

Digital Communications for Quaker Communities: A Basic Guide

- 9:00 Arrivals, fellowship, coffee & refreshments
- 9:30 Welcome & opening worship
- 10:15 Morning workshop session (first part of all workshops)
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:45 Afternoon workshop session (second part of all workshops)
- 2:15 break
- 2:30 Closing worship
- 3:00 Goodbyes

Websites: Basics to Remember

- Link back to the site in all other communications
- Current information!
- “Static” pages are your friend
- Photos of real people
- Community norms/”what’s worship like?”
- Current calendar
- Zoom link for worship
- Use as a “hub” for newcomers and members (password protect sections as needed)
- Online giving?

Internal communications

Best practices

- Have clear policies
- Use a shepherd if needed
- Use multiple channels for different purposes
- Train new users frequently on the technology

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Internal communications (continued)

Platforms: (currently common among Friends)

Google groups

Groups io

Email

Slack

Discord

Whats App

Telegram

Texting

Phone

Sample email group guidelines

For meeting news:

You are viewing the Portland Friends Meeting's "Life of the Meeting Email List," welcome!

This list is the home for announcements related to the Life of the Meeting for the Portland Friends Meeting (in Maine), as well as items related to the wider Quaker world.

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to pfm-life-of-the-meeting+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com.

To post to this group, send email to pfm-life-of-the-meeting@googlegroups.com.

Questions about this list? Contact the moderators at pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com.

For more general news:

You are viewing the Portland Friends Meeting's "Wider Community email list," welcome!

This list is the home for announcements shared by Portland Friends Meeting members and attenders that may be of interest, but may not be directly considered Quaker (e.g. music performances, art openings, social gatherings, political activities).

To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to pfm-wider-community+unsubscribe@googlegroups.com

To post to this group, send email to pfm-wider-community@googlegroups.com

Questions about this list? Contact the moderators at pfm.email.list.owner@gmail.com.

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Groups/listserves:

Many Friends have found that having separate groups for specific purposes helps to keep email volume and confusion down. Many of these platforms have the option for subscribers to decide how often they get emails - either each one as sent, a “daily digest”, or no emails - users can go to the group themselves to read emails as they have time and space.

It is good to know how folks use these lists! If you have users that only get a digest at the end of the day - using groups for time sensitive emails (such as sending “meeting is closed today due to snow”) may not work. The digest might be sent out long after folks need to know information.

Also note that these groups save the emails sent to them. So if a subscriber sends out an email with a forward with other emails addresses or information that should be private - you can’t just ask folks later to delete the email of their own computers. You must remove it from the group (an admin can do this) or the sensitive information stays in the group.

It is a good idea to designate a person (or team) to maintain the group. Sending out reminder of the group’s policies once a year, sending new invitations to subscribers, and other basic tasks.

Email lists:

Many email programs will not let you send mass emails - it will go to spam folders to individuals.

Keeping an accurate and updated email address list is crucial.

Email lists can work very well for small groups who have specific minimal needs for email.

Many meetings use a neutral, office-named email for communications to their meeting members, such as localmeeting@neym.org. Sara Hubner at office@neym.org can assist with setting this up for any NEYM Meeting. This has the advantage of not having to change when the clerk changes - it can be directed to the new person in the meeting role.

Folks today are often very overwhelmed with email! Be very careful in sending lots of announcements. Some meetings will send a weekly email at the same time each week, with basic announcements and reminders, and a link to the meeting website.

USE BCC. It is considered rude and unhelpful to send an email that shows all of the addresses that it has been sent to. It is very easy for those emails to be grabbed and used for other purposes. If you are sending out an email to lots of people who don’t need to know who else is receiving it - simply put your own email in the “cc” and the address, and then put other email addresses in the bcc line. I have included this simple reminder here because it is what I most often see as a problem with email among Friends.

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Other platforms of communication:

Texting - did you know many people prefer brief texts reminders over a phone call or an email? There are many free and inexpensive text services, or you can add a small group to a group text to send appropriate news and updates. It is best to ask folks to “opt in” to texting rather than just text them first with basic meeting updates.

