

## In Twitter era, new pope not a social media maven

March 17 2013, by Eva Vergara

---



Pope Francis speaks during a meeting with the media at the Pope VI hall, at the Vatican, Saturday, March 16, 2013. Pope Francis offered intimate insights Saturday into the moments after his papal election, telling an audience with the press that he was immediately inspired to take the name of St. Francis of Assisi because of his work for peace and the poor, and was embraced by another cardinal amid applause inside the conclave. (AP Photo/Michael Sohn)

(AP)—Pope Francis has 1.2 billion followers in the Roman Catholic Church, but he's not following a single one of them on Facebook or

Twitter.

In a fast-paced, globalized world in which billions send emails, [share photos](#) on smartphones and get their instant news online, the newly elected pope still uses a typewriter for work. On his time off, he follows the games of his favorite soccer club on the radio.

Yet, even though he's not busy chatting, poking and commenting online, the pope recognizes the importance of technology in today's world.

As a cardinal, Francis had a [Facebook](#) account, although he didn't manage it himself, and he blessed the creation of a virtual parish where many could join in prayer online.

"The cardinal didn't understand any of that but I explained it to him. I showed him the computer screen ... he looked at the site and authorized us to pray to the Holy One, online," said Guillermo Marco, the pope's former spokesman.

"He's a man who likes to listen," Marco said. "As cardinal, many would ask to get an audience with him. They'd talk for 45 minutes straight and he'd stay quiet. Then, he'd say three phrases. In modern terms you could say that he's very Twitter-like."

Francis seems likely to follow the Vatican's social media strategy to help with missionary outreach. In a 2012 interview with veteran Italian Vatican journalist Andrea Tornielli, then Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio said the church in Argentina knew well that digital outreach was necessary to reach the faithful.

"We try to make contact with families that don't come to church. Rather than being a church that welcomes and receives, we try to be a [church](#) that goes outside to men and women who don't come to us, who don't

know us or are indifferent to us," he said.

Organizing Masses in public squares is part of that, but there's more.

"We also try to reach those farther away by digital means, using the Web and brief (text) messages," he said.

[Pope Benedict XVI](#) joined the Twittersphere late last year tweeting from a personal account along with the world's celebrities, leaders and ordinary folk. Many were expecting Francis to take over his [Twitter](#) handle, but few knew that he wasn't tech savvy.

Even if he takes the account, it is unlikely that Francis himself will type his punchy one-liners about reaching out to the poor and ending corruption into 140-character bites. The 85-year-old Benedict, who didn't carry a cellphone and wrote longhand, left that job to one of his aides.

Copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: In Twitter era, new pope not a social media maven (2013, March 17) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2013-03-twitter-era-pope-social-media.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--