

Part 4 – Facebook & Social Media

Making the Miles Fade

Using your smartphone, tablet, PC or laptop to bring you closer to friends and family who live far away (*and those who don't*)



Tech Inner Circle Edition

THE
HELPFUL BOOK
COMPANY

An Employee-Owned Company

Making the Miles Fade

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A note about this chapter

Hello

Now – we called this chapter *Facebook and Other Social Media*, but in practice it's nearly all about Facebook.

You might be wondering why we haven't put in more about other social networks like Twitter and Instagram. And the answer's simple.

Twitter and Instagram aren't really *for* keeping in touch with friends and family – they're not *personal* like that. Instead of having a circle of "friends" that you share your news with, most other social networks are like standing on a big box and shouting your thoughts to the world!

Celebrities, organisations (like museums and theatres) and event organisers tend to use Twitter to share their news with fans. They can put up pictures and even videos to let people know what they're up to – and it's quicker, easier and cheaper than sending out newsletters or putting up posters.

For friends, though, Facebook has more of a... community... feel.

For the same reason, you'll find that we haven't covered all the ins and outs of Facebook either – there are so many things you can do with it that don't really have anything to do with friends and family!

If you'd like help with any of the other bits of Facebook (or other types of social media) please drop Mike, Jess or Kathryn a line on the [Inner Circle Clubroom](#).

Chapter 4

Facebook & Other Social Media

Keeping in Touch on Facebook

You've probably heard of "social media" (or "social networking") – it just means using apps or websites to be social – sharing news, photos and videos with your friends and family online, that sort of thing. And Facebook is the most popular social media network in the world...

What is Facebook?

Facebook is all about sharing things with your friends. You set up a network of contacts (called "friends"), and you can share photos, thoughts, snippets of news, etc, with all the people in your little group of friends.



The problem I used to have with that, before I started using Facebook, was why you wouldn't just want to email those things to a group of email contacts – surely that's just as easy. But I've decided I was wrong.

It is often easier to share things on Facebook than by email – unless what you're sharing is private, you don't have to decide who to send it to. You just "post" it on your timeline and all your "Facebook friends" can see it.

And it has the lovely added bonus that people can comment on your photo, video, life news, etc – and all the rest of your friends and family can see that too. For example if I put up some pictures from the last holiday we went on, Mum might comment on how the boys have grown, reminisce about the time they went to Paphos, etc – and my brother and sister, Uncle John and the rest of the family can all see that too.

You can end up with whole conversations going on, and it feels like you're much more "connected" than if I'd emailed those people separately. (OK, there's the "Reply all" feature in email, so that conversations can include everyone, but a lot of my family would forget and just reply to me and no one else.)

How is it different from email?

I like to think of the difference like this:

- Email is like delivering a letter through someone's door. They open it, read it, and might choose to reply.
- Facebook is like writing it out in big letters and putting it up on the wall of your local pub. Your friends can all see it, but they're not obliged to comment on it if they don't want to – and if they do they can, and you can all have a discussion about it.

Email is personal and Facebook is more about social interaction – that's what it boils down to. You can update all your friends at once with one post. And for some things that just works better. OK, Facebook isn't the right place for everything – I wouldn't tell Mum and Dad my top secret business plans by posting it on Facebook! But if we've been on a nice walk in the woods with the boys like we did yesterday, I'd post some of the photos on Facebook, so that the whole family and my friends can see the pictures too, and marvel at just how grown-up Alastair's looking these days.

For a reminder about 'Reply All' and other features of email, see Chapter 3.

Opening a Facebook Account

You can open a new account on the website or through an app on your tablet or phone. That account then belongs to you – not whichever device you created it on. You can log into it from anywhere, so long as you can remember your username and password. I'll start by showing you how to create an account – if you've already got one, you can skip straight to page 44.

