



Communications and Social Media Guide for Committees



December, 2014

Dear Committee Member

Since the publication of the Future of the Law Society Task Force Report, the Law Society has significantly built up its communications resources. There is now capacity to provide communication advice, expertise and assistance to committees who wish to promote their work to the profession and/or the general public.

This Communications and Social Media Guide for Committees outlines how to use these resources. We have detailed our principal target audiences, key messages, and main communications channels. Given that the Law Society's latest communications channel, social media, is so new to us, we have included a special section in this Communications Guide to explain the opportunities and challenges specifically presented by Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.

The Department of Representation and Member Services comprises our communications functions including PR, the website and social media, the Gazette, Member Services and the Library. Our team can provide custom communications strategies to suit any need and we have included contact details in this Guide.

Throughout the year, I would like to invite you to consider the communications value of the work you do at the Law Society for the solicitors' profession. You may see the value of promoting a Practice Note, event or report to the membership. Perhaps you see an emerging opportunity that could affect sole practitioners; or, you may see an emerging risk that is worth sharing with all solicitors. This Guide will help you consider the communications opportunities of your committee work.

Likewise, your committees may have information that should be shared with the wider public. We are working hard to build the reputation of the solicitors' profession as one that offers value and service to clients to help vindicate their rights. We also wish, as a profession and an organization, to contribute to public life so that issues of fairness and justice are to the fore in public discourse.

While every piece of committee work contributes to the profession or the Society in some way, they may not all have mass communications value. This Guide will give you the information you need to think about the options and opportunities available to us.

As you develop your Committee budget for the coming year, I encourage you to think about your communications opportunities and plans. Of course, the impact on your budget depends on the channels you plan to use. I have indicated in the discussion of each channel whether it carries a cost.

I encourage you to get in touch with me either directly or through the secretary of your committee to discuss whether your initiative is something we need to share with the membership and/or the wider public so that we can determine a strategy together.

Kind regards,

Teri Kelly
Director of Representation and Member Services
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Target Audience

The Law Society has six principal target audiences to consider when we devise a communications strategy. These are explained below with an example of a Committee recently targeting an individual target audience.

A communications strategy may target one or many of these audiences depending on the goals of the given initiative. The target audience is the primary factor to consider when determining what mix of channels a communications strategy should include.

1. Solicitors/Law Society members

You may wish to reach members as a whole or target your message by a particular segment such as years qualified, specialism or locality. The annual Meet Your Colleagues Week held each October by the Guidance and Ethics Committee is an example of an initiative that is communicated to the entire profession using the Gazette, an eZine article, the website and social media.

2. Law Society Students

Pre-qualification, Diploma and CPD students are an important target with channels dedicated specifically to them, including through social media and the trainee website. The ADR Committee recently posted information about an event, the Domestic Arbitration workshop, on the Law Society Education Twitter channel.

3. The media

The national media is the best way to reach all audiences, including members, the general public and other stakeholders. For example, every year the Human Rights Committee Human Rights Lecture is promoted through the national media by issuing a media release. Regional media, such as local newspapers and radio stations, should also be considered when your issue impacts on a limited locality.

4. The general public

A small number of initiatives should ideally be known by every citizen of Ireland. While we may not reach everyone we will do what we can to make as much noise as we can. An example of reaching the general public was in April 2014 when the Family Law Committee welcomed the changes contained within the Children and Family Relationships Bill with a strategy that included issuing a press release to the national media and putting information on the Law Society's public website.

5. Clients or potential clients

Sometimes we wish to target a message directly to clients and potential clients of solicitors. The Guidance and Ethics Committee is currently working with the Department of Representation and Member Services to develop a communications strategy to promote the Quotations Project to potential clients of solicitors – this will include a mix of national media, website and social media channels.

6. The Government and state agencies

The Government and state agencies, such as the Courts Service and the Department of Justice, are an important target – they set policy and make decisions that directly impact the solicitors' profession. While some communications channels offered by the Department of Representation and Member Services can also reach the Government (for example through the media), the Department of Policy and Public Affairs is responsible for making submissions to the Government and State Agencies.

