

## Hootsuite



**Services Offered:** Analytics Automated Publishing Contact Management Content Management Conversion Tracking Customer Targeting Keyword Filtering Multi-Account Management Post Scheduling Brand Tracking Customer Engagement Multi-User Collaboration Reporting/Analytics Social Media Monitoring  
**Channels:** Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest

Hootsuite has one advantage over the other social media management apps for me. It is the program that I have used to manage my social media messages for the last three years. I was most interested to see if any of the other apps could impress me enough that I would give up my Hootsuite subscription in favor of them.

Hootsuite is one of the more reasonably priced apps here – as long as you had relatively simple needs. Prices do rise considerably for larger teams and businesses. Their main app focuses predominantly on social publishing. You need to buy a separate app (Hootsuite Insights) if you are looking for social listening capabilities.

Hootsuite has recently upgraded the way you write new posts, and as a long-time customer, I certainly notice the increase in speed. There were a few annoying irks before that they have thankfully sorted out now.

The core of Hootsuite is Streams. You set up a tab for each of your social networks on the Streams page. Then, for each social account, you add a series of streams. You can use these streams in many ways, making them effectively a replacement for your actual social account. They're also handy for finding additional content for you to share.

For example, for one of my Twitter accounts, I set up streams for each of my Twitter lists. I also had streams for my Scheduled Posts, my Mentions, my Twitter Home page, and finally the list of tweets I make. You can add up to 10 streams for each of your social networks.

The next screen is a unified inbox, showing all your incoming messages across your accounts. You can make any replies directly from within Hootsuite.

If you are creating original posts (or Pins on the case of Pinterest), you can use the handy Publisher screen, that shows you a calendar, slotting in any new posts as you make them.

Depending on your plan, you can access a variety of analytics, helping you determine the success of your posting strategy.

If you operate Hootsuite as part of a team, you can easily see which items are assigned either to or from you.

Overall, Hootsuite offers a robust set of social management capabilities, in an easy-to-use clear interface.

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## Pricing

As a SaSS platform, access to Hootsuite is sold on a monthly basis. Hootsuite offers four paid plans, as well as a free plan. All paid plans can be paid on a monthly or yearly basis. The listed prices reflect a discount for annual payment equivalent to approximately 3 months free, e.g., The Team Plan costs either \$189/mo (monthly) or \$1,548 – (\$129/mo) if paid annually.

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- **Free, \$0/mo** – 3 social accounts, 1 user, 30 scheduled messages
- **Professional, \$29/mo** – 10 social accounts, 1 user, unlimited scheduled messages, automated post scheduling, key performance metrics, ad spend limit of \$500 per month to boost posts
- **Team, \$129/mo** – 20 social accounts, 3 users, unlimited scheduled messages, automated post scheduling, key performance metrics, custom analytics, exportable reports, ad spend limit of \$2,000 per month to boost posts
- **Business, \$599/mo** – 35 social accounts, 5-10 users, unlimited scheduled messages, automated post scheduling, key performance metrics, custom analytics,

exportable reports, ad spend limit of \$5,000 per month to boost posts, flexible approval workflows

- **Enterprise, \$custom/mo** –custom solutions
  - **Hootsuite Insights, \$custom/mo**
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## The Details

In many ways, Hootsuite reminds me of a souped-up version of Tweetdeck, Twitter's social media management platform. Sure, it covers far more than just Twitter, but its main Stream page uses the same layout of vertical columns showing relevant streams for each social account.

