

Book II

Cybersocial Tools

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"How long has he been programming our META tags?"

Chapter 1: Discovering Helpful Tech Tools

In This Chapter

- ✓ Learning more about social media
- ✓ Distributing content efficiently
- ✓ Keeping search engines in the loop
- ✓ Giving long URLs a haircut
- ✓ Selecting shopping tools that work with social media
- ✓ Monitoring the buzz

In Book I, you discover that the key to social media success is planning. As you select tools and schedule tasks, enter your choices on your Social Media Marketing Plan and Social Media Activity Calendar.

Try to select one or more tools from each of these categories:

- ◆ Resource, news, and blog sites that cover online marketing and social media
- ◆ Content distribution tools
- ◆ Tools for notifying search engines and directories of updates
- ◆ URL clipping tools
- ◆ Shopping widgets for social media
- ◆ Buzz-tracking tools to monitor mentions of your business

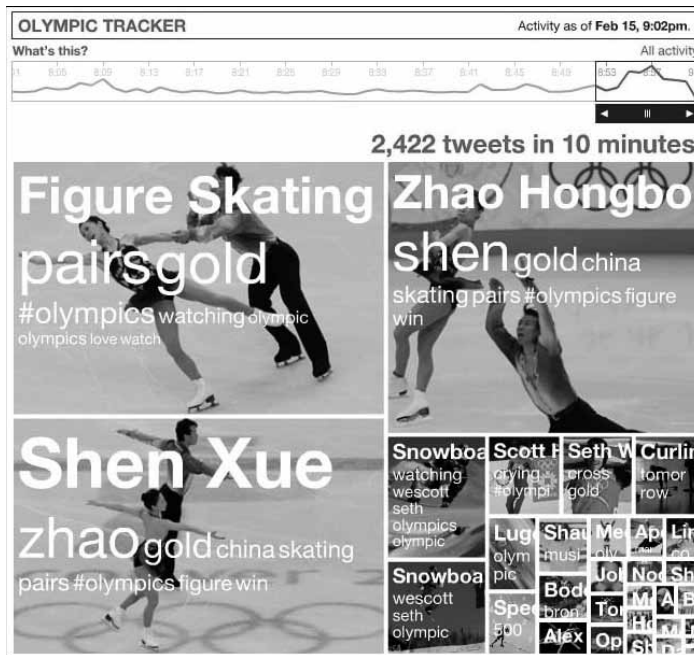
Fortunately, all these tools are online, so you don't have to lug them around!

You can always jump right into the social media scene and figure out these things later, but your efforts will be more productive if you build the right framework first.

Keeping Track of the Social Media Scene

Unless you take advantage of online resources, you'll never be able to stay current with the changes in social media. Within the space of several weeks in early 2010, for instance, Google deployed its new social networking site, Google Buzz (www.google.com/buzz), companies acquired each other, and NBC, together with Stamen Design, launched the NBC Olympics Twitter Tracker (<http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/02/19/a-visual-tool-to-track-olympic-tweets/?scp=2&sq=Twitter%20Tracker&st=cse>), a visual representation of the popularity of events based on the overall number of tweets submitted by individual users, shown in Figure 1-1. You can view the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=1R192Q1IJ0w&feature=player_embedded.

Figure 1-1: The NBC Olympics Twitter Tracker ran in real time, with video images updated continually as the frequency of tweets varied on different tags.



Courtesy NBC Universal

You might want to subscribe to feeds about social marketing from one or more social marketing blogs or news services or make a habit of checking at least one of them weekly. You might also want to review traffic trends on various social media services weekly; they're amazingly volatile. Table 1-1 lists some helpful resource sites.

Table 1-1 Social Media Marketing Resources

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
AddThis	http://addthis.com/services	Traffic trends on social media
BIG Marketing for Small Business	www.bigmarketing.com www.smallbusiness.com	Social media, online, and offline marketing tips
HubSpot	http://blog.hubspot.com	Inbound marketing blog
MarketingProfs	www.marketingprofs.com/marketing/library/100/social-media	Social media marketing tips, including B2B
MarketingSherpa	www.marketingsherpa.com/social-networking-evangelism-community-category.html	Social networking research with B2B focus
Mashable	http://mashable.com	Well-known social media guide
Museum Marketing	www.museummarketing.co.uk	Blog with social media marketing tips for museums but applicable elsewhere
Online Marketing Blog	www.toprankblog.com	Blog about online and social marketing
Practical eCommerce	www.practicalecommerce.com/blogs/5-The-Social-Retailer	Blog about social marketing for retailers
Slashdot	http://slashdot.org	Social news service about technology
Social Media Marketing Blog	www.scottmonty.com	Perspectives on social media data from the head of social media for Ford
Social Media Marketing Group on LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=66325	Professional, nonpromotional discussion group; approval required
Social Media Today Blog	www.socialmediatoday.com/SMC/blog	Social media blog
Social Networking Business Blog	http://social-networking-business.blogspot.com	Social networking blog for business

(continued)

Table 1-1 (continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
Sphinn	http://sphinn.com	Internet marketing news and forums
TechCrunch	http://techcrunch.com	Technology industry blog
Techmeme	http://techmeme.com	Top technology news site



Include the names of resource sites on your Social Media Marketing Plan and schedule weekly research as a task on your Social Media Activity Calendar.

Saving Time with Content Distribution Tools

Social media marketing obviously can quickly consume all your waking hours and then some. Just the thought of needing to post information quickly to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, social bookmarks, blogs, Flickr, or social news services might make any social marketer cringe.

Fortunately, some tools enable you to post your content to all these places at once. You can choose from many good applications for a distribution tool:

- ◆ **Routine maintenance:** Use a content distribution tool whenever you make updates according to your Social Media Activity Calendar. What a timesaver!
- ◆ **Quick event postings:** If you want to share information from a conference, trade show, meeting, or training session, you can use most of these distribution tools from your phone to send short text updates to Twitter and LinkedIn. Or, take a picture with your cellphone and send it to Flickr and Facebook. If you want to send something longer, simply use a distribution tool to e-mail your post to your blog and Facebook.
- ◆ **Daily updates:** Group all social media services that you might want to update with rapidly changing information, such as a daily sale or the location of your traveling cupcake cart by the hour.

In addition to Ping.fm, OnlyWire, and other tools described in the next few sections, you can use Real Simple Syndication (RSS) to feed content to users and to your various social media profiles.



If you have more than three social media outlets or frequently update your content, choosing at least one distribution tool is a “must-have” way to save time.



Reconfigure your settings on Ping.fm or other content distribution tools whenever you decide to add or drop a social media service, or create a new, special purpose group for marketing purposes.

Ping.fm by Seesmic

Ping.fm, shown in Figure 1-2, lets you update some or all your social media sites at one time, for free, and without needing technical help. What's more, you don't have to be at your office computer to do it. You can send text and images from various devices, including your cellphone, e-mail program, instant messaging program, or Skype.