Key Messages

When we develop any communication, whether it is to a member or the public, we are guided by our core key messages. Every key message should be supported by proof points, which are points of evidence proving what we say is true.

The Law Society has five core key messages:

- Solicitors provide expert and valuable help throughout our lives.
- Solicitors are independent, trustworthy and respected.
- The Law Society is the ally and advocate of the solicitors' profession.
- The Law Society safeguards the public interest on issues of fairness and justice.
- The Law Society and the solicitors' profession are strong advocates for the rule of law and the protection of the rights of individual actions against any overarching of the state.

Key messages need to break through a lot of noise in order to be heard. It is only by repeating messages several times across multiple channels that there is a chance they will be heard and understood by our target audience.

Channels

Depending on your message and which target audience you wish to reach, a communications campaign can employ a number of channels, alone or in combination, that are available to the Law Society.

Committees should contact the Department of Representation and Member Services to discuss what channels will work best for their requirements, however, channels to consider include the following:

The Gazette

The multiple award-winning Gazette is rightly held up as one of our members' most valued services and it is the best way the Law Society communicates with its members and the wider public. There is no better channel to reach solicitors in Ireland. In order to place a story or mention in the Gazette, it must be relevant and helpful to our members.

The Law Society Gazette is delivered directly to 10,000 members ten times a year. Readership levels are very high and the format lends itself well to both in depth exploration of a topic or short announcements.

The Gazette is also read by interested members of the media and is available in Easons stores. Because of this public level of readership, the Gazette is not exclusively a member channel and often stories that appear here are picked up by the national media.

Cost to committees: Zero

Key Contact: Mark McDermott, Editor, Law Society Gazette, 01 6724826, mark.mcdermott@lawsociety.ie

www.lawsociety.ie

The website is an important channel that is only increasing in its significance. Visitors to the website increased 28% in 2014 to 490,000 unique visitors and 7.9 million page views.

Messages on the website can be directed to the public, student and/or member areas. We can choose to put information as a news item, unique page or make a big splash with a designed image to be displayed on the rotating carousel on the homepage.

Cost to committees: Usually zero, though design work may be required for web images, which ranges from €100-200.

Key Contact: Carmel Kelly, Web & Digital Media Manager, 01 6724829, c.kelly@lawsociety.ie

eZine and Presidential eBulletin

The Law Society limits the number of emails we send to our database of 8300 solicitor email addresses. The information we send must be genuinely helpful to our members, rather than purely self-promoting. These high standards have ensured the open-rate of our eZine and Presidential eBulletins is well above the industry average with a confirmed open rate of 35% and an estimated open rate of 56% for an average issue¹.

Our eZine, which is currently published six times a year, contains 6-10 articles per issue that are of interest to members. On the other hand, we send Presidential eBulletins only when very important, often breaking, news items arise – usually twelve times per year.

Cost to committees: Zero

Key Contact: Carmel Kelly, Web & Digital Media Manager, 01 6724829, c.kelly@lawsociety.ie

¹ The **open rate** metric is based on readers clicking at least one link or downloading the images contained in the newsletter. The **estimated open rate** metric is an adjustment metric, calculated by including an estimate of those who read the email but did not download images or click any links.

The Media

Unlike the previous channels mentioned here which are owned and controlled by the Law Society, we cannot control the media nor what they say or write about us. We can only influence them but never control them. The media will write or say only what they wish to write or say. Because of this, communicating via the media carries inherent risks.

Likewise, a story must be newsworthy to gain coverage and coverage is never guaranteed. The Department of Representation and Member Services can advise whether media coverage is possible for a given issue. It is generally easier to secure regional, rather than national, media coverage.

Despite these limitations, communicating a message through the media is the most powerful channel we have at our disposal with the power to reach every newspaper reader in Ireland including the public, members, politicians and other stakeholders.