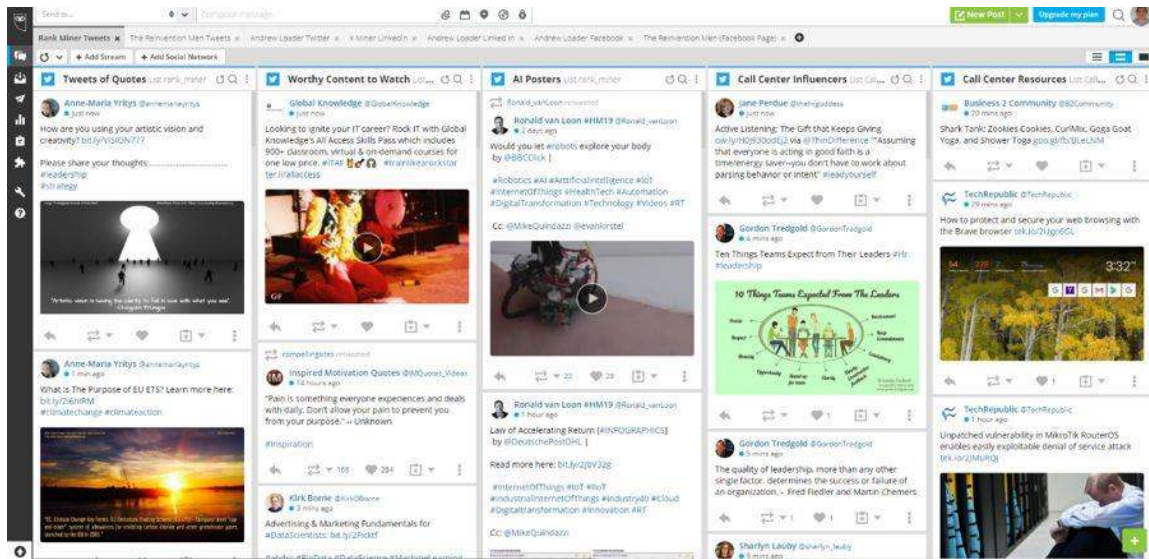
As with all these social media management apps you begin by setting up an account and selecting a plan to meet your needs. The free plan is basic but could still meet the needs of somebody with limited social aspirations. You at least get 30 messages, meaning that you could post once daily to your preferred social account on the free plan.

To get the best from Hootsuite, however, you will need to go with a paid plan. Ultimately you will select your plan based on the number of social accounts you operate (and whether you have a team working on your behalf). The very reasonably priced Professional plan will be suitable for most small to medium businesses not needing team access or detailed analytics. The price rises dramatically for larger-scale plans.

You will need to add your social networks before you can do anything much of value. This is a relatively straightforward process, although some of the social networks have added limitations in recent times. Hootsuite works with one of the broader ranges of social networks, including Twitter profiles, Facebook profiles, pages, and groups, Instagram business and personal profiles, LinkedIn profiles and pages, Pinterest profiles, YouTube channels, and WordPress.com

blogs. You can also integrate some of the less common social networks and blogging platforms using Hootsuite Apps (including WordPress.org blogs).

The next stage of your setup is to create your tabs and streams. This can take a while if you have multiple social networks, but as this is the heart of Hootsuite, it is essential that you do this carefully.

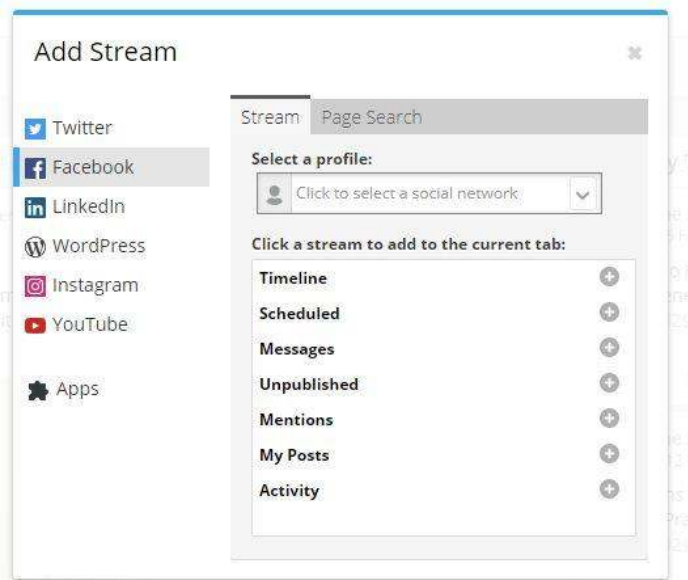


You will notice a black bar on the left-hand side of the Hootsuite app (on the desktop version). The first icon beneath the Hootsuite logo is the Streams page. You usually start on this page as a default, but if you get lost, click on this button to find the Streams page.

You will find a tab for each of your social networks across the top. If you've forgotten one, you can easily add a new network at any time by pressing the +Add Social Network button.

If you click on a tab, you will go to that social network's page. The columns you see on each page are the Streams. You can add up to 10 streams for each network. The exact streams you can add will differ, depending on the type of social network you are looking at.

For example, with Twitter, you can select the following types of streams: Home, Mentions, My Tweets, Likes, Retweets, Schedules, and New Followers. However, Hootsuite is even more intelligent than that. You can also create streams based on a search query, a keyword you wish to track, or any existing or new lists.



