ACT
Tree by Tree
Street by Street
Alliance for Community Trees
Social Networking Series
A Basic Introduction for Nonprofit Use

Facebook Tutorial

If you want to reach out to high school and college students, then social networking sites are some of the best tools for the job. Nonprofit organizations are increasingly taking advantage of free social networking sites to manage and grow their networks, build a base, and reach a broader coalition. In fact, social networking sites are growing in popularity with an ever-widening demographic.

Sites such as Facebook and Myspace are free websites that allow people to share information and find organizations and individuals with similar interests. Typically, these contacts are referred to as your "friends." With such sites, you can post photos, create groups, send invitations to your events, and write messages to other members. They are a way to stay in contact with existing friends and meet new ones by creating a network of contacts. Best of all, creating and maintaining a simple account is very easy!

Some of the ways in which these sites can help nonprofits include:
- Advertise your organization
- Raise awareness of your mission
- Increase traffic to your website
- Publicize upcoming events
- Keep volunteers engaged between events
- Recruit new members and volunteers
- Reach out to youth
- Celebrate successes
- Share information with other nonprofits
- Form coalitions and partnerships with other organizations

Social networking websites may be worthwhile even if you only log on once every few weeks to announce a volunteer opportunity, press release, or fundraiser. If you do not have the time to devote to frequent page maintenance, don't worry. You can still set up an account to serve as a hub and allow your friends to find each other through your profile.

Think of social network sites as a means of advertising. Sure, the more time and money you invest, the better your returns, but, because profiles are free and basic setup takes very little time, there is almost no reason you should not at least setup a profile. Later you can determine how much time to invest in it.

The success of sites such as Facebook and MySpace is due to the access it gives you to your friends, your friends' friends, their friends, and so on. To start adding friends, first you have to create a profile for your organization. This is easy to do by following these instructions.

This tutorial is meant to be a basic guide to help you set up a Facebook account and take advantage of its most powerful tools for nonprofit outreach, volunteer recruitment, member action alerts, and image building. This document contains links to online articles documenting how nonprofits have taken advantage of social network websites, what has worked in the past, and what to expect from a new account. Good luck and welcome to Web 2.0!
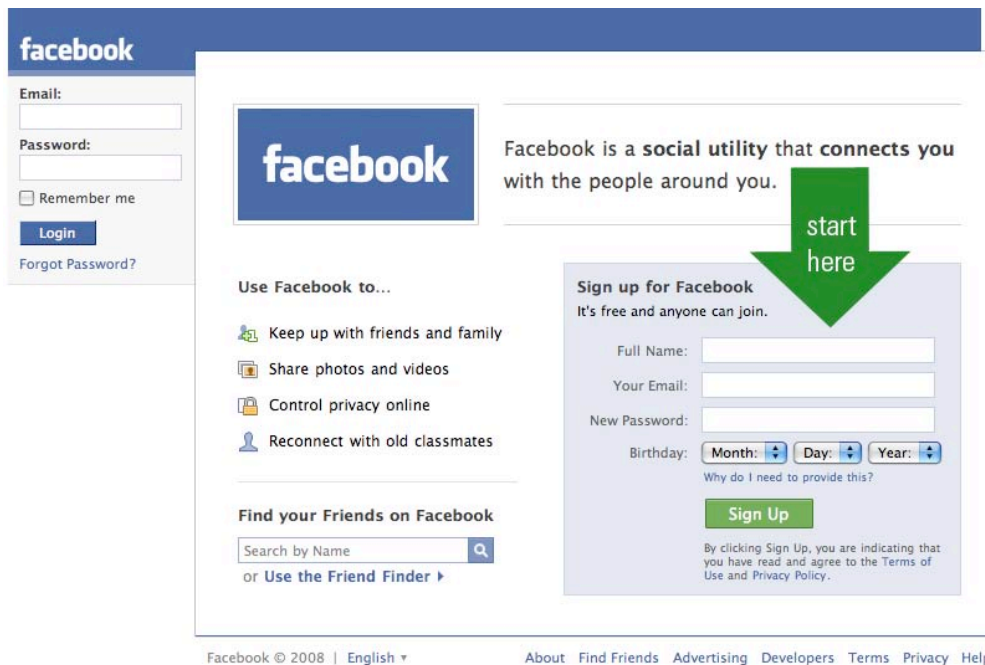
Social Networking Series
A Basic Introduction for Nonprofit Use

Facebook Tutorial

GETTING STARTED

1. Creating an Account

Go to www.facebook.com. The Facebook homepage is pictured below. You will see a blue box on the lower right side that allows you to create an account immediately. Start by entering your name (or your first name and last initial, if you prefer for more anonymity), email address, and a password for your account.

