

# GET CONNECTED

By Theresa "Raey" Walker

It's difficult to manage social networking. The days of chat lines, pagers, and Myspace are long gone. Social sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have taken over. Well, if you think it's hard to manage your three or four social sites, imagine how Mike McCray, social media coordinator for The Fayetteville Observer, must feel.

McCray not only balances his personal social media, but also manages The Fayetteville Observer's focus on community lifestyle, entertainment and nightlife.

A native of Charlotte, North Carolina, McCray is a graduate of North Carolina A&T State University with a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication. Young and spunky, McCray spoke to FSU students at a luncheon event held by The Voice on March 23 in the Rudolph Jones Student Center.

McCray is constantly and consistently updating the public to issues and events in Fayetteville and the surrounding area while at the same time doing traditional reporting and journalism for side gigs.

Here are a few tips McCray shared with FSU students to maintain a social media presence.

1. **Maintain both professional and personal social media accounts.** You should never mix business with pleasure. Keep in mind that some employers will actually check your social networks to see if you are the type of employee they want to hire.
2. **Keep your name handles short.** People don't want to type in long names to get to your account so keep it short and simple. For example, don't have `fayettevillestateuniversitythevoiceonline` as a handle, instead shorten it to `FSUthevoice`.
3. **Link It Back.** Make sure that you paste a link that will lead readers back to another one of your social media pages or company directly. This keeps people within your circle.
4. **Post, Post, Post.** Make sure you are constantly posting so you can gather a following. Sooner or later your post will be listed in the top feeds.
5. **Keep posts short.** Add links and hash tags to posts that may be lengthy.
6. **Be careful what you post.** Even if it is a joke make sure you announce that it is a joke.
7. **Follow to be followed.** You should follow others but you should also have just as many followers. Give out your Twitter handle or Facebook name rather than your phone number. Doing this will automatically create a larger following.
8. **Twitter is your brand.** Twitter is a must have social media platform personally or professionally. Twitter is the best way to allow people to pick up your news and interest or for you connect using hash tags.

There are new social network platforms becoming available daily to initiate one's self into the world of social media and connect on new levels of social stardom. Make sure you use these tips to stay connected. The following are the best platforms to jump-start the social butterfly in you are:

1. Twitter
2. Facebook
3. Instagram
4. LinkedIn
5. YouTube
6. Google +

Trying to maintain more than three is difficult, so be choosy to make sure you are able to constantly update and stay relevant. There are apps for PCs, Macs, and smart phones. Also, make sure to link all of them together so you only have to send out one message and it will pop up on all of your social media sites. A great one to use on Androids is Media Hub.

To hear more of what Mike McCray has to say follow him @ `mikemccray` on Twitter or `www.linkedin.com/in/mikemccray` for LinkedIn or e-mail him @ `mccraym@fayobserver.com`.