

University of Georgia Social Media Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

The UGA Office of Public Affairs, in consultation with the Social Media Advisory Committee, a group of unit communicators responsible for social media in their respective areas at UGA, has assembled “best practice” guidelines from respected industry and collegiate sources to help you use social media platforms effectively, protect your personal and professional reputation, and follow university policies. While official UGA communication is the primary responsibility of appointed campus communicators, the university recognizes that other UGA faculty and staff may also further institutional goals by using social media. The university expects all those UGA faculty and staff participating in social media on behalf of the University of Georgia to understand and follow these guidelines.

These guidelines will evolve as social media evolves. If you have questions concerns or suggestions, please contact Wendy Jones in Public Affairs at wfjones@uga.edu or 706/583-0370.

GENERAL GUIDELINES WHEN OFFICIALLY POSTING ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

These guidelines are designed for UGA employees participating in social media as an official job function on behalf of the university.

Think Before You Post

There’s no such thing as a “private” social media site. Search engines can turn up posts, photos and videos years after the publication date. Comments may be forwarded or copied. Archival systems may save information even if you delete a post.

Think before you post, remembering that anything you share within social media, even within a closed network like a listserv, is not guaranteed to stay private, even if you adjusted your privacy settings to be as secure as possible. It can be shared, stored and spread globally.

Maintain Confidentiality

Do not post sensitive or proprietary information about UGA, or personal, medical or financial information on its students, its alumni or your fellow employees. Use ethical judgment and follow university policies and federal requirements, such as the university’s Privacy Policy: (<https://infosec.uga.edu/policies/privacy.php>), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act – FERPA: (http://www.reg.uga.edu/ferpa_privacy_act), and the University System of Georgia Ethics Policy: (<http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics>).

Respect Copyright and Fair Use

When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others and of the university. For guidance, see <http://www.alumni.uga.edu/policies/nodes/view/266>.

Be Aware of Liability

You are responsible for what you post on your own site and on the sites of others. Social media users have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, threatening, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Be sure that what you post will not expose the university or you to legal liability.

Anyone using social media at UGA should be aware that material published on these outlets may be subject to policies outlined in the UGA Human Resources' Policies and Procedures, including but not limited to the Disruptive Behavior/Workplace Violence or the Conduct sections as well as any other applicable UGA policies or laws. Other UGA policies and documents that may govern the use of social media include, but are not limited to, the following:

Use of Computers Policy: <https://infosec.uga.edu/policies/aup.php>

Board of Regents HR Policy Manual: <http://www.usg.edu/hr/manual/>

Anything that would be deemed a violation of policies in a face-to-face or telephone communication would likely be considered a violation of those same policies if it took place within the social media environment.

Respect University Time and Property

As stated in the UGA Acceptable Use Policy (<https://infosec.uga.edu/policies/aup.php/>), university computers and your work time are to be used for university-related business. It's appropriate to post at work only if your comments are directly related to accomplishing work goals. Limit the time you spend on attending your department's social media presence to what is needed to post content, evaluate traffic data, review related sites, and monitor comments. You should participate in personal social media conversations on your own time.

Be Transparent

The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred. Be thoughtful about your posting's content and potential audiences. If you are authorized by your supervisor to represent UGA in social media, say so. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a UGA faculty or staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of UGA.

EXAMPLE DISCLAIMER: The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the views, positions, or opinions of the University of Georgia.

Before creating any pages or accounts to conduct university business, secure the approval of your senior manager in writing and work closely with your supervisor and public relations colleague in your area to determine how this medium will be used in line with your existing job duties. If you use your own name and profile photograph, be sure to identify yourself as a university employee in the biography/information section of the

site. For example, admission counselors may create Twitter accounts using their own names and photos for the purpose of working with prospective and admitted students. Another example would be accounts created by a group of resident assistants, such as the “5th Floor Creswell” account, in which case everyone who has access to post to this account should be named in the profile section for that particular media. Also, please ensure that your profile photo projects a professional image and is not overly informal in composition.