Tip: AVOID creating a profile with the name of your organization, rather than an actual name, Facebook requires accounts to represent real individuals. If don't want to use your own name, try using a first name and last initial.


After you have registered, you will see a blue toolbar at the top of the screen and a search bar and series of applications (photos, videos, groups, events, etc.) along the left side of the screen. Both the top and left-side toolbars remain there no matter where you go on Facebook.
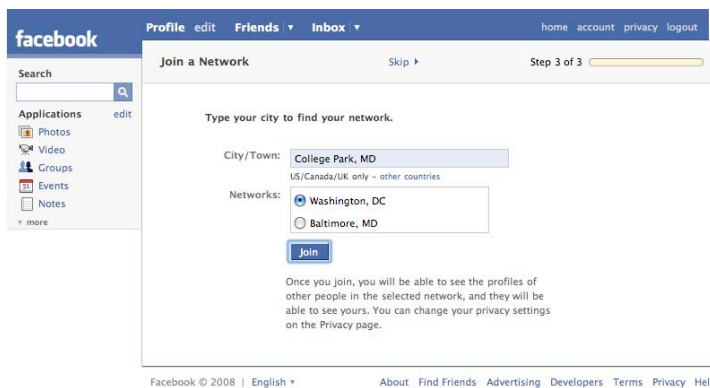
Facebook Tutorial

2. Finding Friends

The best way to begin building a base on Facebook is by connecting with the individuals you already know. Facebook prompts you to search for friends with existing accounts by uploading your address book. There are three steps to this process, but, for faster setup or to prevent Facebook from having access to your address book, you can skip the first two steps. You are able to perform these searches later, if you choose.
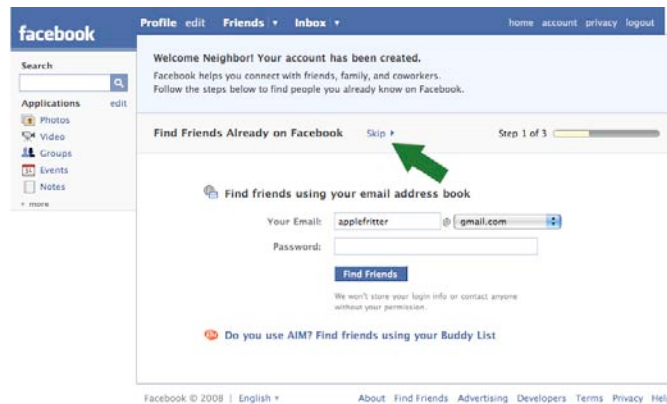
The third step in searching for friends prompts you to choose a **network**. Networks are predetermined identification categories by college, geography, or employer. Networks help new contacts find you and vice versa. You can opt not to join any networks.

Tip: At a minimum, join the geographic network nearest to you. This allows you to be recognized by people in your region**.**

Facebook Tutorial

Also, tell your friends, co-workers, family members, and ACT that you have created a Facebook account and ask them to add you as a friend. Once you have notified them, make sure to regularly check the "Inbox" area of your page to approve friend requests. Nobody can be a part of your network until you approve their friend requests.

When asking friends for their Facebook information, also ask them to alert their friends to your profile and to encourage their friends to add you as a friend as well. Your friends are likely to have Facebook friends who live in your area, so encouraging their association with your Facebook profile gives you an opportunity to recruit new members, donors, and volunteers.

Tip: Stay in touch with ACT! There are two ways: through our Group (receive updates and the latest news) and our Page (you become a "fan"- a way to show support).

