

# SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BIKE SHOPS

*A How-To Guide*



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# SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BIKE SHOPS

## WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social Media offers bike shops an absolutely free marketing channel, and it's one that requires no technical or programming skills. Social Media is a way to complement your existing web presence - it's not intended to replace your current website. Social Media websites allow conversations to occur between you and your local cycling community, typically using computers and mobile phones. These conversations are often composed of informal posts of text, images, and/or videos that can be publicly commented on by the community. Facebook and Twitter are two examples of 'general' Social Media. Additionally, there are also cycling-specific Social Media sites, including the Specialized Riders Club, and Plus3 Network. This isn't an entirely new phenomenon, as more 'classic' sites like MTBR and RoadBikeReview can also be considered to be Social Media.

This guide will focus on four sites: Facebook, Twitter, the Specialized Riders Club, and Plus3 Network. This does not mean that that's all there are out there: they're merely a good starting place for your bike shop. The skills you learn here you should consider putting to use on other sites - and the sites that might work best for you could change based on time and geography, so listen to your customers and find out what Social Media they're using now.

## HOW CAN A BIKE SHOP BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA?

There are three primary benefits that you can expect from getting your shop involved in Social Media: Improved online reputation, improved search rankings for your existing website, and improved connections with your local cycling community. And it's all free.

**BECOME EASIER TO FIND:** The nature of social media is enveloped in links, with many social media sites encouraging their communities to link across to other communities, whether for information sharing or personal connections. These links are highly valued by search engines, and these new links back to your own site will have fast and lasting effects on your page rank on Google and other search engines. As well, by linking to you, your friends and fans across different Social Media sites can send referrals your way, often without even trying. You'll be easier to find, and when people find you, Social Media will enable them to find out even more relevant and current information about you and your shop.

**IMPROVE YOUR LOCAL TRIBE CONNECTIONS:** Social Media can immerse you into the daily lives of your customers in a passive way that makes you more of a friend, and more connected with their lives in a way that is meaningful, permission-based, and relevant. Your fans will become even closer to you, and this will only grow and strengthen your tribe. They'll think of you more, and more often.

**BUILD YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION:** There are people out there online right now, talking about you, your bike shop, and the products you sell. Social Media gives you a way to be involved, allowing you to be involved in the conversation, and improve your relationships with your customers and community.

## HOW IT WORKS, WHY IT WORKS:

Different sites are interconnected. For example, my twitter feed automatically updates my Facebook profile. If you've got a blog, your posts can automatically appear as notes in my Facebook feed. My flickr photos are tagged, commented on, and linked to from other sites. Friends tag me in their photos on Facebook, and those photos then get linked to from another friend's Facebook profile. A concert I'm going to is part of my upcoming profile, and I've added a new ride on the Riders Club that I've linked to from Facebook. And it's all driven by the activity of the community made up of my friends, and in some cases, their friends, and in some cases, complete strangers that stumbled into the web of interconnected activity - perhaps a random found link, perhaps by google, perhaps through a common friend or a common group. This apparently messy interconnectedness is what makes Social Media so engaging, and interesting, and reliable.



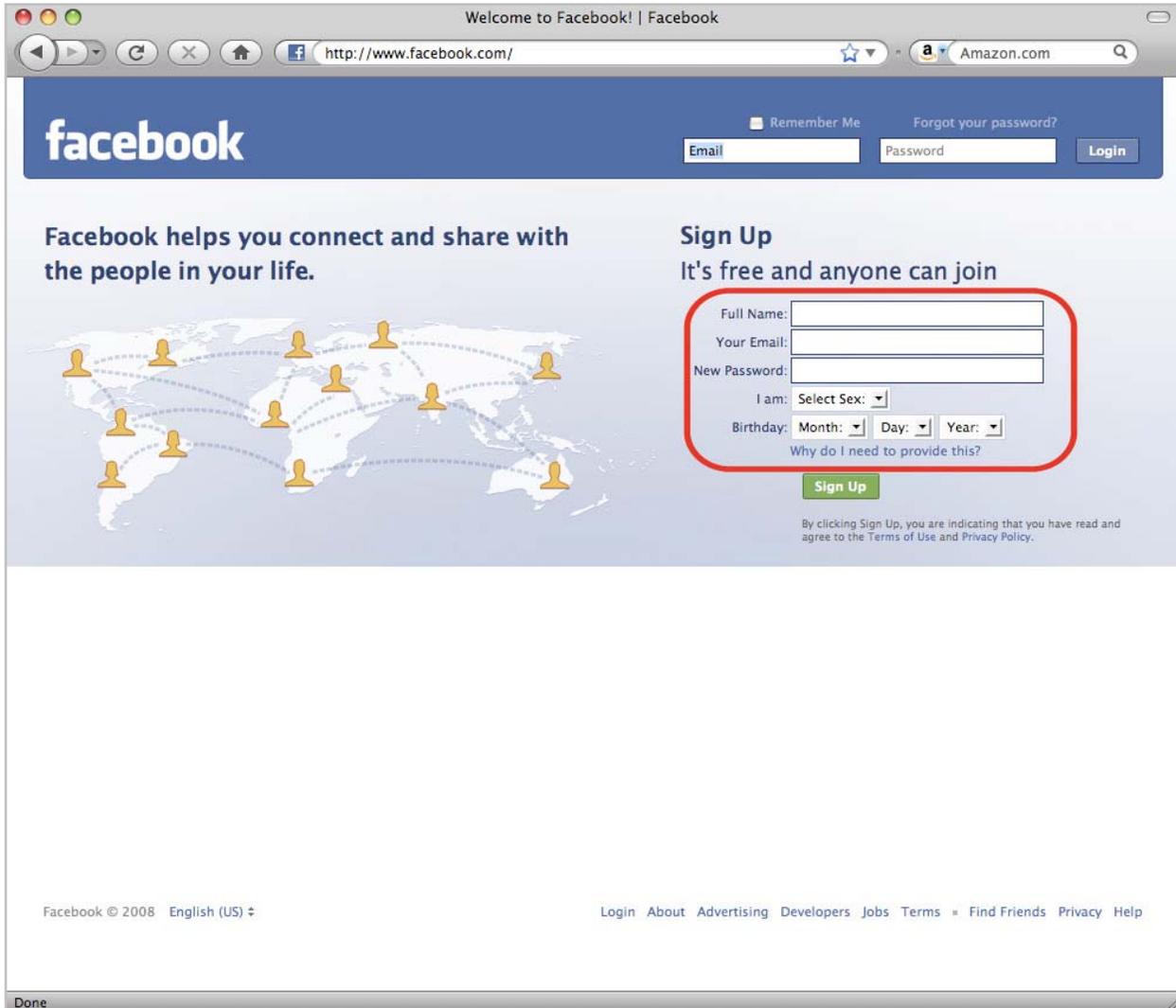
## HOW WE KNOW IT WORKS - METRICS AND MEASUREMENT:

**Google Search Rankings:** Check to see how many pages of results it takes to find you on google. Search for your shop name, search for "bikes" with your zip code. Try searching for brand names you carry. Make notes of your search terms, and where you were ranked. As you implement these new social media tools, recheck these searches and track how your page rank changes.

**Direct feedback from customers:** Social Media will open up a very clear, very open, and often extremely candid channel for feedback. A great deal of it will be positive, and reinforcing. You'll find yourself being offered ideas, accolades, and perhaps even find yourself with friends you didn't know you had. Sometimes people think more highly of you than you might expect: everyone you've ever sold a bike to, even if it was years ago, might still carry around very positive memories of the experience.

What about negative reviews? In the rare instance that you have a negative review, social media makes it easy to reply directly to the person and address the issue - which certainly beats the option of them only voicing their problem to their friends. Think of Social Media as a way to earn a chance to make it right for customers who (right or wrong) felt disappointed with something.

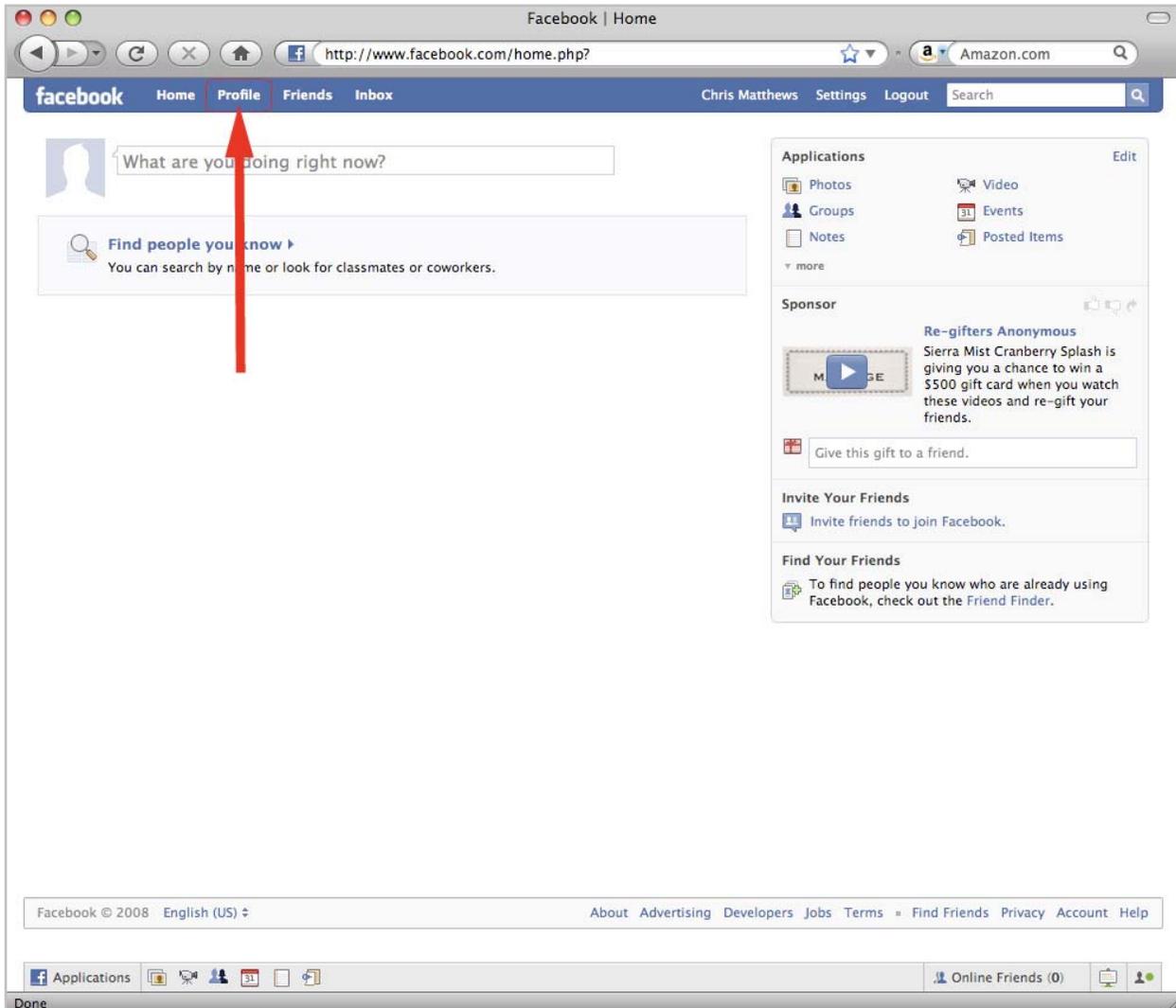
If you haven't already, go sign up for a free account at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)



When you sign up, use your name (not your shop name, we'll do that later). Use an email address you check regularly, and then click the 'sign up' button.

## YOUR FACEBOOK HOME PAGE

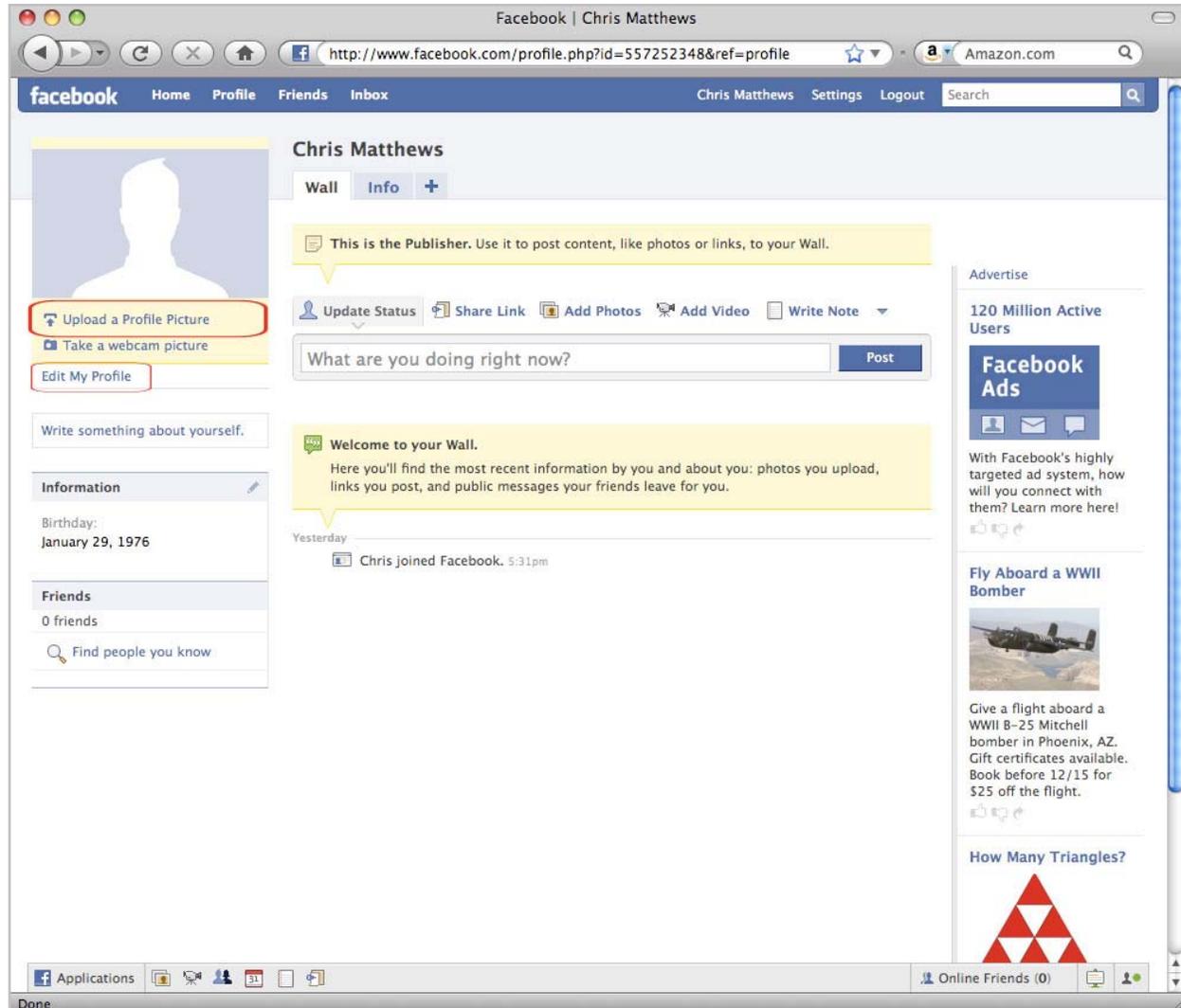
Once you've signed up, you'll arrive at your own Facebook page. The first thing to do: click on the "Profile" link at the top to fill out your personal profile. This page should be about you, not your shop. We'll create the page for your shop in a few minutes. For now, you'll add whatever info about you that you're comfortable sharing with the world. A good general rule is: Don't share anything you don't want your mother to read.



