that anything you post on your page will appear as though it has been added by the group, for example, 'Newcastle Dancemakers' rather than 'Joe Taylor'. This way, you can interact with fans of the page without having to use your own personal profile.

To set up the page:

- Visit www.facebook.com/pages/create.php
- Select 'Company, organisation or institution'

- Select type of organisation – either 'community organisation' or 'non-profit organisation'
- Type in the name of the organisation

- Click the tick box that says 'I agree to Facebook Pages terms' and then click 'Get started'

- When your page has been set up you can add basic information about your group, such as the description, web address, address and when it was founded, and add a profile picture (this can be your logo or a photograph that will give people a good idea about what you do)

- To edit or add any additional information about your group at a later stage, or to change your picture, click 'Edit page' at the top right-hand corner of your page

- To add another administrator to the page, click 'Edit page' and then 'Manage admins'

- Select from your list of friends who you would like to give admin status to, and then click 'Save changes'. The new administrator will be able to edit and post on the page just as you can.

Now your page has been created, you can start populating its wall with posts, links and photos. Anything you add to the page will appear on the news feeds of the people that are fans of the page.

When using images of people, you have a legal obligation to them to get written permission to do so from them, the photographer and, if relevant, your employer and be clear with them about where you are going to share the images.

Creating a username

The default web address of your page will be something similar in format to www.facebook.com/pages/CommunityDance/5846179818

If you would like something a little more concise for people to remember, you can set up a username, providing you with an address in the format www.facebook.com/communitydance

If you are an administrator of a Facebook page, you will be able to choose your username at www.facebook.com/username. There will be an option for you to choose usernames for each of the eligible pages you administer.

Please note: your page needs at least 25 fans to have a username. Check your spelling carefully before you submit – once you have created a username for your page you will not be able to alter or delete it.

We hope that you enjoy exploring and connecting with other people who love your art form as much as you do. Don't be afraid to experiment with Facebook – there's a lot more to discover which isn't covered in this guide, but hopefully we've set you on the right track.

Further Resources

FCD Information Sheets
- **Free and low-cost IT tools** (January 2011)

Voluntary Arts Briefings
- 133 – **Putting your arts or crafts group on the map – ten ways to get noticed** (March 2010)
- 122 – **Reaching out to new audiences** (December 2008)
- 114 – **The latest developments in web technology** (December 2007)
- 96 – **Networking – not just nattering** (March 2006)
- 73 – **Writing for the web** (December 2003)

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