ACT Group:
http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=6424196845

ACT Page:
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Alliance-for-Community-Trees/19980643913

Social Networking Series
A Basic Introduction for Nonprofit Use
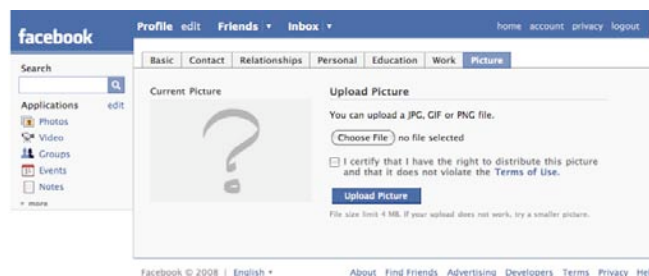
Facebook Tutorial

3. Editing Your Profile

You're now ready to add content to your profile page. Click the "edit" link next to "Profile." You will be brought to this screen:

There are seven tabs along the top: Basic, Contact, Relationships, Personal, Education, Work, and Picture. All tabs and all fields within these tabs are optional. However, your birthday will automatically appear on your profile unless you hide it. Make sure to press the blue "**Save Changes**" button at the end of each page. If you try to navigate away without doing so, you will be prompted to save changes. However, to ensure that your information is updated accurately, you should save your changes as often as possible. Once you have saved your changes in the tab you are working in, you may select any of the other tabs to make further edits.

Tip: Add a picture. Having no picture makes your profile look incomplete and unprofessional. You will need to check the box above the "Upload Picture" button in order to successfully post a profile picture.
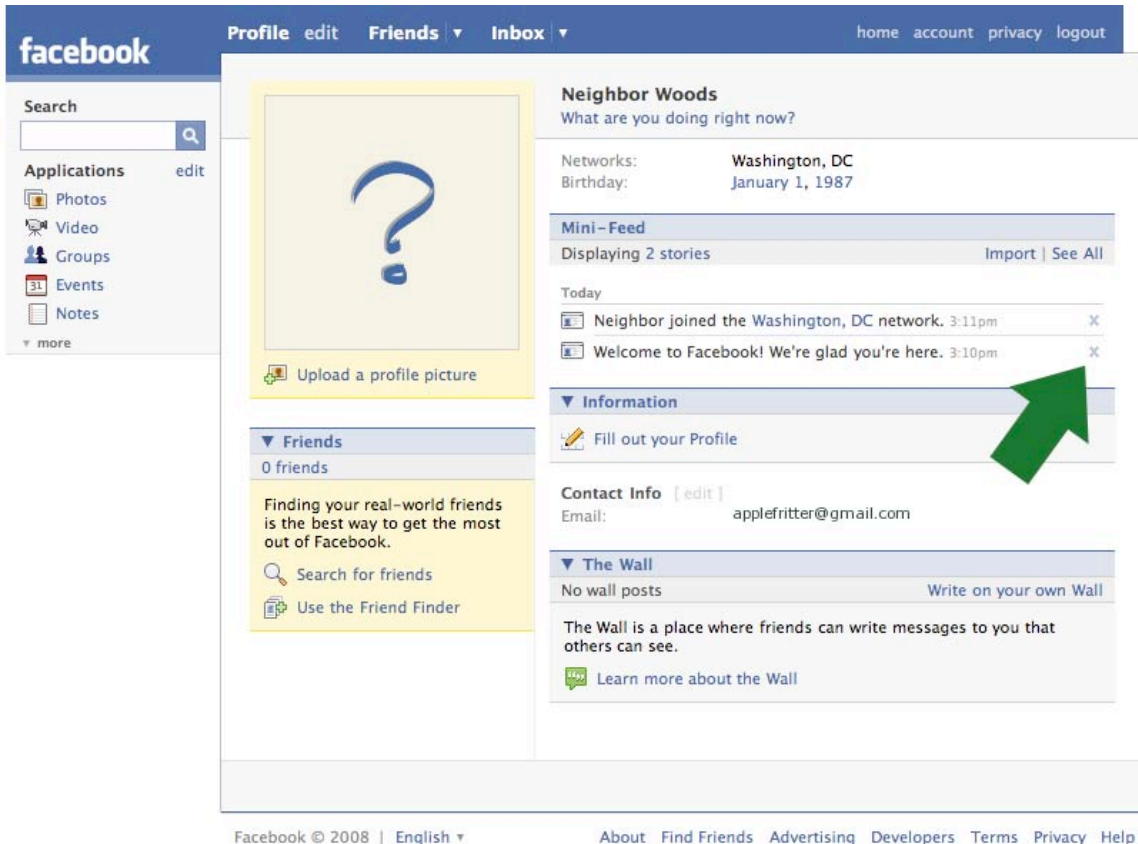
Facebook Tutorial

4. Home Page and Maintaining Your Profile

Now that you have added some basic content to your profile, click the "Profile" button in the top blue toolbar to see what your page looks like.