## YOUR PROFILE PAGE

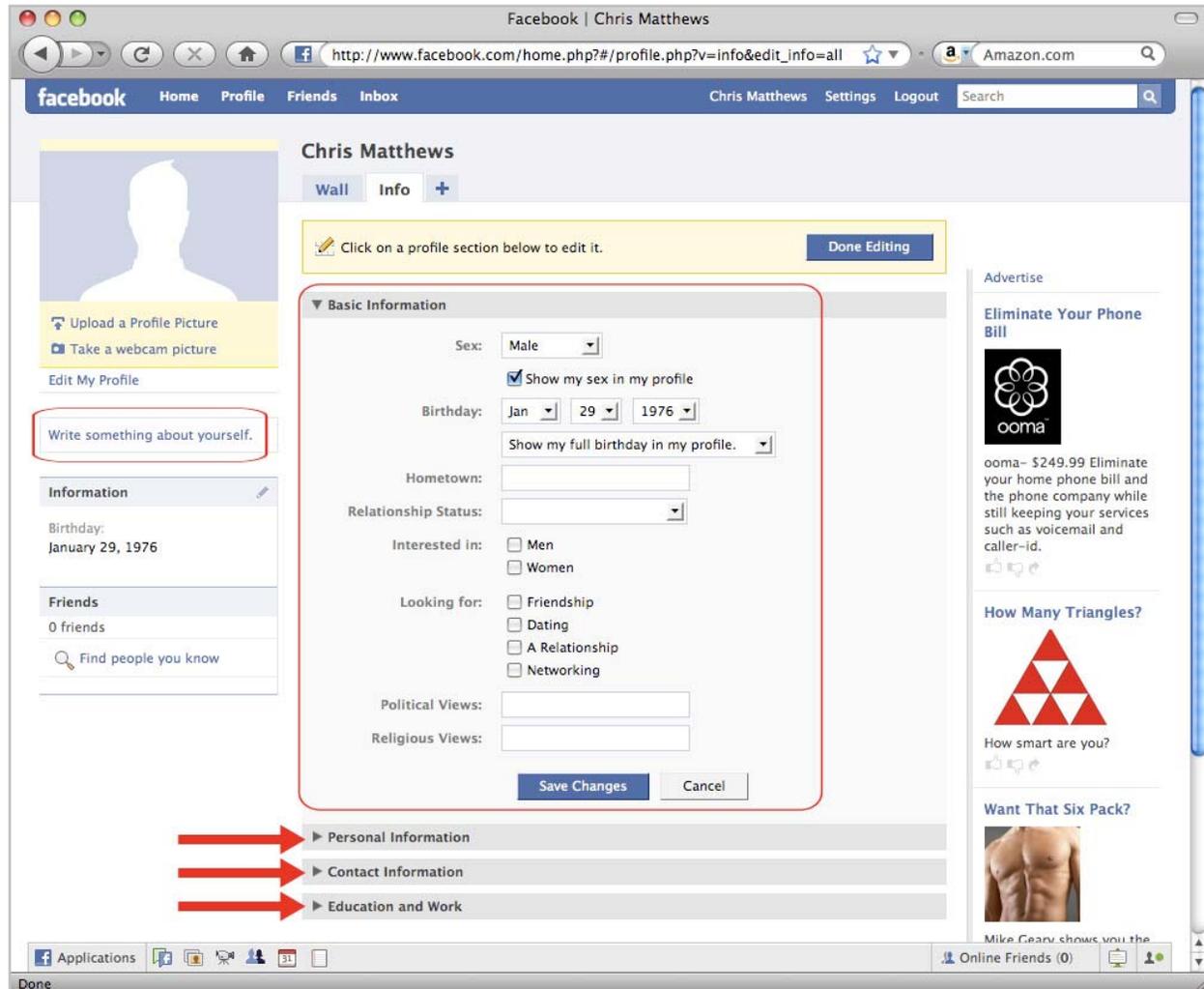
On the profile page, you can upload a profile picture. Typically a headshot is best here, but feel free to get creative with a favorite riding shot - you can always change it later. From this page you can also add the first entry to your 'wall': think of your wall as a scratch pad that you and your friends can write on. Everything you and your friends write here can be seen by you and all your friends (so keep it friendly!)

Personal person-to-person messages between Facebook users, when/if required, can be handled through direct messages by clicking on the 'inbox' button up top, just to the right of the Profile button.



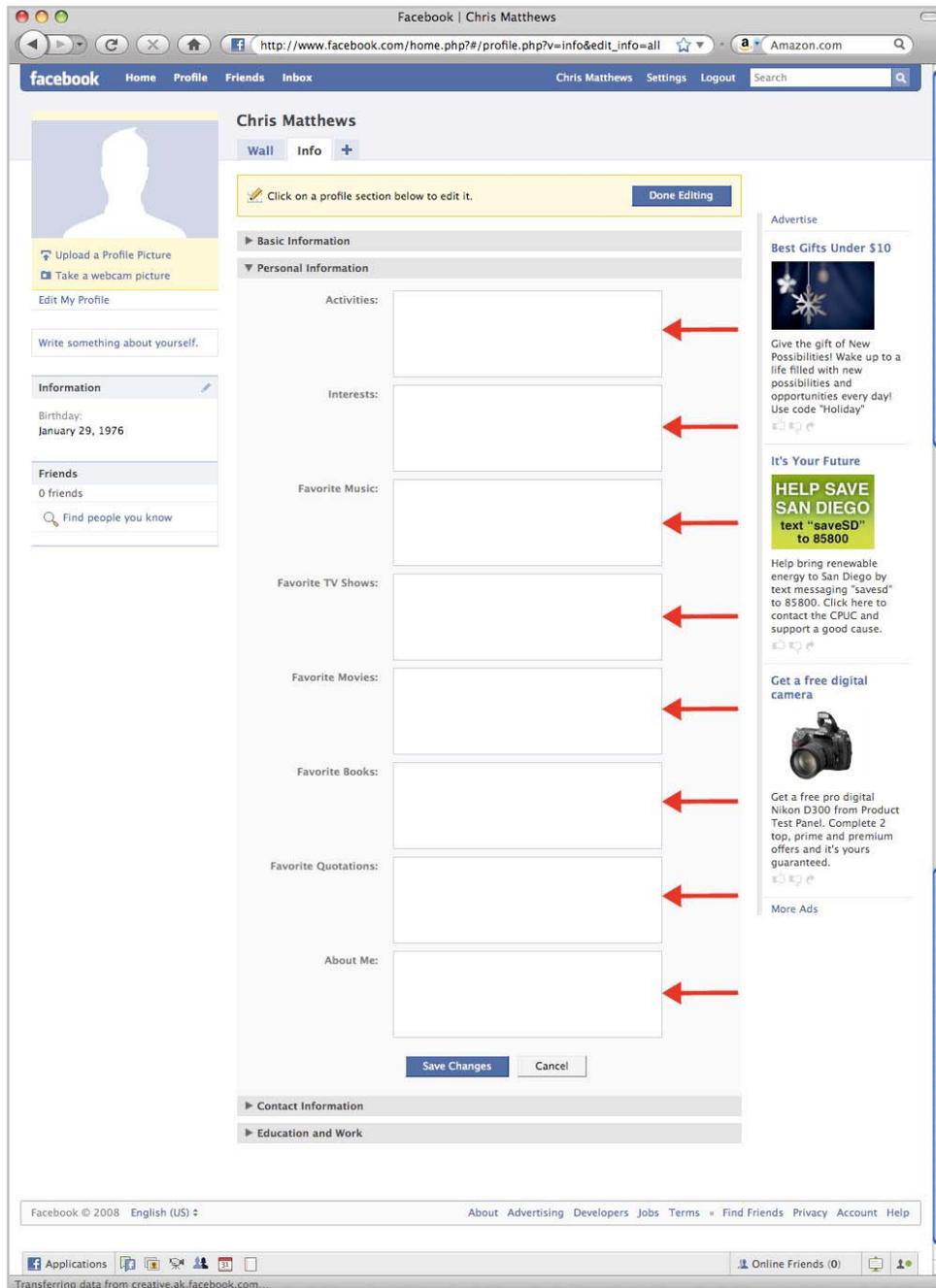
Next, from your Profile Page, click the "Edit my Profile" link to add even more info about you.

On the 'edit profile' page you can add info like your hometown, your political views, and other details. This is all entirely optional, you can say absolutely nothing here if you prefer (and that's what most people on Facebook do). Think ahead and don't add anything that you think might create more conflicts than friends. Again, the general rule applies: don't write anything you don't want your mom to read.



Once you've added whatever basic information you want to add, click one of the other information category titles to expand it: Personal, Contact, and Education and Work.

The tabs for “personal information” and “contact information” can be particularly useful for sharing info about the music you’re playing on your iPod and in your shop, the bikes you’re riding these days, and your favorite trails, ales, road loops, and even your favorite cycling-friendly organizations. Of course, don’t feel like you have to stop there: feel free to add whatever else you like here - and you can always change it later.

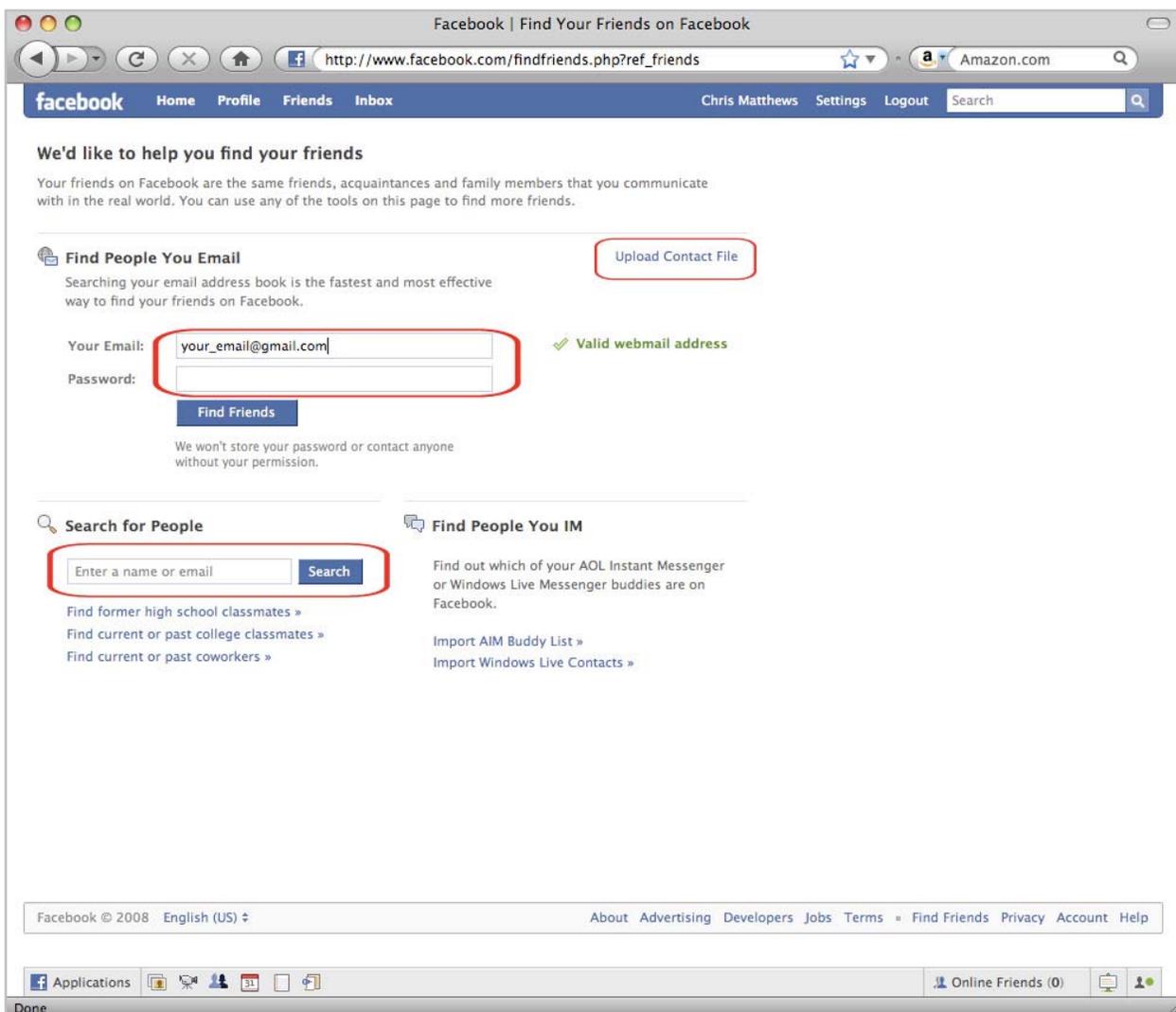


When you’re done, click the ‘Save Changes’ button at the bottom of the screen.

Next, connect with your friends. Chances are that hundreds of people you know are already on Facebook - including lots of your customers! Click the 'Friends' button in the upper navigation bar, just to the right of the 'Profile' link.

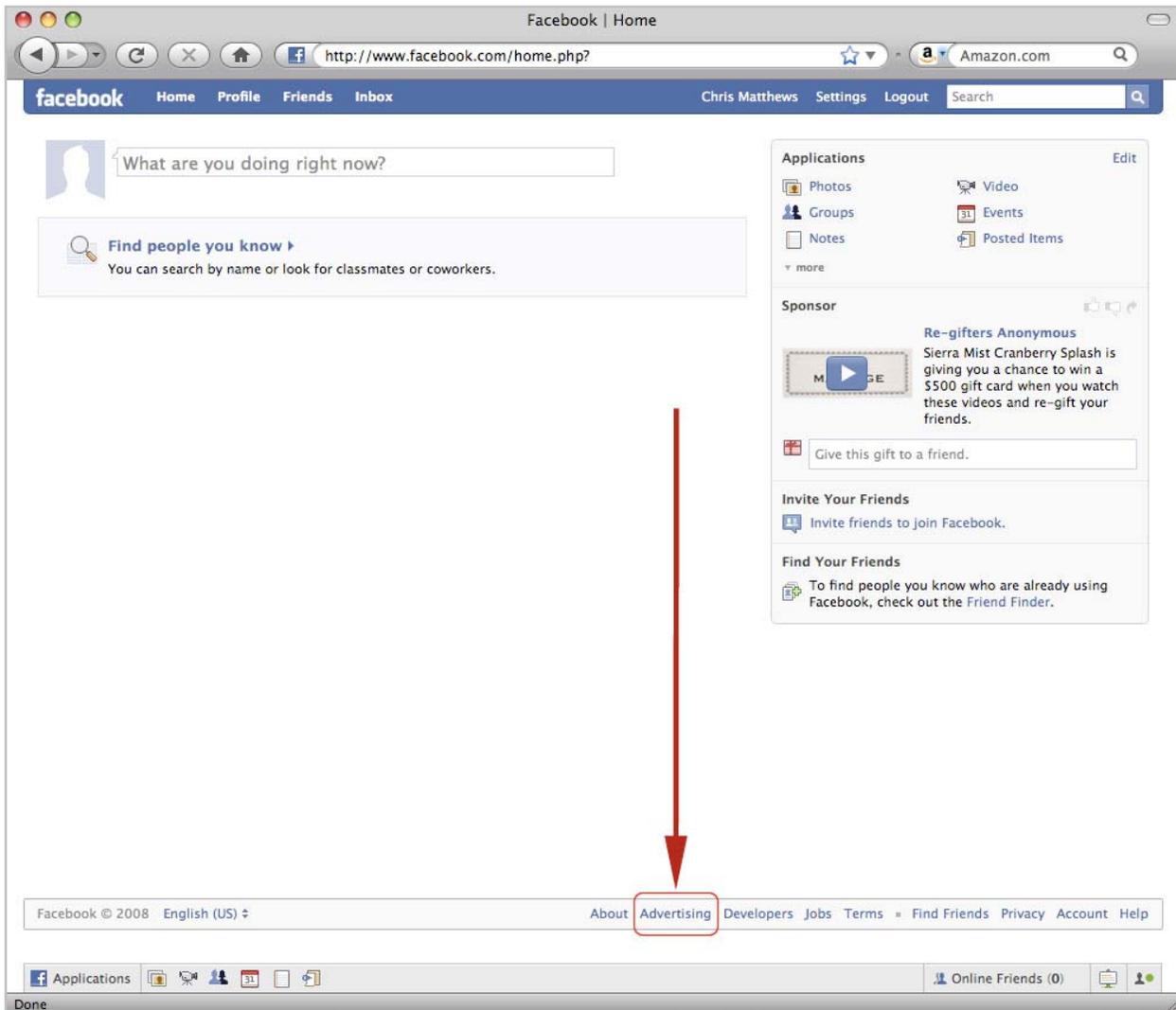
There are a few ways to find your friends: first, the "upload contact file" option is great if you have an email list of your own customers. The second option is to use your own hotmail, gmail, or yahoo email address to search through the contacts you have in that email account. Third option is to search by an individual name or email address.

Once you've found a few friends, take a look at their profiles for inspiration, and take a look at their lists of friends to see if you know anyone in common. Finding friends through other friends is a very common way to build your Facebook friend list. And chances are that people will start finding you, too.

