

sketchpad
an artists online community

Section 1: Overview

April 23, 2010

Nate Melvillain, Dale Strouse, and Josh Thatcher

Dale, Nate, Josh
Prof. Rabby
DTC 338: Social Media
Section 1 - Overview

Purpose: A social media site for artists.

Our website will be a regional social networking site for artists of all media. It could be described as a Facebook for artists. It will be a place for artists to meet, socialize, exchange ideas, show work, discuss techniques, and post news about their individual mediums.

Method: A variety of ways to interact.

- Member profiles categorized by chosen media, with a “wall” ala FB to keep other friends current on what is happening in their art life, as well as online portfolios. Users will be able to stylize their own pages and search and create networks of artists that use common media.
- Discussion forum. In this forum, members can ask questions or pose discussion topics related to themselves, their art, or art in general. This is also a place where events can be scheduled, which can be viewed via an event calendar. Events could include meetings, calls for entry, gallery openings, and other news and art events.
- How-to and Q&A forum. In this forum, members can share their knowledge and expertise with other members, with the ability to use text, photo and video illustration. This is a great place for members to post “how-to” questions/examples.
- Links to other art-related websites, including those that supply materials to artists. In so doing we believe these commercial businesses would be a source of advertising revenue for our website.

Conclusion:

With our site, we hope to provide a place for artists to network with others that share their interests and passions. Making our site a regional SM place, we hope to have a site that will serve as a bridge to developing more face to face interaction, thereby building creative social capital.

sketchpad
an artists online community

Section 2: Design

(please see accompanying mockups for full explanation)

April 23, 2010

Nate Melvillain, Dale Strouse, and Josh Thatcher

Design: explanation of features

- 1) Profile
This area will be used to keep track of what you're doing online. You'll notice message notifications come here, and from here you can view your profile, upload art, or write a journal. At some point, we'd like to make it so you can take elements you've uploaded (journals/pictures/video) and make it so you can combine these into a book. For example, you could sketch a dragon and a knight fighting one day, and the next you might write a journal posting about the story behind the sketch. You could then link these together and show them as a book.
- 2) Links
This area is where links will be to other art sites. Some of these can just be ones we like, some the community like, and some sponsored.
- 3) Subscriptions
This is where your subscriptions to other sketchpad members' work will show up. Let's say you're a video artist and you want to keep up with what's going on in the video art community. You can subscribe to other artists' work similar to the way you would subscribe to another user's channel on Youtube. This way, you can keep up with what's going on in your art field or with specific artists you find interesting.
- 4) Simple log in authentication. Not required to browse the site, but needed to access your profile or upload.
- 5) Facebook connector – a way in which we hope to grow the site. With so many people on Facebook, we want to make it easy for users to access their friends and people they've already met online. With the Facebook connector, you can link your sketchpad account to your FB account—which allows you to invite friends from FB, share art back-and-forth between the two sites, etc.
- 6) The friend feed—a way to keep up with your friends on sketchpad. The right hand side of the page, item seven in this list, is about the community of sketchpad. When you meet people in the community you like, you can add them and keep track of what they're doing in your friend feed.
- 7) This is the global side of sketchpad. This is where you get out and meet new people, dive into discussions, ask questions, and answer others' questions.

- a) Discussions will be for general topics or proposing meetups (which will be trackable via a calendar) will go here. Popular discussions will automatically rise to the top of the board. Anyone on the site can post here. This is a good place to hang out and meet new artists.

- b) Q&A forum is a place where artists can share hints, tips, and best practices. This is a great place for artists to share unique works of art and offer tutorials and suggestions. This is a great place to peruse if you're looking to jump into a new medium. Topics will be sortable by a variety of categories, including author, date posted, and medium.

sketchpad
an artists online community

Section 3: Audience

April 23, 2010

Nate Melvillain, Dale Strouse, and Josh Thatcher

Dale, Josh, Nate

Prof. Rabby
DTC 338: Social Media
Section 3: Audience

Purpose:

Outline eight potential users who would make use of Sketchpad in a variety of different ways.

