



getting started on the social network
creating projects and groups
on thebuddhistcentre.com

the essentials

introduction

This document gives instructions on how Triratna projects (Buddhist Centres and other institutions) can set up their own spaces on thebuddhistcentre.com and begin using the rich features our new Movement website has to offer. There are also some answers to common questions at the end, including details of how you can get further help with setting things up.

If you need to refresh your memory of what the social network is all about, you can view and download our extended 'getting ready' notes here at any time: <http://tinyurl.com/7aggr2c>

You can also read our community guidelines here:

<http://thebuddhistcentre.com/text/community-guidelines>

Once you're ready to begin creating your spaces and posting to them, here's how to go about it (**key things to do first in boxes!**):

stage 1: how to get started

1. Once you have decided who will take overall responsibility for administering your presence on the site, they can go ahead and create their own user account with us.

Your administrator can sign up for a user account here: thebuddhistcentre.com/register

- If your administrator had an account with us for the Urban Retreat 2011, there is no need for them to register again. They can just log in with the same details: thebuddhistcentre.com/login

★ Remember, this principle administrator must be a member of the Order. But they can easily designate other administrators to help if they like, who don't have to be Order members (see p.4, 'notes on adding your team', for more details).

2. Your principle administrator should email us with the following details:

- their own username
- the full name of the Project (eg. *San Francisco Buddhist Center, Karuna Trust*)

Send these to: centres@thebuddhistcentre.com

- *Your web address:* If the project has a specific acronym you'd like to use in the web address, let us know that too. e.g. North American Triratna Assembly = NATA = *thebuddhistcentre.com/NATA*. Otherwise we'll use your place or project (e.g. *thebuddhistcentre.com/sanfrancisco, karunatrust*).

N.B. We need to know this *before you get set up*. Once the address is active it can't be changed.

- *Public or private?:* Projects on thebuddhist centre.com are public by default so people can find you and follow your activities easily. If you think you need a private Project for your work, invisible to everyone except *existing Project members* (you'd have to add all members manually), let us know.

3. We'll send them a link to a brand new Project space and they can go ahead and start setting it up!

stage 1 complete!

stage 2: how to set up your project and groups

Once you have your administrator user account(s) you can set up your Project and edit it anytime. It should be quite quick to get set up – it typically takes 30 minutes or less. The procedure for Groups is almost identical.

★ We've posted a **video walk-through** if you'd like to see how it's done first.

★ In advance of the actual set-up it might be helpful to organise on your computer the files and images you need, so you have everything to hand (eg. a folder for pictures of the team, a folder for pictures of the Centre, etc.).

Here's what you need to get set up (if you'd like help with any of it, please **let us know**):

1. A short introductory message about the work of your project for its 'home' page.

★ If you're using text that you've taken from your website or Facebook page, it's best to copy it first into a text editor or word processing program on your computer and save it as a plain text file. This will get rid of any web code and ensure it displays properly on the site (we do as much of this as we can by default). Otherwise, just type directly into the box on the set-up form.

2. At least one image to represent your space (perhaps your logo or a picture of your rupa), and an image of your Chair/Director to go beside the 'home' page message about your project. These need to be a minimum of 200 x 200 pixels in size.

3. You can add images of your administrators and team members to your 'home' page gallery (recommended) and other pictures of your space too if you like. These need to be a minimum of 400 x 400 pixels in size.

4. You can optionally add your project's address and contact details (recommended) and upload a pdf of your latest program or brochure (also recommended).

5. Your administrator can choose 'edit members' from the 'home' page to make any existing members of your Project an administrator or part of the team (see p.4 for more details). To do this they'll need a list of the usernames of anyone you'd like to be able to help administer or post to your Project.

6. Now all you need to do is email your sangha a link to your page so they can register on thebuddhistcentre.com and join your Project and Groups!

