

fresh  
expressions



[freshexpressions.org.uk](http://freshexpressions.org.uk)

# local media

# advice



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Fresh Expressions: changing church for a changing world

*Fresh Expressions encourages new forms of church for a fast changing world, working with Christians from a variety of denominations and traditions.*



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## Social media

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*Top tips for Twitter and Facebook.*

### Facebook [facebook.com](http://facebook.com)



Founded in 2004 as a college networking site, it is now the largest social network, connecting friends, family, and business associates.

Users put together a profile showing information to their friends and networks, typically including your status, friends, photos, groups and the wall.

Users can search for friends and acquaintances. When people become friends, they are able to see each others' profiles, updates and activity.

#### Pages and groups

Facebook also allows you to create 'pages' or 'groups' for a project or organisation. A page is open and is most suited to being the public face of a project or organisation. A group can have varying levels of privacy and is better for allowing existing offline groups to interact online.

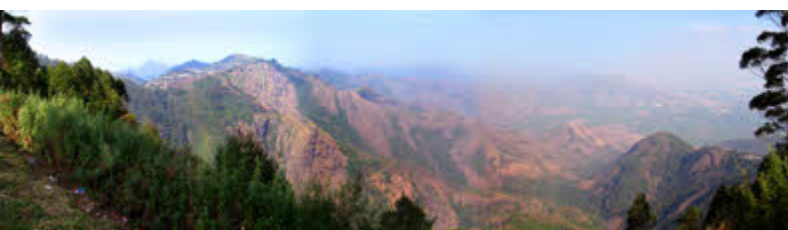
If you set up a page or group for your project:

- Don't be too personal or controversial, all of your comments are in the public domain.
- People can comment and interact with your group or page, so you will need to monitor it to ensure no offensive material is posted.

#### Photos

If you add photos, make sure you have permission of the people involved (those in the photo or their parents/carers as well as the people that took the photo). Children's names shouldn't be attached to any photographs of them.

If people do not want their pictures on the site, be reasonable and take them down.



### Twitter [twitter.com](http://twitter.com)



Twitter involves sending messages (tweets) in just 140 characters and offers a lot of interaction with those on the receiving end.

By posting 'status updates' - what you are doing or thinking - you can engage with others.

#### Read

Read other people's tweets: think what you like and don't like about their Twitter feeds.

#### 'Follow' other people, be relevant

Have conversations, ask questions and retweet others' posts. This helps attract a following - but remember quality is better than quantity. Follow those with whom you share interests (use tools like Twitter Search, Monitter, Samepoint, TweetDeck, Twitterfall etc.).

#### Be authentic and genuine

Transparency is the name of the game. It's very difficult to pretend to be what you're not.

#### Keep it short

Use URL shorteners like bit.ly, tinyurl or give.to to link using less characters. Add keywords and hashtags (#something) that will catch people's attention. They need a reason to follow your link!

#### Integrate

Use it in conjunction with other social media like Flickr, YouTube, blogs and Facebook. Share stuff from other websites in your tweets.

#### Check, check and check again

Keep an eye on your Twitter feed. Be honest, would you enjoy following it? If not, why not?

#### Make the most of your profile

Be clear and include searchable keywords. Link to clear information about your project and its purpose. Use your profile background to say more.

## Social media

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*Top tips for blogging.*

### Blogging

A blog is an online tool designed to foster two-way dialogue among a community of people interested in each other or a specific subject

Blogging can be used to share ideas with a large number of people. A blog can be useful but only if it's going to be used in the right way.

#### Why write it?

Before you reach for the keyboard, think what a blog could do for you. You needn't surround yourself with minutiae but if you can't explain the blog's focus in a single sentence, it's highly unlikely you will get an interactive 'audience'.

#### Hello, my name is...

Think about beginning a conversation or debate and use that as your blog's starting point. Will you be able to keep that conversation going? Will other people want to join in? If you're passionate about your subject, it's far more likely that others will want to respond to what you're saying.

#### Target your audience

Do you expect thousands to respond to what you write, with a book deal a few months in? Think again. Target a few people who share your area of interest and take it from there. Start small.

#### Me, me, me

A blog is not meant to be your personal diary. Your readers' views are paramount because blogs should be built around a shared interest. Listen to what others say. Don't assume the world has been waiting with bated breath to hear about you.

#### How do others get to hear about my blog?

In short: linking. If search engines are to pick up your blog from the thousands of others, people will need to link to or share it via social networks or other sites. It's a two-way thing - if you don't link to others, it's unlikely they will link to you.

### Building up the blog

Tell your friends why you've decided to do the blog thing and give them the lowdown on how it all works. After a while encourage them to leave comments and invite people to be guest bloggers.

