



**Fáilte Ireland**

National Tourism Development Authority

# **MANAGEMENT AND AUTOMATION TOOLS**

A guide to help with the automation and management of  
your social media presence

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# Introduction

This is an overview guide to help companies manage their social media presence to reduce the time requirement and increase efficiency. We have focussed mainly on free tools that are available.

## Skill Level

**Inter**

**Adv**

The majority of the topics in this guide are suitable for users who have reasonable IT skills and have some familiarity and experience with using some of the social media tools and platforms. However, some of the topics are more advanced and require competent IT skills and possibly even some experience with updating websites.

## Terminology

You will come across the following terminology in this guide which you need to be familiar with:

Term	Explanation
Tweet	When you send a message on Twitter this is call a tweet
RSS	A format information is provided in that allows applications to gather, collate and present.

## Video Tutorials



Indicates a video tutorial. Click on the icon to watch the video. These videos demonstrate how to carry out a particular task. In order to watch the video tutorials in this guide, you will need to have Adobe Flash Player v9.0.28 or above installed on your computer.

**Note:** When you go to watch the video, a check is done to make sure you have the correct software installed. If you do not have the correct version installed you will be provided with a prompt to download and install the correct version.

# Introduction

Social media is becoming increasingly important to businesses but it can be very time consuming and companies are looking for help to reduce the time required and help automate but still retain the authenticity required using these platforms.

Tools that will help you manage your social media profiles and updates are still at a relatively early stage and are still under development so there is no one particular tool or trick that will help in the automation and management of multiple social media platforms.

However, this guide offers some practical advice, tips and tools that will help you manage these platforms in a more efficient way. There are many paid tools available but the main focus on this document is using free tools that are available.

## Your Questions Answered

### **Can I schedule tweets and Facebook updates?**

Yes, there are tools available that allow you to manage this.

### **Is it wrong to schedule tweets from Twitter as it is meant to be about 'what is happening now'?**

If you have some valuable information that you want to share there is no point in sending it when people are not listening. So it is not always wrong to schedule tweets. I would expect that most of your tweets are sent real-time but you may still schedule some.

### **Can I automatically update my website with the latest updates from Twitter and/or Facebook?**

Yes, this is all possible. Read on!

# Hootsuite

Hootsuite is a tool initially developed to manage Twitter but over time they have added the capability of managing other social media tools as well. It is a web based application that doesn't require any installation and there is a free version which includes the functionality mentioned below.

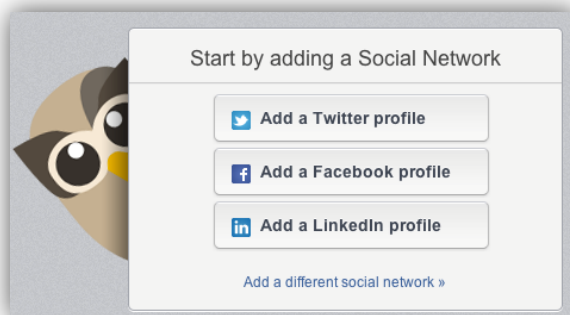
Before you can get started you should go to [www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com) and register a new account with them (assuming you already have a Twitter account).

## Sending Updates to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn

Hootsuite allows you to set up one or more Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts and send updates to each of these accounts from the same area. You can even send the same update to all or a selection of the accounts at the same time.

### *To set up a social network profile:*

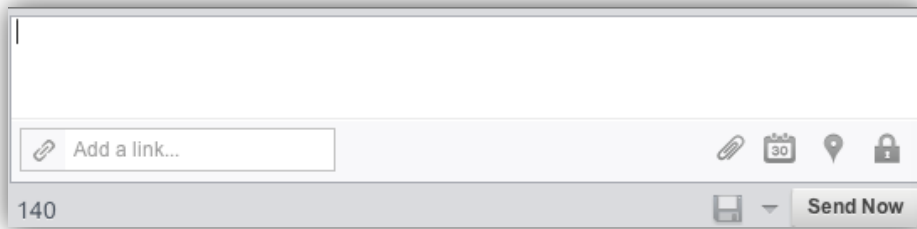
1. Login to Hootsuite and select the option one of the options to add a social network.