Reaching the media is usually done through a press release; however other methods can be used, including background briefings to individual journalists and photo calls.

Cost to committees: Usually zero, though there may be photography costs for photo calls of approximately €200-300.

Key Contact: Kathy McKenna, PR Coordinator, 01 6724915, k.mckenna@lawsociety.ie

Direct mailing, leaflets, and other printed material

As our electronic means of communication improve, distributing information by printed material is becoming less worthwhile. There is an enormous amount of cost associated with this channel and its effectiveness is limited.

However, when the information you wish to distribute has a long shelf-life and will be referenced several times by a reader it may be worthwhile to print and widely distribute the communication. The Guide for Good Professional Conduct, which was developed by the Guidance and Ethics Committee, is one such example.

Cost to committees: Professional design, printing and distribution costs vary widely depending on the terms of a project. Discuss your plans with us and we can give you an estimate.

Key Contact: Sinead Travers, Practitioner Support Executive, 01 8815772, s.travers@lawsociety.ie

Events and Face-to-Face

Launch and other events are also becoming less useful as electronic means of communication take over. They are expensive and it can be difficult getting enough people to attend, for example, a reception to launch an initiative. The exception to this rule is when a high profile guest is able to attend an event to speak, which can lead to public relations and other communications value.

However, face-to-face visits, for example, to Bar Associations can be a powerful way to reach the membership. Depending on the Bar Association, messages can be disseminated quite quickly to the local membership.

Cost to committees: Catering and travel costs vary widely depending on the terms of a project. Discuss your plans with us and we can give you an estimate.

Key Contact: Kathy McKenna, PR Coordinator, 01 6724915, k.mckenna@lawsociety.ie

New Channel – Social Media

Social media is a new channel to the Law Society; therefore, it requires slightly more in-depth analysis in this Guide.

We launched our presence on social media in 2014 and we are gaining followers all the time across our Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook channels. In addition to our main social media channels, we have targeted accounts for education and career support audiences. Social media is particularly good at pushing visitors to our website and for reaching younger members of the profession.

The Web and Social Media Coordinator is responsible for making all posts to the Law Society's social media channels. If you have information you think should be posted to one of the Law Society's social media channels, you, or your committee secretary, should contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator directly to discuss.

Cost to committees: Zero

Key Contact: Derek Owens, Web and Social Media Coordinator, 01 6724924, d.owens@lawsociety.ie

Interacting with the Law Society's social media channels

While you will not be able to post directly on the Law Society's social media channels, we encourage you to interact with and share our posts from your personal account. You can interact with these channels from your own social media account through a number of actions, including Liking, Commenting, Sharing and Retweeting our posts, depending on which social media website you're using.

If you comment on one of our posts, you may wish to identify yourself as affiliated to the Law Society, by either including it in your post, or having the information written into your own profile.

Precautions

We've all heard about the dangers to privacy and reputation that social media can present. It's not all bad, of course, and social media offers many opportunities to build relationships and share information. However, you should be aware of the risks and should always use social media in an appropriate manner. Be mindful that what you publish will likely be publicly viewable. You should also take care to understand a website's terms of service.

If you identify yourself as your professional identity on social media, this increases your obligation to ensure that you use it in a responsible manner. Ensure that any profile and related content you create is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues and the public.

You should also respect the privacy of your colleagues. You should not share any personal data or images of them without their permission.

Be wary that social media can attract negative commentators and 'spammers'. If you come into contact with someone making derogatory comments on your pages, do not respond to them and report the comment to the social media provider. If you ever require assistance on this matter or on technical matters relating to social media, please contact the Web and Social Media Coordinator.

Twitter

Twitter is the signpost of social media. Tweets are limited to 140 characters which means they are useful for simple messages, images or, most effectively, links to content posted on the Law Society website or elsewhere online.

We have three targeted Twitter accounts including the main Law Society Twitter, Education Twitter and Job Ads Twitter. Unless your post is exclusively dedicated to education or job ads, it should go on the main Twitter feed.