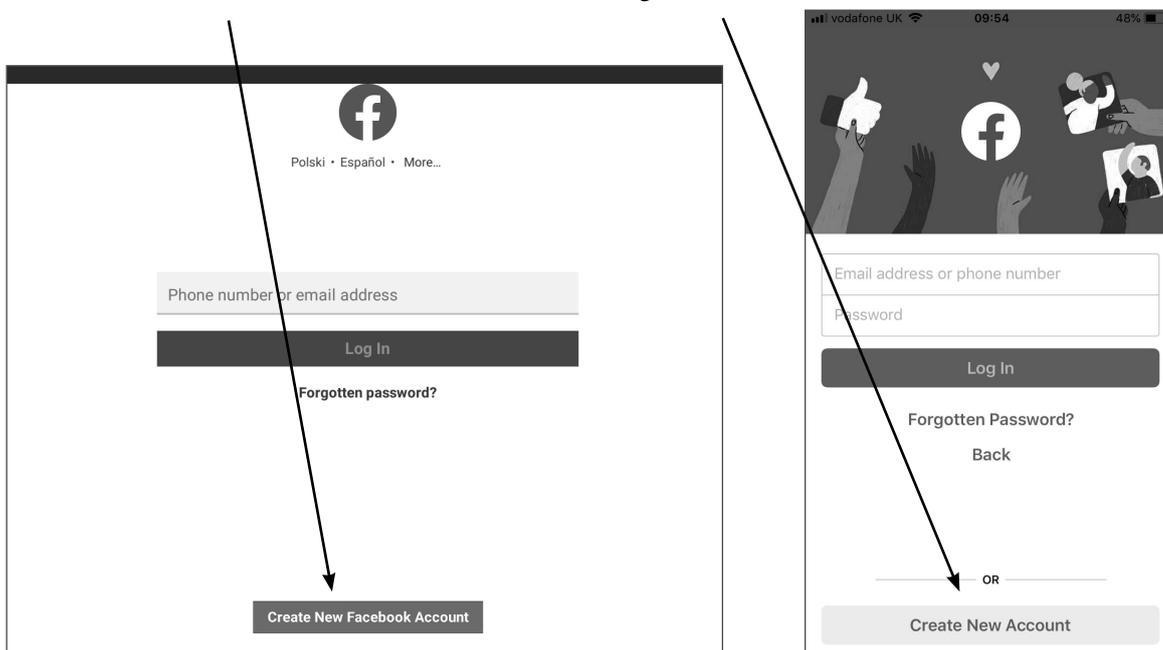
Opening a new account on a tablet or smartphone

You might get a message pop up asking if it's okay for Facebook to access your "Contacts". That's to make it easier for you to find people you already know on Facebook. It's fine to say "No" if you'd rather find your friends manually (I'll come back to that on page 44).

If you're using a tablet or smartphone to open your account, you'll need to download the app first. Search for "Facebook" in the app store – then you want this one, described as "Social Networking".



1) When you first open the app you'll see a screen something like one of these, asking if you already have a Facebook account. To sign up for a new account, tap where it says "Create New Facebook Account" or something similar.

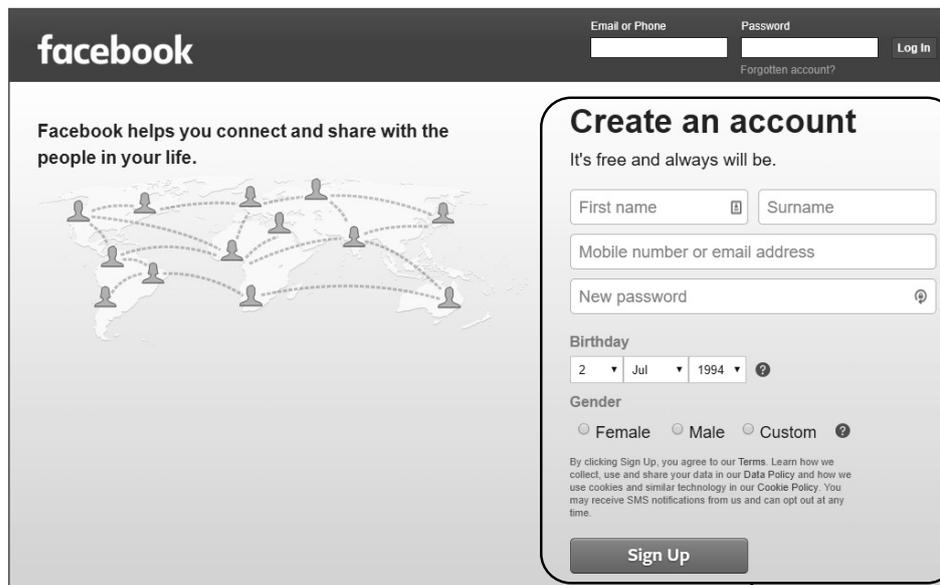


2) Then it'll ask for various bits of information (the exact order of the questions will vary depending on the make of your tablet or phone, and the whims of Facebook updates!). This is what you'll be asked for, though:

