RIT Social Media Guidelines

Social media channels, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, provide another outlet for RIT to inform and stay in touch with the university community as well as the world. But we ask that you think before you post. Please follow the social media etiquette suggested below.

Here are some general recommendations:

The keys to success in social media are being honest about who you are, being thoughtful before you post, and respecting the purpose of the community where you are posting.

Be transparent. Be honest about your identity. If you are authorized by your supervisor to represent RIT in social media, say so. If you choose to post about RIT on your personal time, please identify yourself as a RIT faculty or staff member. Never hide your identity for the purpose of promoting RIT through social media.

A good resource about transparency in online communities is the Blog Council's "Disclosure Best Practices Toolkit" at http://blogcouncil.org/disclosure/.

Be accurate. Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, 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.

Be respectful. You are more likely to achieve your goals or sway others to your beliefs if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

Be a valued member. If you join a social network like a Facebook group or comment on someone's blog, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Don't post information about topics like RIT events or a book you've authored unless you are sure it will be of interest to readers. Self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from Web sites or groups.

Think before you post. There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

Maintain confidentiality. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about RIT, its students, its alumni or your fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow university policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act).

If you discuss a situation involving individuals on a social media site, be sure that they cannot be identified. As a guideline, don't post anything that you would not present at a conference.

Respect university time and property. As stated in the Acceptable Use of RIT Computer and Network Resources <http://www.rit.edu/computerconduct/>, university computers and your work time are to be used for university-related business. It's appropriate to post at work if your comments are directly related to accomplishing work goals, such as seeking sources for information or working with others to resolve a problem. You should maintain your personal sites on your own time using non-RIT computers.

If you post on behalf of RIT

Be transparent. If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of the university, clearly state your role and goals. Discuss with your supervisor when you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

Be connected. If you have been authorized by your supervisor to create an official RIT social media site or a video for posting in locations such as YouTube, please contact Bob Finnerty, chief communications officer (bob.finnerty@rit.edu), for an approved logo and other images and to ensure coordination with other RIT sites and content.

Be respectful. As an RIT employee, you understand the university's commitment to the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of opposing ideas. Some online communities can be volatile, tempting users to behave in ways they otherwise wouldn't. Your reputation, and RIT's, are best served when you remain above the fray.

Be thoughtful. If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material in your role as a RIT employee, ask your supervisor before you post. When in doubt, ask.

Brand RIT. Visit the University Publications Web site to properly brand RIT within your site: http://www.rit.edu/upub/index.html. Here you will find graphic standards, logo and photo standards, Web standards and more.

Facebook Do's

1. Set up your own profile with a nice photo – consider multiple accounts (professional vs. personal)

2. Include RIT as a network on your profile

3. Connect with the RIT Alumni fan page, related pages, alumni you know, colleagues and friends of RIT.

4. Grow your network using the search feature.

5. Create lists of different groups (i.e. RIT, high school, etc…)

6. Share and pass along RIT-related information to these constituents

7. Create your own fan page or group and encourage friends to join

8. Explore available Facebook applications and add them your page/profile

9. Create events and invite friends to RSVP

10. Share content you think would be helpful to those connected with you. Keep content fresh and unique.

11. Be transparent about your role at RIT-Keep it real!

Facebook Don'ts

1. Avoid sharing personal information that you don't want colleagues or alumni to see

2. Share inappropriate photos. Un-tag them!

3. Be respectful and don't post anything you would be uncomfortable saying in a public setting – or in front of your boss.

4. Do not post confidential information about students, alumni, staff, etc...

5. Don't click on suspicious links or friend suspicious people – know your network!

Twitter-Do's

1. Create a user-friendly Twitter ID (@yourname) Example: RIT_Alumni or RIT_BrickCity

2. Add a nice photo and customize your background graphic

3. Search for people to follow – big and small

4. Follow those who follow you

5. Learn the lingo – the art of capturing someone's attention in 140 characters or less

6. "Re-tweet" RIT links and information distributed by other RIT-related accounts

7. Monitor people talking about you – set up search terms ex: "RIT"

8. Know your followers

9. Respond – keep the conversation going

10. Tweet consistent, interesting content

Twitter-Don'ts

1. Don't post the same content over and over

2. Don't ignore direct messages or replies

3. Don't tweet several times in a row – gets annoying to your followers

4. Don't get caught up in the number of followers; get caught up in the content

5. Don't tweet inconsistently – keep it up

Resources

- Mashable's Twitter Guide Book:
  http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter/

- Mashable's How to Use Facebook for Professional Networking:
  http://mashable.com/2009/08/14/facebook-networking/

- The Definitive LinkedIn Guide:
  http://www.centernetworks.com/linkedin

- LinkedIn App Guide:
  http://learn.linkedin.com/apps/

- 12 Ways to Use Facebook Professionally
  http://webworkerdaily.com/2007/07/24/12-ways-to-use-facebook-professionally/

- Facebook for Influencers
  http://www.facebook.com/influencers

- 32 Ways to Use Facebook for Business
  http://webworkerdaily.com/2009/07/21/32-ways-to-use-facebook-for-business/

- CNET Newbies Guide to Twitter:
  http://news.cnet.com/newbies-guide-to-twitter/

- 10 ways to use LinkedIn:
  http://blog.guykawasaki.com/2007/01/ten_ways_to_use.html

- LinkedIn for Dummies: http://www.avangate.com/articles/using-Linkedin-125.htm

- LinkedIn Etiquette:
  http://www.intuitive.com/blog/etiquette_for_linkedin_and_the_professional_networking_world.html

- HOW TO: Build Your Personal Brand on LinkedIn:
  http://mashable.com/2009/07/27/linkedin-personal-brand/