ICT

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

TOOLKIT

an introductory toolkit for artists and arts organisations

Foreword

New media and technological advancements offer many alternatives to traditional marketing and communications. These mechanisms do not come without risk. There are a vast number of online options available and a toolkit of this nature becomes a valuable guide in this virtual minefield.

Without the right knowledge and information these seemingly cost-effective options could be detrimental to the organisation's reputation. In order to truly reap the benefits of an online presence and to maximize return on investment on digital spend; a well-planned marketing and communications strategy is vital.

This valuable resource offers arts practitioners more information and advice regarding the development and maintenance of a website as well as the value of utilising social media as an integral part of their organisations' communications strategies. Both beginners and professionals could benefit by studying the contents of the toolkit, to either learn more or be reminded of online opportunities available to them.

The toolkit succeeds in putting together practical suggestions in accessible language, which will be of great benefit to, especially, a social media novice. The Arts & Culture Trust (ACT) is delighted to be in a position to contribute to the development of this resource and commends African Arts Institute for their superb effort.

Pieter Jacobs
ACT Chief Executive Officer

CONTENTS

WEBSITES

What do I want from a website?

A website can service various needs. You need to identify what your needs are. Do you need a website to be at its most basic – your personal resume? Or are you looking for something more complex, which can act as an introduction to you or your organisation's work and be a part of an ongoing communications strategy, as well as a vehicle for marketing?

If you are looking for website which can offer you more than just a public profile, you will need to have resources committed to it. Development should be properly budgeted for and monies raised for it specifically. With some creative thinking however, it is possible to recover ongoing costs for maintenance of the site by offering advertising space, seeking sponsorship, or collaborations with other artists or arts organisations.

Of course, there are free services who offer free websites but that still leaves you with the staffing issues around gathering and creating content and keeping it up to date. So if the money simply doesn't exist, consider skipping the website altogether and go straight to Facebook.

Facebook pages are freely accessible even if you don't have a Facebook account, so you won't be limiting your audience to those on Facebook. Pages can be found on Google, so people can still search for your content. It's free and easy to use. With a time commitment of just a few minutes a day, maybe 2 hours a week tops, you can easily post news and key events, calls to action and so forth on your Facebook Page. Facebook pages are also useful to link to other social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo, YouTube, SoundCloud, etc. Taking advantage of this means you will reach a broader audience.

TIP: You can even register a domain name and have the domain registrar set it to redirect to your Facebook page – so you don't have to have the Facebook URL on your business card, and you can still have email addresses on your domain. And eventually when you can afford a website, you'll already have your domain name secured.

Contact an Internet Service Provider (ISP) or web developer to register your domain name for you. They will go through the correct processes with Uniforum to register your domain name and thereby securing it for your use sooner or later, and ensure that you renew your domain annually. Your ISP or web developer can also recommend with which server you can have your domain hosted. If you are a non-profit, you can go to http://org.za to register a domain for free.

So basically, you get your domain registered, then you have to 'put your website' on a server, get a web developer to create the "back-end" – or the 'workings' of your website, and a designer to design the "front end" – or the 'pages which viewers will see and interact with'.

Develop a website wireframe

What is a wireframe?

A website wireframe is also known as a page schematic or screen blueprint. Creating a wireframe is one of the first steps towards creating your website. It is something you should consider creating before you sit down with your developer.
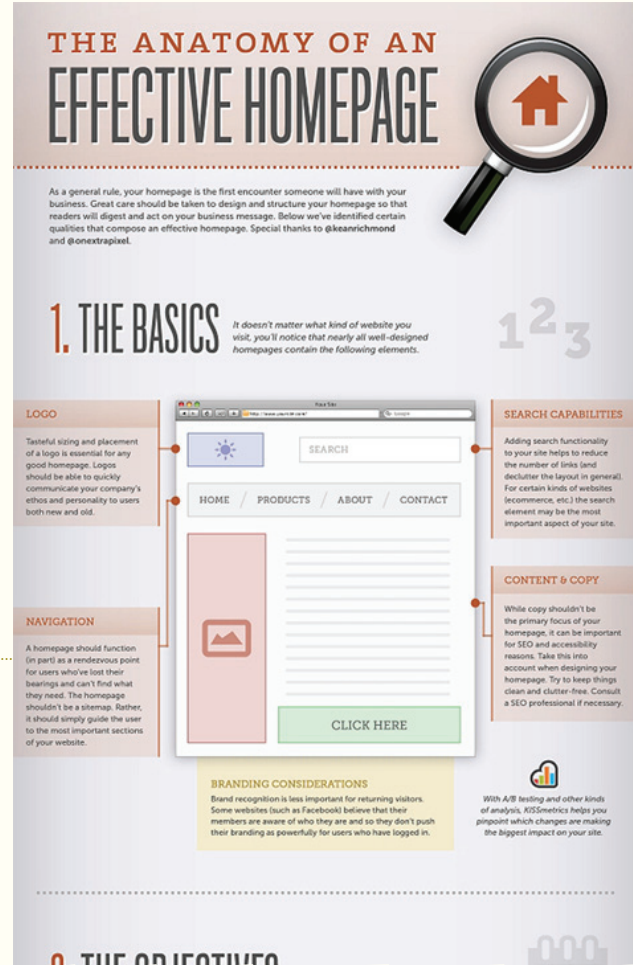
Whether you are building your website from scratch, or revamping your organisation's website, a wireframe helps you organize and simplify the elements and content within a website and is an essential tool in the development process. Essentially, it is your 'sketch' of how you want your website to function, and can include how you want your content to be laid out in a website design.

Before making a wireframe, you need to have considered the following questions:
• What am I trying to communicate to your site visitors
• How do I want my visitors to interact with my site?

You should also look at other individuals' and organisations' websites, to see what kinds of layout, functionality and aesthetics are out there, and what you like. There are some common approaches to content presentation. Have a look at this infographic for several basic **TIPS.**

THE ANATOMY OF AN

EFFECTIVE HOMEPAGE

As a general rule, your homepage is the first encounter someone will have with your business. Great care should be taken to design and structure your homepage so that readers will digest and act on your business message. Below we've identified certain qualities that compose an effective homepage. Special thanks to @keanrichmond and @onextrapixel.

1. THE BASICS

It doesn't matter what kind of website you visit, you'll notice that nearly all well-designed homepages contain the following elements.

LOGO
Tasteful sizing and placement of a logo is essential for any good homepage. Logos should be able to quickly communicate your company's ethos and personality to users both new and old.

NAVIGATION
A homepage should function (in part) as a rendezvous point for users who've lost their bearings and can't find what they need. The homepage shouldn't be a sitemap. Rather, it should simply guide the user to the most important sections of your website.

SEARCH CAPABILITIES
Adding search functionality to your site helps to reduce the number of links (and declutter the layout in general). For certain kinds of websites (ecommerce, etc.) the search element may be the most important aspect of your site.

CONTENT & COPY
While copy shouldn't be the primary focus of your homepage, it can be important for SEO and accessibility reasons. Take this into account when designing your homepage. Try to keep things clean and clutter-free. Consult a SEO professional if necessary.

SEARCH

HOME / PRODUCTS / ABOUT / CONTACT

CLICK HERE

BRANDING CONSIDERATIONS
Brand recognition is less important for returning visitors. Some websites (such as Facebook) believe that their members are aware of who they are and so they don't push their branding as powerfully for users who have logged in.

With A/B testing and other kinds of analysis, KISSmetrics helps you pinpoint which changes are making the biggest impact on your site.

2. THE OBJECTIVES

"
If you are not tech savvy, developing your wireframe on relevant software can be difficult. But you can get back to basics, and sketch or plot your ideas with old fashioned pencil and paper.

Your wireframe should focus on the following areas:

- **The requirements**
  What does the site need to achieve from a user and business perspective? Do you imagine your website to only present your business? A static website may be enough; however, you may want to keep contemporaries, followers and clients updated with your activities and a good solution would be a blog; you may want to create a social network; or you may want a place to list some works you have done and thus want to go for a portfolio.