Be Accurate

Make sure that your posts are accurate and factual. It’s better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. The social media community values when users cite and link to sources whenever possible; that’s how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community. Deleting inaccurate data is discouraged on social media because of the amount of emphasis put on transparency, so it is important to get things right on the first post.

Be Accessible

All UGA-managed social media sites should meet the university’s Web Accessibility guidelines (http://wiki.eits.uga.edu/campuswebhelp/index.php/Web_Accessibility_and_Persons_with_Disabilities). Video should be captioned. Photos should include a cutline. For more information about web accessibility, see http://wikiwiki.uga.edu/wag/index.php/Main_Page.

Be Respectful

Posts on social media sites should protect the university’s institutional voice by remaining professional in tone and in good taste. Don’t publish content containing slurs, personal insults or attacks, profanity or obscenity, and don’t engage in any conduct on a social media site that would not be acceptable in UGA workplaces or classrooms or on official UGA websites. When maintaining or contributing to university-managed social media properties, follow the standards of nondiscrimination and social conduct outlined by UGA’s Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment Policy (<http://eoo.uga.edu/policies/NDAH-Policy.html>).

Be a Valued Member

If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights and posting quality content regularly. Be sure not to overload your updates. Your connections will stop paying attention if you overload with too much information and ignore you if you rarely post useful information. As with any other form of communication, having a strategic plan or a content calendar is a good idea and will allow for proactive use of social media.

Sharing UGA news, events or promoting faculty and student work through social media tools is an excellent, low-cost way to engage the online community and build our brand. The best way to share university news is to link to the original source. Do not share

information that is not a matter of public record. Link to other relevant university accounts and actively follow them, sharing information that is of interest to your readers and viewers.

Be Careful

Social media websites often offer widgets or tools that can be embedded in existing websites allowing social media content (photos, stories, comments, etc.) to be displayed directly from your web site. While these tools offer a way to make your site more dynamic and interesting, they also create situations for inappropriate content to be displayed directly on UGA managed websites. For this reason, these types of social medial widgets and tools should not be used if content can be distributed without first being reviewed and approved by an employee or agent of the University of Georgia.

Be aware that when you use any scripts that are hosted external to the University of Georgia managed web servers, you potentially expose the University of Georgia and the visitors of its websites to greater risks. The content of externally hosted scripts is often used for tracking without the knowledge of the web site visitor. Because these scripts are externally hosted, the risk also exists that the content delivered can be altered at any time to intentionally or unintentionally negatively affect web site visitors.

Accept and Monitor Comments and Replies

Social media is, by design, a conversation and not a one-way broadcast. Be prepared to accept and respond to comments. Understand that not all comments and replies will be positive, and respond to negative comments professionally and by providing any additional information that may help resolve the issue. Users may post comments and start dialogue that has little to do with the post in question. If the matter in question involves a topic that can easily ignite debate (politics or religion, for example), avoid it.

EXAMPLE DISCLAIMER: Users are fully responsible for any content they load on any of UGA's social media sites. Comments posted here do not represent the opinions of the University of Georgia.

Additionally, don't hijack the discussion and redirect by posting self/organizational-promoting information. Self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups.

Listen

Being a consumer of social media is essential to your ability to be a successful producer of social media content. "Listen" to online conversations on your preferred tools to maintain a clear and current understanding of what is relevant and of interest to the community.

Be Active

Social media presences require diligent care and feeding. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day, and to post fresh content several times a week, reconsider jumping into social media at this time. Your site

is only as interesting as your last post – if that post is several months old, visitors will ignore it. If you start a social media account and then realize that it is not meeting the your needs nor the needs of your audience, it is best to close the account rather than leave it inactive. If you do close a social media account, please let Wendy Jones (706/583-0370, wfjones@uga.edu) know so it can be removed from UGA’s A-Z index.

Additionally, you should not advertise your social media site prior to having a good library of content available. When launching a new social site, you should fill the site with at least 10 good posts prior to announcing the site to anyone. This launch approach is similar to a soft launch of a restaurant, but necessary because the first espouse you have to potential users/fans should not be wasted on a “this site is going to be great” type post (don’t tell them what you are going to do; just do it).

