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INTRODUCTION

If you are promoting a Robert Morris University-affiliated organization or event through a website like Facebook or Twitter—or even considering it—you’re not alone. Social media outlets are increasingly popular tools for engaging target audiences and developing relationships with customers and organizational stakeholders. Unlike traditional media outlets, in which information generally flows in one direction, social media offers a highly interactive communication method. It’s best to think of social media as an ongoing conversation that involves a great deal of back-and-forth with a number of people. Because social media offers direct access to a target audience, it’s an ideal method for taking your message straight to the people you want to reach the most. Many social media outlets also offer the opportunity to examine statistics that show how effective, or ineffective, your communications are. This guide provides the basics on several social media outlets and offers suggestions as to how you can maximize their potential. You should consider this guidebook the official university policy when it comes to RMU-related social media activity.
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

RMU’s Public Relations/Marketing team has developed this guide primarily to help faculty members, staff and student organization advisors and leaders navigate the world of social media. Even so, it includes tips that any social media user will find helpful. Whether you don’t know where to begin or if you have a fair amount of social media savvy, we hope you’ll find some useful information in this guide.

The guide begins with an overview of topics relevant to social media in general. It is further organized into sections dedicated to each specific social media channel. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn are addressed specifically in the guide, as are blogs.

This guide is intended to provide you with the basic tips that will help you get started in social media. You are likely to encounter scenarios that are beyond the scope of the information presented here, or you may just want some extra advice. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the PR/Marketing team for help. We’re happy to offer our suggestions and guidance to help you maximize your social media presence. Just email us at rmunews@rmu.edu.

At the same time, PR/Marketing does not intend to exert a significant amount of control over RMU’s social media presence. We’re not going to tell you what you can say and when you can say it. We just want to offer our expertise and share the lessons we’ve learned from our own experiences at RMU as well as the best practices of our colleagues at other universities. We do, however, lay out some rules pertaining to how university-affiliated organizations identify themselves and maintain their presence in the world of social media. These are detailed throughout the guidebook, and they include many of our usual policies regarding branding, logos, colors, and identification.

We also encourage you to revisit this guide regularly, as social media is continually evolving. We plan to update it as needed to provide the most current information on the most popular social media outlets.

Friend me on Facebook and follow me on Twitter.
GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

For many social media outlets, starting an account is as easy as setting up an email address or shopping online. In most cases, you’ll need to provide at least a contact email address and set up a password. Certain social media outlets will offer the opportunity to include other information, such as a website and group description, on your page, as well.

Among our requirements is that you include the ‘RMU’ acronym in the user name for your account. If university-affiliated groups all adhere to that naming convention, then individuals who are looking for Robert Morris-related accounts on various social media outlets will know that they can merely search for ‘RMU’ to find those accounts.

Most social media outlets allow users to include a picture with their account as well. You may be interested in using a RMU logo for that aspect of your page. Every official university-related account needs to include the following logo (attached) somewhere prominently on the site.

As you may be aware, RMU has several different logos, and we have developed guidelines for which logo should be used depending on the circumstances. Please consult with those guidelines before using other logos. You may refer to the Identity Standards Manual online (https://sentry.rmu.edu/OnTheMove/wpguardhouse.startup?lattr=/web/cms/departments-offices/administration-services/pr/secure/auth/Documents/pr_rmu_identity_manual.pdf) for specific details on appropriate logo usage.

When establishing a social media presence, it’s important to devote an adequate amount of time to maintaining it. Because social media facilitates a conversation, you don’t want that conversation to fall silent for too long. Plan to spend at least an hour each day updating the site(s) and responding to comments.

TIP: Do you have any student employees in your office? If so, see if they’d be interested in managing your group’s social media presence. Student employees tend to be well-versed in social media outlets, and when they take responsibility for managing an account, they often take on a sense of ownership for the effort, too.

