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Social Media Design

FOR DUMMIES®

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Learn to:

- Use custom templates to create profiles for Facebook® and YouTube®
- Design a Twitter® background and create a Google+™ design
- Bring all your social media together on RebelMouse™

IN FULL COLOR!

Janine Warner

Author of Web Sites Do-It-Yourself For Dummies®

David LaFontaine

Social Media Design

FOR DUMMIES®

A Wiley Brand

by Janine Warner and
David LaFontaine

FOR DUMMIES®
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Social Media Design For Dummies®

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Social Media Design For Dummies

Visit www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/socialmediadesign to view this book's cheat sheet.

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Introduction

You're not supposed to judge a book by its cover, but most people do. The same holds true on social media sites. You might think that you should be judged for the quality of your written posts or the experience you list in your profile, but the reality is that the first impression you make in social media is based on how good your photos and graphics look and how well you've designed your profile.

Today's social media sites aren't just limited to short written messages. You can post photos, graphics, video, and audio to illustrate a point. Social media has evolved from a novelty used by a few early adopters to an essential communication tool used by hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Along the way, social media has become an increasingly important way to build personal and professional networks, search for jobs, find long lost friends, and so much more.

In *Social Media Design For Dummies*, our goal is to help you make a great first impression by showing you how to make the most of the design features on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, Pinterest, and Tumblr.

Throughout this book, you'll find detailed instructions as well as inspiring examples of how to create professional, inventive, and playful designs. Whether you're using social media to build your brand, develop your business, or just keep up with friends and family, creating a great design is not just about making you look good — it's a key part of building credibility online. So read on to find out how to create great social media designs that will

help you build connections and enhance your online interactions.

About This Book

We designed *Social Media Design For Dummies* to help you quickly find answers you need when you need them. You don't have to read through this book cover to cover, and you certainly don't have to memorize it. Consider this a quick study guide and a reference you can return to whenever you need it. Each section stands alone, giving you easy answers to specific questions and step-by-step instructions for common tasks.

Want to find out how to change the background image on your Twitter page, add a cover image to your Facebook design, or link all your social media sites on RebelMouse? Jump right to the pages that cover those features. (***Hint:*** The Table of Contents and index can help you find the sections that interest you most.) Don't worry about getting sand on this book at the beach or coffee spilled on the pages at breakfast. We promise: It won't complain!

Icons Used in This Book

This icon steers you to helpful things online: templates, help, great examples, site guidelines, and more.

This icon reminds you of an important concept or procedure that you'll want to store away in your memory banks for future use.

technical stuff

This icon signals technical stuff that you may find informative and interesting although not essential. Feel free to skip over this information.

tip

This icon indicates a tip or technique that can save you time or money — or even a headache — later.

warning

This icon warns you of any potential pitfalls and gives you the all-important information on how to avoid them.

Beyond the Book

With a topic this big, we couldn't fit everything we wanted to include in the book. You'll find additional material in the following places:

- **Cheat Sheet:** Find tips and tools that can help you create, manage, and build great social media profiles, pages, and groups.
  www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/socialmediadesign

- **Online articles:** Find tips for crafting great posts, protecting your privacy, and making it easy for web visitors to share your content on social media sites.
  www.dummies.com/extras/socialmediadesign

