BRISTOL, 25th & 26th APRIL 2013
Social Media Do's and Don'ts

- **DO think about who it is for -** Get an idea of who you are trying to talk to – is your audience family orientated, young adults, the elderly? What do you think they would actually want to see. If it's families and children, they are unlikely to want to look at 400 photos from your cast party at the end of your first ever month at the Edinburgh Fringe.
- **DO be selective** – In fact, NO ONE wants to see 400 photos of anything you've done. Keep each album small and relevant and choose your photos carefully before you hit upload. The same goes for videos. People have very short attention spans and no one will watch a 30 minute, unedited clip of your rehearsal that your friend has shot on their iPhone.
- **DO use video but remember it can be your friend AND your worst enemy** – If you want to use video to communicate with your audience then great. But watch it before you post it. Can you hear the audio clearly, does it distort? Does it have 30secs of the studio floor? Don't put it up if even you can't watch it. Video can be great for peeks at your process, interviews with cast members and audiences and so on.
- **DO use Direct Message's for direct contacting** not for spam. Don't DM everyone of your followers with 'Our new show is on sale now'. Put that in a tweet with a link, allow people to look themselves and also share it. The same goes for private messages and group messages on facebook.
- **DO Turn off Auto-Replies.** Most people can tell when you have an auto reply set on Twitter. If you really want to thank people for following, do it individually. People will take you, and the content you subsequently, much more seriously as a result.
- **DO tease your audience** – rehearsal trailers, interviews, production shots – all of these are a great way of building interest in what you are making and a great way of warming people up before you hit them with a barrage of 'Book tickets now for our new show'. If they already feel like they know the background to the show, they are more likely to click the 'Book Now' link.
- **DO Regularly update** and don't just start your profiles up 3 weeks before a show or event. Avoid show specific pages and accounts, build your companies profile up gradually. Think about how much time you have to dedicate to maintaining your twitter profile. Most of these platforms work on feeds, if you aren't updating regularly then your content and your profile will be lost beneath other peoples posts.
- **DO let people make their own decisions about sharing your content.** Unless you're campaigning for a cause, offering a job opportunity or giving something away for free then asking people to retweet, share or like your content is completely missing the point of social media. People want to make that decision themselves.
- **DO link all your content together.** If you are on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, or Wordpress, make sure people can easily find links to your profiles via your website
- **DO think about what your profile says**. Does it say wacky fun loving theatre company when actually the work you make is dark and

uncompromising? Your profile should be able to tell your visitors and followers exactly what you do without them looking anywhere else. Think of it as an invite or introduction to your company.

- **DO Participate and interact** – You need to talk to other people on the platforms you are using or you risk seeming like you are only interested in self promotion. Follow other people who make work like yours or are interested in your genre and practice. Interact with people on twitter, ask questions and give answers, like and comment on other peoples posts. Tweet about burning issues or stories related to your work.

- **DON'T incessantly retweet other people's praise of your work**, one or two is fine. But filling peoples feeds up with constant updates about your company is not fun for anyone to look at. It's like reading out all your good reviews, at the top of your voice, in room full of people, for hours on end.
- **DON'T just copy and paste**, think about the nature of the medium you are using. People want different things from each one. If you post the same thing on your twitter as you do on your facebook then you are missing the point. They are different, take some time to figure out what works best on each platform
- **DON'T just copy and paste.** It's pretty annoying hearing the same thing twice right? It's also really annoying to receive a tweet or be sent an email or be facebooked a link that is exactly the same as what's been sent to everyone else. Tailor your content to the person in mind. For example, on twitter anyone can see your tweets so if you send the same tweet to 10 people then your feed, and anyone who follows you, will just display the same tweet over and over again.
- **DON'T post messages late at night.** If you post at 1am, hardly anyone will see your message. Don't relentlessly repost the same information. Look at a program like Hootsuite that can help you schedule tweets whilst you are working on other things.

This is by no means an exhaustive list. It's worth googling 'social media do's an don'ts' and spending some time getting to know the lingo of each format. Hashtags, likes, feed, retweets, pinboard, are all terms you are likely to come across. Get to know what they mean before you start using it. It's a potted list of the things I think of whenever I am asked about what you should and shouldn't do on social media.

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COMMONLY USED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS:
- Twitter – 140 characters a post, great for simple, quick communication
- Facebook – great for video, links, photographs all linked to your own profile page
- Tumblr – more like a website but an excellent and easy tool for hosting a blog or temporary website

- Pinterest – more of a visual resource, think about this as a way of creating a moodboard for your company or your practice
- Vine – great for swift and effective video – only 6 second videos allowed
- Vimeo – For longer videos, excellent for hosting trailers or full videos