Telegram/Whatsapp/Signal - these all have excellent uses for those that are familiar with them. If you have someone in your meeting who is adept in one particular platform, see if they can be responsible for using that communication tool for the few folks that use it (if not the whole meeting). Maybe someone can send a link to the weekly email update to a telegram group, or post on discord. Do not forget this platform does not contain everyone! It is good to decide on a balance between using lots of platforms, and limiting to just one which might leave folks out.

Which one to use? Refer to your meeting communications survey! This depends on your meeting.

Communications surveys:

It is helpful in picking the right digital tools for your meeting to know what will work best for your community. This is a form of pastoral care for all in the meeting. A yearly/periodic survey might be helpful. Remember that you want everyone to respond to the survey. This might mean emailing it out, posting a link on your website and internal communications groups, and asking the questions in person or over the phone for others. If someone would say “I don’t use email” don’t only email them a survey that is the only way of telling you that!

Here’s a sample church communications survey. There are many out there, and many ways to create and distribute them. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CommunicationsCC>

Caring for information:

Sample data policy:

<https://neym.org/data-privacy-policy>

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Digital newsletters:

Reasons to consider a newsletter:

Modern Reach: Firstly, a newsletter serves as a bridge between the physical and digital worlds, catering to all members, regardless of their tech-savviness. It ensures that vital information reaches everyone, fostering inclusivity.

Information: Secondly, newsletters keeps your church community informed. From upcoming events and volunteer opportunities to spiritual reflections and messages from members and leadership, they offer a comprehensive snapshot of your faith in community.

Record: A newsletter provides a valuable historical record of your Meeting's journey, capturing milestones, achievements, and testimonies. It can be a source of inspiration, reminding members of their collective accomplishments and the growth of their faith community.

Outreach: Newsletters can act as a tool for outreach. Sharing stories of faithfulness, and ministry, community service, and work in the wider body of Friends can inspire others to engage in the meeting's shared journey, and promote goodwill in the wider community.

Choose a platform:

- [Mailchimp](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [Canva](#)
- [The Newsletter Newsletter](#)
- [Adobe Spark](#)
- [My Newsletter Builder](#)
- [AWeber](#)
- [Benchmark Email](#)
- [Moosend](#)
- [GetResponse](#)
- [EmailOctopus](#)
- [MailerLite](#)

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Social Media

Questions to wonder about in choosing platform(s):

Who is my target audience?

What are their needs?

Which social media platforms do they use?

What are their intentions on that social media platform?

What are the rules and algorithms of that platform?

What are the pros and cons of that platform?

What are others doing on social media?

[Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) are the two most common platforms with most churches/Quaker meetings

Others:

[TikTok](#)

[Youtube](#)

[X \(Twitter\)](#)

[Snapchat](#)

[Linkedin](#)

[Threads](#)

[Mastodon](#)

[Discord](#)

[Telegram](#)

[Reddit](#)

Social Media policies

It is very helpful to have a clear social media policy BEFORE you start any posting. You are speaking publicly for the meeting/organization as a whole, and having thought in advance about parameters and needs will help you to avoid questions about how to attend to the social media platforms in the moment. You simply can't wait for Meeting for Business to make many small decisions.

Sample social media policies:

<https://www.fgcquaker.org/fgcresources/fgc-policies-and-guidelines/social-media-community-guidelines/>

<https://neym.org/social-media-policy-and-guidelines>

This link also contains **photography policies:** <https://neym.org/data-privacy-policy>

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Content Creation

- [Canva](#)
- [Gravit Designer](#)
- [Adobe Spark](#)
- [Snappa](#)
- [BeFunky](#)
- [ReciteThis](#)

Stock Photography

- [Unsplash](#) – free images with new added weekly
- [Pixabay](#) – free graphics and cartoon-style images
- [CreationSwap](#) – free and premium photos and videos
- [Church Media Drop](#) – backgrounds and slides designed for churches
- [Church Motion Graphics](#) – free backgrounds ideal for quotes
- [Saltful](#) – free images specifically for churches and ministries
- [Freely Photos](#) – church-based Christian stock photos

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