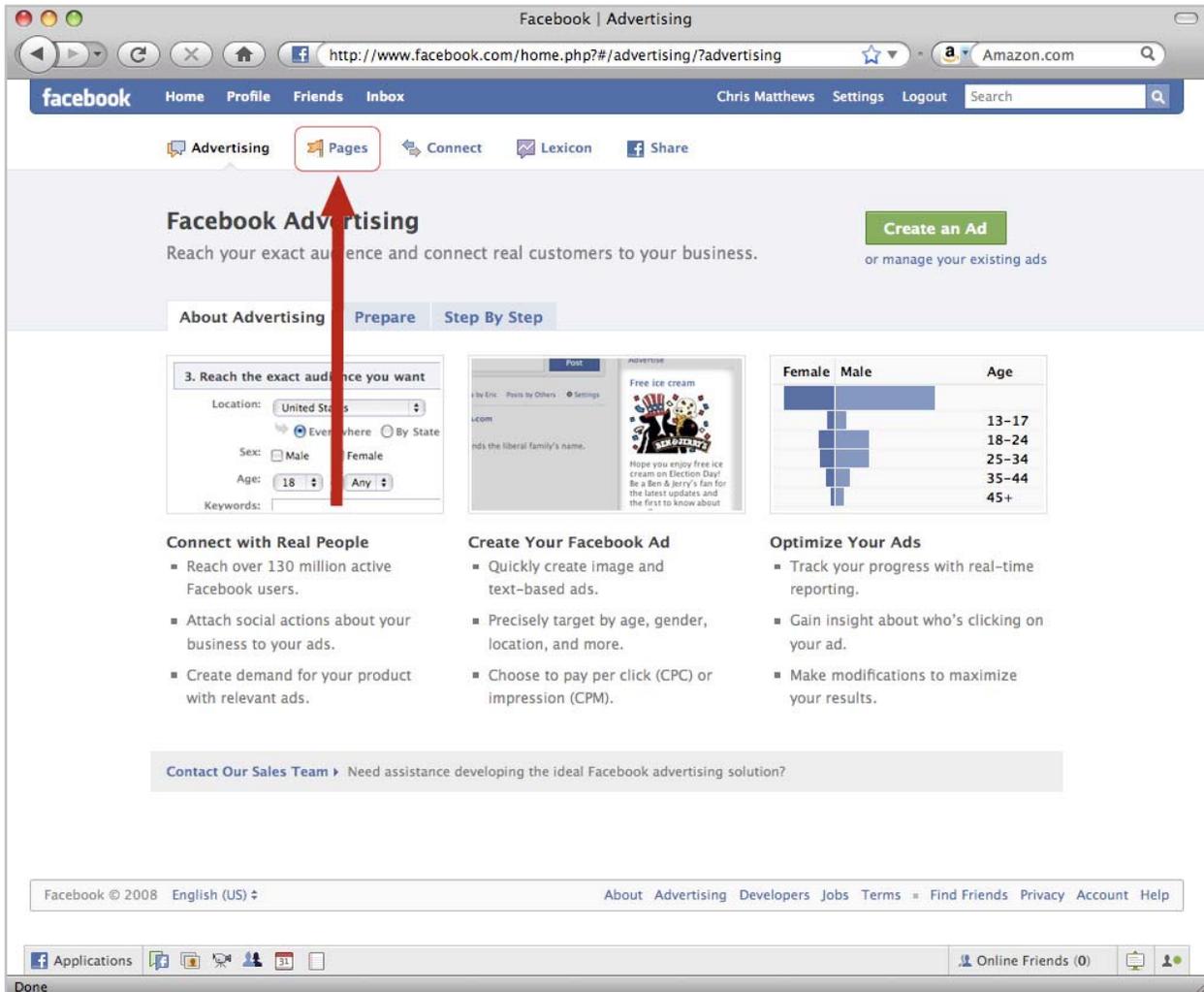


## ADDING A PAGE FOR YOUR BIKE SHOP

Now that you've got your profile set up, we're ready to get your bike shop onto Facebook. From your "home" page, click on the small button at the bottom of the page that says "Advertising"



There are two kinds of advertising on Facebook: the kind that's free and the kind you pay for. We're focusing on the free one at the moment. If you insist on paying for something, feel free to come back to this page later to buy ads on Facebook. There are lots of ad placement options that will help you target local audiences on Facebook that are into cycling, but this can become expensive (and some people have found ways to block the ads anyways).

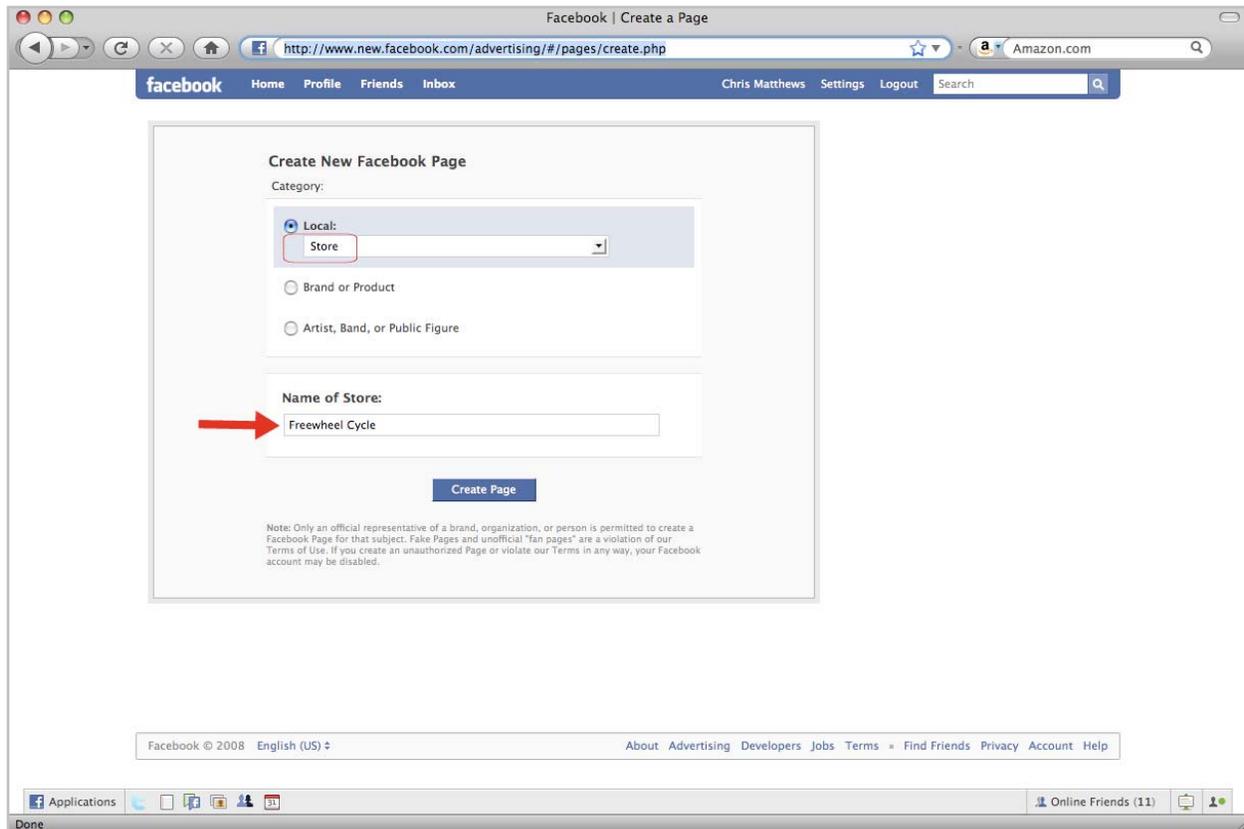


So before we embark on any expensive ad campaigns, let's take care of the part we can do for free. From the Advertising main page, click on the tab that says "Pages"

The 'Pages' main page has some useful information links, such as 'Prepare' and 'Step By Step' - read them for further tips and ideas, and then to get the process started, click the 'Create a Page' button

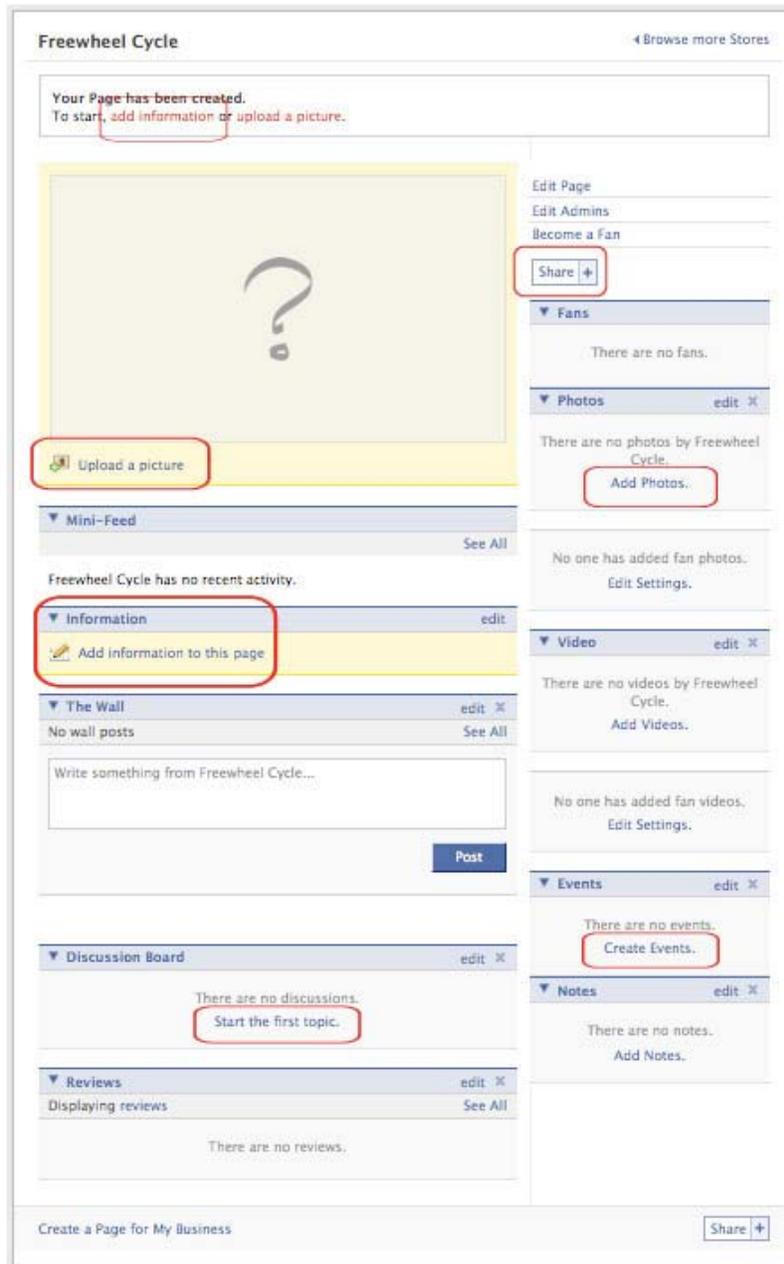
The screenshot shows the Facebook 'Pages' advertising page. At the top, the browser address bar displays 'http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/advertising/?pages'. The navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', 'Inbox', 'Chris Matthews', 'Settings', 'Logout', and a search box. Below the navigation bar, there are icons for 'Advertising', 'Pages', 'Connect', 'Lexicon', and 'Share'. The main content area features a 'Facebook Pages' heading with the text 'Create a presence to engage your customers and let them engage with each other.' A prominent green 'Create a Page' button is highlighted with a red box, with the subtext 'or manage your existing Pages'. Below this, a navigation bar contains 'About Pages', 'Prepare', and 'Step By Step', with 'Prepare' and 'Step By Step' also highlighted with a red box. The page is divided into three columns: 'Create a Facebook Page', 'Start the Conversation', and 'Drive Customer Awareness'. Each column contains a brief description and a 'Contact Our Sales Team' link. The footer includes 'Facebook © 2008 English (US)', 'About Advertising Developers Jobs Terms', 'Find Friends Privacy Account Help', and 'Applications'.

To get started, select “Store” as the category from the dropdown list, type in your shop name, and click the ‘Create Page’ button.

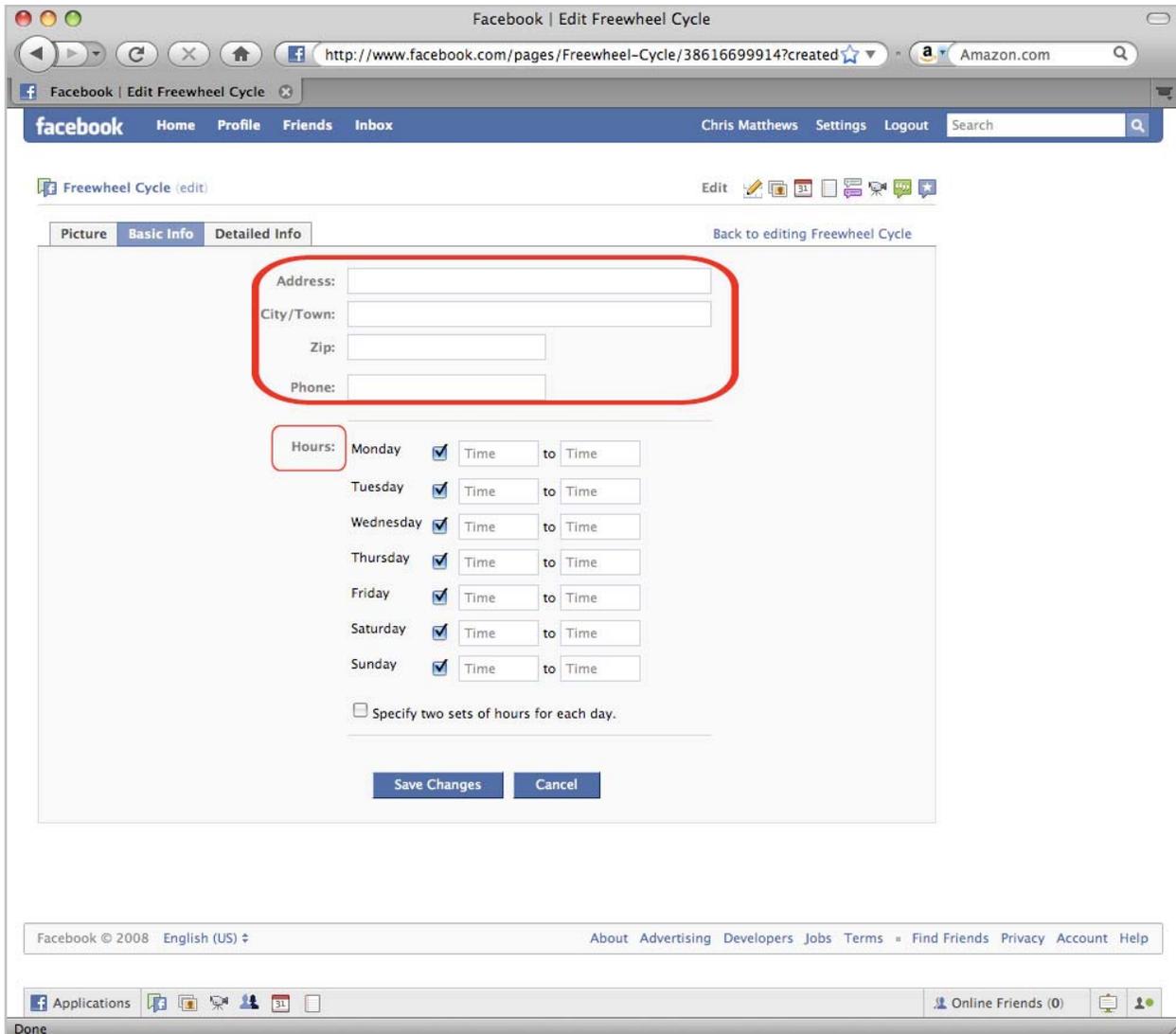


Now it's time to add some more info about your shop: upload a picture (this is a great place for your logo, or a picture of your storefront), and if you've got a lot of photos, the "add photos" button on the right will let you add as many as you like (shop photos, ride photos, employee portraits, customers and their bikes - whatever you like). There's a separate section for events (You run demo events and weekly rides, right? add them here!), and you can even start the first thread in a discussion forum.

When you've explored these options, click the 'Add Information' button at the top or middle of the page to add more specific details about your shop.