Tweets can be purely promotional communication about Committee work, similar to other Law Society communication channels. An example of this kind of Tweet from the PR Committee, and featuring a photo, is below:

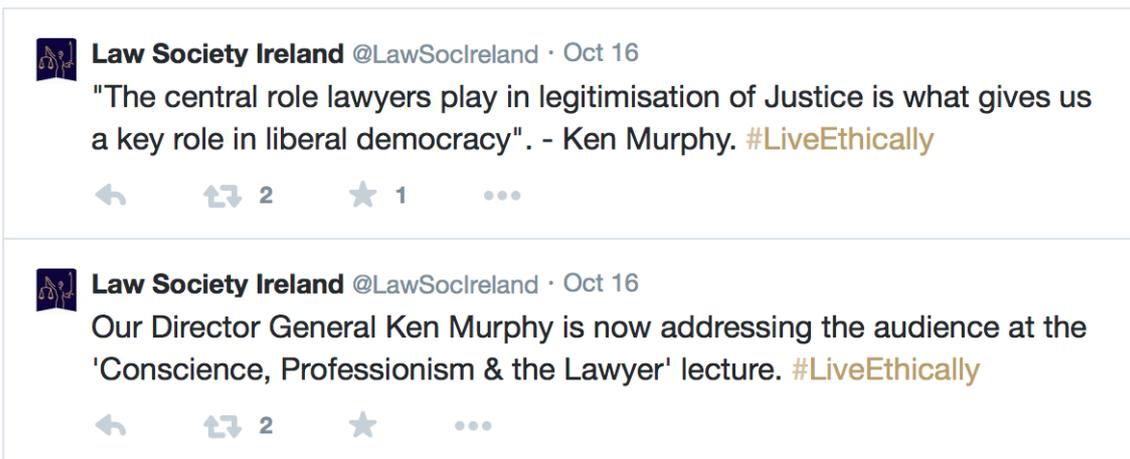


However, our Twitter channels are also a place to post information you feel would be of interest to our followers. Our followers include a mix of members, students, journalists, and others interested in the Law Society and the work of solicitors. Two examples of informational Tweets are below:



Another possibility for Committees who wish to use Twitter is the option to 'Live-Tweet' events which can bring additional energy and interest to conferences and other major Law Society events. By tweeting interesting points made at the event every few minutes, people who were unable to attend get the benefit of much of the discussion.

By creating a unique hashtag other attendees can also tweet their experience of the event. Recently, we live-Tweeted the 'Conscience, Professionalism & the Lawyer' Professional Training lecture held in Blackhall Place by including the hashtag #liveethically in each post. Examples of two Tweets from the event are below:



On Twitter we encourage you to follow the Law Society Twitter channels including the main Law Society Twitter, Education Twitter and Job Ads Twitter. We would also encourage you to Retweet, comment on and Favourite individual Tweets from your personal account if you wish.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the professional's social media channel and operates as an online networking location between peers as well as a recruitment and job search tool. LinkedIn lends itself well to host discussions among members to, for example, solicit views on Law Society policy positions. The Law Society has three main LinkedIn Groups including our Members-only Group, Legal Vacancies Group, and Education Group.

On LinkedIn, you can Like or comment on posts and you can join Groups using your personal LinkedIn profile. We encourage you to interact with the Law Society on LinkedIn in any of these ways, particularly by joining the Members-only Group, Legal Vacancies Group, and Education Group.

Only members or staff of the Law Society are permitted to join the Members-only Group and discussions are only viewable to members. This is a place where discussions between colleagues are encouraged and the Law Society only makes posts here on very rare occasions. We prefer, instead, to have interested parties make the posts themselves using their own profile. Therefore, if Committees wish to promote their work using LinkedIn, they are encouraged to post it themselves using their own LinkedIn profile. Our team can advise you on how best to do this.

Three examples of posts to the LinkedIn Members-only Group are below:



Law Society Library “Precedents” sale promotion 22 July – 22 August

Mary Gaynor

We are promoting our large range of precedents from published sources by offering electronic delivery of the selected precedents at reduced prices for a limited period.
The popular ...