The eight we included are as follows:

Sculptor Hana

Hana is a thirty-something sculptor and professor at a local art school. In addition to her current teaching and sculpting she is involved in local avant-garde theater. She is unmarried, but lives with her partner, an architect. Through her academic surroundings and partner's connections she has many ways to connect to the arts community, but Sketchpad allows her a good online medium to share her work. She is able to include images of her sculptures, blog about what she's working on, and create instant connections otherwise not available. In general, she updates her Sketchpad blog and gallery a couple of times a week.

Illustrator Steve

Steve is a fifty-something professional illustrator. His work includes children's books, graphic novels, magazines and advertisements. He is single with no children. He travels extensively for his work, doing book tours, visiting publishers and accompanying reporters on location. Joe is well-connected nationally, and even internationally, but due to his extensive traveling he lacks local connections. Sketchpad allows Steve to connect with the local arts community. He can keep up on artists' blogs/works and maintain connections to the local community. Additionally, Steve uses Sketchpad to view schedules for new gallery showings that are open when he is in town.

Cha Cha - Printmaker

Cha Cha is a 34 year old printmaker and mixed media artist. She is represented by several local galleries and has her own website. She creates large floral prints and combines calligraphy and collage to make unique and approachable art. She also creates ceramic body torso casts that she paints in vivid color palettes. She is very social and is involved with several art organizations as well as being the president of a local women's printmakers group that meets once a month. She has Facebook and Twitter accounts, writes a blog about the local art scene, and is completely immersed in the new digital world. She is single and shares a home and studio with her longtime partner who is also a printmaker. Cha Cha makes her living teaching classes at her local art center and at the Community College; she also offers private workshops. She sees Sketchpad as a way to expand and enhance her art world social network with her many artist friends, using it as her center for information on what is happening in her art life, including what classes she will be teaching in the future and when they will be offered, what showings she is

currently involved in, and what she has scheduled for the future. Sketchpad will be where she can find out what is happening with her friends in the art community. Finally, she sees Sketchpad as another venue to show her work to those who would not normally find her website.

Lightspace Bob – Photographer

Bob is a 56 year old photographer who uses traditional materials such as real film and paper. He is married with one son who is in college. He does mostly black and white landscape work, but he also shoots a wide variety of other subjects. He shows his work in regional galleries several times a year and maintains his own website portfolio. He is a retired graphic artist and supplements his income by teaching workshops and leading photographic excursions through a local Center for Photography. He also offers private workshops in his personal darkroom at his home. He has written several articles on photographic techniques as well as articles on his own work that have been published. He is interested in all art forms, has many friends who are painters, sculptors, and photographers and attends several openings each month. He is interested in the possibility of exploring digital photography and sees Sketchpad as another way to connect with photographers who are willing to share their expertise with him and others who are just learning the world of digital imaging. He considers Sketchpad as another way to showcase his work, to discover new artists, expand his social network of artistic friends, and share news of his gallery showings, classes, and workshops. Bob just recently got a Facebook and a Flickr account, but sees Sketchpad as a more relevant Social Networking site.

Pixel-Head Paul – Mixed Media

Paul is a 22 year old recent college graduate who is new to the area. He is single and unattached. He is on Facebook and Twitter, but is not on any other Social Media sites. He is interested in making digital mixed media art that utilizes photography, video, and sound. He works for a software company as a junior webmaster but wants to continue making his digital mixed media art; he hopes to find a gallery that is willing to show his work. He currently has no gallery experience, is unsure if his work is ready to be shown in public, and does not know the proper way to go about finding a gallery and presenting his portfolio. He heard about Sketchpad from a woman he met at a gallery opening he attended and she suggested Sketchpad would be a good place for a budding artist or someone new to the area to build a social art network. He found out he could use the Sketchpad forum to ask questions and get advice, and he could also show examples of his college work. He feels Sketchpad would be a great place to find out what is going on in the art world of his new town, find other digital artists like him, and perhaps learn some new techniques and skills along the way.