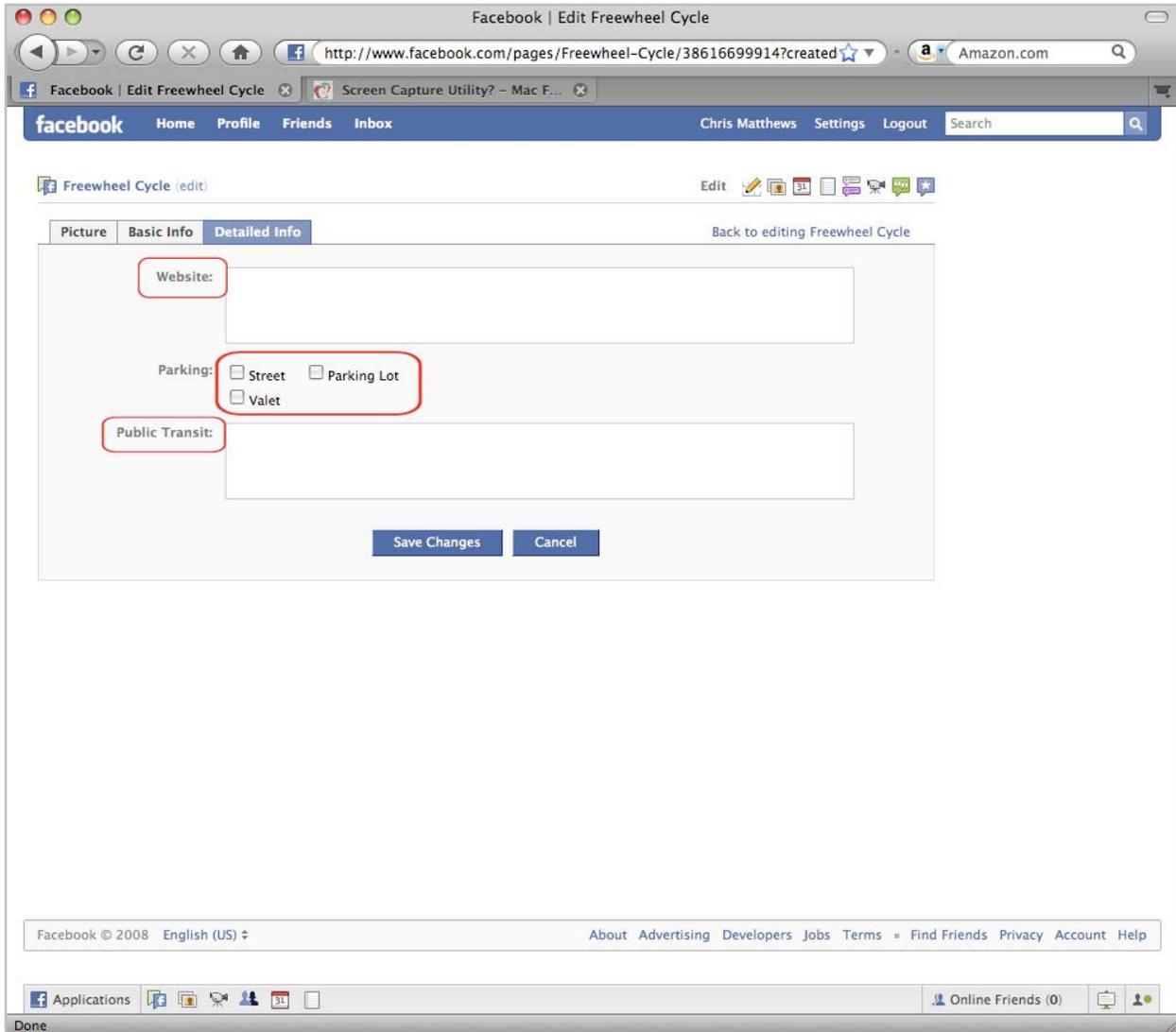


Adding 'basic info' to your shop page: When you click the 'add information' button, you'll see a page asking you for information about your address, your hours, and your phone number. Add that info here so customers know where & when they can find you.

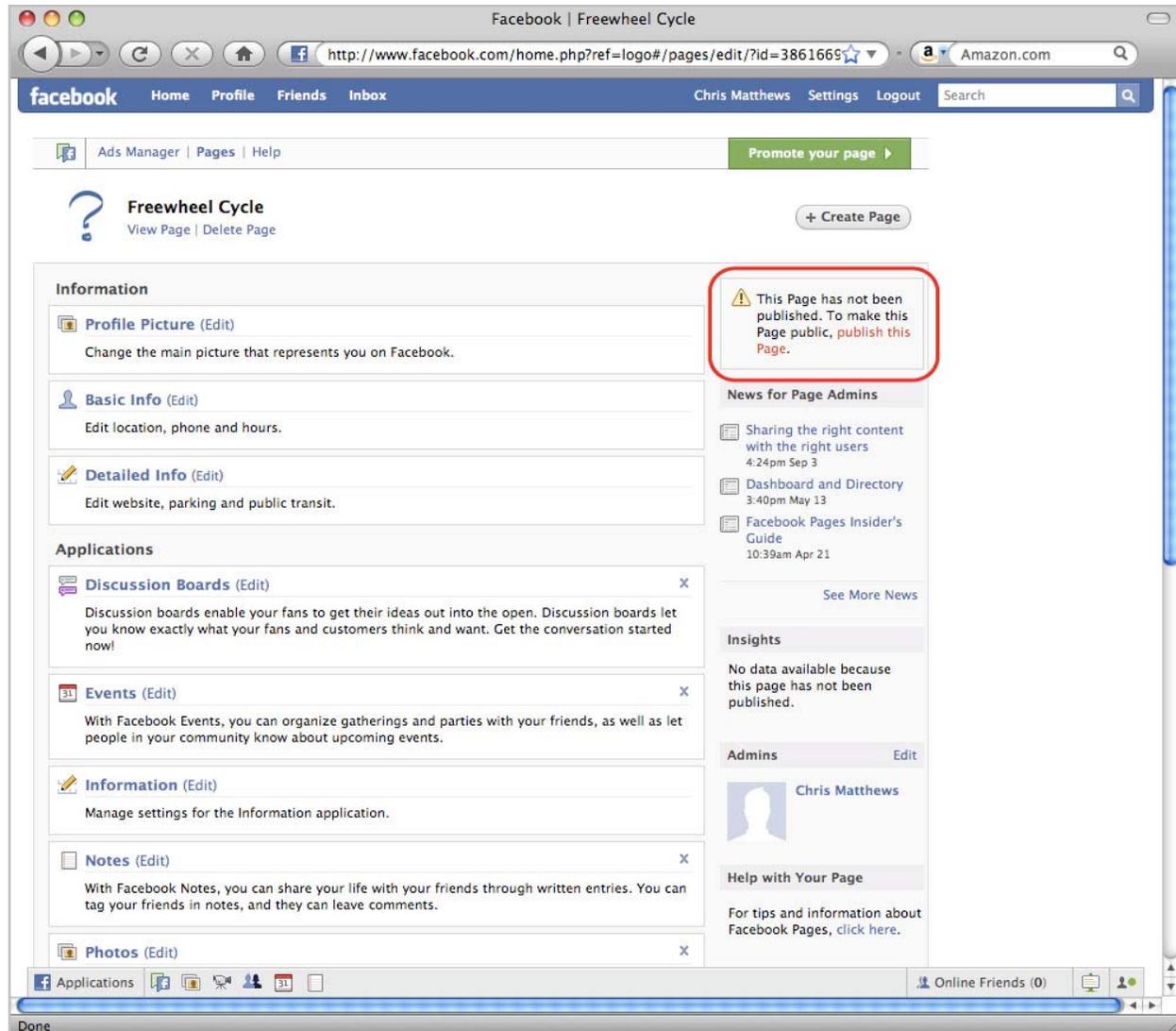


Adding 'detailed info': Click the 'Detailed Info' button in the top navigation bar to reveal more fields of information that you can add, including your website address, details about your parking situation, and even public transit info if there are bus/train station stops near you.

When you're done, click the 'Save Changes' button at the bottom. Then click the 'Back to editing your shop' button in the upper right.



The last step is to activate your Facebook Store page. From your Store page, you'll see a red link in the upper right that says 'publish this Page'. Once you click this, your store is active. Take this chance to quickly review what you've added, and then click the 'publish this Page' link.



## A REAL LIFE EXAMPLE: SUNFLOWER OUTDOOR & BIKE

What your page can look like: Below is a picture of an actual, 100% real Facebook bike shop page, recently created by Sunflower Bike Shop in Kansas. Within their first two weeks on Facebook, they've added 93 fans, advertised one upcoming event (CX Nationals Party!), uploaded a customer appreciation photo album, hosted a fan-created discussion on their discussion board, and had 6 fans post messages to their wall.

The image shows a screenshot of the Sunflower Outdoor & Bike Shop Facebook page. The page layout includes a header with the shop's name and logo, a navigation bar, and several sections: 'Hours & location', 'Recent activity', 'Wall posts from fans', 'Discussion items created by the shop', 'Fans are listed here', 'Photos', and 'Events'. The page content includes the shop's logo, address (804 Massachusetts St, Lawrence, KS 66044), phone number (785-843-5000), and hours of operation. The 'Recent activity' section shows posts from the shop, including an event announcement for 'Cyclocross Nationals Party' and a 'Customer Appreciation Party'. The 'Wall posts from fans' section displays several posts from users, including Keith Baker, Jim King, and Arnold Bartlett. The 'Discussion items created by the shop' section shows a discussion board with a topic 'Coolest Adventure?' and a post by a user. The 'Fans are listed here' section shows a list of fans, including Paul Seyland, Samantha Johnston, Justin Hawkins, Sara Böhmer, Stanley Cill, and Timothy Haynes. The 'Photos' section shows a photo album titled 'Customer Appreciation Party'. The 'Events' section shows an upcoming event 'Cyclocross Nationals Party' on Saturday, December 13 at 8:00pm.

Hours & location

Recent activity

Wall posts from fans

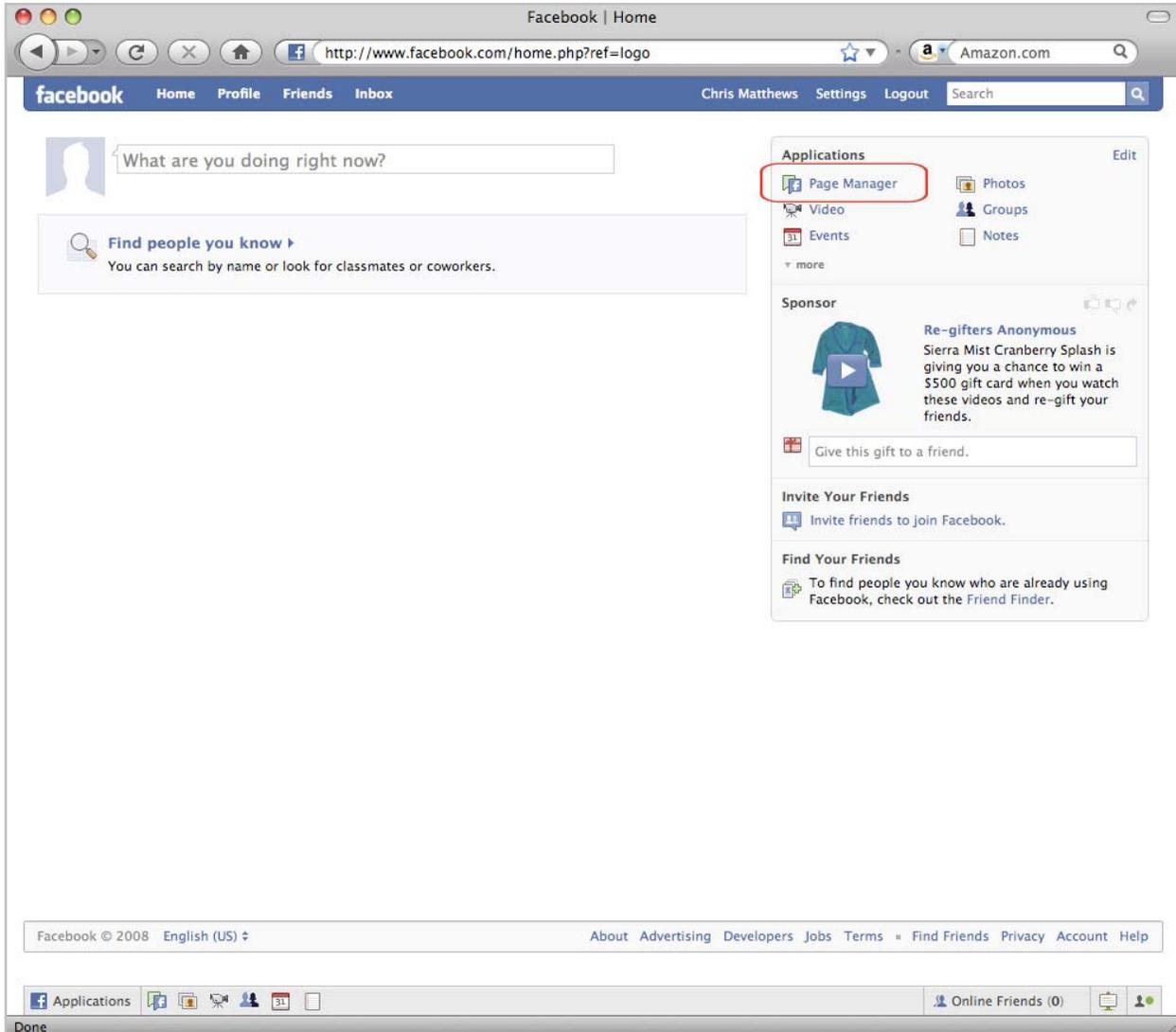
Discussion items created by the shop

Fans are listed here

Photos

Events

Managing your page: when you log in to Facebook, you'll now see a new button in your toolbox on the right side of your home page, called 'Page Manager'. Use this link anytime you want to make any changes or additions to your shop page.



## WHAT NOW?

A schedule of how a Bike Shop can spend 60 useful minutes per week on Facebook

Monday 5 min	Review any weekend activity on your shop page, approve any friend requests made by other people who want to add you as their friend. Update your status (this is the “what are you doing now?” element at the top of your Facebook profile page).
Tuesday 15 min	Search for 5 people you know, see if you can find them. These can be customers, riding friends, or even people unrelated to your bike shop like family or school friends. For any people you find, click the “view friends” link and see if there are further common connections you can add. Update your status.
Wednesday 10 min	Add one thing to your shop page: a photo, a video, an upcoming event announcement, a discussion topic, or a simple post to your shop’s ‘wall’. Update your status.
Thursday 10 minutes	Promote your page! Use the ‘Share’ link at the top of your shop’s page to spread the word about the page and gain fans. Send it to any of new friends you’ve added in the past week. Update your status.
Friday 10 minutes	Explore Facebook. Use the search function to find groups, events, and organizations that you want to become a fan of: bike brands, local riding resorts, IMBA, or your own college - anything that’s relevant to you. Update your status.
Weekends	Go ride!

## WHAT NOT TO DO: TWO THINGS THAT YOU SHOULD ACTIVELY AVOID ON FACEBOOK

1. **Don’t lie** about anything on Facebook, ever. I promise, you’ll get caught, and all your friends will find out about it.
2. **Don’t fight** on Facebook - if you have an issue with someone, take it up with them in real life, not online. If someone posts a negative comment about your shop, take this as an opportunity to open up a dialog with them in real life, and win them back as a customer. And if all attempts at being nice to them fail, then simply ignore people who cannot be pleased. If someone simply cannot be civil, Facebook has options you can use to block their access to your profile and your shop page.

## INVOLVING YOUR EMPLOYEES: EASY!

There’s a very good chance that your employees are already on Facebook (just as there are lots of Specialized employees around the world who use Facebook), so they’re a great resource to add as friends, and to help promote your new shop page. Ask your employees for ideas about how to make the shop page better, and encourage them use Facebook at work to create stronger ties with customers.

Additionally, you can assign ‘officer’ rankings for your shop page to employees, so if you prefer, you can let one (or more) of them contribute to the management of your Facebook page.

## WHAT'S TWITTER?

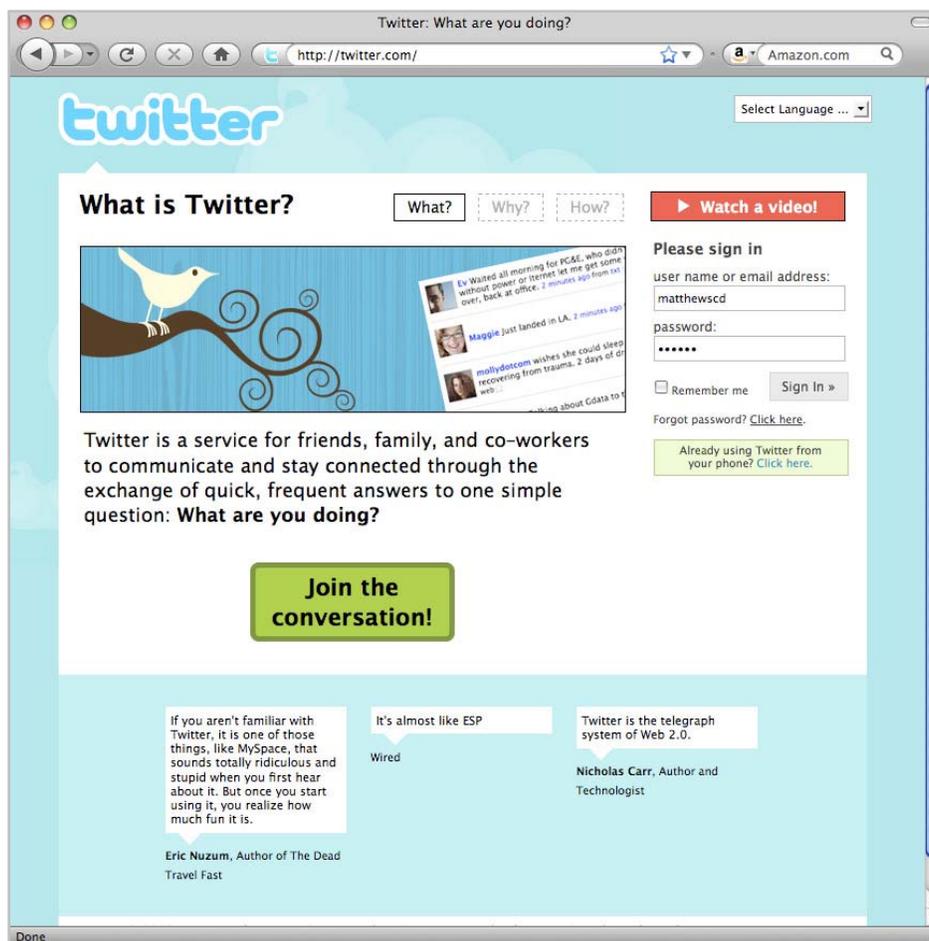
Twitter is a Social Media site that is used by millions of people worldwide, but unlike Facebook or the Riders Club sites, Twitter seeks to only answer the question “What are you doing right now?” in 140 characters or less. That’s it.

