

# **Communication and Delivery Technologies Report**

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## Executive Summary

This paper, commissioned by Contact North | Contact Nord, investigates software, apps and social media that may assist Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs in communicating with their stakeholders more effectively, to make the best possible use of program resources. It will focus on Communication and Delivery Technologies and the role they can play in obtaining client feedback and in program delivery.

The paper reviews two growing trends: the use of mobile devices to facilitate communication and the ever-growing world of social media, as both impact the ways in which programs can and should communicate with learners and stakeholders.

The paper confirms that mobile device usage is currently a factor in successful learning and communication within a program. It emphasizes that it is critical that LBS practitioners and managers recognize that increasing numbers of learners will seek to connect with their program using their mobile devices.

To prepare for the increased desire among learners to use their mobile devices more actively in their literacy programming, the paper recommends that LBS providers review apps that have proven useful in communicating with/delivering follow-up messaging to learners. It can be difficult to know which of the many apps that are on the market is worth investigating. The article [21 Helpful Apps for Teachers and Educators](#) is a good place to begin. LBS organizations with practitioners who have mobile devices may wish to download and try one or more of the listed apps, such as Remind. AlphaPlus delivered a webinar about using Remind in November 2016. Practitioners can review AlphaPlus' [recorded Remind webinar](#) or they can download the [slides](#).

The report examines social media and its potential effects on how, when and what is communicated in LBS programs. It reflects the reality that social media is connected to technology, and that social media allows for the creation and sharing of information and ideas via virtual communities and networks.

Most LBS programs do not have the time or the resources to be proficient in the use of all forms of social media. How, then, does a program decide what to invest in? Forum Research's article, *2015 Canadian Social Media Usage Statistics* includes the following helpful information:

2015	Overall Usage	By Sex		Ages			
Platform	Total %	% Men	% Women	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Facebook	72%	46%	53%	82%	79%	64%	48%
Instagram	28%	43%	56%	56%	28%	11%	4%
LinkedIn	26%	51%	49%	24%	35%	28%	13%
Pinterest	31%	26%	73%	32%	31%	21%	14%
Tumblr	10%	48%	52%	53%	29%	13%	5%
Twitter	23%	54%	46%	40%	36%	16%	7%

Questions around how the use of technology might alleviate the challenges of obtaining client feedback, and exited learners' follow-up information are considered, together with the issue of survey fatigue. The

paper points to the findings of the article In [Myths and realities of respondent engagement in online surveys](#), in which the authors suggest that increasing respondent engagement is based on survey length, topic salience, cognitive burden and frequency of survey requests.

The paper recommends that LBS organizations document the resources they currently invest in client follow up and states that, “if LBS organizations can determine how much client follow up currently costs their organization, especially in terms of human resources, they may find that a new tool is worth investigating, especially if it improves their results and reduces their human resources outlay.”

### ***Tools to Reach Additional Clients***

As the need to stay in touch with LBS learners is so critical, this paper highlights three survey companies: Survey Gizmo, mPoll.me, and Client Heartbeat. There are several free survey instruments on the market that LBS agencies can access, but these survey companies may provide some additional benefits.

	Survey Gizmo	mPoll.me	Client Heartbeat
Url	<a href="https://www.surveygizmo.com/">https://www.surveygizmo.com/</a>	<a href="https://mpoll.me/">https://mpoll.me/</a>	<a href="https://www.clientheartbeat.com/">https://www.clientheartbeat.com/</a>
Benefits and Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists with survey administration across teams (might be useful if you have more than one programming site)</li> <li>Can also be used on an individual level (within one organization)</li> <li>Brand customization (add your logo and organization's colours for consistent branding)</li> <li>40+ types of survey questions</li> <li>Industry leading security</li> <li>Mobile friendly</li> <li>Data analysis and reporting tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average 65% survey response rate</li> <li>All plans come with Custom SenderID (so users know who's contacting them) and real-time results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand customization (add your logo and organization's colours) for consistent branding</li> <li>Sends periodic surveys</li> <li>Average 60% survey response rate</li> <li>Testimonial Widget. Easily display positive testimonials on your website.</li> <li>Log in to your company dashboard to view current and past results for each of your customers or company as a whole.</li> </ul>
On the Downside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more sophisticated program – could be a bit overwhelming for small programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only for mobile devices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No free plan – just a free trial</li> </ul>

### ***Tools to Get Feedback on Website Usability***

Since, increasingly, LBS agencies are relying on their websites to attract and inform their customers, the report provides information on potential products that can provide insight into how customers experience the sites. Below, two such products are compared: Qualaroo and UserTesting.com

	<b>Qualaroo</b>	<b>UserTesting.com</b>
Url	<a href="https://qualaroo.com/">https://qualaroo.com/</a>	<a href="https://www.usertesting.com/">https://www.usertesting.com/</a>
Benefits and Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualaroo makes it easy to survey specific groups of website visitors to gain qualitative information.</li> <li>Get a clear picture of who your customers are, and what they're looking for on your site.</li> <li>Qualaroo surveys lets you target questions to visitors anywhere on your website</li> <li>Offers exit survey options – find out why people are leaving your site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can access different levels of support</li> <li>Get audio, video and written feedback on websites and apps</li> <li>Get videos of real people speaking their thoughts as they use your website or mobile app. Go beyond analytics and understand why users do what they do.</li> </ul>
Pricing	Start-up Plan: \$199/month	Basic: \$99 per video (note: website has offer of \$49/video for first 10 videos) You can request a free trial For more intensive service, you need to get a pricing quote

### ***Tools to Improve Use of Social Media***

The report also reviews several social media communication tools for LBS organizations' consideration: Google Not for Profits, Google Alerts, and Audiense.