Get a student to help you– they know how to tweet and tag!
GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

In some ways, you can be efficient with your social media tasks, though. If you’re setting up multiple social media accounts for the same group or event, keep in mind that some web-based tools allow you to update multiple outlets simultaneously. This approach is particularly popular among individuals who use both Twitter and Facebook, for example.

As with any interaction in which your group or event is representing the university, social media communications should be appropriate to your audience. Never use profanity or other offensive language. We also recommend that you resist the temptation of getting into an ongoing e-battle with a social media user. You can defend yourself or your group against unfair criticism to a reasonable extent, but carrying on the conversation in an attempt to get the last word is likely to be a losing battle. Many social media outlets allow you to review comments before they are posted, and to delete offensive comments. We urge you to take advantage of those features.

Some social media outlets, such as those in which you can “tag,” or publicly identify individuals shown in photos, also may have legal considerations. You may want to develop some procedure for obtaining permission from people in the picture before posting a photo. Copyright issues may also arise, and you always want to be on guard against libel and slander. Please consult the PR/Marketing team for guidance on such matters.

In this photo: Robert Morris
FACEBOOK

With more than 500 million active users—including the vast majority of college students—Facebook is one of the most popular social networking sites. In fact, more people are using Facebook than Google these days. Many Facebook users—including at least 80 percent of RMU students—log on for updates at least once a day.

Because Facebook is so popular, the site can be a useful tool for communicating with an organization’s members or promoting an event.

Facebook allows individuals to set up profiles, connect with their friends, join groups, and “like” and follow their favorite brands, organizations, and celebrities. It also allows organizations a chance to participate in an ongoing conversation with their members and/or target customers.
FACEBOOK DEFINITIONS

Here are a few definitions that will help you navigate the world of Facebook:

PROFILE | Individual users set up profiles that include details such as their education, occupation, marital status, and other demographic information. In profiles, you add connections by asking people to be your “friend,” or by responding to friend requests from other users. **RMU employees should not create an individual profile in the name of an official campus group or event.**

PAGE | A page is intended for companies, groups, and other larger entities to have a Facebook presence that mimics an individual profile. Pages allow for posting status updates, comments, and wall posts, for example. Setting up a page, however, demonstrates that the account belongs to an organization rather than one person. A page develops its network of connections when individuals choose to “like” the page.

GROUP | Groups are particularly useful for interacting with a smaller number of people. In addition to posting on the group wall or sending messages to group members, a group set-up has a forum for members to engage in discussions on specified topics. So, if it’s important for members to talk amongst themselves, this may be the way to go.

TIP: A page has the same look as an individual user’s profile and offers the same functionality. You can exchange wall posts with your fans and members and send messages to them, too. You can also post news via status updates on a page. It has everything you could ever need from Facebook! Plus, pages offer valuable statistics that can help you evaluate your social media presence, and you can’t get those numbers from an individual profile. We’ll talk about these in more detail a little later in this section.
FACEBOOK DEFINITIONS

EVENT | This one is pretty self-explanatory. You can schedule an event on Facebook using the directions listed on page 2.5 and invite all of your organization’s fans or members to attend. The event will then show up on the right-hand side of your members’ news feed pages, offering a perpetual reminder. When you set up an event, you’ll also be creating a guest list of everyone invited to attend. People can RSVP, and you’ll have a list of those who will be attending and those who can’t make it.

WALL | The wall is where a great deal of Facebook’s information exchange takes place. Facebook users can post directly on the walls of their friends, groups, and other organizations. Additionally, when a Facebook user posts a status update, it shows up on the wall, as do all comments in response to the status update. Facebook users also can post links to other websites to their walls.

STATUS UPDATES | Status updates allow Facebook users to share what they’re thinking or doing at any point in time.

COMMENT | A comment is a response to a status update, photo, link, or other Facebook activity. Typically, only profile or page administrators and their friends can make comments.