#### Read widely

What are other blogs saying out there? Find out who are the main speakers in your specialist area and follow them online. Usually there are two or three big-hitters who lead the way. Identify them, and read them regularly. RSS newsfeeds allow you to see when sites have added new content. Sites such as Google, Bloglines and Netvibes or browsers such as Opera and IE8 will allow you to subscribe to newsfeeds and get the latest content in one place as soon as it's published.

#### Raising the profile

How do you prove that you are an active community member and not just hitching a ride on others' hard work and success? Comment on the most popular of blogs, and see the reaction.

#### Don't be afraid of change

If something's not right and it all seems quite hard going, change it. Ask people for an honest review, look at others and see what they're doing well. Look at specialist sites for tips. Perhaps you need video or podcasts, or maybe you just need to find your own style and build on its strengths.



## Generating local media coverage

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*Techniques and hints for generating positive coverage in the local media.*

### Getting the press to take notice

It may seem that bad news rises to the top of media coverage but the fact is that good stories are always needed. A local story, or a local angle on a national story, is worth a lot. If human interest is thrown in as well, it is worth its weight in gold.

#### Is this an 'exclusive'?

What type of item have you got:

**News:** What is of enormous interest and concern to you and your project may not be news. However, if it has an impact on the wider community or is a first, possibly with a quirky side to it, then it may be explored as a news item.

**Features:** These can fall into different camps. Personal stories involve anything based on someone's experience. This may be a triumph over tragedy story, or an individual's tale of how they were caught up in a national or international event. A news feature can also be based on analysis, often unpacking a story with an opinion piece, survey or statistics.

**What's On:** All local papers, radio and BBC Local sites will have an events' listing. Forward planning desks in local TV will be grateful to know of anything that's going to be strongly visual.



### Help, I can't think of anything to write!

Try the lateral approach, put aside the obvious and look at things from a different angle:

- Is someone in your project doing something unusual or interesting? One Pioneer Minister stopped wearing shoes and socks for Lent. Another group looked around them at their position on the south coast and decided to set up Advent Calendar beach huts.
- If you're moved or intrigued by something it's likely that others will be too.
- Look at the national headlines. Can you localise what's going on? Are you involved in social justice campaigns? Has somebody had personal experience of a big issue of the day?

### Keep in touch

Don't lose momentum once you have established a link with editors and reporters. Keep a regular and reliable flow of ideas heading their way; build on the relationship and soon they will approach you when a story is needed.

### Don't miss a deadline!

Newspaper deadlines can be well in advance of publication date or a matter of just a few hours before. Ring all your local media outlets and check on their press days (if weeklies) and respective broadcast deadlines.

Listen to local radio, find out who covers what style of story, and don't miss the chance to get involved in phone-ins if the subject matter can be brought back to feature your work and project.

A day is a long time in news so it is very important to get the timing right. If editors think it is too old, your precious story is unlikely to make the grade.

## Generating local media coverage

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*Techniques and hints for generating positive coverage in the local media.*

### Namecheck

Look through your local press and identify the section and journalist writing about your type of subject. Otherwise, simply ask for the news editor, features editor, or maybe picture desk. If possible, get their direct phone line if they have one and their e-mail address.

### Don't crash their Inbox!

Good quality photos are wonderful things to have up your sleeve. Build up a bank of good images and make sure you send them in a low resolution - nobody wants to be remembered by a journalist for crashing their inbox with huge photo files.

### On the end of the line

If you are a media contact, do give numbers where you can be contacted. Being available out of office hours could make all the difference between a story appearing - or disappearing.

### Don't take it personally

Not every story suggestion you make is going to be covered in the way you would like. Events shape a day's news agenda, you may have been lined up for the front page and find yourself relegated to the bottom right hand column of page 56. It's nothing personal.

### Useful website

The Newspaper Society ([newspapersoc.org.uk](http://newspapersoc.org.uk)) has information on local and regional newspapers.



## Giving a media interview

### Interview the interviewer

Ask why they want to interview you and establish how much they already know. What more do they want to find out? If they work for a newspaper or a magazine, read it; if they are in broadcast media, listen to or watch their show.

Nothing is more likely to irritate a journalist than someone who is unaware of the target audience. On the other hand, someone who has done their homework and who speaks well on their subject may find themselves on the media's 'quotable' list for future debates and stories.

A bit of research will also put you in a stronger position to face the press. If you can help them by finding a unique or unusual angle that taps into their readers or viewers/listeners, you've got a much better chance of being asked back.