	<b>Google for NonProfits</b>	<b>Google Alerts</b>	<b>Audiense</b>
Url	<a href="https://www.google.ca/intl/en/nonprofits/">https://www.google.ca/intl/en/nonprofits/</a>	<a href="https://www.google.ca/alerts#1:1">https://www.google.ca/alerts#1:1</a>	<a href="https://audiense.com/">https://audiense.com/</a>
Benefits and Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free access to Google tools like Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Drive, Google Ad Grants, YouTube for Nonprofits and more</li> <li>Google Ad Grants alone can increase your organization's profile substantially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out everything happening related to literacy. Enter "literacy" or whatever word you choose and find out what's in the news and on social media</li> <li>Keeps you informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build new audiences</li> <li>Understand your audiences</li> <li>Deliver the right experience</li> </ul>
Pricing	Free	Free	From \$31/month

### ***Summary***

The paper concludes that, historically, LBS programs in Ontario have done an excellent job of communicating what they do, how they do it, and the benefits of their work and suggests that as times and technology change, new opportunities for communication develop and require exploration.

## Introduction

Technology is playing an ever-increasing role in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) field, and is used in the teaching of adult learners, in the administration related to delivery, and to communicate with many and varied stakeholders. This paper will focus on Communication and Delivery Technologies and the role they can play in obtaining client feedback and in program delivery.

In this paper, “communication and delivery technologies” refer to the ways in which technology can be used to enhance communication within and from an LBS program, as well as program delivery in Literacy and Basic Skills.

When it comes to communication, LBS agencies have numerous responsibilities and needs. They need to market to new adult learners and to community organizations that may make referrals to their programs. LBS agencies also need to stay in touch with adult learners, volunteers, and community stakeholders. One of the most important communication functions of an LBS program, and often the one that is most challenging, is staying in touch with clients, especially after clients have left the LBS program. Obtaining client feedback is a cornerstone of the LBS program, but LBS learners have limited time, are asked for feedback from many other types of businesses and services, and may experience instability, leading to changing addresses and phone numbers, or limited access to phones. How, then, do LBS programs get the critical information they need for client follow-up?

Traditional methods may no longer be sufficient. The good news is that there is no lack of technology that is designed to assist in communicating with stakeholders. The not-so-good news is that such technology often comes with a price tag. And even the technology that is accessible price-wise may require additional administration and inputting of information.

To support the LBS field, Contact North | Contact Nord has commissioned this research paper to investigate software, apps and social media that may assist LBS programs in not only communicating with their stakeholders, but communicating more effectively, to make the best possible use of program resources.

Throughout this paper, readers will find highlighted text boxes titled “LBS Connection.” The purpose of these boxes is to propose ways in which the information presented might be further explored or applied in an LBS setting. These, of course, are suggestions only.

### Survey Burnout

When it comes to client feedback, there are, of course, mandatory questions that LBS programs must ask of learners after clients have left the program – at 3, 6, and 12 months, with response information to be documented in the EOIS-CaMS system. Getting this follow-up information is very important and realistically, programs currently use a variety of methods to try to get information on how exited learners are faring after their LBS learning has concluded. Such methods include using primary and alternate phone numbers, email, texting, and, should the opportunity present, asking questions during a chance meeting with former learners on the street. Because of the variety of methods required to get client follow-up information, there is no “silver bullet” – no one way to follow up that can be used with every learner, posing challenges for programs that may want to invest in new and emerging technologies to assist with maintaining contact with past learners.



An additional significant challenge for LBS program staff in seeking follow-up information from clients is survey burnout – also known as survey fatigue or as respondent burden.

According to this [article on survey fatigue](#), there are four factors that can create respondent burden:

- The length of the interview/survey
- The amount of effort (cognitive and otherwise) required of the respondent
- The amount of emotional stress a respondent might feel during the interview/survey
- The frequency with which the particular respondent is asked to participate in an interview/survey

Survey fatigue is an issue everywhere, in all sectors, and for every organization – no matter its size. Agencies that have the funding and the time can access many online tools that can assist in increasing survey response rates. However, even agencies that do not have the funding and the time, but know they need to improve their client response rates have some low/no-cost approaches they can try.

### Humanize Surveys

In [Forget Gamification; try writing a humanized survey](#), Annie Pettit suggests going back to basics. It may be tempting to enhance surveys by adding lots of flash or “gamifying” surveys to make them more like games and therefore more enticing to complete. But applying gamification techniques may not be possible for all organizations.