Be Timely

One of the great benefits of social media is the ability to share information almost instantly with a global audience. This timeliness is also one of the expectations of that audience. Be prepared to move quickly in response to new developments and announcements with relevant information on your site. A short amount of accurate information delivered at the time of need can sometimes be more valuable than a full report delivered well after the issue has passed. When planning communication events, ensure that the messaging on social media is coordinated in conjunction with your traditional communication tactics.

Be Current

Keep up with the rapid changes to social media. Settings and policies also may change without much notice from the provider. Check those periodically as a part of your social media plan. The UGA Social Media Users Group also will provide guidance, training and best practices on a regular basis to help you make the most efficient use of social media. Contact Wendy Jones at wfjones@uga.edu or 706/583-0370 to become a part of the group and learn more about sharing and training opportunities. Interested individuals may also join the UGA Social Media Users Group listserv at <http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/smug.html>. This listserv will be used to share upcoming training opportunities and as a discussion forum for all campus social media users.

Emergency Communications

All crisis and/or emergency communications will be generated by the Office of Public Affairs and be posted on the main University of Georgia Facebook page and @UniversityofGa Twitter feed with links back to additional information on www.uga.edu. Departmental social media sites should not freelance emergency information without central coordination.

Photography

Consider posting images at 72 dpi resolution to protect your intellectual property. The policies of UGA Photographic Services related to purchasing and publishing its images apply online as well as in print.

Before posting images of students or others, particularly if they were taken in a classroom setting or include minors, ensure you have permission to share the photos online. If you are posting on behalf of a UGA unit, this permission should be in the form of a signed Photo and Likeness Consent release, which can be found at <http://photo.alumni.uga.edu/download>. Contact Photographic Services at 706/542-8089 with questions or see www.photo.alumni.uga.edu.

Multimedia

All University of Georgia units preparing multimedia presentations (including videos) and desiring online links to those productions be sent to media or the public via news releases or posted on the UGA.EDU gateway website, must submit a broadcast quality, commercial news production (i.e. the highest quality digital file) product to UGA Broadcast, Video and Photography first. For distribution by BVP directly to commercial television news operations, these videos should be of the highest quality production with all shots in focus, properly lit and edited. Productions not meeting these criteria will not be distributed to commercial television news operations. Any conversions required for web release will be done by BVP, and they will caption the product (to meet ADA 508 compliance) and post it to the University of Georgia YouTube site for easy access. Adequate time should be provided to allow for captioning of the product and uploading for web access prior to a news release being issued. All news-type videos produced by and/or on behalf of the University of Georgia must be posted through this process.

Use of the UGA Logo

If you create a social media site on behalf of the university or a unit thereof, use simple graphics that represent the UGA brand. The identity guidelines website http://styleguide.uga.edu/index.php?/entries/logo_policy/ provides information on logo permissions and standards, and UGA registered trademarks must bear the “Circle R” registered trademark symbol. Official student organizations, club sports and other recognized groups may use the name “University of Georgia” or “UGA” in the name of their account or page, but may not use UGA’s logo or the athletic logo without the permission of the UGA Athletic Association. Groups of students who are not recognized as official organizations by the Center for Student organizations may not use UGA’s name, logo or any other university marks. A searchable database of registered student organizations is available at <http://stuorgs.uga.edu>. (http://www.externalaffairs.uga.edu/policies_ugaf/nodes/view/324/Logos-and-Trademarks)

Any questions related to usage may be directed to Chip Stewart at chips@uga.edu or 706/542-4583.

Measure Results

To evaluate post activity and interaction with a community, make use of analytics and tracking tools, which can help to refine your strategy and better understand your audience’s preferences and behaviors. Facebook has built-in analytics for fan pages. When posting links on any social media site, we recommend using a link shortening and

tracking service such as TinyUGA (<http://t.uga.edu/>). This service is provided to the University of Georgia community for shortening links anywhere in the uga.edu domain. It helps users to share links by making them less obtrusive, keeping them within the strict character count limits used by certain websites (e.g. [Twitter](#)), and providing statistics on the amount of activity links are receiving.

