

AssociCom Features - a Concise List*

* Please note - a far more detailed features list can be found at <http://associcom.com>

Connecting Members and the Association

The overarching goal of AssociCom in your Professional Association is to connect members to one another, connect members to the association executive and staff, and to connect members with content to a depth that is otherwise not possible. This connection facilitates communication, collaboration and learning.

Groups: Groups are areas where members who share a common interest, goal or working relationship can collaborate, communicate, share documents, and learn from one another.

Discussion Areas: AssociCom features discussion areas in a wide variety of contexts in order to allow the free flow of communication among members. Discussion areas are found in AssociCom wherever members come together in areas of common interest.

Messaging: AssociCom allows members to send personal message to one or more other members by simply clicking on a message icon. AssociCom allows the sending of messages to specific individuals, members of a group, members interested in a particular topic, etc.

Polling: Polls allow the association executive or individual members to poll specific groups of members. A poll can be associated with a group, a member, a library item, or a library topic.

Questions: This allows any member to pose a question of other members. A question can be associated with a group, a group directory topic, a member, a library item, or a library topic.

Connections: AssociCom provides a feature which allows members to explicitly establish a connection between themselves – much like a “friendship” connection in other social networks.

Discovering People and Resources, and Keeping Informed

Before communication, collaboration and learning can take place, members must first “discover” the people and areas of valuable knowledge that are of interest to them. A member with a shared interest, a group centered on an important topic, or a library item I need may all exist. However, if I am not aware of them, their existence is not useful to me. Discovery is a critical link in the chain of a strong social network.

Discovery: AssociCom implements “soft connections” to connect members through common interests, common activities, common areas of practice, and common usage scenarios.

AssociCom makes these implicit connections concrete and allows members to follow these implicit connections to other members, groups, library items, etc.

Search and Browse: a powerful, configurable search (and advanced search) mechanism allows members to search the entire network by keyword – words found in any part of the profile, content, discussion, etc. AssociCom also supports topic hierarchies similar to e-mail folders. Library items and groups can be placed into these hierarchies allowing members to browse the network contents according to categories they have been placed into.

Alerts: AssociCom allows any member to declare their interest in any aspect of the association network including other members, individual documents, library topics, groups and so on. Various configurable alerts automatically notify members of any new activity in their items of interest.

Directory and Content Repository

Unlike many other social networks, Professional Association social networks are information repositories as well as places for connections between members. For example, the member directory is a place where members possessing particular characteristics can be found. Likewise, all other items of value in the network, such as groups and library items must have a home and must be easily available to all members. AssociCom provides features for Professional Associations which accomplish these goals.

User Profiles: Every member is represented by a user profile which forms their identity within the network. The fields of a member's profile are determined by and customizable by the association. Member profiles are hubs of discovery, information and links to other areas of the professional social network including related members, groups and library items.

Member Directory: All members can be found in the AssociCom member directory. Users have the ability to filter the presented list according to any characteristic defined by the association.

Library and Content Management: AssociCom enables the establishment of an "intelligent" library of items including websites, documents (word, excel, PDF, PowerPoint, etc) and images. Library items are housed in a configurable library organized as a topic hierarchy. Members and group can also have their own library collections. Both library items and library topics have discussion areas associated with them. Likewise, each has a list of members interested in that item or topic, and those members can be immediately messaged as a group of "soft connections".

Group Directory: Groups are organized into a group directory structured as a hierarchy of group topics, with related groups existing in any topic in the hierarchy. The hierarchy is fully configurable by the association administrator.

Intelligence and Administration

AssociCom provides features which give you insight about your members, their concerns, their preferences, and their interests that would not otherwise be available.

Network Analysis: AssociCom provides information on who the major contributors are and the volume of their contributions. Most importantly, AssociCom uses implicit measurements, usage patterns and social network analysis to identify thought leaders who are well respected by the other members.

Polling: Polls, described elsewhere, can be created by the association and deployed in groups, library topics, the main page of the network, or other areas of interest.

Item Flagging: AssociCom supports a ubiquitous flagging system allowing any member to alert the association administrator to inappropriate or questionable content. At the option of the administrator, a flag can be dealt with immediately by that administrator or put to a member vote.

Configurability

AssociCom's goal is to provide the most powerful social network created specifically for Professional Associations at the most reasonable cost. Because it is purpose-built specifically for Professional Associations, AssociCom requires no additional programming or consulting agreements in order to be adapted for use in a professional association, or to be deployed and configured for your organization. The only configuration which you may require our help with is connecting AssociCom to your existing member database (if you choose to do so – AssociCom comes with an integrated member database).

Having said that, AssociCom is highly configurable by the association to ensure that the needs of your Professional Association are met, and that the site reflects the character of your association.

Highly Configurable: AssociCom can be customized using simple web interfaces to include the association logo and color schemes. All e-mails to members can be configured to include the association logo and signature block. The association administrator has complete control over the categories in the library topic hierarchy, who can create categories, and who is able to add library items. The same is true for groups and group directory topics. The association is also able to configure the pages to create prominent, direct links to any area in the network it considers to be important (for example, association documents, association staff, mentorship groups, etc).

Member Database: AssociCom comes pre-configured with a built-in membership database. Records can be imported en-masse from a standard-format file. Alternatively, AssociCom is able to connect with most existing membership databases.

Member Profiles: The number of fields, types of fields, and location of fields contained in member profiles are completely configurable by the association administrator. In addition, fields can be designated to be editable by the member (or not), can have their contents be restricted to certain choices, and can be tied to your external association database.

Item Highlighting: AssociCom provides a feature which allows the association administrators and (optionally) other members to mark items (members, groups, group directory topics, library items, and library topics) with a visible mark and configurable label. Labels are defined by the association administrator along with the color of the mark and the text in the label.

QuickLinks: AssociCom provides a quick-link area on every page. These links can be configured by the association administrator to point directly to any area of importance within or outside the network. For example, links can point to particular members, a collection of members such as the association staff, specific areas of the association library, individual documents, a group directory topic, an individual group, etc.