### Preparation is key

If possible, don't face a camera, microphone or journalist until you've made notes on what you want to say. If they ring for an off-the-cuff quote, promise to call back, then spend a few minutes preparing. Don't put off the call - new stories come up all the time and you could be forgotten.

### Keep it tight

Identify the important issues, and say them. Most of the time the journalist won't be looking for a prime ministerial address, they want two/three key issues to highlight and discuss. Remember:

- Be confident. You know your subject better than the journalist.
- Be clear in what you say. Use local examples and anecdotes to illustrate your key points and don't slip into using jargon.
- Be controlled. Don't be flippant or irrelevant; keep the interview on track with what you want to say.

## Media releases

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*Useful pointers for writing a media release.*

### Writing a media release

#### Headline shock, horror, probe

Many people think the headline is the most important, attention-grabbing element of the release but it's not.

Yes, it's important to avoid a wordy, convoluted description of what's in the main body of the release. Yes, it really should be a short title to give a sense of the story but it's not the be-all and end-all and hours could be saved in dreaming up the most detailed pun or play on words.

99% of all press release headlines will be changed by reporters and editors because they:

- Don't want to run the risk of having the same headline as their rivals;
- have no wish to be seen as lazy;
- employ sub-editors to put paggers together.

For the most part, print reporters don't write their own headlines - although moves are afoot in some areas to bypass sub-editors and ask journalists to type copy directly into a template.

#### What should it look like?

Crisp, clean, with clear release date. Embargoes should be made clear in large print at the top. Most releases are now sent via email but the look remains the same - good spacing with all of the information made clear in the first 200-300 words.

Assume the journalist knows absolutely nothing about your organisation, does this story stand out? Why should they follow it up in any way? Is it clearly of interest to readers or viewers?

Remember to include the five Ws; **Who**, **What**, **When**, **Where** and **Why**. You may also need to include **How** and **What Happens Next**?

#### First impressions

The first paragraph is vital. Could it stand alone as a mini version of the story?

#### Quote, unquote

It's always important to include a quote whenever possible. Identify in advance who your spokesperson is to be and make sure they're willing to talk at short notice to the media. Any quote should flesh out a story rather than simply repeat what has already been outlined in the release. Use active not passive language to create a stronger impression.

#### Know when to finish

Write 'ends' to show that the public information is complete and add your contact details including your name, email, and office/mobile number. Many a story has ended up in the bin because the journalist couldn't get hold of the person named as their contact on a release.

#### And finally... information for editors

Give a brief outline of your project, provide any relevant statistics and include your website.



## Media services and tools

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*A selection of useful media services and tools.*

### Media services and tools

#### The Media Trust [mediatrust.co.uk](http://mediatrust.co.uk)

Works with media organisations and charities to improve their communications and enable communities to find their voice and make it heard. Go to **Free Resources** under **Get Support** on their home page for wide-ranging information on everything from generating local media coverage and establishing contact with a journalist to giving an interview, blogging tips, and finding your way around Twitter.

#### Media UK [mediauk.com](http://mediauk.com)

Websites, addresses, telephone numbers, emails and more for all areas of online media, including 846 radio stations, 533 TV channels, 1,607 newspapers, and 1,959 magazines from 270 media owners.

#### BBC On This Day [bbc.co.uk/onthisday](http://bbc.co.uk/onthisday)

Very useful for tying in media interest with anniversary of an event. It is a showcase of some of the most significant as well as some of the quirkier stories broadcast by BBC News drawn from 1939-1945 and 1950-2005. You can search by date, as well as by theme and correspondent. Warning: this site can be addictive!

#### BBC Where I Live [bbc.co.uk/local](http://bbc.co.uk/local)

Allows you to select your local site (42 in England, 6 Scottish, 5 Welsh, 1 each for Northern Ireland, Channel Islands, Isle of Man). Each includes a section on Religion and Ethics, and provides links to local newspapers and other information.

#### BBC Connecting in a Crisis

[bbc.co.uk/connectinginacrisis](http://bbc.co.uk/connectinginacrisis)

If you want a quick way of getting a phone number and email address for your local BBC radio station, go to Connecting in a Crisis.

This is actually an initiative by the BBC to help ensure that the public has the information it needs and demands during a civil emergency because only the BBC can reach the whole of the UK at once. Click on BBC Information on the left hand column, and you'll find out how to access the range of communication outlets offered by the BBC at local, regional and national level.

**Don't forget local denominational media and communications professionals who may be able to help you in your own area.**

#### Bloggers

[bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/rorycellanjones/2010/02/new\\_tools\\_for\\_new\\_journalists.html](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/rorycellanjones/2010/02/new_tools_for_new_journalists.html)

For the bloggers among you, BBC technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones takes some beating. Take a look at his article above on citizen reporting.

