

## Using New Media to Communicate

**Lesson Objective:** Explore and understand options to communicate internally and externally to the organization and how new media can affect communication.

**Desired Learning Outcomes (DLO):**

1. Participants will explore and demonstrate options to communicate internally to the organization.
2. Participants will explore and demonstrate options to communicate externally to the organization.
3. Discuss the implications of using new media to communicate with public affairs entities.
4. Read and discuss using new media to communicate the Reading List.

**Scheduled Lesson Time:** 50 minutes

**Reading List:**

1. Civil Air Patrol Social Media Guide:  
[https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/SocialMediaGuidelines\\_CAE169A56801E.pdf](https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/media/cms/SocialMediaGuidelines_CAE169A56801E.pdf)
2. OPTIONAL reading for students: CAPR 120-1, Information Technology Security

### 1. Introduction

There are a wide variety of ways to get your message out. Historically, communication was limited to the traditional meeting format. However, with the birth of social media, an entire new way to reach your audience has been developed. The use of email, social media, and blogging created a whole new language and vehicle to be heard.

### 2. How communication has changed

Communication has dramatically changed since the days of scriptoriums. If Gutenberg's printing press sped up the communication in the 1500s, certainly the invention of the internet took communication to a whole new level. Early CAP squadrons communicated with end of meeting announcements, hard copy flyers, and telephone calls. And while each of those methods are still usable today, we have other options such as email, texts, instant messaging, websites, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat, LinkedIn, and whatever the newest channel happens to be), blogs, podcasts, and more. The trick is to find out where your audience is and tailor your communications for maximum impact. Ideally, squadrons will use a variety of methods to reach the largest audience realizing that not all members are using one specific communication method. The oldest senior in your squadron may prefer a phone call or use email. Parents and other senior members may prefer Facebook and websites, while cadets and younger senior members may look to group texts and Instagram for their information.

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#### 3. Personal vs. Official Social Media accounts

As a CAP member, you need to be aware of some important concepts when using new media to communicate. The primary goal for CAP social media is “to raise awareness of CAP activities and members that positively reflect our core values of integrity, volunteer service, excellence, and respect” (CAP Social Media Guide). Within social media, there are two types of uses for CAP: personal and official.

**Personal Use:** This represents you, your opinions, and your views. You can do anything on your personal social media as long as it is not illegal.

**Official Use:** This represents and speaks for the corporation. A member only speaks on behalf of the organization if assigned by the commander as part of their official duties.

**The conflict:** When members use their personal accounts as CAP members (photos in uniform, identifies as a CAP member, etc.), the public perception is that whatever is posted on the personal page represents the organization. In other words, if your personal page’s profile shows you in uniform and states you are a member of CAP and you post questionable photos of parties or other events, then those outside the organization will view CAP as condoning those activities. When you make political posts on your personal page, it can give the public the impression that you are speaking on behalf of the organization and that CAP accepts your opinion and/or behavior. We must be very careful to never put CAP in an inappropriate light on our personal pages. This means our posts should reflect the CAP core values which we live by daily.

#### 4. Synopsis of new media

Let’s define some of the media being used today. Each of the following can be used by CAP members for personal use and CAP units for official use. Each of these media can be used to communicate internally (with other CAP members) and externally (those outside the organization, to include families, friends, organizations, newspapers and other media

**Email:** A system of sending messages from one individual to another (or group of individuals) via telecommunications links between computers using dedicated software.

**Text messages:** Words typed on a keypad and sent electronically to a mobile device, especially from another mobile device; can be sent to individuals or groups.

**Social media:** Computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information and ideas via virtual communities; includes Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, SnapChat, etc.

**Blogs:** A website that contains online personal reflections of an individual or group of individuals, sharing experiences, observations, opinions, etc., often with images and links to other webpages; Twitter is often referred to as a micro-blog.

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**Podcast:** A digital or video file or recording, usually part of a themed series that can be downloaded from a website to a media player or computer.

The CAP Social Media Guide goes into detail about the more popular social media channels available to the public: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn. It is worth the time to read through this guide and learn about how to use each of these channels in your unit.

#### **5. Controlling social media use within your unit**

A social media channel being used officially by a CAP unit must meet specific standards. It must have the words “Civil Air Patrol” in its title, it must be approved by the unit commander, and must have more than one administrator with full permissions (a minimum of two is required). A member who sets up a unit social media page on their own does not officially speak for the organization; they do not have permission to do this. Having more than one administrator allows for transfers to new volunteer social media managers as time goes on.

If you find an unofficial site for your CAP unit has been established, notify the commander so steps can be taken to have the site removed. These rouge sites do not speak for the corporation and have the potential to embarrass CAP through its posts.

#### **6. Photos**

In today’s mobile phone world, everyone has a camera on hand and can take photos and videos, quickly posting them to accounts. Members should take careful precaution when posting photos; looking carefully at the action in the photo (Can the action be misunderstood? Does it go against CAP core values?) as well as the appearance of the member(s) pictured (is the uniform in keeping with CAPM 39-1?). Do you have the permission of the member to post to your site? This doesn’t need to be in writing, but some people prefer not to have their photos on social media for legal or personal reasons.

#### **7. Blogs and podcasts**

Social media is a great way to get your unit’s stories out to both the public and your members. As with all media, there is a difference between personal and official channels. Because blogs and podcasts tend to be more opinion-based, care needs to be taken to ensure that official blogs and podcasts keep within the boundaries of the organization, its regulations, and its core values.

#### **Lesson Summary and Close:**

Expanding communication to include new media opens up possibilities to reach a larger audience both internally and externally. Using multiple channels is optimal since the variety of members has preferences for types of media. Getting your message out to your members and community is important. However, care must be taken to ensure that our personal and official posts follow correct guidance. Websites and social media accounts need to be approved and

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have multiple administrators. The appearance of conflict in photos and opinions must be avoided.

**OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT:** If possible, students should create a post on a social media channel about the Civil Air Patrol training in which they are currently involved.