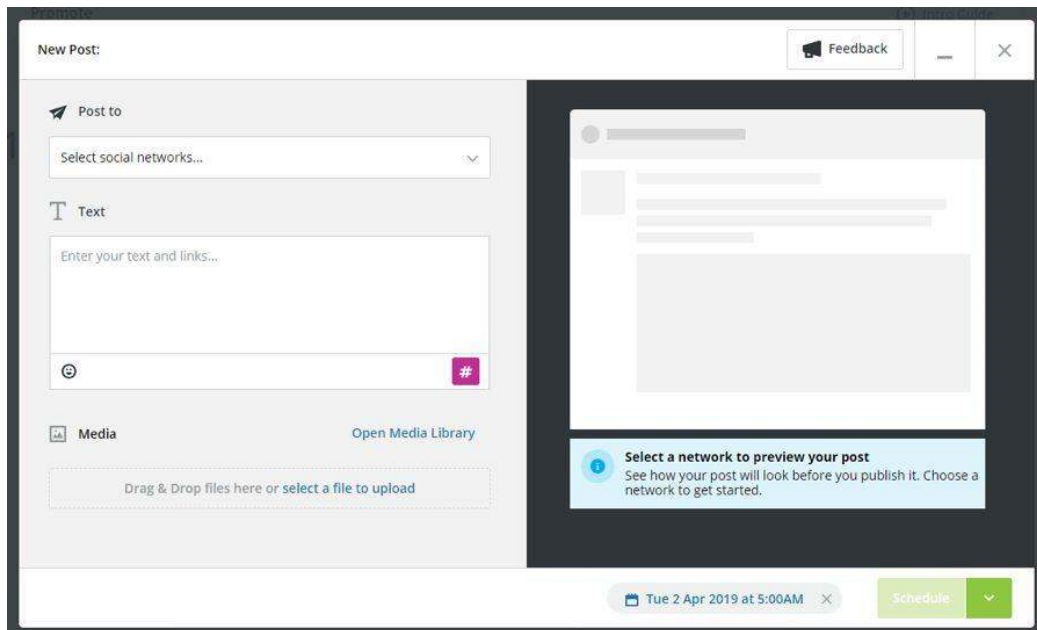
When you get used to it, Hootsuite's streams are an excellent way to keep an eye on the performance of your social accounts. I particularly like the way you can have streams for each of your lists on Twitter. I made lists of people who regularly tweet on my preferred topics. I then use the columns representing these lists in Hootsuite to find relevant posts for retweeting each day. None of the other social media management programs I've looked at in this batch of reviews manages to match this.

If you have one of the team plans you will also want to set up your list of team members, so you can allocate work and collaborate with each other. I didn't test this functionality, but it appears robust.

The heart of social media management is, of course, publishing posts. Hootsuite has a variety of ways you can do this, depending on your requirements. Hootsuite has recently upgraded its Composer. I have used