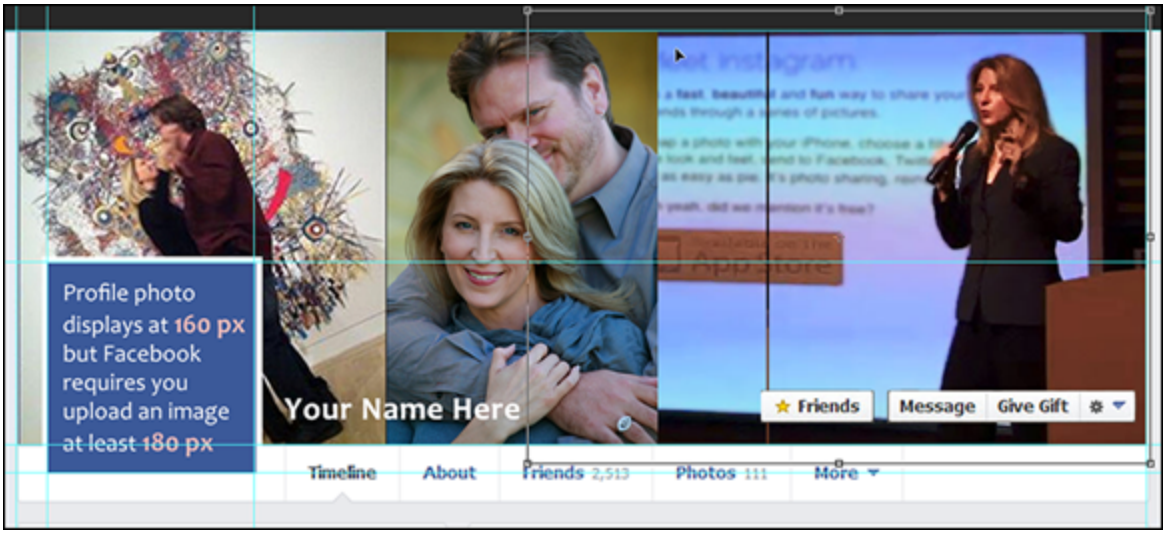
- **Templates:** You'll find templates designed to help you create great profiles for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other social media sites on author Janine Warner's website at
  www.digitalfamily.com/social

Where to Go from Here

To familiarize yourself with the latest in social media websites and strategies, don't skip Chapter 1, which provides an overview of all the sites covered in this book and also helps you sort through the many options available. If you're ready to dive in and start creating a killer Facebook page for your business right away, jump ahead to Chapter 5. If you want to find out about a specific trick or technique, consult the Table of Contents or the index; you won't miss a beat as you work to make those impossible web design deadlines. Most of all, we wish you great success in all your social media endeavors, and we welcome the chance to connect with you.

Part I

Getting Started with Social Media Design



Chapter 1: Find an overview of the many different types of social media sites and the value of creating a consistent design that makes you (or your business) easily recognizable across different sites.

Chapter 2: Find an introduction to working with design tools, such as Photoshop or Photoshop Elements, how to work with the templates included in this book, and a few tips about developing great social media designs.

Chapter 3: Discover how online design principals can be used to improve your social media profiles and pages.

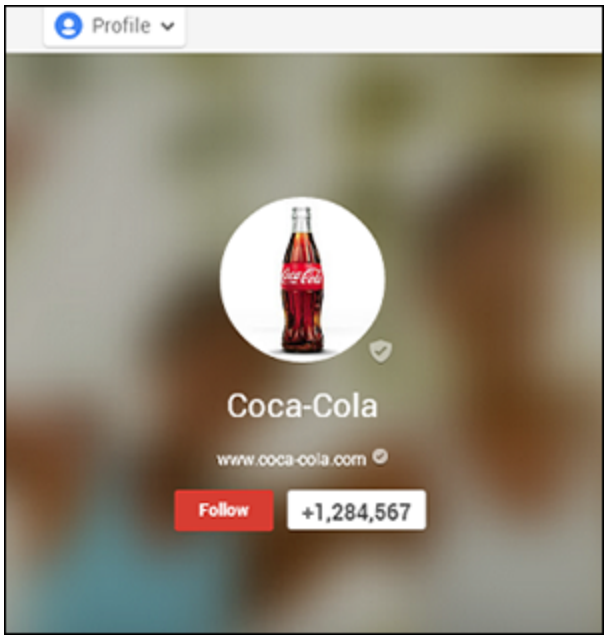
web extras Visit www.dummies.com/extras/socialmediadesign for great Dummies content.