2. For example, select 'Add a twitter profile'.
3. You will then be asked to connect with twitter:



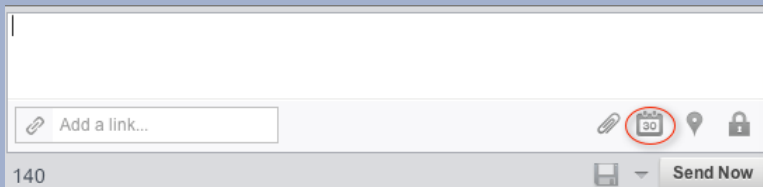
4. You will then be asked to authorise the you will see the social networks you have configured on the right hand side.
5. After this you will then see the Hootsuite client where you can start sending tweets.



6. You can also add other social networks such as LinkedIn and Facebook and then send separate messages to each of these or send the same messages to some or all of your social networks.

**TIP:** Hootsuite also allows you to schedule updates so you can, for example, create a Facebook update for your business page and schedule it to be sent a day later.

There is a bulk scheduling option but this is only available for the 'pro' account which is a paid account.



**VIDEO: Sending Updates to Multiple Social Networks**

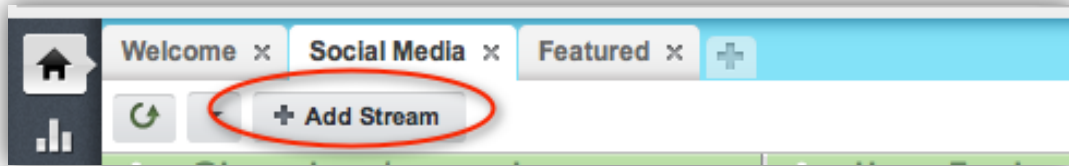
This video shows you how to send updates to multiple social networks, either simultaneously, real-time or scheduled.

When you are ready, click the PLAY icon to start the video.

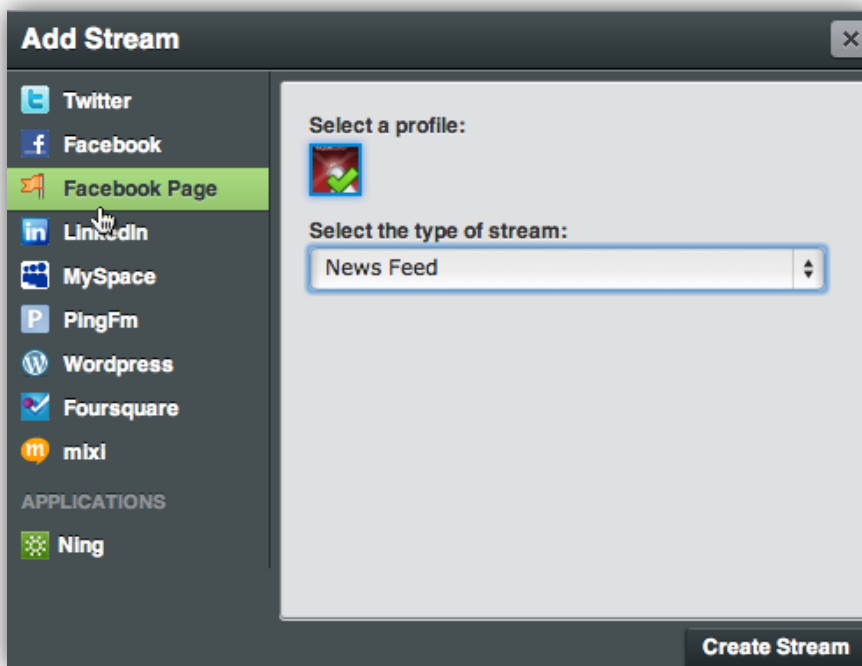
## Adding Streams to your Account

As well as sending updates to multiple accounts you can also add columns to Hootsuite which allows you to view updates from within platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. These are known as 'Streams'.

To add a stream, select the option 'Add Stream' underneath the main tables.