Gallery-Owner Gary

Gary, a well-off and recently retired 55 year old, just moved to Vancouver from California and purchased a small art gallery downtown. Though Gary has always been an admirer of art, he's never really had the time to get into it, at least until his recent retirement. He learned about Sketchpad from one of his friends on Facebook who had linked her Sketchpad and Facebook profiles. Because Gary doesn't have many

connections in Vancouver, he's looking forward to using Sketchpad as a way to find artists and artists' works he'd like to showcase in his gallery. Once Gary is comfortable with his gallery's spread of art, he'll be able to promote his gallery on Sketchpad by announcing showings, new artists, new displays—all in one place. Sketchpad's professional-looking calendar will push notifications to his gallery's followers when these events are taking place, so he doesn't have to send out annoying reminder emails while trying to maintain a big list and deal with changing email addresses, people opting in and out, etc.

Non-Artist Neil

Neil, a 32 year old mechanic, has never been into social media that much. For that matter, he hasn't really been into computers that much. For him, an average day has always been nine-to-five at Boston Brakes & Tires and then home for dinner and a basketball game on TV. While he lives in Massachusetts, his kids live with their mom in eastern Washington. Recently, his kids joined an art club at the middle school they attend. At their prodding, Neil decided it was finally time to jump into the digital world and get a laptop and join the social media world. After a few phone lessons from his kids, Neil figured out how to use Sketchpad to follow the art projects they were working on at school.

Sketch-Artist Samantha

Sam, a 17 year old high school girl, is constantly sketching. Sketching on her napkin, sketching during class in the margins of her notebook, sketching on her friends' arms—sketching, sketching, sketching. They're nothing too fantastic—she can't claim to be a professional sketch-artist. In fact, she doesn't want to be. While the idea may have appealed to her at one time, she's starting to think more about college and finding a steady job as a nurse. Though she doesn't think too much of the sketches, her best friend is always encouraging her and wanting to look at her sketches. After a little prodding, Sam decided a Sketchpad would be a way for her to keep track of her multiplicity of mini-masterpieces. While at first she mainly just uploaded them as a way for her to keep herself organized, she soon found that she had a large following of other members of Sketchpad, one of whom is a comic book writer who wants her to help him with a future project! She's currently thinking about recording a series of video tutorials to post into the Q&A forum of Sketchpad, so other artists can see how she does what she does.

Conclusion:

There are a whole host of potential users for the site. Many will use it in different ways—some will use it for networking; some will use it to browse art; some will use it to keep track of events. In the end, the goal will be a simple, easy-to-access site that's flexible enough to meet all of these users' needs.

sketchpad
an artists online community

Section 4: Business Model

April 23, 2010

Nate Melvillain, Dale Strouse, and Josh Thatcher

Dale, Josh, Nate
Prof. Rabby
DTC 338: Social Media
Section 4 – Business Model

1. In Depth Overview and Description of SketchPad

Our website will be a national social networking site for artists of all media, featuring regional cells ala Craigslist. When artists join Sketchpad, they join the regional site closest to their area, though it will still be possible for members to view and make connections with members in other regions. While it could be described as a Facebook for artists, we intend it to be considerably more than that: it will not only be a place for artists to meet others that share an interest in a particular medium, but it will also be a place for artists to socialize, exchange ideas, show work, discuss techniques, and post news about their individual mediums.

Although it is intended to be a member site, with multiple levels of membership, the site will be open to non members to view artists' portfolios as well as the ability to see the events section. A basic membership would be free, which would allow the member to have a profile, an artist statement, a limited portfolio (100MB to start, though we'll look at user feedback and possibly expand that as our working capital grows and allows us to invest in more data storage), the ability to post and receive comments on their wall, eligibility for SketchPad sponsored competitions, and the ability to sell artwork.