Agencies that do not have the resources to invest in gamification or other methods of soliciting more feedback from learners can continue using online or paper-based surveys, but may wish to consider changing the way the surveys are written. The following table is taken directly from the article and it shows how to “humanize” surveys.

Table 1: Matched Questions From the Traditional and Humanized Surveys

Traditional Survey	Humanized Survey
Thank you for participating in this survey. Your careful and honest opinions help improve existing products and create brand new products.	Thanks a bunch for answering this survey! May the survey force be with you.
Which of the following gaming systems... 1) ...do you currently own? 2) ...have you used in the past 3 months? 3) ...have you used in the past week?	Which systems do you... 1) ...own? 2) ...use? 3) ...use a lot?
What is your favorite video/computer game?	If you could only play one video game for the rest of your life, what game would you choose?
Have you ever lined up at a store so you could be among the first to purchase a new video/computer game?	Are you one of those people who lines up at stores to be the first to buy a new game?
How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about gaming?	Love 'em or hate 'em, what do you think about video games?
What is your opinion about each of the following television shows?	Awesome or terrible, how do you rate these TV shows?
Is there any other information you would like to share with us regarding your opinions and use of video/computer games?	Sharing is caring! Is there anything else you'd like to share about gaming?

Why does the author suggest using more human language? Because surveys have to compete with social networks, and “These online activities have been treating our research responders like human beings since Day 1.”

The author found, during her research on traditional surveys versus humanized surveys, that the implementation of humanized surveys did not cause data quality to suffer. In fact, data quality may even improve. She also found that survey engagement did not suffer and may even be better. Research results may not be strikingly different and the action outcomes can be very similar. So there doesn't appear to be a down side in using a humanized approach to survey development. And given the clients in Literacy and Basic Skills programs, the use of less traditional and technical language may make a lot of sense.



### More Bells and Whistles

LBS agencies that do have a budget for client follow-up or that wish to try something different in an effort to increase client response to follow-up surveys might consider a number of options.

In [Myths and realities of respondent engagement in online surveys](#), the authors recognize that there is a continuum of online survey development:

1. Text only – uses no images at all – extensive use of radio buttons, tick boxes and grids
2. Decoratively visual – uses visual elements (graphics, images, colour) primarily or only to provide visual stimulation that is intended to enhance the respondent experience. Examples include coloured backgrounds, colour or patterned bars that separate the question wording from the response categories, etc.
3. Functionally visual – uses visual and motion elements, often implemented as Flash objects, integrated into the way those questions and categories are presented. For example, response categories are arrayed along a slider bar rather than next to tick boxes; grids are converted to drag-and-drop exercises.
4. Gamified – uses game thinking to make all or portions of the questionnaire engaging. The game may directly relate to the survey content or may exist as a method of increasing respondent engagement somewhat independent of the survey content.

The authors suggest that increasing respondent engagement lies somewhere in the middle of the continuum of survey development. Survey length, topic salience, cognitive burden and frequency of survey requests have the greatest impact on respondent engagement. However, creating a more enjoyable experience for the person completing the survey is still a good goal. For example, a “Functionally Visual web survey design philosophy that eschews mere decoration while avoiding complex game thinking would seem to offer a perfect blend of updated, respondent-friendly design with straightforward, budget-friendly research requirements.”



### Document Investment in Client Follow-Up

Before discussing new tools to use to acquire client feedback, it would be ideal for LBS program staff to know how much of their resources are currently invested in client follow-up. Most LBS program staff are so busy “doing” their work that they may never have taken the time to sit down and determine how much of their resources are currently being used to follow with clients.

Here is a quick tool that agencies may wish to use as a starting point to develop a realistic idea of what portion of their program resources are currently being used to conduct client follow up. Why is knowing this information important? Because there are tools on the market – primarily survey tools – that can be purchased to assist in getting feedback from clients. An initial reaction from many LBS programs might be “But we can’t afford to buy a tool to assist with getting client feedback.” However, if they knew how much client follow-up currently costs their organization, especially in terms of human resources, they may find that a new tool is worth investigating, especially if it improves their results and reduces their human resources outlay.

Activity	No. of hours	Rate per hour	Total
Time spent reviewing documents on EOPG related to learner follow-ups in the fiscal year			
Time spent discussing learner follow-ups at LSP in the fiscal year			
Time spent discussing learner follow-up results and practices with your ETC in the fiscal year			
Time spent discussing learner follow-up results and practices with your Board of Directors in the fiscal year			
Time spent discussing learner follow-up practices with your staff in the fiscal year			
Time spent as a manager analyzing learner follow-up results in the fiscal year			
Time spent as a manager discussing the analysis of follow-up results and developing new practices and processes to increase follow-ups in the fiscal year (i.e., considering changing forms or using social media to increase results)			
Time spent conducting 3-month follow-ups (estimate time per client and multiply by the number of clients) in a fiscal year			
Time spent entering 3-month follow-up data in a fiscal year			
Time spent conducting 6 month follow-ups (estimate time per client and multiply by the number of clients) in a fiscal year			
Time spent entering 6-month follow-up data in a fiscal year			
Time spent conducting 12 month follow-ups (estimate time per client and multiply by the number of clients) in a fiscal year			
Time spent entering 12-month follow-up data in a fiscal year			
Other			
Other			
<b>Total</b>			

### LBS Connector

Whether LBS agencies change the way(s) in which they acquire client feedback or not, knowing how much of their annual budget is spent on this important activity is never time that will be wasted. They can use this information in annual budgeting and in conversations with their Board of Directors/Employment and Training Consultant(s).