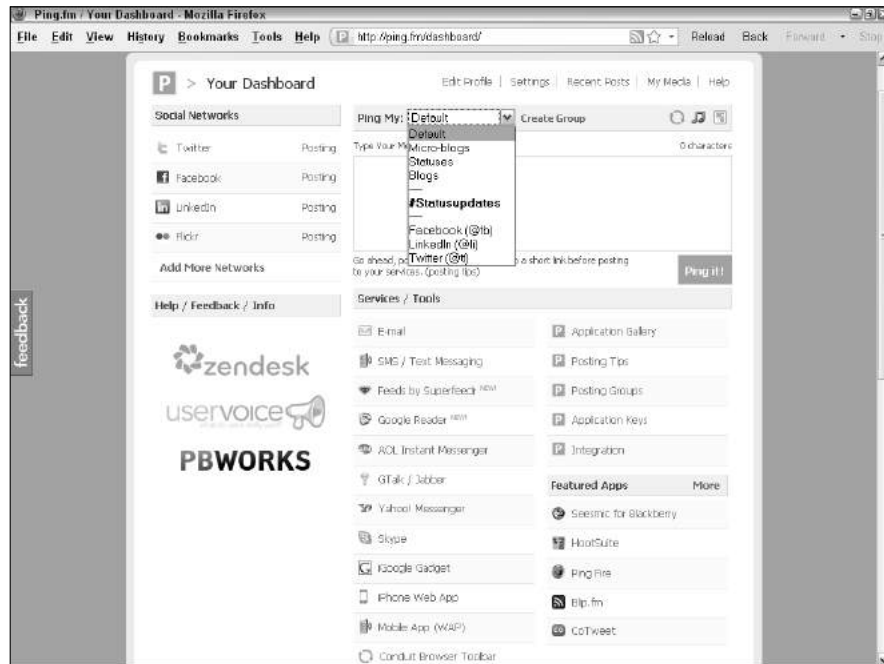


Figure 1-2: The Dashboard page for Ping.fm distributes a posting of a particular type to your selected social media services.

Courtesy Ping.fm by Seesmic

Ping.fm posts your updates to whichever social media services you have preselected. You can specify which types of messages go to which services (for example, photos to Flickr and short messages to Twitter).

In the Ping.fm Dashboard (<http://ping.fm/dashboard>), you select the destination services you want. If you don't want everything to go everywhere, you simply create groups to determine who gets what. Other tools operate in a similar manner.

Here's how to use Ping.fm:

1. **Start up at Ping.fm.**
2. **Click Add More Networks on the left side of the dashboard (refer to Figure 1-2) to see the full list of dozens of possible destination services at <http://ping.fm/networks>.**
3. **Click Add Network next to each destination service you want.**

As you select each service, you may be prompted to establish an account or to permit connections in a dialog box. If you don't return to the dashboard or network pages automatically, just click the Dashboard tab at the top of <http://ping.fm/networks>.

4. **Keep clicking Add More Networks, toggling between the dashboard and network pages until you finish.**
5. **Click the Dashboard tab at the top.**

At this point, you're ready to start submitting content, with each post distributed to your preselected destinations.

6. **To be more selective about which content goes to which service, click Create Group above the message field on the dashboard (refer to Figure 1-2).**

This step takes you to <http://ping.fm/groups>, where a dialog box appears.

7. **Select the content type (Status Updates, Blogging, Microblogging, or Photo Posting) from the drop-down list in the dialog box and name your group. Click Add Posting Group.**

Your list of chosen destination services appears.

8. **Select all the services you want to associate with that content group. Then click Add Posting Group.**

For example, you might want to post photos to your accounts on both Flickr and Photobucket.

9. **Repeat Steps 6 through 8 until you're done setting up various groups. Click the Dashboard tab at the top of the page.**
10. **If you're using a particular tool, such as e-mail, text messaging, cell-phone, or another application to deliver your update, get directions by selecting that tool from the list that appears on the dashboard below the message field.**
11. **On the dashboard, select a group or service type from the drop-down list next to the phrase "Ping My." Then enter some appropriate content in the message field and click the Ping It button.**

All done!



Ping.fm posts to many social media services, but it may not include some of your desired specialty destinations. Try selecting Custom URL from the Ping.fm network page. If this URL points to a script that can accept Ping.fm messages, you're all set. Otherwise, you might need a secondary service or RSS feed to accommodate everything on your list.

Although you can see a history of your postings, Ping.fm doesn't let you track results on these services. For that task, use either the monitoring tools described later in this chapter or some of the measurement tools discussed in Book VIII.

Alternative content distribution services

You have other choices for content distribution to social media services. They all work roughly the same as Ping.fm, but each has its own peculiarities. Choose the one that's the best fit for you.

HelloTxt

According to the HelloTxt dashboard (<http://hellotxt.com/dashboard>), HelloTxt updates 50 services but doesn't allow you to create groups for different types of content. However, you can add hash tags (# tag) to help your postings end up in the right categories on the destination services. As with Ping.fm, you can update by instant message, e-mail, and text message.

HootSuite

Self-described as "the professional Twitter client," HootSuite (<http://hootsuite.com>) functions primarily as a way to manage your entire Twitter experience — from scheduling to stats — from one location. However, it now integrates Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Ping.fm accounts for multiservice postings with one submission.

OnlyWire

OnlyWire (<http://onlywire.com>) updates as many as 33 services simultaneously, and it's the only tool listed in this section that passes updates to your own Web site or blog via a content management system. You'll need to implement the OnlyWire API (Application Programming Interface) or ask your programmer to do it for you.

OnlyWire also offers two handy bookmarklets:

- ◆ A toolbar add-in to submit to OnlyWire with one click from your own browser.
- ◆ A customizable Bookmark & Share button that lets users share your site with all their own accounts at one time. OnlyWire offers the choice of an ad-supported free version or a paid service for \$3 per month or \$25 per year.

Posterous

Posterous (<http://posterous.com>) has a unique approach: You e-mail your text, photo, video, or audio files to Post@Posterous.com and it automatically creates a blog page or appends your material. Then it autoposts your content to as many as 26 social media and video services. You can specify posting to only a subset by e-mailing to a different address (<http://posterous.com/manage/#autopost>) or specify an e-mail address for a service that it doesn't ordinarily support. Posterous also handles RSS subscriptions and integrates with Google Analytics for statistical tracking.

TweetDeck

If you love Twitter, this content distribution tool might be the one for you. TweetDeck allows you to control much of your social media campaign through Twitter. Among its many capabilities, TweetDeck lets you update Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google Buzz, foursquare, and other social networks directly from Twitter (www.tweetdeck.com/features/update-in-a-click/index.html[tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)). You can update your status, post comments, upload photos or videos, and follow friends' activities on these other sites from the TweetDeck control panel. We talk more about TweetDeck in Book IV.

Putting Real Simple Syndication (RSS) to work

It almost sounds quaint, but RSS technology, which has been around for a decade, is still a viable way to distribute (syndicate) information for publication in multiple locations. The familiar orange-and-white icon shown in Figure 1-3 gained prominence about five years ago as a way to notify others automatically about often-updated content such as headlines, blogs, news, or music. The RSS icon indicates that a site offers a Real Simple Syndication feed.

Figure 1-3:
The RSS
icon.



The published content, or *feed*, is provided for free in a standardized format that can be viewed in many different programs. RSS feeds are read on the receiving end in an RSS reader, a feed reader, or an aggregator. Readers come in three species: standalone, like FeedDemon; add-ons that are compatible with specific applications; or Web-based, like Mozilla Firefox's Live Bookmarks, which adds RSS feeds to a user's Favorites folder.

Feeds may be delivered to an individual subscriber’s desktop, e-mail program, or browser favorites folder, or they can be reproduced on another Web site, blog page, or social media page.



You can offer an RSS feed from your site, blog, or social media pages (or display your own or others’ RSS feeds on your pages). This feature requires some technical skills; if you’re not technically inclined, ask your programmer to handle the implementation.

Subscribing is easy: Users simply click the RSS icon and follow directions. After that, the RSS reader regularly checks the list of subscribed feeds and downloads any updates. Users can receive automatic alerts or view their updates on demand. The provided material is usually a linkable abstract or headline, along with the publisher’s name and date of publication. The link opens the full article or media clip.

