Social Media Best Practices

This document summarizes the best practices for Texas Christian University (TCU) pages on social networking/user generated content sites. These practices address the University’s official presence on social media sites.
# TCU Social Media Best Practices

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Purpose of Social Media Guidelines
This document summarizes the best practices for TCU pages on social networking sites. These practices address the University’s official presence on social media sites. These guidelines are established via a committee headed up by the Marketing and Communication division and are Cabinet approved.

Social Media Worksheet
Before signing up to join a social media site for your school, college or organization, make sure you have a plan. First, work with a member of TCU’s Marketing and Communication team to see how social media will fit into your overall marketing plan. Expect to discuss these topics:

Administrators: Who will be responsible for posting content and monitoring your site? Avoid having an hourly employee take on responsibility since this can be a job that requires hours beyond 8-5, Monday - Friday.

Goals and Strategies: What do you hope to gain from having a presence in social media? List your goals and the strategies you will use to obtain those goals.

Content: Is there enough content to post at least twice per week? Do you have opportunities to post rich content such as videos and photos? Remember that this is a conversation. Post content that gives your users a chance to give their input.

Audience: Who is your audience and how will they benefit from your social media presence? List your primary audiences. Do you have secondary ones, too? How will you reach out to them initially? Remember, simply setting up a Facebook page isn’t enough - you have to invite people.

Approval: Once you’ve defined your social media goals and strategies, get approval from your dean or supervisor to use social media for your area.

Evaluation: Regularly evaluate your efforts based on the plan you outlined. Many social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) provide metrics that you can use in your evaluation.

Before Starting
It’s a good idea to experience social networking before managing a social networking site. Create a personal account and spend some time learning how these sites work*. Also look at what other colleges or similar groups have done successfully.

Once approval has been given to administer a social networking site on behalf of a TCU school, college or department, contact Amy Peterson x4993 or Austin Price x2466 for assistance with strategy and set up. Neeley School staff and faculty should contact Neeley External Relations x6034.

*Personal accounts cannot be used as official TCU sites.

Overall Guidelines
1). Be honest and transparent in all your social media interactions.

2). Remember that all posted content is available to the public, including media.
3). Use the University-approved school, college or department logo or word mark on all social networking site profile images.

4). Use the same naming convention across all platforms:
   Examples:
   - www.twitter.com/TCU
   - www.youtube.com/TCU

5). Using platforms like Hootsuite or Sysomos, monitor sites throughout the day, over the weekend and after business hours (consider the salary implications and discuss details with a manager before asking a non-exempt employee to monitor after normal business hours).

6). Post a variety of relevant, valuable and engaging content. Examples include articles, photos, videos, events, and links.

7). Content also can be selected from the TCU News and Events site, TCU Magazine, Flickr, or the TCU video library on YouTube.

8). An administrator or manager must change social networking passwords when an approved social networking administrator leaves.

9). Social networking sites should be kept social. If possible, retweet or share posts from followers, other TCU schools, colleges, or organizations.

10). Any TCU employee or outside vendors in charge of social media for an official TCU page must adhere to University conduct and policy when operating in such a capacity. (http://www.hr.tcu.edu/employee-services/faculty-staff/facultystaff-handbook-2/ and http://www.tr.tcu.edu/TCUComputingPolicy.htm)

11). The Director of Communication, Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communication, and key administrators are responsible for developing the University’s response in a crisis. This response must be used to answer questions related to University crises. In a crisis, the response will be posted on the tcu.edu homepage.

**Moderating Comments**

Followers and fans will share their thoughts by commenting on a story, feature, tweet, or post. Encourage lively, thoughtful and civil conversations that stay within the following guidelines:

1). Comments should be clean and constructive.

2). Accept the good and the bad, but not the ugly. Swearing, discriminatory or derogatory language should be deleted.

3). Negative comments should be addressed in a positive and honest manner. Avoid direct arguments with a fan or follower.

4). Delete solicitors’ comments on official TCU social networking sites.

5). Monitor sites throughout the day and over the weekend to remove unwanted comments and quickly answer questions.

7). For more help responding to comments, contact your Office of Strategic Communications account executive at x7810. Neeley School faculty and staff should contact x6034.

Social Networking Sites

Facebook

Facebook is the most widely used social networking site. Facebook is great to use for building relationships and for having ongoing communication with fans, as well as a place to share video and photography, event invitations, and as a customer service tool.