Study these! There is a test TOMORROW!
CREATING A FACEBOOK PAGE OR GROUP

To set up a Facebook page, you first need to have an individual profile. If no one in your organization has a Facebook profile yet, it’s easy to create one. Just go to facebook (www.facebook.com) and enter the information requested: name, email address, password, gender, and birth date. Then you’ll be able to set up a page following these steps.

1. While logged in to your individual profile, select the ads and pages option on the left-hand side of your news feed.
2. Choose “pages” from the four options listed across the top of the page that comes up.
3. Click on the green Create a Page button in the upper right-hand corner.
4. You’ll need to choose whether your page is for a business, public figure, or other organization. (For most RMU pages, it will probably be the last of those.)
5. Pick a name for your page (and don’t forget to include RMU for university-affiliated groups!)
6. Click the box that says you’re authorized to set up the page.

A Facebook group can be set up in a similar fashion. In your individual profile, click on the Groups option on the left-hand side of the news feed. A list of your existing groups will come up, and at the top of that list will be a “create groups” button that allows you to make a new group. Clicking on that button will bring up a form that asks for basic info about the group, and after the group is created, you can invite interested members to join.

BOOM! You’ve created a Facebook page!

TIP: Try to post something on your Facebook page, be it a status update, photo, video or link, at least every day Monday through Friday, and consider posting on weekends, too, if it’s feasible to do so. Facebook is a conversation, and that conversation is an ongoing one. You have to make the effort to participate and give your fans and friends something to talk about. Also, be sure to make an effort to respond to what your friends say. They want you to respond to what you’re telling them, too. After all, nobody wants to be part of a one-way discussion.
CREATING A FACEBOOK PAGE OR GROUP

If you ever need to delete your Facebook page, it’s just as easy to do so. Once again, you’ll choose the ads and pages option from the main Facebook page. Instead of creating a page, though, you’ll select manage my pages and choose the “delete page” option, which can be found directly under your page’s name. Please note, though, that deleting a page is permanent. You will be unable to retrieve it again. So be sure you don’t need the page anymore before deleting it! Deleting a group is a little trickier. You can only do so if you’re the last remaining group member and you leave the group before deleting it.

After your page or group is up and running, you’ll want to post updates to communicate with your followers. When you bring up your page, there will be a box at the top that says “What’s on your mind?” You can type whatever you want to say into that box, then click on the blue “Share” button. Keep your status updates as short as possible. Use only as many words as you need to get your message across. You can post a link, photo, or video to your page through this method, too.

The bottom line is that it is worse to have a Facebook page that is not regularly updated than not to have one at all. If you can’t devote the time necessary to maintaining a Facebook page, please contact the PR/Marketing Department about using our university social media channels to get information to your constituents.
SCHEDULING EVENTS USING FACEBOOK

Facebook can be a good vehicle for promoting events as well. To schedule an event, follow the instructions below:

1. Select the plus sign at the top of your Facebook wall, and choose the option to create an events tab. This will help you keep track of all of your events in one place.

2. Click on the event tab, and click on the “Create Event” button to the right.

3. Follow the prompts and enter the event title, location, start time and end time. Click “create event.”

4. In the next step, you can add a picture, choose an event category, write an event description, and set up options. None of these items is required, but you may find them useful.

5. Invite friends by finding them in your friends list. You may include a personal message, and you may also invite people who don’t use Facebook directly through their e-mail addresses.

After you’ve created the event, the people you invite can respond to let you know whether they’ll be attending, too.
FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PAGES AND GROUPS

Facebook is used differently by groups and individuals. Here are a few tips that may apply specifically to your situation.

Facebook has a lot of potential as a communication tool for campus organizations and other university affiliates, much of which has been described above. It can help groups connect with members and foster relationships with alumni, among other purposes. Setting up your Facebook page is only a tiny portion of the process, though. Whatever you do with that page will affect your ability to maximize Facebook’s potential. Building relationships is the foundation of a successful Facebook presence, and to develop those connections, you need to communicate with a personal tone. Facebook is not the place for academic or marketing speak. Don’t cross that fine line between providing valuable information and engaging in shameless promotion. To the extent possible, make your status updates and comments sound as though they are coming from an individual.

