# Social Media Policy - <YOUR ORGANISATION>

## Introduction

<YOUR ORGANISATION> supports and encourages the use of social media as a legitimate mechanism for communicating and interacting with the wider community.

It is, however, appropriate for <YOUR ORGANISATION> to promulgate a number of guidelines and controls in relation to the use of social media by its personnel.

This policy addresses three areas of social media usage by <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel:

1. **Personal Use.** This section of the policy provides guidance to individuals who use social media for personal reasons, where that activity does not pertain to their work at <YOUR ORGANISATION> .
2. **Professional Use.** This section of the policy provides guidance to individuals who use social media (or any other electronic publishing means) in a professional capacity, and where the individual’s connection to <YOUR ORGANISATION> can be identified or inferred.
3. **Official Use.** This section of the policy provides guidance to individuals who are responsible for publishing social media content and managing online communities via <YOUR ORGANISATION>’s official social channels. This section also provides advice to business units that currently operate, or propose to establish, their own niche social media channels.

## What is Social Media?

‘Social media’ are internet-based electronic platforms that enable people to connect with one another, to gather in online communities of shared interest, and to create, share and consume content.

Globally, social media activity is growing at a rapid rate, not only among private citizens, but also among government bodies, corporations and small-to-medium enterprises. Social media offers organisations the opportunity to have a voice and to engage in conversations with customers and other stakeholders.

There are literally thousands of social media platforms available on the internet, with new platforms emerging all the time. Some of the more common contemporary social media platforms are as follows:

1. Blogs (short for ‘web logs’) – Wordpress.com, Blogger, TypePad, Tumblr
2. Micro-blogging platforms – Twitter, Yammer
3. Social networking platforms – Facebook, Google+, MySpace
4. Professional networking platforms – Linkedin
5. Messaging platforms – Snapchat, Wechat, Facebook Messenger
6. Video sharing platforms – YouTube, Vimeo
7. Photo sharing platforms – Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr
8. Wikis – Wikipedia, Google Sites
9. Social bookmarking platforms – Reddit, Digg, Delicious, Technorati, StumbleUpon

1. Geo-location based platforms – Foursquare, Yelp, Google Maps, Facebook Places
2. Community websites and forums – Yahoo! Answers, Google Groups

<YOUR ORGANISATION> has embraced social media as an important communication channel for engagement with the wider community, and is constantly seeking ways to extend the reach of the organisation among its target audience.

Whilst social media has proven to be a very effective marketing and communications tool, it is a ‘double edged sword’ and presents some unique challenges for organisations. Social media puts publishing power in the hands of the individual. Comments published online cannot easily be retracted from the public domain, potentially resulting in negative consequences relating to brand reputation, privacy, security or confidentiality. Accordingly, it is appropriate for organisations to put in place a set of guidelines and controls for the use of social media by their personnel.

## Types of Social Media Use

There are three types of social media use that this policy governs, namely:

a) *Personal Use*. Personal use is when an individual publishes content or comments on a matter privately, without reference to their work or study at <YOUR ORGANISATION>; and where that usage does not fall within the definition of either Professional Use or Official Use (see below).

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| ***Examples of Personal Use:***    · *A staff member using a Facebook profile to share personal photos outside of business hours.*    · *A staff member sending a tweet during their lunch break*    · *A contractor maintaining a blog for a local sporting club* |

b) *Professional Use*. Professional use is when an individual publishes content or comments relating to their expertise in a particular field, and when a linkage to <YOUR ORGANISATION> can be identified or inferred by the audience.

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| ***Examples of Professional Use:***    · *A staff member who publishes an article on Linkedin that relates to their work at <YOUR ORGANISATION>.*    · *A <YOUR ORGANISATION> manager who maintains a blog on management issues*    · *A <YOUR ORGANISATION> marketing staff member who comments on the blog posts on industry websites.* |

c) *Official Use*. Official use is when a staff member produces content or comments as an approved <YOUR ORGANISATION> representative for organisational purposes. This type of communication must be undertaken via an official social channel.

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| ***Examples of Official Use:***    · *A member of the <YOUR ORGANISATION> Digital Team who is responsible for curating <YOUR ORGANISATION>’s Facebook Page*    · *A staff member who provides images for <YOUR ORGANISATION>’s Instagram feed*    · *A member of the <YOUR ORGANISATION> Communications team who is responsible for tweeting about corporate news and public relations* |

## Personal Use

*Publishing content or commenting on a matter privately, without reference to work or study at <YOUR ORGANISATION>*

It is not the intention of this policy to impose strict controls on the personal use of social media by <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel, but the policy does seek to limit the possibility of negative consequences to <YOUR ORGANISATION> as a result of personal social media activity. The policy also seeks to help <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel protect their own personal privacy and security when using social media.

