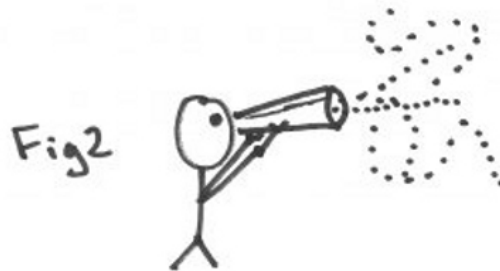


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# Damian's Social Networking Rule Book

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SOCIAL NETWORKING WITHOUT THE NEED FOR  
TIME TRAVEL

*Author:*  
DAMIAN BRASHER

*Publisher:*  
INTERLINUX LTD

# Damian's Social Networking Rule Book

Damian Brasher

8th April 2011

This book is dedicated to the poeple of Japan.

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*Special Thanks*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

I am Damian Brasher, an IT engineer. I use social networking software for work and leisure and have been doing so for several years.

At first I often felt uncomfortable when using social networking software. It has taken me years to feel confident, be in control and know that I am not making mistakes, or at least recognise problems and remedy them. Accidental posting of an update that, on second glance, does not make sense or means something entirely different from the intended message, is embarrassing and can cause time consuming misunderstandings.

I developed a set of rules to help me create updates, which save me time, harness the beneficial power of social networking software and do not cause me problems. I have compiled them and present them here in this public domain ebook.

I have made useful business contacts through the use of social networking. Some updates increased downloads of my software and visits to my websites. Crucial information has reached me through reading updates. Because of these tools, informal negotiation has occurred spontaneously and saved me time.

I'm not trying to be the most connected person, I like connecting with people at my own pace. We all have time to attract followers. I prefer to use a targeted approach to build a strong and meaningful network. Social networking is fun and incredibly useful. I hope you find my rules useful. If you only like or only need a few, then the ebook has done its job.

I nearly ended up like this once...



Figure 1.1: When it gets confusing!

I use footnotes to explain technical terms. The references are taken from public domain dictionaries and application descriptions.<sup>1</sup>.

Read on...

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<sup>1</sup>Wikipedia, Urban dictionary and Dictionary.com, Thefreedictionary amongst others.

# Chapter 2

## Fun

### 1. Say something that you have already done.

It means more and you can add more detail. You liked it or you didn't. Someone might also try what you have just done. Its easier to write and easier to read.

### 2. Deliverables are more fun, tweet<sup>1</sup> those more often.

Posting a note that you have completed several hours of hard work is credible. Even better of you can link to the deliverable. You are giving something to readers too. You might inspire readers to complete their outstanding tasks. Your sense of pride is enhanced and your update will shine a bit more. LinkedIn<sup>2</sup> is a professionals network and deliverables look just fine.

### 3. Pictures and photographs are fun.

The old adage, a picture says a 1000 words, is truer than ever in this world of digital media. It's simple to add a short caption to enhance the images. Everyone can engage with pictures. FaceBook<sup>3</sup> is particularly well suited to posting images.

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<sup>1</sup>A tweet is a post or status update on Twitter, a microblogging service.

<sup>2</sup>A networking tool to find connections to recommended job candidates, industry experts and business partners.

<sup>3</sup>FaceBook is a social utility that connects people with friends and others who work, study and live around them.

#### **4. Filter your daily news-board.**

When working, use tools like TweetDeck<sup>4</sup> to manage your streams of information.

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<sup>4</sup>A personal browser for staying in touch with your contacts. You can view updates from Twitter, FaceBook, LinkedIn and other social networking sites.

# Chapter 3

## Be you

### **5. Response only if you want to.**

Don't ever feel compelled to respond to messages or other peoples' updates, if you feel uncomfortable with the content. Just don't, do something else. If after a few hours you think of an appropriate response then post something. Or let it slide and move on.

### **6. Don't follow someone that does not interest you, even if they follow you.**

There is no point in me following a dog grooming company. I don't have a dog and don't plan to get one. I don't plan to sell to a dog grooming company through this network. The idea that other people might follow you that may need your services, that are following the dog grooming company is enticing, however the price for that possibility is that I have to read tweets about dog grooming for eternity. But if they help you by re-tweeting<sup>1</sup> they might be interested in something else - so follow.

---

<sup>1</sup>Retweeting is an integral part of the Twitter experience. The retweet (or "RT") allows Twitter users to share the best links.

**7. Why bother lying? unless they are white lies;).**

Lying can be creative, but keeping track of them will surely render someone inoperable eventually. They will be so clogged up with maintaining lies that they won't be able to post any more updates - I've seen it happen. I once posted a white lie saying to my wife that I had followed the plan to make a mediocre microwave dinner and surprised her with steak and wine when she got home.

