Lawrence Technological University

Social Media Guidelines

Introduction

Social media has become one of the primary platforms for disseminating information and interacting with various constituents. However, because of the ever-changing social media landscape, there are often many questions and concerns about protocol when using these platforms.

These guidelines are designed to help you identify and resolve potential usage issues related to social media, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube.

Lawrence Technological University uses social media to supplement traditional public relations and marketing efforts. One of Lawrence Tech's social media goals is to raise awareness of the University beyond the Metro Detroit area. To accomplish this, members of the LTU community are encouraged to share with their families and friends University activities and events in the academic colleges, athletics, student organizations, and corporate and foundation relationships.

Linking directly to the information source is an effective way to help promote the mission of the University and build community.

Definitions

- **Social media** is media (and communication) utilized for social interaction. Social media uses web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive experiences. Outlets within social media include online social networks such as Facebook, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds, video sharing such as YouTube, interactive geolocation, and collaborative information and publishing (i.e., Wikis).

- **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.

- **Terms of Use** 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, users grant the company irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive license to use and distribute content for any commercial, advertising, or other purpose.

Creating Social Media Accounts

Registering a New Site
Before launching a social media site, notify the University at
socialmedia@ltu.edu.

Use a @ltu.edu email address for official University sites when possible. Use a student organization email address for student sites.

Keep University contact information accurate and current.

Understand that passwords and administrator access to the site must be carefully managed.

Terms of Use
Know the terms of service for the site being used. Also, understand that by using any site there is implicit agreement not to:
- Send or post unauthorized commercial communications (spam).
- Bully, intimidate, or harass any user.
- Post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or gratuitously violent.
- Do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory.

Posting from LTU Social Media Sites

Before using social media, ask yourself these questions:

What audience are you trying to reach?
What's the main thing you want from them?
What kind of social interaction will lead to what you want?
What tool will best support that interaction?

Make sure it is clear to your audience who you are representing: Lawrence Tech or yourself and your personal opinions or beliefs.

Once you have answered these questions, follow these recommendations:

Be Accurate
Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible—that's how you build trust, authority, and community.

Be Timely
Monitor postings and content regularly. Aim for standard (high traffic) times when posting and making updates, but be sure not to overload your

followers. They will stop paying attention if you burden them with too much information.

Be Responsible
What you write is ultimately your responsibility. The web is not anonymous. Everything posted on behalf of the University can be traced back to the writer.

Your posts and comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. Post only pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public (family, friends, employers, etc.).

If you are contacted by a member of the media about a posting or comment on a social media site, contact the [Office of Marketing and Public Affairs](#) immediately.

Respect Your Audience
Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, profanity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable at Lawrence Tech. Do not ridicule, exploit, or demean people on the basis of their age, color, creed, handicap, national origin, race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. You should also show discretion regarding sensitive topics such as politics and religion.

Maintain Transparency
The line between professional and personal business is often blurred. Be honest about your identity and who or what institution you are representing, if applicable.

If you manage a social media site on behalf of the University, or you are posting with a University username, the audience views what you post as coming from the University. Be careful and respectful. What you say directly reflects on our institution. Discuss with your supervisor the circumstances in which you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

Respect Confidentiality and Privacy
Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Lawrence Technological University, its students, its alumni, or your fellow employees.

Use good ethical judgment and follow University policies and federal requirements, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Review HIPAA requirements and FERPA information.

Do not discuss a situation involving named or pictured individuals on a social media site without their permission. Do not post anything that you would not present in a public forum.

Don't Let This Happen
Immoderate or thoughtless online behavior can have consequences. Be aware of the damage that can be done to individuals or the University through inappropriate disclosure of personal or confidential information.

Such damage can result in:

- Defamation lawsuits
- Copyright or trademark infringement claims
- Privacy or human rights complaints
- Workplace grievances under a collective agreement or unfair labor practices complaint
- Criminal charges with respect to obscene or hate materials
- Damage to Lawrence Tech's reputation and business interests

Use of LTU Trademarks
If you create a social media site on behalf of the University, you may use simple graphics that represent the Lawrence Tech brand. The Office of Marketing and Public Affairs (mktngpub@ltu.edu) can provide guidance with graphics and design.

The identity standards website provides information on branding standards and obtaining permission to use the University logo.

Read the Lawrence Tech logo guidelines.

Understand Your Personal Responsibility
You are responsible for complying with the existing rules of social media websites. For example, Facebook has regulations regarding the use of promotions (prizes and giveaways) on its website. Employers are now conducting web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be sure that what you post today will not come back to hurt you tomorrow.

