

# IUCN-CSG social media's role in conservation & science

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**Abstract:** Our conservation projects aim to modify community behaviours and attitudes, and we seek funding to help us achieve these goals. Social media can be used to leverage the global community to further extend the reach of our conservation projects and issues. This is a resource and a tool to reach people we would not otherwise be able to physically meet. An obstacle we need to overcome is the stigma that social media is often viewed as a place for pointless conversations, photos of the individual social media user, or a place for those users to say whatever is on their mind without due consideration first. We will discuss some marketing data to provide an insight into what is current and what is performing well. *Awareness* is the term we use when we share our knowledge or perception of a particular issue, with *education* the process of increasing this awareness or to bring about an enlightening experience. Social media platforms are becoming an increasingly important tool for everyone to use: for broader awareness of their research, conservation projects, and for educating the worldwide community on certain issues. Currently, there are over 3 billion users on Facebook and over 1 billion users on Instagram; the two most popular social media platforms, with TikTok and YouTube growing in popularity. There are a few simple and effective measures to improve our own social media profiles to better utilize the current algorithms and technologies. The objective is to increase the visibility of our conservation projects, issues, and research to reach and engage with the social media community. This can effectively lead to increases in donations or funding of our research, or behavioral changes in the public for the benefit of wildlife and their habitats. We will share the current status of the social media presence of the IUCN-SSC Crocodile Specialist Group on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; as well as the goals for each social media platform. We are encouraging our members to share with us the projects they are involved in. While many of us are biologists, we also need to be marketers for these conservation actions. We want to promote the species we are trying to conserve, and to create value for these animals and their habitats within the local communities, as well as to the broader global community. Since COVID and the global pandemic, social media has had game-changing advances in technology and in our cultures. It's no longer a “bonus” to organizations, but it is now essential.

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*Thematic area:* *In situ* conservation and sustainable use (Conservation in protected areas and other schemes)