



The University Of
T A M P A[™]

SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES

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INTRODUCTION

The University of Tampa has crafted the following best practices guide to help clarify how best to utilize social media to further UT's mission and how to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media. Employees maintaining University social media sites must refer to the Social Media Policy.

Social media is defined as media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Examples include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat and blogs.

UT recognizes that social media sites can be effective tools for exchanging information and raising the visibility of the University. When unsure what or how to post, contact the Office of Public Information and Publications at publicinfo@ut.edu or (813) 253-6232.

Requests to feature an event, student or story on any of the official UT social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Snapchat, can be sent to publicinfo@ut.edu.

SECTION 1: BEST PRACTICES

This section applies to those posting on behalf of an official University unit, though the guidelines may be helpful for anyone posting on social media in any capacity.

- **Creating a page:** Before creating a separate social media presence for your office or administrative department, contact the Office of Public Information for the opportunity to gain a better reach and utilize UT's primary social media presence.
- **Think twice before posting:** Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the University. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online. If you are unsure about posting something or responding to a comment, ask your supervisor for input or contact the Office of Public Information.
- **Emergency Communication:** During emergency situations, the University's Emergency Communications Group will post official University communications to Facebook at www.facebook.com/universityoftampa, and Twitter at [@UofTampa](https://twitter.com/UofTampa)
- **Separate personal from professional.** Content that you might share on a personal media site may not be appropriate for sharing on an official University site. Given the public availability of web site information, it is also worth considering how you are represented on your personal site as it relates to your work at the UT and how that personal site might lead to your being perceived in your role as a faculty or staff member.
- **Strive for accuracy:** Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the University in any capacity.

- **Be respectful:** Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the poster and/or the University and its institutional voice.
- **Remember your audience:** Be aware that a presence in the social media world can easily be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers, colleagues, peers and the media. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm or provoke any of these groups.
- **Photography/video:** Photographs and videos posted on social media sites can be appropriated by visitors. Only post photos that show UT in the best light and avoid posting photos with alcohol or photos that may embarrass the people in the photo. Contact the Office of Public Information with questions.
- **Strategy:** Social media pages require input and maintenance to be effective. Departments should consider their messages, audiences and goals, as well as a strategy for keeping information on social media sites up to date. New information should be posted on a weekly basis at the minimum. The Office of Public Information can assist and advise you with your social media planning.
- **Use of Disclaimers:** It is good practice to post a disclaimer on your chosen social media site stating you reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments. Here is an example you can use as a basis, please amend as appropriate:

The views and opinions expressed on the University's social media sites do not necessarily represent those of The University of Tampa. The University of Tampa cannot be held responsible for the accuracy, currency or reliability of information posted by external parties.

- **Content:** If someone posts an opinion about the University that is negative, it should not be removed. Try to positively respond to the poster's comment. Check social media pages daily and respond to questions asked by end users. Remember that many viewers may want to know the answer to the posted question.
- **Link back to the University:** Whenever possible, link back to The University of Tampa website. Ideally, posts should be very brief, redirecting a visitor to content that resides within the UT web environment. When linking to a news article about UT, check first to see whether you can link to a release on The University of Tampa News Archive/UT Life section (www.ut.edu/articles) instead of to a publication or other media outlet.
- **Posting to Social Media Outlets:** When naming pages or accounts, selecting a profile picture or icon and selecting content to post — names, profile images and posts should all be clearly linked to the particular department or unit rather than to the institution as a whole.
- **Student Organization Advisers:** Often, when students graduate they do not pass on the access information for the organization's social media pages to the next class of organization leaders. As an adviser with access, you can facilitate the continuity of the organization's social media presence. Also, advisers should regularly monitor the content of the

organization's social media sites.

- **Brand Associations:** UT is a positive and strong community brand. Be mindful of who or what you associate with UT's brand.

SECTION 2: BEST PRACTICES FOR SPECIFIC SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS

Follow the below guidelines when creating pages on social media networks. If you do not see the network in which you would like to create a page, contact the Office of Public Information and Publications.

Facebook:

The Office of Public Information maintains the official UT Facebook page at www.facebook.com/universityoftampa. To be granted administrator privileges for this page, contact the Office of Public Information. If you create a separate department page, a member of the Office of Public Information must always hold an administrator position on any UT Facebook page or group.

The images for all UT Facebook pages should maintain a consistent graphic identity and should be coordinated through the Office of Public Information. Logos should be used in compliance with UT graphic standards.

Facebook Guidelines:

- Each time you post content to a Facebook page as the administrator remember that your post will show up in the news feed of all the people who have "liked" the page. To reach the maximum audience, always post official UT business as the administrator.
- Do not share your Facebook login with others. If you want someone to be able to administer a Facebook page, ask him/her to first "like" the Facebook page and make him/her an admin via Facebook settings.
- Check your page morning, mid-day and before you leave work.
- Watch out for advertisers posting to your page as fans or with comments. Delete these posts as spam. If your page is overwhelmed with spam, people will stop visiting and unlike your page.
- For more information visit <http://www.facebook.com/help/?ref=drop>

Twitter:

The Office of Public Information maintains the official UT Twitter account [@UofTampa](#). Twitter accounts may be created by departments for posting information about the department. Before creating your account, contact the Office of Public Information to discuss naming conventions. If you create a department Twitter page, you must use a UT departmental email account for the admin account login, i.e., publicinfo@ut.edu.

Twitter Guidelines:

- To raise visibility of your tweets, utilize hash tags (#) to add your tweet to the other twitter feeds related to your topic.
- The official University hashtag is #UTampa

- Don't follow someone just because they follow you. Review the feed from the requestor and see if their content is appropriate for your feed to connect with.
- For more information visit <https://support.twitter.com/>

Instagram:

The University's official Instagram account is [UofTampa](#). The Office of Admissions and the Office of Public Information maintain this account. University departments are discouraged to create separate Instagram accounts, unless their social media strategy is approved by the head of their department and the Office of Public Information. The sharing of appropriate photos is encouraged using #UTampa from personal accounts.

YouTube:

The Office of Public Information maintains the official UT YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/UTChannel. If you would like a video posted to UT's YouTube channel, contact the Office of Public Information. Video formats must be .mov, .avi or other YouTube-approved formats. Departments should not make separate YouTube channels.

LinkedIn:

The Office of Public Information maintains a LinkedIn presence and the University considers it the primary presence for the [University on LinkedIn](#). If you would like to create a LinkedIn group page, you must use a UT email account for the admin account login, preferably a departmental one, i.e., publicinfo@ut.edu.

Foursquare:

The University's official Foursquare web presence is located at <https://foursquare.com/uoftampa>. The Office of Admissions and the Office of Public Information maintain this page. University departments should not create separate Foursquare pages.

Blogs:

No employee should write a blog on behalf of the University without permission from their area's department head and/or the Office of Public Information. Departments that employ students to write blogs should review the content before posting it online. The department will be held accountable for the content of student blogs. Contact the Office of Public Information for information on visual identity of blogs.

Google+:

The Office of Public Information maintains the University's Google+ page. At this time, department Google+ pages should not be created.

Pinterest:

The University's official Pinterest presence is located at <http://pinterest.com/uoftampa>. The Office of Admissions and the Office of Public Information maintain this page. University departments should not create separate Pinterest accounts. The sharing of appropriate photos is encouraged using 'University of Tampa' in the description from personal accounts.

Snapchat:

The University's official Snapchat account is [UofTampa](#). The Office of Admissions and the Office of Public Information maintain this account. University departments should not create separate Snapchat accounts.