

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

GUIDELINE ITG- 2

Social Media Page/Account Guidelines

1. General Information:

- 1.1. **Scope:** This guideline establishes the appropriate institutional use of social media for the faculty, staff and students of Marshall University.
- 1.2. **Authority:** Marshall University Information Technology Council
- 1.3. **Passage Date:** November 20, 2009
- 1.4. **Effective Date:** November 20, 2009
- 1.5. **Controlling over:** Marshall University
- 1.6. **History and Summary:** The use of social media sites has continued to increase in recent years as a way for individuals, groups, and organizations to connect with one another and share information. Marshall University has identified social media as another medium useful for engaging with current and prospective students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni and University supporters.

The term social media can apply to a large number of public websites. These guidelines seek to identify those sites that Marshall University is currently making use of, and to assist other MU departments in how to best use these tools.

2. Guideline:

The two primary tools in use at Marshall University at the time of this writing are Facebook, and Twitter. Both have general landing pages associated with them that serve as a directory of MU departments or organizations represented on these sites. These landing pages can be found at: <http://www.marshall.edu/connected/facebook-directory/> and <http://www.marshall.edu/connected/twitter-directory/>

2.1. Considerations Prior to Establishing a University Branded Social Media Presence for your Department:

- Determine what goals your department has for its use of social media. Determining goals in advance can help you make the right choices in choosing a medium.
- Seek the support and approval of a senior administrator in your area. Make sure that social media is a good fit for your department before creating accounts and publishing content.

- Decide who within your department will serve as your page/accounts primary administrator. This person will be responsible for adding and managing content for the department, and should be familiar with the use of the medium being chosen.

2.2. Guidelines for Setting Up a University Branded Social Media Page/Account on Behalf of a Marshall University Department

With respect to Facebook, department pages should always be created as “Fan Pages” rather than profile pages. Contacting the University Portal Administrator beforehand will help to ensure that proper steps are taken when the social media presence is developed. Using the support site available at <http://support.marshall.edu> you can open a support ticket requesting assistance with this setup.

The individual within the specific department who will be responsible for updating content should be included as a page administrator, and their name, email address, campus telephone number, and associated department recorded in the Web Overseer’s database. The process for completing an Information Provider’s Agreement for a Social Media site is the same as that for publishing web content. The Online Information Provider’s Agreement may be completed online at <http://www.marshall.edu/kb/online-information-providers-agreement/>.

The Office of University Communications will be listed as a secondary administrator on any departmental pages created on behalf of the University.

2.3 General Content Guidelines for University Social Media Pages/Accounts

Any content posted should be of direct relevance to the college, program, department or service that the page is representing. Administrators of pages or social media accounts should not use these mediums to express individual opinions.

Content should be short, specific, and accurate. Delivering information on a social media site is significantly different than creating a traditional press release or article. Information is best consumed in short snippets, with links to more details bringing the user back to your site on the Marshall University web server.

Any uploaded photo, video, or audio content should be relevant, audience oriented, and respect all applicable copyright and fair-use law.

Pages should be as up-to-date as possible. In general, the more frequently a social media page/account is updated, the more popular and relevant it is.

Consider your audience when creating content. Tailor the style and delivery of the content to make it relevant to that audience.

By creating a department social media presence, department page administrators are committing to monitoring their social media sites frequently to ensure that content is accurate and appropriate.

2.4 Interacting with Fans/Followers

With respect to Facebook: the term “Fan” refers to a Facebook member who has chosen to become a fan of your department page. Fans are, by default, able to interact with your page by commenting on stories/items that you have posted, and (depending on how you have chosen to configure your page) post photos, video, or links to your page. Fans will also receive updates sent out by your page about events or specific page activities.

Interactivity with fans is generally encouraged, as it provides a more compelling experience for your user community. Allowing interactivity does require additional oversight from page administrators, depending on what type of fan activity they’ve chosen to allow.

Facebook does also provide page administrators the ability to deliver information to Fans in a read-only way, disallowing any posting back or commenting from fans.

With respect to Twitter: the term “Follower” refers to a Twitter member who has chosen to “follow” your updates on Twitter by associating their account with yours. Any new items an account administrator posts to Twitter will show up in a followers Twitter “feed” along with items from others they follow. Your account name, avatar, and link to your account on Twitter.com will show up on your followers Twitter.com profile pages.

2.5 Dealing with Content Posted by Fans of Your Page

Facebook provides privacy settings that allow page administrators the ability to control wall postings, comments, and other content posted by fans of their page. Judgments about replying to, deleting, or reporting potentially objectionable content should be made on a case-by-case basis by the departments’ page administrator.

In general any comment or posting deemed inappropriate by page administrators because of language, slander, profanity, inaccuracy, etc. should be removed from the page. Page administrators do have the ability to “block” fans that repeatedly violate posting policies. Blocking a fan effectively removes their ability to see your page updates, or interact with your page in any way.

2.6 Respect for Institutional and State policy

In no way should any content posted to a social media site violate institutional or state policy. It is the responsibility of the site overseers to insure that applicable policies are respected as content is posted on behalf of their department or group.

2.7 Reporting a Violation of Policy/Requesting a Content Review

In the event questionable content is posted to a University branded social media site, users may report this content via the Marshall University support portal at <http://support.marshall.edu>. Depending on the nature of the suspected violation, it will be reviewed by either the site administrator, or other appropriate University staff.

Faculty/Staff Social Media Tips can be found at

<http://webcontent.marshall.edu/sites/itcweb/Public/ITCPoliciesandProcedures/PDF/ITG-2Tips.pdf>