## Factors Affecting Communication and Delivery Technologies

It's not possible to discuss communication and delivery technologies without paying due respect to two growing trends: the use of mobile devices to facilitate communication and the ever-growing world of social media, as both impact the ways in which programs can and should communicate with learners and stakeholders. It will be helpful to LBS programs to look at mobile device use and social media specifically within the context of obtaining client feedback.

### Mobile Devices

It wasn't so long ago that nobody had or used mobile devices. Now they are so common, it's difficult for most people to imagine life without them, and the range of mobile devices and the ways in which they are being used is changing and evolving rapidly. Here is a definition of mobile devices:



A mobile device (or handheld computer) is a small computing device, typically, small enough to hold and operate in the hand and having an operating system capable of running mobile apps. These may provide a diverse range of functions. Typically, the device will have a display screen with a small numeric or alphanumeric keyboard or a touchscreen providing a virtual keyboard and buttons (icons) on-screen. Many such devices can connect to the Internet and interconnect with other devices such as car entertainment systems or headsets via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or near field communication (NFC).

*Source: Wikipedia*

Lots of individuals have mobile phones and tablets, great for phoning, texting, shopping online, looking up information when and where it is needed, and playing games. But what do mobile devices have to do with Literacy and Basic Skills programs?

In addition to the possibilities that mobile devices provide for staying in touch with adult learners, mobile devices have given rise to a new term – mobile learning. According to the article [Learning On The Go](#), the demand for mobile devices is strong and getting stronger, leading to three trends:

1. Mobile devices of all kinds are growing in use and demand for these devices is strong – it in fact outstrips demand for desk-top devices
2. Students are using these devices in large numbers – for many, laptops, smartphones and tablets are the devices used to read, search, connect and explore
3. Learning will increasingly require use of, and access to, these devices, since blended learning and online learning are now the norms for how college and university students learn

#### **LBS Connection**

Although the [Learning On The Go](#) article references college and university students doesn't mean there isn't a connection to Literacy and Basic Skills. Blended learning and online learning are alive and well in LBS in Ontario. LBS has numerous e-Channel providers. If an LBS program doesn't offer blended learning, it may wish to consider doing so and think about how mobile devices will play a role in how students access blended learning.

Again, the tendency might be to think that students or learners possess mobile devices, but they use them just to phone and text. When it comes to learning, many students are already using mobile devices to:

- Access the learning management system for the courses they are taking
- Use online collaboration tools
- Use the devices for note taking, searching for relevant material or checking facts
- Access e-textbooks, library services or readings shared online
- Use social media
- Access simulations and games
- Use e-portfolios to record their work and capture competencies, assessment and feedback



#### **LBS Connection**

Consider how LBS programs create opportunities for learners to use mobile devices. Do they offer mobile devices for learners to use? As funding in LBS may not stretch to include such purchases, do they have a wish list of such devices in hand to share with service clubs or with MAESD if there is an opportunity?

Simply having mobile devices does not translate into successful mobile learning. The *Learning On The Go* article referenced above makes two critical points that LBS programs may wish to consider in their ongoing planning and development. First, the successful use of mobile devices in learning is impacted significantly by the ability (or lack thereof) of instructors to integrate mobile device use in learning. It cannot be assumed that just because a learner uses a smartphone to text and email, that the same learner knows how to effectively use that same mobile device for mobile learning.

#### **LBS Connection**

Do LBS programs consider mobile device usage as a topic for practitioner professional development? Do they have any learning materials, tasks, or activities that are designed to introduce learners to basic mobile devices and how to use such devices effectively for mobile learning? Given that some learners are going to move on into other educational settings once they leave LBS, these are important skills for learners to have.

Clearly, mobile device usage is currently a factor in successful learning and communication within a program. It is critical that LBS practitioners and managers recognize that increasing numbers of learners will seek to connect with their program using their mobile devices.

## LBS Connection

To prepare for the increased desire among learners to use their mobile devices more actively in their literacy programming, LBS providers may wish to review apps that have proven useful in communicating with/delivering follow-up messaging to learners. It can be difficult to know which of the many apps that are on the market are worth investigating. The article [21 Helpful Apps for Teachers and Educators](#) is a good place to begin. LBS organizations with practitioners who have mobile devices may wish to download and try one or more of the listed apps, such as Remind. AlphaPlus delivered a webinar about using Remind in November 2016. Practitioners can review AlphaPlus' [recorded Remind webinar](#) or they can download the [slides](#).

The learning and technology environment is always changing and evolving so organizations and practitioners are reminded that newer lists of up-and-coming apps will be developed over time and should be viewed for consideration.