As with all of your social media efforts, RMU’s PR/Marketing team is available to help with your Facebook presence. You can consult with PR/Marketing about the look of your page. In fact, they even offer templates for university-related Facebook pages. Also, by keeping the PR/Marketing team informed of your Facebook efforts, you can take advantage of Robert Morris’ Facebook profile to promote your organization and its events.
FOR PERSONAL PROFILES

RMU has no intention to interfere with your personal Facebook profile in any way. However, you may want to consider certain aspects of the site in your personal use. For example, Facebook users often choose to friend their colleagues, and RMU faculty and staff may even choose to friend students. This does not present a problem in itself, but you should consider the image you’re presenting to colleagues and students. You may want to refrain from posting photos or status updates that present you in an unprofessional light, or, if you don’t care to self-censor, you can create a list of friends from whom you can hide your posts, photos, videos, and the like. This can be done through the privacy settings, which also control what Facebook profile information can be seen by the general public. To manage your privacy settings, go to the account menu found in the upper right corner of your Facebook profile. Bring up the drop-down menu and select “privacy settings.” It’s worth spending 10 or 15 minutes establishing your privacy settings when you set up the account. Facebook is known for making changes rather frequently, so it makes sense to check the privacy settings periodically on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, when faculty and staff promote the university or its events on personal Facebook profiles, we appreciate it! We also ask that you disclose your RMU affiliation to make people aware of the relationship.
With its 140-character limit, Twitter is the ideal social networking site for those who prefer to keep their updates short and sweet. A variety of companies, organizations and individuals have recognized the value of using such brief messages—also known as microblogging—for getting out the word about their efforts. In fact, the number of Twitter accounts has increased dramatically in the past few years.

Twitter also allows its users to reach broader audiences than most other social networking sites. Unlike your Facebook friends, you may not necessarily know your Twitter followers personally.

In most cases, you are able to follow a Twitter account without having to obtain the user’s permission first. Often you’ll find that other Twitter users will follow your feed merely because you followed theirs. Your time will be well spent in searching for Twitter users who might be interested in your group or activity.
TWITTER DEFINITIONS

Here are a few definitions that are particularly relevant to Twitter:

**TWEET** | Tweets are the updates posted on Twitter. They must be limited to 140 characters or fewer.

**FEED** | A Twitter feed is the list of all of a user’s tweets.

**FOLLOW** | When you follow a Twitter user, all of his or her tweets will be delivered automatically to your homepage. You will see their tweets whenever you log in to your account.

**LIST** | Twitter users can create groups using the “list” function. You can group the accounts you’re following into various lists, organized by similar interest or geographical location, for example. Using the list function can help you review tweets by category or interest.

**RETWEET** | In the world of Twitter, it’s perfectly acceptable (even encouraged) to repeat what other people say. This is known as retweeting. When you retweet another Twitter user’s update, it shows up with an icon that notes that the update came from elsewhere.

**MENTION** | When you refer to another user in your Tweet and use the @ sign to do so, you’re mentioning that person in your post. Twitter allows you to track everytime someone mentions you in their posts.

**TAG** | Tagging is a way for Twitter users to classify their tweets by subject, so that anyone using Twitter can find all the tweets that have been posted on a particular topic. You tag a topic by using the hash tag (#). A tweet about the university might be tagged “#RMU.” For example: "Is anyone going to the #RMU homecoming game?" or "I can’t wait for classes to start! #RMU"

**TRENDING TOPIC** | Twitter keeps track of the most popular topics of the day – based on tags – and those topics show up in a list on the right-hand side of a Twitter user’s homepage. The trending topics tell you what people are talking about on any given day. If you can connect your tweet to one of the trending topics, new followers may stumble upon your feed when they search for the topic.