Then select the platform you want to add the stream for and enter the necessary configuration:



For example, you can add a stream for the Facebook newsfeed on a business page so any updates on a business page are displayed within Hootsuite.

There will always be times when you need to go to Facebook directly but this reduces the need for that and helps you monitor multiple platforms at the same time.

**TIP:** You can also add a stream for keywords on Twitter and enter up to 3 sets of keywords. For example, you can add a stream which shows you any time somebody mentions the words 'book accommodation Ireland' in a tweet anywhere in the world.

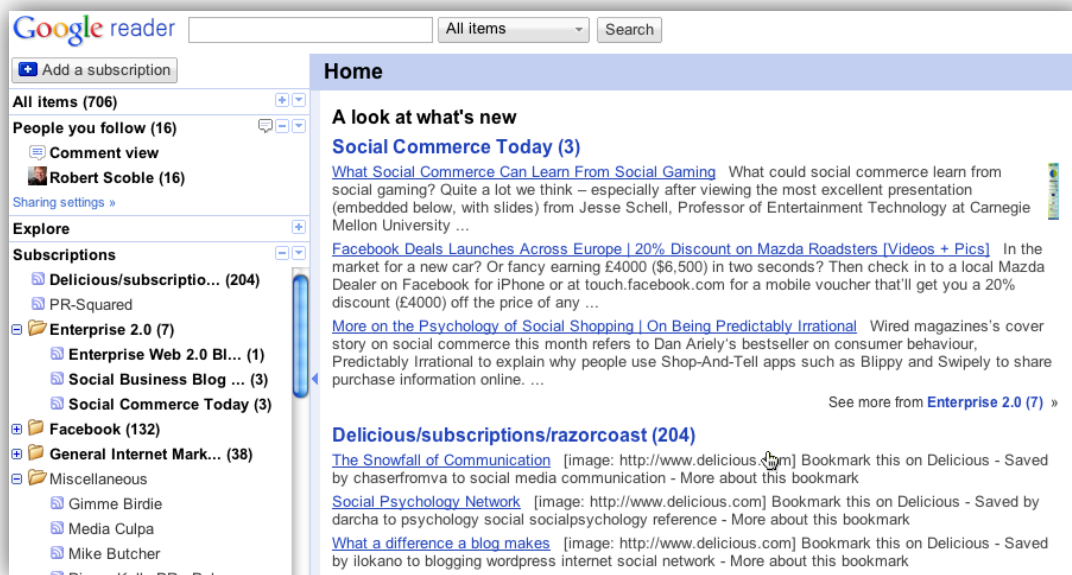
## RSS Readers

A blog is basically a series of online articles (or blog posts) and a blogger is someone who writes blog posts. When you find bloggers that write good articles and you decide to keep a track of what they write, it can be very time consuming to go to each of their websites on a regular basis just to find out if they have any new articles and read them.

A quicker and better way of doing this is by using an RSS reader.

Typically blog articles are provided in a standard format known as RSS (Real Simple Syndication). When they are provided in this standard format an application known as an RSS reader can automatically collect and display and new articles from a variety of blogs in one standard location.

An example of one of these applications is Google Reader. You simply subscribe to the blob posts via RSS and then when you login in to Google Reader it will display the latest posts from each of the blogs that you have subscribed to.



Using a tool such as this saves a lot of time because you can quickly see what blogs have delivered new posts and quickly flick through the new posts to find relevant information.

Blogs are not the only information provided in RSS format so there is much more data that you can add to the reader so it becomes more useful. For example, on LinkedIn you can subscribe to questions/answers via RSS so that you can keep an eye on interesting information in this area.

Anytime you see this orange icon this means this feed is available in RSS.



## Facebook Applications

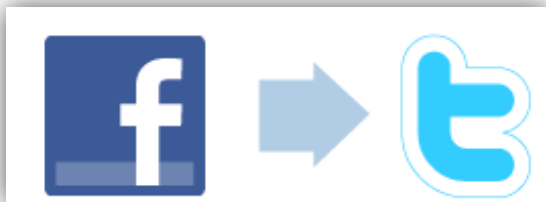
Within Facebook you can set up a business page where you can keep in contact with your current and potential customers and promote your business. Facebook also provides a development framework which allows you to add functionality in the form of applications to your business page and also as part of the Facebook platform.

