

Thank you for this opportunity. I would like to begin by acknowledging the number of people younger than myself, who have been very busy social networking on their devices throughout this meeting. Their passion and their courage as they enter into this vocation of Communications is inspiring to me. I also want to ask them to be kind to me. They are digital natives on this Digital Continent, and I am a digital immigrant who speaks with an accent.

I also want to encourage those who may think entering into social media is only for the wealthy organizations. Everything I am showing you today has a low threshold of investment. You must have access to a computer with an Internet connection, and invest time. There is no need to buy additional software or other special equipment to use the large social networks that are emerging globally.

There are risks to engaging in social media, as we have heard from previous presenters and in our small groups. But the greater risk may be NOT to engage. In the English language group in which I participated, everyone noted that the readers of our print publications are getting older. Almost half of the 'fans' on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Facebook page – 46% as of yesterday – are under age 35. We can reach an audience with social media that we can not reach with our print publications.

Why? I would suggest two significant attributes of social media are responsible – its very nature encourages dialogue, two-way communication. Human beings seek this kind of interaction.

Social media is also very accessible. As I mentioned previously, not only is there a relatively low threshold of entry for the content creator, but the users also can access it with a mobile device, even, with Twitter, with a basic cell phone.

I was asked to show you today examples of how the USCCB and Catholic News Service use social media to support our print resources, which I will do. I do not have time to go into the need to have solid guidelines, training and application of basic journalistic principles when using social media. But allow me to simply say, these are very, very important. It is absolutely necessary for those who are using social media, especially those of us who are immigrants, to be properly trained.

Now let me show you some examples of what we are doing in social media.

I hope this brief presentation allowed you to see some of the wonderful possibilities in social media. If anyone is interested in copies of the USCCB guidelines, I would be happy to email them to you. We only have them available in English, however.

Thank you.