A key feature of Twitter is that you can update your ‘twitter feed’ via SMS (text) message using your cell phone. And as an added bonus, you can link your Facebook and Twitter accounts using a small (and free) program called an ‘App’ (short for ‘application’). The result is that you can update your Twitter feed and Facebook status simultaneously with a single text message, no computer required.

Still not convinced? Take a look at the people and companies in the bike business who are already on Twitter: [Lance Armstrong](#). [George Hincapie](#). [Interbike](#). [Masi](#). [Sugoi](#). [Johan Bruyneel](#). [BikeBiz](#). [Timbuk2](#). [VeloNews](#). Plus bike shops like [Greggs Cycles](#) and [Jack and Adams](#). Even [Lucy the Shop Dog](#) from Bicycle Therapy in PA.

## STEP 1: SIGNING UP

Just like everything else we’ve discussed in this guide, Twitter is free. Go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and click the ‘Join the Conversation’ button.



## CREATING YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT

When you're creating your account, use your shop name, or something close to it if someone has already taken a Twitter account that happens to have the same name as your shop.

Twitter / Create an Account

https://twitter.com/signup

Amazon.com

### Create a Free Twitter Account

Username:  Your URL: http://twitter.com  
/Your\_Bikeshop  
Available!

Password:  6 characters or more (be tricky!)

Email Address:  In case you forget something

Humanness:

Type the two words:

I want the inside scoop—please send me email updates!

By clicking on 'I accept' below, you confirm that you are over 13 years of age and accept the [Terms of Service](#).

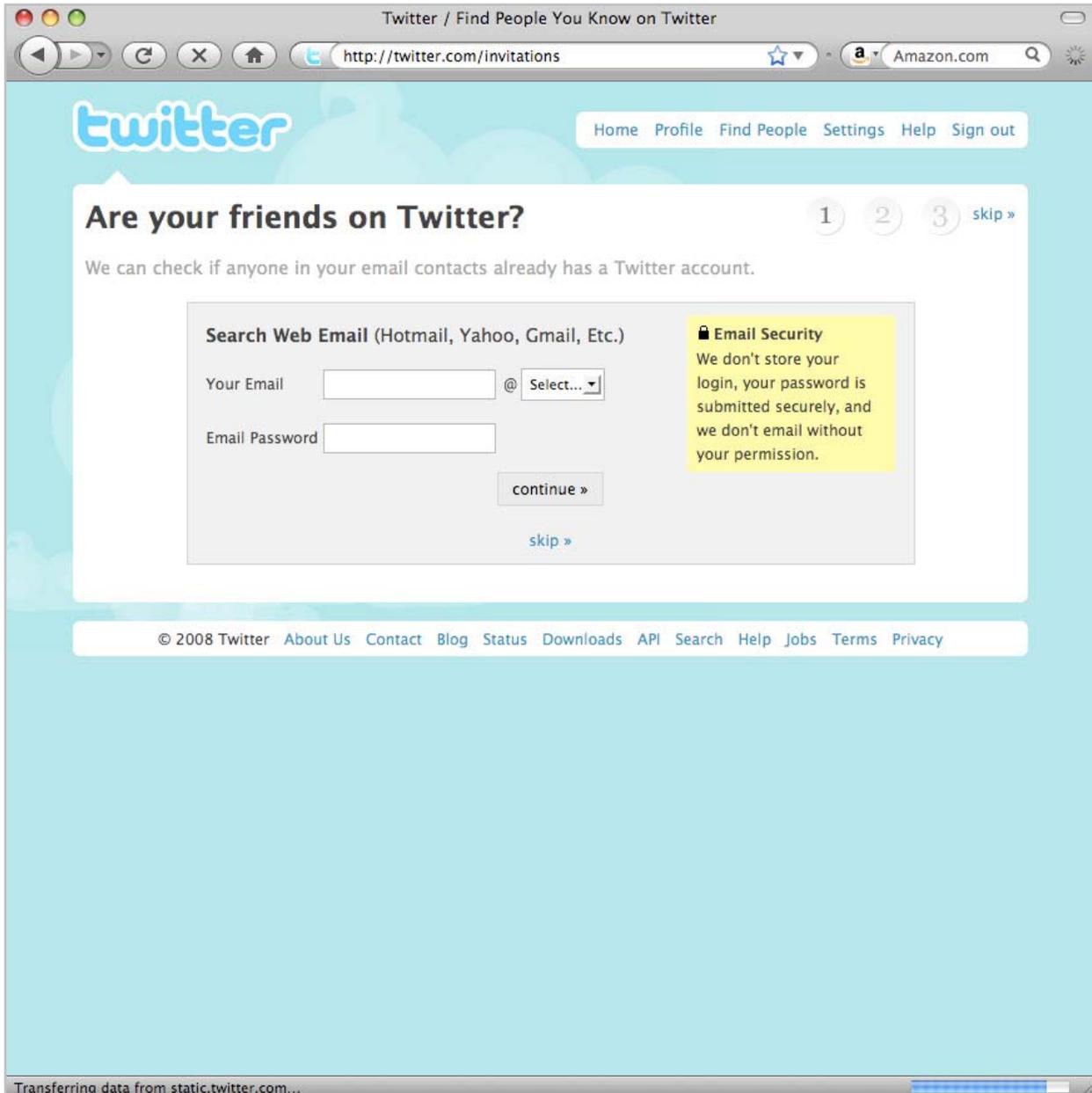
Already a member?  
**Please Sign In!**  
Already use Twitter on your phone? [Head over here](#) and we'll get you signed up on the web.

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Done twitter.com

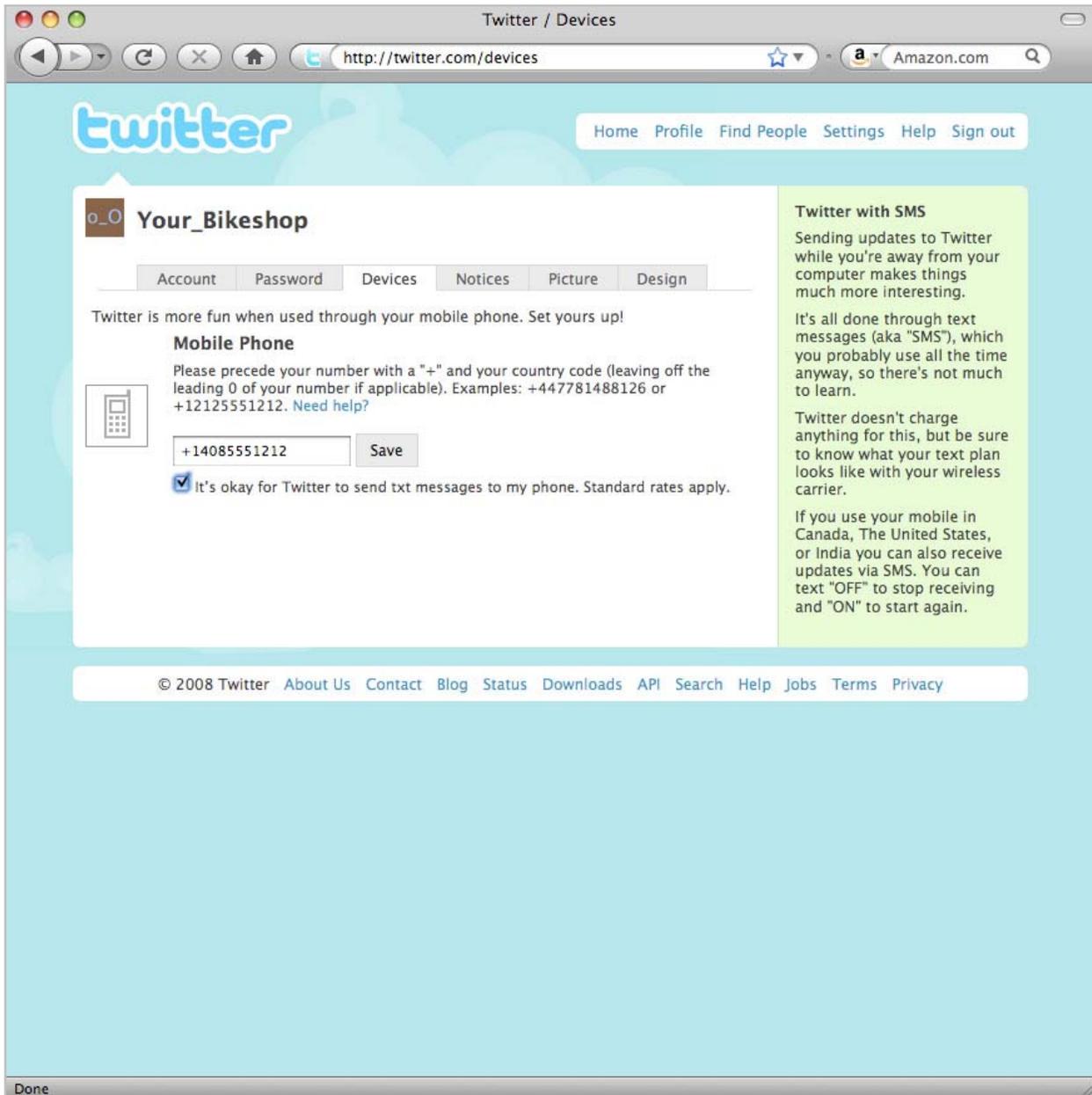
## GETTING SET UP ON TWITTER

Just like Facebook, you can give Twitter temporary access to your web-based email (@gmail, @yahoo, @hotmail) to see if any of your friends in your address book are using Twitter. If they are, you can choose to follow them, so that when they post a 'tweet' it will show up in your Twitter feed.



## ACTIVATING YOUR CELLPHONE

By activating your cell phone, you can allow Twitter to receive updates via text message. Add your cell phone number here, and Twitter will send you an activation code. Type in the activation code that Twitter texts to you, and you're set! Just follow the directions of where to send text updates, and you can now send 'tweets' from your cellphone anytime.

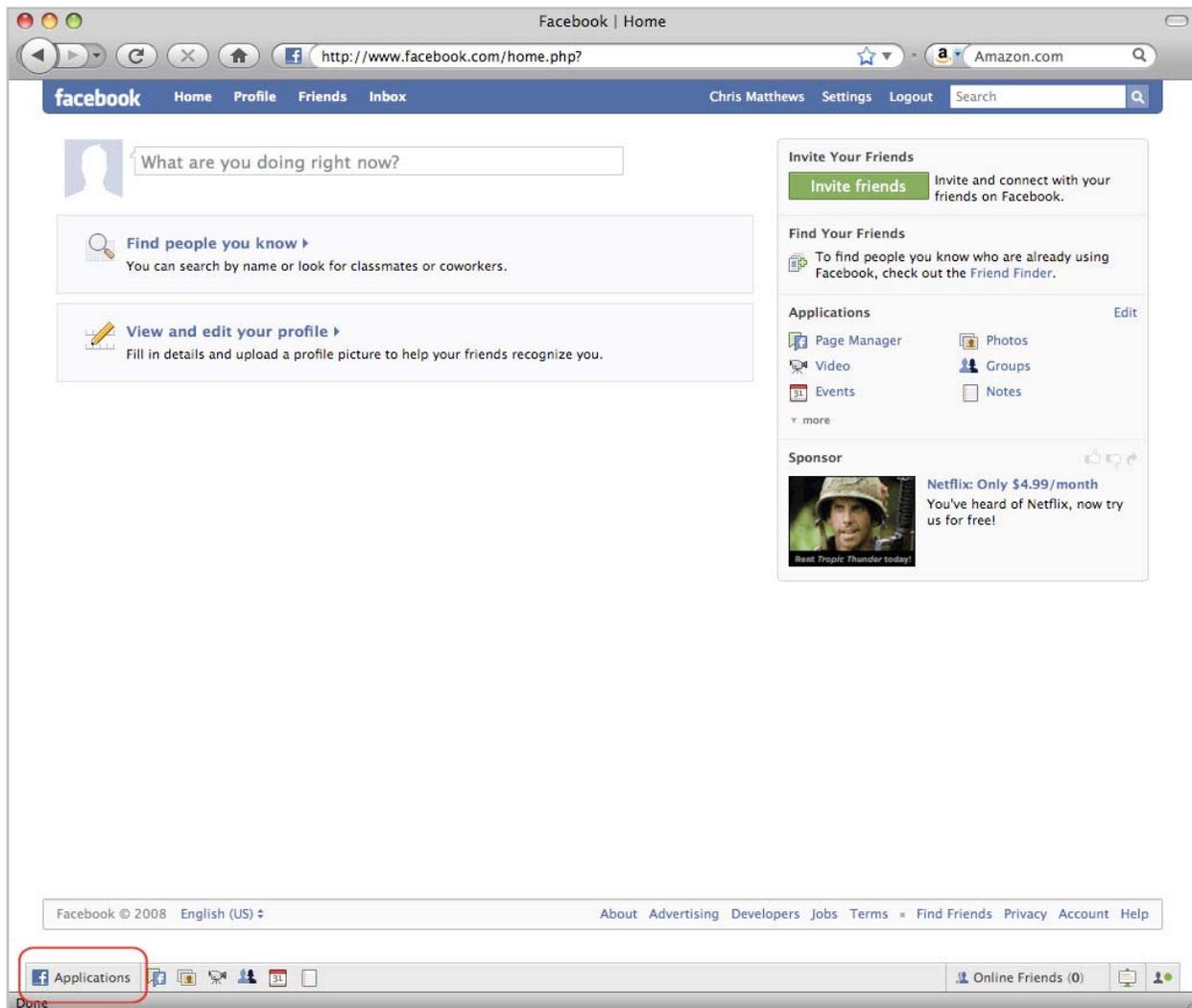


The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Twitter / Devices" with the address bar displaying "http://twitter.com/devices". The page features the Twitter logo and navigation links: Home, Profile, Find People, Settings, Help, and Sign out. The user's profile name "Your\_Bikeshop" is visible, along with tabs for Account, Password, Devices, Notices, Picture, and Design. The "Devices" tab is active, showing instructions for adding a mobile phone. A text input field contains the number "+14085551212" and a "Save" button is next to it. Below the input field, there is a checked checkbox with the text "It's okay for Twitter to send txt messages to my phone. Standard rates apply." To the right, a green box titled "Twitter with SMS" provides additional information: "Sending updates to Twitter while you're away from your computer makes things much more interesting. It's all done through text messages (aka 'SMS'), which you probably use all the time anyway, so there's not much to learn. Twitter doesn't charge anything for this, but be sure to know what your text plan looks like with your wireless carrier. If you use your mobile in Canada, The United States, or India you can also receive updates via SMS. You can text 'OFF' to stop receiving and 'ON' to start again." At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with copyright information: "© 2008 Twitter" and various links: About Us, Contact, Blog, Status, Downloads, API, Search, Help, Jobs, Terms, Privacy. The browser's status bar at the bottom left shows "Done".