- **The kinds of information displayed**
  Do you want videos, images, or music on your site?

- **The range of functions available**
  Do you require an online store? What payment and security options & features have you explored, which ones do you think suits your purposes?

- **The relative priorities of the information and functions**
  What is your primary content; what is your secondary content? How do you want visitors to your site to navigate this content?

- **The rules for displaying certain kinds of information**
  This includes aspect of layout like the placement of page features, such as header, footer, content, sidebars, as well as navigation. For example, do you have an aesthetic preference for drop down menus? Do you want external links on your site to be opened in a new window or tab?

- **The effect of different scenarios on the display**
  How do you want your images displayed? In a slideshow? As thumbnails? And how will your choices and layouts be displayed when viewed on a tablet or smartphone?

- **The site map**
  What is the structural design and positioning of pages within the site? How will you catagorise or group your content, and how will a visitor navigate your content?

- **Site content audit**
  If you are revamping your current website, consider what content you have, what you are keeping, and what needs to be thrown out. Whether you are revamping your current website or making a new one, the quality of your visual content is important, be sure to check that you use the correct resolution images (your designer can help you with this). Low resolution images can look unprofessional.

- **Mood or vision board**
  This can help to communicate to your designer what the look and feel of the website should be. Typography plays an important role in this, have a look at this infographic from Visual.ly, and remember to choose fonts which are readable!
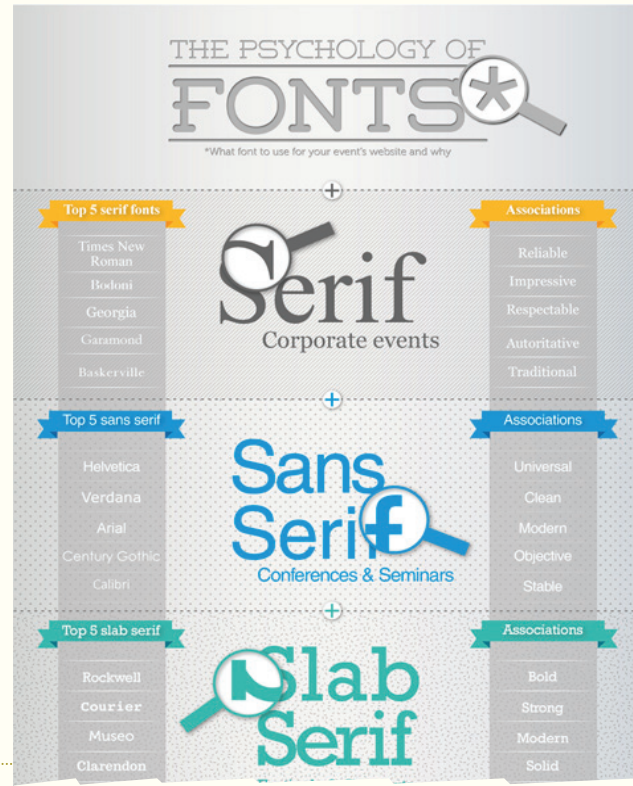
Wireframes can be pencil drawings or sketches on a whiteboard, or they can be made using free or commercial software (see some here). If you are not tech savvy, developing your wireframe on relevant software can be difficult. Wireframes are generally created by business analysts, user experience designers, developers, visual designers and other roles with expertise in interaction design, information architecture and user research.

But you can get back to basics, and sketch or plot your ideas with old fashioned pencil and paper, for the purposes of communicating to the developer.
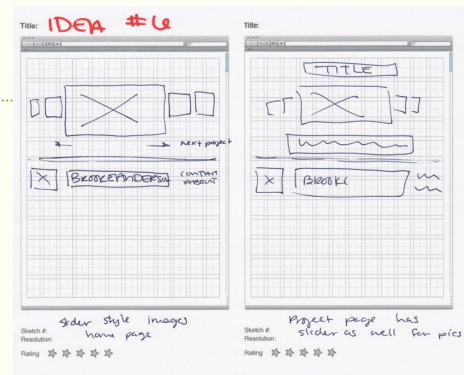
> **"**
> A bad, outdated website is worse than no website at all. It makes you look amateurish. If you don't have the staff to build and maintain a website, don't advertise that fact by putting up a website.

To make it yourself or get a web developer?

People often use the terms web developer and web designer interchangeably, but they do have vastly different functions. The web designer focusses more on the front-end of the site, i.e. the design and usability aspects, whereas the web developer focusses on the back-end of the site, or the coding behind the site and making sure the site functions effectively on different browsers and operating systems.

It may seem like a blessing, but think carefully before letting anyone develop your site for free, even if they offer. Once the developer moves on what happens to the site?

Consider that you will need funds for hosting, maintenance, upgrades, and repairs. Then you will either need staff resources or you will need to develop your own capacity, to generate and upload content and keep the site up to date.

A bad, outdated website is worse than no website at all. It makes you look amateurish. If you don't have the staff to build and maintain a website, don't advertise that fact by putting up a website.

FOR YOUR INTEREST:
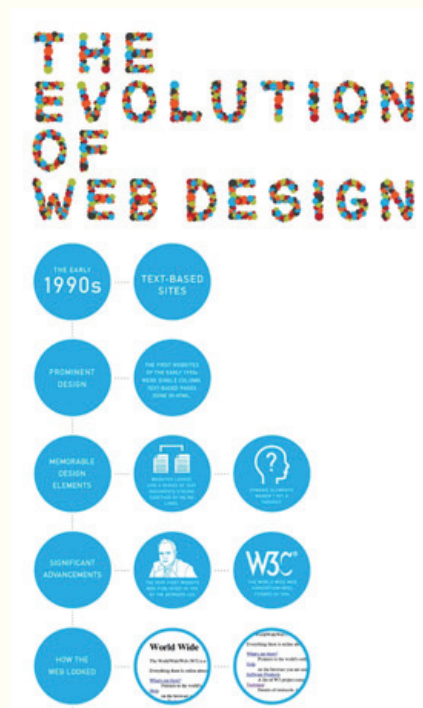
How to choose a web developer

Once you've decided to (re)develop your website, your first hurdle is in choosing the right developer to partner with. This can be a difficult and confusing process, especially if you are not familiar with the intricacies of web development, browsers, search engine optimization, web accessibility etc. Remember that you don't need to be an expert in these areas, you just need to hire someone who is!

Here are some basic points to consider:

• Find a developer who will provide a simple, free content management system (CMS) like Wordpress, Joomla or Drupal. These will save you money in the long term, and enable you to easily update your site yourself. A Content Management System (CMS) is an application used to store and display text, images and other data. A web-based systems allows this data to be displayed as a website. The free systems available mean that you can have a website up and running in a short space of time and at low cost.

• Always look at their portfolio to determine if you like their design style. If you don't like what they've produced before, there is little chance you will like what they produce for you.

• Get several quotes and compare the quotes to the portfolios. You do get what you pay for!

• Look at other artists or arts organisations' sites which you like and ask them for a recommendation, and an indication of what they budgeted for their website.

Ultimately, choose someone you trust who is also interested in your work and your content. It is easy for a web developer to create a site and copy/paste your content into the framework. But someone who understands and cares about your content will work with you to make sure it is presented optimally on the web.

Writing for the Web

On the web, 79% of users only scan read the page, whereas 16% read word by word. Outside of creative or 'conceptual' writing, web writing has its own style. It's direct, visual, short and to the point.

TIPS:
• Write content which is relevant to your readers and update often.

• Put conclusions at the beginning. Use the inverted pyramid model. Get to the point in the first paragraph, and then expand upon it.

• Write only one idea per paragraph. This makes pages easy to scan.

• Use lists instead of paragraphs. Lists are easier to scan than paragraphs, especially if you keep them short.

