



## **Princeton University Social Media Policies**

### **OVERVIEW**

Princeton University's social media policies provide individuals and academic and administrative units on campus with information about rules, laws and guidelines for the use of social media platforms.

In most cases, social media accounts registered in the name of the University and its various units allow the transfer, copying and redistribution of information posted online by other users and the social media company. Adherence to these policies is intended to avoid copyright claims and other liabilities that might arise from the posting of inappropriate or unauthorized content.

These policies apply to faculty and staff, including student employees, who engage in online conversations for work-related purposes or who are asked by supervisors to use or participate in social media as part of their job responsibilities.

Along with the University's Social Media Strategy [LINK] and Best Practices documents [LINK], these policies are intended to help University account holders minimize risk while developing an effective social media program that maximizes user engagement.

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## **1. DEFINITIONS**

### **1.1. Social media**

"Social media" are media for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. The goal of social media is to use web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. Outlets within social media include but are not limited to online social networks such as MySpace and Facebook, blogs, podcasts, discussion forums, RSS feeds, video sharing such as YouTube, interactive geolocation, and online collaborative information and publishing systems that are accessible to internal and external audiences (i.e., Wikis).

### **1.2. Platform**

The term "platform" refers to the online forum, mechanism or tool through which users participate. Facebook is an example of a social networking platform, and YouTube is an example of a video sharing platform. Many platforms are owned by independent companies that regulate their use.

### **1.3. Terms of use**

Terms of service dictate the rules and guidelines for authorized use of individual platforms. Many companies that operate social media platforms specify that, by posting on their sites, the company is granted irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive license to use and distribute content for any purpose, commercial, advertising, or otherwise.

## **2. ACCOUNT CREATION**

Accounts made for a University unit must be created by an authorized representative of the University.

In order to comply with most platforms' terms and conditions, and to enable the University to assess authorized accounts and platforms, any unit wishing to create an account with a social media platform should provide the University's Social Media Coordinator with information about such accounts, along with the contact information for the individual(s) who will be authorized by the department to create, operate, monitor and edit accounts on an ongoing basis (i.e. the "Page Administrator"). Students may not be named as administrators.

A unit's authorized administrator(s) must maintain the security of account passwords and identification. These individuals are fully responsible [see Section 5] for all use of accounts and any actions that take place using the account.

### **3. NAMING GUIDELINES**

Some social media platforms allow the creation of specific -- or "vanity" -- account names. Naming a social media account is very important. Whenever possible, Princeton University, PU, or Princeton should be listed prior to the college, department or program. This helps to build an awareness of all units, it helps users to find relevant Princeton units in search results, and it provides a consistency that is shown to help build trust for users.

#### **3.1. Facebook**

Princeton University [insert name]. Example: Princeton University Office of Communications

#### **3.2. Twitter**

PU[Insert Name] or Princeton[Insert Name]. Example: PUAthletics or PrincetonHumanities

#### **3.3. YouTube**

PU\_[Insert Name] or Princeton\_[Insert Name]. Example: PU\_Athletics or Princeton\_Humanities

**NOTE:** The names on accounts that have already been created should not be changed, as changing names changes a URL, which can cause confusion for users.

### **4. NOTIFICATION**

The University's Office of Communications should be notified when you have established -- or plan to establish -- a social media presence, especially for individuals or offices posting on behalf of an official University unit. This is to ensure that all institutional social media sites coordinate with other Princeton University sites and their content. To notify the Office of Communications, e-mail [icahir@princeton.edu](mailto:icahir@princeton.edu). Any changes in the designated administrator(s) also should be promptly communicated to the Office of Communications.

### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Account holders must adhere to all applicable University policies for property, privacy and civility outlined in "Rights, Rules, Responsibilities" [LINK] and the Princeton University Information Technology Policy [LINK], which sets forth the central policies governing all uses

of the University's information technology resources, whether administered by the Office of Information Technology or individual departments.

## **6. POSTING OF CONTENT**

The following must be considered related to posting content to a social media account, whether the content be text, photographs or video:

### **6.1. General content guidelines**

Content should be posted with the understanding that it may be redistributed through the Internet and other media channels and may be viewed by the general public. If deleted or modified, older versions may continue to exist online. Content should not be posted unless it furthers the University's education, teaching or research mission. Share only information that is appropriate for the public.

In order to avoid discrepancies and minimize the need for updating, social media platforms should not be used to post detailed policy or procedural information, e.g., program admission criteria. Rather, users should be directed to official University websites, electronic resources or publications for such information.

Content directed at individual fans or page users should be written in a respectful manner. Content should never be written in a manner that can be interpreted as combative, demeaning or otherwise negative.

Generally speaking, content should not be posted if it depicts a dangerous activity unless discussed with and approved by appropriate senior University administrators. A legal disclaimer may be required for such posts.

Do not post content that shows (or may be perceived to show) someone getting hurt, attacked or humiliated; that might be considered racist, bigoted or demeaning to a particular group of individuals; that depicts activity that is (or may be perceived to be) illegal, such as drug use; or that could otherwise show the account holder or the University in a negative light.

If controversial content is related to academic study, ensure that appropriate context and disclaimers are provided. Also package the content in a manner that does not make it easy to reuse without the appropriate context.

Content should not be posted unless it is clearly suitable for all ages.

### **6.2. Personal vs. public persona**

In general, administrators should post on affiliated social media platforms only in the name of that unit. For example, John Doe, who administers the Princeton University page on Facebook should not appear as a commenter on the Princeton University page on Facebook. This maintains

the privacy of individuals who are administrators of University social media, and also preserves the consistency of the unit's voice online.