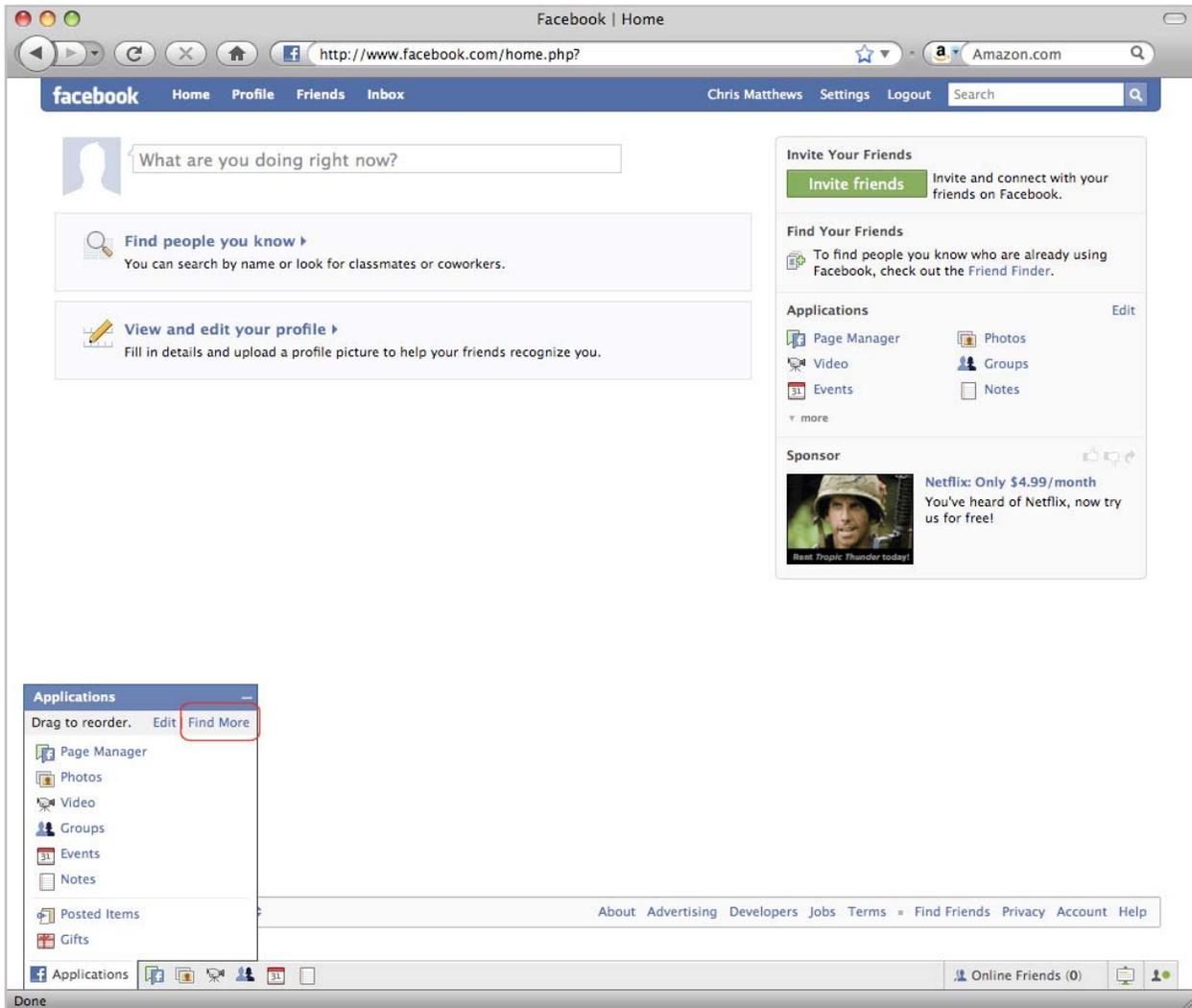
## FACEBOOK+TWITTER

The 'status' feature of Facebook and the 'what are you doing now' theme of Twitter accomplish basically the same thing. So, there are small applications, more commonly known as Apps, that can help in situations like this. By activating the Twitter app inside Facebook, your Facebook status can automatically change when you post a twitter update: one text message from your cell phone updates both places with the same info.

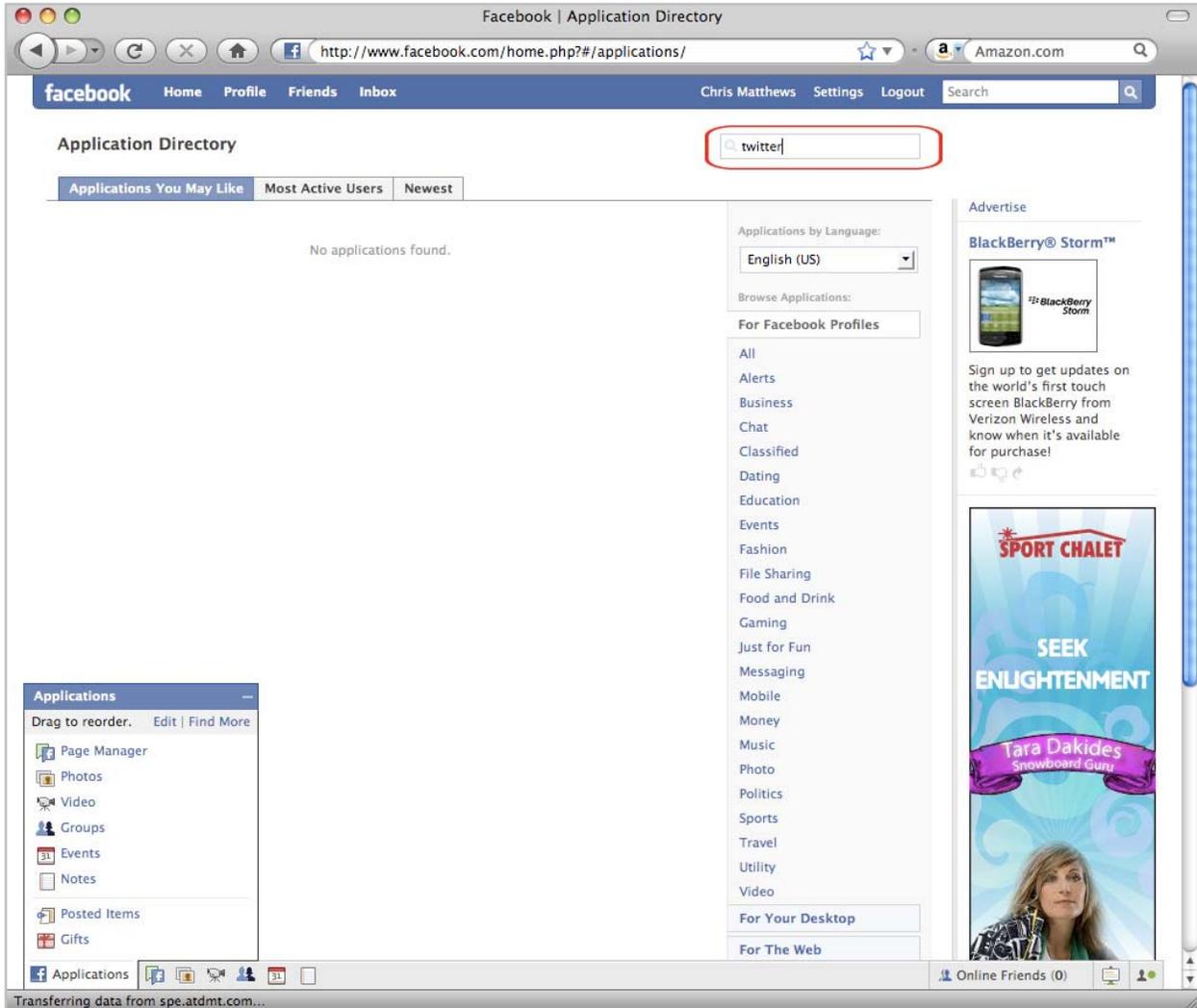
First, log into Facebook, and look for the small "Applications" button in the lower left corner of your screen.



By clicking the 'Applications' button, you'll see a pop-up menu with a link to 'Find More' - click that 'Find More' link.



This will show you the Application Directory. Use the search box to search for 'Twitter'.



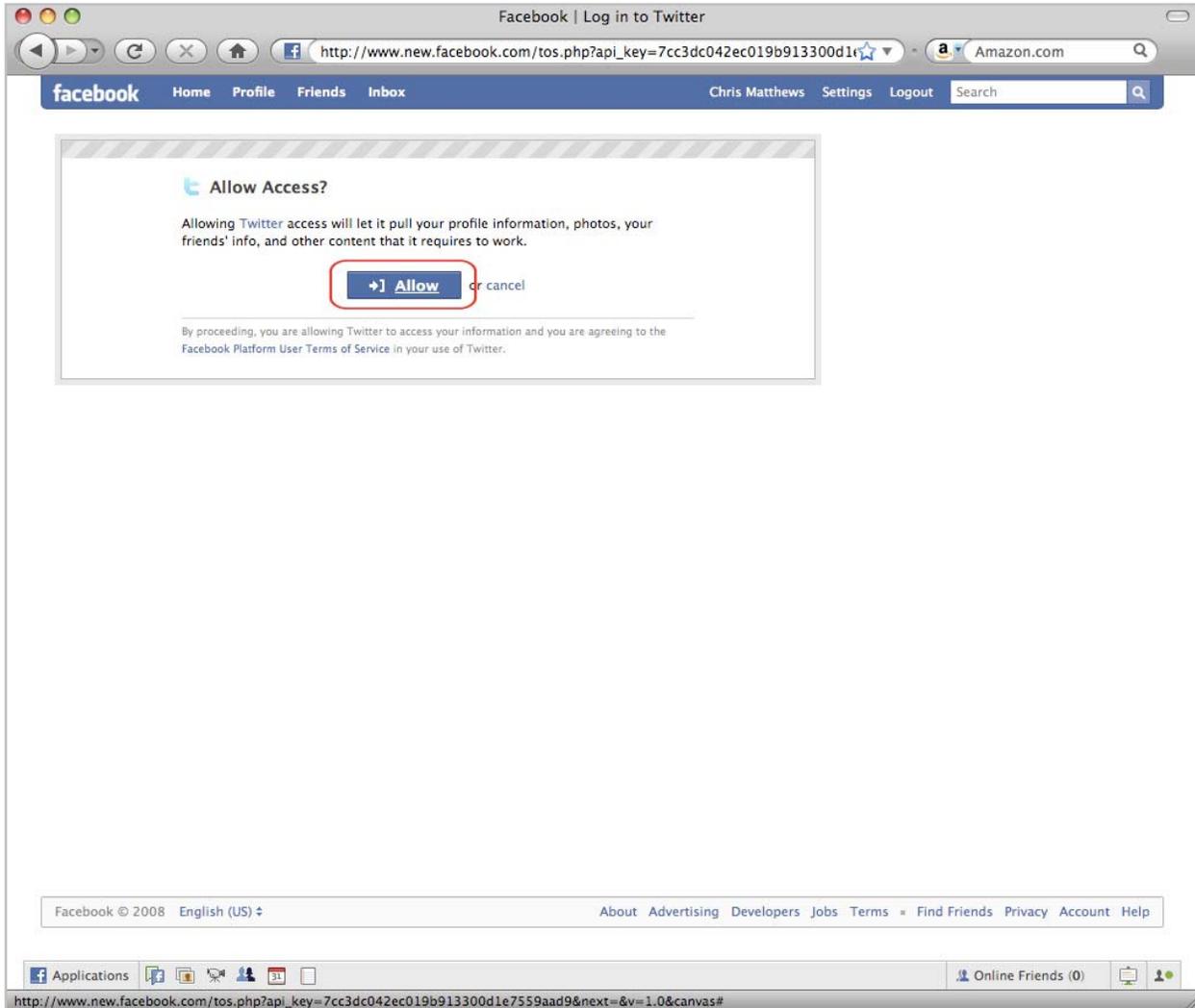
In the search results, look for the Twitter application, and click the title link to go to the application page.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the Facebook Application Directory search results for 'Twitter'. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/apps/index.php?q=twitter>. The Facebook navigation bar at the top includes 'Home', 'Profile', 'Friends', 'Inbox', and a search box. The main content area is titled 'Application Directory' and features a search bar and three tabs: 'Applications You May Like', 'Most Active Users', and 'Newest'. The 'Applications You May Like' tab is selected, displaying a list of applications. The 'Twitter' application is highlighted with a red oval. It is listed as 'By Twitter' with 89,341 monthly active users and 378 reviews. The description states: 'See what you and your friends are up to on Twitter and update your Twitter status, right from Facebook!'. Other applications visible include 'Flock', 'Street Football', 'TWENTY20 Cricket', 'Ping.fm', and 'Voomaxer'. On the right side, there is a sidebar with 'Applications by Language' set to 'English (US)', a 'Browse Applications' menu for 'For Facebook Profiles' (including categories like Alerts, Business, Chat, etc.), and an advertisement for 'Bright Travel Deals' and 'PayPal Free Shipping Site to Store'.

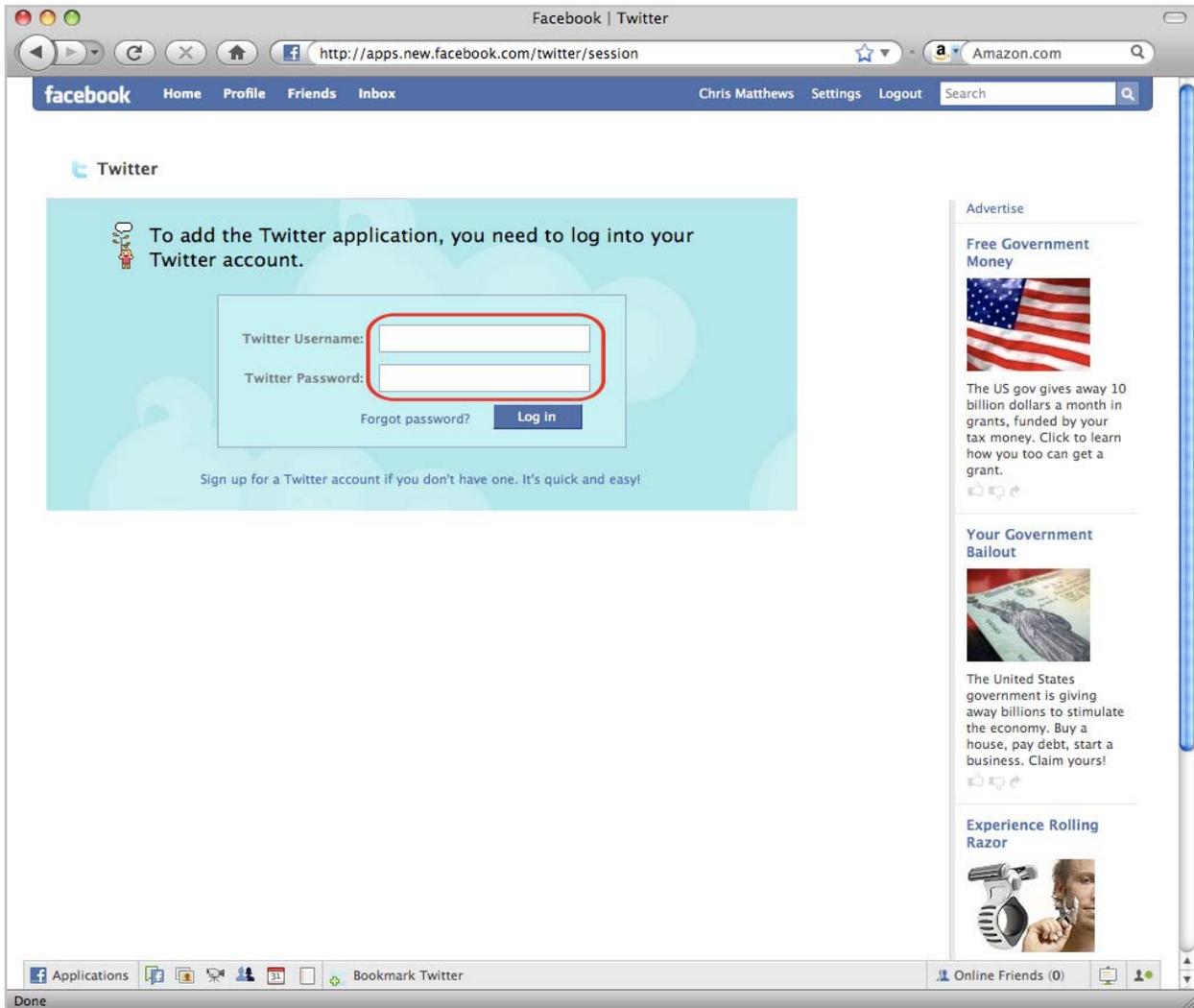
On the Twitter application page, click the link that says 'Go to Application'