Chapter 1

Creating a Consistent Design for All Your Social Sites

In This Chapter

- There are many social media sites to join — you don’t have to choose just one!
- Expand your social media presence with Share, Like, and Follow buttons.
- You can consider joining social bookmarking sites, too.
- Be sure to research effective social media designs.



Social networking — the art of meeting and building contacts through social media websites — has become the most popular activity on the Internet. As we live more of our lives online, social networks have become a powerful way to build connections, attract new clients, find discounts, or get a new job.

On the most popular social media sites, you can create personal profiles as well as professional pages, which are an increasingly important way to drive traffic to your website and promote your business, brand, or organization.

As social media has evolved, it's no longer enough to simply have a presence on each social site. Similar to the evolution of web design, social media design has become increasingly complex, and visitors to social media sites are becoming more discerning.

Today, how you present yourself, your brand, your business, or an organization on your social media is a key part of any marketing strategy, job hunt, or quest for new friends.

This chapter is about helping you stand out from the crowd by creating a great social media design. Figure 1-1 shows an interesting Facebook design.

Figure 1-1

tip

If you're looking for advice on how to use the top social media platforms, consult *Facebook All-in-One For Dummies* by Melanie Nelson and Daniel Herndon, *Twitter For Dummies* by Laura Fitton, and *Pinterest For Dummies* by Kelby Carr.

Choosing the Best Social Media Sites

With so many social media sites to choose from, how do you decide which one(s) is (are) right for you? The following is an overview of the relative strengths and specialties of some of the top social media platforms.

The examples in the sections feature the profiles of our friend Erin Manning because she has created a consistent look across her many social media sites. Erin is a photographer, photography instructor, and fellow

Wiley author. She takes her brand very seriously and has crafted an image that she is careful to protect and manage consistently across all of her social media sites, as well as her website, which is shown in Figure 1-2. As you can see in Figures 1-3 through 1-8, she uses similar colors, and even the same photos in many cases, to make it easy to recognize her brand on the many different social media sites she uses.

Figure 1-2
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

Facebook

www.facebook.com

Facebook wins top place as the largest social networking site on the web, and its broad appeal makes it an excellent place to promote your website. Facebook was originally considered a vanity site and a place for college

students, but its professional power has grown with its ever-expanding audience. With more than 1 billion members, Facebook is by far the most important, and most active, of the social media sites to date.

You can create a Facebook Profile, Page, or Group, and there are many options for customizing the designs. Erin's Facebook profile is shown in Figure 1-3.

We talk more about how to set up your Facebook Pages in Chapters 4 and 5.