TIP: Some popular RMU hash tags are #rmu #rmusports #colonials and #robertmorris.
CREATING A TWITTER ACCOUNT

All you need to create a Twitter account is a username, password and email address. When you visit the Twitter homepage (www.twitter.com), you’ll be prompted to “Give it a try.” Follow these steps:

1. Click on the “Sign Up” button in order to set up your account.

2. Enter your full name, your username, your password, and your email address. (Note that Twitter only allows one account per email address, so if you have an existing Twitter account, you’ll either need to delete it to use that email address for a new account or select a different email address to use.) If you are creating an official Twitter account for an RMU organization, you need to incorporate RMU into your username, as it will make it easier for potential followers to find you.

3. Read the Terms of Usage document included on the page.

4. Click on “Create my Account” to get up and running. (Doing so also indicates that you’ve agreed to the Terms of Usage document.)

After your account is established, you can make changes to it via the settings page. If you ever want to change your username or email address associated with the account, you can do so there. You can add a photo to your profile. You can also change your password, designate if you want to approve other Twitter users before they can follow your account, or deactivate your account through the settings page. You can also change the visual aspects of your Twitter account by switching wallpaper. The RMU PR/Marketing team has created a number of templates available for RMU-related Twitter accounts.

The first thing you’ll want to do after setting up your account is find other accounts to follow and encourage existing users to follow you. Alert your members and any other people interested in your group that you’re now on Twitter. You can also find Twitter users in a number of directories. Popular ones are Twellow (www.twellow.com), WeFollow (www.wefollow.com), JustTweetIt (www.justtweetit.com) and Tweetfind (www.tweetfind.com).

TIP: Be careful who you follow! You should review a user’s recent tweets before following the account. That way you can tell if people are using their Twitter account simply to ensnare followers in some hare-brained pyramid scheme or peddling “adult” viewing material. You want to be sure that the account is legit before you sign on as a follower. Similarly, take note of who follows you. You should block Twitter users who appear to be generating spam or adult content from following your account.
TWITTER CONVENTIONS

Like Facebook, Twitter allows its users to engage in conversations with each other. Knowing a number of the site’s conventions can make the process smoother.

You can communicate with other Twitter users in a couple of ways. You can use the @ sign to mention another Twitter user in your tweet to send them a message publicly. You can also send a direct message to a follower if you’d prefer to keep the communication private. If you want to comment on something another user has said, you can do so by clicking on “reply.” The reply option can be found in the bottom right-hand corner of a tweet when you’re holding your cursor over that particular tweet. Choosing the reply option automatically mentions the other user in your Tweet.

You should also consider retweeting updates from other users if you think those updates would be of interest for your followers. Not only will that give you an opportunity to tweet, but it is also much appreciated by the user who originally posted the tweet. It will raise awareness of his or her account, and you may even get mentioned in a thank you post, which will increase your visibility among that user’s followers. We’d like to offer a word of caution about retweeting, though: If you’d like to retweet something from a protected account (that is, an account that is not open for public viewing), be sure to ask the Twitter user if it’s OK before doing so. That’s a basic rule of Twitter etiquette.

The hash tag is another important tool in the Twitter-sphere. Placing a hash sign (#) before a word or a phrase (take out the spaces first, though!) ensures that other Twitter users searching for that particular term or phrase will find your tweet. The hash tags and their associated words or phrases are often included at the end of the tweet to designate the topic.
WHEN TO TWEET AND WHAT TO SAY

Now that you know more about Twitter logistics, it’s time to cover the frequency and content of tweets. We suggest that you tweet at least once a day, and more than that if possible. You don’t want to over-expend yourself (or your followers), though, so don’t feel the need to tweet every hour on the hour. That type of frequency may overwhelm your followers, and you may not have enough quality content to add to your feed if you try to tweet too often.