There are many companies that provide custom applications that you can use within Facebook and some of these applications help automate the spreading of content within Facebook. For example, there are some applications provided by a company called Involver, such as the YouTube Channel mentioned in the following section.

The following sections provide details on some of the more popular and useful ones.

### Automating Updates to Twitter

There is a Twitter application that you can add to your business page which will automatically copy any updates you make to your business page to Twitter. To set up the application go to [www.facebook.com/twitter](http://www.facebook.com/twitter)



From here you can put in your Twitter account details and then any updates you make on Facebook will automatically be synced to Twitter.

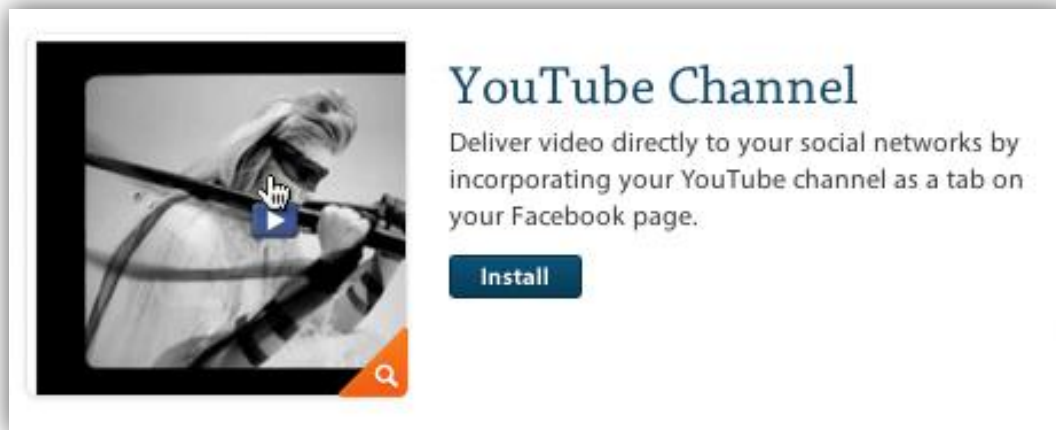
### Selective Twitter

There is an application on Facebook called 'Selective Tweets'. When you add this application you can send selective tweets to your Facebook business page by putting **#fb** at the end of your tweet. Only tweets with this on the end will be added.

## YouTube Channel

This application allows you to display the contents of your YouTube channel within a Facebook business page. Every time you add a new YouTube video this will be automatically updated within Facebook.

To install the application, go to [www.involver.com](http://www.involver.com), select the option for applications and click install on the 'YouTube Channel' application.



Select the business page you want the application to be installed on and then configure the details of your channel, what you want displayed, and so on.

## Twitter for Pages

Twitter for pages is another Involver application that allows you to display your latest Twitter updates on a tab within your business page. This adds additional value to your business page.

## LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business social networking tool. As part of LinkedIn there is the ability to add applications to your personal profile.

To access the applications, select the **More** menu option from the top of the LinkedIn screen and you will see a menu item for **Applications**.

Here are just some of the applications that you can choose from.

### WordPress Application



If you have a WordPress blog you can add a WordPress application to your LinkedIn profile so that every time you add a new blog post this will automatically be displayed within your LinkedIn profile.

Go to the application directory and select the WordPress icon and enter the details of your RSS feed for your blog.

Now when you write a blog post it will be automatically updated on your LinkedIn profile. This is a great way of promoting your blog posts and generating more traffic back to your website.



## Linking to Twitter

Within LinkedIn you can also link your status updates to Twitter so that either all, or selective, updates are sent to Twitter.



### **VIDEO: Integrate LinkedIn with Twitter**

*This video takes you through how to setup the integration between Twitter and LinkedIn so that any tweets can automatically be shared out on your LinkedIn profile, and any status updates within LinkedIn can automatically be sent out as tweets.*

*When you are ready, click the PLAY icon to start the video.*

1. To link Twitter with your LinkedIn profile:
2. On the status update bar you will see a Twitter image:



3. When you select this you will see a screen similar to the following.



4. First of all you need to add your Twitter account. Click on **Add Twitter Account** and enter your Twitter username and password.