Subscribers not only receive timely updates from their favorite sites but also can use RSS to collect feeds from many sites in one convenient place. Rather than check multiple Web sites every day, for instance, political junkies can have RSS feeds about Congress delivered automatically from The Huffington Post, *The Nation*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*.



Unless you’re targeting a market that’s highly proficient technically, be cautious about using RSS as your only option for sharing content. Recent studies have found that more than 12 times the number of people will subscribe to an e-mail newsletter than to an RSS feed, except in technology fields. The general public sees RSS as too technical or complicated.



Be sure to enter your choices for content distribution on your Social Media Marketing Plan, and create a schedule for distributing updates (daily? weekly? monthly?) on your Social Media Activity Calendar.

If you’re interested in RSS, you’ll find the resources in Table 1-2 helpful.

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Function</i>
Atom	www.xml.com/lpt/a/1619	Atom feed details
Feedage.com	www.feedage.com	Directory of RSS feeds
FeedDemon	www.newsgator.com/Individuals/FeedDemon	Free-standing RSS reader for Windows
FeedForAll	www.feedforall.com	RSS feed creation tool

(continued)

Table 1-2 (continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Function</i>
FeedBurner	https://feedburner.google.com	Create, manage, and monitor RSS feeds
Netvibes	www.netvibes.com/#General	Combination personal aggregator and social network
NewsFire	www.newsfirerss.com	RSS reader for Macs
NewsGator	www.newsgator.com/individuals/default.aspx	Offers RSS readers for multiple applications
RSS: News You Choose	http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-10088_7-5143460-1.html	About RSS feeds
RSS Toolbox	http://mashable.com/2007/06/11/rss-toolbox	Annotated list of more than 120 RSS tools

RSS offers a distinct advantage for sharing site content with readers: one-time-and-forget-about-it installation. After RSS is installed on your site or blog, you don't have to do anything except update your master site. You don't even have to type an entry as you do with the other content distribution tools. Everyone who subscribes gets your feed automatically; you know that they're prequalified prospects because they've opted in.

From a user's point of view, RSS means that after requesting a feed, the user doesn't have to go anywhere or do anything to receive updates — updates arrive at their fingertips.



Unfortunately, RSS coordinates with social media distribution services only if you (or your programmer) enable your other social media pages to accept and display your RSS feed. Alternatively, that person might be able to use a tool such as the OnlyWire API to program your RSS feed to accept updates for distribution to social media.



You may see an icon or a link for an Atom feed. A newer format for syndication, an Atom operates similarly to RSS but uses different technical parameters. While many blogs use Atom feeds, the older RSS format remains more popular overall. Some sites offer or accept only one or the other, so your

choice of source and destination services partly drives your selection of syndication format. For more information, see www.atomenabled.org or www.intertwingly.net/wiki/pie/Rss20AndAtom10Compared.

Notifying Search Engines about Updates

Some people think that search engines, especially Google, know everything about everybody's Web sites all the time. Not so. Even the Google grandmaster needs a tip now and again. Though all search engines routinely crawl or spider (visit and scan) Web sites to keep their own results current and relevant, your cycle for updates won't necessarily match their cycles for crawling.

Keeping search engines updated is valuable: Your site is not only more likely to appear in relevant search results but its ranking will also improve from frequent updates.

The solution, *pinging*, is a simple way to get the attention of search engines and directories whenever you update your blog or Web site. Pinging has several other uses online: to confirm that a site or server is operating; as a diagnostic tool for connectivity problems; or to confirm that a particular IP address exists.



Don't confuse the type of pinging that notifies search engines of changes to your site or blog with Ping.fm, the tool for distributing content to multiple social media services.

Pinging can be done on demand with a third-party service, or you can configure your blog, Squidoo lens, RSS feed, and some other sites to do it automatically. Generally, you simply enter the name of your blog or post, your URL, select your destination(s), and click the Submit button, as shown in Figure 1-4. The service then broadcasts a message that your site contains a new post or other content.

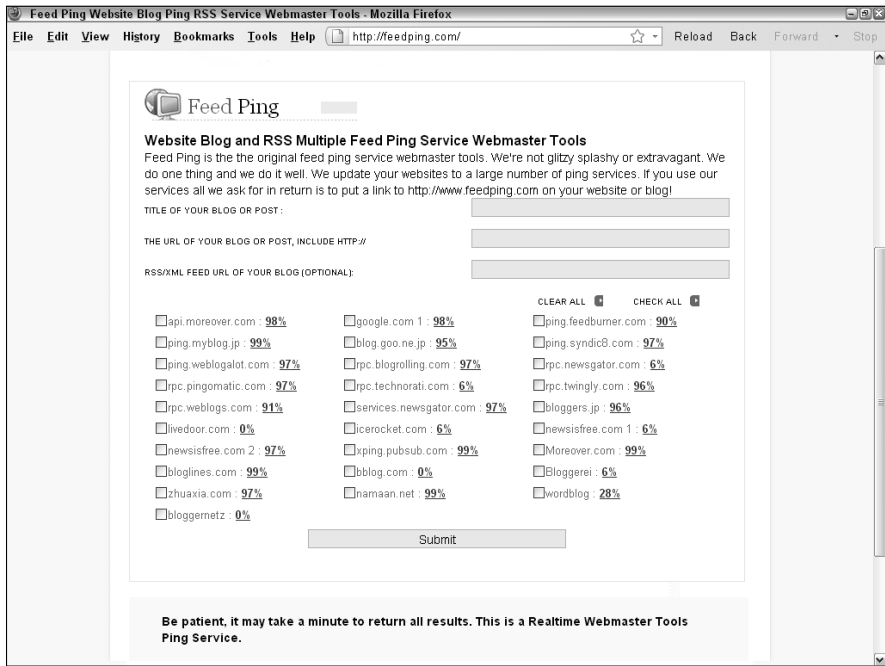


Select only one service. Search engines don't take kindly to "double pinging."

WordPress, TypePad, Blogger, and most other blog services offer built-in, automatic pinging every time you post. On some smaller blog hosts, you may have to set up pinging (or submit to search engines) in a control panel. Table 1-3 summarizes some of the most popular pinging options.

112 Notifying Search Engines about Updates

Figure 1-4: FeedPing offers pinging services for blogs and RSS feeds with an easy user interface.



Courtesy Rentex™

Table 1-3 Pinging Resources

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
Feed Ping	www.feedping.com	Free ping service for blogs, RSS, Web sites, international
Feed Shark	http://feedshark.brainbliss.com	Free ping service for blogs, RSS feeds, and podcasts; offers tracking
Google Ping	www.google.com/support/faqs/bin/static.py?page=faq_blog_search_pinging.html	Ping Google blog search
King Ping	www.kping.com	Paid, automated pinging for blogs, tweets, online publishers; free manual version
Pingdom	www.pingdom.com/about	Uptime monitoring service, free for one site; paid service for multiple sites

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
Pingates	www.pingates.com	Ping service for blog search engines and directories
Pingler	www.pingler.com	Free and paid services for ping-ing multiple sites on a regular schedule; useful for developers and hosts
Ping-O-Matic!	http://pingomatic.com	Ping service for blogs, RSS, and podcasts
Ping Tool for Squidoo	www.squidutils.com/ping-lens.php	Third-party tool that pings blog search engines when you update your Squidoo lens
Weblogs	http://weblogs.com	Original, free ping-ing service on the Web for blogs, news, and other sources
What is Ping-ing	http://ezinearticles.com/?What-is-Ping-ing-and-Why-Do-You-Need-to-Ping-Your-Blog?&id=1584692	Ping-ing information
WordPress Ping-ing	http://en.blog.wordpress.com/2010/02/11/reach-out-and-ping-someone	WordPress ping-ing service (owns Ping-O-Matic!)