Like (3) • Comment • Follow • 1 month ago

👍 [madeleine thornton](#), [Katherine Kane](#) and 1 other like this



Diversity helping to change the face of our legal profession

Teri Kelly

Legal profession not what it used to be... have you noticed the change? My OpEd from Friday explores the issues.

[Diversity helping to change the face of our legal profession -... independent.ie](#)

Last night, Charlie Flanagan, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, addressed 85 newly qualified solicitors at their parchment ceremony.

Like (1) • Comment • Unfollow • 2 months ago

👍 [David Curran](#) likes this



Car rental companies told to cease differential pricing for customers based on the location indicated by their IP address

Liz Quinn



[European Commission Challenges Differential Pricing by Car Rental... buff.ly](#)

The European Commission has challenged the practice by car rental companies of using consumers’ countries of origin and IP addresses to determine the price that they are charged, alleging that this constitutes a form of discrimination.

Like • Comment (2) • Follow • 18 days ago

 **James Heney** Harks back to the early days of the Data Protection Act, when discrimination by mail order companies based on the location of addresses was ...
16 days ago

 **Deirdre Kilroy** Thanks Liz.
14 days ago

Facebook

Facebook is the noticeboard of social media channels – it excels at displaying rich content like photos, videos and longer written content. The Law Society has a main Facebook page and three Education Centre pages for pre-qualification students, Diplomas and Professional Training. Facebook is particularly useful reaching younger social media users including junior solicitors and students.

On Facebook you can Like, Comment or Share any post made by a third-party. We would encourage you to do any of these actions to Law Society posts from your personal Facebook account.

An example of the Human Rights Committee using this channel is below:



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the Law Society of Ireland. At the top left is the Law Society of Ireland logo, a scale of justice. To its right, the text reads "Law Society of Ireland shared a link." followed by "9 September" and a globe icon. Below this is the main text of the post: "'Criminal Justice and Human Rights in Ireland' – the 12th Annual Human Rights Conference organised by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Designate and the Law Society of Ireland - will take place on Saturday, 11 October 2014, in the Law S... See More". Below the text is a link preview for "Criminal Justice and Human Rights in Ireland" with the URL "www.lawsociety.ie". The preview includes a small image of the Law Society of Ireland logo and a short description: "The 12th Annual Human Rights Conference aims is to examine recent developments in the area of criminal justice in the light of Irish human rights law." Below the link preview are the interaction options "Like · Comment · Share". Underneath, it says "5 people like this." followed by a comment box with the placeholder text "Write a comment..." and a small "Press Enter to post." prompt.

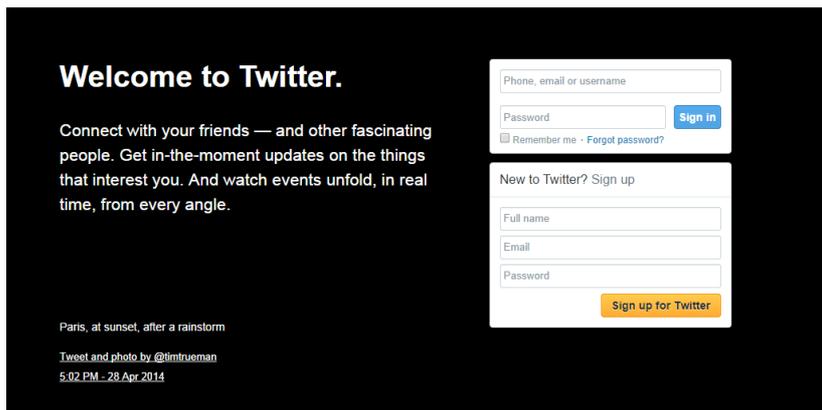
Appendix – Social Media Guide

Below are basic instructions on how to set up a personal account on Twitter, LinkedIn or Facebook. We have included an outline on the privacy settings for each channel which we encourage you to review. Visit the website for each social media provider for more information.

