

Nancy Ross
Social Media Map

List of social media sites where I have accounts:

- Facebook (every day, have been on it since 2005)
- Twitter (almost every day, have been on it since about 2012)
- Google Hangouts (almost every day for years)
- Slack (I use it for work Monday through Friday)
- Instagram (almost every day, but this is a new account for me)
- YouTube (I use this every day and I use it to create content for my classes)
- Wordpress (I use this monthly to post on a group blog, which I've done since 2016)
- Overdrive (podcatcher, which I use nearly every day)
- Zoom (I use this every week)
- Fitbit (I use this in fits and starts)
- Pinterest (I used to use this regularly when my job was primarily teaching art history and we used it for class projects, haven't used it in a few years)
- Goodreads (I rarely log in)
- Nextdoor (I check it every few months)
- Marco Polo (I used this more last year, but not so much this year)
- WhatsApp (I use it to contact one friend, only rarely now)
- Blogger (haven't logged in in years, but used to use it regularly)
- Patreon (I don't log in often)
- Skype (I don't use this much anymore)
- GroupMe (I used this for a class, but just one)
- Rover (I have an account but don't use it)
- Google+ (haven't logged in in years)
- Ravelry (I have an account but haven't used it much)

Top Three:

My top three are easily Facebook, Twitter, and Google Hangouts. I have 2285 friends on Facebook, 1458 followers on Twitter, and one years-long text chat on Google Hangouts.

I used to use Google Hangouts more, for both video and text chats. This was an important tool when I was on the board of an organization called Ordain Women, but now I mostly use it to communicate with my best friend/writing/research partner. We've been chatting on Google Hangouts since 2013. We message back and forth about life and work most days.

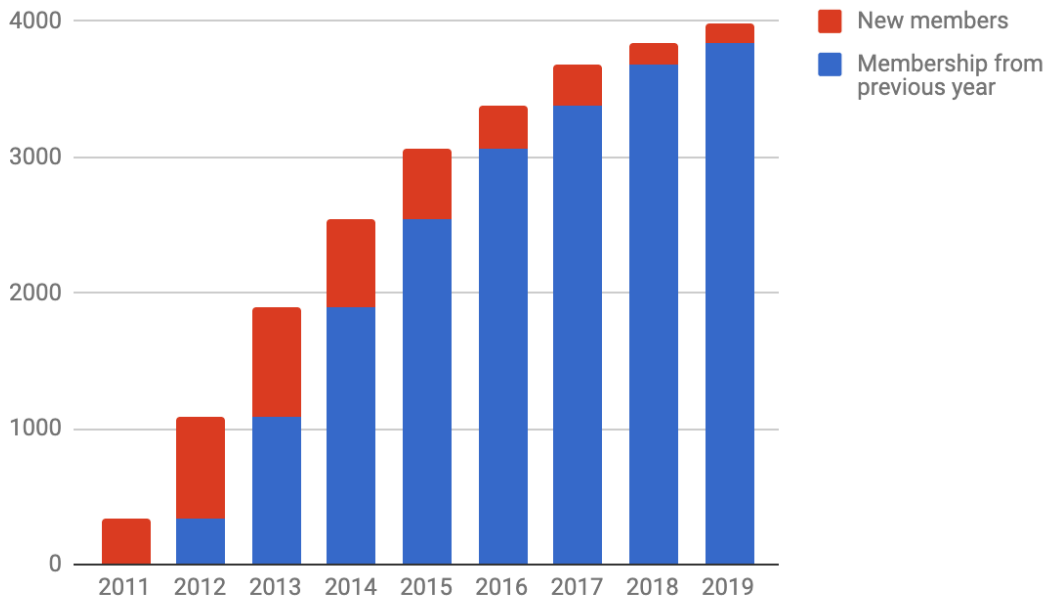
There is a lot of overlap in my Twitter followers and Facebook friends, but I use them for different things. My Facebook friends are an amalgamation of every person I've ever met in my life together with people who are part of my extended fringe Mormon and Community of Christ social networks. I post on my facebook wall, although not as frequently as I used to. I've been

on it for 14 years. In 2012, I joined the Feminist Mormon Housewives Society (closed Facebook group related to a blog) and have been involved in that Mormon feminist community and others. I've watched that community grow, shift, and dwindle in activity while others, particularly the Exponent Discussion Group, have grown and are thriving (see graphs below, part of an ongoing study). Both of these groups are closed, which allows for a degree of privacy from more orthodox friends, family members, and congregants. I post and comment in these groups and in other Mormon, Community of Christ, and spirituality-themed groups. In my comments, I'm frequently answering questions about the differences between Community of Christ and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS/Mormon) and how to grow faith and spirituality in the midst of a faith transition. I have met many of the people I regularly interact with in these groups in real life, though most of these relationships started online I manage a Facebook pages for my congregation and a few other things. I'm a moderator in a few closed Facebook groups. I study Mormons and Mormons live in Facebook, so I spend a lot of time in Facebook reading, commenting, and observing.