Be sure to enter your choices for a ping-ing service on your Social Media Marketing Plan. If ping-ing isn't automatic, enter a task item for ping-ing below each update on your Social Media Activity Calendar.

Snipping Ugly URLs

The last thing you need when microblogging on sites such as Twitter is a URL that takes up half your 140-character limit! Long, descriptive URLs that are useful for search engines are also messy in e-mail, text messages, text versions of e-newsletters, and blogs, not to mention making it difficult to retweet within the limit. The solution is to snip, clip, nip, trim, shave, or otherwise shorten ungainly URLs with a URL truncating service. Take your choice of those in Table 1-4 or search for others.

<i>Service Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Notes</i>
10 Short URL Services Face Off	http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/short-url-truncators	Comparison review article
bit.ly	http://bit.ly/pages/about	Popular for Twitter, free and paid versions with history, stats, and preferences
is.gd	www.is.gd	Users can find out where a short URL points
Ow.ly	http://ow.ly/url/shorten-url	HootSuite's URL shortener
Snipurl	http://snipurl.com	Stores, manages, and tracks traffic on short URLs
TinyURL	http://tinyurl.com	One of the oldest and best-known truncators

The downside is that the true owner of shortened URLs may be a mystery, so it doesn't do much for your branding. Figure 1-5 shows a typical URL truncating service and the result.

Figure 1-5: Enter a long URL at SnipURL and receive a short URL in exchange.





As always, enter the name of your URL snipping service on your Social Media Marketing Plan. To make it easier to track URLs and their snipped versions, select just one service.

Using E-Commerce Tools for Social Sites

If money makes the world go round, e-commerce takes the cybersocial world for a dizzying spin. You have many different options for promoting or linking to your online store from blogs and social networks, but in most cases you can't sell directly. Either the platforms don't support transactions or selling would violate the terms of service.



Always check the terms of service on social media sites to be sure you aren't violating their rules.

Instead, most e-commerce tools display items on your blog or social profile and then link to a third-party application or an existing Web store to complete the transaction.

Indeed, the easiest way to sell from social networks and blogs is simply to post a banner or text link to your own Web site or to other sites that sell your products. Composer and intuitive counselor Max Highstein does this successfully on the Meditations tab of his Facebook site (www.facebook.com/pages/The-Healing-Waterfall/111483778861659), shown in Figure 1-6. Each meditation links to the primary Web site store (www.guidedimagerydownloads.com) for downloads and payment. Omelle does something similar in Figure 1-7, using shortened links in its Twitter stream to take visitors directly to its on-site store.

E-commerce widgets are mini-displays of products in your store; these changeable badges link to a real cyberstore. If you already have an online store, check your own shopping cart or check-stand provider to see if it offers a widget for social media, too.



Many vendors offer customers the equivalent widget functionality for use on some compatible social media services. For instance, Zazzle.com offers a Merch Store application for Facebook and Merchbook widget for MySpace; PayPal offers one for TypePad blogs and MySpace.

By comparison, a *virtual storefront* either imports products from an existing online store or allows products to be uploaded directly to a freestanding, online store. At the add-to-cart stage, these storefronts link to your regular Web store or to a third-party site to process the transactions. Though virtual storefront strategies may be a useful way to cast a wider net for customers, they may complicate your recordkeeping when used in addition to an existing Web store.

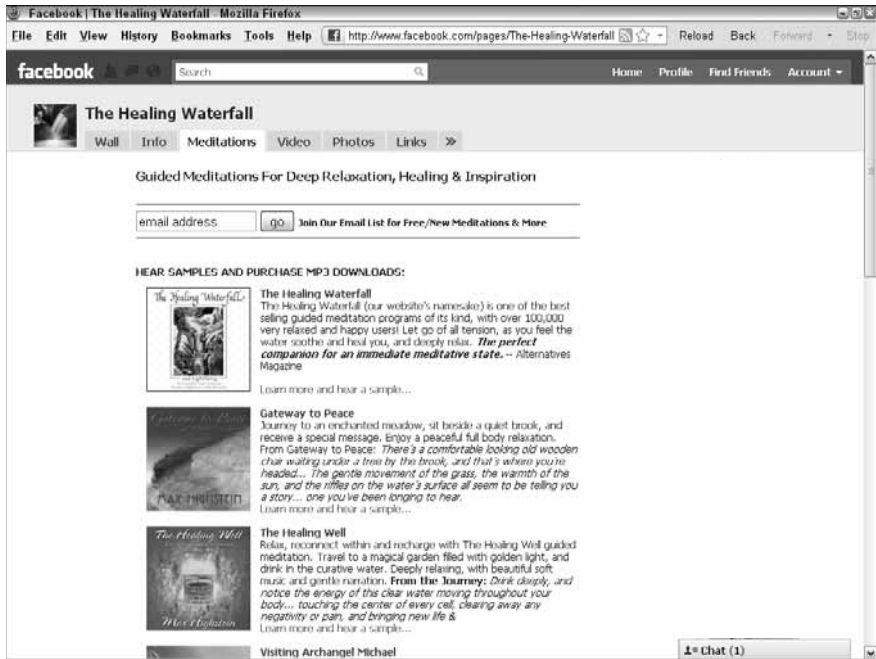
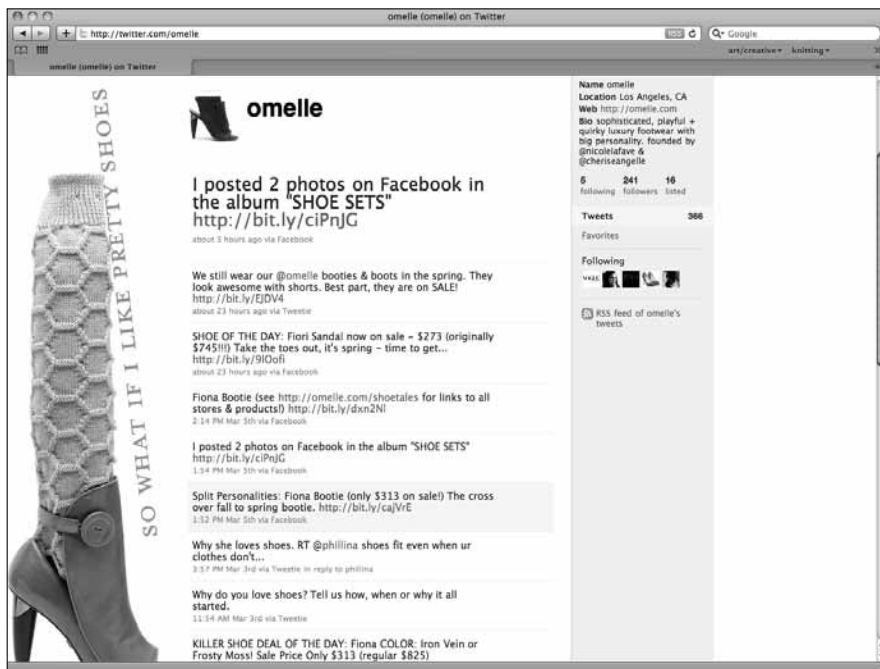


Figure 1-6: A product offering for The Healing Waterfall guided meditation begins on Facebook and links to the corresponding page on the primary Web site to continue the process.



Courtesy www.GuidedImageryDownloads.com

Figure 1-7: Omelle, a luxury footwear site, links visitors from its Twitter feed to its online store.



