

Over the next few days, we shall consider how some of our favourite media-related pastimes can improve our well-being.

Even solitary hobbies have social and collaborative possibilities, and we shall be exploring these in more detail this week.

Below are just a few ways you can share your interests and engage with other people, whilst doing what you love.

Social Media

An increasingly wide range of social media platforms gives you the flexibility to share your interests in a format of your choosing, with your preferred audience.

If you're new to social networking, or want to ensure you're using it securely, there's some great advice on the National Cyber Security Centre website: [How to use social media safely](#).

Once you're safely set up, here are two examples of how social media platforms can be used to share your hobby:

- “**Bookstagram**” is the portmanteau literature-lovers are using to describe an Instagram post showcasing their current read (usually an arty photo of the book, set against an aesthetically relevant background).



And with Instagram's comparatively generous caption limit (2200 characters) you can accompany the image with a review of the book.

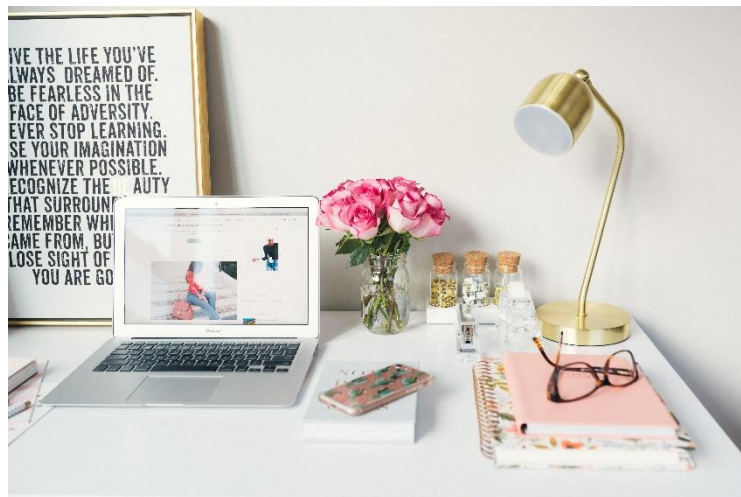
Intrigued? This article from The Independent, explains further: [How the #bookstagram movement has changed the way fiction is marketed, reviewed and read](#).

- Creating a **Facebook** group around a particular pastime can be an ideal way to bring together people who share that hobby.

For example, if you have a passion for gaming, you could set up a group for your friends where you share hints and tips, and review/recommend video games.

Blog

Definition: *A regularly updated website, where an individual (or small group) writes about events or topics of interest to them, usually in an informal or conversational style.*



Why start a blog?

Blogging is a great way to share your interests, whilst improving your writing skills. Provide fresh insights to your readership, whilst creating a living record of your hobby!

For example, you could start a blog journaling your viewing habits, by reviewing and rating episodes of your favourite TV show.

Get started!

[WordPress](#) is a widely used website builder which allows you to create a blog for free.

The WordPress website also offers plenty of helpful support for [setting up a blog](#).

Podcast

Definition: *A spoken word digital audio file, which you publish on the internet for people to listen to, on-demand. Essentially, a pre-recorded talk radio programme which can be accessed online, at any time.*

Podcasts are usually episodic and follow a particular theme or subject.

Why start a podcast?

It can be daunting, recording your voice and opinions for an audience, but it's also a fun way to share your interests and involve your friends.

Podcasts also offer lots of flexibility: they can be any length, frequency, or format you wish. And they can cover ANY topic – it's your podcast, about your hobby.



Get started!

To start your own podcast, you'll need the following equipment:

- A **recording device**, with a **microphone**.
- Some Podcast **recording software** installed on your device – so you can record, edit and upload your podcast.

There are plenty of free software tools available to download (e.g. Audacity, Anchor).

Once you have the equipment, you need to decide upon the following:

- A **concept** for your podcast: what topic or area of interest will you be focusing on?

- Will you record **solo**, or recruit a **co-host** who shares your hobby?
- A **catchy name**, which conveys what your podcast is about whilst being broad enough for you to introduce other topics and subjects further down the line.
- **Length and frequency**. Will your episodes be five-minute snippets twice a week, an hour every fortnight, two hours each week... whatever suits your schedule.
- **Episode structure**. Whatever episode length you go for, having a vague structure/outline makes recording easier and stops you drifting off-topic.
- **Cover art**. This is usually the first thing people see when they're searching through a podcast app, so make sure it's eye-catching!

Now, you're ready to record, edit and launch your podcast to the world!

For more hints and tips, the BBC Academy has developed '[Podcastology](#)' – a series dedicated to the art of making great podcasts that audiences will love.

PowerPoint

PowerPoint was first launched in 1987, but it's still the go-to presentation tool for many of us, and a useful aid to classroom teaching.

Here are a couple of suggestions for ways in which you can put this old software to new uses:

- **Quizzes**: If you're a film-buff, you could create a movie quiz for your friends. Make your quiz stand out by [embedding YouTube clips](#) into your PowerPoint!
- **Do a 'Jackanory'**: PowerPoint allows you to add narration to your slideshow. Read aloud a favourite poem or children's book to images of your choosing – you could make your kids the stars of their favourite bedtime story!

[How to add and record audio](#)