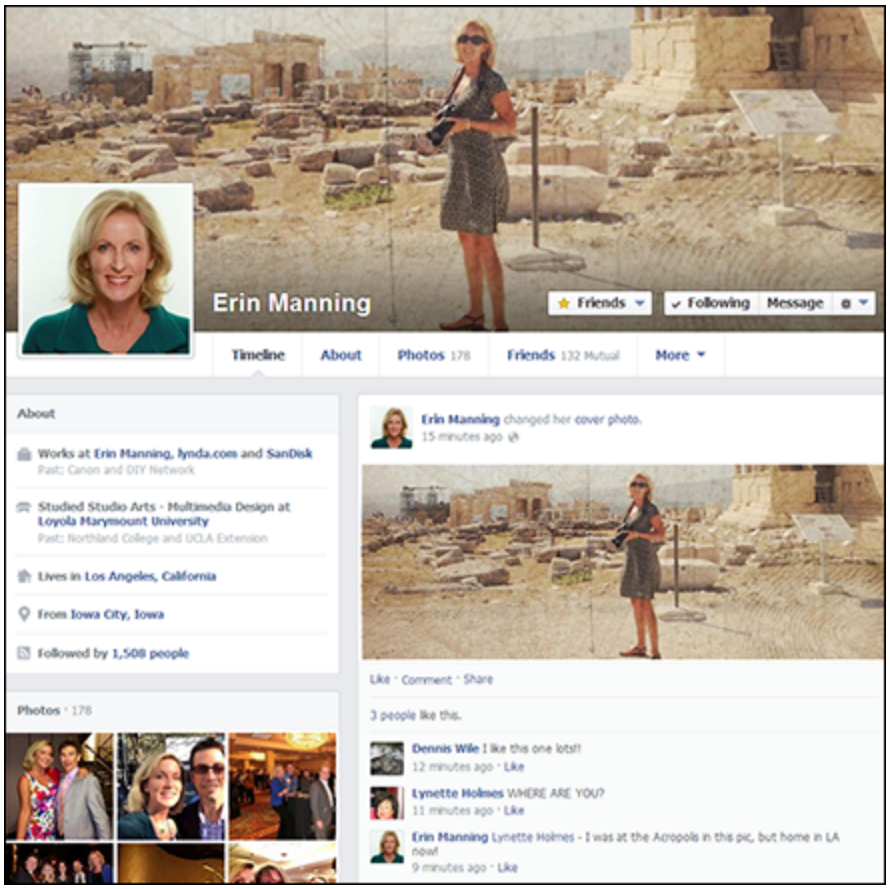


Figure 1-3
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com

LinkedIn is the site for professional connections and online business networking. If you're online to develop business contacts with other professionals, especially if you're job hunting or trying to attract new business clients, LinkedIn is a powerful place to promote yourself and your website.

remember

Unlike Facebook, LinkedIn is all business.

tip

You get only one small profile image on a LinkedIn profile. Be sure to use the same profile image you use for your other sites for consistent branding.

Erin uses the same profile picture on LinkedIn that she uses on some of her other social sites, as shown in Figure 1-4, and it makes her easily recognizable.

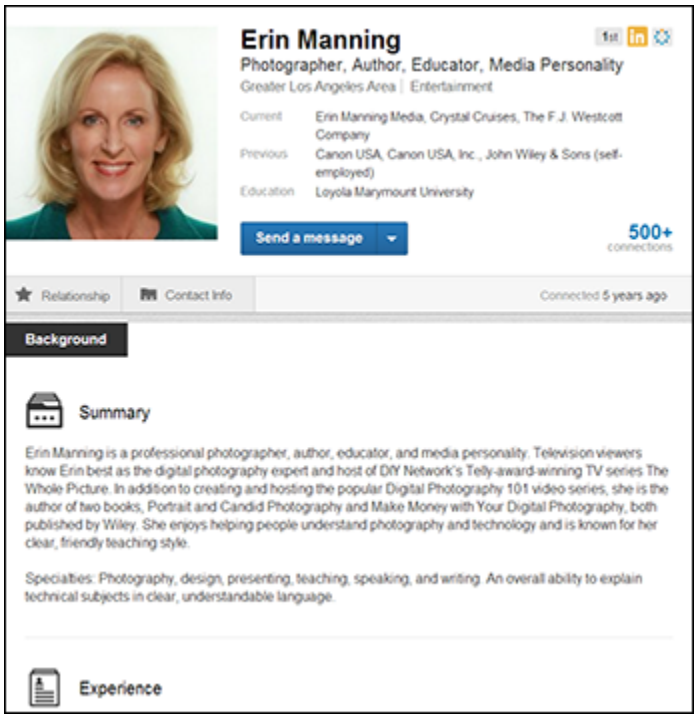


Figure 1-4
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

We show you how to create your LinkedIn presence in Chapter 8.

Twitter

https://twitter.com

Twitter has evolved into an international force to be reckoned with. A microblogging platform, Twitter makes it easy to connect with people and share brief bursts of information *(tweets).* Twitter limits you to no more than 140 characters per post, but that brevity seems to be the secret to Twitter's success. Athletes, celebrities, politicians, and all types of so-called experts use Twitter to connect directly with their audiences, one brief message at a time.

remember

It takes a while to get the hang of the terse, abbreviation-heavy Tweetspeak language, which includes the use of special characters, such as the hashtag (#) to indicate a topic (such as `#socialmedia` in posts about the social media) or the at sign (@) in posts about a person (as in, follow me `@janinewarner`).

