



CELT

Guidelines for Academic Practice with Social Media

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Purpose of these guidelines

This document has been created through consultation with Faculties and Central Support teams to provide good practice guidelines for University of Derby (UoD) academic staff engaging with social media for learning, teaching and assessment purposes.

The guidelines laid out in this document are applicable in all domains where social media are used to support learning, teaching and assessment practices, whether they are within or outside University systems such as Course Resources (Blackboard).

What do we mean by social media?

The term social media is used when referring to a wide range of web-based tools / services which, when used collaboratively with other users, allow individuals to share ideas, opinions and knowledge as part of networked communities. Content circulated within groups is often created, mediated and regulated by members rather than institutional third parties or the providers of the social media service being used. Services falling under the social media banner such as blogs, wikis, social networking sites and podcasting tools have become a familiar part of everyday life for many.

Why use social media?

In an increasingly digital age, it is important we provide our students with opportunities to develop digital capabilities needed for academic life and for life as a graduate. For students, social media potentially makes available:

- alternative ways to engage with their disciplinary area, which are instant and multimodal in nature.
- communication channels which link them with alumni and staff, creating communities of inquiry and support.
- networks of individuals, groups and bodies, which can be useful sources of knowledge and resources.
- tools and resources to support individual creative and collaborative learning experiences.
- services and applications which are often free and widely available to enhance their learning experience.

General Considerations

The following considerations need to be taken into account when adopting any social media:

University policies and guidelines

Social media and the underlying Information Technology (IT) are vitally important to many of us at the University of Derby, both staff and students. It has huge potential but we must use it responsibly and legally. IT Services in partnership with Human Resources (HR) provide advice, guidance and policy documents surrounding the use of computing facilities. While the policies themselves are not a statement of the law, they are intended to reflect it, but none of them stand on their own. Most areas of activity are likely to come under a number of [IT policies](#).

The following policies and guidelines are of particular importance:

- IT Acceptable Use
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act Policy
- Data Code of Conduct
- Social Media Policy
- Cloud Based Storage Policy

The [UoD Software Whitelist](#), which meets our institutional governance requirements, should also be viewed and [HR policies](#) may also be relevant.

Privacy

Staff making use of social media should be cognisant of issues of privacy, confidentiality, accuracy and be mindful of appropriate boundaries in the relationship between staff and students. There should be clarity in the distinction between professional and personal information and interaction.

Data protection

Care should be taken to protect individuals' personal data such as addresses, birth dates and information about performance in assessments. This is important as any breaches of the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) may result in a large fine for the University.

Copyright

It is important to take into account the [copyright licenses](#) of any third party materials you are looking to share or reuse on social media. You should also consider what copyright license you would want to apply to your own resources before you share them on social media sites.

Terms and conditions

Please read all terms and conditions associated with any applications you use to ensure you are familiar with the requirements of use and your legal rights as stipulated by the social media provider. These should be reviewed on a regular basis as services may change these overtime and as a result the service may no longer be suitable for your needs.

Longevity of application

Be aware that some social media have a very short life span. As third-party services they can potentially disappear, along with all the data stored on them, with little notice.

Stability

As with all technologies, social media are liable to crash from time to time and reliability of services cannot be assured. Be aware that you are liable to experience differing levels of support, which at critical times may impact negatively on your students' learning.

Accessibility

Before using any social media tool with your students and colleagues you should consider whether there are any barriers to people being able to access the services. This could be related to disability, language, access to technology, internet connection, skill or confidence level with IT. If you have identified any barriers then you should consider whether any additional support or adjustments need to be made in order to ensure the social media tool is being used inclusively.

Different accounts

Given the potential that anything created, posted and disseminated using social media can be accessed by a multitude of people, it is a good idea to have separate accounts for personal and professional communication. Where possible, look for and create educational accounts for learning, teaching and assessment purposes. These will often have additional settings, which are more appropriate for an academic context.

Ethical considerations

Use of social media in learning, teaching and/or academic research should be managed responsibly and professionally to ensure accuracy and consistency of information. All use should be considered an ethical issue and at all times focused on positive, constructive practice, avoiding distress.