5. Configure the remaining settings:

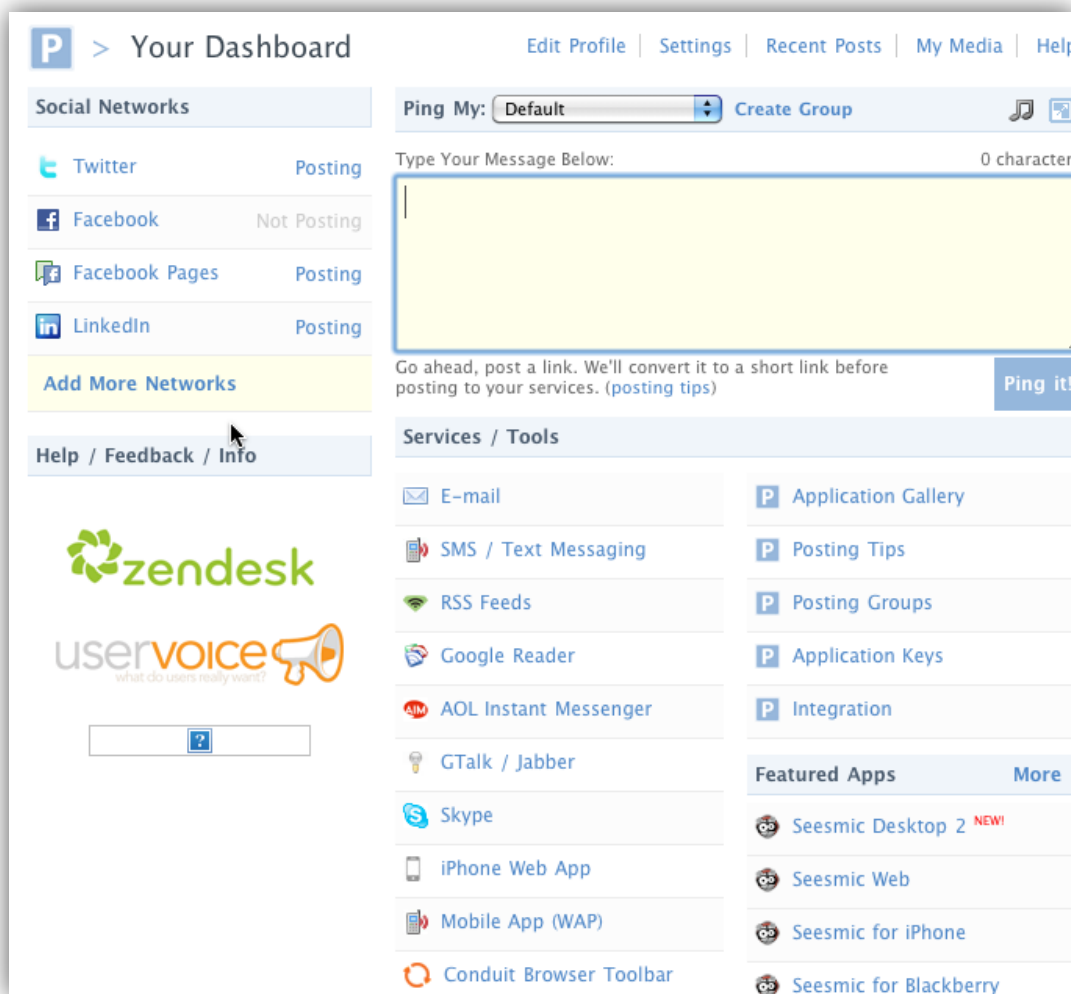
- a. **Display Twitter on LinkedIn Profile** — specify if you want your Twitter account displayed on your profile.
- b. **Share only tweets than contain #In in your linkedin status** — specify if you want to share all status updates from Twitter on your LinkedIn profile. Ideally you should share only selected updates from Twitter because maybe not all Twitter updates will be relevant. If you choose to only share selected updates then when you send a tweet you will need to include **#in** at the end of your tweet, for example:

*"Check out the latest offers on our website [www.besthotel.com](http://www.besthotel.com) #in"*






























- c. **show rich link display where possible** — allows LinkedIn to try to expand out any tweet to display a picture related to the link within the tweet.