People tend to update Twitter more frequently than other services, making it a great place to follow trends, news events, and other information in real time. Like all social networks, Twitter is constantly evolving, so read other people's posts for a while to get the hang of it before you start to participate. Follow a few friends or experts to see how they use the service.

Twitter offers two areas where you can control the design of your site: the background and the main cover image, located at the top center of a profile. In Erin's case, she chose a simple illustration as the background, as shown in Figure 1-5, and uses the same photograph for her Twitter cover image that she uses in her Facebook design, which again makes her easily recognizable across her various profiles.

Turn to Chapter 6 to find out how to set up your Twitter profile.

Google+

www.plus.google.com

The newest entry in the social media scene is Google's competitor to Facebook, known as Google+. Launched in the summer of 2011, Google+ quickly turned into a must-have for every self-respecting web geek because membership was initially limited only to people who were invited.

The principal difference between Google+ and other social networking sites (such as Facebook) is that

Google+ starts out by encouraging you to put your friends into *circles,* which provides a way to organize the people you know into categories, allowing you to choose what information and updates you share with each group.

Google+, now open to everyone, has become one of the top social media platforms, dwarfing many of its competitors and leveraging the power of the Google brand. In the case of Google, you can include a very large photo at the top of your profile. As you can see in her Google+ profile in Figure 1-6, Erin is making herself easy to recognize by using the same image she uses in her Facebook and Twitter profile designs.

Chapter 9 is where to go to set up Google+.