- a) Your mobile phone number or email address, which you'll use as your Facebook username whenever you need to sign in. If it's asking for your phone number but you'd rather use your email address instead, tap on "Sign up with email address" – it's usually somewhere below the phone number box.
- b) Your name, your birthday and your gender. You should use your real, full name when you sign up (or the name that most people know you by, anyway) – otherwise your friends won't be able to find you.
- c) You'll need to come up with a password, too – then your account will be created. You'll still need to "verify" it before you can open it, though (see next page).

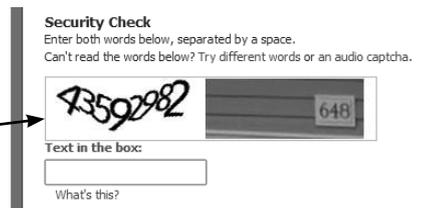
Opening a new account on the website

- 1) If you're using a PC, type [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) into the address bar of your web browser. You'll get a page that looks something like this:



- 2) To create a brand-new account, enter the info they ask for here and click “Sign up”. You can give either a mobile phone number or an email address – that will be your Facebook username whenever you need to sign in.

- 3) You might be asked to prove that you're a real person by typing in some letters and numbers – it'll look something like this:



- 4) And that's your account created.

Verifying your account

- 1) Once you've created your account, you'll need to verify it. Exactly what it looks like when you do that depends on the device you're using, and whether you've given them a mobile number or an email address.
- 2) You'll get a screen asking you to enter a code that's been sent to the phone number or email address that you gave them. It'll look something like this:

- 3) You'll be sent a message with a five-digit code in. Find the code in your inbox and type it into this box:



- 4) Then click on the blue “Confirm” button to verify your account.

- 5) If you don't get the code, you can click or tap here to ask them to resend the code. You can also send it to a different mobile number or to an email address instead.

If you can't find the message with the code straight away, make sure you check your Email inbox as well as your Messages inbox, just in case it's gone to the other one by mistake!

Finding Friends

Facebook isn't much use if you haven't added any friends that you want to share things with. You can let Facebook suggest friends for you, or you can look for specific people if you prefer.

Facebook needs you both to agree to be friends

To become “friends” with someone on Facebook, both they and you need to agree to it – you can't add someone as a friend without their permission.

You start by sending them a “Friend Request”, which involves clicking or tapping on a button that looks something like this:



They need to accept that request before you can become Facebook friends, by clicking or tapping on a button a bit like this:



And the same's true the other way round – no one can add you as a friend without you accepting (or “confirming”) a friend request from them.

By the way, you don't have to accept a friend request if you don't want to – you simply click or tap on “Delete” instead of “Confirm” on the friend request.

Facebook Friend Suggestions

Facebook is very good at working out who you might want to be friends with – so good that it can be quite creepy sometimes.

They base their suggestions on the information you put in your profile (the page explaining who you are) – so what town or city you live in, where you work, where you went to school, etc. Then once you've got a few friends, they might suggest your friends' friends too.

They've almost certainly got other fancy ways to suggest people as well – based on other Facebook accounts using the same device, or even the same wi-fi connection. So try not to get too freaked out if you can't see how they've made the link!

The list of suggestions will usually look like this:

If you see someone you know, you can send them a friend request by clicking or tapping on “Add Friend”. You don't have to, though. This is just Facebook trying to be helpful, so feel free to ignore the list entirely.

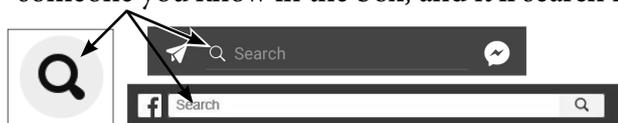


When you create your account, Facebook will offer to use your contacts to make a list of people with Facebook accounts who you already know. You can then add those people as friends. I'll show you how this works on page 78.