Courtesy Angelle & LaFave, LLC dba Omelle

You can find a list of e-commerce widgets, storefronts, and resources in Table 1-5.

Table 1-5 Social E-Commerce Widgets, Storefronts, and Resources

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Amazon	https://affiliate-program.amazon.com/gp/associates/network/store/widget/main.html	E-commerce widget for your Amazon store
Cartfly	https://www.cartfly.com/stores/new	E-commerce widget for blogs, social networks (MySpace, Facebook), elsewhere
eBay	http://blog.widgetbox.com/2009/01/ebay-sellers-build-ebay-widgets-to-drive-bids	E-commerce widget for your eBay store

(continued)

Table 1-5 (continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Notes</i>
E-junkie	www.e-junkie.com	Cart or buy now buttons for MySpace; fee based on size and volume; handles downloads
Etsy	www.etsy.com/storque/etsy-news/tech-updates-etsy-mini-679	Directions for using e-commerce widget for your Etsy store
Mercantec	www.mercantec.com/google/index.html	Snippet Generator adds shopping cart to sites, blogs, MySpace, or Facebook; has analytics
Netcarnation	www.netcarnation.com	Free e-commerce storefront for Facebook, MySpace, Hi5, Orkut, Ning, and Friendster
PayPal	http://storefront.paypallabs.com/authenticate/review	E-commerce widget for TypePad blogs, MySpace
Practical eCommerce	www.practicalecommerce.com/search?q=social+media+ecommerce+widgets	Articles about using e-commerce widgets with social media
ProductCart	www.widgetbox.com/widget/ProductCartEcommerce	Offers its own e-commerce widget for blogs, social network, or elsewhere
Sellit	www.sellit.com	Integrates existing hosted shops with social media sites
Shopit	http://shopit.com/tour#4	E-commerce on multiple forms of social media and Web sites
Social Sell	www.provencommerce.com/social-sell	Customizable app that integrates with Facebook to share products, coupons; one-time fee
ToldYa	www.toldya.com	Sell on Facebook, MySpace, other social networks and blogs; transaction-based fees
Zazzle	www.zazzle.com/sell/promotion/promotionbasic#flashPanelWidget	E-commerce Facebook app and MySpace widget



E-commerce tools, which let you promote and sell only your own products, are quite different from social shopping services, which aggregate products from multiple sources often suggested by consumers themselves and link viewers back to your Web site. We discuss social shopping services, which essentially are social bookmarks for products, in Book II, Chapter 3.



Freestanding e-commerce tools that link to PayPal or other third-party services generally don't integrate with inventory and accounting packages as might a full-featured, on-site shopping cart. If you don't link to your existing cart, you may need to adjust those records manually.

If you use a virtual storefront in addition to an existing on-site store, but don't track inventory automatically, there's another way to track the source of sales. You could create separate SKUs for products that will be listed on different online store locations or at a different price for tracking purposes; for example, items specifically discounted for your audience on Twitter. This approach wouldn't work with automated inventory controls. Some virtual storefront options are listed in the following sections.

Cartfly

Cartfly operates in a manner similar to Netcarnation (see the next section) but doesn't take data from an existing store. You create an independent online store that you can then replicate elsewhere, as long as the site accepts HTML. You can install your store display on MySpace, Friendster, Hi5, Perfspot, Blogger, Xanga, TypePad, Tagworld, Facebook (which has a separate installation procedure), and other sites.

Cartfly (cartfly.com) is unique in offering to let your friends and followers "share" your store, almost as though the store were a YouTube video. By copying and pasting your "share" code on their own Web sites, social media pages, or blogs, your friends can generate dozens of online points of sale. It's like having push carts all over town.

Free to set up and use, Cartfly charges a 3 percent transaction fee on all sales. It defaults to Amazon for payment processing, so you need to set up an Amazon merchant account as well; PayPal is available as an alternative. This option is reasonable if you have no existing online store but want to start selling on the Web.

Netcarnation

Netcarnation Marketplace (netcarnation.com), a virtual storefront tool, supports customizable displays on Facebook, MySpace, Hi5, Orkut, Ning, and Friendster. A mini-storefront can appear on your profile page as well. It imports product information from many platforms, including Zen Cart, Etsy, Amazon, and eBay.

If you have no existing Web store, you can upload individual products and integrate Nectarnation with a PayPal shopping cart.

Nectarnation comes in free or premium versions. The free version, which is ad-supported, displays as many as 10 products. It's perfect if you're just dipping a toe into e-commerce or if you want to feature a subset of your products for a particular audience. The premium version, for \$1 per month, accepts as many as 1,000 products and includes multiple-site displays, integration, and promotion.

Premium Nectarnation storefronts can be managed from any of the sites on which they appear. For instance, when you add, delete, or edit products on Facebook, the changes automatically appear on your other selected sites, such as MySpace or Ning.

ProductCart

The ProductCart “ECommerce Widget for Blogs” is designed for its own customers to use. It's an easy way for ProductCart (www.earlyimpact.com) store owners to redisplay products taken from their Web site store on a blog (as shown in Figure 1-8) or on a social networking page or on another site. Free with the purchase of the shopping cart, the widget is generated in one click from the user Control Panel. Figure 1-8 shows how aHa! Modern Living uses its blog at www.ahamodernliving.com/blog to drive traffic to its online store at www.ahamodernliving.com/store/pc/viewCategories.asp.

Operation is straightforward. First, the Web store manager designates specific items in the store catalog as “portable.” The widget dynamically loads the selected product information from the store database and displays it on the page where the widget is placed. Simply copy and paste the generated code into any blogging platform or another site that supports JavaScript. For some sites, such as Facebook and MySpace, you must place the widget by using Widgetbox.

When viewers click on items in the ProductCart widget, they link to the existing ProductCart store on your site. The advantages of this approach lie in already centralized inventory and reporting functions.

The ProductCart widget is also an easy way to help affiliates, if you have them. Because they can attach their IDs to the product links, they can also easily use the widget on their own blogs or Web sites, reducing the amount of support you may need to provide. By treating different social media sites as affiliates, you can identify sales generated by each source.



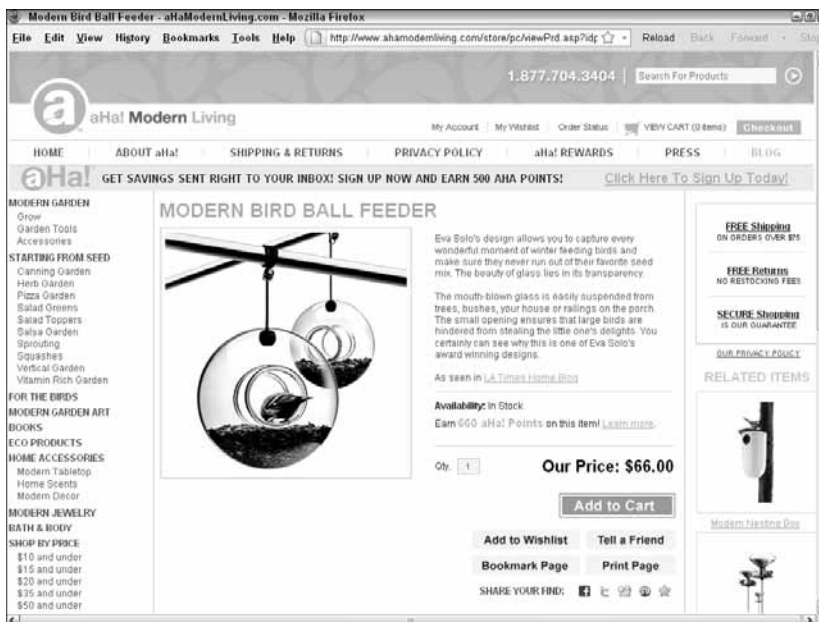
You might want to offer a special sale price or discount just for members of a particular social network. If your shopping cart doesn't provide a linkable widget but supports promotion codes you can always advertise a promotion code, in text or as a graphic, on your social profile pages.