- Administrators can also manually add members to the Project who have an account on the site.

stage 2 complete. congratulations – you now have a project on thebuddhistcentre.com!

the extras

extras 1: notes on adding your team

The language of the computer systems used to create social networks can sound a bit clunky. 'Administrators', 'Users', etc. can all seem very technical and maybe even a bit scary! But in reality it works out just like any kind of Triratna team – some people take responsibility for managing the whole project, others help with that as part of their own contribution. Here's a detailed guide to what you need to know (the [video walk-through](#) will help if the words don't work!):

★ Any members of your team that you'd also like to be able to post to your Project or help administer it should now create an account with us and join your Project (they can join before it's fully set up).

thebuddhistcentre.com/register

★ Your principle administrator can then designate them as 'administrators' or 'team members' via the Project's 'home' page using the 'edit members' link.

★ Remember, administrators hold the keys, as it were, to your 'official' space on thebuddhistcentre.com. We'd recommend limiting the number of administrators to 5 at most.

- Only administrators can edit your Project, designate other administrators, and set team members.

- Administrators and other team members can make posts to your Project page and create Groups under its auspices.

- Other members – people who 'join' your Project – can't post or set up Groups within it, but they can comment on posts the team have made and contribute to discussion that way.

- If you set up Groups then the difference here is that *all members* who join one of your Groups can post to it. So these are more fully participatory spaces.

- Within any Group administrators and other team members can choose to mark their own posts as 'team' posts so these stand out a bit for general users.

- They can also decide whether the Group is also a 'Course' and whether it's public (visible to everyone, who can then ask to join) or private (invisible to everyone except *existing members* – you'd have to add all members manually).

As ever, if you'd like help with any of this, please [let us know](#).

extras 2: any questions?

Here are some answers to the three most common questions we've heard so far.

can I get help with all this?

Yes! Aside from just **emailing us anytime**, we've made a special support Project to offer detailed help as you get used to the new site. Once you've registered for a user account, please join **thebuddhistcentre.com/support**.

what are the benefits of this when we already have a website?

- ★ At the very least, getting your basic information and occasional posts onto your Project page will help promote your work. At the moment over 20,000 people a month spend time on our site (without the social network or us doing any advertising) and each month 70% of those are still new users. Some of them will be looking for what you do, they'll find you, and they'll make a connection.
- ★ Most Triratna websites aren't set up to enable much social networking amongst a local sangha. We offer free, easy-to-use, multi-media tools that can augment your existing web efforts. We think they will help you communicate your message, strengthen your connections locally, and encourage your sangha in building connections around the Movement. The increased sense of context all round can help you stay in better touch with your own sangha in-between their visits to the Centre or can be an ongoing part of fostering your supporters' sense of relationship with your project. We also think it will be useful in promoting coherence and understanding within the Triratna community across geographic, cultural, and language borders.
- ★ It's one thing to have a lot of words *saying* 'who we are' and 'what we teach' as a Movement, it's another to exemplify it. We hope that over time all of us sharing the same space and bringing our collective practice to life there through the web will help us support each other and model to the world what we already do so well as a community locally: friendliness, openness, accessibility, and inspiration. A big light for those in need of the Dharma...
- ★ New Triratna Centres and groups can take advantage of Projects and Groups on thebuddhistcentre.com to avoid the expense of having to develop and maintain their own websites (if they like!). They will automatically be part of a bigger context too, which can be crucially supportive in smaller situations.

how much time will it take? we're already busy!

As we mentioned, getting set up should be very quick and easy (around 30 mins.). Thereafter, it's up to you. If you only want to start by getting your presence established so users can find you, that's fine.

If you feel ready later to experiment a bit with your online presence or test the site as a way to strengthen existing connections with your own sangha then the tools will be there for you and we can help you get going. We've tried to design things so you can move at your own pace, and we encourage you to play a bit and see how it might help with the work you already do, perhaps making you more effective and allowing new initiatives to arise from within your local sangha.

good luck as we start a new chapter in the life of the triratna buddhist community online!