Searching manually for friends

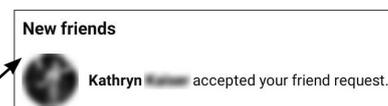
If there's someone in particular who you'd like to add as a friend but they're not in your friend suggestions, you can always look them up manually:

- 1) At the top of most screens on Facebook, there's a search box. Type the name of someone you know in the box, and it'll search for them.



- 2) It'll list all the people with that name that it can find. With a common name you might have to scroll down quite a long way to find the one you want.

- 3) All you do is click or tap on “Add Friend” and it will send them a friend request. If they accept your request, you'll get a notification that looks something like this:



- 4) However, Facebook *doesn't* tell you if someone declines your friend request.

Finding your Way Around

Interacting with friends on Facebook is pretty easy once you know the basics.

Finding your way round – what the icons mean

On different devices the icons may be in different places on the screen, and Facebook varies which icons you see – it depends on both the device and who’s using it!



Search – use this to find people or businesses you know.



Profile page – tap here to go straight to your profile page.



News Feed – this is where posts and photos or videos from your friends will appear – see below.



Notifications – tap here to see when people comment on your posts, tag you in a post, or accept your friend request.



Friend requests – tap here to view them and accept or decline them.



Messages – new ones pop up here, but on the app you’ll need to download the Messenger app to access them (see p53).



Menu – tap here to open and close the menu quickly.



Marketplace – you can post adverts/photos of things you’re selling or browse for things for sale in your area.



Watch – where Facebook suggests videos you might want to watch.



Stories – a slightly odd feature where you can share photos, etc for just 24 hours, and then they’ll disappear.



Groups – you can join groups about all kinds of hobbies and interests.

The menu: ☰ lets you get around the app quickly – flip between the News Feed, your own Profile page, and pages for the groups you like, or to look at your friend suggestions.

Occasionally Facebook will “interrupt” your News Feed with suggestions of people you might know or “Recommended posts” that it thinks you’ll like.

See p.49 for more details on liking and commenting on people’s posts.

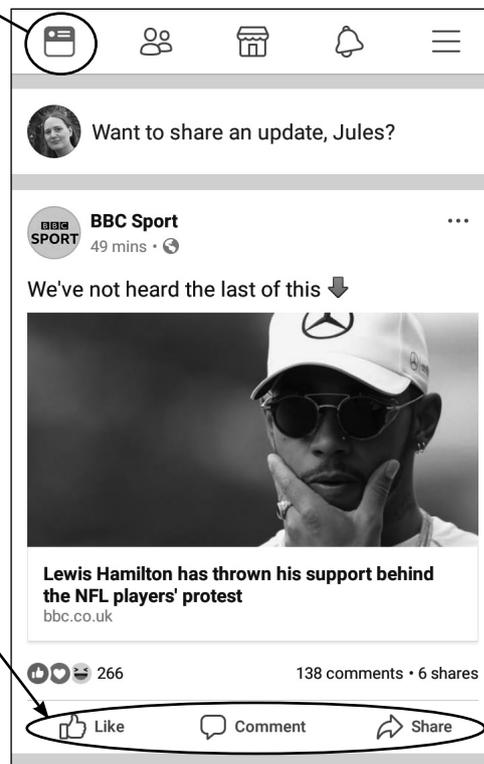
The News Feed is where you see what’s going on

Tap on the News Feed icon here (it might be at the bottom on your screen) to see things that your friends have posted on Facebook.

- 1) It could be a comment about the weather, a photo or video they’ve taken or maybe a link to an article they’ve read on the internet.
- 2) You can also “Like” or “Follow” celebrities or businesses, and their posts will show in your News Feed too. Scroll down to see more posts.

You can either read what people have written and leave it at that, or you can choose to “Like” it, “Comment” on it or “Share” it with your own friends. These options usually appear at the bottom of each post:

Each time you do any of these things, the friend who posted in the first place will be able to see it. (And, depending on their privacy settings, their friends might be able to see it too. It’s worth remembering that before you post anything – a bit of tact might be needed).



Creating a Post

Your friends might want to know what you're up to, too, so you need to know how to create a post (sometimes called a "status update" for some reason) and how to add photos.

Writing a new post

This is how you tell your Facebook friends your news – the bit that makes it all work – and it's pretty similar whether you're using the website or a version of the app.