Twitter - The Signpost

How to set up a Twitter account

1. Visit www.twitter.com
2. Create an account by entering your name and email address, and creating a password.
3. Select Sign Up.



4. You will then be asked to upload a profile picture and to add followers. To create the account, you must follow at least 5 accounts. Follow five suggested accounts and continue.
5. You will be presented with a number of options. At the bottom of each option, you can click Skip Step to proceed to creating your account.

How to use Twitter

The primary way to navigate around Twitter is through the buttons at the top of the page.



The list below explains these buttons, from left to right:

1. **Home page:**  Home This icon is located in the top left of the page.

The Home button brings you to your Feed, which shows you tweets from people you follow in chronological order. There are usually a few tweets at the top that are rated due to popularity, and are not in chronological order.

2. Notifications:  Notifications This icon appears on the top of the page, beside Home. The notifications button will show you all others people's interactions with you on your account, such as Mentions, Retweets and Favourites.

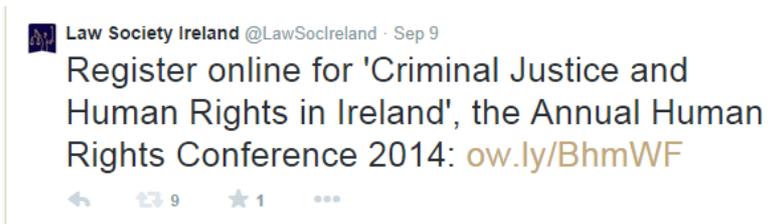
3. Discover:  Discover This section shows you the most trending/popular Tweets among who you're following. Trending Tweets happen when a recent Tweet is Favourited or Retweeted many times.

4. Me:  Me This is your profile. See your profile image, background image, info, list of your own tweets, number of followers/following, and more.

5. Search:  This works just like Google, but with some extra quirks. You can simply type in a word, or #word, and results of tweets using this word or hashtag will appear. If you wish to search Twitter without opening an account, visit www.twitter.com/search.

6. Direct Messages:  This icon on the top of the page allows you to message someone privately, similarly to Facebook or LinkedIn private messages. To send someone a Direct Message, you must be following each other.

7. Tweet:  A post on Twitter is limited to 140 characters. Photos, videos and webpages can be shared through Tweets, simply by uploading the photo or including the link to the webpage. Twitter will automatically shorten the link for you.



Action buttons

Tweet:  A post on Twitter is limited to 140 characters. Photos, videos and webpages can be shared through Tweets. This button is located in the top right corner of the webpage.

Retweet:  1 A Retweet is when you share someone else's Tweet with your followers, or vice versa. This Tweet will appear on your profile page. The number beside the icon indicates how many times a Tweet has been Retweeted.

Favourite: ★ This is the Twitter version of the Like button on Facebook and LinkedIn. The person who Tweeted it will see that you Favoured a Tweet. It will also appear in the Favourites section on your profile page.

Reply: ↩ Click this to reply to someone's Tweet. Your reply will automatically begin with their username to notify them, and the reply will appear directly below the Tweet you replied to.

More options: ⋮ Click on this icon below a Tweet to: delete your own Tweet, share via email, embed the Tweet in a website and Pin to the top of your page.

Privacy

Although Twitter is intended to be a public network by default, the site does provide a privacy setting.

In Settings, the following options are available:

- Control who can tag you in photos: set this to Everyone, Following only, or Nobody.
- Protect my Tweets: if ticked, only people you approve of will see your Tweets.
- Twitter location: Add location, or delete all location info.
- Discoverability: allow others to find you by email address.

LinkedIn - The Professional Network

Create an account

1. Sign up to LinkedIn by visiting <https://ie.linkedin.com/>.
2. It will initially ask you to import contacts from your email account to connect with people. If you don't wish to do this, click Skip this Step.
3. Set up your profile. Add a photo, fill out your details such as your position, experience and education, similar to a high-level CV.
4. You can connect with people by searching their names in the search bar. They should appear if they are on LinkedIn and have searchable accounts.
5. You can join Groups and follow Companies.