The UGA Social Media Advisory Group will share information on best practices in tracking your results. Contact Wendy Jones at wfjones@uga.edu or 706/583-0370 to become a part of the group and learn more about sharing and training opportunities. Interested individuals may also join the UGA Social Media Users Group listserv at <http://www.listserv.uga.edu/archives/smug.html>. This listserv will be used to share upcoming training opportunities and as a discussion forum for all campus social media users.

GETTING STARTED

1. Secure the approval of your department head or manager

If you wish to create a social media page or profile for your area, confer with the public relations professional in your school or unit to determine what is already being done in this area and how this activity will complement and benefit the overall communications efforts. Then secure the approval of your senior manager in writing and work closely with your supervisor and public relations colleague on this endeavor.

2. Define your goals

Before jumping into social media for your department, program or office, spend time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tool or tools, create relevant content and understand the best ways to reach your target audience.

3. Identify a coordinator

Determine who will be the primary person or people responsible for updating and monitoring your site. Ensure that the coordinator has the time to check in on the site at least once a day. This does not need to take up a significant amount of time, but successful social media sites are updated frequently, enable easy engagement with viewers and adjust in response to timely events and problems. Assign and train a backup for this person. Use a common resource email mailbox so that team members or a substitute designee can continue updating the account regardless of personnel changes, vacations, etc. We emphasize the importance of controlling the administration of organizational social media accounts; that is, keeping the number of administrative publishers to a minimum and having rules in place for managing login credentials. Don't share your social media passwords with those outside of your communications team.

4. Create a strategy

The more work you do on the front end, the more likely you are to create a successful social media presence. Define what you hope to accomplish, with whom you wish to engage, and what content you wish to share first, and then begin exploring social media tools. Work with your campus unit's communications staff to determine how the use of social media fits into your campus unit's overall communications strategy before going any further.

5. Listen

All social media platforms have their own standards, styles and expectations. By becoming a consumer of social media well before you become a producer, you will learn how these communities work, what content is of most interest, what other organizations are talking about your topic, etc. Spending a reasonable amount of time on this step will help you better plan what unique contribution your voice can have. Also, find and monitor the conversations already taking place in the social media sphere about the university, your unit and your subject of interest.

6. Choose your tool

After listening, you may find the short, 140-character bursts of Twitter are a good fit for your goals. Or you may have photos, videos and a well-developed community that would be best shared via a Facebook fan page. Do not try to do it all at once – choose a tool that best meets your goals and focus on building a strong presence before joining another social media community. Match your chosen tool to your information sharing needs and the communications practices on your target audience(s). The following are examples of other social media platforms to consider, keeping in mind that they can change frequently:

- Social & Professional Networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace, etc.)
- Instant Messenger (AIM, GChat) and Texting (on cell phones, BlackBerries, iPhones and other PDAs)
- Blogs (Wordpress, Blogger, etc.)
- Micro-Blogs (Twitter, etc.)
- Content (Wikipedia, etc.)
- Social Bookmarking (Digg, Delicious, StumbleUpon, etc.)
- Opinion Site (Yelp, MouthShut, Epinions, etc.)
- Multimedia Sharing (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.)
- Virtual Worlds (Second Life, Active Worlds, etc.)
- Social Aggregators (Netvibes, Friendfeed, etc.)

7. Name yourself and Notify the Office of Public Affairs

Create a profile name that clearly and concisely identifies your program and its University of Georgia affiliation. Do not identify yourself simply as the “University of Georgia” as that implies you are speaking for the entire institution.

Social media sites at the university should be marked “official” in some way, where appropriate (for example, in a Twitter bio or in the Facebook “about” section) and follow the university’s logo policy http://styleguide.uga.edu/index.php?/entries/logo_policy/.

Submit your official UGA social media site URLs to the university’s A-Z index by clicking on the SUGGEST A LINK button on any one of the A-Z pages (<http://www.uga.edu/a-z/a/>). Doing so encourages cross-site collaboration with all university-managed social media properties and creates a one-stop directory for the university community and the university’s Web audiences to connect with our social media platforms.