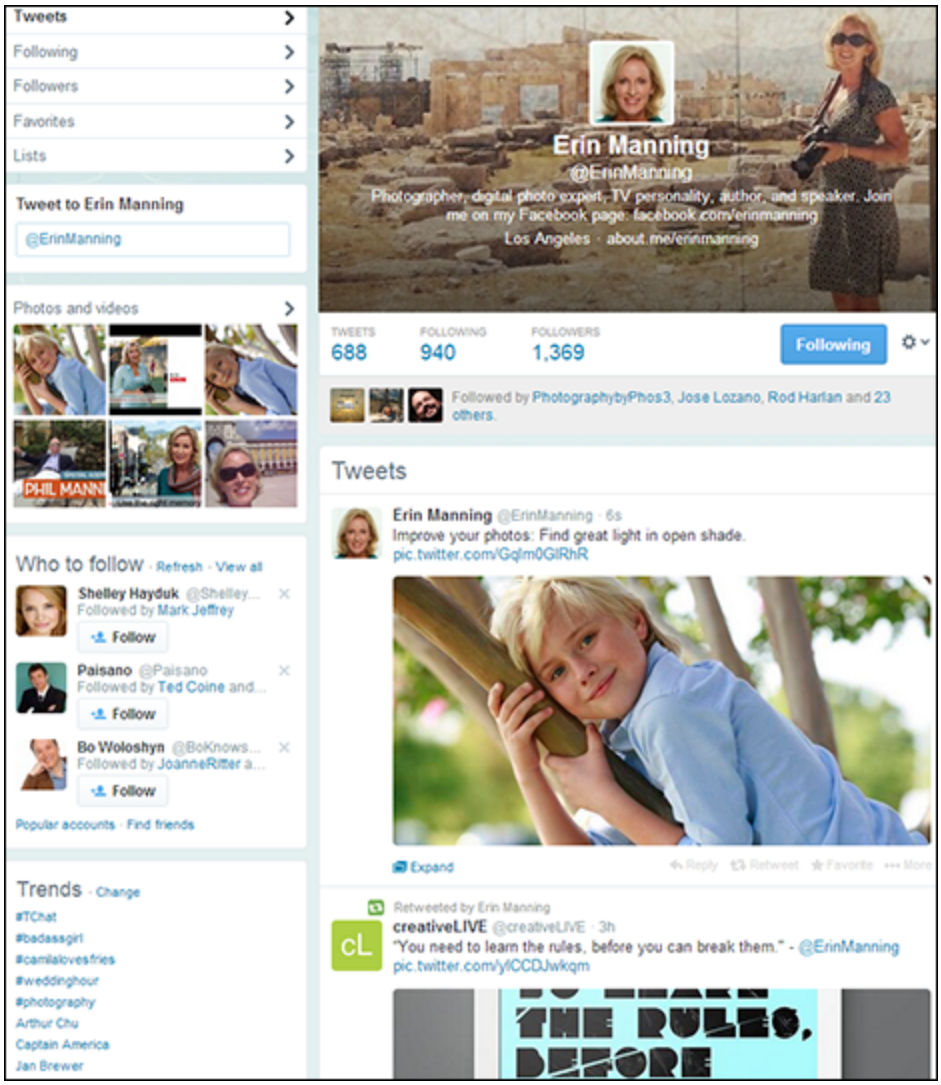


Figure 1-5
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

Pinterest

www.pinterest.com

This highly visual site exploded on the social media scene and became the fastest-growing site in 2012. Especially popular among designers, artists, fashionistas, and other creative people, Pinterest makes it easy to "pin" and share images in collections (*boards)*. In her Pinterest profile, as shown in Figure 1-7, Erin showcases her photo tips as well as her fashion sense.

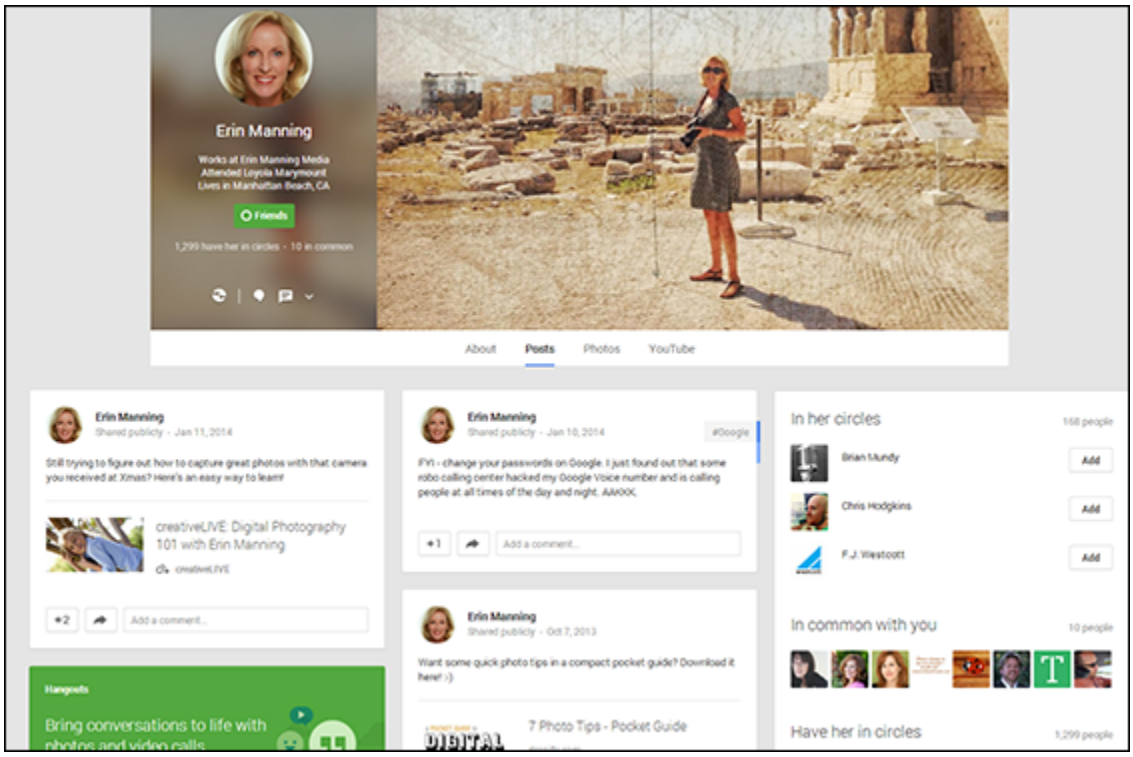


Figure 1-6
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

Even though Pinterest is a platform that thrives on the visual, user profiles are not the focus. Pinterest profile pics are incredibly small compared with the other images on the page, and Pinterest allows users to post only a brief, limited bio.