Features

Groups: LinkedIn Groups provide a place for professionals in the same industry or with similar interests to share content, find answers, post and view jobs, make business contacts, and establish themselves as industry experts.

Companies: A Company Page helps LinkedIn members learn about a business, brand, and job opportunities. Any LinkedIn member can follow a Company Page.

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn profile for Teri Kelly. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Profile', 'Connections', 'Jobs', 'Interests', 'Business Services', and 'Upgrade'. Below this is a search bar and a notification area with 125 messages and 51 connections. The profile header includes a profile picture, the name 'Teri Kelly', and her current role: 'Director of Representation and Member Services at Law Society of Ireland'. It also lists her previous roles at 'Irish Bank Resolution Corporation Limited, Ulster Bank, Bank of America' and her education at 'The University of British Columbia'. There are 'Connect' and 'Send Teri InMail' buttons, and a '254 connections' badge. The 'Background' section is expanded to show a 'Summary' and 'Experience' section. The 'Experience' section details her role as 'Director of Representation and Member Services' at the 'Law Society of Ireland' from October 2013 to the present. To the right, there are sections for 'People Similar to Teri' (featuring Frank McCracken), 'Ads You May Be Interested In' (with ads for VOSK, KOREA Patent & Trademark, and Start your Data Room Now!), and 'People Also Viewed' (featuring Maureen Seabrook, Emily Maher, Majella Walsh, and Naomi Doyle).

Privacy

LinkedIn has strong privacy settings and gives you good controls over your profile and content.

By going to the top right corner of your profile and hovering over the small image, a dropdown menu will appear. Select Privacy and Settings in this menu.

One unique feature that LinkedIn has is the ability to see who has viewed your profile and others can see when you view their profile. It is possible to turn this off, but it means you can't see who looks at your profile either.

In Privacy and Settings you will find the following options:

- Turn on/off activity broadcasts: choose whether to share your profile changes with Connections.
- Who can see your activity feed: only you, connections, your network (includes your connections' connections) or public.

- What others see when you view their profile: When you view someone's profile, do they see your profile summary, 'someone in the Legal Industry' or completely anonymous.
- Who can see your connections: Everyone, Connections, or Only You.
- Change your profile photo and who it is visible to: Everyone, Connections or Network.
- Edit your public profile: this allows you to control what is visible to public viewers of your profile.

Facebook - The Noticeboard

Create an Account

1. Visit <http://www.facebook.com> and sign up using an email address.
2. A confirmation email will be sent to your email address. Click confirm on the button in the email.
3. Connect with friends by sending email invites or by searching for them in the search bar. Private accounts won't appear in search.

Features

Pages: Facebook pages can be made for anything, but are usually made around a certain interest, organisation or individual. For example, the Law Society has a Facebook page that allows us to post to all who have Liked our page, and allows them to message us with queries. Pages operates in the same way as LinkedIn Company Pages, except it's not limited to companies.

Groups: Facebook Groups is a feature that is usually used for social or interest-based reasons. For example, a group of college friends might have a group to discuss meeting up and organising social events. These groups tend to be private / personal in nature.



Privacy

Facebook's privacy settings have been amended a number of times, primarily to address concerns from users. The company has since prioritised and simplified its privacy settings. They can be found by clicking the lock icon to the right of the notification globe on the top bar.

Facebook has the following privacy options:

- Privacy Checkup: gives you a summary of your current settings.
- Who can see my stuff: Control if Anyone, Friends of Friends, Friends Only or just you can see your posts.
- Who can contact me: Friends of Friends and People You May Know, or just friends.
- Who can send me Friend Requests: Everyone or Friends of Friends
- How do I stop someone bothering me: options to Block users.
- More options: Who can look you up by email address, phone number provided, and whether you want search engines (such as Google) to link to your profile.