



Digital Quicksand

AVOIDING SOCIAL MEDIA
OCD



By Laura Stack,
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ABOUT THE PRODUCTIVITY PRO, INC.



Laura Stack, MBA, CSP, has consulted with Fortune 500 corporations for nearly 20 years in the field of personal productivity. She helps her clients achieve Maximum Results in Minimum Time® and develop high-performance cultures. She is the president of The Productivity Pro®, Inc., which specializes in productivity improvement in high-stress organizations. Since 1992, Laura has presented keynotes and seminars on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces. She is one of a handful of professional speakers whose business focuses solely on time management and productivity topics. Laura is a high-energy, high-content speaker, who educates, entertains, and motivates professionals to improve workplace productivity.

Laura is the bestselling author of four books, including *SuperCompetent: The Six Keys to Perform at Your Productive Best* (Wiley, 2010); *The Exhaustion Cure* (Broadway Books, 2008), *Find More Time* (Broadway Books, 2006), and the bestselling *Leave the Office Earlier* (Broadway Books, 2004), which was hailed as "the best of the bunch" by the *New York Times*. Her books have been published in nine countries and translated into six foreign languages, including Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Italian, and Romanian. She is also a contributor to two of the popular *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books. Laura's popular monthly electronic newsletter has subscribers in 38 countries. She is a Microsoft Certified Application Specialist in Outlook.

Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of employee productivity and workplace issues, she has been featured nationally on the CBS Early Show, CNN, NPR, Bloomberg, NBC TV, WB News, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *WashingtonPost.com*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *O Magazine*, *Entrepreneur*, *Readers Digest*, and *Forbes* magazine. Laura has been a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Skillsoft, Office Depot, and Xerox, and she is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer. Her client list includes top Fortune 500 companies, including Starbucks, Wal-Mart, IBM, GM, MillerCoors, Lockheed Martin, Wells Fargo, and Time Warner, plus a multitude of associations and governmental agencies.

Laura holds an MBA in Organizational Management (University of Colorado, 1991), integrating the importance of productivity in business with employee retention and satisfaction. She is the 2011-2012 President of the National Speakers Association (NSA) and is the recipient of the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, NSA's highest earned designation.

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Digital Media - Avoiding Social Media OCD

By Laura Stack, MBA, CSP

Social Media has become another huge obsessive-compulsive disorder! Like it or not, sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter are here to stay. I know that many businesses and individuals are finding interesting ways to use these social networks and interactive online types of media to do pretty amazing things. They use them to build their brands and to get to know their customers. What about you? Where do you stand in this whole world called “Web 2.0”? Perhaps, you have avoided it all together or maybe you’re an addict. It could be really wasting your time at work. Possibly, you are somewhere in between. Most technology, like email and social networking, can be great tools but lousy masters!

What is social media for you? Is it a useful way to spend your time OR is it a sinkhole of what I call “attractive distraction”? You could literally spend all day going from site to site, updating your information and connecting with people all over the world. How does that really add to your daily productivity? I am going to share a few tips on how to deal with all the types of interactive media out there.

1. Understand why you are doing it.

My audiences are from a variety of backgrounds. If you are consultant in social media or an internet marketer, your reasons and uses would be very different than other people. If you’re trying to build a brand as I am, it could really make sense. Therefore, it’s really important to understand exactly what you’re trying to do. The biggest reason that otherwise productive, well-intentioned people end up wasting a ton of time is that they never really sat down and figured out what they were trying to accomplish. Are

you trying to build a brand, interact with clients, or reach out to new prospects? It isn't really about how many new friends or followers or readers you have. You have to establish reasonable, meaningful goals. If there is absolutely no reason for you to be on social media during the day, then you shouldn't even log in to it, unless it's your lunch hour, or you've been given permission to check in on certain sites on your off time. If you have goals, such as if you are in Sales, you need to establish "What is this going to mean for me?" Maybe it means you have the goal of establishing one new lead per week. Perhaps you are trying to generate awareness and your goal could be, "I'm going to post industry-related content once a day." You might want to extend your brand and your goal would be, "I want to be the online resource for customers and prospects" and determine how to reach out to people. These are just examples, but you need to know what this means to you.

2. Choose a few key targets that make sense to you.

Once you have your goal established, you can go out and choose a few key targets that make sense to you. One of my favorites is LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a great site that allows you to create a professional profile for the purpose of making business contacts online. Most users see this site as a relatively no-nonsense one. It is a great resource for building professional relationships and reaching out to people you need to meet virtually to assist you in your work. I have 1000+ contacts currently, all of whom I have either met, networked with, done business with or would be willing to refer to others. When you first look at LinkedIn, you'll see it has your picture, any status updates you have inputted, your current job, your past job, your education, your recommendations and your websites. You can go through and see using mine as an example at www.linkedin.com/in/laurastack. You can summarize your background and experience and explain your specialties. What's powerful about LinkedIn is how it relates to other types of social media that you employ, such as blogs. I have my blog

content posting on my LinkedIn page. I have the books I wrote on my profile, linked to Amazon.com. You can make polls. I have my travel status through TripIt, so I can connect to people who live in other cities and let them know when I'm there live. You can use SlideShare to put up presentations, as I have done about my books. You can also share files. There are so many uses. I would highly encourage you if you have not done so already, to create a professional profile on LinkedIn and build it out.