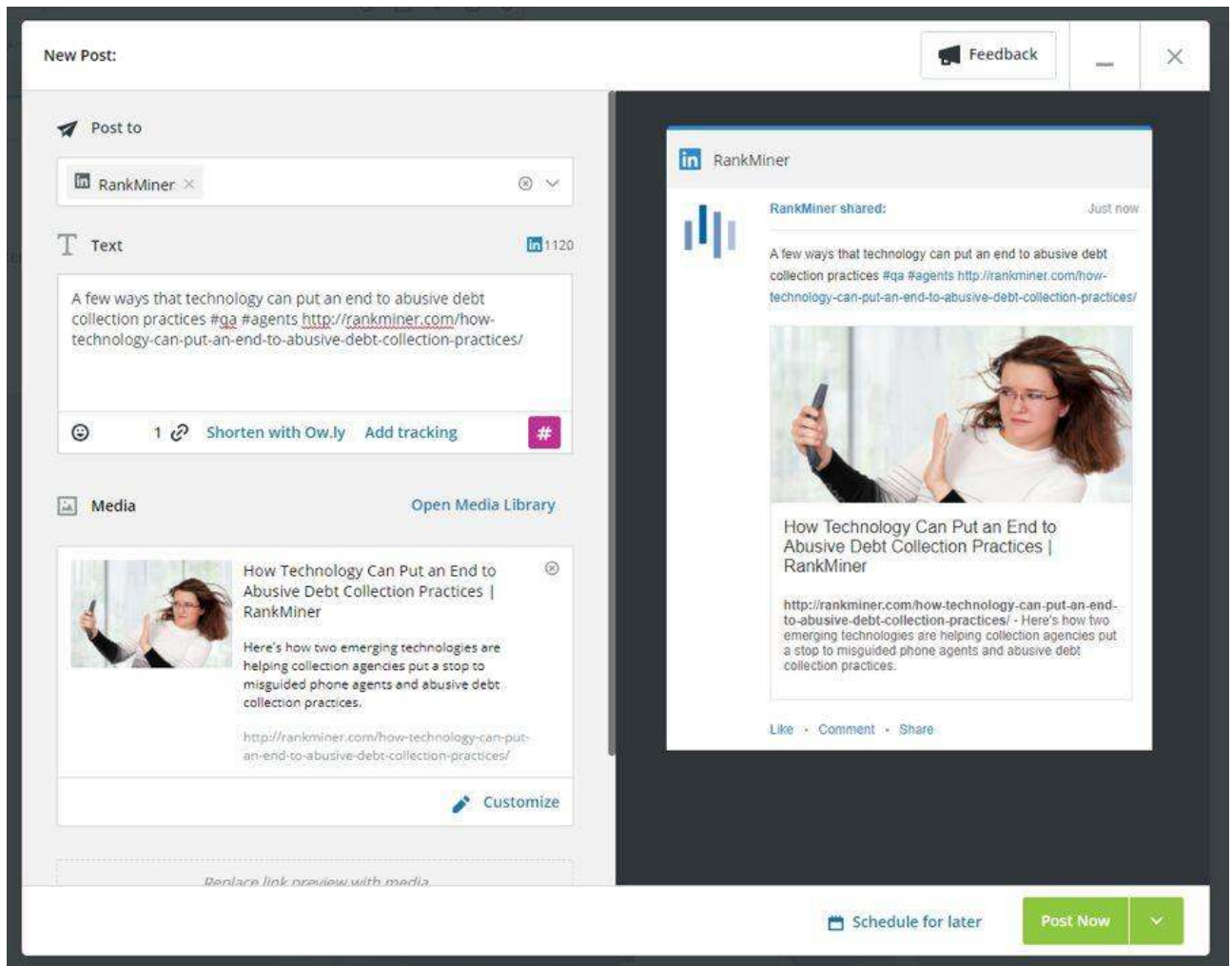
Hootsuite for a while now, and the new Composer is much more user-friendly than its predecessor. It also helps you reduce keystrokes and save time.

There are several ways you can create a new post. One of the easiest is to click on the big green New Post button at the top of the Streams page. This takes you to the Composer page.



You can compose your post directly on this page. If you have posts stored externally, perhaps in a spreadsheet, you can cut and paste into this box too. This is an area where the new composer is much better than its predecessor. I used to have to select Post as Plain Text when cut and pasting text from Excel into the Composer, as it added random spaces in odd places if simply used Paste. The new composer, however, works perfectly.

Similarly, it was a hit and miss affair with the old composer when it came to it finding the Twitter image from a blog post address. The new composer has now found it every time for me, so far.