Generally, <YOUR ORGANISATION> expects its staff to behave with integrity, respect and accountability when using social media, whether in a personal, professional or official capacity. <include details of your Code of Conduct or other internal policies here>.

The following guidelines govern the use of social media by <YOUR ORGANISATION> staff in a personal use capacity:

1. Personal Users are advised to become familiar with the Terms of Use of the social media platforms that they use, and to understand the privacy and preference settings for each platform.
2. Personal Users are advised to consider the appropriateness of establishing social media linkages with other <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel and the potential consequences of having such a linkage.

1. Personal Users are advised to exercise considerable care when posting content about, or sharing content with, other <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel.

1. Personal Users are advised to think carefully about their online affiliations (eg. through ‘Likes’, forum membership, etc), as there may be circumstances where individuals are identified by the media, or other parties, as having views that do not align with those of <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Personal users are permitted to use social media for reasonable personal consumption during work hours, where access has been granted. Reasonable personal consumption means: a) during designated breaks in work (eg. lunch time); and b) not excessive to the point where the individual's work performance is affected.

1. Personal users are permitted to identify the fact that they work for <YOUR ORGANISATION> in their personal social media accounts (eg. their Linkedin profile), however doing so requires the user to take additional care when publishing content, to ensure that it does not impact negatively upon <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Personal Users must not use social media to conduct private business activities during work hours.

1. Personal users must not publish any content (eg. blog posts, comments, images) to the internet that is critical, damaging or prejudicial to the best interests of <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Personal Users must not imply that they are authorised to speak as a representative of <YOUR ORGANISATION>, nor give the impression that their views are those of <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Personal Users must not use their <YOUR ORGANISATION> email address or phone number when publishing to the internet.

1. Personal Users must not use the <YOUR ORGANISATION> logo or branding elements when publishing to the internet.

1. Personal Users must not use the identity or likeness of another staff member of <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Personal Users must not use or disclose any confidential information obtained in their capacity as a <YOUR ORGANISATION> staff member.

1. Personal Users must not make any comment or post any material that might otherwise cause damage to the reputation of <YOUR ORGANISATION>, or to bring it into disrepute.
2. Personal Users must not post content that is, or might be construed as, threatening, harassing, bullying or discriminatory towards other <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel.

## Professional Use

*Publishing content or commenting in a particular field of expertise, when a linkage to <YOUR ORGANISATION> can be identified or inferred by the audience.*

<YOUR ORGANISATION> staff are encouraged to engage actively in social media that relates to their profession. Where an individual’s linkage to <YOUR ORGANISATION> is apparent, or when it can be inferred, it is necessary for the individual to exercise additional care when publishing content via social media.

The following guidelines govern the use of social media by <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel in a professional capacity:

1. Professional Users must use a personal social media profile, such as a personal blog (rather than a <YOUR ORGANISATION> official social channel).
2. Professional Users must actively avoid conflicts of interests between their individual publishing activities and <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. When publishing online about topics relating to their profession, Professional Users must provide a disclaimer making it explicit that their views do not necessarily represent those of <YOUR ORGANISATION> – eg. ‘this does not represent the official view of <YOUR ORGANISATION>; any views expressed are those of the individual author only’.

## Official Use

*Publishing content or commenting as a <YOUR ORGANISATION> representative for organisational purposes.*

<Include specific information here about how social media is managed within your organisation>

The following guidelines govern the use of social media by <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel in an official use capacity:

1. Official Users must read, understand and comply with relevant State and Federal Government legislation (eg. the Privacy Act, the Spam Act) and <YOUR ORGANISATION> policies .
2. Official Users must obtain written approval from their line manager in order to use social media in an official capacity.

1. Official Users must undertake official user training before commencing any social media activity.

1. Official Users must advise the Digital Team in writing should they no longer require access to <YOUR ORGANISATION> social media platforms (for example, due to resignation from <YOUR ORGANISATION>)

1. Official Users must only use an official social channel for <YOUR ORGANISATION> business.

1. Official Users must be familiar with the relevant Terms of Use of the social media platform that they are using (eg. Facebook Terms of Use), and be cognisant of the fact that these terms change regularly.

1. Official Users must maintain the security of all passwords that are used to access social media platforms.

1. Official Users must take every precaution to ensure that the content that they post is accurate, factual and not misleading. Where necessary, Official Users are to double check with the relevant internal business unit or subject matter expert before posting content.