• Studies have shown that people can only reliably remember 7-10 things at a time. By keeping your list items short, it helps your readers remember them.

• Write short sentences.

• Give a call to action, and action words. Tell your readers what to do. Avoid the passive voice.

Finding your voice

Perhaps the easiest way to find your voice is to make sure your content is engaging. In terms of a website featuring you artistic practice or organisations' work, involve your readers, share interesting information with them and encourage them to engage with you and your organisation.

The best web pages have an efficient, informative, but approachable tone. Blogs, for example should be somewhat informal and conversational, and invite responses. Yet they still have to be professional and grammatically correct. How, you may ask, do you make your writing engaging? Write with passion; Tell client stories; Relate real experiences; Remember the human touch.

So, write more about the people your organisation has impact on, about who you work with, write about the relevance of your work to the reader, write less about the organisation itself. This is the kind of writing that works well on the web. Indeed one study showed that on an average webpage, users read at most only 28% of the text.

What you really need to know about SEO

Simply put, Search Engine Optimisation is what one does to help Google and other search engines find your site. While it should not be dismissed as mere geek-speak, it doesn't have to be that complicated either. Indeed, and this is the dirty secret the "experts" don't want us to know: much of SEO strategy involves nothing more than sound web design, good writing and some common sense.

If you search online, you will find countless SEO how-to guides available, and they all say more or less the same thing:

• Good content is key. Update often, be topical, and write well.

• Mind your web platform. HTML is search engine friendly, Flash is not. Out of the box Content Management Systems like Joomla, Wordpress, Drupal are easily found by Google because of the way they use headings and format text.

• Use keywords well. But don't overdo it. "Keyword-stuffing" will get you labelled as a spammer, and search engine spiders will ignore you.

These simple tips will help create a considerable web-presence for your site.

Don't employ SEO strategies unless they also have real purpose to your site, and watch your analytics (site statistics) to see if your strategies are paying off. If you have a high volume of traffic, but they all leave after seeing just one page, is your strategy successful? Or is your aim to have your site visitors linger, reading more content and engaging with your site?
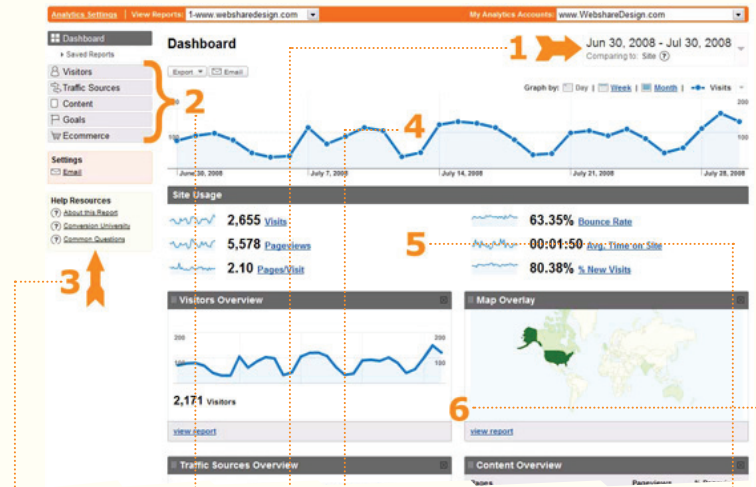
Analytics

Analytics deals with finding and communicating patterns in data, to quantify performance. Tools like this help businesses identify trends and make decisions.

Google Analytics is the most commonly used platform in this field, and it is a free platform (though users with a site which generates more than 10 million hits per month are 'offered increased limits as part of Google Analytics Premium'). Google Analytics is aimed at marketers as opposed to webmasters and technologists from which the industry of web analytics originally grew.

If you want to measure how well your website is doing, but you're on a budget, Google Analytics is the tool to use. It helps to make sense of the different metrics that show how your site is performing. Google Analytics gathers, crunches, and reports data from e-commerce information to tracking visitors from all referrers, including search engines and social networks, direct visits and referring sites. It also displays advertising, pay-per-click networks, email marketing and digital collateral such as links within PDF documents, all so that you can make sense of this information, and review your ICT strategy, based on actual usage, patterns and results from your existing ICT operations.

Using analytics

The Google Analytics Dashboard gives you a high level overview of what is going on with your site. It is necessary to dig a little deeper to get the specifics. Here is a quick overview of the dashboard, from websharedesign.

1) Date Ranges – Defaults to last 30 days; but you can change that and can set up comparison date ranges.

2) Main Menu – Quick links to your reports, expandable and present throughout Google Analytics.

3) Help Resources – Common to all reports – if you forget what you're looking at these offer some quick reminders as well as help point you in the right direction for how to use the data you're looking at.

4) Overview Graph – Several metrics are offered to choose from and comparison options are available.

5) Site Usage Statistics – A high level view of the visitors that came to your site, how many pages they saw, how long they stayed, how many left from the same page they landed on (bounced), and how many had been there before.

6) Widgets – Select up to 12 graphical overviews of reports that you'd like to see at a glance. Move them around, remove them from the dashboard, or add new ones as needed.

Blogging

What is a blog?

Short for *Web log,* a blog is a Web page that serves as a publicly accessible personal journal, discussion group or informational site published on the World Wide Web. Until 2009 blogs were usually the work of a single individual, and often covered a single subject. More recently "multi-author blogs" (MABs) have developed, with posts written by large numbers of authors and professionally edited. MABs from newspapers, other media outlets, universities, think tanks, interest groups and similar institutions have led to an increasing quantity of blog traffic.

A blog can differ from a typical website in a number of ways. In addition to a page, blogs also have posts. A post is created in the same way as a page, but is different when published: posts are typically dated and assigned to a specific author; they can also be assigned to specific categories and tags to help readers discover new content. Search engines rank posts in a different way than pages as well.

A blogging platform is the software or service that turns a regular site into a functioning blog. There are several blog services or platforms to choose from. Following is a summary of some of the more frequestly used options:

WordPress

Worldwide, the majority of blogs are run on the WordPress platform [at the time of publishing]. While there are many options for blogging, serious bloggers almost always choose WordPress as their blogging platform. Here are some reasons why:

WordPress features include:
• It's free (premium options are available)
• The ability to use a custom domain
• Integration with Google Analytics
• Ability to Use Custom Themes

WordPress comes in two variations. The primary difference between the two versions of WordPress is blog hosting:
• If you're starting a blog you might find wordpress.com to be the simplest and least expensive option. With WordPress.com your blog will be hosted on their servers, and you can set it up at no cost.
• If you are planning on growing your blog into a business or to generate leads for your existing business or organisation wordpress.org could be the better option. With WordPress.org you'll have to find and pay for your own web hosting and your own domain.

Other platforms are catching up with Google Analytics integration, custom themes, and plug-ins – but there is no other option as powerful as WordPress. Themes exist for many functions including:

• photography blogs
• e-commerce
• listings
• classifieds
• forum items
• journal or travel blogs

Squarespace
Squarespace was launched in 2004. The visual experiences are rich, suggesting that Squarespace is targeting a unique segment of users such as visual artists, designers, boutique businesses, and portfolio driven websites. Here are some features, and points to know about when deciding if Squarespace is the platform for you:

• Squarespace is a drag and drop website builder specifically focused on providing rich-imagery, highly polished/finished experiences for website builders. Their LayoutEngine technology allows you to click and drag images, re-size them, and adjust placement faster and smoother than any other blogging platform allows.
• Everything is laid out inside a grid ensuring that everything is always properly aligned. Text, images, or blocks can be dragged to the exact location where you want them.