- 1) First you need to find the "Create a post" box. This is always at the top of your News Feed, and it'll look something like one of these:



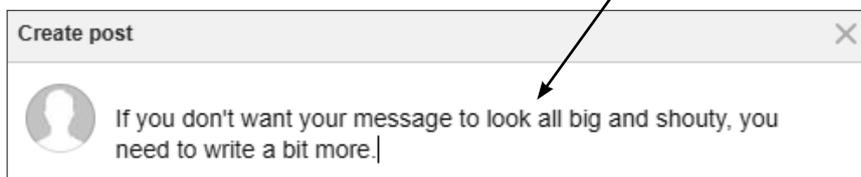
There are lots of things you can add to your post in this three dots menu: "Check in" lets you post that you're at a specific location, such as your favourite café. There's also "Feeling/Activity" where you can share exactly how you're feeling or what you're up to at that moment. It's a bit gimmicky, but some people like it...

- 2) It'll say something like "What's on your mind?" or "How's it going?" to encourage you to write something. Just click or tap on that bit of text to start your post. Exactly how it looks depends on what device you're using – this is what I get on the website:



3) Type your news in here. If you only write a very short message, it'll be in big writing like this. If you keep typing, the text will go down to normal size automatically.

- 4) This is where you choose who gets to see this post (its "audience").



It says "Friends" at the moment, which means that only your Facebook friends can see it. You can click or tap on the little downwards arrow to see other options if you like. For example, you can choose just a few specific friends to share your post with. Or you can choose to make it "Public", so that anyone could see it by going to your profile page.

- 5) Once you're happy with what you've written, click or tap on the "Share" button. Now your post will be added to your Timeline (a list on your Profile of all the posts you've shared), and it'll appear on the News Feed of everyone you're friends with.

Posting Photos and Videos

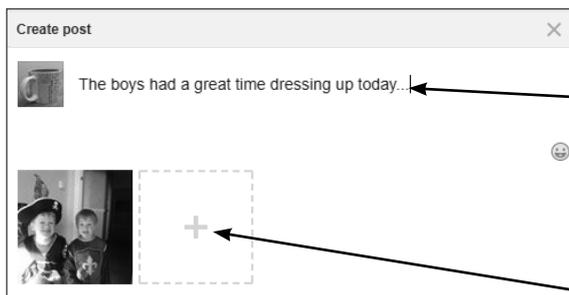
A picture tells a thousand words as they say... so, as well as telling people your news, you can show them by adding photos or videos to your post.

If you're adding photos of people, it's a good idea to check that they're happy for you to post that picture before you share it on Facebook. With photos of children, it's definitely best to check with their parents first.

Adding photos and videos using the website

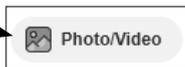
In these instructions, I'll be talking about adding a "photo", but you can add videos to your post in exactly the same way. Short clips are best – longer videos can take a long time to upload.

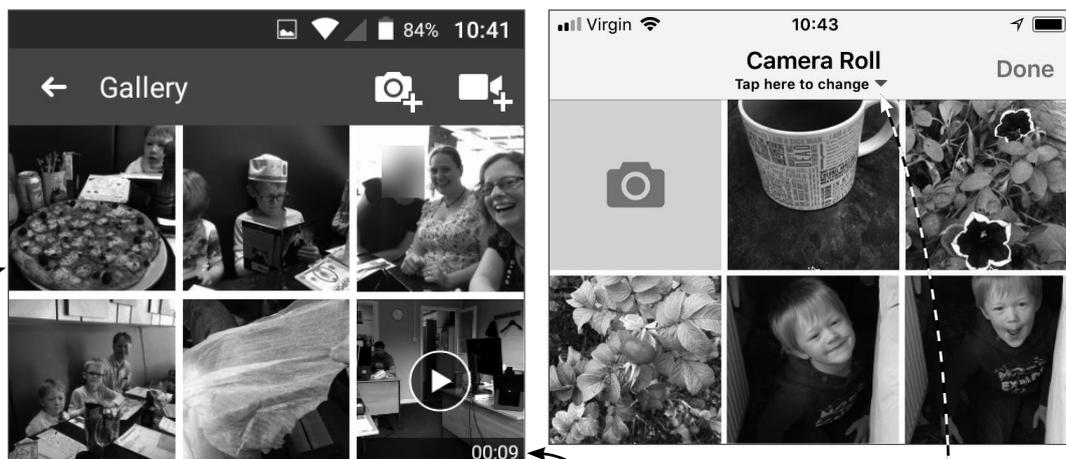
- 1) In the "Create a post" box, you'll see a "Photo/Video" button:  Click on that to add a photo.
- 2) A window will open showing all the different folders on your computer. Find where you've saved the photo you want to add and double-click on it.
- 3) Your photo will appear in your "Create a post" box. You can type something about it here (you don't get the extra big writing once you've added a photo – see previous page).
- 4) If you want to add more than one photo to the same post, just click on the "+" sign to add another.



