



Puttin' on the Dance Session Notes

“To Facebook and Beyond! Online Marketing for Dance Series”

With: Emily Addison and Alex Krogh-Grabbe

General considerations:

- While word of mouth is probably still the most effective ‘marketing’ tool, online tools are very powerful and support the word of mouth piece as well.
- All of what talk about are tools (e.g., website; listserv). In each case, consider what you are trying to achieve, if that tool will help you, and then how you want to use the tool to succeed in your plan.
- Also need to consider who creates the tool and who maintains it (e.g., where do you find the person to make and maintain your facebook group? Your website?)

Website:

Process of getting one

- Check availability of domain names on whois.net
- Easy places to get websites: Google Sites & Wordpress.com (simple, free, less flexibility)
- Wordpress.org is good framework for self-hosted website

Design

- Most important thing is to have the *most* relevant content to your visitors above the “fold” (bottom of first screen)
- Most valuable “real estate”, where your prime content (what your visitors are looking for) should go, is along top and left, especially upper left corner
- Use Google Analytics to get details on # of people visiting sites, popular pages, etc.

Content

- Schedule – How easy to find? How much info on who performing? Picture? Downloadable schedule & flyer? When is next event?
- Directions – Map with google? Public transportation? Carpooling?
- Info on contra – what are you saying about the dance itself? Video?
- Other info – Cost? All ages welcome? Beginners welcome? Beginners lesson with start time? Info on who organizes/volunteers? Promoting other dances/events? ...

... ..

YouTube

- Pick good videos to feature on your website as examples of folk dancing.
- You probably don't need a YouTube channel, instead you can use the videos uploaded by dancers who already have a channel and enjoy taking and uploading videos.

Examples

- Brattleboro Contra Dance (brattcontra.org) – clean, professional design; enticing picture, most important info above fold on left
- Concord challenging dance (www.neffa.org/Thurs.html) – extremely simple, basic information and little else (this sort of website is the most timeless)
- Guiding Star Grange (www.guidingstargrange.org) – integration of Google Calendar (good, but less flexibility)
- Monday Contras (mondaycontras.com) – clean design, especially calendar (web grid & printable PDF)
- Ottawa (www.ottawacontra.ca) – bright colors, great pictures, dynamic content
- Swing into Summer (swingintosummer.cds-boston.org) – good pictures, performers & dates on every page (important info)
- Youth Dance Weekend (www.youthdanceweekend.org) – great picture, professional design, keeps intended audience in mind

Social Media:

Purpose of Social Media

- Social media is rooted in conversation rather than monologue. Ongoing interaction key.
- Contra dance organizers are ‘experts’ in community ... experts in social media already.
- Why use? Build anticipation... maintain community in different way... Engage community...and more!

Facebook

- Facebook presence best managed by community member who's familiar with the medium
- Pages for organizations, can be “liked”, can do much of what a personal page can.
- Groups for groups, have “members”
- Distinction between pages and groups unclear, due to Facebook's ever-shifting nature. This page provides some clarification:
<https://www.facebook.com/blog.php?post=324706977130>
- Facebook events are of decreasing usefulness for predicting attendance numbers, but are still valuable because people often look for the Facebook event for a dance.

Other forms of social media include twitter, myspace, blogs (with reader comments), flickr, etc.

Email lists:

- These individuals have self-selected to hear about your dances. Active audience. †
- Send out 2-7 days ahead of time (depends on community) ... info about the band, help with set up/beginners lesson?, date, time, etc.
- Ask dancers to forward to friends they might know who are interested.
- Can use tools like constant contact (www.constantcontact.com) for great formatting look, stats, etc.

Cross-advertising

- ID communities with possible shared participants and contact them to suggest sending out one-two messages each a year about each other's events, a special event, or similar (e.g., contra in next community over; swing dance society; outdoors club; song circle; home schooling group).
- Work with dancers in community who are tapped into other online communities (e.g., social club that plan regular events through online tools).