

**PDFs are
great because
they function
entirely
offline once
downloaded.**

Extension Essentials is a curated series of resources and publications from the Extension Foundation, designed to empower and support Extension professionals in delivering impactful programs, advancing innovation, and fostering community engagement across diverse areas of expertise.

Publishing Platforms for Extension Professionals

Publishing used to be a pretty straightforward process for Extension professionals: We either printed our work (internally or through an outside publisher) or we uploaded it to a page on our university or county website.

Now there are so many ways to share content—from social media channels to email marketing platforms to other ever-multiplying corners of the internet. It can be hard to know which one is best and easy to default to the one that feels most familiar, even if it might not be the most effective for a particular kind of content.

In this Extension Essentials publication, we focus on three common ways to publish (because there's something to be said for familiarity) but also give you tips for discerning when each one makes the most sense.

1. PDFs

PDFs are a great choice when you're sharing a document with static images and text with no links or with embedded moving images and sound so that people don't need internet access to see all of the content in the document.

It's also a format of choice when you need digital signatures or other information that the recipient can enter in "Edit this PDF" mode.

2. Websites

Websites are best for branding an organization while providing easy-to-find news and information about the organization. They are best for a robust combination of moving images and text blocks with links (but perhaps not as many links as might be in a wiki— see next section).

A website is good for a balance of more evergreen content (mission statements, areas of focus, organizational structure) and regularly updated content (blog posts, news updates) that drives search engine and AI search optimization.

3. Wikis

A wiki (the best known example being Wikipedia) is ideal for targeted content that requires (or at least benefits from) collaboration among and frequent updates by multiple authors in the same general field.

With an interface that's simpler than many website platforms, a wiki can be easier for several people to access and contribute to and tends to include such features as page comments, search functions, and discussion forums. These features make wikis user-friendly not just for creators but for their intended audience. A wiki might be best for a long glossary of terms or a group of many related text-heavy pages with a large number of hyperlinks.