This paper will now look at social media and its potential effects on how, when and what is communicated in LBS programs. Although some practitioners may perceive that students are already spending too much time on social networking sites, [a recent study](#) by Dr. Terry Anderson showed the more students use social media, the more they are interested in using these powerful tools to aide their formal education activities. This study is one of [three](#) offered by Dr. Terry Anderson that explore the learning management system (LMS), social media, and personal learning environments – and how they might best be used for enhanced teaching and learning.



## Social Media

Social media...whether an LBS agency uses it or not, there is no doubt that social media is gaining steam. And social media usage extends far beyond using Facebook to update followers on what is being purchased in the grocery store.

Wikipedia defines social media this way:

Social media are computer-mediated technologies that allow the creating and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available introduces challenges of definition. However, there are some common features.



- Social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications.
- User-generated content, such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions, are the lifeblood of social media.
- Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization.
- Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals and/or groups.

A couple of key points emerge from this definition. First, the successful use of social media is indeed connected to technology. And second, social media allows for the creation and sharing of information and ideas via virtual communities and networks.

### LBS Connection

Consider the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF) competencies. At a glance, at least five of the six could be integrated with social media use:

- Find and Use Information
- Communicate Ideas and Information
- Use Digital Technology
- Manage Learning
- Engage with Others

And it's quite likely that creative practitioners can find ways to introduce the use of numbers and social media. For example, practitioners could look at statistics related to who uses what forms of social media!

### Social Media Platforms and Applications

As the use of social media becomes more common, statisticians and marketers have begun to dissect social media usage to determine which type(s) of social media appeal to which demographics.

Here is a review of some of the most commonly used social media platforms and how they are used. LBS programs may already use one or more of these platforms/applications.

Application	What is it?	Who is it intended/used for?
<b>Facebook</b>	An online social networking website where people can create profiles, share information about themselves, and respond or link to the information posted by others	Becoming less popular with youth and more popular with 65+; still very popular
<b>Instagram</b>	Online mobile photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service	Popular with 18-29 year olds
<b>LinkedIn</b>	Business-oriented social networking service; allows users to create profiles and connections to each other	Older age demographic – 100 million users over 50; most popular among 30 to 49 year olds; skews towards men
<b>Pinterest</b>	Free – requires registration to use; videos and images; personalized media platform	Used more by women than men; not just for “hobbies” anymore
<b>Tumblr</b>	Microblogging platform and social networking site	Users spend a fair amount of time on the site. ½ of users are teen and college-age; more urban-oriented
<b>Twitter</b>	A free social messaging service for sending and receiving short messages in real time	Used more by individuals 49 and under, including youth. Used more in urban areas than rural.

#### LBS Connection

Are there any social media platforms or applications on this list that are unfamiliar? Do staff have knowledge of social media? Is there any agency succession plan that includes social media communication?



### Social Media Statistics

Most LBS programs don't have the time or the resources to be proficient in the use of all forms of social media. How, then, does a program decide what to invest in? How is it determined which type(s) of social media are going to be integrated into program delivery? Communication practices? Marketing and outreach?

An excellent [article](#) on social media statistics in Canada, conducted by Forum Research in 2015, reveals some interesting information which LBS programs may wish to bear in mind as they consider their communication and delivery practices.

- Facebook is still the top social network in Canada, followed by LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram
- LinkedIn and Instagram usage is increasing – Facebook and Twitter growth has leveled off

2015	Overall Usage	By Sex		Ages			
Platform	Total %	% Men	% Women	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Facebook	72%	46%	53%	82%	79%	64%	48%
Instagram	28%	43%	56%	56%	28%	11%	4%
LinkedIn	26%	51%	49%	24%	35%	28%	13%
Pinterest	31%	26%	73%	32%	31%	21%	14%
Tumblr	10%	48%	52%	53%	29%	13%	5%
Twitter	23%	54%	46%	40%	36%	16%	7%

2015	Overall Usage	Annual Income per year				Location		
Platform	Total %	Less than 30K	30K-49	50K-75	More than 75K	Urban	Suburban	Rural
Facebook	72%	25%	25%	22%	27%	34%	33%	31%
Instagram	28%	23%	25%	28%	24%	41%	36%	23%
LinkedIn	26%	15%	19%	29%	37%	44%	38%	17%
Pinterest	31%	18%	28%	31%	22%	28%	37%	34%
Tumblr	10%	41%	20%	10%	28%	59%	30%	11%
Twitter	23%	23%	21%	27%	28%	45%	32%	23%

### Helpful take-aways:

- Facebook is the most used form of social media. It's more popular with women than with men (53% vs 46%). 82% of youth respondents use it. Facebook is well used by all demographics, ranging from 48% with 65+ to 82% with 18-29 year olds. Facebook use is split equally across all socio-economic brackets. It is used marginally less in rural areas (31% versus 34% in urban areas)
- LinkedIn is used a lot among 30-49 year olds; It's used more by those with higher incomes and by those who live in urban areas
- Pinterest is the second most popular form of social media; Women outnumber men in its use by 3:1. Most popular with younger demographics (18-29 and 30-49)



- Youth (18-29) use Instagram a lot
- Tumblr is used a lot among youth and is very popular in urban areas. Tumblr is a site for short-term blogging.
- Twitter appeals to women and men, more with younger demographics; cuts across socio-economic brackets, but is more used in urban areas

### LBS Connection

An interesting and worthwhile activity might be to compare the profile of learners who are currently attending an LBS program (and the profile of learners who would be ideal to have attending the program) with the types of social media that are in use. Doing so should provide some insights into which types of social media are most likely to provide value to the program. For each type of social media that appears promising, consider setting some modest goals for how each form of social media will be used – in delivery, in marketing, in ongoing communication and in client follow-up.