RECOMMENDED PAGES FOR USE:

Page: Facebook Pages allow organizations, businesses and brands to communicate broadly with people who like them.

Group Page: Groups provide a closed space for small groups of people to communicate about shared interests.

For more information on the differences between fan pages and group pages go to: https://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=155275634539412

FACEBOOK ADVERTISEMENTS:

Several organizations on campus have had success obtaining more Facebook fans through running an ad. For a list of best practices for advertising on Facebook go to: https://www.facebook.com/business/goals

FACEBOOK TIMELINE:

1). Apps - Facebook apps such as photos, videos, events, etc. are displayed at the top of your Facebook page. Carefully choose which apps to display since there is only space for four apps to be displayed without expanding. Facebook has Photos set as your first app, but the administrator can choose the other three. It's a good idea to choose apps that support your distinctions if possible. For example, if you are focusing on global dimensions, consider placing an app focused on maps and the places around the world where you or your followers have been.

2). Cover Photos - A large cover photo (850px wide and 315px height) acts as a masthead above your Facebook page. Use this space as an opportunity to highlight what is happening with your school, college, etc., and pictures that strategically support who you are. Change your cover photo often to give your page visual variety. A good rule of thumb is to follow the seasons. As an example, the TCU Facebook page will use student move-in pictures in August and holiday pictures in November/December. Keep the profile photo the same because this picture is the one that will be pictured alongside your entries on your Timeline or in response to fans’ questions. Use your official logo for this profile photo.

3). Milestones - Timeline gives us a unique opportunity to share our history with users. Create Milestones on your timeline to highlight important events within the history of your school, college, etc.

4). Pin to Top - To keep posts at the top of your timeline, click on the “Edit/Remove” button and select “Pin to Top”. This will keep your post at the top of your page for 7 days or until you “unpin” it.

5). Highlights - To highlight a post, click on the “Highlight” or star button to make the post take up both columns on the timeline.
6). **Boost Post** - Boosted posts appear higher in News Feed, so there’s a better chance your audience will see them. You set the price for how much you want to spend.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

1). Post content no more than three times per day and at least twice a week. If multiple posts are required, try to give each post room to breathe.

2). Facebook administrators can ‘favorite’ pages. Make sure to only favorite official TCU pages.

3). Schools, colleges and departments should make the TCU – Texas Christian University main page a “favorite page” on their site. The University will favorite official University sites.

4). Post photos and videos whenever possible since this type of content gets consumed most. Keep videos to less than three minutes.

5). To feature posts on the TCU Facebook page, contact Amy Peterson at x4993. To post content on TCU Athletic’s page, contact Austin Price at x2466.

6). Posted content must be reflective of the organization’s thoughts, not the administrator’s.

**Twitter**

Twitter is a micro-blogging site and is best used for brief updates. The site, which allows only 140 characters per post, is perfect for live event coverage and as a customer service tool. Links to photos, photo galleries, or videos, move quickly on Twitter due to the high number of postings. Followers can sign up for tweets via an RSS feed.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

1). Try to limit tweets to five per day. At minimum, tweet at least two times per week.

2). If there are multiple tweets, post them 30 minutes apart to make sure each tweet has room to breathe (exceptions to this would include live event coverage).

3). A re-tweet is a repeat of something said on Twitter. For example, if someone tweets about how great your program is, re-tweet it!

4). Use the @username (i.e., @tcu_athletics) when re-tweeting or referring to other members and @TCU when referring to TCU

5). Follow followers, but check each profile to prevent following spammers or solicitors.

6). Use Twitter to tweet live during events such as updates on what a speaker is saying or posting photos during the event.

7). To categorize entries, use the hashtag - #. For example, during football games all updates ended with #gofrogs so followers could quickly find the latest score.

8). When creating a hashtag that connects with a campaign, discuss the strategy with your MKC account exec.
YouTube

TCU's YouTube page is divided into playlists representing TCU's schools and colleges, and other categories such as facilities and student affairs. To discuss the feasibility of a new playlist, call Amy Peterson x4993.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1). Keep videos between 1-3 minutes long, and ensure that the content promotes reputation-defining qualities.

2). TCU will review all videos before posting to the TCU YouTube channel to determine the appropriateness of the submitted video.

3). Unless a group is producing more than two videos a month, it is unnecessary to start a YouTube channel apart from the TCU YouTube channel.