Next is Facebook, which is used for both personal and business purposes. A business profile is called a "Fan page" or just Pages. I have a personal profile, www.facebook.com/LauraStack, which were all my friends and family and speaker buddies go, but www.facebook.com/ProductivityPro is where all of my business contacts will go. You have to be very careful about which presence you are trying to establish because that is going to make a difference later when you go to use your social media as to whether it will be a waste of time or a productive marketing effort for your business.

Twitter is a micro-blog, as people follow you or "subscribe" to your feed like a blog, but only 144 characters are permitted per post. It is quite similar to a regular blog. You can share a link to an article you've been reading, something that you found interesting or a person that you want people to be on the lookout for. The concept is the simplest of any social networking site. Throughout the day, you are simply posting answers to the most straightforward question: "What are you doing?" Others can elect to "follow" you, which is basically subscribing to your feed. It's no different than any other blog. The nice thing is that a lot of other companies and applications have figured out how to link in to Twitter and build networks. It's a very fast-paced and growing way to meet people and update people on your business practices. In Twitter, if you go to www.twitter.com/LauraStack you will find my Twitter page and you can follow my posts that I make every day, a Productivity Pro tip of the day. I currently have almost

4000 followers who have found me through Twitter who simply like to get my tip of the day. If this is an application that would be productive for you in your work, this is a way to build an online reputation and actually create awareness of you and your brand.

The last one I would highly recommend is a blog. If you have not done a blog, such as TypePad or WordPress, which is what we use as part of our site, this is a great way to share your expertise with the world and build your corporate brand or your personal brand. If you go to www.TheProductivityPro.com/blog you will find my blog and can subscribe to my feed. This allows me to share productivity news and insights in a very informal, impromptu way. On my blog, every time I post an article or a video, all of my subscribers are alerted to the new content that I've added. The nice thing is that anytime I post to my blog, I can set up my fan page on Facebook to also display that content. Anytime I have a video, I can have that on YouTube and simply embed the code there.

3. Connect your social media together.

I would recommend if you are going to get started with social media to try LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and a blog. Use all of those pieces to keep up with each other. When you are looking at your sites, you have to be careful to separate your business life from your productivity at work. Make sure you keep them separated. I've been really careful not to invite friends and family into my workday by going into my personal Facebook because then I would get distracted. So, if I am at work and I'm trying to focus on marketing myself and I go to my Facebook profile, I'm certainly going to be distracted from updates and messages from my family and friends. This is where you have to be careful to separate them.

In the same way, I don't want my clients to have my regular, personal Facebook profile; I want them to be on my fan page. That way, you don't have to worry about what you are posting on your personal page that you don't want others to read. You have to be very careful about maintaining professionalism and not comingling your personal social network with your professional social network. I want to put my personal updates on Facebook and I don't want to worry about what a client might think. Instead of "friending" these contacts, I invite my clients, vendors, colleagues and prospects to become fans. This way I can choose which business items to post separate from my regular wall.

Be very careful which types of social media you choose to focus on, because you have to keep up with it. Once you get started in this, you have to maintain the blog and the profile, because a neglected site can actually give a bad impression. Especially when you're networking professionally, information that is inaccurate or out of date is going to reflect poorly upon you. Set aside dedicated blocks of time where you check your social media. I am very careful about only going once or maybe twice a day to keep up with these social networks. It doesn't take that much time provided you are actually approaching it as a task and doing it efficiently. Know when those times are that you are going to check and make it a regular task. Some people are a little ridiculous about the updates they are posting like "I'm on the way to the post office" and the like. No one wants to know that. Keep it very relevant and don't use it as a form of procrastination. Bill this as a dedicated approach. If you're going to write blog content, then set aside time to write. Perhaps it's a single 15 minute session each morning or whatever makes sense with your natural energy periods. Maybe you are a "morning person" and the morning will therefore be best to update your social media.

When you're using your technology, it's very tempting to be distracted by it. We talked about how to turn off the alerts in email, but social media has its own set of distractions.

One of these distractions is your phone. I recommend that you go into all of your settings, turn off all the alerts that are sent to your phone. Turn off the pop up boxes that you get whenever one of your friends wants to talk with you. Don't leave your Facebook pages open all day with your instant message box open because you will randomly invite people to chat with you throughout the day.

If you're already going every day to your social media to check on your updates, you don't also need to get an email every time someone accepts a friend request or every time someone sends you a note. I'm already going to be checking so I have all of my social media emails turned off.

Avoid whatever your distractions are. If you absolutely can't avoid checking your email while you're supposed to be working on something else, close your email program altogether. If you cannot resist checking your account balances or checking your EBay listings or booking travel, close your browser. Whatever it is that is distracting you, you need to close so you don't have to constantly be caught in this back and forth multi-tasking problem with 47 browser windows open on the bottom of your screen.

