



Icons Really Have a Purpose



By Mary Lynn Wagner

Social media icons are designed to provide users with easy interaction with social media in different ways. For example, if you were reading an article and wanted to forward it to others, clicking on the Twitter icon would allow you to “re-tweet” the article (providing you already have a Twitter account). In addition, clicking on the Facebook icon would allow you to post that same article to your Facebook profile. However, if you were looking at a company website such as Macys.com, clicking on those same icons will now take you to Macy’s Facebook page and to Macy’s Twitter account. Social media icons play a huge role in driving traffic to a blog or website as well as in sharing information among users. Below is a summary of the most common social media icons and how they are used.



Facebook needs little introduction. It is considered the most popular social networking site used by individuals and companies.

This link can be used to post an article to your Facebook profile or to visit a company’s Facebook page. From there, you can browse the page, share it with others or choose to “like” the profile and receive updates.



The Twitter icon will take you to the Twitter website for an individual or a company. You can view all the tweets from the company or the individual and choose to follow them. Once you choose to follow someone, their tweets will appear on your Twitter homepage.



LinkedIn is a professional social networking site. Clicking on the LinkedIn icon will take you to an individual or a company profile. With both types of profiles, you will have the option to follow them for updates or you may also choose to connect with an individual. Connecting with an individual requires that they accept your invitation.



Clicking on the Digg icon will submit a story to the Digg site for others to review. Once something is submitted, other people see it and “Digg” what they like best. The rating system on Digg is an up-vote or a down-vote. If your submission is “dug” by enough people, it will be promoted to the front page for everyone to see.



Stumble Upon is similar to the Digg site. You can submit an article for others to find and review. Articles are rated with a thumbs-up or thumbs-down approach. The database contains articles and video clips.



Del.icio.us is one of the most popular bookmarking sites on the Internet. It allows users to bookmark pages while searching and utilize keywords for categorizing. Links may be accessed from any web browser. Bookmarks are not private unless you mark them as such. Since the site is owned by Yahoo, it can utilize your Yahoo login and password should you already have an account.



Google Bookmarks is an online service like Del.icio.us that allows users to save their favorite sites while searching and using keywords for added search capabilities. Bookmarks are accessible from any computer, fully searchable and are completely private from the rest of the world. The service utilizes your Google login and password. Note: that this icon may be different than the one listed above and may be found under a box labeled “bookmarks” grouped with other bookmarking resources.



The YouTube icon will take you directly to an individual or a company's YouTube channel where you may view all posted videos.




RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication. Clicking on this icon will allow you to subscribe to the content on a site through a reader. RSS allows users to avoid manually reviewing all of the websites in which they may be interested, and instead have content pushed out to their RSS readers when it becomes available. If you are a beginner, Google has a nice RSS reader that is easy to use.



Flickr allows users to upload photos into a "photostream." Clicking on the Flickr icon will take you directly to the pictures posted by an individual or an organization.



The Share icon was created to help users easily identify shareable content and is becoming the standard visual representation for sharing content from any source to multiple destinations such as email, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Clicking on this icon will open a window containing many of the icons above allowing the user to choose the method in which they would like to share the content. 

Wagner serves as the director of information services at Keating Muething & Klekamp. She is responsible for managing all aspects of the firm's information resource center. She is a member of the Association of Legal Administrators.

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Delicious www.delicious.com

Digg www.digg.com

Facebook www.facebook.com

Free readers http://email.about.com/od/rssreaderswin/tp/windows_free.htm

Flickr www.flickr.com

Google Bookmarks www.google.com/bookmarks

Google Reader www.google.com/reader

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Stumble Upon www.stumbleupon.com

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