Speaking of content, all sorts of things can make good tweet fodder: event updates, links to interesting blog posts or news items, retweets, or even inspirational quotes (be sure to credit the source when you use that last option). When developing your tweets, keep in mind that you’ll want them to have a personalized tone similar to that of your Facebook updates, but in 140 characters (or fewer). Remember, although you’re engaging them in cyberspace, you’re still talking with regular people. This conversation isn’t all that different from one you might have at a coffee shop with a friend.

TIP: It can be tough to keep your tweets under 140 characters (especially when you’re as chatty as I am!). When you’re trying to include a link, it makes the task even more challenging. Fortunately, several sites will shorten lengthy website addresses to just a handful of characters. Try www.bit.ly or www.tiny.cc.
For organizations with a strong visual component (think performing arts groups, athletics, etc.), posting videos on YouTube is a good way to reach broader audiences. Billing itself as the “largest worldwide video-sharing community,” YouTube is a popular website that allows users to share videos and tag them for easy searching. Organizations and individuals can create channels on YouTube to house all of their videos in one place, and other YouTube users can then subscribe to those channels to ensure that they’ll keep tabs on new items of interest to them.
CREATING A YOUTUBE ACCOUNT

The first step in using YouTube is creating an account. Going through that process allows a person or organization to create channels, establish a profile, comment on other users’ videos, connect with Facebook and Twitter accounts, and a host of other activities. A new YouTube user creates an account in the following steps:

1. Click on “Create Account” on the top right-hand side of the page.

2. Choose a username. If the account is intended for a university-sanctioned group, please use “RMU” as part of the username.

3. Enter the account holder’s zip code, birth date, and gender.

4. Review the Terms of Use Agreement. Note that YouTube users are prohibited from posting copyrighted material if they do not own the copyright themselves. YouTube’s Copyright Tips page offers guidance on determining when copyright violation is an issue.

5. Click on “I Accept” at the bottom of the page to create the account.

After you have created a YouTube account, you can move forward in a number of ways. The main menu can be found by clicking on your username at the top right corner of the page. One of your first steps is likely to be posting your videos. Videos can be up to 2GB and as long as 10 minutes and can be uploaded by selecting the My Videos menu option. Before you have added any videos, you’ll see a prompt to “Start uploading videos now.” Click on that prompt, and it will bring up a screen with a yellow “upload video” button. Clicking on that button will open up a default location in your computer, allowing you to browse for the video you’d like to upload. This process works in a fashion similar to attaching a document to an e-mail.
After uploading your video, you’ll be asked to include a description of it. It’s important to keep keywords in mind while doing this. Think about what would interest potential viewers and what search terms they might use to find your video. Include those keywords in the description and use them to tag the video as well. You can tag videos in the “edit video” option for your uploaded videos. Not only can you tag your individual videos, you can tag your entire channel. We recommend including RMU as a tag for easy searching. You can also select categories, such as education or entertainment, to classify your videos.

We’d advise you to ask non-RMU students for their permission before you post videos that include them to YouTube, and you should ask the parents of minors to sign a photo release form. Please contact the PR/Marketing Department with questions.

The “My Channel” menu option also offers a great deal of useful functionality. It allows account holders to post bulletins to their subscribers’ YouTube pages. Account holders can also manage their settings and set the channel’s visual theme through the My Channel option. If you’d like to incorporate the RMU color scheme in your channel, please contact the PR/Marketing team for the specific settings to use. The “Account” menu option offers the opportunity to create an in-depth profile that reveals relevant details about your group and is also worth exploring.

Like other social media outlets, YouTube facilitates user-to-user communication. You can send messages directly to other YouTube users or comment on their videos (and perhaps suggest that they check out yours!). Also, please remember to give yourself the option to review comments about your videos before they are published live. You will need to select this option for each video you upload. Otherwise, the default option allows users to publish their comments – or criticism – automatically.