• Multiple site components are pulled together all under one platform – typical website components such as pages and galleries along with blogs and e-commerce stores all work smoothly together.
• Squarespace does not offer users a free plan. There is, however, a 14-day risk-free trial for you to test out their website builder. Easily build your website from scratch or using one of their numerous free templates. All annual accounts get a free domain name.
• Sites and blogs with Squarespace are hosted in the cloud. Cloud web hosting is scalable and stable meaning there is no downtime and no maintenance required by the blogger.
• They offer true 24/7 support. There are no call centres or outsourced help. Everyone on the team is an experienced user of square space.
• Squarespace offers apps for iPad, iPhone and android allowing post creation review and editing along with comment management and access of web stats available on the go.
• Every square space template includes a mobile design so that your site will display properly on any device all the time, so you don't need to worry about the mobile version of your site.
• Content created on other blogging platforms can be seamlessly imported into Squarespace. These blogging platforms include WordPress, Tumblr, and Blogger.
• Content created inside of your Squarespace blog can be set to auto-publish to Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and Tumblr.

Weebly

Weebly offers a free tool for creating and hosting your website. You can add a blogging application to your free website at no extra charge.

- While Weebly has its own CMS (content management system) it resembles WordPress in a number of ways. Key features such as form builders, traffic stats, functional mobile sites, changeable themes and a set of other functions and applications make Weebly a powerful option for new bloggers.

- Weebly offers a drag-and-drop website builder so you can build a great-looking site with no coding or technical skills needed.

- In addition to the drag-and-drop ease of Weebly Designer Platform, there is also an option to modify and change HTML and CSS. This is not required but a nice feature for those who like to fine-tune their site and have knowledge of these coding languages.

- You can choose from a full set of multimedia applications, including for HD video galleries and audio players, maps and photo slideshows.

- In addition to the standard features included with the free version, the Weebly Designer Platform offers a 100% white label solution. White label means that all the branding from Weebly is removed and replaced with your company logo, color scheme, and domain name. This platform allows you to resell this service.

- Weebly's free platform provides you enough tools to build a functional website. There is no pressure to upgrade to the paid platform, but only if you want to. No credit card information is required to sign up for a free account, and there is no time limit to the free account.

- A broad range of templates allows you to build a professional looking website. You get access to all the templates from Weebly (even with a free account) and they regularly add more designs to what they have available. Weebly also grants you access to their HTML / CSS editor so you can modify the website design as you wish (or hire someone to help you do this).

- iPhone app available.

- On the bad side, Weebly's blogging function gives only the bare basics. If you manage a large number of blog posts with a wide range of categories, this is where Weebly falls behind as they currently don't provide users with an efficient way to organize and manage articles.

- If you are looking to build an online shop with a lot of products, Weebly's e-commerce tools are not advanced enough yet to help you manage your online shop needs (such as multiple product displays, inventory tracking, item options, different payment option other than PayPal, customization of emails to confirm orders). However, there are third party shopping carts that you can integrate into a Weebly website to supplement this – Weebly is flexible enough to support this.

Tumblr.com

Tumblr is a free microblogging platform (microblogging is the posting of very short entries or updates on a blog or social networking site, typically via a cell phone). You can easily create an attractive functional blog in a matter of minutes – and you can forward your own domain to your Tumblr blog.

Some of the more notable features of Tumblr include:

- Use bookmarklet to quickly share web links via a quick link you add to your bookmark bar.

- Automatically post text, photos, or videos to your Tumblr blog via a unique email address. The email address is found on the Settings page for any of your blogs.

- The Mega-Editor is a powerful tool to easily edit tags on multiple posts at the same time.

- Via a number (Dial 1-866-584-6757) you can call in a post and it will be automatically posted for your followers.

- Short URLs are useful when you'd like to share a link to one of your posts and you don't have much space. If you've connected your blog to Twitter, you can grab the short url for any published post from the right column of the Edit screen for that post.

- Use keyboard shortcuts for fast navigation through posts. For example, pressing "Z + tab" will switch between the dashboard and the public view of your blogs.

- There are mobile apps for either iOS or Android operating systems.

- It has the ability to let you use a custom domain name.

- It is integrated with Google Analytics.

- It offers custom themes.

- Tumblr is free!

TypePad

TypePad is a strong contender as a **business blogging platform**. It is stable, flexible, and offers strong analytics.

- The platform offers **promotion of your content** across its network. This means increased exposure and traffic to your blog.

- **Benefits** of using TypePad:
  - It is published easily via PC mobile or email.
  - It offers the ability to sell products and services.
  - You can earn revenue with ads on your blog.
  - You can join the TypePad affiliate program to generate more revenue.
  - There is the ability to tweak or even build your own blog theme.

- TypePad is not free, but each account comes with a free 14-day trial.

Blog.com

- While they offer a set of premium features, you can begin blogging without spending any money.

- Choose from more than 100 blogging themes, the majority of which are free.

- Blog.com as a free sub-domain looks good in that is it doesn't shout out the name of a blogging platform as its url (yourname.blog.com).

- You get optional privacy settings.

- Blog.com is search engine optimized.

- You have the ability to earn from ads on your blog.

Jux.com
- Jux.com is unique blogging platform that displays your posts and images full-screen on every device. If photography is a primary part of your blogging model, you might want to check out Jux.com.
- While photos are the obvious benefit to a format like this, there are a number of other applications, such as:
  - Slideshow: display images with no clutter.
  - Video: display video at full-screen and make an impact.
  - Article: display your content above a related image background.
  - Top 10 lists: create strong list posts with powerful images.

Blogging platforms and site builders are changing what they have to offer on a regular basis – in order to keep up with competition, and meet of peoples demands. Its best to seek out updated information before committing to one option. Websitebuilderexpert.com have a great article layout, and update their articles regularly, as platform updates emerge.

Sourced from:
http://onlinebusiness.about.com/od/blogging/a/The-10-Best-Blogging-Platforms.htm
and
http://www.websitebuilderexpert.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

What is social media?

Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies for interactive communication. While your website may be used as a tool to broadcast information, social media allows you to share information and receive comments, as well as giving your community the opportunity to share information and content with you.

Most of your social media platforms can be linked. Facebook can be linked to Twitter so that all your Facebook updates are automatically tweeted; Instagram can be linked to Facebook so that your images are automatically shared on Facebook. However, be conservative in how many links you automate. Twitter updates can be more frequent than Facebook, and automatically sending your tweets to Facebook can overwhelm your newsfeed and annoy your followers. Facebook posts are typically longer than tweets, so your Facebook update can be incoherent when automatically fed to Twitter.

Have a look at this infographic from Shane Atkins giving a brief overview of what some social media platforms offer, to assist in finding the most suitable one or ones for your needs.

And once you have decided, look at Mark Smiciklas's infographic providing an 8 step "tool-agnostic" social media strategy, to begin to develop social media stategy.

An activist in Egypt explained: "We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world."

FOR YOUR INTEREST:

> **The fact is you have to make the time. Social media is an important communication tool that simply cannot be ignored.**

How can this benefit me or my organisation?

Learn from and connect with related artists and arts organisations globally; share resources, best practices and knowledge, inspire each other.

- Reach a wider audience with your news; learn from your community's responses to your posts.

- Reach a wider audience by encouraging your supporters to use their networks to spread the word; social media is about sharing information.

- Raise funds or support by teaching people about your work; share interesting stories, facts and 'teasers' of what you have produced to encourage interest.

Social media helps you learn, teach, and grow

If you clearly define your goals, and understand how the various mediums work, this does not require you to invest all your time online. The fact is you have to make the time. Social media is an important communication tool that simply cannot be ignored. Start with the basics:

Listen. Follow related artists and arts organisations on Twitter, and 'Like' them on Facebook. Listen to what they are saying, and how they are saying it. Use their examples to:

Learn what you need to do. See what works and what doesn't. See what is possible for you to achieve in the time you have available. And finally:

Decide what you want to achieve. Sign in and get started!

For artists:
Tips for Effective use of Social Media

Below is an edited version of Neil McKenzie's (author of *The Artist's Business and Marketing ToolBox – How to Start, Run and Market a Successful Arts or Creative Business*). Read the full article: Tips for Effective Social Media for Artists.

