55 FREE Marketing Tools for Libraries and Others on Tight Budget

JENNIFER BURKE OF INTELLICRAFT RESEARCH LLC

Thanks for signing up for my live, FREE, monthly webinar to talk marketing and communication tools for libraries, information professionals and similar professionals on a tight budget. Make sure you check your emails for the next webinar!

I also talk tools, tips and marketing hacks for libraries in my column in Information Today's [Marketing Library Services Newsletter](#) – check for back issues online or subscribe now for more marketing help and case studies.

JENNIFER'S PERSONAL MUST-HAVE FAVES:
THE MARKETING TOOLS I USE ALL THE TIME

- Canva*
- Hootsuite AND Buffer – yes, I use both at the same time; plus Social Jukebox
- Coolors and 0to255
- PicMonkey (*but for most of my own photo editing I do use Lightroom*)
- Unsplash, Pixabay, Death to Stock, and Pond5
- CoSchedule's Headline Analyzer
- Animoto*, Biteable* and good 'ol Windows Movie Maker (*though I have at least 3 other video editing programs too*)
- SnagIt*
- Trello
- Typeform
- Zoom*

Tools I have purchased or own a paid/premium version of – I have used all in their free version as well, if applicable.

I'd love to show you more – but there's only so much time! That's why I talk tools on my webinars, in my [MLS column](), on my [blog](), social media, and in presentations or trainings tailored to YOUR library or association. [Contact me]() for a personalized training session.

Social Media Management – to save your valuable time + energy, you're probably already using at least 1 social media tool. These are others to consider adding to your toolbox. [*Note: Instagram has kept their code and API locked down and doesn't 'play well with others', but has recently started letting tools do more true scheduling. Check out Later and* [Hootsuite for managing Instagram]()).

- ☐ [Hootsuite]()
- ☐ [Buffer]() [*Why do I use Buffer plus Hootsuite? It seems to handle and post images inline = more engagement where HS doesn't automatically*
- ☐ [CoSchedule]() - so much more than social media management; a full blown content manager, editorial calendar and team project/collaboration manager.
- ☐ [Post Planner]() - Free version just for sharing Facebook posts. Getting content seen on Facebook is hard, so a tool that helps is a time-saver
- ☐ [Social Jukebox]() - 'evergreen' scheduling (load a 'jukebox' and set it to play, shares randomly from that box on your set schedule – recycles with no end, unless you pause)
- ☐ Latergram.me (now [Later.com]()) - visually plan and schedule Instagram posts

Social Media Monitoring, Metrics or Research

- ☐ [Bitly]() – link shortening and tracking – see where link shared, clicked; customize your short links
- ☐ [BuzzSumo]() – content trends, who is sharing what and where.
- ☐ [ManageFlitter]() – social analytics and metrics, focused on Twitter.
- ☐ [Audiense]() – understand your social audience better, interests, demographics, timing, segmentation; Free ver open to Twitter users less than 5000 community (your followers + who you follow); Paid plans ? (appear to be $30+/mo, aimed at larger orgs)
- ☐ FollowerWonk – from [Moz]().
- ☐ [Mention]() - You need to know what is being said about your library online – and Mention is the user-friendly tool for the job.
- ☐ [PinAlerts]() – monitor links to/from Pinterest and your library's site

Design – colors, typography, and/or tools that handle all of your design needs

- ☐ Canva – making graphic design easy and affordable – you can do nearly all you need with free version.
- ☐ Adobe Spark – social graphics, presentation images, animated video clips via web and apps
- ☐ Coolors – create, save, share awesome color palettes
- ☐ 0to255 – when you need to know the hex color codes for any color, or want to find complementary tones/hues for any color
- ☐ Font Squirrel – 'free front utopia'; search and download great looking fonts
- ☐ MyFonts – HUGE selection of fonts, including all the most well-known ones available for purchase. Want to figure out what a cool font is you saw in a picture or logo? Use their What the Font tool
- ☐ Google Fonts – large source of most common free fonts (e.g. Roboto, OpenSans, Raleway, Montserrat, etc)
- ☐ Font Pair – now that you have cool new free fonts from Google – which ones look good together
- ☐ Font Awesome – open-source, CSS font/icon kit ('pictographic language')

Image Editing – I admit, I have/own/use more different pieces of image editing software that I know what to do with! Habit of being seriously into photography since I was a young kid/ So in addition to the tools here, I do have PhotoShop, Lightroom, and camera specific photo processing apps or software.