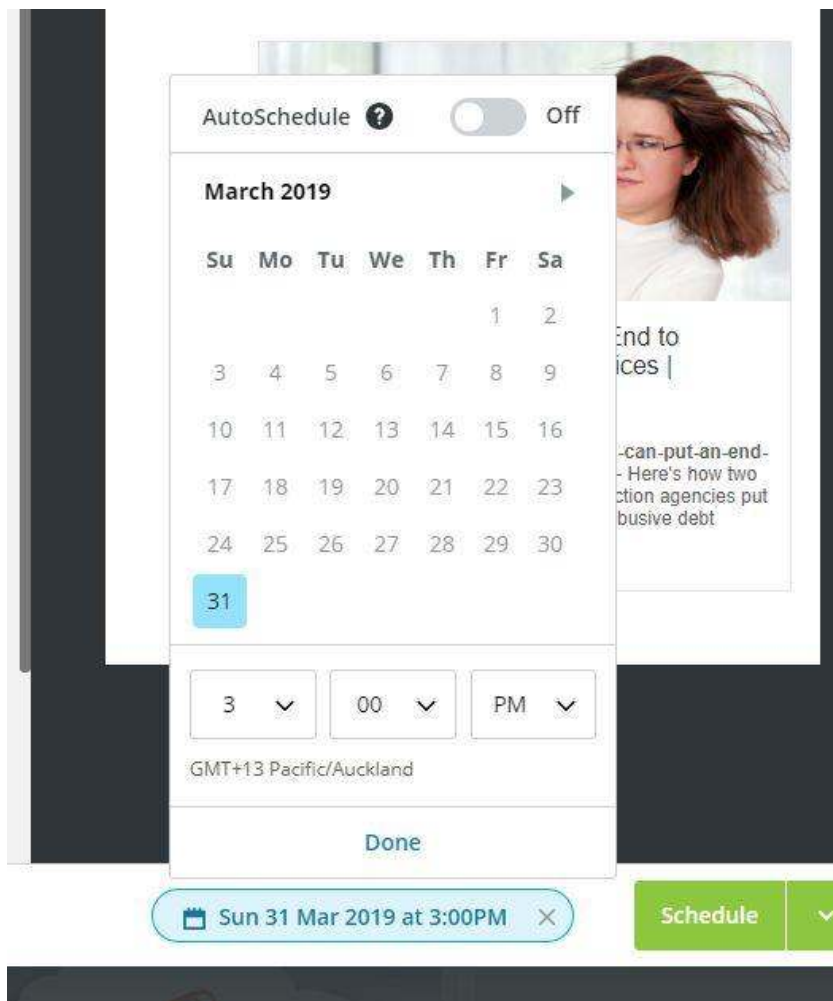


The composer changes the options it makes available, depending on the social networks you're to which you're trying to post.

You can opt to make your post now, schedule it for a specific time in the future, or let Hootsuite auto-schedule it for a time that Hootsuite's AI suggests will be a good time for your audience.

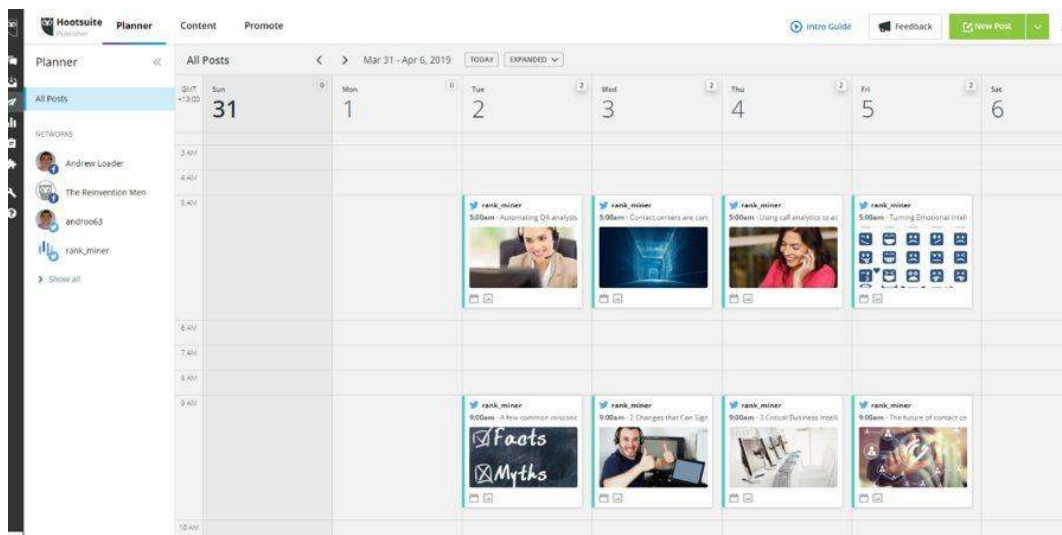
You can easily change the date and time of your post from within the composer's settings.





However, there are other ways you create and/or upload content. One way is via the Publisher (the third button on the left-hand bar).

Publisher is Hootsuite's scheduler. It contains three tabs: Planner, Content, and Promote. The Planner screen shows your schedule for the next day or week. You can select the social networks you want to view on the left-hand side.



If you have already posted or scheduled content, it will show in your Planner.

You can create a new post on this screen by clicking the green New Post button, or you can save some time by directly clicking the time for which you want to schedule your post.

You have all the same options here that you have when you create a post elsewhere in Hootsuite.

The Content tab offers a range of settings, depending on how you use Hootsuite. It includes any Drafts you may make, your scheduled posts (both now and in the past), and information about posts requiring approval.

This is also where you can gain some other sources of content for your posts. You can sign up to RSS feeds from your favorite blogs to source posts to share via your social accounts. You can also import a bulk CSV file of your posts if you prefer that over creating each post individually in the Composer.

Finally, the Boost tab allows you to boost posts on Facebook pages. You attach your Ad account and manage your boosted posts within Hootsuite.