Have a purpose in mind. This may sound simple and obvious but far too many people have no idea why they are engaging in social media other than it is the thing to do. Your purpose could be to position yourself as an authority, drive traffic to your website or blog, help others, promote a cause or just have a better social life. Decide on your purpose and stick to it.

Target your audience or market. Think of social media in the same light as your other marketing efforts – who is your target customer? What are their likes and dislikes? What are their demographics? How can I reach them? And most importantly what are their social media habits and which social media platforms do they use? Once you have defined your target audience you are ready to start to connect with them.

Choose the social media platforms that are appropriate for you and your target audience. The idea here is to match up social media efforts on the right platform with the right messages. You may have different customer groups who have substantially different social media habits – do some research and find out.

Look at some of the social media platforms that are more visual in nature such as Pinterest and Instagram. Artists have a lot of content that is visual and is well suited to these types of sites. Don't just think of these sites as a place to show your work but a place to show how you create. Many artists have been quite effective in engaging their audience by showing the steps they take in their creative process.

Develop your profile. Take some time to plan and write your profile. Your profile should portray you as unique, authentic and someone worth connecting with. People will judge you after reading a few sentences or looking at your profile picture.

Tailor your profile to match your purpose and target audience. A person reading your profile should say, "I want to get to know that person better!" If you are on several social networking sites make sure that your profiles have some common threads.

Choose your friends or the people you follow carefully. A mistake many people make is to have as many friends or followers as possible. Your goal should be to have good friends not just a lot of friends. If you do it right, sooner or later you will have a lot of good friends.

Engage, interact and develop relationships. This is the whole idea behind social media. You don't need to report on every detail in your life. You don't need to endlessly pitch your product, service or yourself. If all you have to say is "buy my product, buy my product, buy my product..." you will run out your welcome very quickly.

Be genuine, authentic, helpful, inspiring and informative. Doing this will position you as someone worth following.

Get a great image for your profile picture. Your image should reinforce your profile and the interactions you have with others in your social networking world.

> " *Social media is not a technical medium, it is a communications platform.*

For arts organisations:
What are the Skills Required to Manage Social Media?

Your social media manager needs to know and understand your organisation's work, be passionate about promoting the work you do, and be able to communicate on behalf of your organisation.

Too often social media is left to the "techie" or intern to manage, regardless of whether this person can effectively communicate on behalf of your organisation or not. Social media is not a technical medium, it is a communications platform. And passion and enthusiasm for your work and projects can be contagious!

The social media manager should have experience with:

• writing website content,

• managing e-newsletters, and

• running fundraising campaigns.

Just knowing how to use Facebook or Twitter is not enough. An understanding of marketing and campaigning is critical, as is understanding how all the e-communications platforms work together.

Your social media manager needs to understand your brand. Their tone and personality on social media should reflect the tone and personality you want your organisation to embody.

The ability to be resourceful and creative, as well as friendly and welcoming, is important because this person will be managing one of the faces of your organisation.

Creativity is helpful in thinking about ways to convey seemingly mundane information. For example, a few months after they launched the new issue of the *Chimurenga Chronic* Newspaper, and were working to sustain interest in it, the publishers used a poetic quote from Niq Mhlongo's interview in that issue: "*I asked her where the river was in Zulu & she answered in Kikongo. I understood completely*". The quote made people interested in literature stop, read and reflect, and importantly, retweet the quote and click on the link to learn more about the *Chimurenga Chronic*.

And finally, the social media manager should be able to mentor staff in cultivating their online presence as well. Relegating these critical tasks to an intern or person who is not well versed in both communications work and communicating your own brand and vision can lead to your brand being damaged at worst, or your social media communications being a waste of time at best.

Fundraising using Social Media - does it work?

When asked what made people donate money, 50% responded, "Because a friend asked me". Did you know that using social media as part of your fundraising campaign has been proven to increase fundraising results by an average of 40%?

In a nutshell, the 2 key points are:

• Encourage personal storytelling in your campaigns. Let supporters know that their personal story is what counts – they're already naturals at sharing themselves!

• Make it easy for your supporters to share how they're helping you, not just what you're doing. They're already naturals at sharing themselves, and besides why it's personal, what they most want to share is what they've done to help you.

Take a look at **this infographic from Blackbaud**, showing some stats from the US. It looks at what made the top 5 campaigns successful and is worth a read.

Also from Blackbaud, **this infographic** takes the argument one step further, visualising how tech savvy museums in the US are bringing arts and cultural organizations into the information age, and in turn are saving costs by making better use of volunteers, connecting with and developing the sustained support of communities, and becoming more organised and productive.

Take a look at **this infographic from Visual.ly**, showing how crowd funding in business can influence and even alter the way we do business and approach profit and shares.

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a social networking site, launched in 2004. It currently has more than 900 million active users.

Before you use Facebook, you need to create an account, and set up yor personal profile. Then you can search for your friends online and add them to your friends list. If people accept your friend requests, you can view each others profiles, send each other event invitations, exchange messages and receive updates when they update their profile.

When it was launched, Facebook was only available to university students, initially only students from Harvard University, where it was created, and later to all students, including high schools. Currently, Facebook is open to anyone over the age of 13.

“ One of the key differences between Pages and Groups are that interactions on your Page can be done as your organisation, Groups are directly connected to the people who administer them, therefore your Personal Profile is used in all interactions.

Getting Started with Facebook:
Pages or Groups?

When you set up Facebook, your choice is between pages and groups, or possibly to use both.

Facebook offers Personal Profile Pages, Pages and Groups. You should never create a Profile Page for an organisation. A Profile Page is for individuals only, and Facebook's Terms of Service state that you are not permitted to create a personal Profile Page for an individual who does not exist. So apart from the unnecessary admin on a Personal page (having to constantly accept 'friend requests'), if Facebook discovers your illegally created Profile Page, they can, and will, delete the page with no warning.

So, when you set up Facebook for your organisation, your choice is between Pages and Groups, or possibly to use both. Why is this so confusing? Well Facebook has evolved both Pages and Groups over the years so that many of the features now overlap and many features that used to be specific only to pages or only to groups are now available on either option.

The use of Pages grew organically when Facebook noticed that,

people were trying to connect with brands and famous artists in ways that didn't quite work on Facebook…[With Profile Pages], not only can you connect with your favourite artists and businesses, but now you can also show your friends what you care about and recommend by adding Pages to your personal profile.

Pages are useful for an organisation not only for sharing news, events, videos and photos via status updates, but you can also view 'insights' into the number of people who viewed each of your posts. From these you can learn users' levels of interaction, demographics, and other information that may be helpful to an organisation. (At the time of publishing you have to have at least 25 fans on your Page to view insights.)

How do you know which is right for you? It really depends on how you would like to use and interact with Facebook. One of the key differences between Pages and Groups are that interactions on your Page can be done as your organisation, so it can keep your personal profile anonymous. However, Groups are directly connected to the people who administer them, therefore your Personal Profile is used in all interactions.

Groups are more like a 'club', belonging to a group of people. Your groups can be open to everyone, restricted to invite-only, or restricted so that people have to request approval to join the group. You can add people to the group without their consent, though this is not advised – and they can easily leave a group.

With Pages, you can only invite people to 'Like' the page, but you can't add them. However, no action is required on your part when a fan 'Likes' your page. Groups are better suited to discussion and organizing; Pages are better to interact with your supporters without the profile being connected to a personal account, and is more 'official'.

It is not recommended that you create both Groups and Pages unless you have the capacity to manage them, and a specific role for each one. Duplicating content on your group and your page is confusing to users – which should they respond to? And you would be cluttering their newsfeed, likely resulting in leaving the group and 'Unliking' the page.

Consider creating a Page first, and if you still have the time and resources to manage another space, create a group with a specific focus that is not already covered by the Page.