4). Contact Amy Peterson x4993 to post videos to the TCU YouTube channel.

iTunes U

iTunes U is a repository of video and podcasts. It can host longer video and audio that the user can download and listen or watch at their leisure. Good content for iTunes U includes classroom lectures, events, or special speakers.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1). To post college, school, or department content on TCU's iTunes U, please contact Social Media Specialist, Amy Peterson x4993.

2). Content on iTunes U can be longer since it's in podcast form. Content should highlight reputation-defining qualities of schools, colleges, or departments.

iPhone App

Apps allow people to get information on their iPhone or other smartphone. TCU's iPhone app launched in July of 2009.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

1). TCU has invested in a suite of apps. All TCU iPhone apps must be part of the TCU suite.

2). Contact Director of Website and Social Media, Victor Neil, x5218 with inquiries for building an iPhone app.

Flickr

Flickr is great for sharing multiple photo galleries. It may be better to use Flickr as opposed to Facebook if the main purpose is to share photos, and not personally engage the audience.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

1). Link to Flickr from Facebook or Twitter to allow people to download photos.

2). Post photos from events to the site.
3). Create event specific photo albums or school, college or department-wide photo albums

**Blogs**

Blogs are best used if your group has a lot of information to share that can be formatted as a story. Subscribers of a blog can comment and sign up for an RSS feed. Social media administrators must be responsible for responding and monitoring blog comments.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES:**

1). Should have at least one blog entry per week.

2). Responses to comments should be made quickly.

**LinkedIn**

LinkedIn is best used for business networking and posting events.

**LinkedIn Advertisements:**

To run an ad on LinkedIn, read through their list of best practices: http://partner.linkedin.com/ads/bestpractices/index.html?utm_source=li&utm_medium=el&utm_campaign=pcstc4015

**Pinterest**

Pinterest is an online visual bulletin board, where you can “pin” up pictures of just about anything. You can categorize your pins into different boards, and “repin” other people’s material.

1). Categorize Your Boards: You can categorize any of your boards into one of 32 existing categories on Pinterest. This will make your boards easier to navigate and also easier to find by Pinterest users. Consider your distinctions and what makes you unique and build boards to support those distinctions. For example, the TCU Pinterest account has boards focused on resident life, study abroad, school spirit and Fort Worth.

2). Follow Other Boards: You don’t have to follow all of a user’s boards; You can choose which boards you want to follow, so irrelevant pins don’t pop up on your stream.

3). Repinning is one of the most social activities on Pinterest and it’s how any user really builds his/her network of followers.

**Instagram**

Instagram is a photo and video sharing site that allows you to add filters and effects to make your images more beautiful.

1). Post photos that users can’t see anywhere else - behind the scenes or a sneak peek.

2). Connect your Instagram account to your social networks to let your followers know you’re on Instagram.

3). Tell your story through images. Be authentic about the content you share and you will build genuine connections with your followers.
Examples of Social Media Interactions

Twitter -- Customer Service

Responding quickly is imperative on Twitter. Before directing someone to another department, try to find the answer for them. This question was answered the same day within an hour of the original tweet.

Student: @TCU I was wondering if you could tell us what is going on at Colby Hall and how long the window coverings will be up. Thank you so much!

TCU: @Student let me look into this and get back with you.

TCU: @Student The coverings will be taken down tomorrow!

Student: @TCU Thank you very much!

Facebook – Customer Service

A potential student posted a question on Facebook over the weekend. The following is TCU’s response:

Student: How do I check my application online? Whenever I try to sign into the portal and click on “Need a User Name? Click Here” it says that “You are not currently eligible for a TCU user name.” I’ve called the Admission office and they keep giving me an ID number and it won’t work.

TCU: I’ll see what I can do to help on Monday when the admissions staff is at work.

TCU: Hi Dillon, I spoke with someone in admissions and they should be contacting you soon to clear up the issue. Let us know if there’s anything else we can help with.

Student: Thanks, I got the email and now it’s working. Thanks for all the help.

Facebook -- Crisis situation

In December 2013, a snow/ice storm hit Fort Worth, but the university remained opened. A comment was posted on the TCU Facebook wall and the University’s official message was used in reply:

Follower: My daughter lives at home in Weatherford! We have freezing fog at this time and Everything in Weatherford as well as Universities in Fort Worth, Arlington, and Dallas are closed tomorrow BUT TCU! The roads are the worst I have ever seen!! Why won’t TCU follow suit!!! Tomorrow is not worth the loss of lives!! The news even states to stay off the roads if you can! Come on TCU, it is not worth the lives that can be lost, cancel school!!!!