Additionally, send your department name, social media URL, and the names and contact information of all account administrators to Wendy Jones in the Office of Public Affairs (wfjones@uga.edu).

8. Experiment

Build out your blog, Twitter stream, Flickr profile, Facebook page or whatever you choose and spend time populating it for several weeks, sharing it with a small group who

can provide comments. Have the site up and running well before you plan to launch it more publicly so you can become comfortable with maintaining it.

9. Launch

Use traditional means, such as email lists and notices on your website, to notify your potential audiences that you have a social media presence. Also, notify others with social media presences and similar interests that your site is live – one of the best ways to do this is by linking to these sites from yours and mentioning them in your posts. Include easy-to-find links to your social media presence on your Web site.

10. Adjust

Once your site is up and running, you will find some content is popular, some is ignored, and some is just plain cumbersome. Develop creative ways to provide value to your audiences through exclusive content, advice, multimedia and more on your social media sites. Some social media tools come with easy-to-use tracking tools, so you can see which posts are viewed and shared most, which generate comments, etc. Be prepared to re-align your strategy in response to who is viewing your site and how they are interacting with it.

UGA POLICIES FOR REFERENCE

Copyright

<http://www.alumni.uga.edu/policies/nodes/view/266>

FERPA

http://www.reg.uga.edu/ferpa_privacy_act

Privacy Policy

<https://infosec.uga.edu/policies/privacy.php>

Use of Computers

<https://infosec.uga.edu/policies/aup.php>

Information Classification Standard

<https://infosec.uga.edu/policies/classification.php>

Web Site Design, Templates and Policy

http://styleguide.uga.edu/index.php?/entries/website_design_templates_and_policy

Web Accessibility:

http://wiki.eits.uga.edu/campuswebhelp/index.php/Web_Accessibility_and_Persons_with_Disabilities

Logo Policy

http://styleguide.uga.edu/index.php?/entries/logo_policy/

OTHER RESOURCES

EDUniverse

A network for brand, web, tech and marketing professionals in higher education with a very rich social media section.

<http://www.eduniverse.org/social-media>

Blogger Help Center

<http://support.google.com/blogger/?hl=en>

Facebook Help Center

<https://www.facebook.com/help>

FourSquare Help Center

<http://support.foursquare.com/home>

LinkedIn Help Center

<https://help.linkedin.com/>

MySpace Help Center

<http://www.myspace.com/help>

Second Life Help Center

<https://support.secondlife.com/?lang=en-US>

Tiny UGA (URL shortening and tracking service)

<http://t.uga.edu/>

Twitter Help Center

<https://support.twitter.com/>

Wikipedia Help Center

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Contents>

WordPress Help Center

<http://wphelpcenter.com/>

Vimeo Help Center

<http://vimeo.com/help>

YouTube Help Center

<http://support.google.com/youtube/?hl=en>

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES WHEN POSTING AS AN INDIVIDUAL (outside of official UGA duties)

In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a UGA student, faculty or staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your personal views and are not speaking as a formal representative of UGA. If you identify yourself as a member of the UGA community, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues. Please be aware that activity on behalf of the university on social media is subject to the employee code of conduct.

Use a Disclaimer

If you publish content to any online platform outside of UGA and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with UGA, use a disclaimer such as this: *“The postings on this site are my own and do not represent UGA’s positions, strategies or opinions.”*

Don’t Use the UGA Logo or Make Endorsements

Do not use any UGA marks or images on your personal online sites. Do not use UGA’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate. http://styleguide.uga.edu/index.php?/entries/logo_policy/.
http://www.externalaffairs.uga.edu/policies_ugaf/nodes/view/324/Logos-and-Trademarks.

Take the High Ground

If you identify your affiliation with UGA in your comments, readers may associate you with the university, even with the disclaimer that your views are your own.

Protect Your Identity

While you should be honest about yourself, don’t provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Don’t list your home address or telephone number. It is a good idea to create a separate e-mail address that is used only with social media sites.

Does it Pass the Publicity Test?

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or 10 years from now?