

# Fact sheet

*This fact sheet has been developed using the information gathered from the Digital Technologies, Connecting Communities project, an AHRC-funded study that took place in 2011.*

*The information contained in this fact sheet is not meant to be exhaustive; rather is meant to be a guide to some of the issues community groups can consider when thinking about the most appropriate and effective communication technologies to use to get their messages across to their target audiences.*

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## 1. Choosing technologies

When thinking about which technologies to use, consider:

### **Allocating sufficient time for discussion**

- Decisions about which technology to use needs careful and often lengthy discussion
- Treat the decision-making process in relation to technology as important as other issues
- Make sure you implement time to manage the technologies as a legitimate work issue

### **Agreeing on clarity of purpose**

- Be sure about the message the group is trying to get across

### **Contextualising the audience**

- Who and where are the group's audience
- What technologies are they using?
- Include disability access issues

### **Surveying the market**

- Find out what is out there already, and what is free and what is not

### **Getting expert free advice and on-going support**

- From members of your group: survey each member for expertise
- From other groups
- From advice services for not-for-profit groups
- From social media surgeries

### **Paying for advice**

- Get recommendations from other groups who pay for IT advice
- Find out how much this would cost for your not-for-profit group

## 2. Once technology is chosen

Communication technologies need constant servicing so consider:

### **Training**

- Encourage group members to undertake voluntary IT training
- Source free/low cost training for non-profit groups

### **Diversifying roles**

- Resident experts can leave the group: have more than one available
- Make sure more than one group member has access to passwords/log-in details

### **Accepting trial and error**

- Be open to trial and error: technologies change and so do group aims

### **Allocating sufficient time management**

- Be aware that managing several communication technologies (email/facebook/twitter/websites) for example can be time consuming, so allocate time to this

- If you have a website, take control of it so that you are not reliant on an external website developer to upload the latest news, for example

**Consistency of message**

- Decide if your message needs to be consistent across all technologies
- Regularly check that consistency is not being lost

**Responding to your audience**

- Interact with your audience if possible to ensure loyalty and connection

**Investing in backup equipment**

- Use an external hard drive to back up data regularly

**Updating information across platforms regularly**

- Keep your message up to date and professional-looking