ITS Communications Policy

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General Description

Purpose:

The growth of the internet has brought to the fore a powerful new medium of communication. While it is often a valuable resource to many members of the Trinity University community, it also must be used and managed responsibly by the University community so that the mission of the institution may be best fulfilled.

The Communications Policy establishes guidelines for the use of the Internet and social media with two purposes in mind: to ensure free, fair access to and responsible use of the internet by the University community, and to establish an "official" University presence on the internet through a consistent, clearly identifiable set of internet pages administered by the Office of University Communications.

Scope:

The Communications Policy applies to the Trinity University community (hereafter, the University community). The University community includes faculty and staff members, students, alumni, guests, and contractors.

Policy Content

Official Trinity University-Led Social Media Presence

Social media includes a variety of online tools and services that allow users to publish content and interact with their audiences. Currently, the most common social networks or Internet sites within this rapidly changing media space include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs.

Through its institutional social media presence, the University communicates directly with and receives instant feedback from online communities that include students, faculty, staff, alumni, prospective students, families, fans and others. Offical Trinity University social media channels include:

- https://www.facebook.com/TrinityUniversity
- https://twitter.com/Trinity_U
- www.youtube.com/user/trinityuniversitysa
- http://www.pinterest.com/trinityu
- http://instagram.com/trinityu
- https://www.facebook.com/TrinityITS
- https://twitter.com/TrinityU_ITS
- https://twitter.com/Trinity_Sports
- https://www.facebook.com/pages/Trinity-University-Alumni-Association/167415236730761
- https://www.facebook.com/pages/Trinity-University-Police-Department/185825271452339
- https://twitter.com/TU_Basketball
- https://twitter.com/trinityNSO
- https://twitter.com/TUFootballTX
- www.youtube.com/user/TrinitySportsInfo
- trinitydean.blogspot.com

The University's official presence on the internet is via the Trinity University website, which is administered by the Office of University Marketing & Communications. Only this official website and the official University print publications listed in Chapter 9B: Other Handbooks, Bulletins, and Publications of the Faculty and Contract Staff Handbook are permitted to display facsimiles of the registered University seal or the University logo; exceptions require permission of the Office of University Marketing & Communications.

Upon request, direct links will be provided from the official University webpages to Internet pages maintained independently by individual departments and University offices listed in the University Administrative Structure Chart in the Faculty and Contract Staff Handbook, and sponsored student organizations as defined in the Student Handbook. Direct links to websites maintained independently by individual faculty members, recognized student organizations, or other individuals or groups may be provided at the discretion of the Office of University Marketing & Communications.

The University has charged Information Technology Services with managing its domain name assets. All domain names purchased with University funds must be recorded, and names within the trinity.edu domain or non-trinity.edu names whose domain name is served by Trinity domain name servers must be registered with the University through Information Technology Services.

Student Organization Social Media Presence

Students who run social media for an organization officially recognized by the University, are responsible for following all normal expectations for professional behavior as representatives of the University. Social media postings, including comments and responses, can be stored by and shared with millions around the world. The Responsible Information and Technology Use Policy and

Appropriate Use Policy for Students should also be followed. Additionally, policies in the student handbook (especially regarding academic honesty and student code of conduct) must also be adhered.

Students who run social media or are considering establishing social media for an organization officially recognized by the University must make a formal request through their organization's adviser to the Office of Digital Communications. The Office of Digital Communications will then provide advice, support, and promotion, as appropriate. The office can help you to establish your goals, build a social media plan, learn about do's and don'ts, select the appropriate social media tool to support your goals, promote your site, and otherwise navigate through the process of establishing and maintaining a social media presence.

Obey the terms of use for each social media platform. These rules are constantly changing so it is each user's duty to stay up to date. Here are links to policies for some of the more popular platforms.