Considerations for learning, teaching and assessment

If you would like to talk about how you might use social media for learning, teaching and assessment, please contact the Technology Enhanced Learning Team at tel@derby.ac.uk or on 01332 591865. You might also find this [library guide on social media](#) helpful.

Before using social media on your modules / programmes, consider the following:

Learning, Teaching and Assessment

- Use social media with a clear learning and teaching purpose in mind.
- Let your students know how social media will support their learning and clarify which services you will be using.
- If content is fundamental to the delivery of a course, make it available via Institutional platforms such as Course Resources and/or on the Panopto Video Repository rather than using your own personal account on external services.
- When considering using these tools for assessment think about how you will maintain a record of what was assessed and provide feedback to students.

Student Experience

- Don't assume that all learners are keen to engage with social media in an academic context just because they use it informally.
- Allow learners to opt out of using social media and / or provide alternative learning activities if necessary.
- Establish appropriate behaviour expectations and establish boundaries with your students.
- Consider trialling the use of social media with small groups prior to embarking on opening it up to large groups, if possible.

Online Identity Management

- Use your own name and avoid aliases where possible as transparency will help establish your online credibility.
- Maintain your presence and avoid being inactive for long periods of time.
- Be careful about what you post/say about the University and other people – remember you are representing the University of Derby.
- Avoid making public any personal beliefs or opinions which may cause offence to others.
- Be aware of cultural sensitivities when posting content and encouraging learners to engage with social media.

Further information and guidance

The following section provides guidelines on how you might use the different types of social media.

1. Blogs

There are quite a few blog providers, and while they all serve a similar purpose, some are better suited to supporting particular types of content than others. For example, Tumblr is a site which supports the use of visual and image-based representations while Penzu is a site which allows users to keep journals in the manner of a personal diary. Blogs often allow users the option of making their content private or public. This is something, which needs to be considered if you are using external sites with students, particularly if they are reflecting on their own personal, professional and academic practices. Where a more private space is needed for curricular activities such as assessments, other internally supported tools might be more appropriate such as blogs in Course Resources, PebblePad or Office365 tools like OneNote Class Notebook.

Specific considerations for blogs

If you choose to use images on your blog make sure they are copyright cleared / have a Creative Commons license and appropriately credited. Additionally, refrain from comments on others which could be construed as malicious and avoid writing anything that could be regarded as libellous.

Example blog providers

Blogs can be set up with the following providers as well as within Course Resources (Blackboard) and PebblePad:

- [WordPress](#)
- [Blogger](#)
- [Penzu](#)
- [Tumblr](#)

2. Micro-blogging

Micro-blogging services such as Twitter or Yammer provide users with opportunities to share information, opinions, knowledge and resources using short sentences, typically only 140 characters. It can be accessed via mobile devices, PCs and laptops as long as an internet connection is available. A widely used networking micro-blogging service, which encourages users to follow other users' posts, is Twitter where postings are referred to as 'tweets'. Applications of Twitter in learning, teaching and assessment contexts are many and varied. It could be used as a polling tool during lectures and/or it can be used to take part in question and answer sessions, share links, posts thoughts on topics, share images or have discussions with others around the globe.

Specific considerations for micro-blogging

When you're using a micro-blogging service you might consider having a separate account for personal, academic and professional activities so that your purpose for micro-blogging is clear and encourages others to follow you. An aggregator service such as Hoot Suite will help you manage multiple Twitter accounts. Make sure that you don't re-tweet (tweet a message someone else has posted) information which may be libellous, false or a breach of copyright.

Example micro-blogging services / tools

- [Twitter](#)
- [Yammer](#) (this is available as part of Office365 at the University)
- [HootSuite](#)

- [TweetDeck](#)

3. Social networking sites

The University of Derby supports the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn as channels which allow you to share knowledge, express your creativity and connect with others who share your interests. For quite a few people, platforms such as Facebook are a constant feature of their lives, so they will be familiar with the affordances for social interaction it provides. However, the activities we engage in informally do not always translate to more formal learning environments and working out how you might integrate them into contexts you are familiar with is important.