The Premium membership would cost \$49.00 per year and would include all of the benefits available to basic members with some modifications as well as benefits not

available to basic members. Premium members would have unlimited portfolio space and would be able to customize their portfolio in several ways. One, they could create catalogs of different bodies of work and be able to arrange and stylize these catalogs to create more visual impact for their portfolios. Also, instead of just a portfolio section, premium members would have their own customizable URL on SketchPad for their profile page. For instance, the premium member Lightspace Bob would have his own URL as follows: SketchPad.com/LightspaceBob/. Premium members would also have higher resolution image display in their portfolios. Another benefit to Premium members would be enhanced placement on SketchPad's home page. Each week the main Sketchpad site (viewable to all regions) would have a section of featured artists with short articles and interviews about the artists and their work. Premium members would also be eligible for SketchPad Evite Invitations for their upcoming exhibitions generated from SketchPad member lists and the artists' own mailing list. In conjunction with Evites, premium members would receive personal press releases that could be picked up and/or downloaded as pdf files or searched through Google. Traffic monitoring would also be another added feature for premium members. As newer technology arises, premium members would be the first to have access to new features, from beta testing to rollout.

Method: A variety of ways to interact.

- Member profiles categorized by chosen media, with a “wall” a la Facebook to keep other friends current on what is happening in their art life, as well as posting updates to their online portfolios. Users will be able to stylize their own portfolio pages and search and create networks of artists that use common media. These features are available to all members, basic and premium. Premium members will have the additional benefits listed in the previous section.
- Discussion forum. In this forum, members can ask questions or pose discussion topics related to themselves, their art, or art in general. This is also a place where events can be scheduled, which can be viewed via an event calendar. Events could include meetings, calls for entry, SketchPad sponsored competitions, gallery openings, exhibition reviews and other news and art events. Available to all members. Members and non members will be able to subscribe to email alerts of art events, delivered daily, weekly, or monthly (based on the users' preference), with the ability to choose what kind of alerts to get (all events, events only of a certain medium, etc). Premium members have the additional benefits of Evite invitations and personal press releases.
- How-to and Q&A forum. In this forum, members can share their knowledge and expertise with other members, with the ability to use text, photo and video illustration. This is a great place for members to post “how-to” questions/examples. The video illustrations and tutorials would be available to Premium members only.
- Links to other art-related websites, including local galleries, museums and retail outlets that supply materials to artists. In so doing we believe these commercial businesses would be one source of advertising revenue for our website. Although all members have access to the links, Premium members would have the added benefit of viewing SketchPad without advertising.

With our site, we hope to provide a place for artists to network with others that share their interests and passions. Making our site a regional SM place, we hope to have a site that will serve as a bridge to developing more face to face interaction, thereby building creative social capital.

2. Features and Advantages of SketchPad Relative to Competition

There are very few Social Media sites that are exclusively for artists. One we came across, myartspace.com is owned and managed by CatMacArt Corporation, a privately owned and funded company legally incorporated in the state of New York with headquarters in Palo Alto, California. It offers similar features to SketchPad, having basic free and premium memberships. Premium memberships are \$75.00 per year or \$6.99 per month. Another competitive site we found was artselector.com which can be described as an “art collective.” Only members can create profiles and upload images of their work. Its membership is mostly European with less than fifty U.S. members listed. There is no advertising on this site. Although there are most of the features that SketchPad present, one thing myartspace.com and artselector do not have is an active “Wall” where there can be comments and replies. In short, these sites still appear to be Web 1.0 instead of Web 2.0, one area where we see Sketchpad as significantly more appealing to artists. Another feature these sites lack but that is included with SketchPad is an active and lively how-to forum where members can ask and answer process-related questions as well as the ability to view how-to video tutorials on different methods in different media.

Another significant advantage of SketchPad will be its regional focus. Each major metropolitan area of the country will have its own site, much like Craigslist. We believe this local feel will have a greater appeal to artists and will generate more interest in each local art community, relative to a single national site. Specifically, having a regional SketchPad we allow us to target local galleries and highlight local artists and events to generate interest. We believe being local will be an incentive for local artists and galleries to become members and, hopefully, supporters. The local nature will appeal to artists who may feel like they would be lost in the crowd of a national site such as myartspace.com. Most interest in art purchasing, learning, exhibiting, and networking occurs on a local level. SketchPad will provide artists an additional venue to realize these various goals on their own home turf. Also, the possibility of obtaining advertising from local retail art supply stores, as well as frame shops, would be more appealing if those retailers know they would be reaching a local customer base.

