

# US Army enlists Facebook, Twitter

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Mindful of a changing media landscape, the Army said it wanted to make sure it reached a younger audience that relies heavily on "tweets" and social networking sites, spokeswoman Lindy Kyzer said.

"Young people today don't watch the evening news. They're friends are sharing information through [Twitter](#), or Facebook," Kyzer told AFP.

"If we have no presence on those spaces, then we're not telling the army's story."

The Army's Online Social Media Division was created in March. Its official Facebook page was launched last week and now has more than 8,000 fans, she said.

The site has entries from wives of soldiers seeking advice from other military families, young men getting ready to enlist and veterans sending their prayers to troops in combat.

The Army's Twitter effort begun last year has gotten off to a slow start with about 5,000 followers.

But Defense Department computer security restrictions set out in 2007 pose an obstacle to the social networking campaign, as soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan often are barred from accessing Facebook or Twitter on computer networks at military bases.

"It's unfortunate and makes things more difficult in the deployed environment, but we have great programs set up so that you have Internet cafes in deployed situations and things like that," Kyzer said.

The security rules have been blamed for stifling blogging by soldiers from the battlefield, even as some senior commanders write blogs or maintain a Facebook page.

General Ray Odierno, who commands US forces in Iraq, has more than 5,000 friends on his Facebook page, which includes photos from his trips around the country but no gossip from the battlefield.

The Air Force is on Twitter, and the US Navy's Pacific Command has a [Facebook](#) page with plenty of photos.

The security restrictions have not killed off blogging by [soldiers](#), said Kyzer, but the rules require that blogs are not written without the

knowledge of their superiors.

"The commander needs to know what you're up to. If you're blogging in a deployed setting, as a soldier, writing as a soldier, you should let your commander know that."

With Hollywood star Ashton Kutcher surpassing the one million mark for his Twitter audience, Kyzer joked that he might have some competition once the Army taps into its Twitter potential.

"If he has a million followers, why can't we? We're the US Army," she said.

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