## Ping.fm

Ping.fm is a comprehensive tool which allows you to post a status update to many social network platforms at the same time. It also provides you with a facility to post these updates from many different places. For example, you can send an e-mail to a specified e-mail address provided by Ping.fm and Ping.fm will take the text from that e-mail and send it to your relevant social networks (e.g. Twitter, Facebook etc).



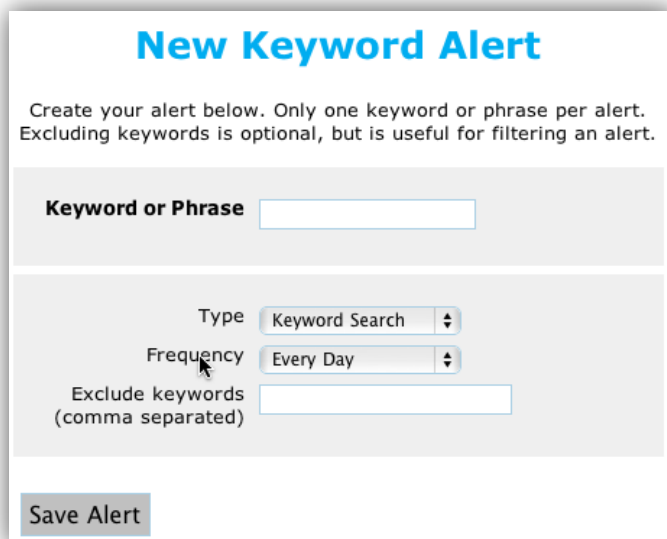
First you need to register an account and then add in the relevant social networks that you want to update. The list of networks that Ping.fm supports is shown in the screenshot that follows, and as you can see it is quite comprehensive.

 Google Buzz	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Custom URL	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 MySpace	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Delicious	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Ning	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 YouAre	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 GTalk Status	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Multiply	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 AIM Status	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Yammer	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Tumblr	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Flickr	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Identi.ca	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 StatusNet	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Brightkite	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 TypePad	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 FriendFeed	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 StreetMavens	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Plurk	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 myYearbook	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Jaiku	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Posterous	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Blogger	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Photobucket	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Plaxo Pulse	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Yahoo Profiles	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 Bebo	<a href="#">Add Network</a>	 Tagged	<a href="#">Add Network</a>
 WordPress.com	<a href="#">Add Network</a>		

## TweetBeep

If you want to keep track of mentions of certain keywords or phrases on Twitter you can create search columns (known as streams) within a tool like Hootsuite and monitor this but you can also set up alerts which are the equivalent of Google Alerts.

TweetBeep is one such application. Go to [TweetBeep.com](http://TweetBeep.com) and set up an account and then configure your alerts.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "New Keyword Alert". Below the title is a sub-header: "Create your alert below. Only one keyword or phrase per alert. Excluding keywords is optional, but is useful for filtering an alert." The form contains the following fields:

- Keyword or Phrase**: A text input field.
- Type**: A dropdown menu with "Keyword Search" selected.
- Frequency**: A dropdown menu with "Every Day" selected.
- Exclude keywords (comma separated)**: A text input field.
- Save Alert**: A button at the bottom left.