**TIP:** When you’re tagging a video, think about the search terms that you would use to find such a video. Would you type in “RMU vs. Villanova game recap”? Probably not. But you might do a quick search for “RMU game highlights.” Also remember that you can use more words as tags than you can in a video’s title. Take advantage of that capability and include as many tags as possible that apply to the video and that might come up as a search term.
Of all of the vehicles for web-based communication, blogs offer the best opportunity for you to get more in-depth on a topic of interest. You may want to consider a blog when you want to provide comprehensive information to an audience, such as a class or a discussion section. A blog might also be helpful to shed light on a complex issue or when you want to share your insights on a topic and get feedback from your readers.

In their most basic forms, blogs involve posts, which are the entries added by the blog’s author, and comments, which are responses from blog readers. As a blog author, you may choose to respond to various comments, as well. We’ll discuss that aspect of blogging in more detail a little later in this section.

Worried that you’ll need to make a significant financial investment before you can call yourself a blogger? Don’t be. Popular, user-friendly and, most importantly, free platforms are readily available for any bloggers-in-waiting. Wordpress (www.wordpress.com) and Blogger (www.blogger.com) are among the most popular.
The most important part of blogging is providing information that is relevant to readers on a regular basis. This takes time. Before you start blogging, you should take a look at your schedule and make sure that you have enough hours in your week to post on a regular basis. It may take anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour or two to brainstorm and write each blog post. It’s also important to consider the length of your blog posts. You don’t want them to be too short or too long. Between one and three paragraphs is typically sufficient for a post. Some may be a little longer, based on content.

You can find inspiration for a blog post almost anywhere. If you’re writing about a specific topic, then it makes sense to follow other bloggers who specialize in that subject. You can write about your reaction to one of their posts. Just be sure to link to the original post to guard against accusations of plagiarism. The author of the original post likely will be grateful for the opportunity to reach new audiences, too. You can also blog about current events, important developments in a particular profession or area of interest, sports action, and a whole host of other activities. The possibilities are endless. The only limit is your imagination.

If you are blogging in a professional capacity for RMU, we ask that you use appropriate tone and language that reflect the university’s reputation. Even if you’re only blogging for your personal enjoyment, be sure to consider the kind of image you want to portray and include posts that support that image.

Like the other forms of social media discussed in this guide, blogs are intended to be a two-way conversation. As the blogger, you will be responsible for driving much of that discussion, and you should plan to engage with your readers even after you add a post. Most blogging platforms will allow you to review comments before they are made visible to the rest of your readers. Please take advantage of this feature. It will allow you to monitor the tone of comments. You don’t necessarily want to censor your readers and what they can say, but at the same time, you don’t want them to become insulting or abusive to each other.

**TIP:** If you’re posting any content (videos, photo, stories) from another site on your blog, be sure to give the original source the credit they’re due for that material.
ADDITIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA OUTLETS

We’d also like to give some attention to a few other social media outlets that are more specialized in their purpose. Because these websites have a more limited scope, we won’t discuss them in as much detail as we offered in earlier sections. We’ll give you a brief overview of each of these outlets. If you feel that they might be useful for you, please contact the PR/Marketing team for more details before proceeding.
FOURSQUARE

Foursquare is a "geo-location" based website, that is also available as a mobile application, which allows registered users to "check-in" at locations locally and around the world. Users earn points for each check-in and badges for reaching achievements set by Foursquare. As each badge is earned it is displayed on the user's profile. The user with the most check-ins during a 60-day span will be crowned mayor of that location. Watch out because someone could steal that title from you and just to make sure you're not cheating, Foursquare keeps track of check-ins to make sure you are in that area.

