



# The Future of Social Media

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### When Twitter Quitters Start Flocking Away

A few short years ago top social media venues were sites like Friendster, MySpace, and Blogger. Today, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn are major social networking sites. In a couple more years that list might be replaced by a new suite of names. If you're committed to establishing a social media presence, it is important to keep an eye on developing trends. This eBook will take a look at some of the emerging social media venues. As well, we'll examine some of the smaller established "niche" platforms. A niche social media site has fewer users but, depending on one's business, a niche site might offer a better fit.

### Lifestreaming and Social Integration

Wifi hotspots, netbooks, iPhones and other web enabled phones along with "micro blogging" sites like Twitter and Facebook are allowing the emergence of the "lifestreaming" phenomenon. Users have the ability at any moment, from almost any location, to immediately stream out the minutiae of their daily life: where they are, what they're about to eat, where they're shopping, etc.

Lifestreaming can also be coupled with social integration, which means being able to push out the core content to various social media platforms (a blog post can go to Twitter, a Facebook fan page's wall, and images can get injected into your Flickr photo stream).

Lifestreamers are not only pushing out content but pulling in content from their trusted networks. Getting access to those networks gives a marketer an astounding ability to influence a lifestreamer's choices or attitudes mere minutes before a purchasing decision is made or a vote is cast.

### Email Blogging

URL: [posterous.com](http://posterous.com)

URL: [tumblr.com](http://tumblr.com)

Posterous and Tumblr offer Twitter's easy and spontaneous posting modality but allow for longer texts and embedded media. As well, they're built around an email interface. If you can write an email and attach images, you can quickly post visually compelling content to these sites. Given the ease with which these sites offer posting of richer content than Twitter, both sites stand to become key players in the emerging lifestreaming trend.

### Posterous Key Features

Posterous allows you to white list multiple emails, allowing you to quickly and easily create a group oriented blog. It also has rich social integration functionality, giving you ability to channel content to Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and blogs. Posterous also integrates well with cell phones and images/videos taken with your cell phone. As long as you can email your content, you can quickly publish it to Posterous.

## Tumblr Key Features

In terms of social integration, Tumblr links only to Twitter but Tumblr supports a much richer content sharing community within the Tumblr domain. Similar to Twitter, you can follow multiple users and be followed by users. Tumblr allows customizable themes, helping you maintain a consistent brand look between your Tumblr site and your web site.

## Life Streaming TV

**URL:** Justin.tv

Justin.tv is similar to Youtube in that you can host prepared videos. Justin.tv gives one the additional ability to live stream a video feed to interested viewers. For example, you might want to live stream a feed from a keynote speech at a conference or do a live tutorial. Users of Justin.tv can comment on your videos via a message board as well as comment via a real-time chat room. Combining live streaming with instant feedback allows one to quickly react to viewer problems. For example, viewers might not seem to understand a certain step in a tutorial.

## Podcasting

**URL:** iTunes.com

Podcasts are pre-recorded audio files. Usually they are in MP3 format. They are not live broadcasts. Listeners typically download them and then load them onto their iPods, MP3 players, or other portable media devices for later listening. Because podcasts are mostly spoken word, the MP3 files can be created at a lower fidelity than music MP3s,

hence deliver a considerable amount of audio content with surprisingly small file sizes.

People listen to podcasts when and where they traditionally listened to radio or music: during their daily commute, at the gym, or on airplanes. Unlike radio, there is no constant dial searching. A podcast listener is usually committed to listening to the full show.

A compelling podcast can be created quickly, simply, and with little to no investment in hardware and software. All one needs is a computer, a simple microphone, and audio recording/editing software. Inexpensive and even free recording/editing software can be downloaded from the Internet.

After creating your podcast, the MP3 files are hosted either on your own Internet site (or a third party site that specializes in podcast hosting). A simple RSS/XML file is also hosted on your site. The RSS file allows iTunes and other podcast aggregators to link to your MP3 and distribute it. Of course, one does not need to register or link via iTunes. An RSS file for a podcast intended for internal company communication can be accessed by employees outside of iTunes and other public podcast aggregators.

## Why Podcast?

Your audience is captured and motivated: Podcast listeners download your podcast by choice. It offers them the content they want. They listen to it to the exclusion of competing media. Unlike listening to music, spoken word podcasts require a greater cognitive investment.

**Good PR:** An informative, entertaining, and engaging podcast host or ensemble cast can create a rapid and deeply personal relationship with the target audience. Podcasting shares the ability of radio to create a one-to-one relationship between listener and host.

**Bring focus to issues:** We all know the media blows it when it comes to covering a given industry. There is a lack of balance and perspective. A podcast helps you tip the balance back in your favor by not only focusing on news and events that better reflect upon your industry, but allows sober, detailed comment. A podcast gives you time to deliver a message that reaches beyond the headlines.

**Get the emotional content exactly right:** We all know an improperly worded email can have negative consequences if the reader misinterprets the message's emotional content. At times it is difficult to distinguish between professional language and a message that is unnecessary terse. A podcast allows you to deliver messages to clients and colleagues with unambiguous emotional content.

## Voice Chat with Voxli

**URL:** [voxli.com](http://voxli.com)

Voxli is a free (for now at least while it's in open beta) voice conferencing system. You require no sign in. You can quickly invite others to join your chat by emailing or IMing a unique URL the system provides. Users do have to initially install a browser plugin before being able to engage in voice chat. It's currently popular with online gamers playing browser-based games but clearly has some uses for conferencing with coworkers or clients.

## Yelp

**URL:** [Yelp.com](http://Yelp.com)

Yelp.com is the Facebook for people who demonstrably have lives outside of their parents' basement. It's a system where users generate review content and images for local restaurants, nightclubs, stores, and other attractions in their city. Users can friend each other, chat on message boards, and advertise events. Yelp's emerging potential is social integration and location awareness. Yelp allows other applications to tap into its database. Mobile applications with location awareness can quickly display to a user highly rated restaurants or businesses near the user's location. If one owns a traditional brick-and-mortar store, it's worth examining how one's business is fairing on Yelp.

  

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### Loopt

**URL:** [loopt.com](http://loopt.com)

Loopt is a web site/cell phone social networking application that allows people within your network to always be aware of your location in real time. It gives a user the ability to see on a map which other members of the user's network are physically near.



As well, the application pulls in information from Yelp.com (see above) letting a user flag his/her location using Yelp's knowledgebase. The application also integrates with Facebook, allowing users to integrate Facebook friends into their network.