Benefits of Pages

- You have a lot more control over access to a group than a page.
- You can send messages group members (up to 5000 people).
- It is well suited to engagement and discussion around a cause.

Benefits of Groups

- Pages are indexed by search engines, so can be found on Google.
- You can restrict access to a Page (by age or location).
- You can install applications on your Page.
- Pages are not connected to a Personal Profile so content can be posted by the Page itself, so content isn't linked to an individual.
- The Page can also interact with other Pages.

Best practices for non-profits on Facebook

One of the most helpful resources for non-profits or small business on Facebook is actually Facebook itself.

Go to https://www.facebook.com/nonprofits or https://www.facebook.com/business for Facebook's official resources to help your non-profit organization or small business respectively, maximize the benefits of this popular platform.

Some basic best practices

- Be human, and engage with your audience. Social media is not simply there for you to broadcast news about yourself, and if you use it as such, you supporter base may narrow along with the way your artistic production is perceived.

- Use your image if you are an artist, or your organisation's logo as your profile picture. Make sure it can fit neatly into the small square and still be recognizable. Having a 'social media version' of your logo is an important consideration if your logo is not easily scalable.

- Encourage dialogue and interaction on your page by asking questions and inviting participation from your followers. You can also encourage your staff to post on your page and respond to questions to get a dialogue started.

- Select a username for your site that is as close to your organisation's website URL. Previously you had to have '25 likes' before you got to choose your vanity URL, but now you can choose one as soon as you setup your page.

- Have more than one trusted admin for your Facebook page. Don't risk having your Facebook admin leave the organisation, and lose access to your page and followers.

- Install apps to include Twitter and YouTube on your Facebook page. Go to http://www.involver.com/applications/ to see the free apps. Take a look at Inyathelo Facebook page to see an example of these apps.

- Don't update your page too frequently each day: 1 or 2 updates is enough. More than that risks having people leave your page or 'hide' your updates as they would be cluttering their newsfeeds.

- Promote your page on your e-newsletter. Do more than include a simple 'follow us on Facebook' like. Talk about what kinds of posts and information people can access on your Facebook page that isn't as accessible elsewhere.

FOR YOUR INTEREST:

- Ask your followers to 'suggest your page' to friends, to help grow your community.

- Advertise your Facebook page on all your correspondence, even your 'thank you' notes.

- Post powerful stats about your area of work and your impact. This is very helpful in sparking an interest and generating support.

- Embed social media on your website – a simple 'like' and 'Tweet' button on articles on your site to make it easy for people to share them is sufficient. You don't have to include options to share on every social media network known to date!

- Promote your Facebook page with a 'Like Box' on your website

- Remember that social media is all about the human story. Use pictures and real case studies of your work to help connect with your audience.

Sources include: http://www.diosacommunications.com/ facebookbestpractices.htm and **Social Media for Social Good**, also written by Heather Mansfield (creator of website listed above). Very useful guide and highly recommended.

What is Twitter?

"Twitter is a service for friends, family, and co–workers to communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?" (from the Twitter website).

Twitter is one of the fastest growing social media platforms in the world. It is a tool to send short messages, of 140 characters or less, to your followers. What can you say in just 140 characters? As it turns out, quite a lot!

One of the best features of Twitter is its ease-of-use. Because it can be installed on your mobile phone, you can simply login in whenever you have a few moments to spare and send out a few tweets.

Twitter, however, is only as interesting as the people you follow. So make sure you find and follow interesting people and interesting conversations. Many South African artists, musicians, writers and journalists as well as Members of Parliament and NGOs are on Twitter, as well as a host of regular South Africans engaged in daily discussions.

Quick tips for tweeting

Some Twitter basics:

- **140 character limit.** You have 140 characters to get the message across. On the other hand, the brevity of tweets allows users to filter large amounts of information in a short period of time. Twitter forces brevity, but doesn't diminish the ability to share ideas.

- **Keep it simple.** Tweets have a very short attention span. If they are too complex or uninteresting, they are likely to be given a miss by most readers.

- **Make it search friendly.** If you are tweeting about a specific topic, make sure to use #hashtags and annotations so that Twitter search can find your stories. Incorporate keywords directly in your tweets so that your post will appear in the displayed search results.

- **Use Short URLs.** Long URLs use characters, you only get 140 of them for each tweet so why waste precious real estate? Use Bit.ly or a similar service to shorten your URLs.

- **Don't oversell.** If you try too hard to sell, your tweets will probably end up being overlooked by most users and worse, you are likely to be labelled as a spammer. Try to get people engaged in what you are trying to tell them and highlight why they should go and visit your business website or read your blog. Stir their interest and the readers will oblige.

- **Think like readers.** Your tweets need to be accurate, to the point, humorous (when appropriate) and most of all interesting to ensure maximum impact.

- **Keep an eye on the competition.** Make sure to keep an eye on what your competitors are up to. Read their tweets and try to tap their follower base. It does not harm to see what they are tweeting about and how they interact with their readers.

What is Pinterest?

Pinterest is a virtual pinboard, a website that allows users to create and manage theme-based collections by 'pinning' images and video, to their boards. It allows users to save images and categorize them on different boards. Users can browse other pinboards for images, "re-pin" images to their own pinboards, or "like" photos. They can follow other users' boards if they have similar tastes. Popular categories are travel, cars, food, film, humour, home design, sports, fashion, art and design.

> **Remember that if it's free, you are the product, and you are building someone else's business. Use social media to develop support and a following, but link back to your website. Your own site is the best place for long term marketing growth.**

For Business

Pinterest also allows businesses to create pages aimed at promoting their businesses online. Pinterest's pinning principles for business, basically asks that businesses join the community, and inspire visually. If your business is your art, this should be no trouble at all for you. Business pages can include prices of products, a star-rating system, and business owners can access web analytics, showing what content from your website is most popular with pinners.

Keep in mind that even though Pinterest has had a meteoric rise to prominence, it's still a new site and they don't have a business model. They could go away tomorrow. Don't invest all of your hope in Pinterest.

The smart play is to use Pinterest as a way to drive people to your site and get them on your mailing list or purchasing your art.

Remember that if it's free, you are the product, and you are building someone else's business. Use social media to develop support and a following, but link back to your website. Your own site is the best place for long term marketing growth.

Uses & best practices

- **Be yourself**
  Consider being yourself and pinning interesting things, not exclusively self-promotional items. This can contribute to building your brand; people will want to do business with you as a person. They will enjoy connecting with you through the personal self-expression of Pinterest and may consider buying your art or working with you because they like who you are and what you're about. The very best boards are inspiring, with beautiful images that draw people in.

- **Use as a digital portfolio of your work.**
  This is perhaps the most straightforward use of Pinterest to artists. Pinterest is a great platform for showing off your work in a visually appealing way. You can create boards on Pinterest to share your work. You can upload images directly, or, better yet, pin your portfolio directly from your blog. This way the images will link back to their original source.

- **Tool for artistic production & inspiration**
  Create boards to show the progress of your work, or as a storyboard of ideas, or a location for inspiration images and videos.
  Use Pinterest as a curatorial platform for inspiring images. If you collect magazine clippings, photocopies, images, colour chips and other inspirational material for future projects, you may want to consider converting your inspirational materials to digital, and creating boards, to pin them onto.
  Using boards means that you can organise your inspiration material more effectively, add or delete new pins easily, and see you inspiration material presented altogether on one board.
  Not only can you keep your inspiration in one place, but collectors can get an idea of what inspires you and make a personal connection; some people are keenly interested in the creative process.

Connect Pinterest to Facebook, Twitter and Your Blog

If you write a blog you can embed your pins into your blog posts. To do this, click on one of your pins. You'll see some options for social media sharing on the right side of your screen, and one of them says "Embed." Click on that button, and you'll get the HTML code that you can put into a blog post to create post content.