You will notice the **Mini-Feed** section on the right side of your profile below Basic information. This is a running record of all changes made to your Facebook profile. Individual items may be removed by simply clicking the respective "x." However, the Mini-Feed section will appear on your page even if you delete every news item that appears, unless you alter your Privacy settings to have no Mini-Feed items posted.

Social Networking Series
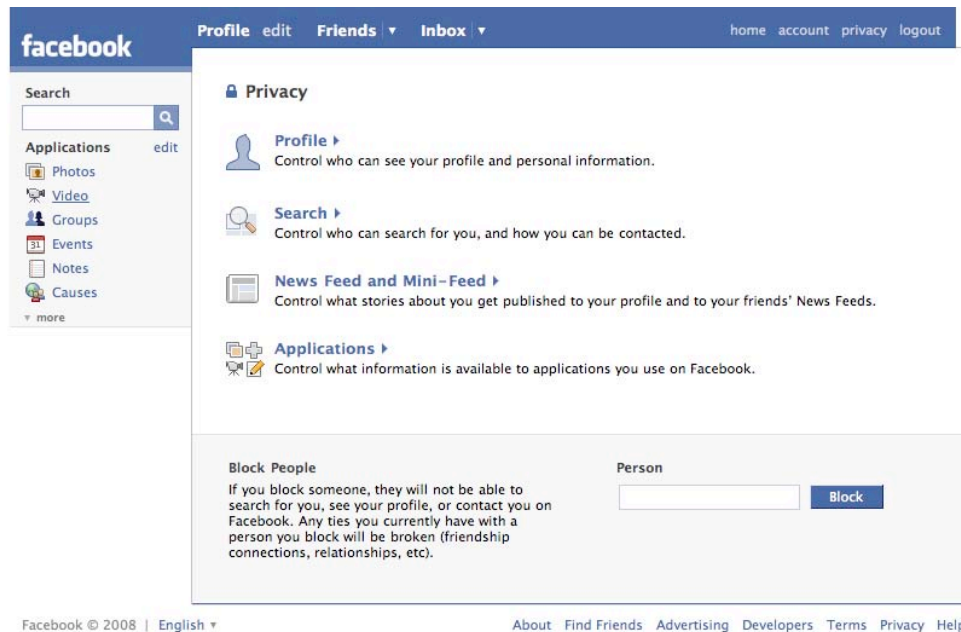*A Basic Introduction for Nonprofit Use*

Facebook Tutorial

5. Other Tools

Privacy

Facebook allows you to control many aspects of how your profile performs and is viewed. In the world of social networking, this is probably the determining factor in how well sites are used. Some of the many privacy settings you can change are: others' ability to **search** for you, **News Feed, Mini-Feed**, and **Applications**. At the upper right corner of the blue toolbar, click on "**privacy**" and you will see this page:

Alliance for Community Trees | 4603 Calvert Road | College Park | MD | 20740
301-277-0040 (p) | 301-277-0042 (f) | info@actrees.org | www.actrees.org

<u>Photo Albums</u>

You can host photo albums within your Facebook profile. To begin, click the "Photos" application from along the left-side toolbar, followed by the "+ Create a Photo Album" button along the upper right-hand side. First, **name your photo album**. Make sure this name is concise and clearly identifies the general contents of the album. You will be given privacy options; it is best to leave these photos open to **Everyone** so that your images can reach as many people as possible.

Next, you will be prompted to **upload** photos. You will be able to do this either by allowing the Java applet to load (the applet will let you navigate folders on your hard drive and select them directly) or clicking the "Try the Simple Uploader" link towards the bottom of the page. From there, browse your hard drive and input the file paths into individual fields.