**8. Little every so often.**

I prefer to post updates with high quality content, of some significance, less often. I don't have the time to post eight or nine times a day and read everything.

**9. Don't be afraid of delete - Whoops, I didn't mean to say that!**

The delete options is there so use it. Some people may have read an erroneous post but the chances are that before five minutes are up, most of your posts won't have been read. Even if a mistake is read, by deleting it, you are saying to all readers - "that was a mistake". I often prune my updates on all the networking tools I use. Some posts have been superseded or the content no longer has relevance.

**10. Decide your place and time, work, social or both.**

Be in control. Your updates reflect your activities and your activities are more important than the updates. Without your daily life going on as normal then there is nothing to update. I see social networking as an enhancement to life, by itself social networking will not make things happen in your life.

Also try not to use too much self-deprecating humour. It is an art form that some comedians rely upon. It can be usefully seductive, when used sparingly. I want people to take me seriously most of the time - I'm not a comedian.

**11. Don't feel like, then don't.**

Just don't post something if you don't feel like it. Wait until you do feel like it - the message will project better. If the distraction of updates streaming by is too much, then close the desktop application.

## Chapter 4

### Privacy and safety

#### **12. Use strong passwords and change them regularly.**

It is disastrous and extremely upsetting when someone defaces your network presence by gaining access to your accounts. It happened to a member of my technical community - he was devastated.

#### **13. Does everyone need to know where you are about to go?**

Not everyone in the world follows you on-line for the right reasons. I'd rather not give too many clues as to my whereabouts in the off-line world at any given time.

#### **14. Check if this tweet is a leak?**

Did this information come from the office email circular? Does the email have a privacy disclaimer attached? Was this an office rumour? Double check these things. Social networking is like having a loud speaker attached to you desk - so be very careful. Driving around the streets with a loud speaker attached to your car, broadcasting your Boss's business meeting plans will get you into trouble. The same goes for tweeting this information.

**15. When you are at work, do updates in your break.**

Unless they are work related then don't take liberties with your employers. A few minutes every hour soon adds up over the course of a year. That could lose the company business and you your job.

**16. Respect other peoples privacy.**

If something personal has occurred don't tell everyone without permission. A family member recently suffered a heart attack. She recovered well, but really did not want everyone to know. I didn't post an update telling everyone the news, it would have caused an upset if I had!

# Chapter 5

## Meaning

### **17. Don't shorten every link.**

Shortening links is a convenient way to save character space. However the output when using URL<sup>1</sup> shortners<sup>2</sup> can often be cryptic and ugly. If your URL is three or four characters longer than it would be if shortened, then use the full text URL. It looks better and can be used as part of the update text.

### **18. Follow interesting people.**

Simple rule, but this ensures what you read is interesting and relevant. They might follow you too.

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<sup>1</sup>A URL (Uniform Resource Locator, previously Universal Resource Locator) is the unique address for a file that is accessible on the Internet.

<sup>2</sup>Using a URL shortener can make it easier to include a URL within a short sentence.

**19. Beware of shortening to meaningless.**

"We have released the new version of our software and it has some many features I can't fit them all in here and we also need to let you know how exciting the brand new interface is and at the same time provide you with you the link <http://ournewsoftware.org> and add some hastags #newsoftware #importantchannel @friendofminetoo"

"New version of our software, many features, exciting interface link <http://bit.ly/hnxzSi> #newsoftware #importantchannel @friendofminetoo"

Has lost its way...

Perhaps

"@friendofminetoo #newsoftware released with loads of exciting new features | enhanced interface <http://bit.ly/hnxzSi> #importantchannel"

is better.

Use the #hashtag<sup>3</sup> as one of the words and addressing the update to @friendofminetoo saves character space and keeps the intended meaning. I like to use the | character, it acts as a clear separator.

---

<sup>3</sup>Hashtags are a community-driven convention for adding additional context and metadata to your tweets.

**20. Beware of the oxymoron - unless you mean it.**

An oxymoron<sup>4</sup> is easy to accidentally to produce. For example, "This news article is extremely average." Extremely contradicts the word average. Some are deliberate, like the word "doublespeak".

If you want to get more technical think about the effect of the double entendre<sup>5</sup> or malapropisms<sup>6</sup> :-).

**21. Spell check - it's worth it.**

Really, to avoid all sorts of misunderstandings, spend a few seconds to spell check. Most web browsers have some kind of built-in auto-spell check facility, switch it on!

**22. Think about context.**

You may want to define boundaries of update content for a period of time to enhance the outward message, or keep particular readers interested. If an ongoing project is nearing completion, throwing in a random tweet linking to last year's holiday snaps could confuse your readers; especially if they are expecting the final part of a crucial document. Post the holiday snaps when you have finished or when you next take a holiday.