Adding photos and videos using a phone or tablet

Adding photos using the app is similar to doing it on the website, but there are a few subtle differences:

- 1) On the "Create a post" screen, tap on the "Photo/Video" button:  On some phones and tablets, you have to tap "Add Photos and More" before you can see the Photo/Video option.
- 2) That takes you to your gallery – showing all the pictures on your phone or tablet. It'll look something like one of these:

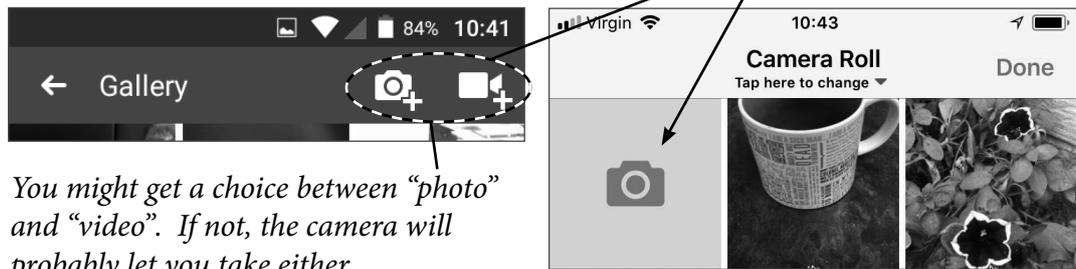


Just tap a picture to select it. You can choose more than one picture at once if you like.

On some phones and tablets, your videos will just appear in the gallery along with your photos. This is one.

On others, you need to tell Facebook to look at your videos folder by tapping up here.

- 3) If you want to take a new photo or video to add to your post, you can do that too. You should be able to see a camera icon something like one of these near the top of your screen. Just tap on it to open your camera.



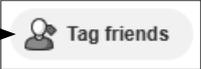
You might get a choice between “photo” and “video”. If not, the camera will probably let you take either.

- 4) Once you’ve chosen the photos you want to add, tap on “Done” up at the top of the screen. Your photos will appear on your “Create a post” screen, and you can type something about them at the top.

Tagging your friends in photos and posts

“Tagging” lets you say who’s in the photos you’re sharing or who you were with when you took them. It makes a sort of link to that person’s profile. When you tag someone in a photo or post, your post appears on their Timeline and gets shared with all *their* friends. Once you’ve added the photos to your post, you can start “tagging”.

Tagging a post

- 1) You can tag any post, not just one with photos in. In the “Create a post” box, you’ll see a “Tag friends” or “Tag people” button. Click on that. 
- 2) If you’re on the website, a “With” line will appear at the bottom of your post. If you start typing the name of your friend, Facebook will bring up a list for you to choose from. In the app, you’ll just go straight to a list of friends to choose from – you don’t have to start typing first.



Be careful if you’ve got two friends with similar names – make sure you tag the right one!

I sometimes “mention” people in a post to make sure they see it. Facebook sends you a notification when you’re mentioned, just like it does when you’re tagged in other ways.

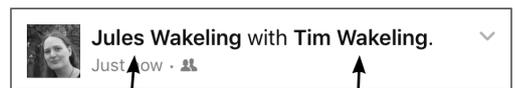
Mentioning someone in a post

But sometimes you might want to just *mention* someone in a post – a congratulations message maybe, or a note to tell them about an event. It works just the same as any other tag – here’s how to do it:

- 1) Start a new post and type whatever it is you want to say.



- 2) When you start typing your friend’s name, you should get a box pop up that looks something like this. Click or tap on the friend that you want to tag, and their name will appear in your post with a pale box behind it.