One of the most useful ways to gain existing content to share is on your Streams page. I find this particularly invaluable in Twitter, where I have columns for each of my Lists. These lists are tailored to include the people whose posts I most often retweet.

You work your way down your streams, and if you find something you want to share you click on one of the buttons at the bottom of the post.

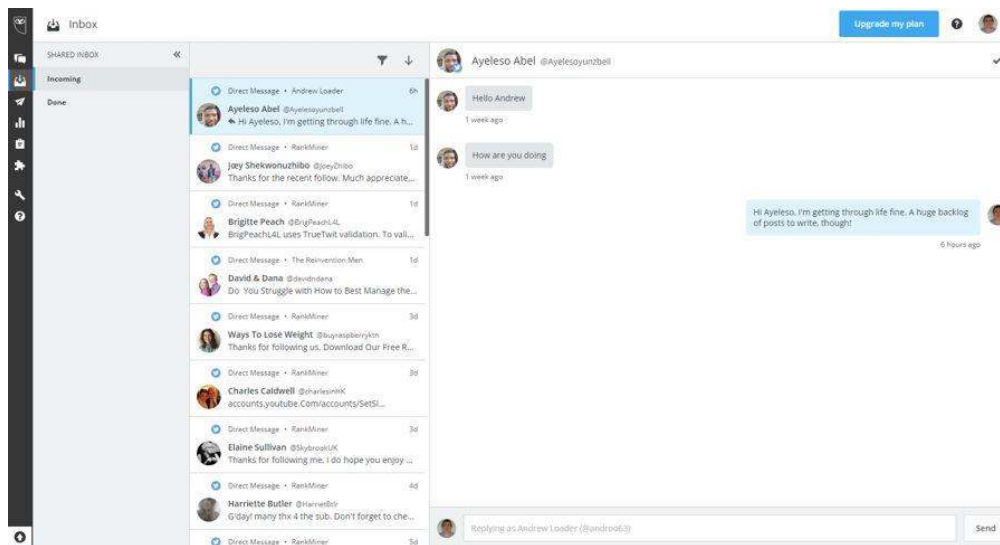
For example, if I want to retweet somebody's tweet, I click on the arrow beside the retweet button and select Edit. By doing this, you can schedule the retweet for some time in the future and add your own comment if you choose to do so.



Likewise, you can engage in most other ways, directly from Hootsuite. Indeed, as you can have streams for your Home page in Hootsuite, you don't really need to open the actual social accounts very often.

One reason you might consider going to Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, or whatever, is to check your messages and keep any conversations going. However, Hootsuite's Inbox also makes that redundant in many ways. You have a shared Inbox across all your social accounts (which can be daunting if you manage quite a few accounts). You can, however, filter your inbox to

concentrate on a particular account if you prefer. You can click on each message, replying to any that you judge appropriate.



Hootsuite provides reasonably in-depth analytics, although you need a Team subscription or better to gain access to custom analytics. The lower plans still provide you with overviews for each of your social accounts. I only had access to the Pro plan, but the overview statistics were well presented and highly visual. I found the Inbound Messages by Sentiment stat to be quite enlightening.

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## Conclusion

I entered these reviews as an existing Hootsuite customer. While this meant that I already knew some of the shortcuts, I also discovered that there were parts of Hootsuite I had never used. It is more fully-featured than I realized. It includes excellent educational resources, in the form of Hootsuite Academy, as well as webinars and hundreds of guides, white papers, and other types of help.

Although it may not appear obvious, Hootsuite's streams allow you to do many of the more specialist tasks offered by some of the heavy-duty opposition apps. For example, you can use Hootsuite for social listening by setting up streams for

Mentions on each social network tab. You can even set up streams for relevant keywords or locations (including setting up rules for words you want to exclude).

I still find Hootsuite's streams to be the easiest way to grab tweets that you can schedule to retweet later (particularly if you want to modify the tweets in some way).

Hootsuite is also sufficiently established for other firms to create apps to integrate with Hootsuite. Hootsuite has more than 250 technology partners.

If the standard Hootsuite Program isn't robust enough to meet your organization's needs, you could look at adding one of their specialist products:

- Hootsuite Amplify – to boost the reach of your content with employee advocacy
- Hootsuite Insights – to better understand the conversations that matter to you
- Impact – to help enterprises better understand revenue and marketing results generated by social media
- Hootsuite Ads and Adespresso by Hootsuite – to perfect your Facebook and Instagram advertising