Book II
Chapter 1
Discovering Helpful
Tech Tools

Display products through an e-commerce widget.

Figure 1-8:
The aHa!
Modern
Living blog
uses the
e-commerce
widget from
ProductCart.



Screenshots courtesy of aHa! Modern Living™

Sellit

Sellit (www.sellit.com) works like Netcarnation, importing products from Yahoo!, CafePress, Etsy, or Cartfly stores and reproducing product offerings in a Flash-based widget on a blog or elsewhere. Developed by the same team as Cartfly, it works in a similar manner but accepts material from elsewhere. You simply register and paste in your existing shop URL. Sellit does the rest.

Like Cartfly, Sellit offers a Shout icon so that you can post your store on multiple sites and others can distribute it, as long as the destination site accepts an embedded Web application. The Shout function is compatible with Twitter, Facebook, social bookmarking sites, and most blogs.

Basic services are free, with a \$12 per month solution for Sellit Pro, which accepts up to 150 products, offers advanced features, and additional advertising impressions.

Shopit

Shopit (www.shopit.com) takes a distinctly different approach. Billing itself as “empowering every Internet user to be a merchant,” Shopit is an ad-supported social network itself, but it contains a built-in store for selling products or services.

You can quickly upload items for sale and build a custom widget that’s distributed to other social networks, blogs, and e-mails. The widget drives visitors from those sites (for example, from MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn, Plaxo, Bebo, Friendster, eBay, Craigslist, or blogs) back to a Shopit-hosted storefront.

Though listings are free, Shopit charges a transaction fee and runs through PayPal.

Keeping Your Ear to the Social Ground

The onslaught of data from social media sites can be overwhelming. To garner some value from all the noise, you can take advantage of certain tools to monitor what’s being said about your company.



Social media monitoring is about who’s saying what. It’s about your brand, your products, and your reputation. It’s not the same as *social media measurement*, which deals with traffic statistics, conversion rates, and return on investment. Measurement is covered in Book VIII; some measurement tools specific to particular social networks are covered in their individual books (for example, Facebook tools are covered in Book V).



Bring user feedback directly to you. Place a free feedback widget on your site from <http://feedback.widget.me>, <http://crowdsound.com> or www.makeuseof.com/dir/snapabug-visual-feedback. More elaborate versions are available for a fee from GetSatisfaction.com. This feature takes some programming knowledge; if you're not up to the task, ask your programmer.

You can find some monitoring tools for specific types of services in the sections that follow.

Deciding what to monitor and why

If you didn't have anything else to do, you could monitor everything. That situation isn't realistic, so you need to set some constraints. Start with your goal and ask yourself what you want to accomplish. For example, you may want to

- ◆ Track what's being said about your company and products, both positive and negative
- ◆ Conduct competitor or market research
- ◆ Stay up-to-date on what's happening in your industry
- ◆ Watch trends over time in terms of mentions, topics of interest, or volume of comments
- ◆ Gain a competitive advantage
- ◆ Monitor the success of a specific press release, media campaign, or product promotion
- ◆ Monitor for infringement of trademark or other intellectual property
- ◆ Obtain customer feedback so you can improve your products and services

After you've decided your goal, it should be obvious what search terms or keywords to monitor. Your list might include:

- ◆ Your company name
- ◆ Your domain name
- ◆ Names of executives and staff who speak with the public
- ◆ Product names and URLs
- ◆ Competitors' names
- ◆ Keywords
- ◆ Topic tags

Deciding which tools to use

The number of monitoring tools is almost as great as the amount of data they sift through. Research your options and choose at least one tool that monitors across multiple types of social media. Depending on the social media services you're using, you might want to select one from each appropriate service category as well.

The frequency with which you check results from these tools will depend on the overall visibility of your company, the schedule for your submissions to different services, and the overall intensity of your social media presence. For some companies, it might be a daily task. For others, once a week or even once a month will be enough.



If you're not sure where to start, begin with weekly Google Alerts to monitor the Web and daily Social Mention alerts to monitor social media. Add one tool each for blogs and Twitter, if you use them actively or think people may be talking about your business on their own. Adjust as needed.

Using free or cheap social monitoring tools

Pick one or more of the tools in this section to monitor across multiple types of social media.



Mark your choices on your Social Media Marketing Plan. If the tool doesn't offer automated reporting, you'll need to enter the submission task, as well as the review task, on your Social Media Activity Calendar.

Addictomatic: Inhale the Web

Addictomatic (<http://addictomatic.com/about>) lets you “instantly create a custom page with the current buzz on any topic.” It searches hundreds of live sites including news, blog posts, videos, and images, and offers a personalized dashboard that you can bookmark and return to for updates.

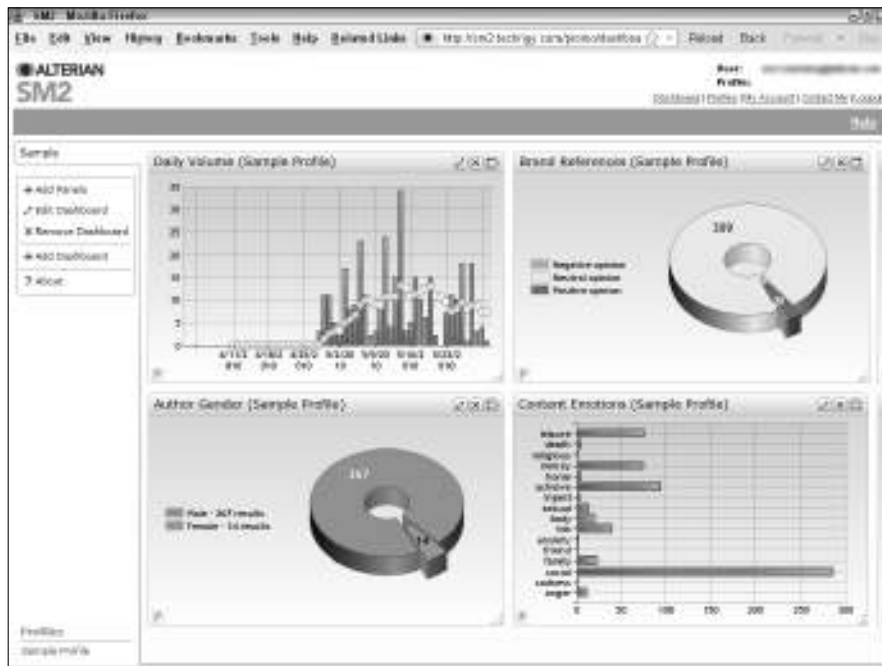
Alterian SM2

Alterian (<http://alterianSM2.com>), formerly Techrigy, monitors and measures social media, stores the results, and allows in-depth analysis. The free version allows you to store up to five profiles and 1,000 search results per query. You can customize reports and view multiple characteristics of social mentions, as shown in Figure 1-9.

BrandsEye

BrandsEye (www.brandseye.com) claims to comprehensively track every online mention of your brand to protect your reputation. The basic package for \$1/month offers twice-daily updates on five phrases.

Figure 1-9: The Alterian dashboard displays information about social mentions in graphic format.



