

## Vatican Facebook page for John Paul

The Vatican will unveil the latest instalment in its social media transformation next week – a Facebook page dedicated to the upcoming beatification of Pope John Paul II, officials said.

The site, which will link to video highlights of John Paul's 27-year papacy, is designed to promote the May 1 beatification.

But it may well continue beyond given the global and enduring interest in the late pontiff, Vatican officials said.

The Vatican's first attempt at an event-themed Facebook page – to promote Pope Benedict XVI's September trip to the United Kingdom – is still active six months later and updated near-daily with 10,000-15,000 regular fans checking in, said Monsignor Paul Tighe, the number two in the Vatican's social communications office.

"What we found is that Facebook doesn't just share information, it creates community," Mgr Tighe said in an interview. "People begin talking to each other and sharing ideas."

That interactivity – and the potential it brings to the church's evangelisation mission – is behind the Vatican's new social media push, the culmination of which will be launched at Easter with a new Vatican information web portal whose contents are specifically designed to be tweeted, posted and blogged.

The portal will serve as a one-stop-shop aggregator of news from the Vatican's various information sources: Vatican Radio, Vatican Television, the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, the Holy See's press office and Fides, the Vatican's missionary news agency, Mr Tighe said.

The Vatican's current website – [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) – will remain since that is more of a stable site with basic information about the Holy See, key Vatican documents and offices, and papal activities.

The new site, rolled out first in English and Italian and then other languages, will be more news-based, bringing together onto one page the current disorganised web presence of Vatican media.