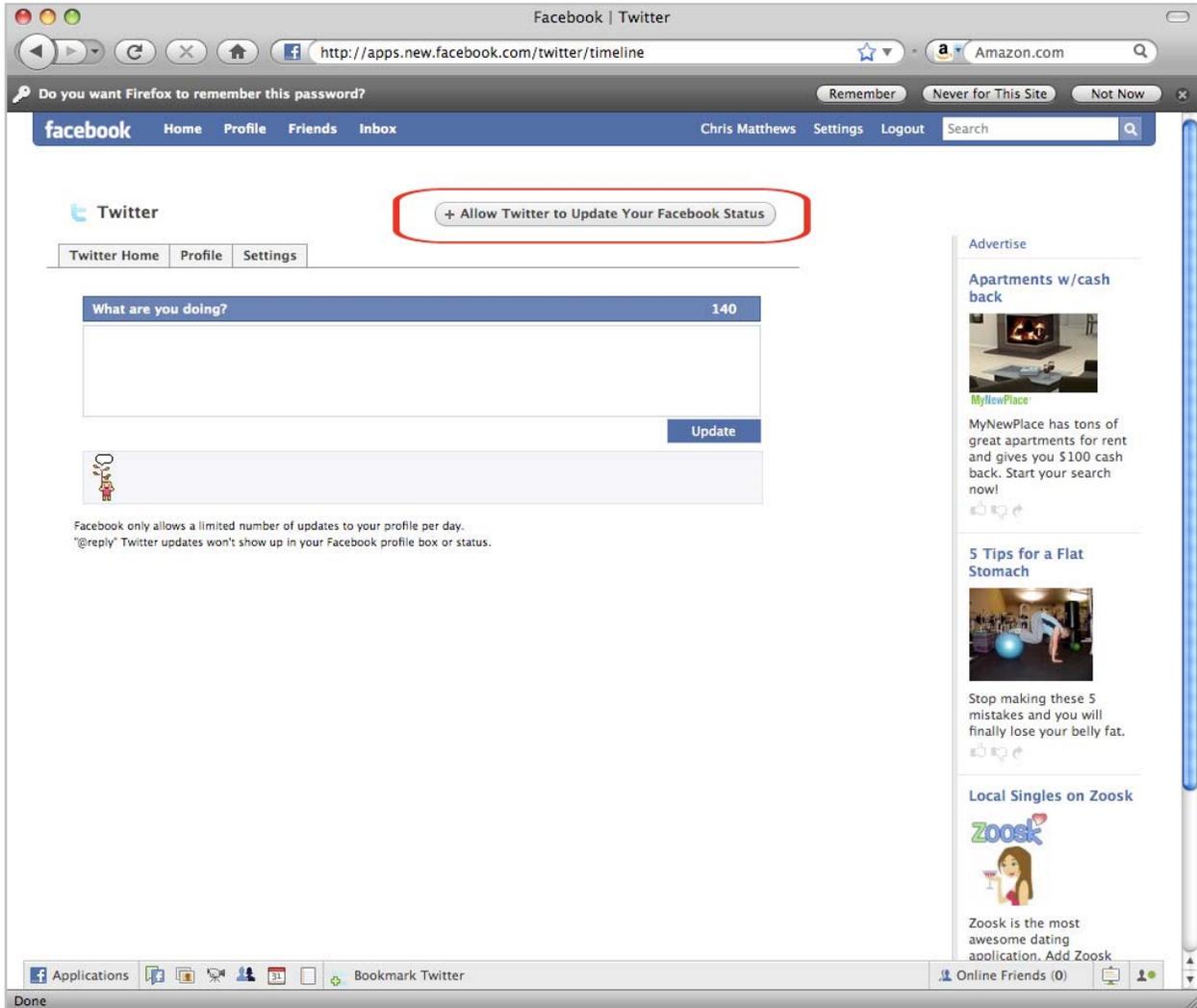
Next, confirm with Facebook that you want to allow Twitter to access Facebook.



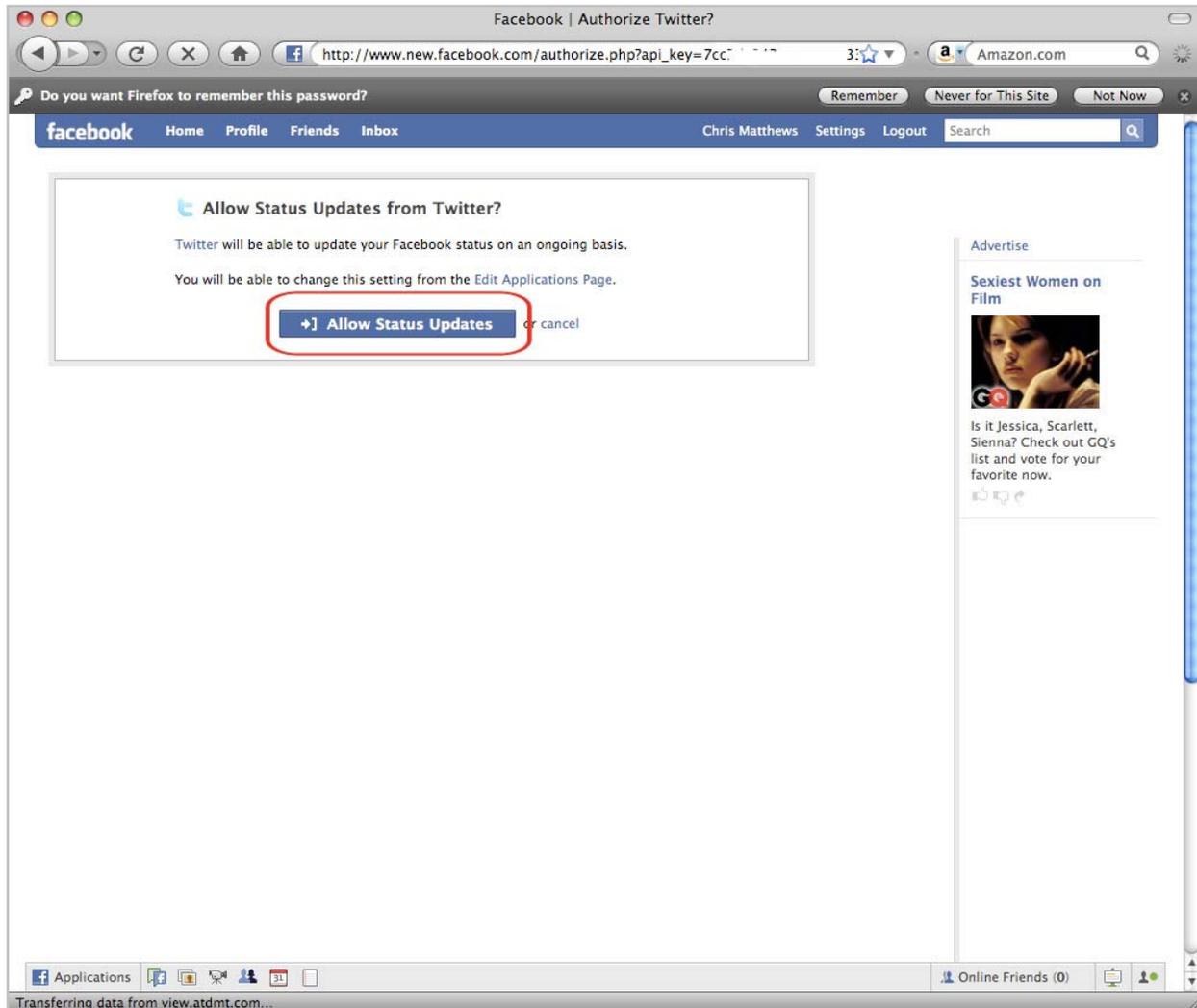
Next, log into Twitter using your Twitter username and password - you're basically logging into Twitter while 'inside' Facebook. This will allow Facebook and Twitter to work together.



Allow Twitter to update your Facebook Status: click the large button in the upper right.



Last step! Click the 'Allow Status Updates' button.



That's it, you're done! Now, whenever you update twitter, via twitter's website or via text message from your mobile phone, your Twitter status and Facebook status will both update simultaneously.

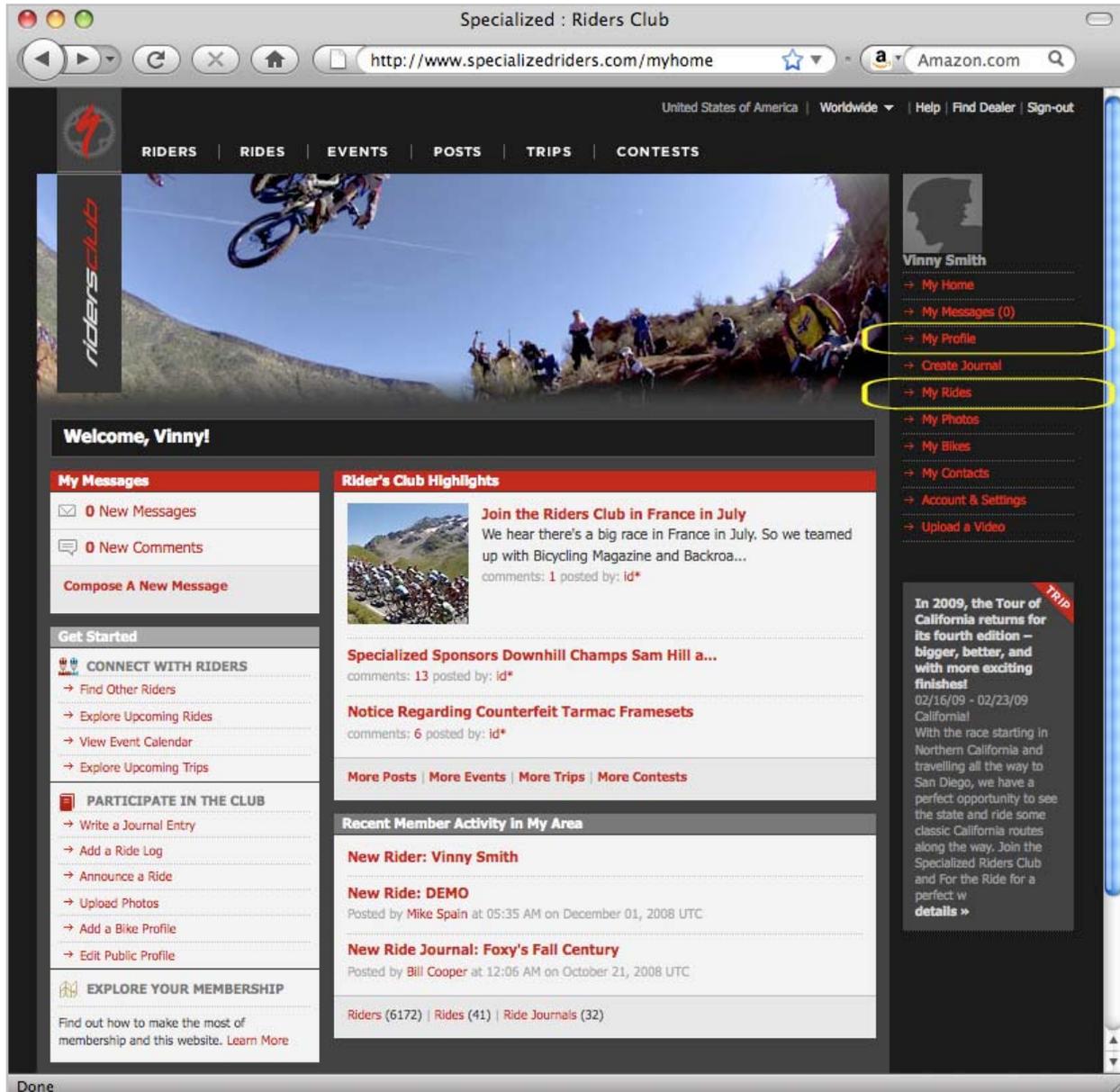
## I'M ON TWITTER. SO NOW WHAT?

Now that you're on Twitter, and on Facebook, it's time to start updating your status more often. Be creative, but don't feel obligated. Take some time to follow some other folks on Twitter, whether bike industry people or just friends, and see what kinds of info they share. Twitter is best learned by using it, and for sure you'll find ways to use it that others wouldn't have thought of.

As some first ideas though, consider using Twitter to announce when a bike is being test ridden right now, run Twitter-based contests, broadcast new bike arrivals, mention when reps are in the store, brag about recent new bike sales, or twitter about the strange mumblings coming from your head mechanic.

Of particular interest for Specialized Dealers: the Specialized Riders Club is a community separate from Facebook, specific to Specialized owners and fans worldwide. For Specialized dealers, it represents another free, easily-managed way to promote your shop to a wide audience of fans and potential new fans. While Facebook supports a larger audience, the Riders Club site supports an audience comprised exclusively of cyclists, making it a great resource for you.

First step: if you don't already have a riders club account for your shop, or if you've forgotten your login data, contact Ian Dewar at Specialized ([ian.dewar@specialized.com](mailto:ian.dewar@specialized.com)) and he'll set you up. Once you're logged in, there are two important things to do: update your profile and add your shop rides to the site.



Facebook and the Riders Club site are not mutually exclusive: there is good reason to be in both places, and by linking from one to the other, it's a great way to expand your reach in both audiences.

## EDITING YOUR PROFILE

From your profile page, the 'Profile' link in the upper left will drop down and let you select the 'edit profile' option. Click the 'edit profile' link to proceed.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Specialized : Riders Club". The address bar displays "http://www.specializedriders.com/profile/view/52228". The website's navigation menu includes "RIDERS", "RIDES", "EVENTS", "POSTS", "TRIPS", and "CONTESTS". The main content area features a profile for "Vinny Smith (Member #52228)". A dropdown menu labeled "Manage: Profile" is open, with "Edit Profile" highlighted. Below the profile name is a "Comments (0)" section with a "Post Your Comment" button. A sidebar on the right contains a list of links for "My Home", "My Messages (0)", "My Profile", "Create Journal", "My Rides", "My Photos", "My Bikes", "My Contacts", "Account & Settings", and "Upload a Video". A promotional banner for the "2009 Tour of California" is also visible in the sidebar.

## EDIT YOUR PROFILE

Your profile details will ask you for some of the same info you added to Facebook - feel free to copy the content where it's appropriate. Then, be sure to add a link to your shop's Facebook page to the 'About Me' section so members of the Riders Club community know they can also find you on Facebook.

Specialized : Riders Club

United States of America | Worldwide | Help | Find Dealer | Sign-out

RIDERS | RIDES | EVENTS | POSTS | TRIPS | CONTESTS

Manage: Profile

### EDIT PROFILE

Use the form below to update your public and private profile information.

#### My Profile

First Name: Vinny  
Last Name: Smith  
Site Nickname:   
Types of Riding:  Road,  Mountain,  Freeride,  Road Racing,  Cross Country Racing,  Cyclo-Cross,  Dirt Jumping,  Fixed Gear,  Urban,  Triathlete  
Why I Ride:   
Gender:  Male,  Female  
Favorite Ride:   
About Me:   
URL:

#### My Profile Photo

Upload Photo:   
Image Guidelines: Accepted file formats are .JPG, .GIF, .PNG, or .BMP. Size limit is 1MB. For best results crop your photo to a 300 x 300 pixel square.  
  