Copyright Alterian 2010

Google Alerts

One of the easiest and most popular of free monitoring services, Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts) are notifications of new results on up to 1,000 search terms. Alerts can be delivered via e-mail, your iGoogle page, or RSS feed.

You can receive results for news articles, Web sites, blogs, video, Google groups, or a comprehensive version, which comprises news, Web, and blog results.

You set the frequency with which Google checks for results and other features on a “Manage Your Alerts” page. Think of Alerts as an online version of a “clipping” service. Yahoo! (<http://alerts.yahoo.com>) offers something similar.

Google Trends

Google Trends (www.google.com/trends) compares how frequently searches have been made on up to five topics over time, how frequently those terms have appeared in Google News, and the geographic location that generated the searches.

HowSociable?

Type any brand name at www.howsociable.com to see how visible it is in social media. It's great for monitoring competitors, as shown in Figure 1-10.



Figure 1-10: How Sociable displays the social media visibility for the White House.

Courtesy Inuda Innovations Ltd. All third-party trademarks and icon designs shown on the Web page are the property of their respective owners.

monitorThis

A free aggregator for up to 26 search engine feeds covering Web sites, blogs, microblogs, articles, news, photos, video, and tags, **monitorThis** (<http://monitorthis.info>) is a manual search on a single term. Results can be sorted by publication date or search engine.

Moreover Technologies

Moreover (<http://w.moreover.com/public/free-rss/free-feeds.html>) offers free RSS feeds from thousands of news and social media sources, enabling you to track your company, your competitors, and a nearly endless list of keywords and topics. For in-depth business intelligence, their Social Media Metabase (<http://w.moreover.com/public/products/social-media-metabase.html>) searches and monitors hundreds of thousands of blogs, podcasts, video-sharing sites, photo-sharing sites, microblogs, wikis, reviews, and forums on a paid basis.

PostRank Analytics

PostRank (<https://analytics.postrank.com>) monitors something it calls “engagement” on a variety of social media services. It quantifies how often individuals take action after reviewing a particular piece of content (for example, a blog post), which it calls an engagement event. For instance, tweeting, posting a comment, or voting one digg would constitute an event. PostRank integrates with Google Analytics. It costs \$9 per month or \$99 per year to track five sites, with a 30-day free trial.

Social Mention

Social Mention (<http://socialmention.com>) tracks and measures what is being said about a specific topic in real time across more than 100 social media services. It provides a social ranking score based on “popularity” for every search. Figure 1-11 shows the results for the term “Twitter.”

Figure 1-11: Social Mention provides a social ranking score based on its definition of strength, sentiment, passion, and reach.



Courtesy of Social Mention

You can select to monitor only specific services and choose among service categories of bookmarks, blogs, microblogs, comments, news, networks, video, audio, images, Q&A, or all. While you can input only one term at a time, if you set up social alerts (<http://socialmention.com/alerts>), you can receive daily reports — much like Google Alerts — for multiple terms compiled into a spreadsheet.

In addition, Social Mention aggregates trends (www.socialmention.com/trends) in near real time about social media discourse. This feature is handy for market research.

Social Mention also offers real-time widgets (<http://socialmention.com/tools>) to place on your site or in your browser bar. The browser is a simple plug-in, but your programmer will need to copy and paste the widget code onto your site.



Well-heeled social success for Omelle luxury shoes

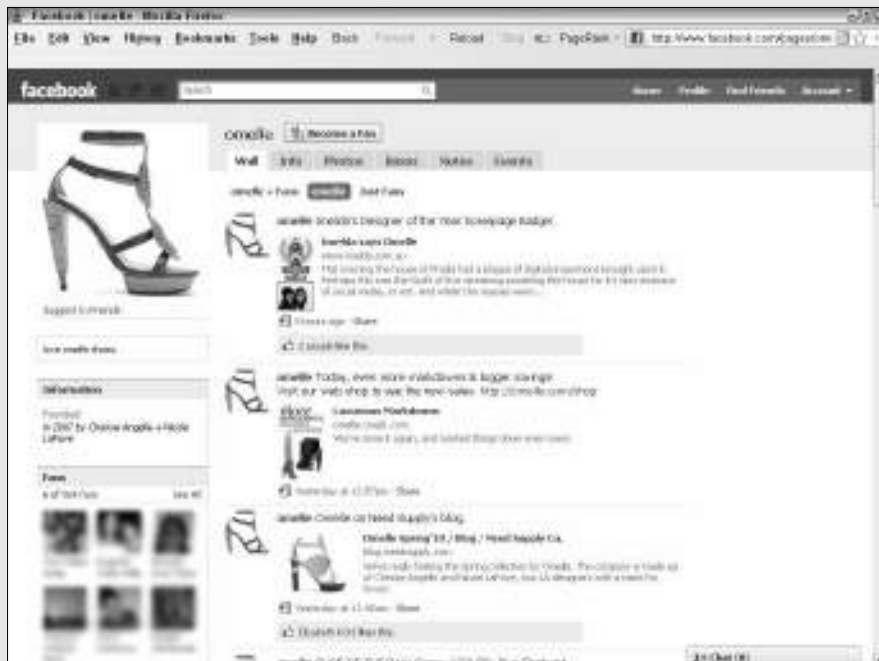
Luxury footwear company Omelle.com officially launched its Web site with its spring/summer 2009 shoe collection. Founded two years before by Cherise Angelle (president) and Nicole LaFave (creative director), Omelle targets lovers of high-end fashion, particularly those who adore shoes.

LaFave describes Omelle's consumers as "confident, expressive, well-educated, fashion-savvy women living in metropolitan areas." Members of their target market are daily computer users who appreciate the convenience of shopping online, sign up for electronic newsletters from their favorite brands, and read fashion blogs.

Acknowledging that profile, Omelle manages its B2C marketing strictly through social networking and online e-mail campaigns. It reached

out specifically to blogs and Web sites already accessed by its target market to increase brand momentum in the fashion industry. Both LaFave and Angelle directly contact bloggers through e-mail to make the experience more personal.

In addition to its Web site, Omelle uses Twitter (<http://twitter.com/omelle> (refer to Figure 1-7), Facebook (www.facebook.com/pages/omelle/19617863068) (see the following figure), and their own *Shoetales* blog (<http://omelle.com/shoetales>) to connect directly with customers. They also both use their own Facebook and Twitter pages (twitter.com/nicolelafave and twitter.com/cheriseangelle) to give customers a more personal connection to the brand, while linking back to the primary Omelle site.



Courtesy Angelle & LaFave, LLC dba Omelle

“Places like Facebook and Twitter allow us to interact with a broad, captive audience with little or no marketing costs associated,” LaFave says. “As a start-up, in these current economic conditions, you would be a fool not to.” However, she segments the social media marketplace carefully. Core customers willing to buy at regular price points may not be on Twitter, she explains, but Twitter has a secondary market that watches for designer merchandise on sale.

Social bookmarks on sites like Kaboodle, StumbleUpon, and Delicious followed organically afterwards.

On average, LaFave and Angelle each spend about an hour per day researching what is being said about the Omelle brand online, implementing social networking, tweeting about sales or news, and maintaining the Omelle.com Web store. They rely primarily on Google Alerts to follow the “buzz” and Google Analytics to track results of their efforts.

Trackur

Trackur (www.trackur.com) tracks all forms of social media including blogs, news, networks, RSS feeds, Tweets, images, and video. In addition to displaying conversational content, it presents trends over time and analyzes any Web site mentioning a term being monitored. You can get a free account with one saved search and unlimited results. Monthly plans with updates twice/hour start at \$18/month.