1. Official Users must declare their purpose and their position as a representative of <YOUR ORGANISATION> when posting content and responding to comments (eg. 'hello, this is John and I am a member of the Digital Team at <YOUR ORGANISATION>).

1. Official Users who initiate or contribute to a content thread must continue to monitor and respond to that thread until it arrives at its natural conclusion – including commenting, responding to questions, and moderating responses.

1. With regard to announcements and embargoed information, Official Users must ensure that they have obtained the necessary clearances and approvals before making content available to the public.

1. Official Users must only post content that is already on the public record or available in the public domain.

1. Official Users must adopt an appropriate conciliatory tone, and always be respectful and polite towards any person that they interact with online, even in situations where there is heated discussion or debate.

1. Official Users must provide an appropriate disclaimer if they are stating their own personal views - eg. 'please note that these are my personal views, and not those of <YOUR ORGANISATION>'.

1. Official Users must be apolitical, impartial and professional, and avoid any statements that might be interpreted as advocating or criticising policies of <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Official Users must protect personal information of <YOUR ORGANISATION> staff members and stakeholders.

1. Official Users must be aware of <YOUR ORGANISATION>’s obligations under the Copyright Act in relation to the copying, circulating or other use of any text, graphics or other content.

1. Official Users must ensure that a ‘talent release form’ is completed in all situations where an individual appears in photographic images or video content. (this is often a government requirement)

1. Official Users must check to ensure that stock imagery used in social media is licensed for use.

1. Official Users must not comment about proprietary matters or the internal activities of <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

1. Official Users must not make any statement that might bring <YOUR ORGANISATION> into disrepute.

1. Official Users must not commit <YOUR ORGANISATION> to action or initiative without appropriate authority.

1. Official Users must not endorse, or allow others to endorse, any particular service or website, or the use of any associated advertisements that may give the appearance that the content is endorsed.

1. Official Users must not disclose, or allow others to disclose, official information, classified, in-confidence or otherwise sensitive information.

1. Official Users must not post content, or permit others to post content, that breaches laws covering libel, defamation, privacy, discrimination, harassment, contempt of court, criminal law and the protection of intellectual property.

1. Official Users must not post content, or permit others to post content, that is obscene, threatening, harassing, sexist, racist, or discriminatory towards another person, people or entity.

## Official social channels

Official social channels are those channels that have been officially approved for use in <YOUR ORGANISATION> by the Digital Team. A list of <YOUR ORGANISATION> official social channels can be found …...

Official social channels can be either:

1. Centrally-managed, <YOUR ORGANISATION>-wide social channels that are maintained principally by the Digital Team; or
2. Niche, standalone social channels that have been approved by the Digital Team, and are managed principally by other <YOUR ORGANISATION> personnel.

In the first instance, <YOUR ORGANISATION> business units are encouraged to contribute content to <YOUR ORGANISATION>’s central social media properties by contacting the Digital Team directly.

Where a business case exists, the Digital Team will consider the establishment of niche, standalone social media channels for subordinate business units within <YOUR ORGANISATION>.

Business units seeking to establish their own social channels are required to produce a written business case that incorporates the following considerations:

1. The intended target audience of the social channel;
2. Desired objectives and business outcomes;
3. Content strategy/calendar for the new social channel;
4. Resource and operational management considerations; and
5. Risk management considerations relating to oversight of the channel (eg. moderation of conversations)

The <Digital Strategist> is the approving officer for official social channels. The <Director of Marketing> is the ultimate arbiter for any issue that requires escalation.

## Unofficial social channels

Social media channels that do not have an ongoing business case in accordance with the considerations above may be closed down by the Digital Team.

For clarity, it is not the intent of the Digital Team to unilaterally shut down existing social media channels, or to discourage the use of social media by <YOUR ORGANISATION> business units. The intent of this process is to achieve a degree of control and to ensure that <YOUR ORGANISATION>’s social media activities are integrated and complementary.

## Breach of policy

<YOUR ORGANISATION> encourages its staff to participate in social media and it is not the intent of this policy to limit use or to discourage participation.

However, in cases where there have been flagrant breaches of this policy, individuals may be subject to disciplinary or administrative action in accordance with <YOUR ORGANISATION> conditions of employment.

## Review of policy

The <YOUR ORGANISATION> Social Media Policy, and the schedule of official social media channels, is to be reviewed every <twelve months in December> by the Digital Team. Official social channels that do not have an enduring business case may be reviewed and closed down during this process.