

The five subjects in our cover photo are more than avatars lost in the mix. Each is a distinct, well-known identity in the world of Memphis social media. And each comes at social media with different goals and perspectives. We asked each to tell us what they felt were the limitations and possibilities of social media:

Tweet



Joe Spake @memphisRLST8:

It seems that some users who want to use it in some way for marketing try to use it as a one way, broadcast medium. They put lots of stock and credibility in gaining friends and followers – working the numbers, but don't seem sincerely interested in the two-way part of the equation.



Chris Vernon @ChrisVernonShow:

The limitation that stands out to me is the way things can be interpreted, but that is getting better as people follow me for a longer time. At first, I was getting a ton of messages asking me if I was being serious when I thought everyone would recognize the sarcasm.



Margot McNeeley @projgreenfork:

Social media will never take the place of one-on-one, person-to-person communication and nor should it. I've never believed that sensitive and important issues should be communicated any other way than in person.



Richard Thompson @MLGW:

It's also challenging to explain what can be complex issues to individual customers on platforms like Twitter. You also have to take greater steps to protect customer privacy when using social media.



Shea Flinn @FlinnShady:

There's a lot of self-promotion on there that becomes white noise. People I get most annoyed with and consider unfollowing are people who are just constantly linking. There's an element of inanity to it.



Chris Vernon @ChrisVernonShow:

I speak as someone with a newborn who connects with my parents several times weekly and they can see their grandchild. I taught my 62-year-old father to use the technology in five minutes.



Joe Spake @memphisRLST8:

However, there is great potential for abuse: interruption marketing, spam, propaganda, all directed from the one-way communication point of view or in trying to dominate the "conversation."



Margot McNeeley @projgreenfork:

Restaurateurs that are Project Green Fork certified are really the members but so many people are interested in supporting the efforts of these restaurants, so a Facebook fan base or following us on twitter gives them a place to go to stay informed, even if they don't own a restaurant.



Chris Vernon @ChrisVernonShow:

I think real time reporting will get to the point where everything does not have to be confirmed by multiple sources, etc. And I don't think that is a good thing. The old rules that were in place to assure accuracy will be gone in favor of being able to keep up with others not abiding by those guidelines.



Shea Flinn @FlinnShady:

Certain industries are going to benefit more. The more interaction they have to have with the public, the greater the benefit.



Richard Thompson @MLGW:

Only a small percentage of MLGW customers are on social media, but these customers are integral in helping us spread awareness about important issues, like energy conservation and more, as well as outage information.



Margot McNeeley @projgreenfork:

I'm not sure what the future holds, I'm really just enjoying the ability to communicate with a broader base of people right now. Currently, it's enough for me to keep up with two Web sites, four e-mail addresses, Twitter account, and two Facebook pages and my cell phone!



Shea Flinn @FlinnShady:

I try to be very apolitical on it. I use it for the social aspect of it. I see a lot of politicians on there and its self promoting. You need to be doing your own tweets or Facebook postings and not pass that on down to a paid political operative.