

Category: Best use of Facebook by a newspaper

The Straits Times (ST), Singapore's national newspaper, started using Facebook more intensively this year, especially to generate leads for stories and follow-ups.

Interactive photo galleries

ST intends to interact more with readers using print and online combinations. For example: In print, the reporter makes a "call for action" to readers, to send pictures to us for a coming National Day Parade under an initiative themed "Finding Love in Singapore". The story is published in Breaking News across all platforms and highlighted on Facebook.

Different weeks have different themes. After the "call to action", the print reporter sieves through the submissions. The online crew then creates a Facebook album, and constantly promotes the album in news and Facebook to remind readers to send in submissions—something which newspapers alone cannot do daily, due to constraints of space.

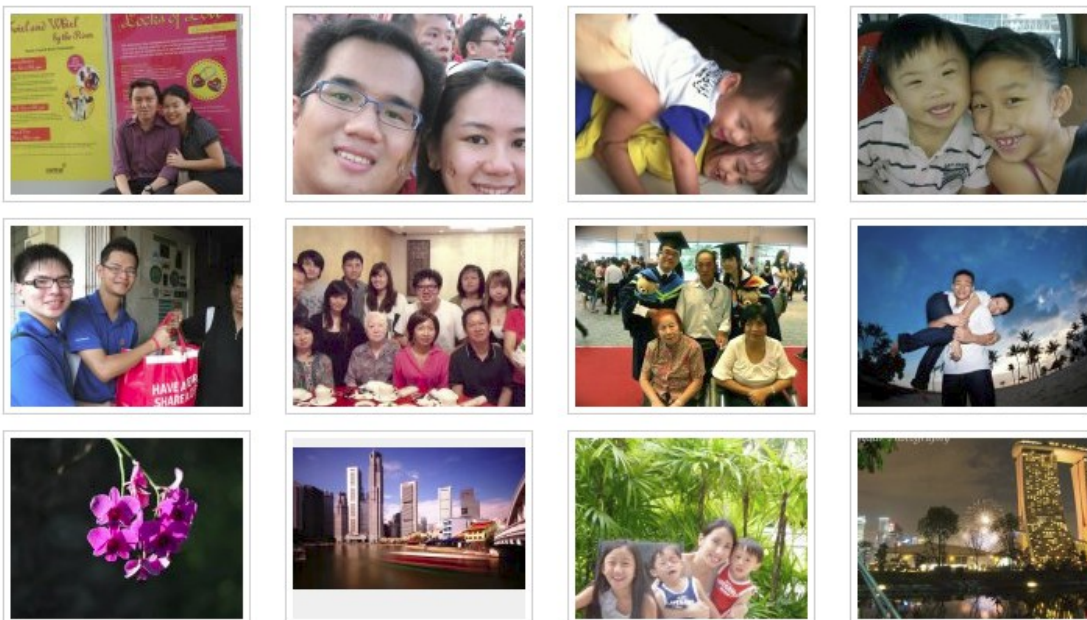
The reporter keeps adding more submissions and at the same time, readers on Facebook add more comments to the pictures. This allows for a better variety of comments for the follow-up print articles.

The interactive nature of this mini-series lets readers feel as if they are also contributing to the news creation process via online means, as they await the finished follow-up story in print.

Readers being "Called to Action": Slide 1:

NDP Love Contest Album: Finding Love in Singapore

By The Straits Times (Albums) · Updated 16 hours ago · [Edit album](#)



Crowd-sourcing

Slide 2: A post is made giving the reporter's contact details so readers can give more info personally to the reporter. The incoming comments are also tracked by the reporters to see if there are any tip-offs to be generated alongside.



The Straits Times · 54,047 like this.
5 July at 11:12 · 🌐



Against a backdrop of people marrying late, ST's Eve Yap of Life! is looking for couples who married before they were 21 to talk about what it was like being very young parents, and how they have grown through the years. If you would like to share your story, email her at evyap@sph.com.sg with your mobile numbers by Sunday, July 8. Thanks!



More couples got married last year, divorces also up

www.straitstimes.com

More couples got hitched last year, even as the trend of divorce continue to inch upwards in 2011.