Pinterest also makes it easy to share new pins and re-pins on Facebook and Twitter. Again, click on any pin and then look over on the far right to see options for sharing your pins on Facebook and Twitter.

Copyright Issues

Pinterest's terms and conditions state that they can reuse your images for anything that they want, and this has brought them under some scrutiny and questions, even panic, from their users. Basically, if someone **re-pins** an image, there's no immediate link back to the original site. This can be a problem if you

want people to know you are the artist. To counter this, you can watermark your images. If you want to opt-out of Pinterest altogether, read and implement this code and nobody will be able to pin your images from your website. They could still download and upload your images, or just take a screen shot.

In February 2012, photographer and lawyer Kirsten Kowalski wrote a blog post explaining how her interpretation of copyright law led her to delete all her infringing pins. The post contributed to scrutiny over Pinterest's legal status. The post went viral and reached founder Ben Silbermann who contacted Kowalski to discuss making the website more compliant with the law. On the positive side, Pinterest will need to address and change its copyright issues to keep its users happy. If it does not soon enough, it will fold. Based on Silbermann's reaction, we might be able to assume he is open to keeping pinners happy.

What is SoundCloud?

SoundCloud is an online audio distribution platform. It allows you to upload, record, promote and share your originally-created sounds. In January 2012, SoundCloud announced they had reached 10 million registered users. It is growing in popularity as a tool for artists to distribute sound files online, and for users to discover new music.

It is a free platform, but also offers additional features to users with paid subscriptions, including more hosting space, the option to distribute your tracks or recordings to more groups and users, to create sets of recordings, and to more thoroughly track the statistics for each of your tracks.

Making music

- There's a stage in music production where your music is not ready to be released, but you need to share it with press, or certain contacts, possibly collaborators. SoundCloud can give you stats on private sharing allowing you to see if the person you sent your music to has listened to it, how many times they have listened to it, and if they have shared it.

- Also helpful for collaborative work, or when working on several audio projects at the same time, SoundCloud allows you to 'compartmentalise' groups or sets of music. Audio pieces can be put onto playlists, and you can decide who has access to which playlists.

- There is also the option to tag audio pieces separately, say for example as 'unfinished'. When you go to your SoundCloud page, you can access only unfinished pieces from a certain playlist.

- If you own an iPhone, iPad or Android, you can record anything you want while on the move, and post it instantly online using a SoundCloud app. There are no limits to file sizes.

- Although you can record and publish on the spot, you cannot edit audio files on SoundCloud. There are no editing tools, and no added effects. You will edit your work somewhere else and then upload it to SoundCloud.

Sharing music

- Publishing your music to Soundcloud gives you access to an existing and massive audience instantly. However, SoundCloud is not set up as a site for users or site visitors to go to to *discover* music. Though this might happen, SoundCloud is best used as a tool for music production and distribution. The focus here is to give artists' music a 'home' on SoundCloud, but not make it the 'destination'. The new version of SoundCloud (as of December 2012) changes this aspect.

- Fans no longer go to one particular place on the web to listen to music. The days are gone when an artist could have a dedicated MySpace page and expect listeners or potential fans and music buyers to go to that page for their music. MySpace is not getting that following anymore, what is required now, is to take your music to Twitter, Facebook and to music blogs.

- SoundCloud has dedicated players to embed into Facebook or Twitter newsfeed. For music blogs, while SoundCloud hosts your music, a blogger can embed a player into their blog, and have it stream your music right there in their post.

FOR YOUR INTEREST:

- So you are sharing your music. The fact that you can publish your music anywhere is an advantage, and you are making it easier for people to share your music too. Being limited to uploading your music only to your own website won't give you much, if any, exposure.
- If you want to get the full package, you have to pay a hefty amount. In order to find out exactly how much you need to pay annualy or monthly, and the exact details of what you will receive by upgrading to a paid subscription, click here.

Selling music

- SoundCloud does not offer retail services, and you have control over how you want listeners to access your music. You can decide if you want listeners to stream or download.
- You can put bylinks in, so say for example you are a musician using SoundCloud to promote, you can put your own links to iTunes, Amazon, or to your website, from where listeners can buy your music.

Sources:
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and
http://audio.tutsplus.com/articles/lectures/how-to-use-soundcloud-to-promote-your-music/

What is Vimeo?

Vimeo is an online video hosting website which has been in operation since 2004. Once registered, members can upload videos (in SD or HD) for the world to see. Basic membership is free and allows for up to 500MB of storage space per week. Premium services - Vimeo Plus and PRO – are also available at a monthly cost. To watch videos on Vimeo you do not need to register, or "Join" the service.

The website uses much of the language of the major social networks, for example, registered users can Like videos, Follow other members they would like to receive updates from, and select videos to Add to… their Channels, Groups or Albums. These groupings can also be used to search through videos. The New York-based founders of Vimeo chose the name as a play on the words video and me, it's also an anagram of a suitably cinematic word that begins with M.

Vimeo videos can be embedded (for blogs etc.) in various dimensions by selecting the Share button and copying the HTML code. If the video's uploader has selected the enable download option, then videos can also be download for free (in SD or HD formats). As with Google Analytics, statistics or Stats for videos can also be publically seen (unless the uploader has disabled this option).

A wide range of additional services are also available, these include:

- **Creative Commons** – Vimeo members can copyright their videos through four differing Creative Commons licenses (Attribution, Share Alike, Non-Commerical, No Derivative Works). These free licenses mean video works can be copied, distributed, or edited while due credit is given to the original video's creator. Users can also search films using the same Creative Commons categories.

- **Creator Services –** These consist of three options. The first, **Vimeo On Demand**, for Vimeo PRO members only, is an open self-distribution platform whereby users can sell their video work to interested parties. After Vimeo On Demand "transaction costs", members keep 90% of the revenue. Vimeo On Demand films are available for any users to pay, to rent or buy. Secondly, **Tip Jar** whereby Vimeo Plus and PRO members receive payment (via PayPal or a credit card) from people who click the Like button. The third Creator Service offered is **Vimeo + Getty Images**. In this partnership, members can register their video content for the vast digital media library, Getty Images, to use as stock footage. If then accessed by a third party, the Vimeo member would receive a royalty fee.

- **Enhancer** – These production tools allow users to edit the appearance of their video, or as Vimeo say, the Look. A range of filters and styles can be applied for free or at a price. Soundtrack or sound effects can also be added using the Music tab (see Music Store also).

- **Music Store** – Here songs or sound effects can be downloaded and licensed for use in members' videos. The sounds on offer come from free music archives and affiliated sound libraries. Some are free, some cost.

- **Staff Picks** – As the title suggests, this is a playlist of videos recommended by Vimeo staff.

- **Vimeo Video School** – Written and videoed advice, lessons, and tutorials from Vimeo staff and "friendly personal creativity consultants".

Why use Vimeo (rather than YouTube)?

- Whereas YouTube hosts videos that can range from obscure animal antics to the latest Rihanna video or mainstream movie trailers, Vimeo offers a more filtered, *cultured* platform – you're unlikely to be recommended a video of a "cute baby" or dancing pet with millions of views.

- The large network of Vimeo users (over 8-million) includes professional animators, artists, designers, and filmmakers. This pool of creative professionals means like-minds can easily view one another's work and connect with one another through the comments and messaging facilities.

- Adverts, or rather, no adverts. With free accounts, banner ads can appear on the video, however, Vimeo proudly state that (unlike YouTube and other online video hosts), they don't put ads before, after, or over videos. As part of the perks you pay for, premium accounts come without any advertising.

- Visual appeal. Credit where credit's due. Vimeo keep their pages clean, clear and uncluttered with headings, tabs, and help options easy to navigate. The video to be viewed is the central focus.

What is Instagram?

Instagram is an online photo-sharing platform first launched in 2010. Since June 2013, videos (of up to 15 seconds) can also be shared. The app is designed for smartphones – i.e Android devices and iPhones – and can be downloaded from the Apple App Store or Google Play for free.