Sometimes this doesn’t work either! Sorry – just one of those foibles of Facebook.

- 3) Sometimes, the person you want to tag in your post doesn’t appear when you start typing their name. If that happens, try typing the @ symbol before their name first (you’ll probably need to delete the name you’ve already written rather than just adding an @ at the start of what you’ve already typed).

Commenting and Reacting

One of the best things about Facebook is that it's not a one-way street. You don't just have to read people's posts and leave it at that – you can quickly let them know what you think by “reacting” to their post, or you can write a full comment (complete with photos if you like!).

You can comment on other people's posts

When you log in to Facebook, you'll see people's posts on your News Feed – here's one from my friend Jane:

- 1) You can leave a comment on any post by clicking or tapping here where it says “Comment”.



- 2) You're not limited to just words in a comment either – you can add emojis, photos and (depending on what device you're using) other bits and pieces like stickers and gifs.

Some posts have this comment box down at the bottom – you can just click or tap in it and start typing.

- 3) When you're done, tap on the “Send” arrow on the app, or press the “Enter” key if you're on the website. Your comment will then appear underneath the original post.

If you've “liked” a post, the like button turns blue:

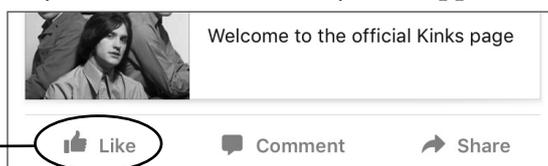


If you change your mind (or do it by accident) and want to “unlike” a post, just tap on the like button again.

You can “React” to posts in a few different ways

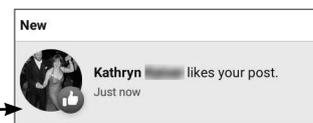
If you don't want to actually leave a comment, you can still show that you've appreciated someone's post by “reacting” to it.

The simplest reaction is a “Like”. You can “Like” someone's post or comment just by clicking or tapping where it says “Like”.



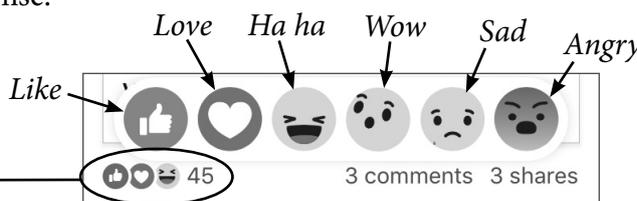
When you “Like” a post or a comment, two things happen:

- 1) Whoever wrote the post or comment gets a notification telling them that you liked it, which looks like this:
- 2) A little note appears under the post saying that you like it – so anyone who can see that post can see your “Like” too.



A few years ago, Facebook brought in a full set of “reactions” that you can use when a “like” just doesn't feel like the right response.

Here are your options:



You can see how other people have reacted down here.

On the website, you get to the other reactions by hovering your mouse over the “Like” button. In the app, you need to tap and hold the “Like” button instead.

Once you can see the list, just drag your finger over the one you want and let go (or if you're on the website, move your mouse over the one you want and click once).

If you open these options in the app by accident, slide your finger until it's well away from all six of the icons. Only take your finger off the screen when “Release to cancel” appears under the icons.

Twitter

I must admit, I don't really use Twitter to keep in touch with people – I find it more useful for brief updates on what's happening in the news. But if you feel like giving it a go, here's how...

What is Twitter?

The Twitter app will usually look like this:



I'm guessing you'll have heard of Twitter – it's in the news a lot, usually when some celebrity or politician has said something inappropriate. Most people who use Twitter seem to use it for following famous people and commenting on news stories. It's probably less useful for sharing news with your immediate friends and family.

On Twitter you can follow people and other people can follow you. If you want to share anything you can type up a "tweet" (basically like a "post" in Facebook but limited to no more than 280 characters). You can put photos and videos on there too, as well as web links. And you can read tweets from anyone you follow.

Everything you tweet is public, but in practice it'll more likely only be seen by people who follow you. And if you want more privacy you can change your settings to "protect your tweets" so that they're only seen by your followers – and that means you get to approve any new followers too.