Like · Comment · Share



👍 Amy Cher, Mark Tan, Glenn Yeo and 19 others like this.



Fred Tan Young ppl onlie get married when shotgun
5 July at 13:27 via Mobile · Like



Tan Thiam Hock The term "young couples" in this respect may need to be redefined as "under-30 yrs".
6 July at 08:23 via Mobile · Like · 👍 1

💬 View more comments



Write a comment...

14,734 people saw this post

Promotion Unavailable

Leverage on layout

We are also starting to think of Facebook more in terms of its layout. How can our team use its features to "sell" the more pertinent elements of our stories and pictures and best "lay it out" on Facebook's Timeline?

Slide 3: This is an example of a recent blackout in a train subway station that affected many people in Singapore. Almost 20,000 readers saw it immediately, because of the visual impact of the post, as opposed to the common practice of just posting a link in the Facebook status box.



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from 'The Straits Times' dated July 6, 2012, at 21:04. The post features a photograph of people sitting on a bench in a dark subway station. The post text reads: 'Passengers sit in the dark during a blackout at City Hall MRT station in Singapore, on July 6, 2012. (Photo: Desmond Lui for The Straits Times)'. Below the photo is a link to the full story: 'www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_819353.html'. The post has 106 likes and 20 shares. The comment section includes several user reactions such as 'What About Emergency Lighting', 'How Did Fire Safety Shelter Department Approve The Operation Of Trains Without Checking On The Back Up Lighting', 'This is 1 cool pic!', 'This is absurd', 'R we perfectionist n totally can't accept some failure?', 'Total breakdown the train system', 'Cool shot!', and 'Train can move most important. Yup.'. At the bottom, it shows '18,736 people saw this post' and 'Promotion Unavailable'.

Breaking News

The Straits Times employs a "across four-online platforms at once" policy when it comes to breaking news.

When a big news story breaks, or there's a key announcement, a line of two is sent via SMS (short message system) to our subscribers, published on our website (straitstimes.com) and posted on Facebook and Twitter.

When a story with more details is ready within minutes and refreshed on our website, the URL link is promoted again as another post on Facebook and Twitter.

Take the recent Breaking News article where a prominent church founder was arrested for alleged criminal breach of trust.

An SMS was sent at 1432hrs: City Harvest Church founder Kong Hee arrested by Commercial Affairs Department in morning raid.

Slide 4: The news was first posted on ST Twitter at 1432hrs, with 400 RTs (retweets), followed by Facebook at 1433hrs on the same day, without a link yet, back to the website. This reached 11,643 people (99 likes, 29 shares).

The Straits Times @STcom 26 Jun
BREAKING: City Harvest Church founder Kong Hee arrested by Commercial Affairs Department in morning raid.
[Collapse](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

400 RETWEETS 18 FAVORITES

2:32 PM - 26 Jun 12 via TweetDeck · Details

Reply to @STcom

The Straits Times · 54,023 like this.
26 June at 14:33 ·

BREAKING: City Harvest Church founder Kong Hee arrested by Commercial Affairs Department in morning raid. More details to follow.

Like · Comment · Share 29

Slide 5: The story with a website URL link was then posted on ST Facebook three minutes later at 1435hrs, Twitter at 1436hrs with link (470 RTs, 14 favourites). It reached 14,392 people (121 likes, 129 shares).

 **The Straits Times** @STcom 26 Jun

City Harvest church founder Kong Hee and 4 others arrested
bit.ly/MRplAh

[Collapse](#) [Reply](#) [Retweet](#) [Favorite](#)

470 RETWEETS **14** FAVORITES



2:36 PM - 26 Jun 12 via TweetDeck · [Details](#)

Reply to @STcom

 **The Straits Times** · 54,110 like this. ✓ Liked

26 June at 14:36 · 



City Harvest church founder Kong Hee and 4 others arrested
www.straitstimes.com
 City Harvest church founder Kong Hee and four others from his ministry were arrested by the police on Tuesday

[Like](#) · [Comment](#) · [Share](#)  128

In the meantime, it's pushed on our iPhone, iPad and Android apps.

The combined effect is that we spread the news first, and then help direct readers eventually to straitstimes.com for the fuller story, which satisfies both subscribers and non-subscribers.