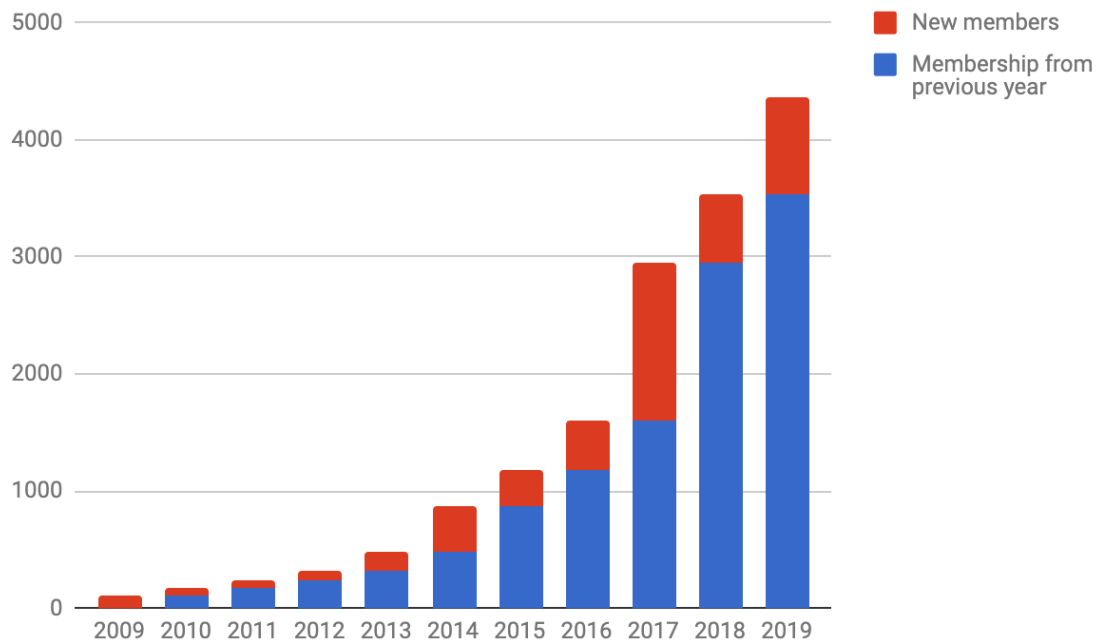
On Twitter, I follow many academics and church people in addition to many fringe Mormons and Mormon feminists. A few years ago, when conversations in the Feminist Mormon Housewives Society fell apart as white women learned about race, some Mormon feminists left Facebook for Twitter. I try to follow these conversations. Many Mormon Studies scholars post regularly on Twitter, as well as scholars in Digital Humanities, Digital Sociology, and Medieval Studies. More and more I'm following people who are writing about religion. I respond to some of the LGBTQ+ Mormon and Mormon feminist posts. Participating in those conversations attracts the Deseret Nation (DezNat) trolls, who are white Mormon supremacists, so I have to routinely check my mentions and block the related accounts. I am in the middle of trying to figure out how to study Mormon feminism in Twitter and gather some quantitative data. As a bisexual former-Mormon woman who is now ordained and a pastor in a related Restorationist tradition, I sometimes tweet comments using the hashtag #queerpastor.

When I encounter people on both Facebook and Twitter, I tend to comment on Twitter, as that feels more intentional and personal. I also know that fewer friends and family are there to see what I am commenting on, which is why some Mormons moved to Twitter in the first place. Many old friends and family are conservative and Mormon. Twitter is public, but I feel like far fewer people will see my tweets than my Facebook posts.

Growth of the Feminist Mormon Housewives Facebook Group



Growth of The Exponent Facebook Group



What I have learned about myself from me social media practices

I have known for a while that I am a heavy user of social media. This started when I moved away from graduate school in England and had my first child in St. George, Utah, a place that was unfamiliar to me at that time. I felt isolated and the demands of being a new mom and quickly having a second child made it easier for me to connect online than in person with other people. I didn't anticipate the difficulty of making friends while my children were babies and toddlers. I also struggled to connect with Mormon women my age, who were often finishing their years of babies and toddlers just as I was starting. A lot of socializing in my community is organized around family, and my mother-in-law and sisters-in-law were only interested in superficial relationships.

As an introvert, I don't need many friends, but I do need depth in my relationships. Social media proved to be a good place to reconnect with old friends and to make new friends in Mormon feminist spaces. I spent a lot of time in 2007, the year we moved to St. George, through to 2013 reading blogs and eventually I became brave enough to comment.

Today, I use digital tools and social media continually and I no longer apologize for that. Like the grand warnings of the 80s and 90s with regard to TV, it does not rot my brain. Most of my close friendships are with people who do not live nearby. My university is not great at fostering academic discussion among faculty members. Mormonism is a high-demand religion that requires conformity. "Community" does feel like a value in my physical community, which does not value inclusion or difference.

My online communities value inclusion, questions, and difference in ways that my face-to-face community do not. I claim my Mormon feminist community, an online religious social movement, as a very important community to me. I engage with it every day by reading or writing blog posts, listening to podcasts, and commenting on Facebook groups and on Twitter. I give and receive a lot of emotional support in those groups and they have been important spaces of learning for me. My undergraduate institution did not teach classes on feminism, but my Mormon feminist community pointed me toward the basics and taught me about the practice of deconstructing faith, recognizing sexist patterns in behavior and society, and introduced me to intersectionality. In this community, I learned that I needed to work on racial literacy in this community and that people would hold me accountable for that learning. I am fortunate that my community has pushed political feminism and not just a more generic empowerment feminism. I now spend a lot of time answering the questions that I once asked and offering pastoral care and support in this community.

Social media has improved my life in a number of concrete ways, from an informal education about Mormonism and feminism to changing the direction of my scholarship and job. I became an activist because of my online communities and I became a better mother because of these communities. Social media does not have the reputation of changing people's lives for the better, but I do believe that is what happened in my case.