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Google +
- LinkedIn
- Flickr
- YouTube
- Wikipedia
- WordPress
- Blogger

Students are encouraged to think carefully about the content posted and urged to double check everything, with special attention to accuracy, spelling, and grammar. Students should think twice about the value of the content and consider whether or not it may potentially malign or polarize any person or group. Students should be respectful in posts and responses. Good sportsmanship should be advocated; rivals should not be maligned. The "golden rule" of "treating others as you would like to be treated" should be followed.

Students Who Maintain Personal Social Media Sites

The Responsible Information and Technology Use Policy and Copyright Policy should guide interaction in personal social media. Additionally, policies in the student handbook (especially regarding academic honesty and student code of conduct) should also be consulted and must be adhered.

Obey the terms of use for social media platforms. These rules are constantly changing so it is your duty to stay up to date. The links to individual usage policies are listed in the previous section.

Faculty/Staff Social Media Presence

Faculty and/or staff members who manage social media as representatives of Trinity University are responsible for following all normal expectations for professional behavior as representatives of the University. Social media postings, including comments and responses, can be stored by and shared with millions around the world. These guidelines are intended to help Trinity University faculty and staff who create and manage social media presences as University representatives, either as individual professionals or on behalf of their academic or administrative departments.

Social media are constantly changing and evolving. As a result, these guidelines may be updated frequently. Trinity University faculty and staff who would like to establish a social media site representing Trinity University must make a formal request through the Office of Digital Communications through their department chair or manager. The Office of Digital Communications will provide advice, support, and promotion, as appropriate. The office can help a program to establish goals, build a social media plan, learn about do's and don'ts, select the appropriate social media tool to support goals, promote the site, and otherwise navigate through the process of establishing and maintaining a social media presence.

- What social media, if any, has already been established by colleagues or the University for this purpose? This avoids the duplication of effort and mixed messages.
- What does the program hope to accomplish with this social media presence?
- What communications goals will the social media help to accomplish that other media, such as an Internet site, couldn’t?
- Who is the social media audience?
- What content needs to be contributed (and by whom) on a regular basis to the social site?
- Study various social media sites to answer the question: Which of the social media platforms available will best help fulfill goals for reaching key audiences in an efficient way?
- Each social media platform has its own set of strengths and weaknesses in such areas as ease of use, type of content included, popularity with users, privacy controls and community user expectations.
- Understanding what is being communicated will help guide the decision of selecting a platform or platforms. (For example, if sharing “headlines” is of primary interest, Twitter may be the best platform. If the primary goal is to develop a community dialogue, Facebook may be the better choice.)
- Learn what the individual platforms offer and how their communities work when developing a site plan.
- Choose only one or two platforms, especially in the beginning, to focus the plan.
- If the social media presence will be for departmental rather than individual professional purposes, identify the faculty or staff member(s) who will manage the site.
- Choose at least one person from the department who will be primarily responsible for monitoring and updating the site. This person should be able to check the site at least once daily and, in general, depending on which social media presence chosen, update it with new content several times a week.

- Set clear expectations for this person's understanding of the site's tools, the privacy settings to follow, and the frequency of posting and reviewing site content.
- Assign and train a backup who is familiar with the communications goals set for the site.
- Select an appropriate name for the site. The site name should make it clear to visitors that it represents a specific profession, department or office associated with Trinity University. For example, a Twitter "handle" for the College of Engineering might be @TrinityEngineering.
- Start small and build the site before officially launching.
- Create the site and begin populating it with content for several weeks before announcing it broadly.
- Share the link with a small group of people who can join or become followers and provide feedback. Doing so will allow those responsible for the site to become comfortable with maintaining the site, work out any bugs and develop a small audience before launching more widely.
- Announce the launch, focusing on the audience being sought.
- Use more traditional means, such as e-mail listservs, Internet sites and newsletters, to announce the official launch of the social media site.
- Briefly describe the focus of the site and the kinds of information planning to be shared and encourage people to join.
- Cross-promote the site through other University social media sites. For example, request that the University mention the site on its official Facebook account. Other opportunities for promotion may include departmental websites and email signatures.
- Monitor, measure and be prepared to change.
- Manage your site regularly and track which content is most popular and best communicates goals. Depending on analysis of this information, emphasize certain types of content or turn focus to another social media platform that might better communicate messages to the intended audience.
- Be professional and respectful always. Anything posted on a social media site in the role as a Trinity faculty or staff member reflects on both individuals and the University. As such, be professional and deliberate with comments and avoid engaging in emotionally charged arguments or debates with critics.
- Be obvious, honest and transparent. Use a unique "voice," but make sure it is clear that posts represent a faculty or staff member at Trinity University. Do not misrepresent identity through postings or post as another individual.
- Nothing is truly private in social media. Think about comments, photos or other content before posting, remembering that anything shared in social media, even within closed networks, becomes publicly available information. Content can be stored and shared around the world instantly. If it's not something that should be shared with mainstream media, don't post it on the site.
- Be active, timely and responsive. Social media requires diligent attention to remain engaging. Schedule time to check the site(s) at least once a day during the work week and plan to post fresh content several times each week. Social media allows the sharing of information instantly