Best Practices for Social Media

Social media utilizes web-based tools to interact with other people by using text, photos, videos, audio, images, infographics, and instant messaging. To maximize your efforts, you should:
- Write deliberately and accurately
- Acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly
- Disagree with other opinions respectfully
- Disclose conflicts of interest
- Review criteria for replying to comments, visitor posts, and direct messages

Remember the Three Cs

Be consistent
Be concise
Be clever

Helpful Tools
Bit.ly (preferred hyperlink shortener)
Facebook DeBugger
FollowerWonk
Hootsuite (free app for scheduling posts)
Tagboard

Posting from Your Personal Social Media Accounts

How to Raise Awareness of LTU in Your Posts
There are a number of strategies you can use in your posts to attract more attention and increase web traffic and interest in LTU:

Use backlinks, which are links back to an LTU webpage from the social media site on which you are posting

Use LTU's hashtag #WeAreLTU on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter

If you have an official University social media profile, notify the Office of Marketing and Public Affairs at socialmedia@ltu.edu so it can be listed on the University's social media directory.

Does Your Post Pass the Publicity Test?
If the content of your message would not be acceptable in a face-to-face conversation or on the telephone, it will not be acceptable for a social media website. Ask yourself: Would I want this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard today, tomorrow, or 10 years from now?

Does Your Post Promote LTU in a Positive Way?

If you are mentioning LTU in your posts, provide information that positively reflects on the institution. Examples could include upcoming events (lectures, gallery show openings, admissions open houses), student and faculty achievements, and interesting research. Avoid unflattering, critical, or awkward comments.

The following post is not really appropriate because it mentions and promotes a rival institution.
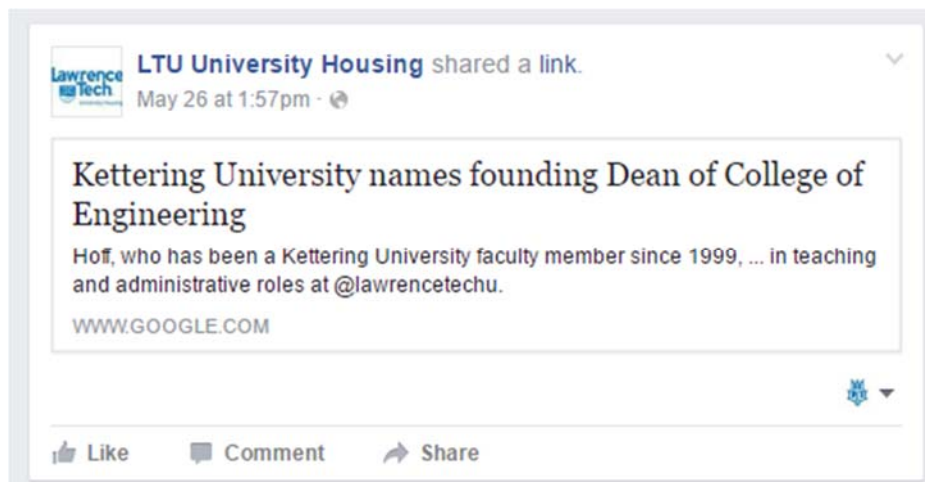
If you have questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain topics in your role as a Lawrence Tech employee, ask your supervisor before you post.

