

Social Media - LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a professional networking site (as opposed to a social networking site) focused on creating and maintaining business relationships. It includes many of the elements of traditional social networking sites (e.g. profiles, contact lists) but reads more like a hyperlinked network of resumes.

Profiles

Like Facebook, LinkedIn has its own profile system. However, LinkedIn profiles tend to be more professional and well, true. Profiles are created by uploading your address books and adding work history information. LinkedIn will then recommend people who you may know, and you can request that they be added to your network.

As a result, a network of chapter members on LinkedIn should provide a more reliable source of professional information about that group. Unfortunately, though, LinkedIn does not have the user base that Facebook does, so any group of members from your chapter on LinkedIn will likely be small.

Groups

LinkedIn is probably not big enough *yet* to work as a major base of operations for your chapter. That being said, setting up a LinkedIn Group for your chapter is a quick and easy way to establish a presence. Any LinkedIn user may start a group, and as administrator may adjust the visibility and privacy settings for the group.

Subgroups: Subgroups may be created within the group, and updated separately. This feature may be good for larger chapters with a number of geographic subchapters.

Announcements: Through the group, members may be contacted via their LinkedIn profile via updates to the group page. Each member of the group may set how frequently they want to receive updates (daily, weekly, etc.).

Discussions: Each group page includes a discussions section, which can be enabled and disabled by the group administrator. In the discussions section, group members can post comments, and reply to other members posts.

Applications

Events: http://www.linkedin.com/opensocialInstallation/preview?_ch_panel_id=1&applicationId=2000

LinkedIn also has a number of "Applications" that may be useful to chapter administrators. Primary among these is the Events Application. Any user can publish an event they plan on attending, even if they are not organizing the event. There does

not currently appear to be a way to manage RSVPs for events, but that functionality could be added soon.

Wordpress: http://www.linkedin.com/opensocialInstallation/preview?_ch_panel_id=1&applicationId=2200. There is a wordpress plugin for LinkedIn which allows updates to a Wordpress blog to be automatically posted in a user's LinkedIn profile. Unfortunately, this does not appear to work with groups at this time, so the usefulness of this plugin is currently limited.

APIs: LinkedIn has a developer network up and going at <http://developer.linkedin.com/index.jspa>. With the APIs, it should be possible to allow visitors to your chapter website to login via their LinkedIn username, and use all or some of their LinkedIn profile information to populate a registration form. This functionality is relatively new, and I have not found any easy-to-use plug-and-play add ons for Wordpress or Joomla. This will probably change soon.

Recommended Usage

- Set up a group for your chapter with a link to your website.
- Depending upon the usage level for your chapter, updating the group page with chapter events and news may be beneficial. However, there does not appear to be a way to do this automatically at this time, so pasting updates to the group page may be more time consuming than would be practical.
- Keep your ear to the ground for changes. LinkedIn's popularity is growing fast.