We show you how to use Pinterest in Chapter 10.

YouTube

www.youtube.com

YouTube is a global giant, so people use the name "YouTube" generically to refer to all kinds of videos on the web. Owned by Google, YouTube is not only one of the most popular social media sites, but it's also the world's second-most popular search engine. YouTube has become the default place users around the world turn to when looking for Internet video.

From her television appearances to video tapes of speeches to training videos for companies like lynda.com and creativeLIVE, Erin has plenty of video to showcase on YouTube, but she also uses a few still images from her website to decorate her YouTube channel, as shown in Figure 1-8. Chapter 7 shows you how to use YouTube.

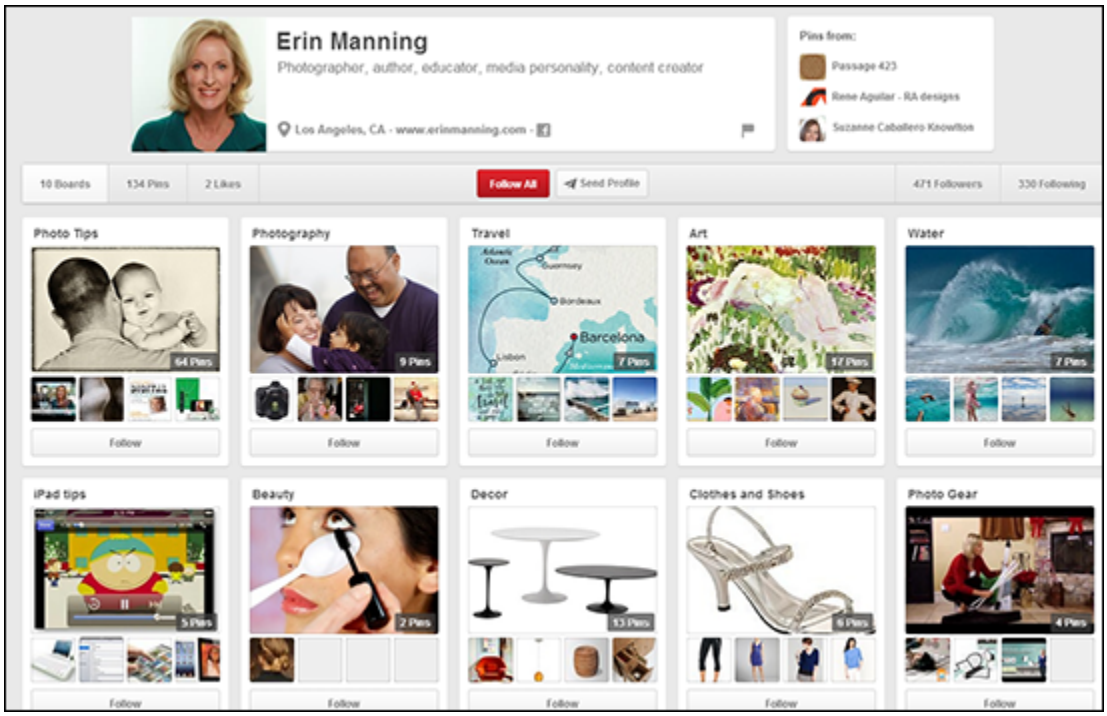


Figure 1-7
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

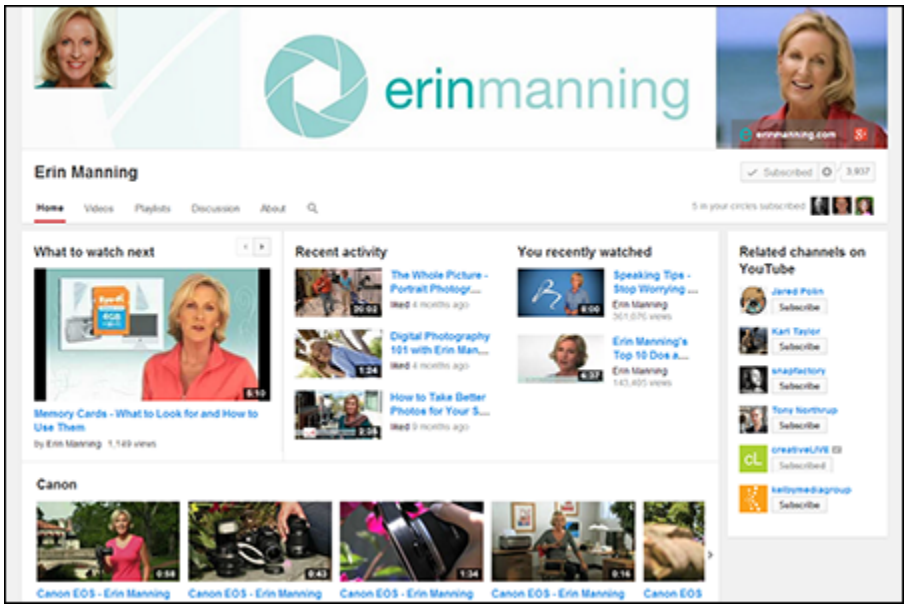


Figure 1-8
Erin Manning (http://erinmanning.com)

POSTING TO SOCIAL SITES

Creating a great social media design is just the first step. You also need to update your pages and profiles by regularly posting and tweeting. Here are a few ideas:

- **Share a favorite link or hot news item in your specialty area.** Odds are that many people in your networks on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn share your interests.
- **Share or retweet something someone else has posted.** Passing along a great post is the highest compliment you can give in social media, and if you liked what they had to say, chances are that your friends will, too.
- **Be personable but not too personal.** You want to be authentic and relatable, but oversharing is the fastest way to lose followers.
- **Ask a question related to your latest book, research project, or business venture.** While writing this book, we asked our friends and followers to send great social media designs to feature in our book.
- **Make updating your status at least a weekly habit.** Just be careful not to flood your social networks with trivial or mundane posts. If you post more than a few times a day, make sure your followers welcome your status updates and find them helpful,