- ☐ Canva – Does. It. All. (ok, not *all* for image editing – that's why I still have other software – but the advanced features under Filters let you do a lot)
- ☐ PicMonkey - web-based photo editing (exposure, color other basic corrections), filters, a collage tool. Includes templates for common social media sizes, design tips, extensions for common browsers. Most advanced features and special features require paid account.
- ☐ Pixlr Express – free web app, user-friendly, basic photo editing and filters. Editor has advanced tools, layers – similar to PhotoShop.
- ☐ Gimp – GNU Image Manipulation Program – free, open-source, downloadable software. Robust tools for photos and graphics.
- ☐ Inkscape – open-source, downloadable, professional level vector graphics editor (same tools as PhotoShop, Illustrator – same level complexity+ opens PSD, AI, EPS files).
- ☐ Photobucket - upload instantly and edit with filters and effects.
- ☐ PicMark – add a watermark to your images before sharing online.

Images – where to find better, non-generic photos that you can use safely, freely, with no copyright fears or restrictions (usually via Creative Commons CC0 license). Yes, there are *tons* more free sites plus royalty-free stock houses out there – these are just ones I prefer.

- ☐ [Unsplash](#) – curated, artist/photographer driven, HUGE collection of stylish pics
- ☐ [Pixabay](#) – photos, illustrations, vectors, some video clips
- ☐ [Death to Stock](#) – subscribe to email newsletter, get package of 10 themed, curated images monthly
- ☐ [StockSnap](#) – euro-focused, searches other free photo sites (inc Unsplash); from design/graphics tool, [Snappa](#)
- ☐ [PicJumbo](#) – get emails with latest free additions; also offers premium/paid plans
- ☐ [MorgueFile](#) – be sure to read their requirements (e.g. you're supposed to change, adapt images and not just use as-is)
- ☐ [Pexels](#) –searches/sources from other free photo sites
- ☐ [Librestock](#) – searches other free photo sites
- ☐ [Pond5](#) – very affordable HD video stock clips, plus images, sound effects, music
- ☐ [Dissolve](#) – modern, artistic, quality video stock (and photos) inc many not found other sites
- ☐ *Psst – don't forget to use the Creative Commons filter to search Flickr or the* [Commons](#) *project!*

Visual Content – Charts, Infographics, other text+ graphics

- ☐ [Piktochart](#) - great visuals/infographics without much effort or searching for a graphic designer
- ☐ [Easelly](#) – infographics, charts, timelines, process charts; start from templates or scratch
- ☐ [Visme](#) – infographics, visual resumes, presentations, etc
- ☐ [Ripl](#) – your images + their templates + sounds = a shareable video
- ☐ [Quotes Cover](#) - quickly get a social-friendly, shareable quote image

Audio/Video – based on my background and personal interests, this is a big area for me – I can't cover all my fave tools here so see my separate blog posts, videos and training!

- ☐ [Audacity](#) – free, open-sourced audio recording and editing tool
- ☐ [Animoto](#)- montages, pictures, clips put into templates and uses their algorithms turns out good looking videos with little effort or skill.

- ☐ [Biteable](#) – web-based for animations, logo intros for videos, slideshows using their templates, customizable colors, text and adding your own logos or images.
- ☐ [Loopster](#) - intuitive, easy to learn online video editor (plus app for all phones/tablets)
- ☐ [WeVideo](#) – simple, cloud-based video editor. Upload and edit online, add transitions, simple effects and even collaborate with videos from friends or colleagues.
- ☐ [Handbrake](#) - free, open-source, downloadable software to convert videos to/from any format and/or codec (plus many other features, metadata); I.e. to make a raw video better size for viewing on mobile, YouTube, tablets, game consoles [Start here: https://handbrake.fr/docs/en/1.0.0/introduction/quick-start.html e.g. use the 'Fast 1080p30 preset' as default]
- ☐ [FreeMake](#) - Free video converter (alternative to Handbrake); also downloads and converts streaming videos, extract the audio from a video; more intuitive UI
- ☐ *Psst – did you know YouTube has a* [free audio library](#) *[see also Creator Studio > Create > Audio Library in your account] to use with their free video editor?! Music that is clear to use in your videos.*

WHO IS JENNIFER?

Jennifer E. Burke is President of IntelliCraft Research LLC, a strategic marketing consultancy for libraries, in Philadelphia, PA. She holds a MSLIS from Drexel University and also spent 5 years as an IMLS Fellow in Drexel's Information Studies PhD program working on digital libraries and education. She's a former advertising executive; a member of ALA, SLA and AIIP; and a trainer on strategic storytelling and marketing tools to save time. Email her at: jburke <at> intellicraftresearch.com or visit [www.intellicraftresearch.com](#)