WhosTalkin.com

WhosTalkin.com (www.whostalkin.com) is another free, real-time search tool. It surveys 60 social media services for current conversations in the categories of blogs, news, networks, videos, images, forums, and tags. It lacks the reporting capabilities of Social Mention, but it does include actual comments. WhosTalkin.com provides results for only one term at a time, but offers a browser search plug-in and an iGoogle gadget.

Measuring the Buzz by Type of Service

The number of monitoring tools competing for market share is astonishing. The following tables are not intended to be comprehensive lists but simply to provide some idea of what’s out there. You can always search for free tools in each category to get more options.

Table 1-6 lists tools for monitoring blogs and forums; Table 1-7 tools for news, RSS, and geo-location sites; Table 1-8 tools for Twitter; and Table 1-9, some high-end tools at the enterprise level.

To ensure that your own blog appears in a timely fashion in blog monitoring tools, submit your blog to each one and set up ping.



Table 1-6 Blog and Forum Monitoring Tools		
<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
BackType	www.backtype.com	Monitors conversations on blogs and Twitter
BoardTracker	www.boardtracker.com	Searches forums and message boards, free and premium accounts
Blogdigger	www.blogdigger.com	Delivers blog search content in an RSS feed
Bloglines	www.bloglines.com	Delivers blog search content in an RSS feed
BlogPulse	www.blogpulse.com	Automated keyword or URL search of blogosphere with RSS feed; profile, tracking, and trend tools available
coComment	www.cocomment.com	Track comments on any Web page; compiles trends and top commentators
Google Blog Search	http://blogsearch.google.com	Master search engine for all blogs with an RSS or Atom feed, not just Google's own blogger.com; can segment by topic; displays by popularity
Lijit	www.lijit.com	Customizable search tool with statistics for your own blog to monitor what topics readers are searching for; can add sites you have bookmarked, your blogroll, posts by your social networking contacts, and other feeds
Technorati	http://technorati.com	The first real-time blog search engine; ranks authority and influence of blogs and has more comprehensive index of blog popularity
Trendpedia	http://www.trendpedia.com/	Free blog search tool

Table 1-7 Social News, RSS, and Geo Monitoring Tools

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
Find Articles	www.findarticles.com	Monitor traditional media channels for keyword mentions
foursquare	http://foursquare.com	A geo-location tool for mobile phone or Web that displays where users are located; good for local marketing
Google News	http://news.google.com	Keyword search of Google News saved into RSS for automated updates
Google Reader	http://reader.google.com	Aggregates your news services and blogs in one place
IceRocket	www.icerocket.com	RSS feed for results of your keyword search
Loopt	www.loopt.com	Shows where users are located when they access social media via mobile phone; good for local marketing
PubSub	www.pubsub.com	Keyword searches saved to RSS feed; allows alerts for posts constrained to specific areas such as press releases, SEC/EDGAR filings, news groups, or blogs
Yahoo! News	http://news.yahoo.com	Keyword search of Yahoo!News saved into RSS for automated updates

Table 1-8 Twitter Monitoring Tools

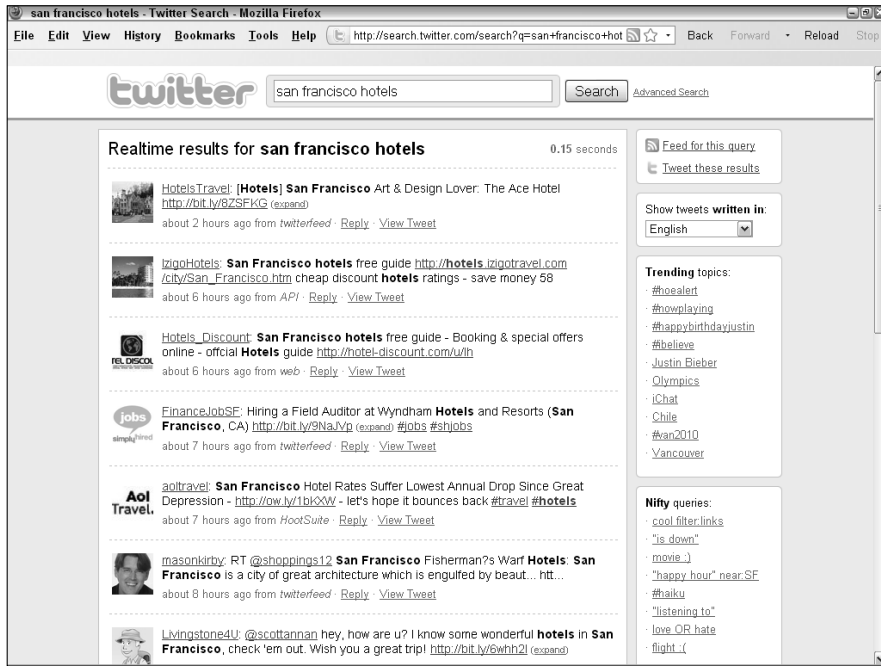
<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
BackTweets	www.backtweets.com	searches for links mentioned on Twitter; from BackType
CoTweet	www.cotweet.com	Allows multiple people to communicate, in sync, through corporate Twitter accounts

(continued)

Table 1-8 (continued)		
<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>Description</i>
SocialOomph	www.socialoomph.com	Formerly TweetLater.com, one-stop shop to monitor and manage Twitter
twalala	http://twalala.com	Twitter client that filters your twitter stream by keywords; has a mute button
TweetBeep	http://tweetbeep.com	Like Google Alerts for Twitter
TweetDeck	www.tweetdeck.com/features/follow-topics-in-real-time-with-saved-searches/index.html	Auto-update search results from Twitter on multiple search terms; one of many tools available
TweetMeme	http://tweetmeme.com	Aggregates popular links on Twitter for popularity reporting
Twellow	http://twellow.com	Analyzes public tweets by categories to narrow search and identify influential tweeters in your categories
Twitter Search	http://search.twitter.com	Twitter's own search filter with advanced queries

Figure 1-12 shows the results of a typical Twitter search.

Figure 1-12: Results page from search.twitter.com for *san + francisco + hotels*.



Book II
Chapter 1

Discovering Helpful
Tech Tools

Table 1-9 Fee-Based, Enterprise-Level Monitoring Tools

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>What It Does</i>
Cymfony	www.cymfony.com	Identifies people, issues, and trends in social and traditional media; for marketing and PR pros
eCairn Conversation	www.ecairn.com	Integrates and analyzes multiple social media sources for marketing and PR pros; starts at \$99/month
Gigya	www.gigya.com/public/platform/Analyze.aspx	Social optimization tools for online businesses, including monitoring and analysis
FiltrBox	www.filtrbox.com	Tracks across multiple sources online for master list of mentions

(continued)

Table 1-9 (continued)

<i>Name</i>	<i>URL</i>	<i>What It Does</i>
Klout	http://klout.com	Measures influence and impact of your content across social media
Nielsen's BuzzMetrics	http://en-us.nielsen.com/tab/product_families/nielsen_buzzmetrics	Deep Web analysis of consumer-generated content in online communities, message boards, groups, blogs, opinion sites, and social networks.
Radian6	www.radian6.com	Monitors real-time conversations in all forms of social media, including boards, forums, networks, blogs, video, images, opinion sites, and mainstream media; designed for marketing and PR pros
Scout Labs	www.scoutlabs.com	Web-based application to monitor customer response
Spiral16's Spark	www.spiral16.com/spark	Advanced software tools for monitoring social media and sentiment with sophisticated reporting
Sysomos' Heartbeat	www.sysomos.com/products/overview/heartbeat	Real-time monitoring and measurement tool for buzz and sentiment