

Expand your social media skills to build your community & advocate for it

Over the course of a few short years, technology has completely transformed the way human beings communicate with each other. A few key clicks and *pow!*: you're connected to individuals all around the globe. Social media provides countless opportunities to cross borders and **make local, national and even international connections** far beyond your pre-existing group.

How we present ourselves online matters. It matters to the kind of career we'll have, and contributes to how people outside of our dance community—our friends and family and acquaintances—view dance. As with our offline interactions, you become part of a community when you're actively involved and display good citizenship. You'll get out of it what you put into it.

NETIQUETTE TIPS & FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Your online behaviour is your avatar (online projection). How do you want to be seen online by the members of your community, especially by those you haven't met yet IRL but who might be of help to you one day (be it as a presenter, a collaborator, a funder, or an audience member)?
- Your online actions have the power to influence how people outside of the industry view dance. Simply by sharing your work, and posting about what you do, you become an ambassador for your art.
- Whether you're tweeting, Facebooking, or blogging, always do so from a place of respect and sincerity. Network because you're genuinely interested in making connections and learning from others.
- Commiserate with fellow artists without complaining. Complaining can be a big turn-off to people who might otherwise want to support you.
- Celebrate your triumphs and the triumphs of others. Foster good social media karma.

It's not impossible: you can stay away from all things technology and still work as a professional dancer. But with so much of our lives spent online—Canadians' Internet usage is nearly double the global average—it is challenging to do so. And it's challenging to bring an audience to performances, or create interest in our work. If you don't have a presence on social media, you're invisible in that online world. You deserve the opportunity to be seen and heard.

Sabrina Furlinger crafts publicity and marketing campaigns for cultural festivals, exhibitions, and dance and theatrical productions throughout the Lower Mainland. Recent clients include Out Innerspace Dance Theatre, TomoeArts, the Powell Street Festival, and Brief Encounters. Between 2004 and 2009, she was publicist for the Vancouver International Dance Festival. For more information, visit <http://www.sabrinafurlinger.com>.