

# **Facebook Basics**

## **“Profile” – represents an individual user**

Each individual user of Facebook is represented by a “profile”. You can think of this as like an “account” on many other online systems. An individual user can post many different kinds of information on his/her profile, from simple text comments to videos, photos, and other kinds of images and files.

Individual users establish connections with each other by becoming “**friends**”. Friends receive notices of each others postings, may have access to some posts or other information that is not visible to other users, and may allow friends to post things on their profile. (Or not – there are many options to control what is accessible by users in general, by friends, and even specific other users.)

## **“Page” - represents a business, organization, product, brand, etc.**

A Facebook “page” serves a purpose similar to the web sites that most organizations and businesses maintain outside Facebook, but within the Facebook environment. People establish a connection with an organization or business by “**liking**” its page – this allows them to receive notices of new material posted by that organization.

Many square dance clubs, associations, and other organizations maintain Facebook “pages”. Such pages also make sense for small businesses operated by an individual, so a caller can have one as a way to represent that business. (Note that this is a separate thing from the “profile” representing that same caller as a user of Facebook, i.e., a caller using Facebook in this way would have *both* a “profile” and a “page”.)

## **“Group” – a set of people interested in some topic**

One of the most popular ways to use Facebook to communicate with other people is through “groups”, organized around a topic of common interest. These serve pretty much the same purpose as groups supported by other online service companies (e.g., Yahoo, Google) and by ordinary e-mail mailing lists that are used in that way.

People who join a group are called “**members**” of the group. All groups require that a person join before he/she can post messages, but many are “public” meaning that anybody can view the messages without joining. A group that you must join before you can even read the messages is called a “closed” group. It is also possible to set up a “secret” group that nobody can find or join unless you invite them.

Each group has one or more “**moderators**” who control what may be posted. Some groups require that a moderator approve each new message before it becomes visible by other users. Others allow any member to post without approval, but the moderator(s) can still remove messages that they consider inappropriate. Most groups have some sort of rules or guidelines about what is appropriate – it's always a good idea to review these rules, and it can also be helpful to review past postings by other people to see what has been considered acceptable in the past, before starting to post your own messages in a group that you have just joined.

## ***Some Facebook Groups***

These are some groups that have a significant number of members and in which topics likely to be of interest to callers are frequently discussed. Note that some of these topics are also of interest to dancers who are not callers, and so many of the members of these groups may not be callers.

The number shown after each group name is a recent count of group members. Groups that are “closed” are shown in italics. The rest are “public”, which means you can read through as many past messages as you like to help you decide whether you want to join.

**Square Dance Callers [1903]** – general news/comments/questions related to calling

**Square Dance Video [1392]** – posts are mostly videos, either on Facebook or links to YouTube

**Square Dance Music [1366]** – mostly posts about new music, and music producers

*Square Dance Callers [closed, 907]* – another general-purpose group

*Square Dance Topics and Issues [closed, 807]* – issues relating to square dancing in general

*Software for Callers and Cuers [closed, 796]* – also includes comments/questions about hardware

**Translate Square Dance Calls for Me [739]** – questions about calls/choreography

**Newbie Callers [591]** – focus is on questions of interest to new callers

*Callers in Training [closed, 405]* – another group with focus on new callers

*Square Dance Equipment for Sale [closed, 315]* – notices of equipment for sale or wanted

**Square Dance Choreography [242]** – another group for discussion of choreography

*Square Dance Caller Needed [closed, 226]* – a place for people looking to hire callers

There are also many other groups relating to square dancing on a regional basis or to specific square dance organizations. Here are a few examples of some large groups, but there are many more including many connected with specific clubs. Mostly these groups contain postings intended for dancers, announcing various kinds of events, but callers may still find it useful to follow some of them.

**United Square Dancers of America – USDA [1271]**

**Square and Round Dancing in California North & Central [1210]**

**IAGSDC [813]** – International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs

# ***Ways Callers Can Use Facebook***

## **General Communication**

- ◆ Like anybody else, callers may want to make use of Facebook to keep in touch with friends, family, and other people they know in the real world – including sharing messages, photos, and videos.
- ◆ But to the extent you post things about square dancing, you are also reminding all of these people about square dancing!

## **Learning/Discussion**

- ◆ Facebook groups are a way to learn from and to help others who share your interests.
- ◆ Join a general caller-oriented group, one relating to your geographic area if there is one, and as many specialized groups as make sense for you.
- ◆ Be aware of the distinct purposes of the various groups, and post your news or questions in one that is most appropriate.
- ◆ In general, posting the same thing in many different groups is not a good idea – many people will see it as “spam”.

## **Promoting Your Business**

- ◆ If you are a caller looking for additional business from people you don't otherwise know, you may want to consider creating a Facebook “page”, separate from your profile as a user.
- ◆ The same would be true if you are selling music or some other product or service.
- ◆ Posting messages in relevant groups will help keep your name in peoples' minds – but try to avoid posting messages that are obviously only for this purpose!
- ◆ Certain groups have guidelines limiting advertising of certain types – be aware of those rules and follow them. (But there will usually be another group where those posts are welcome.)
- ◆ Remember that not everybody is on Facebook – your business should still have a regular web site, and if repeat customers are important to your business a list of regular e-mail contacts.

## **Organizing a Club or Class**

- ◆ Many clubs already have either a “page” or a “group” on Facebook. If you are trying to form or rejuvenate a club, consider making use of these tools.
- ◆ You could have both a “page” and a “group”, but in most cases this is not necessary. If you want to encourage club members to communicate with each other, a “group” is what you want. If you just want to post notices yourself for people who may or may not be members, a “page” may make more sense.
- ◆ If you are starting a class, especially if it is large or held separately from club-level dancing, you may want to create a separate group or page for that.
- ◆ Facebook also offers paid advertising, which some clubs have used to promote their classes.
- ◆ But remember that not everybody is on Facebook – you don't want to make people who aren't on Facebook feel unwelcome in your club. Even if your club has a Facebook “page”, it's still useful to have a regular web site. Even if you have a Facebook “group”, you should still have a regular e-mail mailing list, at least for important announcements.