Copyright

Copyright protection generally applies as soon as a piece of work (article, music, photo, song, story, or video) is created. A copyright does not have to be registered to be enforceable. If you are going to use copyrighted material, you must ask the copyright holder for permission. The copyright holder may require a fee and specify limits in the use of the material.
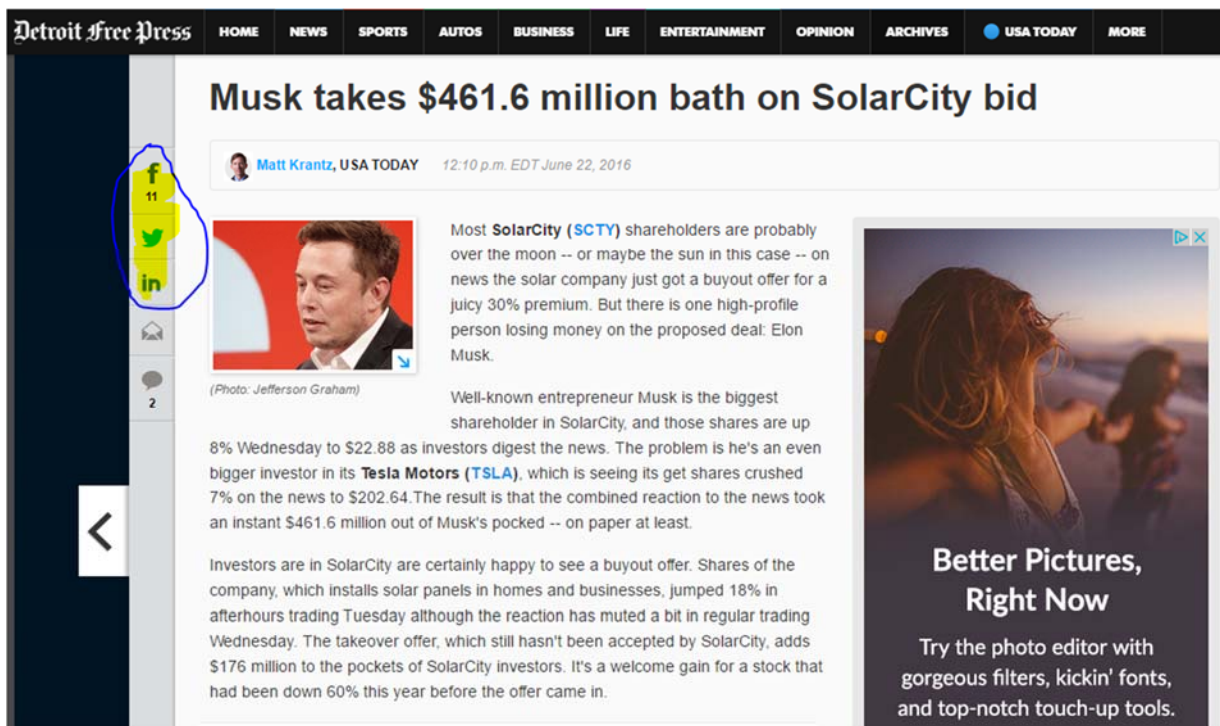
Some websites offer copyright-free photos:

https://search.creativecommons.org/
https://pixabay.com/
http://gratisography.com/

Fair use
Under certain circumstances, brief excerpts of copyrighted material may be quoted or used verbatim for purposes such as criticism, news reporting, teaching, and research without obtaining permission from or payment to the copyright holder. You must, however, always provide the source of the material you use.

Sharing Photos, News Stories, and Videos
When posting photos or news stories from other sites, it's usually permissible if the article includes share buttons or promoted hyperlinks. For example, this news story has share icons on the top left:

Some websites will "extract" or load images from hyperlinks. These include Facebook Debugger and Twitshot. While it may be permissible to visualize how an image will load by using Facebook DeBugger, using Twitshot to post directly is problematic and may be illegal.

In almost every circumstance, it is not legal to post a recorded/live video from local or national newscasts, even if LTU is the subject.

Music
Be extremely cautious when posting a video that has a music track. The

music must be licensed for use. Unless a license is obtained *prior to use* of particular recorded music, the user is in violation – even if the music is playing at an event and can be heard in the background of a video. Posting video on social media has greatly increased ways in which licensing agencies can uncover violations. Fines can be large and even include jail terms.

Musical artists are normally represented by one of three agencies that monitor for copyright violations and charge individuals and organizations a licensing fee for its use. LTU currently pays an annual fee to BMI, one of the three agencies that license popular music, to use the music of the artists it represents.

The University also maintains a contract with Elias Music Library, which contains thousands of original compositions in many different genres. If you need music for an event or video, you can choose compositions from the Elias collection and use them free of charge and copyright restrictions.

When in doubt, please ask the Office of Marketing and Public Affairs.

Here are some articles about copyright:

http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/copyright-fair-use-and-how-it-works-for-online-images/

https://pixabay.com/en/blog/posts/avoiding-copyright-issues-on-facebook-and-pinteres-13/

https://www.buzzfeed.com/jwherrman/want-to-publish-a-twitter-image-legally-just-embe?utm_term=.ft5OoW5Yw#.ogAeP2Zo8

https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/what-you-need-to-know-about-sharing-photos-and-videos-online/

Unusual Occurrences/Threatening Posts/Criminal Activity
It is not uncommon for a social media profile to be hacked. If you receive questionable posts or disturbing messages, flag the content with the respective social media portal and take screenshots.

Also, you may need to report suspicious or threatening behavior to the dean of students and Campus Safety.

In extreme circumstances, you may need to contact law enforcement.

Resources

DePaul University I On Brand
Social Media at Grand Valley State University
University of Michigan I Social Media Strategy & Guidelines

Need Help?

Contact the Office of Marketing and Public Affairs:

Bruce J. Annett, Jr.
Vice President
bannett@ltu.edu
x2206

Christian Forrest
Manager of Web Services
cforrest@ltu.edu
x2204

Brian M. Breen
Digital Media Specialist
bbreen1@ltu.edu
x2215