

Social Media Procedure

Section 1 - Background and Purpose

Preamble

- (1) Social media forms an important part of La Trobe University's communications framework.
- (2) Social media channels provide the means to engage and participate in two-way communications with targeted audiences and offer a useful way of disseminating a diverse array of messages including news updates, research findings, and marketing and promotional messages, quickly and efficiently.
- (3) Given its importance to La Trobe University's overall communication strategy, La Trobe requires that all people representing the University through social media channels are familiar with and adhere to this procedure in order to avert problems that may arise from engagement in this space.
- (4) This Procedure applies to all social media activity undertaken by staff, contractors and agencies representing La Trobe University in an official capacity when using social networking sites and Web 2.0 applications hosted either internally on University infrastructure (e.g. Yammer) or externally by third parties (e.g. Facebook or Twitter).
- (5) Be advised that routine monitoring of comment in social media channels occurs for various reasons.

General

- (6) Social media presents many opportunities to communicate directly with target audiences. Because of the dynamic nature of content generation in social media contexts, if not managed effectively these channels have the potential to cause reputational damage, and even result in defamation actions. While the University takes the risk of these occurrences seriously, a straightforward, common sense approach, based on the key tenets of transparency, honesty and authenticity is the best way to mitigate against the risks inherent to the use of social media.

Section 2 - Scope

- (7) Refer to the [Website Operational Framework Policy](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statement

- (8) Refer to the [Website Operational Framework Policy](#).

Section 4 - Procedure

Part A - Advice on Effective Use of Social Media

Authorisation

(9) After completion of the [Self-assessment for New La Trobe Social Media Account, Request for Authorisation to Create a Social Media Site to Officially Represent La Trobe](#), channel, presence or campaign that officially represents the University must be submitted to the University Web Manager. Careful consideration should be given to the most suitable channel for each particular audience and purpose.

Look and Feel

(10) Social media channels that officially represent La Trobe University (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs et al) will use styling complementary to the University's branding and online style guidelines.

Integration

(11) When planning content consider and integrate social media channels with all other available options. Consider intended audiences and their information delivery preferences - develop a communication strategy that uses the most appropriate and useful attributes of different communication tools / platforms.

Content Strategy

(12) Consider the goals and the needs of the audience - devise a content strategy and schedule.

- a. The best way to add value to your online community is to post relevant information on a regular basis (the frequency depending on the expectations of your audience).
- b. Do not post simply for the sake of it - if your posts are of no value or interest to the audience, they will disengage.
- c. Respond to comments or questions in a timely manner. Make sure you proactively manage spam and abusive posts.
- d. Any social media channel using a language other than English must be regularly reviewed by an employee of the University knowledgeable in the specific language in line with the clauses of this procedure.

Accuracy

(13) Ensure that all content displayed is factually correct. (As an example, if someone posted a comment claiming that La Trobe University was ranked in the top 10 universities in the world, under the Competition and Consumer Act 2010 this statement would need to be corrected or removed.) Remove posts submitted by others if they are inaccurate or misleading.

(14) Avoid posting misleading or incorrect information about you or the University by checking facts before you post. If you make an error acknowledge it and move on. Do not try to revise history.

Monitoring

(15) Social media channels that officially represent La Trobe University (or any part of the University) must be monitored proactively.

- a. Respond to posts / queries in a timely manner: the initial response should occur within 1 working day of receipt of a post.
- b. Consider how the success of the channel will be assessed. Review performance against success measures regularly and tweak content based on audience interest and engagement levels.

Transparency

(16) Always consider the content of your message and the audience receiving it. As its name suggests, social media encourages a more relaxed casual voice, however a more formal tone may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

- a. If you feel angry or stressed about a subject, delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. The internet acts as a virtual global archive meaning once information is posted online, it is too late to recall or change it.
- b. Remember, all content is 'public' in the social media context.
- c. Be respectful of other people and their opinions. If you disagree with someone's opinion do so in a polite and constructive manner.

Protect Your Privacy

(17) Be honest about who you are but also protect your privacy. Do not divulge information that may compromise your professional confidentiality.

(18) Review channel privacy settings to ensure your privacy and location are protected.

Part B - Standards for Personal and Professional Use of Social Media

(19) This section of the procedure sets out standards for personal and professional use of social media.

Do not use social media in ways likely to bring La Trobe University into disrepute

(20) You are personally responsible for all content you publish and any comments you make.

- a. Do not post any content that is inflammatory, racist, sexist or offensive. Never upload offensive or explicit written, audio or video content.
- b. Ensure you do not post comments that may be contrary to La Trobe's Statutes (e.g. [Use of Computer Facilities Statute 2009](#)), Regulations, policies, procedure or any laws.

Do not disclose confidential information obtained through work

(21) Do not post commercially sensitive information about La Trobe and its partners or confidential personal information about the University's students, alumni or employees. Posting such information is in breach of University policy and procedures and may break the law.

(22) Please comply with [Privacy - Personal Information Policy](#) at all times.

Do not imply La Trobe University endorsement of your personal views

(23) It is appropriate for people to make public comment within their area of expertise. However, staff are not permitted to represent themselves as spokespersons for La Trobe University unless authorised to do so, and should make the distinction that opinions expressed are their own and do not necessarily represent the University.

(24) If you post directly about La Trobe University in your personal time, please identify your association with La Trobe as a staff member, alumnus or student, and mention that you are sharing your personal views and opinions, not representing the organisation. Comply with the University Code of Conduct.

Do not undermine your effectiveness at work

(25) Remember that La Trobe University's facilities and your work time are to be used for University related business, so use social media channels within reason during business hours. The use of social media at work should be directly

related to accomplishing work goals such as seeking sources for information or working with others to resolve a problem.

(26) As a rule, it is best to conduct your personal business in your own time.

Section 5 - Definitions

(27) For the purpose of this Procedure:

- a. Social media: The term 'social media' broadly describes Web 2.0 technologies that underpin the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Typified by channels such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#) et al, social media enables people to communicate easily via the internet to share information and resources.
- b. Web 2.0: The term Web 2.0 is associated with web applications that facilitate participatory information sharing and collaboration via the internet. A Web 2.0 channels allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators and consumers of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users (consumers) are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. Examples of Web 2.0 include social networking channels, blogs, wikis, video sharing sites, hosted services and web applications.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	9th November 2016
Review Date	15th June 2017
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	9th November 2016
Expiry Date	25th September 2017
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