The exception to this policy is when a unit director or a faculty member must establish a specific Facebook presence to speak on behalf of the unit or the University. Such examples might include University President Shirley M. Tilghman, the director of the Princeton University Art Museum or the coaches of Princeton University sports teams. In these cases, it is necessary to create a "Public Figure" account that is administered by the public figure and the administrators involved in the unit's other social media pages. This public account should speak only in the voice of the public figure's role. For instance, a museum director's public account wouldn't discuss personal plans or his or her personal activities, but it would discuss a grant or a museum event.

### **6.3. Confidential and proprietary information**

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Princeton University or its students, employees or alumni. Employees must follow the applicable federal requirements outlined in FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), as well as NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) regulations.

Generally, the University must have written permission from a student in order to release any information from a student's records.

Do not include personally identifiable information that can be used to locate any individual without that person's written permission. This includes an individual's screen name, personal photo, hobbies, identification numbers -- such as Social Security numbers or student ID's -- addresses and phone numbers (other than an authorized business address or business phone number).

Do not upload, post, transmit, share, store or otherwise make publicly available on a social media site any private information of any affiliated or unaffiliated third party, including addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, Social Security numbers and credit card numbers.

University units should not use social media platforms to collect personal information of users, as most sites' terms and conditions, as well as state and federal law, impose significant requirements and restrictions on the collection of personal information of users. In the case of minors, significant additional penalties can apply to violations. For more detailed information, review the University's information technology policies [[LINK](#)].

Do not post content that could create a security risk for the account holder or the University. Examples include but are not limited to images of restricted access research areas and information technology facilities.

Employees who share confidential information without appropriate authorization do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination. For more information, visit the University's Human Resources website.

#### **6.4. Use of University marks**

Accounts and pages should, where possible, feature the unit's official name, logo and/or signature. Units also are encouraged to use photographs to display campus beauty. When a social media platform allows changes to layout or design, official University colors should be used. Note that the University colors are orange and black; secondary colors include white and gray.

Note that use of University marks, such as logos and graphics, should comply with University policy. For information about colors, typeface, size and other details, please visit <http://www.princeton.edu/communications/services/image/graphic/logo/>

#### **6.5. Use of copyrighted or proprietary materials**

Rights and permissions must be secured before posting, sharing or distributing copyrighted materials, including but not limited to: music, art, copyrighted photographs or texts, portions of copyrighted video, or information considered proprietary by a University partner, vendor, affiliate or contractor.

Secure written permission prior to using/incorporating any copyrighted or proprietary materials except when such material is covered under Fair Use provisions.

Fair Use allows for the use of copyrighted material if it meets some or all of the following requirements: It's a work that is mostly factual; it is being used to serve a significantly different purpose than it's original purpose; and it has been changed significantly from its original appearance. For more information, visit the Princeton University Office of General Counsel's website outlining fair use [LINK to [http://www.princeton.edu/ogc/community/copyright/fair\\_use/](http://www.princeton.edu/ogc/community/copyright/fair_use/)].

Questions regarding the appropriateness of a posting can be directed to the social media coordinator in the Office of Communications at [icahir@princeton.edu](mailto:icahir@princeton.edu).

#### **6.6. Use of identifying images**

In most cases, prior permission (i.e. a release) must be obtained to post, share or distribute images of individuals whose images are identifiable. For that reason, it is always best to use content, such as photographs or videos, obtained by University representatives specifically for the purpose of posting or distribution. For assistance with release forms, e-mail the social media coordinator in the Office of Communications at [icahir@princeton.edu](mailto:icahir@princeton.edu).

Do not post content that might be embarrassing to an individual or that could be construed as placing an individual in a negative or false light.

Do not post content that might cause someone to believe that his/her name, image, likeness or other identifying aspect of his/her identity is being used, without permission, for commercial purposes.

Special care must always be taken when dealing with images of "special populations," e.g., minors, health care patients or research subjects. Stringent legal requirements apply. Generally speaking, such images should never be used for social media posting or distribution.

### **6.7. Commercial use, e.g., sales of merchandise**

Endorsing commercial products or services is not permitted. The provision of online services or the sale of University publications, products or paraphernalia via "e-commerce" is permitted only in accordance with University policies and procedures.

### **6.8. Political campaigning**

Because of the University's non-profit status, there are prohibitions against using University resources to support individual candidates or parties in a political campaign.

## **7. MODERATING COMMENTS**

University social media efforts should encourage fans, followers, and friends to share their thoughts with one another by commenting on stories, videos, links, posts, etc. within the following guidelines, which should be prominently displayed on the social media site:

- Comments must be relevant to a topic discussed and to the point.
- Comments should be constructive and absent of expletives, obscenity and vulgarity, in accordance with University guidelines.
- Posts that are off-topic, abusive, contain profanity, are threatening in tone or devolve into personal attacks will be deleted immediately.
- Posts with links that are determined to be spam or sales and advertising should be removed immediately.
- Account administrators reserve the right to review all comments and posted materials and remove such materials for any reason.

## **8. TROUBLESHOOTING**

Accounts must be monitored and updated on an ongoing basis by the units that create them to enable rapid response to any problems that may arise. This also ensures an engaging, interesting environment for visitors.

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For any questions about this policy, contact Social Media Coordinator Ian Cahir in the University's Office of Communications via e-mail at [icahir@princeton.edu](mailto:icahir@princeton.edu) or by phone at (609) 258-1049.

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