### Social Media Guidance and Training

The article on social media usage referenced earlier contains some helpful links to sites that can assist LBS managers and practitioners in becoming more knowledgeable about, and proficient in, social media use:

- <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/530/educational-webinars-about-linkedin?lang=en> for resources on using LinkedIn
- Facebook marketing – Canadian social media queen – Mari Smith: <https://marismith.infusionsoft.com/go/main/Melody/>
- <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-grow-your-periscope-audience-with-twitter/> to learn how to use Periscope to increase your Twitter audience
- Wishpond – social contests and offer coupons (free and paid options): <http://mbsy.co/cN7MZ>; <https://www.wishpond.com/social-promotions/>

In addition, Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) has produced some excellent modules about Social Media, including how to market using:

- Blogs
- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Twitter
- Video

You can access these useful marketing materials [here](#).

### Social Media Management

The goal with this research paper is not to delve too deeply into social media management, but since several forms of social media have been highlighted as ways to stay in touch with and communicate with clients and stakeholders, it would be remiss not to mention that there are tools that have evolved to manage the multiple social media platforms that a single agency might be using.

Once such tool is [Hootsuite](#). Hootsuite is no/low-cost (free trial to \$9.99/month) and it enables an organization to manage multiple social media accounts more efficiently. AlphaPlus looks at how LBS programs can use Hootsuite in the [Featured Technology](#) section of AlphaPlus' website.

If Hootsuite is not an appropriate social media management tool for your organization, [TweetDeck](#) and [Social Defender](#) are also quite popular.

### Client Feedback

So far, this paper has reviewed mobile devices and how their use is increasing and impacting learning. It has also covered how social media is becoming increasingly popular and is being used by different demographics. What's notable is that these two topics – mobile devices and social media usage – are difficult to isolate from one another. The reality is that many people use mobile devices to connect to and use social media! It will be helpful, then, to LBS programs to look at mobile device use and social media specifically within the context of obtaining client feedback.



### Focus Groups

To gain information on some of the ways that LBS programs and support organizations use communication and delivery technologies, two focus groups were held in researching this report – one with Community-Based Literacy and Basic Skills Programs and one with Literacy Support Organizations.

### Learnings from Community-Based Programs

- Multiple methods of collecting client data must be used by programs
- Questions don't always meet program needs
- A mixed method approach may generate better results
- Need more efficient ways to get the data
- Multiple people involved in the process – lots of steps along the way
- Having a tool to streamline the "steps" might be more efficient
- Questions about security of data and connecting third-party software to EOIS-CaMS

### Learnings from Literacy Support Organizations

- Support organizations are using more communication technology to manage shrinking budgets
- Constant need to get feedback and show accountability
- Different ways technology is used to facilitate conversations
  - Holding Meetings
  - Basecamp
  - SurveyMonkey/FluidSurveys
  - Professional Development
  - Program Management and Content Development
  - Communication with Staff
  - Boards of Director (communication)
  - Dropbox/the Cloud/Google Drive
  - Literacy Service Planning
  - Registrations (EventBrite, MailChimp, Constant Contact)
  - Doodle Polls
  - Big Blue Button/Blue Jeans
- Gap – support orgs need help with capacity building around technology
- Support organizations don't use social media to full effect.

### Last Year's Survey Said!

Last year, Contact North | Contact Nord commissioned a survey of the Employment Ontario field to find out what types of strategies were being explored via programs' continued efforts to get feedback from clients. The chart below shows that texting and Facebook were the most popular methods being explored.

**Please tell us what programs or methods you are using.**

Program of Method	# of Respondents
Texting	10
Facebook	18
Twitter	7
LinkedIn	2
Email	7
Cellphones	2
Phone	1
SurveyMonkey	1
Survey via Google Docs	1
Google Forms	1
Website	3
Call directly whenever time	1

Survey respondents were able to identify more than one method for this question and several did so, showing that not only are some programs moving in the direction of using social media and mobile devices to gather client/learner feedback, but they are using multiple methods/types of software in their efforts. Most programs are currently using Facebook to gather feedback from clients/learners, with texting coming in as the second most popular method. Twitter and email share the third spot for getting feedback from clients/and learners.

When asked how effective these methods were in garnering customer feedback, only 5% of respondents said “not at all effective.” The other respondents indicated that using these methods was either “somewhat effective,” “very effective,” or “more effective than traditional methods.” Twenty percent of respondents indicated that “they haven’t had the time to evaluate how effective these methods were.” However, an LBS program’s ability to get client feedback is very important in our current model of accountability.