with wide audiences. These audiences also expect sites to be active and timely and will ignore site if they prove to be otherwise.

- Interact with the community created. Do more than just share news. Offer insights and information that are of interest to the network's community that may not be available elsewhere. Comment on interesting posts and encourage related dialogues.
- Accept but monitor comments and postings by others. Social media thrives because of the community's ability to participate in the "conversation." To support and encourage this interactivity, be prepared to accept and respond – judiciously – to comments, not all of which will be positive. If necessary, to correct misunderstandings or factual errors, respond to negative comments in a professional manner and by providing any information that may be helpful in clarifying the issue. Remove comments that are profane, that attack any individual or group by name or other clearly identifying characteristics and that are obviously advertising or spam. Otherwise, take a light hand.
- Be a valued member of the community. Share or re-post information from other, trusted sources that will increase the value of the site.
- Separate personal from professional. Content that might be shared on a personal media site may not be appropriate for sharing on an official University site. Given the public availability of Internet site information, it is also worth considering how personal sites relate to work at Trinity University and how that personal site might lead to perceptions about your role as a faculty or staff member.

The Responsible Information and Technology Use Policy and Copyright Policy are to be followed in all use of the internet and social media.

Personal Social Media Presence

If you maintain a personal blog or presence on another social media site but there is no indication that you represent Trinity University either by text or photos, you need not consult with the Office of University Marketing & Communications or be concerned with these guidelines.

If, however, your social media presence is representing your Trinity University department, group, organization, or activity, you are also representing your own professional reputation and the University. Even on your personal site, if you indicate that you are a Trinity University faculty or staff member, visitors to the site may perceive that you are speaking for your department or the University. If you are in some way invoking your professional affiliation with Trinity University, it may be hard to contend that this is not the case if you are not explicit about that fact. If you discuss professional issues on your personal social media site, it is suggested that you include a sentence similar to this: "The views expressed on this [blog, site] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Trinity University."

Performance Evaluation

Consequences of Policy Violation:

Enforcement
To ensure adherence to the Communications Policy, Trinity University reserves the right to monitor the internet and social media.

The division Strategic Communications & Marketing, as a policy on Trinity's official social media sites, removes any comments that contain profanity, defamation, or sell merchandise or services that are not official University business. This policy is incorporated into the profile of the University's official social media sites managed by Strategic Communications & Marketing.

Reporting Violations
When acting as an official Trinity representative or when using the Internet for personal use, please alert Strategic Communications & Marketing when misrepresentations are found that are made about Trinity University in the media, by reporters, bloggers, or individuals. This will allow for Trinity University to provide accurate information.

Terms & Definitions

Terms and Definitions:

Term:	Definition:
Social Media	Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Related Documents

Related Documents:

Document Type:	Document Name:	Document Number:
Policy	Acceptable Use Policy	ITS-0001
Policy	Copyright Policy	ITS-0009

Revision Management

Revision History Log:

Revision #:	Date:	Recorded By:
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Vice President Approval:

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