interesting, or at least entertaining. Consider creating an editorial calendar for your social media properties to remind you to post often, but not too much!

Spreading the Love with Social Media Share Buttons

In addition to creating great designs for your social media profiles and pages, you can also include social media icons and links on your website or blog.

The two distinct ways to link to social media sites are

- **Like and Follow links:** When you include Like and Follow links on your website (see Figure 1-9), you link to your own profiles on Facebook, Twitter, and other social sites, and invite your visitors to connect with you. When visitors follow this kind of link, they are given options specific to each site, such as clicking the Like button on your Facebook page, clicking the Follow button on your Twitter profile, or subscribing to your YouTube channel.

Figure 1-9

- **Share links:** In contrast to Like and Follow links, Share links invite your visitors to share what's on your website with their friends and followers. In Figure 1-10, you see what happens when a user clicks the Share button for Facebook on the DigitalFamily.com website.

In the Share This Link Facebook window open in Figure 1-10, you can see that the headline and the main image from the article are included and will be added to the post box. Above that information is a field (look for `Write something`) where the users can include their own comments as they post a story. When users click the Twitter button, a similar box opens with text for a tweet, which the user can edit before posting.

Figure 1-10
Janine Warner (www.digitalfamily.com/social-design)

Which option is best for your website or blog? We recommend using both. Including social media share buttons is one of the best ways to attract new visitors to a website or blog because you empower every visitor to your site to easily share your content with their friends and followers. The type of social media button shown in Figure 1-10 is best included with each individual post or article on your site.

tip