# White Paper: Automating a Social Media Presence

### Author: Nate Hoffelder

Context: Social media is a great place for our client (a coworking space named CWS) to find new members, but the client can’t afford to maintain a live presence on social media. This white paper explains how to build a chain of automated tools that will find relevant content on social networks and post the content through our client’s social media accounts.

## Intended Outcome:

* Give the client the ability to manage a social media presence that requires only 20 minutes a day.

## Required Tools:

* Social media accounts
* IFTTT (a free online automation tool)
* Buffer (a subscription-based social media management tool)

## Preparation:

* Set up accounts with IFTTT and Buffer. Note: You will likely require a paid Buffer account. It currently costs $144 per year.
* Grant Buffer access to each of your social media accounts. This will enable it to post updates on your behalf.
* In Buffer, set up a schedule for each social media account to post 4 updates per day during working hours.
* Create one IFTTT account for each social media account Give each IFTTT account permission to access one of your social media accounts and access the same account in Buffer.

## The Process:

Identify four to six Twitter accounts that actively share links to blog posts and news stories that will be of interest to the client’s audience (customers and potential customers). Each of those accounts will be referred to as SOURCE. Create an IFTTT applet that accepts one Twitter SOURCE as input (“if this”) and outputs to Buffer (“that”) Twitter account. If the client does not have a Twitter account, skip this step.

Repeat the above steps for the client’s Facebook and other social media accounts.

## Observations:

* Take time to validate your SOURCES. If you have to remove too many updates from a source, abandon the SOURCE.
* Finding relevant SOURCES could be difficult. You may need to opt for a more general news focus rather than one designed specifically for your target audience.
* In early 2018 Twitter and Facebook have changed their rules on automated posts. The process described in this white paper complies with existing rules when it was written, but that could change in the future.
* Buffer will automatically post the updates fed into it, but it still requires some supervision. This is why someone will need to spend around twenty (20) minutes a day curating the updates queued in Buffer. Delete the updates that refer to specific events hosted elsewhere, as well as any updates that sound like a personal update (“I just got coffee at Starbucks”). The goal is to post updates that create a professional impression.
* If you perform the curation, the resulting social media feeds will look appealing and like you are on social networks all the time. As a result, your audience will talk to you on social media. You will need to monitor your social media accounts and respond to your audience. Be professional, but also take care to respond as a person rather than as a business.
* For optimal results, you will need to spend additional time writing your own updates. Occasionally ask questions, share stories and photos, tell your audience about events your company will be attending, and retweet/reshare updates posted by your audience. In short, carry on a conversation. Combining source posts with a client’s posts makes for the most effective social media account.
* Hashtags are the key to getting noticed and building an audience. Use relevant tags in your updates.

## Conclusion:

This was an interesting technical exercise but I don’t plan to use it in the future, and I don’t recommend that you use it either. Yes, it works, but this is not the best way to promote yourself on social media. Ideally one should share updates that are unique and personal. This is why I recommend rather than auto-share a post’s title plus a link, instead share a summary sentence and the link.

But if you want to implement this idea, here is my contact info.

### Contact

Nate Hoffelder

nate@ValiantChicken.com

571-406-2689

Dale City VA 22913