Specific considerations for social networking sites

In order to manage the boundaries between your professional and private life, you might consider creating an account for academic purposes that is separate from your personal account. It is also helpful to talk to your students about what you consider to be good and bad practice to help set the tone for the site. Maintaining a visible presence so that students know you are there is particularly important if you are facilitating a group or activity using a social network. You will also need to consider how you create areas which are either open publically or for a specified group of individuals. If setting up areas like this, think carefully about the privacy settings and who your audience is for these areas.

Example social network providers

- [Facebook](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Snapchat](#)

4. Social bookmarking

Social bookmarking services provide users with opportunities to archive, curate, annotate and share a wide variety of online and offline resources. Sites such as Diigo allow individuals to share content with groups of people with similar interests. Academic bookmarking applications such as Mendeley provide users with opportunities to archive and organize academic content on and offline. Some, like Mendeley or CiteULike, also have the ability to create bibliographic lists, which can be inserted into academic texts such as essays and theses. The University has a licence for EndNote.

Specific considerations for social bookmarking

Make sure that you habitually tag resources you bookmark so that they are easy to find, share and discover for yourself and others. Be careful that you're not sharing resources with others that breach copyright and/or Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) laws.

Example social bookmarking providers

- [EndNote](#)
- [Diigo](#)
- [Mendeley](#)
- [Zotero](#)
- [CiteULike](#)
- [Cite This For Me](#)

5. Content curation

These tools allow you to collect together content from around the web in one place, which you can then organise and convert, into an attractive interface for others to view or interact with. Many of these tools

utilise other social media services either by generating content from the feeds that you have already set up (e.g. Paper.li uses the people you follow on Twitter) or helping you to specifically search these sites for content. Other services require you to actively seek articles that you want to share with others and then add them to your collection/s, sometimes through using useful buttons, which you can add to your internet browser.

Specific considerations for content curation

Be particularly careful when you're curating images because of copyright concerns. Make sure that you only collect images which are out of copyright / or which you own / have permission or a license from the rights holder to reuse (JISC Legal, 2012). For this reason it is worth considering searching for images which are shared under a [Creative Commons license](#). For more information on this, take a look at this guide produced by [JISC Legal on image sharing websites and the law](#).

Example content curation providers

- [Pinterest](#)
- [Scoop.it](#)
- [Paper.li](#)
- [Flipboard](#)

6. Image sharing

Image sharing is the transferring and distribution of digital images online, enabling the user to share their images with others. Images can be stored in your own private space or shared with family and friends as well as being used in teaching and learning materials (providing copyright regulations are adhered to). Here at the University of Derby we make our images available to others through a [Flickr](#) site.

Specific considerations for image sharing

Think about the license of the images that you're using / sharing. Use reputable image sharing sites which have a connection to [Creative Commons](#) in some way and consider which license might be appropriate for the image you are sharing. You might find this guide produced by [Jisc Legal on image sharing websites and the law](#) particularly helpful in understanding the issues here.

Example image sharing sites

- [Flickr](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Photobucket](#)
- [Google Photos](#)
- [Pinterest](#)

7. Presentation sharing

These tools allow you to publish and share your presentation slides online. As the slides are run from an internet browser, you can access it from any computer and use a copy on a memory stick as a backup. You can also embed the presentations within other websites including blogs, wikis and in the content area of Course Resources. One of the main advantages of using these services is to share your presentations more widely, allowing other people to comment and re-share your work across the world. Office365 supported by the University allows presentations to be delivered online and shared externally via PowerPoint and Sway.

Specific considerations for presentation sharing

It is important to consider what types of technologies might be used to view your presentation as how it displays may vary on different devices. Think about not only the computer you will present on, but also the different types of internet browser, mobile device and connection speed your audience might use to view it.

Example presentation sharing providers

- [PowerPoint Online](#)
- [Sway](#)
- [Prezi](#)
- [SlideShare](#)
- [SlideBoom](#)
- [SpeakerDeck](#)