TCU: Any student or faculty who does not feel safe coming to campus is encouraged to contact their professor/supervisor to make other arrangements. Please remember, safety first! We don’t want anyone to put themselves in jeopardy.

Facebook – Negative comments

During the holidays, TCU posted a short video of the holiday tree lighting. The video description read: “Happy Holidays from TCU!” Below are some of the comments received from that post.

Follower 1: Hello TCU!!!! It is “MERRY CHRISTMAS”!!!!!!!

Follower 2: Texas CHRISTIAN University should be able to say “Merry Christmas!”
Follower 3: I went to TCU and celebrate Hanukkah so I appreciate the Happy Holidays as well.

TCU: We’re addressing all the holidays – including New Year’s and Christmas.

Follower 4: Happy Holidays one and all.

Legal Implications

FERPA Regulations
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Therefore, posting any information that pertains to a student’s educational record is a violation of this policy.

Although not covered under FERPA regulations, posting any information that pertains to any person’s personal health information is unacceptable.

Proprietary Information
Proprietary information refers to information that TCU owns. TCU employees are not permitted to access, copy, transport, modify or destroy programs, records or data belonging to the University. (courtesy of the Computing Resources Policy in the Faculty/Staff Handbook - http://www.tr.tcu.edu/TCUComputingPolicy.htm

Copyright Issues
Digital copyright issues are very important when administering social media. It is strongly suggested that you visit www.copyright.gov to get full information on copyright issues. In general, remember:

1). Photographs, video clips, audio recordings, and written text can all be protected under copyright.

2). Never use copyrighted materials to sell or endorse a product.

3). Don’t post copyrighted sheet music or song lyrics on TCU’s official media pages.

4). Don’t embed copyrighted music or video content on a page – linking to the copyright holder’s site is appropriate but does not grant permission or a license to use the content in other ways.

5). Fair Use – copyrighted materials can be used for non-commercial commentary or criticism (this generally covers educational purposes).

6). Materials that have had their copyrights expire due to age, generally 75 years and older are considered public domain and can be used.

7). To legally use materials that are copyright protected, the appropriate license must be purchased.

Remember, just because a digital file can easily be pasted into a page or project, that ease-of-use doesn’t grant legal right to do so.
Account Security

1. Social media account usernames and passwords should be stored in a safe, electronic location with availability to at least two TCU employees. We recommend using your m drive or home file personal network space to store your passwords.

2. If an official TCU social media account is hacked, please immediately disable the account and contact Amy Peterson at amy.peterson@tcu.edu or x4993. We will keep the account disabled until we can gain full and secure access to the account.

3. In the event that a social media administrator leaves your team, please change all social media passwords and remove them from administrative access. Also, update the email address linked to the social media account if necessary.

4. Use two-factor authentication when available to help secure your account.

Resources

Copyright law
- http://www.copyright.gov

Facebook Ads
- https://www.facebook.com/business/goals

Free music
- http://www.findsounds.com
- http://freeplaymusic.com

Instagram Photo sharing social networking site for use on smart phones
- http://instagram.com/

Live Stream Video
- http://www.youtube.com
- http://www.ustream.tv/

Mashable Great resource for all things social media
- http://www.mashable.com

Tiny url.com Use to shorten long url. Especially good for Twitter use.
- http://tinyurl.com

Tweetdeck Use to update Twitter and Facebook and monitor organization mentions.
- http://www.tweetdeck.com/

100 Twitter Tools Help you achieve your Twitter goals

Viddy Video sharing site
- http://viddy.com/

* Vitrue Social media monitoring tool with extensive Facebook customization capabilities
- http://www.vitrue.com
*Wildfire* Facebook app best used for building campaigns, contests, etc. [http://www.wildfireapp.com](http://www.wildfireapp.com)

*Cost associated with the resource.

**TCU's Social Media Sites**
- [http://www.facebook.tcu.edu](http://www.facebook.tcu.edu)
- [http://www.twitter.com/TCU](http://www.twitter.com/TCU)
- [http://www.itunesu.tcu.edu](http://www.itunesu.tcu.edu)
- [http://www.youtube.com/TCU](http://www.youtube.com/TCU)
- [http://www.flickr.com/texaschristianuniversity](http://www.flickr.com/texaschristianuniversity)
- [http://www.foursquare.com/tcu](http://www.foursquare.com/tcu)
- Snapchat - tcusnap

**Social media committee**

**Committee Co-Chairs**
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