Once users have set up their account they can take images on-the-go, adjust the picture by selecting from a range of filters, and then upload their photo online to display on their own Instagram page and/or share through social networks. In September 2013, Instagram proudly announced 150 million monthly active users worldwide.

Because of the ease with which the platform can be used, artists should take precautions to avoid their images being used without their knowledge or permission. As with Facebook, who owns Instagram, there has been controversy and confusion as to the copyright of images and the companies possibly profiting from users' photos.

Key Features and Language

- Hashtags are arguably Instagram's not-so-secret weapon. By adding a # symbol then a key word, these hashtags can be clicked on to search other images with the same hashtag (e.g. #CapeTown or #graffiti).
- Users can Follow other users whose images appeal. Totals of the amount of accounts users are Following or have as Followers suggests their digital popularity (or amount of time spent online!).
- By clicking the heart button, users can show that they Like an image.
- Comments can also be left for each photo; this can lead to conversation or debate about works as well as just showing digital approval.
- Tagging allows users to link their image to other users (including galleries or other organisations).
- The range of filters allows user to apply preset styles such as sepia or light enhancers.

Uses & best practices

- Separate work and personal. If you constantly snap away on your camera phone and want to share the images with friends, family, or even online strangers, consider if these pictures are a fair representation of your artistic practise. Do you want potential buyers of your work seeing photos of you out partying? This can be easily avoided by having one personal account and a separate account solely to display works or works in progress; or using Instagram as a scrapbook to document your artistic processes.
- Watermark or sign your images. Once posted online, images can be shared all over the Internet with no obligation to credit the creator. To avoid an image of yours getting used without credit add a watermark, logo or signature so it can be identified.

- Choosing the settings to automatically link an Instagram account with Facebook, Flickr, SoundCloud, Twitter, and Tumblr accounts allows images to be shared widely without having to post to the individual websites.

- Create a visual identity. What makes your images special? Established and successful visual artists who use Instagram have all found their voice. How can you convey a style that separates you from others?

- Many independent businesses and large brands are using Instagram as a marketing tool for direct contact with their audience. High-profile multinationals such as Mercedes, Nike and Samsung have headhunted established Instagram photographers to use the platform to promote their products or temporarily take over their corporate accounts.

- The first three years of Instagram have been advert-free, however, it seems likely the platform will go the way of most social networks or services and find ways of generating income through advertising.

Sources include:

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LISTEN TO THE PROFESSIONAL:
Pippa Tshabalala on Creativity and Digital Space

Firstly, who am I? I'm not going to bore you with my credentials, but I've crossed over and occupied a number of different roles in my career, some of which I guess can be identified, in no particular order, as: Artist, VJ, Writer, Producer, Presenter, Researcher, Lecturer, and first and foremost Gamer.

Increasingly you'll find job titles popping up that are recruiting for Social Media Strategists... and Digital Media Managers. Where once these were unheard of titles, you'll now find that these are the people hired to analyse your company's online activity, manage your digital assets and accounts such as Facebook and Twitter, and come up with solutions to maximise your business reach and potential.

Social media is an incredibly important theme that runs throughout many online and digital art in the current climate.

The online and digital are not bound by things like dimensions. Space is infinite, bound only by the confines of the screen on which you view it, which in turn is malleable. Things like hyperlinks provide infinite reference points and points of interaction for the viewer, so why would you not want to embrace this medium?

Interactive art, digital painting, sensors, responsive art, artificial life, algorithims, robotics, video games, webcomics, iphoneography, comments on privacy, sharing. These are just some of the themes that have emerged in recent years and which are increasingly being explored on multiple levels, with artists continually diversifying into new and relevant topics.

I'd like to discuss one of my own works, something that has gone through a variety of incarnations. I have an obsession with the gaming franchise *Grand Theft Auto*. In this case I made use of the game *GTA: San Andreas*.

I have always had an interest in the tactile interpretation of digital art and the sense of dislocation one experiences when viewing art through the physical barrier of the screen. The smoothness of the monitor itself, places the viewer in a position where the sense of tactility is lost, thus changing the way in which they relate to the work.

Whilst playing videogames, the player experiences a sense of identification with the character. Not only do they view and empathise with the character onscreen but also emotionally they often become very deeply associated with the avatar. Most players refer to their chosen characters as 'I' – perceiving themselves as the perpetrator of the actions taking place in a constructed digital environment.

Although this particular work has been exhibited multiple times, I think it is important to note that each time the format has changed and the experience of the work is fundamentally different due to placement, format and audience.

Pippa Tshabalala 'simulation'

It has been exhibited as a series of photographs, printed out postcard size and then attached to a wall as a one, large piece, at times occupying multiple walls, at other times a single wall. The more closely compacted the photographs, coupled with the larger volume, increases the impact of, and ironically at the same time desensitization to, the violence presented to the viewer.

The important issue to note here is the method of production, which is sometimes misunderstood by those not familiar with the game. These images are not screenshots. Neither are they photographs I have taken of the computer screen with a camera. The character within GTA has a virtual camera as a 'weapon'. When the player presses the 'shoot' or 'attack' button whilst holding the camera, the character (and by implication the player as the crosshairs fill the screen) looks through the viewfinder and 'shoots' a photograph, which is saved into a gallery on the computer. In other words, the artwork is effectively produced through a symbiotic relationship between the player and 'Carl Johnson', GTA:SA's main protagonist.

I 'killed' pedestrian characters within the game in the more traditional gaming sense: by shooting them (with a number of different guns), stabbing them (with different bladed weapons) or beating them to death with my fists, a crowbar, or any of the handy blunt objects lying around (including a bunch of flowers and a dildo), and then took photographs of the dead bodies.

This was often a complicated process, due to the fact that as soon as I started to attack people, enthusiastic pedestrians and law enforcement agencies in turn attacked me, which made it difficult to compose the photographs. In a few of the prints there is even a fist or baton of a policeman at the edge of the shot. As a result, many of the shots look awkwardly arranged, but understanding the process makes it easier to understand how and why they came to look this way.

Violence is an extremely contentious factor in the playing and marketing of games in the global market. I inserted myself into the logic of killing in *Grand Theft Auto*, but then manipulated that process for aesthetic effect. The process of killing over 2000 Non-Playable Characters (NPC's – these are characters within the game, but which the player is unable to use as avatars) was an arduous, emotionally exhausting one.

My work is fuelled not only by a desire to transfer the digital into the material, but also by a need to explore the more visceral nature of what is often referred to as 'a time-wastage medium'. Videogames are no longer the realm of children and computer geeks that remain within the dark confines of their bedroom, lit only by the glow of the monitor, they have ventured into mainstream culture and thus need to be heard and understood as a medium reflective of society.

The next step in this process for me was to allow members of the public to create their own stories. I created a blog called Telling Death, uploaded a series of these photos and the public then engaged with the photos to create their own narrative around how these people died.

*This text is an edited version of **Pippa Tshabalala**'s talk at University of Johannesburg's Arts and Culture Conference 2013.*

The African Arts Institute

The African Arts Institute's vision is for a vibrant, dynamic and sustainable African creative sector that contributes to development, human rights and democracy on the continent, and projects African aesthetics and intellectual content into the international arena. The mission is to harness relevant expertise, resources, infrastructure, markets, knowledge and information to help develop and sustain creative practice in Africa, and the protection and promotion of the continent's cultural heritage and assets in line with our vision.

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ACT is the oldest funding agency in democratic South Africa. It was established to secure financial and other resources for arts, culture and heritage; and to project the needs and role of the sector into the public domain.

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Nonprofit Network

The Nonprofit Network is a resource centre for non-profit organisations, particularly those based in South Africa, in using social media, websites and e-newsletters. The website has been made possible by the Open Society Foundation's Public Health Programme: Health Media Initiative to assist their grantees with their web and social media work.

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