



facebook

# What's The BUZZ?

A crash course on 2015's hottest social networks for music professionals

By Katy Krassner

A social network is any site that provides people with a place to make connections. When you're navigating the wild west of social networking, it helps to know what to expect and what type of audience you, as a music industry professional, will reach. You don't want to spread yourself too thin on social media, so it's better to do really well on a few networks than do poorly on several. Here's a "cheat sheet" that could be very useful when you're planning for your online media assault!

## Facebook

**WHAT IS IT?:** Facebook needs no explanation! There are a lot of pundits who say the kids have left Facebook, which may be true—who wants to be where their parents are? But it's still the biggest network out there.

While organic reach is barely possible any more on Facebook, when you do pay to boost your posts, you get your money's worth. The key to any social network is engagement, not how many followers you have (remember that!). You can target whom you want to reach when you boost posts, so if you'd like your music to fall into the hands of women over 25 who watch soap operas, you can pretty much choose that.

**WORTH IT?:** Totally. Every musician should have a Facebook artist page.

## Twitter

**WHAT IS IT?:** When Twitter first came on the scene, I am not sure anyone thought that 140-character missives would be the first place people went to look for breaking news, but it is now. Twitter's demographic is very different from Facebook's (younger, urban) and most people on Twitter are loyal, using it as their main social network.

It's an interesting time for Twitter, which is trying hard to broaden its reach beyond its 284 million monthly active users. Twitter has just struck a deal with Google for Tweets to appear in searches, which is a big deal. They've also made inroads with brand advertising, and while 'regular folks' can't boost tweets like you can with Facebook, I wouldn't be surprised if that happens soon.

**WORTH IT?:** Yes. As an artist Twitter is a great way to communicate with your audience in real time.

## Instagram

**WHAT IS IT?:** If you're looking for a younger crowd, this is where you're going to find it. Instagram, probably the fastest growing social network right now, allows you to post photos with written content you create. You can tag other artists or brands with each photo you post, and there's also a third party app that allows you to "re-gram" someone else's photo upload, but it has to be a person that you are already following.

Advertisers like Instagram because it skews so young, and is racially diverse for a social network; it also allows short videos (15 seconds) that repeat in a loop on a User's feed. One thing many people don't love is that all access is through an app on a smartphone; you cannot update your Instagram from a computer.

**WORTH IT?:** Maybe. It's important to be both clever and consistent on Instagram. People love visuals and short videos, so if you can create compelling content, it's worth it. If your Instagram account is going to be boring, it's not worth your time to start one.

## VINE

**WHAT IS IT?:** Vine allows users to post 6.5 second videos that play in a loop. You read that correctly—six and a half seconds. Think it's hard to be creative in 6 seconds? You're right, it is, but Vine has created some actual online superstars with enormous followings.

The videos on Vine tend to take it up a notch creatively, and you can watch some incredible (and yes, short) videos by animators, celebrities, musicians, etc. Vine has also recently added "Vine Kids," where all the content has been filtered to make it age-appropriate.

**WORTH IT?:** Like Instagram, Vine is only worth it if you are consistent and clever about your posts. But if you're a hit on Vine, it could even help you score a record deal! See <http://goo.gl/9UCJXz> for the remarkable story of the duo Us, who got signed based on a very creative use of Vine.

## LINKEDIN

**WHAT IS IT?:** LinkedIn is a business oriented social network. It may seem odd being on this list, but it is actually a great networking tool. LinkedIn isn't somewhere you'd announce an engagement or post a photo of your new baby, but it is a good place to join groups within your field, or post information about a new single you may have produced or engineered.

LinkedIn has changed the way people recruit in business as well, and the same would hold true for someone in the arts field. It's a great place to tout your professional accomplishments and keep up with your like-minded peers.

**WORTH IT?:** Yes. While it gives you a place to provide status updates, it doesn't require the same constant commitment as other social networks. It's also a place to put your professional resume and network with people you want to work with or be introduced to.

## Google+

**WHAT IS IT?:** This is Google's foray into social networking. I would call it a mixed success, which is probably being kind. I don't know anyone who uses Google+ exclusively, and even all those rumors about younger people moving over



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to Google+ to get away from their parents on Facebook turned out to be untrue.

Google+ is a lot like Facebook in how it works, but you can tailor who sees your posts between close friends in your "circle" versus acquaintances. I don't know one band that utilizes this platform to great effect. Of course, what Google+ has is Google, and apparently if you post updates on Google+, it will come up on Google web searches, which could be invaluable.

**WORTH IT?:** Only if you have time to spare and are up for cutting/pasting your Facebook updates into Google+.

## YouTube

**WHAT IS IT?:** Is YouTube a social network? Well, yes, it is. People gather to watch the content on the "channel", comment and share it. When you hear the term "going viral," it almost always pertains to a YouTube video, like the little boy coming home from the dentist or the video for "Lazy Sunday." The vocal group Pentatonix made YouTube an essential part of their marketing, and for them, it has paid off both financially and as an awareness tool. In fact, they have their YouTube page integrated onto their website so you never have to leave the website to watch their videos.

One issue with YouTube is that Facebook doesn't like it. So when you post a video on YouTube and then put the link on your Facebook page, there's a good chance even your friends/followers will never see it in their feed. Facebook wants to "encourage" users to upload videos directly to their platform, and videos posted directly to Facebook play automatically as people scroll through their feed, making it count as an "engagement" even if the person doesn't watch the video!

**WORTH IT?:** Absolutely, especially for an artistic person such as yourself. A musician should film as much content as they can and put it on YouTube. The same holds true for behind-the-scenes music industry people - giving tutorials about what you do in the studio, videos of best practices and techniques, even instrument clinics. Nothing sells like a visual that engages the audience.

Where will we be in social networking in 2016? Who knows—you need to engage your audience now, and these are today's best tools for doing that. ☺

Katy Krassner (krassner@recordingmag.com) is a social media strategist and entertainment writer who has worked with or written for Duran Duran, Def Leppard, Robert Plant, Jordin Sparks, Morrissey and many others. Learn more at [katykrassner.com](http://katykrassner.com).

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