#### Wordle [wordle.net](http://wordle.net)

And for fun: Don't miss Wordle, a toy for generating 'word clouds' from text that you provide. The clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. You can tweak your clouds with different fonts, layouts, and colour schemes and take a screenshot to use however you like (below).



## Useful links

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*A selection of our main web channels and some other useful links.*

### Useful Fresh Expressions links

Our media page

[www.freshexpressions.org.uk/media](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/media)

Our news page

[www.freshexpressions.org.uk/news](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/news)

Our RSS news feed

[www.freshexpressions.org.uk/feed.xml](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/feed.xml)

Our podcast

[www.freshexpressions.org.uk/podcast](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/podcast)

Our email newsletter, *e-xpressions*

[www.freshexpressions.org.uk/signup](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/signup)

Fresh Expressions on Twitter

[www.twitter.com/freshexpression](http://www.twitter.com/freshexpression)



Fresh Expressions on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/freshexpression](http://www.facebook.com/freshexpression)



Fresh Expressions on YouTube

[www.youtube.com/freshexpressions](http://www.youtube.com/freshexpressions)



*Share*: encouraging fresh expressions of church together

[www.sharetheguide.org](http://www.sharetheguide.org)



*mission shaped ministry*

[www.missionshapedministry.org](http://www.missionshapedministry.org)



### Other useful links

#### National dailies

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Daily Mail         | <a href="http://dailymail.co.uk">dailymail.co.uk</a>                 |
| Daily Mirror       | <a href="http://mirror.co.uk">mirror.co.uk</a>                       |
| FT                 | <a href="http://ft.com">ft.com</a>                                   |
| Guardian           | <a href="http://guardian.co.uk">guardian.co.uk</a>                   |
| Independent titles | <a href="http://independent.co.uk">independent.co.uk</a>             |
| News of the World  | <a href="http://news-of-the-world.co.uk">news-of-the-world.co.uk</a> |
| Observer           | <a href="http://observer.co.uk">observer.co.uk</a>                   |
| People             | <a href="http://people.co.uk">people.co.uk</a>                       |
| Sun                | <a href="http://the-sun.co.uk">the-sun.co.uk</a>                     |
| Sunday Mirror      | <a href="http://sunday-mirror.co.uk">sunday-mirror.co.uk</a>         |
| Sunday Times       | <a href="http://sunday-times.co.uk">sunday-times.co.uk</a>           |
| Telegraph titles   | <a href="http://telegraph.co.uk">telegraph.co.uk</a>                 |
| Times              | <a href="http://thetimes.co.uk">thetimes.co.uk</a>                   |
| Daily Express      | <a href="http://express.co.uk">express.co.uk</a>                     |
| Daily Star         | <a href="http://dailystar.co.uk">dailystar.co.uk</a>                 |
| Evening Standard   | <a href="http://standard.co.uk">standard.co.uk</a>                   |

#### Church press

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Baptist Times      | <a href="http://baptisttimes.co.uk">baptisttimes.co.uk</a>           |
| Reform             | <a href="http://urc.org.uk">urc.org.uk</a>                           |
| CEN                | <a href="http://churchnewspaper.com">churchnewspaper.com</a>         |
| Church Times       | <a href="http://churchtimes.co.uk">churchtimes.co.uk</a>             |
| Christian Today    | <a href="http://christiantoday.co.uk">christiantoday.co.uk</a>       |
| Methodist Recorder | <a href="http://methodistrecorder.co.uk">methodistrecorder.co.uk</a> |
| Tablet             | <a href="http://thetablet.co.uk">thetablet.co.uk</a>                 |

#### Other links

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Ananova     | <a href="http://ananova.com">ananova.com</a>             |
| BBC         | <a href="http://bbc.co.uk">bbc.co.uk</a>                 |
| Channel 4   | <a href="http://channel4.com">channel4.com</a>           |
| Metro       | <a href="http://metro.co.uk">metro.co.uk</a>             |
| Private Eye | <a href="http://private-eye.co.uk">private-eye.co.uk</a> |
| Reuters     | <a href="http://reuters.co.uk">reuters.co.uk</a>         |



## Useful **contacts**

Fresh Expressions: changing church for a changing world

*Our communications team are here to help you with any information about the Fresh Expressions initiative or about fresh expressions of church.*

### Our communications team

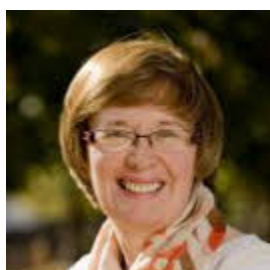


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