When asked about challenges in using social media and/or mobile devices to get feedback from clients, a significant number of respondents (44.3%) noted that one of the challenges to using social media/mobile devices to gather client feedback is having to change the way the agency does business, while almost an equal number (39.3%) cited lack of time to research and investigate the use of these methods as the main challenge. A lack of access to the technology and to social media at work were identified as challenges by almost 30% of respondents (11.5% and 21.3% respectively). A further 13.1% of respondents identified costs as being a challenge.

Additional challenges that were identified through the comments part of this question included concerns about potentially rapid changes in technology and a program’s ability to keep pace with this type of change. Some respondents indicated that their clients don’t have physical access to social media/mobile devices and/or that those clients who do may struggle to use it/them to communicate with the program. Other concerns included a lack of policies around the use of social media/mobile devices as well as concerns related to privacy and confidentiality

#### LBS Connection

Changes in social media platforms and in types of mobile devices can be very difficult to keep up with. Yet, given how much individuals in Ontario, including LBS learners, use both social media and mobile devices, LBS programs cannot afford to stay the course and hope these trends will go away. LBS programs have an important role to play to assist learners in understanding how to use social media and mobile devices to give feedback and to learn.

One final resource that LBS organizations might find helpful to review is: [Customer Feedback, Customer Service](#) - September 24, 2013 By Ross Beard.

The table that follows reviews the potential strategies and tools together with other factors that LBS organizations can use to help guide their planning to acquire learner feedback.

Strategy	Advantages	How-to?	Cost? Value?
Client Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get more accurate feedback from clients</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Client Heartbeat</a>	\$59/month - \$89/month 5-10 users; 500-1000 contacts You set up the survey once and then this service will follow up. Would it be valuable in saving time for follow-ups? Pilot?
Behavioural Insight Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When visitors are viewing specific pages that are important to you, use Qualaroo to ask personalized questions to get feedback and then offer a solution to help.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Qualaroo</a>  <a href="#">Google Consumer Surveys</a>  <a href="http://www.keysurvey.com">www.keysurvey.com</a>  Qeryz	Qualaroo is expensive – touts that it will help you better understand your customers
Mobile Device Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These platforms give you the ability to build and deliver mobile surveys that are distributed via a simple text message.</li> <li>It's estimated that people look at their cell phones 150 times a day</li> <li>Send surveys in real time to catch real-time feedback</li> </ul>	<a href="#">mPoll.me</a>  <a href="#">Ask Nicely</a>	You can embed video and images into your surveys \$49/month plus a free trial. Can get more expensive packages  mPollme.com - \$19/month to \$199/month. You can get the number of surveys you need – 200-2000. Good for mobile devices. Customize each survey to your logo, brand and colours and add links to your website. 65% average response rate 95% of mpoll surveys are completed within 2 hours; 99% who start go on to complete.

Strategy	Advantages	How-to?	Cost? Value?
Usability Testing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tool that can help you conduct usability tests on your website, web-based app, or even mobile app - offers a range of services in which real people actually use your online product or website, actively record their screen and give you actionable feedback.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://UserTesting.com">UserTesting.com</a>	It provides actionable insights from your target users. It's \$49/video for your first 10 videos. Watch the videos of users. Random site viewers share their thoughts on the usability of your site.
Monitor Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hear what people are saying about your organization on social media – good indirect customer feedback</li> <li>Use key words related to your brand</li> </ul>	<a href="http://Sprout Social">Sprout Social</a>  <a href="http://SocialBro">SocialBro</a>  <a href="http://Google Alerts">Google Alerts</a>	Social media engagement and management software \$49/month SocialBro is now Audiense. Might be good for networks... <a href="http://lifehacker.com/five-creative-uses-for-google-alerts-475278626">http://lifehacker.com/five-creative-uses-for-google-alerts-475278626</a> Free and interesting for snooping!
Website Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See where on your site visitors are getting stuck. If nothing else, target the FAQ part of your site</li> </ul>	<a href="http://Google Analytics (free)">Google Analytics (free)</a>	Learn as much as possible about how users are experiencing your site.
Customer Feedback Portals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24/7 feedback from customers</li> </ul>	<a href="http://UserVoice">UserVoice</a> ; <a href="http://Get Satisfaction">Get Satisfaction</a>	Get Satisfaction is now owned by Sprinklr. UserVoice is \$200/month.
In-App Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-app customer feedback gives you insight into how your customers actually use your product.</li> </ul>	<a href="http://Intercom.io">Intercom.io</a>	Might be interesting to look at for learner re-engagement

## Recommendations for Piloting

In this section of the report, several suggestions are offered for LBS organizations to consider if the need and opportunity arise to try new technology to assist with communication processes. Survey companies that may assist LBS programs in reaching additional clients are explored, along with online tools that provide feedback on website usability and online tools that can provide insight into social media usage.

### Tools to Reach Additional Clients

The process of following up on clients can be challenging. In some agencies, there are hundreds of learners who need to be contacted, and multiple staff who are involved in the process of following up. Smaller agencies may not have as many follow-ups to complete, but they generally have less in the way of human and financial resources.