Write a brief **caption** for each picture and describe what is going on without being wordy or adding unnecessary information. Try light-hearted or humorous captions, too! You can also identify the people or objects in each photo by "**tagging**" them. By clicking anywhere on the photo itself, you will be able to tag, or label, the photos. The benefit of setting tags is that visitors can find your photos simply by using a search bar. For example, ACT tags most photos with the following keywords: tree, urban forestry, Alliance for Community Trees, and NeighborWoods.
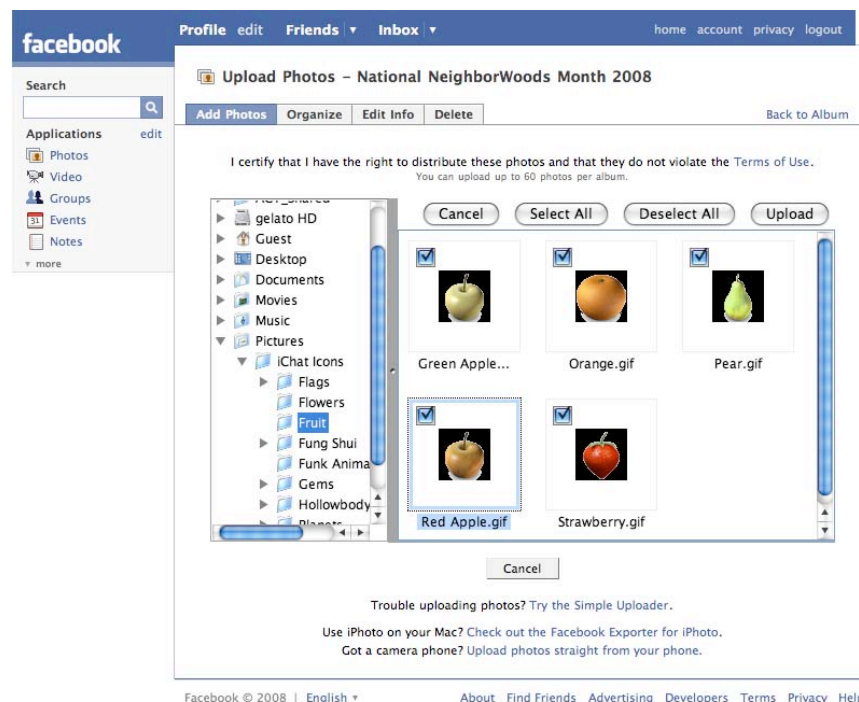
Facebook Tutorial

Groups

Groups are mini-communities with their own profiles that people choose to join. Group members browse and upload photos, write on **Walls** (bulletin boards), and post to **Discussion Boards** (like the Wall, but with threads you respond to directly).

To start a new group, click on the "Groups" application from the left-hand menu, followed by the gray "+ Create a New Group" button, located on the upper-right side. Choose a short and simple **name** that is easily recognizable. Enter a concise **description** of your organization, along with a Group Type ("Organizations" and "Nonprofit Organizations" are your best bets). You may choose not to input any other information, although additional information is often helpful to constituents who don't know you. Click on "Create Group" and the basic information is now complete.

Next, customize your group by adding a **picture**. Don't leave this blank or the group will seem incomplete and unprofessional. Use a logo or a photo that illustrates your mission. Remember to add the URL for your organization's **website**. This is a must if your organization is on the Web. Select "**This group is open**" access so that individuals in the community can find you, and again click "Save Changes."

Finally, invite members to your group by selecting existing members with whom you are already friends.
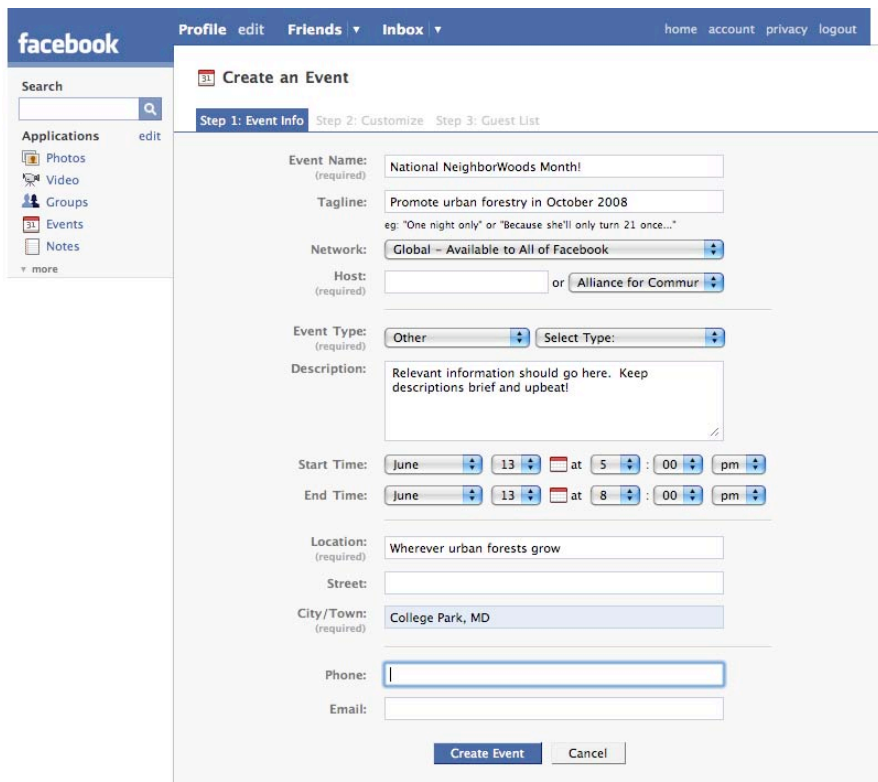
Facebook Tutorial