Another tip is not to use real time. Real time is where you want to post something and you go into it and manually do it. Instead, use a couple of good applications. One is called HootSuite where you can use the "send later" feature to schedule posts to your different social media. I wrote all 365 tips of the day, but I'm not manually putting them up on Twitter. HootSuite is doing that for me. You can also use tools like SocialOomph.com which will send you a report every day of all of the places that certain search terms were mentioned, all over social media platforms. Every time someone says "personal productivity" for example, I find out about that. This is so I don't have to go and search for those; I get them right to a summary email once a day.

When you post, turn it into multiple posts. Use social media to do it one time and then spread it out all over the place very quickly. You can connect your different forms of social media. Every time you tweet on Twitter, it can go directly to your Facebook page. When you post on YouTube, it can go right to your blog with some code. You can connect your blog to your Facebook fan page, so that it is automatic. You can use blip.tv to post a video and that can be the vehicle to go to YouTube, iTunes or TubeMogul. The last one I love is ping.fm to post content through all of these different networks. So, once you enter one update, you can use ping.fm to update the rest of your accounts. Get creative about how you do things in one place and have it populate on other accounts.

Don't search, but scan instead. If you get into Facebook or Twitter, you'll notice that when you first pull up your account, you're going to see a huge listing of different feeds. This is not very helpful. Use an application such as TweetDesk or Twirl to pull all that information for you and set up customized columns to keep track of different people that you are following. There's lots of ways that you can pull from the applications without having to look through all of those live feeds. Also, you want to go faster. When you look at Twitter and the like, they are much faster if you use some applications such as ShortKeys, Capture Express and Roboform. These are my three favorite pieces of software to help you go faster.

ShortKeys is a text replacement utility. Rather than typing my email address, laura@TheProductivityPro.com, for example, ShortKeys uses "##" and then one letter which is "L" in this case. It automatically changes into my full email address.

Anywhere I am, I can put signatures, my street, my credit card, or anything else that I want to replace.

Capture Express allows me to grab an image off a screen and copy it, print it, email it and turn it into a .jpg file. Roboform remembers all of the passwords for me on all of the different social media and all the places I post my content.

My final time tip warning on technology is watch how you spend your time at work. The Internet is one of the best enhancers of productivity time in our lifetime, but it's also the biggest productivity drain. Social networks are no exception. Whether you're blogging or profiling, keep that under control. Set proper boundaries for yourself. Some people simply waste inordinate amounts of time on the Internet each day which leads some companies to block websites. It doesn't really take that much time to sit down, once or twice a day to check in on things and make sure you're up to date. However, it's extremely easy to find yourself wasting half the day doing it.

Limit your social networking at home. Just by the nature of the beast, whether you're doing this primarily for professional reasons, it's fun! There are countless interesting people out there in cyberspace. However, there's a handful or much more interesting people right under your nose in your very own home. Be careful about neglecting the real people in your life just because you are busy interacting with those on your computer screen. Censor yourself. For whatever reason, the Internet has a really odd way of releasing people's inhibitions and often not for the better. So, especially if you're planning on tapping social media for professional networking, think about what you're putting out there. This is used more and more lately for job searches. If you think there's anything up there that features some less than flattering images of yourself, it is time to clean it up. Would a prospect choose not to hire you due to an attitude you show on your page?

Finally, connect, listen and contribute. This is the easiest one to forget. If you're going to invest the time and energy into these new technologies, remember you aren't simply



there to broadcast a sales pitch to anyone who will listen. Set aside the time to look through what other people are saying. Listen to them; don't just put out *your* thoughts. Get some insight into the needs of your community and focus your message when you have something to say.

To hire Laura Stack to speak at your next meeting or event, please contact:

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Keynoter

Laura presents over 100 practical, high-energy keynotes and seminars each year on improving output, lowering stress, and saving time in today's workplaces and homes. She is one of a handful of professional speakers whose business focuses solely on time management and productivity topics. Laura is a high-energy, high-content speaker, who educates, entertains, and motivates professionals to improve workplace productivity. She has earned the Certified Speaking Professional (CSP) designation, the highest earned designation given by the National Speakers Association (NSA).

Author

Laura is the bestselling author of four books, including *SuperCompetent: The Six Keys to Perform at Your Productive Best* (Wiley, 2010); *The Exhaustion Cure* (Broadway Books, 2008), *Find More Time* (Broadway Books, 2006), and the bestselling *Leave the Office Earlier* (Broadway Books, 2004), which was hailed as "the best of the bunch" by the *New York Times*. Her books have been published in nine countries and translated into six foreign languages, including Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Italian, and Romanian.

Recognized Productivity Expert

Widely regarded as one of the leading experts in the field of employee productivity and workplace issues, she has been featured nationally on the CBS Early Show, CNN, NPR, Bloomberg, NBC TV, WB News, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *WashingtonPost.com*, *O Magazine*, *Entrepreneur*, *Readers Digest*, and *Forbes* magazine. Laura has been a spokesperson for Microsoft, 3M, Skillsoft, Office Depot, and Xerox, and she is the creator of The Productivity Pro® planner by Day-Timer.



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