We also hope to set ourselves apart from the competition by offering a premium membership at a more affordable price than what would be available on a national site. Other sites are more focused on established artists, and while we will aim to do so as well, we also want to be a home for novice artists and non-artistic art lovers as well. We aim to make SketchPad more than just a place for artists to showcase their work; we want to create a place where anyone can come and look at art, find out what is happening in their local art community, and learn how to better connect with the community. We believe that an affordable price will help to generate interest in everyone from gallery owners and artists to those with only a casual interest in art.

3. Sketchpad Across Platforms

Because Sketchpad is a web-based platform, we feel it will appeal to traditional desktop and laptop users as well as the newer generation of smart phones, tablet devices (iPads, etc.). Particularly, compatibility with members' profile page wall, RSS feeds from the Events and News Pages, as well as forum pages will be important for us to maintain across platforms. Based on user feedback, we'll consider what features need to be mobile-compatible and in what ways, bearing in mind that as technology evolves, we may be able to open more and more of the site up to mobile devices. As far as that goes, some features will be designed specifically for mobile devices, such as geotagging. During events such as First Thursday, anyone could log onto SketchPad with their mobile device and walk around the Pearl District with the ability to see what galleries are where and what art they are showing.

4. Legal Protections and Users' Privacy.

First, a disclaimer that states that "All material appearing on this site remains copyright of the originating artists." This should protect us and our artists from someone using art from SketchPad without permission. However, since all art on the site will be at screen resolutions, copyright infringement and use without permission should not be an issue. Beyond this disclaimer it will be necessary to draw up a legal set of "terms and conditions" by which members must agree to before joining SketchPad. These agreements are somewhat standard and are relatively commonplace for other similar social media sites such as Flickr. Some of these legal requirements are age limits, limits on offensive art or posts, the ability of SketchPad to remove work deemed inappropriate, verification of artist as creator of works submitted as well as agreements not to use SketchPad as a vehicle for free advertising. These "terms and conditions" will have to be agreed to before one can become a member at any level. In particular the two most important statutes to consider concerning legal liabilities and obligations of SketchPad are Section 512(c) of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act. (Understanding the Legal Issues for Social Networking Sites and Their Users By Kevin Faule of FindLaw)

5. Costs for Users to Participate

For SketchPad to be a financially viable site, we believe we must offer the option of a paid premium membership. It does not appear feasible to rely on advertising to support SketchPad. At the basic level of membership, users will have a profile page, a wall for comments and replies, a portfolio section, and access to the forum, Q & A section, events calendar, an artist statement, eligibility for SketchPad sponsored competitions, and the ability to sell artwork. Premium members will pay \$49.00 per year or \$6.99 per month. Premium members will receive all of the above mentioned benefits as well as those additional benefits described in the first section.

6. Avoiding Obsolescence

One way to avoid obsolescence is to stay current with new technology surrounding Social Media and have the ability to adapt to and make use of that technology ahead of the pack. The owners of SketchPad must keep abreast of what other social networking sites are

doing and what features they are offering their users, and not just competing social networking sites for artists, but others as well, such as Facebook, Ning, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc. The more we offer members, the easier it will be to keep them coming back to our site. As new coding language appears, SketchPad may have to go through several reworkings to take advantage of new technology. Design tastes and trends change with alarming rapidity, and SketchPad should periodically evaluate its look and usability. Having a way for members to give feedback about what features they would like to see on Sketchbook will be an important part of our planning for the future. Implementing a forum dedicated to user input would be one way to connect with members and hear what they think would improve the site. Reaching out on Facebook will be another method we will utilize (see Marketing Plan for more detail). Often, it is the public that drives trends in social media, and as such, we would be wise to listen to what new features members would like to see implemented on SketchPad. Not only do we want to give members a place to air their complaints and suggestions, but we also want to give them a place where SketchPad can actively demonstrate it listens to members and addresses their concerns on a one to one basis. Good customer service is crucial, and having this level of interaction will be one way we can create a more loyal following with our members. We need to make sure members feel like SketchPad is *their* community and that their investment in it is rewarded with a meaningful experience. Giving members a vested interest in how SketchPad evolves channels directly into our goal of avoiding obsolescence.