The different parts of a tweet

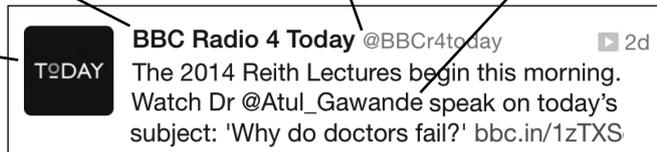
Here's an example of what a tweet looks like. It's by BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

This is the full name of the person or organisation.

This is their username (Twitter adds the @ symbol at the start) – you can see it's much shorter than the full name.

Here they've "mentioned" another twitter user in their tweet (Dr @Atul_Gawande). The @ symbol shows the bit after it is a Twitter name.

This is their profile picture.



Most people use Twitter via the app. But it also has a website – twitter.co.uk – which works in more or less the same way.

Finding your way around the Twitter app

The app looks different depending on what phone or tablet you have, but the same options will be there (sometimes just with the word, not the symbol):



Tap this symbol to search for people to follow, or to see which topics are trending.



Tap on this quill to write your own tweets.



Tap on the house symbol or the word "Home" to get back to the home page (i.e. the "News Feed" of accounts you follow).



Tap here to see all your notifications – who has "followed" you, who has responded to your tweets, and who has mentioned you in their own tweets.



or Opens a menu including, among other things, a "Profile" option to see how your profile looks to the outside world.



Tap here to switch between your News Feed showing "top tweets" first and showing tweets in order of when they were written.

You have a profile like this too, which other people can look at. They can see your name, Twitter name, and some statistics.

Finding people to follow

Tap the search icon and type in the name of the person or organisation you're looking for, or tap on the username or profile picture in a tweet. Either way you'll see their profile. To follow them, just tap on "Follow". (To unfollow them, go back to this page and tap the same button again.)



How do I tweet?

Remember a tweet can't be any more than 280 characters, including punctuation or usernames, so you have to keep it relatively short. You can also add a photo, by tapping on this symbol:



This is the tweet symbol – tap on it to open up a box to type in: It's often in different places depending on the version of the app. And if you can't see it, look for a little box saying "What's happening?" and tap on that.

Type your message here and tap "tweet" to post it:



Replying, Retweeting and Favouriting

At the bottom of each individual tweet, you'll see these symbols.



1) Reply

Tap here to type a public reply to the tweet.

2) Retweet

This means you republish the tweet on your own Twitter "feed", so all your followers will see it.

3) Favourite

Tap on the heart to make the tweet one of your "favourites". This lets the person who wrote it know you liked it.

4) Share

Tap on this to share the tweet by private message, add it to your bookmarks or share it using a different app on your phone. This is what the symbol looks like on the Android version:



5) **Follow** – If you see the word "Follow" next to someone you aren't following, you can tap on it to follow them.

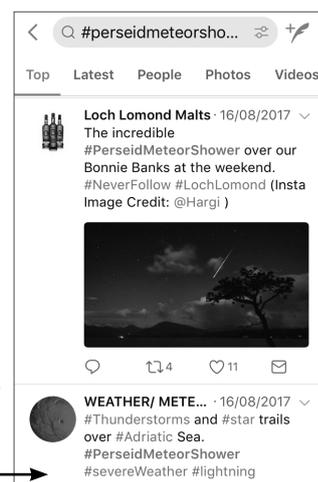
Understanding Hashtags "#"

Struggling to find the # key? On most touchscreen keyboards you need to tap the "symbols" button first, and a new keyboard pops up just with symbols on it.

A hashtag is just a hash symbol "#" that you add to the start of a word in your tweet. They're used to group together tweets about the same subject. People usually use hashtags when they want to be part of a bigger conversation.

Using a hashtag in your tweet means that it's "tagged" with that word (hence the name *hashtag*). Once you publish it, the tagged word will turn into a link you can tap on.

If you tap on the "hashtagged" word, it'll take you to a live feed of all the tweets people have written containing that word. Here's what I got by tapping the #perseidmeteorshower hashtag:



To be continued...

Hello again

On Monday – in the next part of this little serialisation – we’ll be sticking with Facebook, but switching to the Facebook Messenger app. It’s a bit like sending a phone text message, but you do it over the internet rather than using your phone signal.

You’ll discover the difference between WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger – and find out various other ways to send “instant messages” to your friends and family.

Until then – take care.

All the best

Julie Wakeling and The Helpful Book Company

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