CURRENT PROFILE PHOTO:

#### Edit Private Profile

Birthdate:   
Address:   
Address2:   
City:   
Country: United States of America  
State:   
Zip/Postal Code: 95037  
Language:   
Phone:

#### Edit Account Information

Email: your.email@email.com  
New Password:   
New Password Confirmation:   
 Notify me via email when I receive new comments  
 Notify me via email when I receive new messages

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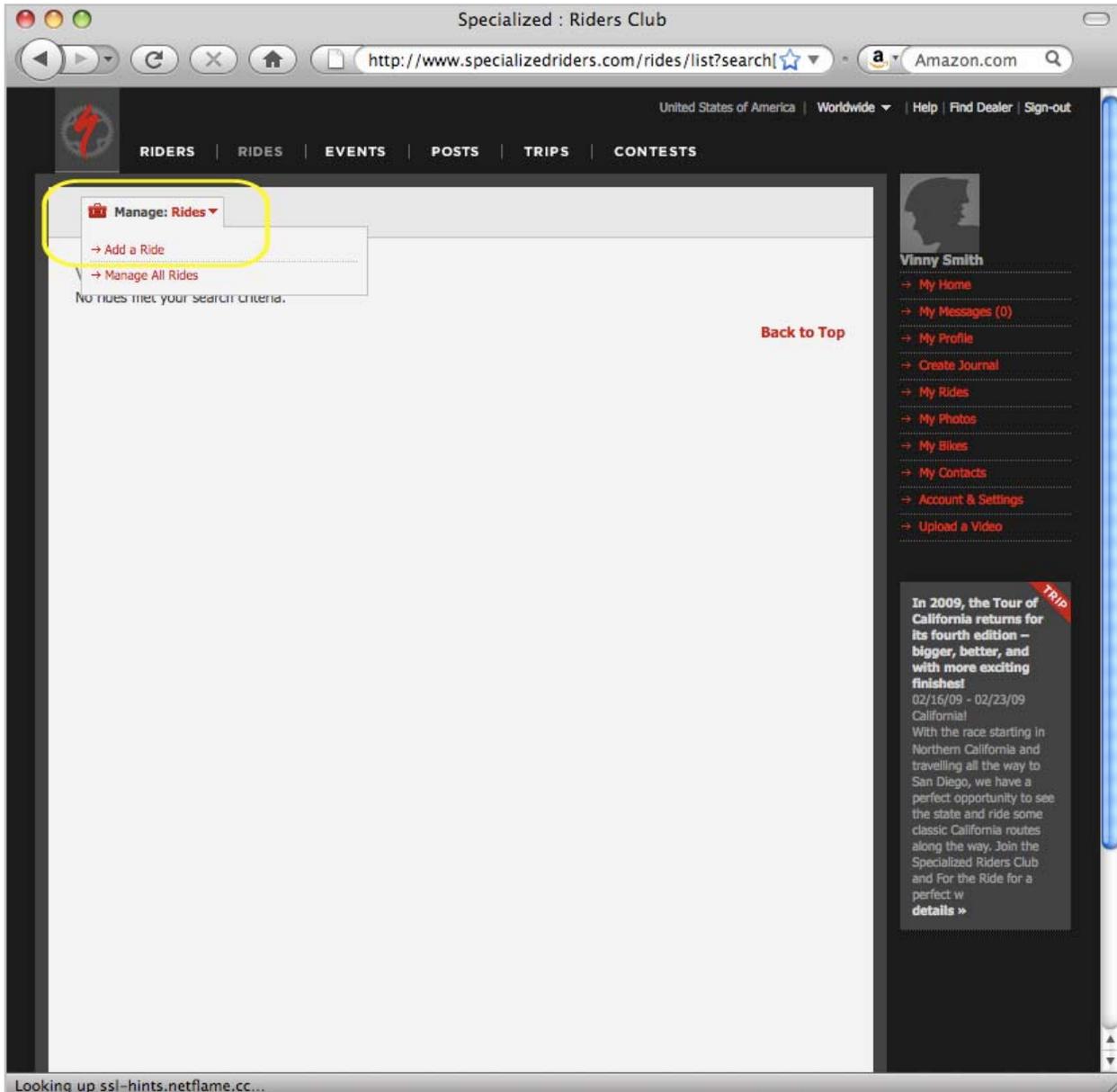
http://www.specializedriders.com/UserProfile/52046/gallery/add

Vinny Smith  
→ My Home  
→ My Messages (0)  
→ My Profile  
→ Create Journal  
→ My Rides  
→ My Photos  
→ My Blogs  
→ My Contacts  
→ Account & Settings  
→ Upload a Video

**In 2009, the Tour of California returns for its fourth edition—bigger, better, and with more exciting finishes!**  
02/15/09 - 02/23/09  
California  
With the race starting in Northern California and traveling all the way to San Diego, we have a perfect opportunity to see the state and ride some classic California routes along the way. Join the Specialized Riders Club and For the Ride for a perfect w  
[details >>](#)

## ADDING RIDES

The Specialized Riders Club has some unique features to broadcast details about your shop rides, whether they're weekly rides or a special 1-day event ride. Once your shop profile is complete, add your rides to the site using the 'My Rides' link.



## ADDING RIDES

For each ride you organize, add the details to your shop's profile page. There is no problem with these rides being promoted here as well as on Facebook, and you may find some advantages to linking from Facebook to your rides on the Riders Club site, if only because of the more ride-specific details that you can add here.

Specialized : Riders Club

United States of America | Worldwide | Help | Find Dealer | Sign-out

RIDERS | RIDES | EVENTS | POSTS | TRIPS | CONTESTS

### NEW RIDE

Use the form below to alert others about upcoming rides you are organizing including rides that happen on a regular basis (e.g. weekly / monthly / annually) or one time only (e.g. Thanksgiving ride).

**New Ride**

Name:

Organized by:

Type: Triathlon

Route Distance:

Ride Intensity:

Route name:

Contact name:

Contact phone:

Contact email:

Starts at: 00 : 00

Ends at: 00 : 00

When: Select an option

Ride Description:   
 **B** **I** **U**

Country: United States of America

Address:

City:

State/Province:

Zip/Postal Code:

**Map Your Start Location**

**Fine Tune Your Start Location**

Use the map on the right to mark your exact start location. To do so:

1. Zoom into the marker to get a closer view.
2. Drag the marker onto any point on the map. For example: a parking lot, trailhead, etc.

**Note:** This won't change the location info provided above, only the map that appears with your post.

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Done

**Vinny Smith**

- My Home
- My Messages (0)
- My Profile
- Create Journal
- My Rides
- My Photos
- My Blogs
- My Contacts
- Account & Settings
- Upload a Video

**In 2009, the Tour of California returns for its fourth edition – bigger, better, and with more exciting finishes!**

02/15/09 - 02/23/09  
California!

With the race starting in Northern California and travelling all the way to San Diego, we have a perfect opportunity to see the state and ride some classic California routes along the way. Join the Specialized Riders Club and For the Ride for a perfect w  
**details »**

Plus3 Network is a relatively new Social Media site that lets members join for free, then select a cause they want to raise money for, and then select a sponsor to support them. Then they ride, run, or walk and for each mile they cover, the sponsor kicks down a few cents to the charity they picked. Over time, it adds up - and it doesn't cost the Plus3 member a cent. This charity feature is then complimented by a collection of Social Media elements that we've already seen elsewhere: you can keep a list of Plus3 friends, invite others to join you on rides, and join group-based challenges.

The advantage here for bike shops is more focused than we saw in Facebook or Twitter - but for shops that sell GPS units like the Garmin 305 and 705, it's a way to inspire customers to ride more, and to help them stay motivated. Your shop could, for instance, organize a public wall for your customers to graph their charity progress, and you could offer matching programs - perhaps offered as discount coupons, or shop apparel, or other accessories that your tribe can use to help evangelize your shop and the charity work you're doing, for free, using Social Media.

And yes, there's a good chance it could help you sell more GPS-enabled bike computers. And if you don't ride with a GPS yourself, you should; it's not just cool, it's the future.

So, step one: get a GPS. Then sign up for Plus3 by visiting [www.plus3network.com](http://www.plus3network.com)



## SIGNING UP

Once you click the sign up button, you're asked for the usual info: name, email, and password, and then click the 'Select a Cause' button.

Plus 3 Network

http://www.plus3network.com/user/signup

Amazon.com

BETA

Home People Activities Calendar Goals + Rewards Causes + Sponsors

**+3 NETWORK**

### Register

Just a few simple items will get you started doing good for yourself and with those around you.

First Name Chris	Password *****
Last Name Matthews	Confirm password *****
Email Address email@email.com	Zip Code 95128

Select a Cause

About Plus 3 Network Tell Me More & FAQ Get Involved as a Cause Or Sponsor Make the Site Better Support Privacy Terms Of Use Contact Us

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## PICKING A CAUSE

Once you've clicked the "Select a Cause" button, a window will appear on the screen that will let you pick the cause you want to support (and the sponsor who will be providing the money). Click the dot beside the Cause/Sponsor pair you want to support yourself, and then click 'Select a Cause'

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Plus 3 Network" with the URL "http://www.plus3network.com/user/signup". The page features a navigation bar with "People", "Activities", "Calendar", "Goals + Rewards", and "Causes + Sponsors". A "Register" form is visible on the left, with fields for "First Name" (Chris), "Last Name" (Matthews), and "Email Address" (chris.matthews@specialize). A "Select a Cause" button is located below the form. The main content area displays a grid of cause/sponsor pairs, each with a radio button for selection. The pairs are:

- World Bicycle Relief + SRAM
- International Mountain Bicycling Association + Trek
- Bikes Belong + Pedros
- Environmental Defense Fund + Pedros
- TheTech + IDEO
- League of American Bicyclists + Trek
- International Mountain Bicycling Association + Rock Shox

The "Select a Cause" button at the bottom of the grid is highlighted with a red box. The "Select a Cause" button in the registration form is also highlighted with a red box.

Once you've selected your charitable cause and sponsor, you'll be asked to confirm one last time. Check the box to agree to terms of use (exciting legal stuff), and click 'Sign Up'

Plus 3 Network

http://www.plus3network.com/user/signup

Amazon.com

BETA

Home People Activities Calendar Goals + Rewards Causes + Sponsors

### Register

Just a few simple items will get you started doing good for yourself and with those around you.

First Name: Chris

Last Name: Matthews

Email Address: chris.matthews@specialized.com

Password: \*\*\*\*\*

Confirm password: \*\*\*\*\*

Zip Code: 95128

 +  change

I agree with the terms of use

**Sign up**

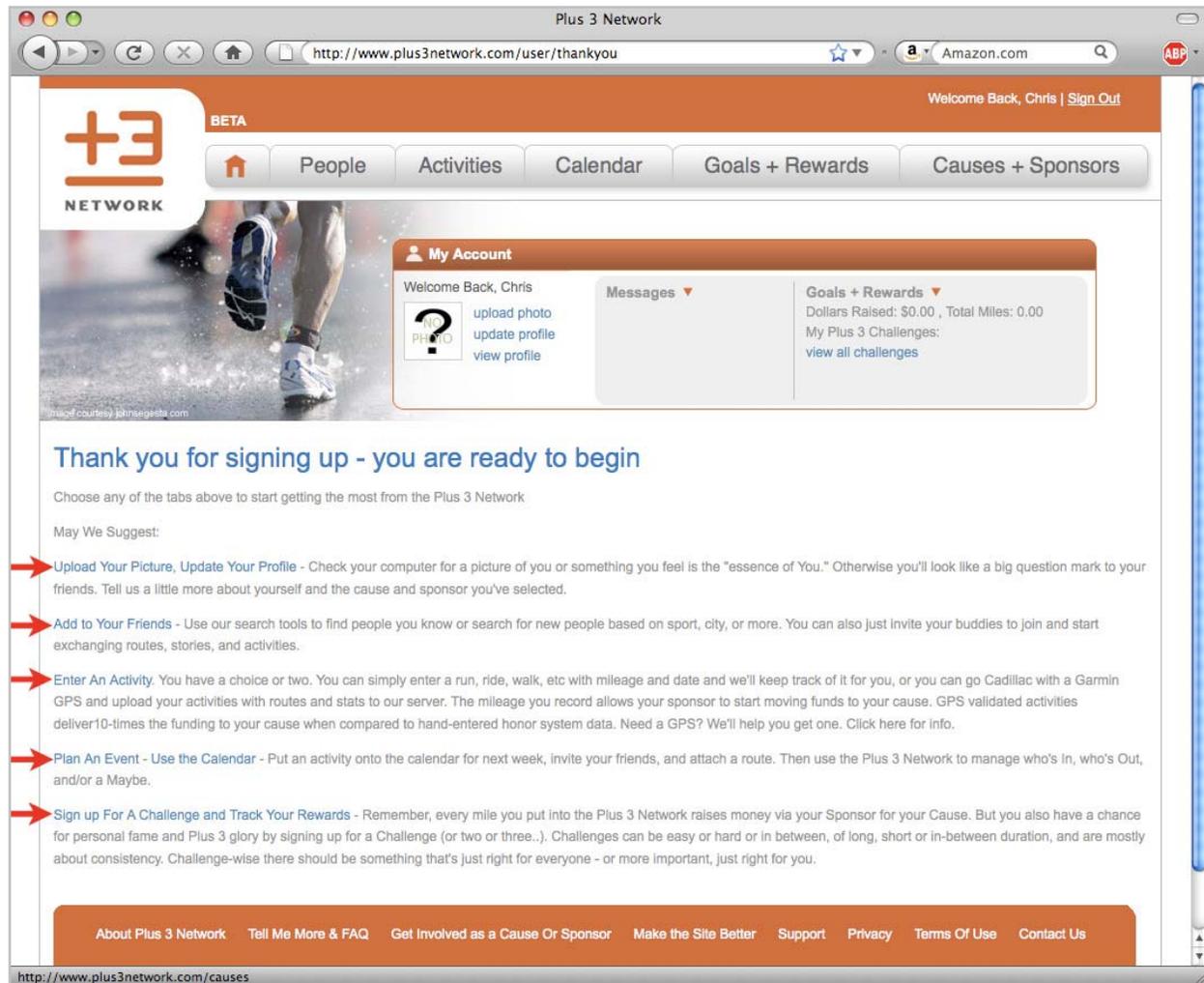
About Plus 3 Network Tell Me More & FAQ Get Involved as a Cause Or Sponsor Make the Site Better Support Privacy Terms Of Use Contact Us

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## NOW WHAT?

Now take some time to explore the site - particularly so that you can show prospective GPS customers how to use the site themselves (and thus, build a bigger and more devoted tribe of GPS-enabled customers who will LOVE you for showing them how to help charities they want to support by doing nothing more than riding their bikes!)

One the registration confirmation page, there are links to show you how to upload your profile picture, find friends who are already using Plus3, enter an activity using your GPS device, plan events, and if you see one that interests you, join a challenge.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.plus3network.com/user/thankyou>. The page features a navigation bar with tabs for Home, People, Activities, Calendar, Goals + Rewards, and Causes + Sponsors. A 'My Account' section is visible, containing a welcome message, a 'Messages' dropdown, and 'Goals + Rewards' information (Dollars Raised: \$0.00, Total Miles: 0.00). Below this, a 'Thank you for signing up - you are ready to begin' message is displayed, followed by a list of suggestions with red arrows pointing to specific links:

- Upload Your Picture, Update Your Profile** - Check your computer for a picture of you or something you feel is the "essence of You." Otherwise you'll look like a big question mark to your friends. Tell us a little more about yourself and the cause and sponsor you've selected.
- Add to Your Friends** - Use our search tools to find people you know or search for new people based on sport, city, or more. You can also just invite your buddies to join and start exchanging routes, stories, and activities.
- Enter An Activity** - You have a choice or two. You can simply enter a run, ride, walk, etc with mileage and date and we'll keep track of it for you, or you can go Cadillac with a Garmin GPS and upload your activities with routes and stats to our server. The mileage you record allows your sponsor to start moving funds to your cause. GPS validated activities deliver 10-times the funding to your cause when compared to hand-entered honor system data. Need a GPS? We'll help you get one. [Click here for info.](#)
- Plan An Event** - Use the Calendar - Put an activity onto the calendar for next week, invite your friends, and attach a route. Then use the Plus 3 Network to manage who's In, who's Out, and/or a Maybe.
- Sign up For A Challenge and Track Your Rewards** - Remember, every mile you put into the Plus 3 Network raises money via your Sponsor for your Cause. But you also have a chance for personal fame and Plus 3 glory by signing up for a Challenge (or two or three..). Challenges can be easy or hard or in between, of long, short or in-between duration, and are mostly about consistency. Challenge-wise there should be something that's just right for everyone - or more important, just right for you.

At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with links: [About Plus 3 Network](#), [Tell Me More & FAQ](#), [Get Involved as a Cause Or Sponsor](#), [Make the Site Better](#), [Support](#), [Privacy](#), [Terms Of Use](#), and [Contact Us](#). The browser's address bar shows <http://www.plus3network.com/causes>.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

When you (or your customers) have spent some time on the site and raised some money for charity, their home page on the Plus3 site might look like this:

The screenshot shows the Plus3 Network user profile for Chris. The page is titled "Plus 3 Network" and includes a navigation menu with "People", "Activities", "Calendar", "Goals + Rewards", and "Causes + Sponsors". The user's account information is displayed, including their location (San Jose, CA) and a "Goals + Rewards" section showing \$4.43 raised and 221.30 miles ridden. The "My Activities" section lists several road biking activities with dates and times. The "My Friends" section shows a list of friends. The "My Calendar" section displays a calendar for December 2008. The "My Causes + Sponsors" section features SRAM as a sponsor and World Bicycle Relief as a cause, with a "Make an additional donation" button. Blue callout boxes highlight specific features: "Money raised and miles ridden" points to the Goals + Rewards section; "Activities logged and entered" points to the My Activities list; "Friends are shown here" points to the My Friends section; and "Cause and sponsor info" points to the My Causes + Sponsors section.

Once you've experimented with different elements of the site, you can now find yourself twittering about money you raised on the site, or joining the Plus3 Facebook group, or organizing an event through the Specialized Riders Club for your tribe with a goal of raising money for a specific charity together.

GO FORTH AND SOCIAL!

So there you have it: 4 different Social Media sites that are 100% free to join, and each offers a unique way to connect with your customers and communities in ways that will strengthen your existing ties, and form new connections that you didn't already have.

Through the strength of active and passive referrals, by becoming involved in the daily lives and conversations of your customers, and by extending the reach of the activities you're already investing time and money into, Social Media can offer your bike shop an absolutely free way to grow your tribe, and remain strong so that you're there for your tribe when they need you in the future.

Because when it comes down to it, we're all here for them.

Peace,  
Chris

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR (AND/OR 'FULL DISCLOSURE', DEPENDING ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT)

Chris Matthews is a proud member of the Global Marketing team at Specialized Bicycles, based in Morgan Hill, California. He can be found on Facebook, Twitter, Plus3, and the Specialized Riders Club (which he led the launch of in 2006). He graduated with an MBA from the Rotman School of Management at The University of Toronto in 2005.

Comments, ideas, suggestions, complaints? To provide feedback on this Social Media Guide, just leave a comment at <http://creativextreme.com/?p=218>. Or find me on Facebook. Or find me out riding.

Chris Matthews

Social Media for Bike Shops