Another key strategy in avoiding obsolescence is to keep up with current trends in the art community. Knowing what new art movements are taking place as well as what local art critics are saying about the art community will be an important way to keep our members informed and involved, as well as a way to demonstrate our commitment to the art community. Since SketchPad will be a Social Media site for artists, our involvement in the art community as a forum for artist will play an important role in keeping members involved with the site. Having links to well respected art critics' blogs and linking their posts with our events calendar could be one way to manage this information.

We also need to keep in mind that our users will at some level be considering SketchPad as a toolkit that helps them accomplish their artistic and social networking goals in one central location. For us to remain current we must constantly question ourselves as to whether we are offering a toolkit that allows our users to do what they need to do with ease. We need to consider what makes sense from a member standpoint instead of our owner standpoint. In other words, we need to offer an exceptional product that artists feel is relevant to their everyday artistic needs — for networking, getting and giving information, and showing work.

7. Financing SketchPad

On the first level we will need financing to get the development stage off the ground. One option would be to try to declare and apply for a non-profit (education) status. If this goal could be achieved we would at least start out with the luxury of being tax exempt. Another avenue would be to seek capital from a wide variety of different sources. These would include galleries, arts organizations, and retail art suppliers. Linking their

investment in Sketchpad in return for advertising space might prove to be an incentive for some. Also, as a non-profit, we will probably be more attractive to arts investors than a for profit endeavor.

We could also apply for arts grants from regional organizations such as the Oregon Arts Commission (www.oregonartscommission.org), The Oregon Community Foundation (<http://www.oregoncf.org/receive/grants>), The Allen Foundation for the Arts, in Bellevue, Washington (www.pgafoundations.com), to name a few. Another source of grant funding would be to apply for corporate arts and culture grants that are offered by some of the regional major corporations such as Intel, Microsoft, Hewlet Packard, and Boeing to name a few. Although grant money takes long term planning and the competition for grant money is rigorous, it would still be worth pursuing. If we could land a significant grant, it would make investing in SketchPad by local businesses and arts organizations more attractive.

We must also keep the option of traditional bank financing open. Obtaining a traditional loan may be another way to fill in whatever financial gaps we have. Attempting to get financing from a local small bank may be a better option than a large commercial bank. Before attempting to get traditional financing it will be imperative to have a refined and detailed business plan. This holds true for all other sources of prospective financing. We have to be open to and seek out all forms of financing, both traditional and otherwise.

To keep SketchPad up and running we plan on relying on a variety of strategies. One, we will offer a Premium pay membership that offers members some significant advantages over the basic membership. To generate more involvement on this level we will post testimonials by premium members in which they speak about the advantages of becoming a premium member, how it has made a difference to them personally, and why it would be advantageous for a basic member to upgrade to a premium membership. If we can market SketchPad to prospective members as a cooperative social media site where members are directly involved in the society, they may see value in becoming a premium member.

Second, SketchPad will sponsor online themed competitions that members can enter for a nominal fee, similar to the many juried art competitions available today. These competitions would offer a three level prize structure for competition winners. There could be competitions on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis and they could be geared toward individual media. Competitions are an attractive draw for artists who want to see their work showcased.

A third way to generate operating costs would be to require a small commission on any work sold through SketchPad. A 10% commission would not appear to be unreasonable. Even though it may not amount to a significant part of an artist's overall sales it could be another important source of revenue for maintaining SketchPad.