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<sup>4</sup>An oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines contradictory terms.

<sup>5</sup>A double entendre or adianoeta is a figure of speech in which a spoken phrase is devised to be understood in either of two ways.

<sup>6</sup>A malapropism is the substitution of one word for another, where the sound of the substituted word is similar to the original, and the resulting phrase makes no sense; it is often used for comic effect.

**23. Did you mean that cliché<sup>7</sup> or <sup>8</sup> idiom?**

Double check for these. You could say something like, "Avoid it like the plague". But, whenever a search for plague is made your tweet will be displayed - you may want this, you may not - the targeting effect is diluted and you lose six characters of relevance. It is a matter of personal taste, I like originality, so commonly used clichés can appear boring.

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<sup>7</sup>A trite or overused expression or idea.

<sup>8</sup>An expression whose meaning is not predictable from the usual meanings of its constituent elements.

# Chapter 6

## Connecting with humans

### **24. Connect people with hashtags.**

These useful keywords can connect two subjects, or community channels, can bring people together at little extra cost, therefore enhancing the experience for everyone. This uses common interests to bring together otherwise separate entities. Attendees of event #superevent and readers of product #greatos may both need #extraexpertise.

### **25. Use tweets at conferences and events.**

I particularly like this. I can read about talks or workshops I can't attend and let my contacts know I am at an event. Social networking enhances and enriches the experience for me.

### **26. Try to offer or give something when you tweet.**

I try to keep in mind the readers needs. As a general rule if you can give free advice, insight or useful information. Then, by default, the relationship between you and your contacts is enriched. An important effect if you think in terms of years.

**27. Try not to bombard everyone with meaningless statistics.**

They are boring, can be provocative and are often irritating to read.

**28. Don't shout unless you need to.**

I would only ever SHOUT AT YOU, using caps, in very rare circumstances - if at all. I am about to do this, I am about to do this, I am about do do this - is also shouting in a way. I used a shouty voice in my mind when I wrote that:)

**29. Beware of provocation and provoking others.**

If someone, or a well know keyboard warrior<sup>1</sup> is taunting you - ignore it. If you are not sure if the message is a taunt - definitely ignore it.

**30. Do not upset people.**

Don't be horrible, be nice.

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<sup>1</sup>A Person who, being unable to express his anger through physical violence (owning to their physical weakness, lack of bravery and/or conviction in real life), instead manifests said emotions through the text-based medium of the Internet, usually in the form of aggressive writing that the Keyboard Warrior would not (for reasons previously mentioned) be able to give form to in real life.

# Chapter 7

## A wise man once said...

Finally...

*"Nobody has right of way, you can have priority - but you must earn it."*

A wise man, my father actually, told me this when I was learning to drive. Neat really, if you think about driving on our busy roads. I think it applies to social networking...

- *Nobody has right of way* - You can't force people to read your updates.
- *You can have priority* - You can post an update whenever you like.
- *But you must earn it* - If you write something well, with a little thought attached to it - your update will be read.

# Appendix A

## Links

This ebook's FaceBook page  
Bloggers code of conduct

The logo for 'Linux Literer' features the word 'Linux' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'L' is black, the 'i' is yellow, the 'n' is red, and the 'u', 'x', and 'X' are black. Below the 'i' in 'Linux', the word 'liter' is written vertically in a yellow, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Figure A.1: [www.interlinux.co.uk](http://www.interlinux.co.uk)

# Appendix B

## A little bit about the author

Damian was born and grew up with his mother, sister and brother in Eastleigh, near Southampton in Hampshire, UK. Married to Marisa, they share their home with two cats and numerous guests on occasion. Damian enjoys organic food, walking, travel, kayaking in the nearby Solent and spending good times with friends and family. Music is very important to him and he enjoys forms from all genres. But the old 80s rock classics are fond favourites. Once a year, Damian and Marisa join a party of friends for role playing weekends, as well as the theatre, cinema and evening meals. Damian is teetotal. Also a member of Mensa and BCS The Chartered Institute for IT.

### [Damian's LinkedIn profile](#)

Damian started his computing career at the age of six with the assistance of his uncle who at the time worked as a British Telecoms engineer. Armed with a soldering iron, from his uncle's bags filled with resistors, wire, capacitors, transistors and an old GPO hand generator Damian configured many strange and unique electronic devices and the ones with LEDs and electric motors mostly worked. Later, this was followed up by a fantastic technology teacher at Wyvern Technology college in Eastleigh, Hampshire. His grandfather, once an accomplished electrical engineer, was also a strong engineering influence.