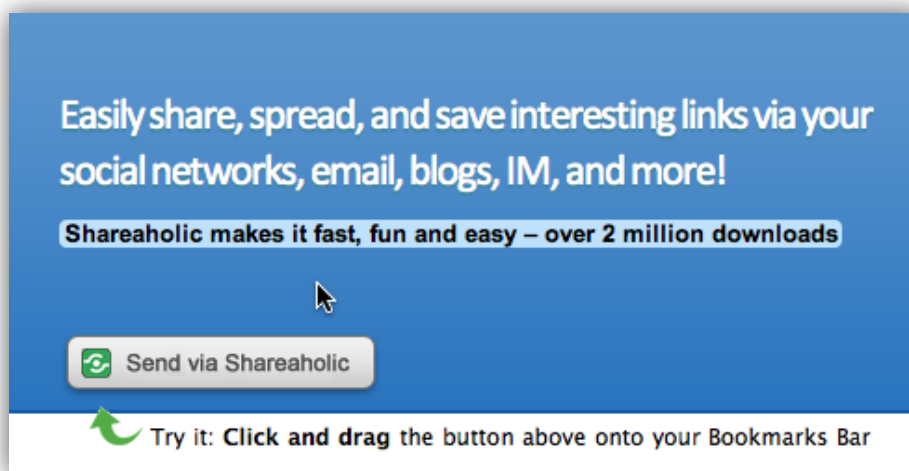
- **Keyword or phrase** – Enter the keywords or phrases that you want to track.
- **Type** – The type can be a normal keyword search within a tweet, searching for a Twitter username containing the keywords or searching for a hash tag.
- **Exclude keywords** – You want to filter out keywords within tweets that are not valid.



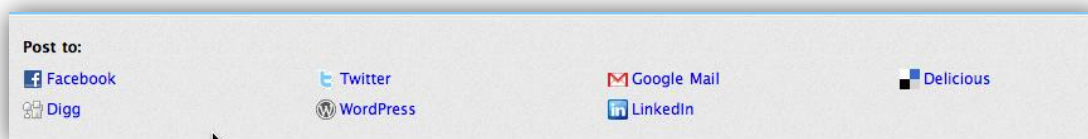
## Sharing Links

Quite often when you are browsing interesting content on the web you may want to share it out to your networks on Twitter, Facebook, and so on. But you want to do it in a quick and easy way. Well, there are tools available for this. Shareaholic is one of these tools.

When you go to shareaholic.com you will be asked to drag a button to your bookmarks bar (near the top of your browser).



When you are browsing websites and see an article of interest you click the button 'Send via Shareaholic' you will be given the option to share this link out to the many social networks:

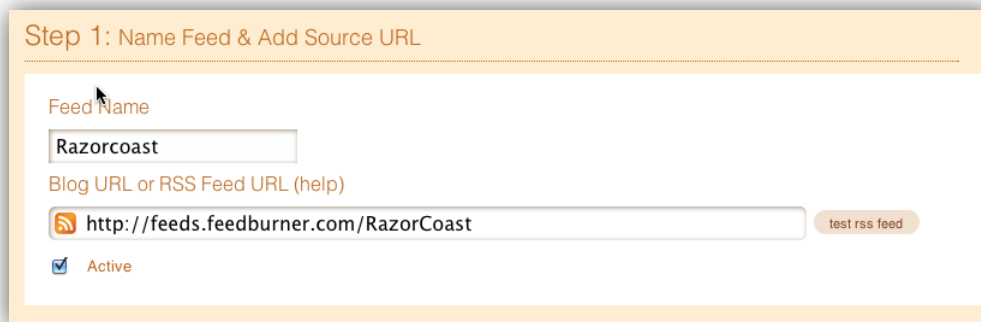


Shareaholic is just an easy way to share out content quickly. As well as sharing out the link it will take text from the page that describes the link.

## TwitterFeed


TwitterFeed is an application that allows you to link your blog posts to Twitter. So every time you write a blog post you can get TwitterFeed to take that blog post and automatically create a tweet about it and update it on Twitter.

To set up this facility you need to create an account on TwitterFeed and then enter details of your RSS feed set up for your blog:



Step 1: Name Feed & Add Source URL

Feed Name  
Razorcoast

Blog URL or RSS Feed URL (help)  
 http://feeds.feedburner.com/RazorCoast test rss feed

Active

Then you need to configure where you want these details published. Currently Twitterfeed supports Twitter and Facebook.

## Summary

There are many automation and management tools available and they are changing rapidly as the social networks change. Some are expensive but a lot are provided for free. We have focussed on the free tools in this guide.

Using the tools mentioned in this document will help you reduce the amount of time you spend on these platforms and increase your effectiveness.

There are differences about how you communicate across each of the platforms so it's important to consider this when you are automating and/or synchronising updates.



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