Events

Creating events is a valuable tool for informing the public about your upcoming functions. There are two steps: **create an event** and **invite people to attend**. First, click the "Event" application on the right-hand menu, followed by the gray "+ Create a New Event" button.

Make your **event name** short and simple. In addition, a short **tagline** is a way to provide a bit more information about your event. Add details that tell immediately what your event is about. If you'd like, you can set the **Host** of your event to a group that you created in your organization's name. You are required to input **start/end times**, as well as a **location** and **city/town**. The other fields are optional, but good to fill in if you are able.

Creating an event is similar to creating a group. Don't forget to add a **photo**!

Facebook Tutorial

<u>Causes</u>

Causes allows individuals in the social networking community to support your organization financially! A Cause is similar to Facebook group in that you create a profile to connect you to interested people, but there are also additional features. For example, people can contribute money to your organization if your nonprofit is a 501c3 registered with Agave, the group that developed this program. If you file an annual Form 990, then likely you're registered with Agave and able to create a Cause for your organization.

How do nonprofits get included in Causes?

Causes supports over 1.5 million nonprofits. We obtain information about these nonprofits from a database maintained by Guidestar. GuideStar is the industry leader in collecting data about nonprofit organizations, which it obtains through annual IRS tax filings and through its direct communication with tens of thousands of organizations each year. GuideStar's database includes almost every registered 501(c)(3) organization in the United States, but does not include some of the most recently registered organizations. Causes also has a staff based in Washington DC that works with several hundred nonprofit organizations, who provide extra information to supplement the info obtained from Guidestar. If you are a nonprofit that wishes to work directly with Causes, please visit http://www.causes.com/partners/partners/new.
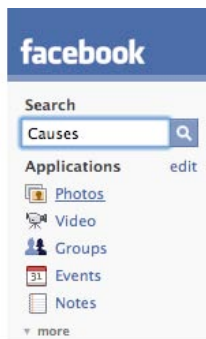
You can add the Cause application by **searching** for it in the Search bar, located on the right-side menu. Because it is a popular application, it will likely be the first result listed. Once the search result appears, click on the application's name, followed by the blue "Add Application" button along the right-hand side of your screen.

Creating a Cause page is just like creating a group or event. Fill in as many fields as possible with concise, easy to read information. Upload pictures to add interest to your page. The goal is to create a professional, helpful page that will encourage donations.

Your organization does not need a Facebook profile to be listed as a Cause, but only Facebook users can start Causes. So if you don't have a profile and don't want create one, you'd have to find a Facebook user to setup your organization as a Cause.

CONCLUSION

This introduction is a primer for nonprofits on how to create a Facebook profile for promoting your organization and programs through online social networking. Further reading and a dedicated investment of time in managing your account will determine how your network grows. It takes time, but many nonprofits have found that it is worth the effort. Here are some of the ways:

Frequently updating your profile with relevant groups helps to:
- Keep volunteers engaged between events.
- Raise awareness of your mission.
- Increase traffic to your profile and website.

Asking friends and their friends to link to your profile helps to:
- Advertise your organization.
- Form coalitions and partnerships with other organizations.
- Reach out to youth.
- Increase traffic to your profile and website.

Timely events posted to active friends helps to:
- Publicize upcoming events.
- Celebrate successes.
- Recruit new volunteers.
- Promote fundraising activities.

The suite of tools available on Facebook provides many overlapping benefits. As you spend time on the site, you may discover new tools or new uses for the tools listed here. Please share your experiences with ACT as you navigate the world of online networking.

Good luck and welcome to the world of Web 2.0!