



People's Voice Media Social Media Centres

What is a Social Media Centre?

The aim of a Social Media Centre is:

- to help community projects, individuals and communities spread their messages innovatively
- to form a hub of people sharing skills and exchanging information to create exciting content which can be published and distributed online
- to provide access to the equipment needed to create social media
- to support the development of community reporters
- to act as a communication hub for a local community providing multiplatform content distribution

In essence, a social media centre is a place that not only supports the development of content but also provides a social space for people to interact and learn from each other. It acts as a communication hub for the local community by providing a single point of access for the development and distribution of content. A social media centre therefore might not only provide a social space for the development of content but also provide informal and formal accredited programmes. This may include local community reporters who are collecting and developing local content.

This content could be distributed via a community web site, local blogs, internet TV station (using a you tube channel), internet radio (podcasts), multimedia online magazine (opens source), or a physical newspaper.

The purpose of the centre is also to develop dialogue and consultation between different agencies, individuals and communities. The centre attracts in funding from a variety of sources to sustain itself.

There is no single model that best describes a social media centre and different communities will develop them in ways best suited to their needs.

Examples of Social Media Centres

One model is the Salford Social Media Centre. This offers a social space for interaction as well as providing extensive resources including PCs and Macs, plus videos, cameras and digital sound recorders which can be loaned out. This social media centre also provides a community website (<http://eastsalforddirect.co.uk>), internet TV and radio station and a community newspaper.

Another model is the iBlog Social Media Centre at the Grange Community Resource Centre, in the heart of a regeneration community, which is situated in an allocated area within an existing community venue, with access to 1 or 2 computers and printers.

Support package

People's Voice Media offers 3 levels of support in order for centres to develop as social media centres. The support package is intended to complement existing services. Each of the support packages are listed overleaf.

Level 1: Feasibility

Aimed at	Organisations and individuals who have expressed an interest in the idea of a social media centre and seek to explore it further.
The intended outcome	At the end of the process they will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear idea of what is involved • An understanding of what a social media centre is and how it might fit with their needs and aims • An understanding of the start up process and also how PVM can assist.
Outline process	PVM will take responsibility for delivering the outputs, will then provide follow up.
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured visit to the Salford centre to see it in action • A consultancy session, locally delivered, on what is involved in starting up and running a centre • A package of materials/DVD to help to sell the idea • Follow up contact.

Level 2: Practical support for the start up of a Social Media Centre

Aimed at	Organisations who have made a positive decision to establish a social media centre.
The intended outcome	A social media centre is established that is effective, viable and sustainable. That the start up process is efficient and draws on PVM and other's experience and expertise.
Outline process	Once an agency has agreed to move into a start phase, a tailored package of support and materials can be negotiated and agreed.
Outputs	This package will include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the start up process • identifying and bidding for funds • outline business plan/budget • technical support • advice and support on communication centre products and services • staff and volunteer training • marketing plan • advice on layout and equipment
Notes	The role of PVM would be to support and advise and the centre will have responsibility for implementing the work

Level 3: On going support and networking

Aimed at	Local organisations that have an established social media centre.
The intended outcome	The local centres are connected into a national network that provides advice, learning and development opportunities.
Outline process	PVM offers a range of events, networking meeting and shared services that encourage local centres to develop their work and be part of a wider movement.
Possible services/ outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences • Peer exchange • Consultancy service • Advice on new social media approaches • Advice on community reporters programme • Marketing and distribution of content • Advice on communication centre products and services

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