

## WIU Social Media Guidelines v. 1.0

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### Background & Goal

Social media or networks are Web 2.0 tools that provide WIU faculty, students, and staff with ways to connect and share via the World Wide Web. Western Illinois University supports the use of social media and networks to:

- encourage connection among individuals and groups; who are interested in and have a stake in the University;
- promote the achievements of the WIU students, alumni, faculty, staff, and programs; and
- share knowledge applicable to the WIU community and beyond.



The overall goal is to enable connection and, ultimately, a positive, productive engagement between and among individuals who are interested in Western Illinois University.

### Recommended Platforms

Based on the broad use of these particular social media networks, the following platforms are recommended for promotional purposes:

- **Facebook** — WIU's various departments, colleges, services, offices, and other entities have Facebook pages through which they connect with the constituents of, as well as promote, WIU. (see [www.wiu.edu/social\\_networking/facebook.php](http://www.wiu.edu/social_networking/facebook.php))
- **Twitter** — More information about Twitter can be found at <http://twitter.com/about>. For a directory of WIU-affiliated Twitter feeds, see [www.wiu.edu/social\\_networking/twitter.php](http://www.wiu.edu/social_networking/twitter.php)
- **YouTube** — WIU maintains a University channel on YouTube (see [www.youtube.com/WesternIllinoisU](http://www.youtube.com/WesternIllinoisU)), on which WIU faculty, students, and staff videos about WIU are featured. To request that your video be posted to WIU's YouTube channel, contact your area's webmaster; Jeremy Merritt in Web Services; or Darcie Shinberger in University Relations.

All videos must be captioned in order to comply with the Illinois Information Technology Accessibility Act. An individual can submit a request for a video to be captioned (once it is uploaded to YouTube) via a pool of volunteers who have volunteered to caption. More information is available at: [www.wiu.edu/accessibility/captionrequest.php](http://www.wiu.edu/accessibility/captionrequest.php).

*\*Please note* that if you're going to post videos on your office's or department's Facebook page, there must be an accessible version posted somewhere on the Web (preferably YouTube), and that accessible version of the video must be linked (via copying and pasting the video's URL) to the video posted on Facebook.

Many WIU faculty, staff, students, departments, offices, programs, etc., utilize other Web 2.0 tools, e.g., blogs and professional networking sites (i.e., LinkedIn); however, due to the wide use Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as the time and maintenance that social networks require, the recommended social media platforms for promotion are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. (*Note: This is subject to change in subsequent versions of these guidelines. The University website also links to University-affiliated blogs at [www.wiu.edu/social\\_networking/blogs.php](http://www.wiu.edu/social_networking/blogs.php).)*

## **Best Practice Suggestions**

The following guidelines are best practice suggestions for engagement *on behalf of Western Illinois University*; these are aggregated from a variety of online sources and from practice and use of social media based on a common-sense approach.

### **Accuracy, Ethics, and Confidentiality**

Strive to be accurate and provide references (links) to resources that support your position or idea. Attribute information appropriately and ethically.

Keep in mind that posts on WIU-affiliated Facebook pages will appear as posts from the particular page and will be next to the icon (i.e., the WIU bell tower, the COEHS logo, etc.) representing the University and/or specific college, department, office, or group.

If you post something that is inaccurate, post a correction or an amendment to the initial post or comment as soon as you discover the error or when someone points out an error. Do not be defensive when someone points out an error; be receptive and listen to what the individual has to say regarding your initial post and the accuracy of it.

Do not disclose confidential or proprietary information about Western Illinois University or about WIU students, faculty, staff, or alumni. Follow WIU's policies and federal requirements (such as those stipulated in Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA], see [www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html)) and/or Health Information Privacy Act (which might apply to Beu or the Alcohol and Other Drug Resource Center; see [www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/summary/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/hipaa/understanding/summary/index.html)).

### **Respect and Listening**

Address all questions, even negative ones, or interactions with respect and diplomacy. Recognize the power of positive engagement while trying to really "listen" to what an individual is saying.

- Think before you react to a negative post.
- Consult your colleagues about best possible responses to negative or conflict-oriented communications.
- If you would not say "it" front of a camera, do not post it to the social media site you are maintaining for WIU.
- Always strive to respond appropriately (tone, length of response, language used, etc.) and be polite.

## Communication, Content, and Collaboration

Different colleges, departments, offices, groups, etc., have different reasons to engage via social media applications and tools. Use them to effectively communicate with individual constituencies. Ensure that all "official" WIU social media sites identify clearly that your site is the "official" site or account of your particular WIU college, department, program, etc.

Below are points about the content posted to your social media site(s):

- **Relevance** — Contribute and communicate information that has **relevance** to audience members. Different colleges, departments, programs, etc., have different reasons to engage via social media applications and tools: use them to effectively communicate with individual constituencies.
- **Timeliness** — Keep "above the fold" information current.
- **Accuracy** — Double check links (URLs) to ensure they direct users to the intended website/page. Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- **Positive/Affirming** — Post and share content that portrays the subject(s) and/or programs in a positive light.
- **SPAM** — Be mindful of SPAM-like posts, e.g., posting the same link over and over and posting too much (which may annoy your followers/likers/fans) in a specified time span (i.e., a 24-hour period).

Do not use the social media sites to promote businesses or political candidates. Finally, be open to working with other departments, colleges, offices, etc., particularly when there is a common objective (e.g., distribute information about an upcoming event, contest, academic opportunity that would appeal to the particular online community).

## Personal Information and Privacy

Social media sites often cross conventional boundaries between professional and personal relationships. Use privacy settings to restrict personal information on otherwise public sites.

## Maintenance of Social Media Sites

Designate an individual or individuals who will maintain and post content to the site, so that the site will be updated with timely, relevant information. Think about providing administration rights to your division's webmaster and marketing/promotions representative. Ensure that the offices of University Relations and Web Services are aware of your sites, so that the site(s) can be listed in the appropriate social media directory.

If your social media site(s) has/have not been updated in six months, then your social media site will not be listed in the applicable social media directory. Once your social media site(s) has/have been updated, they will again be listed in the applicable directory.

## WIU Visual Identify Guidelines

Adhere use of logos based on WIU's Visual Identity Guidelines; they are available at: [www.wiu.edu/DPS/downloads/admin/VisualIdentityGuidelines.pdf](http://www.wiu.edu/DPS/downloads/admin/VisualIdentityGuidelines.pdf).