Section 5: Marketing Plan

April 23, 2010

Nate Melvillain, Dale Strouse, and Josh Thatcher

Dale, Josh, Nate
Prof. Rabby
DTC 338: Social Media
Section 5 – Marketing Plan

Ways we will drive users to the website

Bearing in mind that our target audience is quite diverse, ranging from young teens to older, non-computer savvy users, all with a varying level of art expertise, we'll need a multi-faceted marketing plan that hits the different audiences where they're at.

As we launch the site, one of the primary ways we'll want to get the word out is through the art community leaders in the Portland/Vancouver area—a “top down” approach. Because Portland/Vancouver will serve as our pilot area, we can use this method here, as we already have connections with a variety of art galleries and shops. We will start conversations with gallery owners and see what events we can use as a tool to promote our site to the community. We can offer free premium profiles to select users, namely artists who host at the galleries we have connections with. In this scenario, everyone benefits—the artist gets another way to market themselves, the gallery has added incentives to bring artists in, and we get users on our site, from whom we can learn and grow from a beta-mold into a full-fledged site.

While we feel this approach has merit in the Portland/Vancouver area, once we launch into other markets, we probably won't have the same, established relationships with gallery/shop owners, artists, etc. This is where our growth into other social media becomes a valuable asset for bringing the site to full fruition.

Our aim is that the initial round of artists we garner from the Portland/Vancouver area would slowly begin to grow and expand; often times gallery owners here may have relationships with artists outside of the area, and when they come in and see what we're doing with Sketchpad, our hope is that they would begin to interact on Sketchpad Portland/Vancouver and be some of our spark for future growth into other markets.

Utilization of existing social media: Facebook

With that said, the artists who do join Sketchpad Portland/Vancouver have the ability to connect their Sketchpad profile with their Facebook profile, via a Facebook Connector. This allows artists to take gallery showings they're doing and share from the Sketchpad Events Calendar to Facebook—one button and you can invite Facebook friends to your showing. Users will have the ability to sort by region and see which friends have attended events in the past, and in this way they can target their promotions.

Because artists tend to keep in touch with other artists, features like these will market themselves, in a sense. Rather than us pushing Sketchpad heavily on Facebook, the sharing of information from Sketchpad to Facebook by artists will garn interest from artists' friends.

In addition to this more viral form of networking and marketing, we plan to initiate a Facebook Fan Page that will act like a blog. We'll keep users up to date with what's going on at Sketchpad (what new markets we're looking into, new feature updates, etc.) and also market our product by giving the general public a peek at premium features. This could be as simple as making a well-done video tutorial public and posting it on the Facebook page for all to see. As the site grows and expands, the Facebook page will doubtlessly shape itself to be what our target audience wants; one lesson social media teams are finding everywhere is that there's no one magic formula that always works; the way to be successful is to initiate conversation and grow and adapt to what the audience wants. As such, we'll also use the Facebook page to pose questions and look for input from our fans.

Utilization of existing social media: Twitter

Whereas Facebook will be more bloggish, utilizing Facebook's ability to host longer conversations with more visual media (pictures, video, etc.), Twitter will be used to post quick-updates as more of a real-time update to what we're doing. Making the most of Twitter's 140-character nature, we'll post short updates that might only be of interest for that day. An example might be a link to a discussion happening on the forums, a 24 hour promotion we're running, or even a notification of site downtime. We'll @reply users who have questions or complaints, often times linking them to relevant sections of our website or Facebook page.

As with our Facebook page, we'll link our Twitter account to our site, which will provide search-engine optimization, boosting us in the rankings and making our site easier to find. Though right now there isn't much competition for search terms like "Sketchpad," we would eventually like to show up when users search for "art," "art website," "art blog," "social media site for artists" or "art showings in [city name]."

Other forms of marketing

Another way we'll want to market ourselves is by linking arms with other art sites and blogs. This provides symbiotic benefits for both parties: other art sites receive content in the form of guest posts from us, and inbound traffic from us linking to them; similarly, we get our name out and get interest from artists, and the inbound links from these sites gives us another search engine optimizer.