As the need to stay in touch with LBS learners is so critical three survey companies are highlighted: Survey Gizmo, mPoll.me, and Client Heartbeat. There are several free survey instruments on the market that LBS agencies can access, but these survey companies may provide some additional benefits, such as branding potential (learners may respond better if they see an agency logo they recognize), mobile device compatibility, or an opportunity to schedule follow-up surveys. The following chart provides some additional details about uses and pricing, as well as links to websites for these services.



	Survey Gizmo	mPoll.me	Client Heartbeat
Link	<a href="https://www.surveygizmo.com/">https://www.surveygizmo.com/</a>	<a href="https://mpoll.me/">https://mpoll.me/</a>	<a href="https://www.clientheartbeat.com/">https://www.clientheartbeat.com/</a>
Benefits and Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assists with survey administration across teams (might be useful if you have more than one programming site)</li> <li>Can also be used on an individual level (within one organization)</li> <li>Brand customization (add your logo and organization's colours for consistent branding)</li> <li>40+ types of survey questions</li> <li>Industry leading security</li> <li>Mobile friendly</li> <li>Data analysis and reporting tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average 65% survey response rate</li> <li>All plans come with Custom SenderID (so users know who's contacting them) and real-time results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand customization (add your logo and organization's colours) for consistent branding</li> <li>Sends periodic surveys</li> <li>Average 60% survey response rate</li> <li>Testimonial Widget. Easily display positive testimonials on your website.</li> <li>Log in to your organization dashboard to view current and past results for each of your customers or company as a whole.</li> </ul>
On the Downside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A more sophisticated program – could be a bit overwhelming for small programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only for mobile devices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No free plan – just a free trial</li> </ul>
Pricing	<p>Individual plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free plan offers unlimited surveys, unlimited questions, unlimited responses, standard reports.</li> <li>Basic plan is \$25/month and offers everything the free plan does plus brand customization and email/chat support</li> <li>Also a Professional plan for \$75/month</li> </ul> <p>Team plans: You must email for a price quote</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free plan gives you 50 surveys and email support</li> <li>Silver plan is \$19/month and gives you 200 surveys and email support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic plan is \$29/month for 1 user, 50 contacts and unlimited surveys</li> <li>Gold plan is \$59/month for 5 users, 500 contacts and unlimited surveys</li> </ul>



### Tools to Get Feedback on Website Usability

Increasingly, literacy organizations are relying on their websites to attract and inform their customers. There are some products on the market that are designed to provide insight into how customers experience websites. Below, two such products are compared: Qualaroo and UserTesting.com

	Qualaroo	UserTesting.com
Link	<a href="https://qualaroo.com/">https://qualaroo.com/</a>	<a href="https://www.usertesting.com/">https://www.usertesting.com/</a>
Benefits and Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualaroo makes it easy to survey specific groups of website visitors to gain qualitative information.</li> <li>Get a clear picture of who your customers are, and what they're looking for on your site.</li> <li>Qualaroo surveys lets you target questions to visitors anywhere on your website</li> <li>Offers exit survey options – find out why people are leaving your site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can access different levels of support</li> <li>Get audio, video and written feedback on websites and apps</li> <li>Get videos of real people speaking their thoughts as they use your website or mobile app. Go beyond analytics and understand why users do what they do.</li> </ul>
Pricing	Start-up Plan: \$199/month	Basic: \$99 per video (note: website has offer of \$49/video for first 10 videos) You can request a free trial For more intensive service, you need to get a pricing quote

### Tools to Improve Use of Social Media

In a similar fashion, literacy organizations are using social media to communicate messages about literacy. Here, three tools that literacy organizations might find useful are reviewed: Google Not for Profits, Google Alerts, and Audiense.

	Google for NonProfits	Google Alerts	Audiense
Link	<a href="https://www.google.ca/intl/en/nonprofits/">https://www.google.ca/intl/en/nonprofits/</a>	<a href="https://www.google.ca/alerts#1:1">https://www.google.ca/alerts#1:1</a>	<a href="https://audiense.com/">https://audiense.com/</a>
Benefits and Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free access to Google tools like Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Drive, Google Ad Grants, YouTube for Nonprofits and more</li> <li>Google Ad Grants alone can increase your organization's profile substantially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out everything happening related to literacy. Enter "literacy" or whatever word you choose and find out what's in the news and on social media</li> <li>Keeps you informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build new audiences</li> <li>Understand your audiences</li> <li>Deliver the right experience</li> </ul>
Pricing	Free	Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From \$31/month</li> </ul>

## Summary

Knowing when and how to get additional feedback from clients and stakeholders can be a tricky business for many LBS programs in Ontario. The goal of this paper has been to acknowledge some of the challenges facing LBS agencies in communicating with clients and stakeholders, such as survey fatigue. It has also identified some significant environmental trends, such as mobile device use and social media, which have and will continue to impact communication with clients and other stakeholders. Finally, additional tools to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of communicating with clients and stakeholders have been reviewed.

Historically, LBS programs in Ontario have done an excellent job of communicating what they do, how they do it, and the benefits of their work. As times and technology change, new opportunities for communication will develop and require exploration. It is hoped that the contents of this paper will offer LBS agencies in Ontario potential tools to try as well as food for thought as they continue to explore their needs related to communication and delivery technologies.