Your location is determined when you log in by the GPS in your mobile device (for the application) or the IP address of the Internet connection (for the web site) you are using. Keep an eye out at the venues you check in at as Foursquare offers discounts to customers at select locations. If you'd like to give Foursquare (www.foursquare.com) a try you can create an account and search "Robert Morris University." You will find that each building (including residence halls) is listed. What will you be the mayor of?
This site is designed to help members connect online with people in their professional networks—clients, friends, and colleagues and supervisors from past and present employers. LinkedIn, which is free to join, allows members to create profiles that list their professional experience in addition to other basic details, such as name and contact information. The site has search functions that help members find contacts in their network. It also allows clients, supervisors, and co-workers to offer recommendations on members’ work. As is the case with so many social media outlets, LinkedIn offers the opportunity to create and join groups based on similar professional interests, geographical location, and other shared characteristics. Group members can then join in discussions and share news items that may be of interest to other members. LinkedIn also features a job search function that recommends particular openings based on member profiles and experience. With its focus on professional connections, LinkedIn is a useful tool for groups or departments that have career preparation and development as a focus area. RMU is still in the early stages of making use of LinkedIn as a tool for bringing together alumni and employees who wish to network professionally. Do not create any RMU-themed LinkedIn group without first contacting the PR/Marketing Department.
FLICKR

Primarily designed for online photo and video organization and sharing, Flickr takes this task to the next level. Flickr users can upload photos and videos to the site or email them from a mobile phone camera and then edit the uploaded photos. The photos and videos can be organized into sets, based on a particular event or timeframe, and sets can be grouped into collections, which reflect a broader theme, such as travel, entertainment, or friends. Photos and videos can be tagged with their photographer/videographer, geographic location, subject and time, and users can include captions or messages. Flickr users can control who is able to view their uploads and limit access to their family and friends if they so choose. In addition to the photo and video functionality, Flickr offers a significant social networking piece. Flickr users can build a network of contacts who can comment on their photos and join groups that reflect their interests. The Guest Pass feature also allows Flickr users to share photos with people who don’t have Flickr accounts. Groups and organizations that have a major visual component may want to look into Flickr to promote their efforts and events. We’d advise you to ask non-RMU students for their permission before you post pictures to a Flickr account, and you should ask the parents of minors to sign a photo release form. Please contact the PR/Marketing Department with questions.

TIP: Did you know RMU has a Flickr page with great collections of university event photos? Check them out: http://www.flickr.com/photos/rmu_news/. Please feel free to download these photos for use in official university publications and websites.
BOOKMARKING SITES

Several websites allow users to bookmark web content, including news stories, blog entries, videos and photos. The most popular of these are Digg, del.icio.us, StumbleUpon and Reddit. By bookmarking content on these sites, users are essentially recommending the items to the site’s community. As the item earns more recommendations, it moves up the list of the day’s bookmarked items and attracts more interest from other users. These bookmarking sites have various features. StumbleUpon, for example, asks you to input your interests and directs you to content recommended based on those choices. Digg lets you create friends lists. These sites hold appeal for people who want to keep tabs on current events or those who are looking for fodder for water cooler conversation. You can also promote the work of your favorite writers on such sites.
CONCLUSION

We hope that you have found this introductory tour of the social media landscape to be helpful. As you continue to navigate your way through these sites and the interactions that they facilitate, we hope that this guide will continue to be a resource for you. In closing, we’d just like you to keep a few social media tips in mind. First, social media doesn’t need to be a complex endeavor. Many mainstream websites and browsers are adding features and applications that allow you to update multiple social media outlets at the same time. You can also use mobile apps to monitor your social media presence on the go. Also, we suggest that you diversify your social media presence as much as possible. In other words, don’t put all of your eggs in one basket. Each of these sites has unique features that you can use to your advantage. Facebook, for example, can help you strengthen existing relationships, while you may reach new audiences on Twitter. Above all, remember that the foundation of social media is the conversation. You have to put in as much as you hope to get out of it.

As always, the PR/Marketing team is here to help you whenever you need it. Don’t hesitate to reach out to us if we can be of any assistance. Also, give us updates when you’ve found a particular social media outlet to be particularly effective or if you’ve come across a new site that might be useful for reaching different audiences. We’re always on the lookout for innovative ideas and resources, too.

Happy Browsing! And remember, I am like Santa.... I know when you’re tweeting and when you’re not.