Robert Morris University Social Media Guidelines

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.**

RMU recognizes the important role that social media plays in communicating, collaborating and interacting with students, faculty, staff and the general public. We encourage you to use social media to connect and engage with the RMU community and your constituents.

These guidelines apply to all members of the RMU community, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, and all other employees of the university. Reminders and best practices to help guide your participation in RMU social media efforts include:

You are representing Robert Morris University
Regardless of whether or not you're posting about Robert Morris, as an affiliate of RMU you are always representing the university, so please be mindful of what you post.

Respect intellectual property laws
RMU respects and upholds the property rights of authors of copyrighted materials. It is a violation of RMU policy to engage in any activity that infringes on the intellectual property rights of others. To see the IT usage policy, visit http://studentlife.rmu.edu/residence-life/policies/it-usage-policy

Rely on your teams
Robert Morris has a holistic goal to education our students and make their experiences the best possible. One way to make this happen is supporting other departments' social media outreach to their audiences. Collaborating between our Schools, divisions, departments and programs, across your social media platforms with help us all reach our goals.

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Once on the Internet…always on the Internet.
Nothing escapes cyberspace. Know that when you post something online, it is nearly impossible to delete all traces of it. So be mindful of your audience. You are allowed to show your opinion and disagree with others, but creating or distributing any disruptive or offensive messages, including comments about race, gender, appearance, disabilities, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and practice, political beliefs, or national origin is prohibited.

Handling inappropriate posts
You may come across a post that is inappropriate or one that does not coincide with your own personal views. Remember that everyone has a right to his or her own opinion. However, in a case where an RMU employee or student posts content that is against the ethics policy, action may need to be taken. If you see an inappropriate post, please contact the Public Relations and Marketing Department immediately. If the post poses an immediate threat, contact RMU Public Safety.

The PR/Marketing Department does monitor all of its social media pages and will intervene with a negative comment when necessary. Generally, we have three courses of action we can take when coming across a negative comment – ignore, delete/hide/respond.

Ignore - If the comment is about why someone disagrees with something the university posted, we would generally ignore this. If someone posts about an awful experience they had at Robert Morris, we would ignore this.
Delete – If the comment is an offensive comment that does not comply with our policy and ethics guidelines, we would delete or hide the comment. Generally the person complaining will only write one negative comment, in which we would delete/hide it. Most of the time, this is the last we hear from that person.
Respond – If a person posts an offensive post about a specific person or entity of RMU multiple times, we would delete/hide the posts and then respond to the person. Depending on the situation, we will either send the person a private message, or respond to their comments publically.

All content, information and views expressed online belong to the individual posting the content and do not necessarily reflect RMU official policies or positions. The university is not responsible for unanswered posts or inaccurate information posted by others.

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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 or "Robert Morris University" 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" or "Robert Morris University" 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 a version of one of the official RMU logos 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 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.

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 will likely be a losing battle. Many

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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.

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 Create Page option on the left-hand side of your news feed.
2. Choose one of the six options for the cause of your page: Local Business or Place; Company, Organization or Institution; Brand or Product; Artist, Band, or Public Figure; Entertainment; or Cause or Community.
3. After clicking one of the six boxes, fill out the information that is being asked. For example, chose a category in the drop down menu (Cause or Community box is the only one that does **not** have a drop down menu), insert the name of the organization, person or cause, and then click the blue Get Started button. **Be sure to pick a name for your page that includes RMU for university-affiliated groups!**
4. Fill out more information of the page. In the "About" tab, describe what the page is about. You can also link other social medias or website links to the page you're making under the description box. When finished, click the blue "Save Info" button.
5. Now, you can select a profile picture for the page. There are two options: upload from your computer or important from a website. Once you have chosen the picture, click the blue Save Photo button. It's best practice to use a photos that prominently displays your custom RMU logo.
6. In the Add to Favorites tab, you can select the green button Add to Favorites to have your page show up in the top of your listed page items on your Facebook

home screen for easy access, or press Skip if you prefer not to have this page listed at the top.

7. The Preferred Page Audience tab allows for you to set demographics of who you wish to view your page. Fill out any restrictions you desire and click the blue Save button.
8. You have just created your page!

A Facebook group can be set up in a similar fashion. In your individual profile, click on the Create Group option on the left-hand side of the news feed. 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.

DELETING A FACEBOOK PAGE OR GROUP

If you ever need to delete your Facebook page, it's just as easy to do so. In the top right corner, there is a downward facing blue arrow, click it. Here you will see all of your pages listed at the top of the list. Click the page you want to delete. Once on that page, click Settings in the top right corner. This will redirect you to a list of altercations you can do to this page. Scroll all of the way to the bottom and you will find Remove Page. Click this line, and it will then change to Permanently delete "Page Name." Click that, and the page will permanently be gone.

Deleting a group is done the exact same way as a page.

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. 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.

TWITTER

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

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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.

CREATING A TWITTER ACCOUNT

All you need to create a Twitter account is a username, password and email address.

1. Click on the "Sign Up" button in the top right corner of Twitter's homepage.
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),

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Wefollow (www.wefollow.com), JustTweetIt (www.justtweetit.com) andTweetfind (www.tweetfind.com).

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-extend 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.

YOUTUBE

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 "Sign In" on the top right-hand side of the page.

2. Sign in with an email and password. Google owns YouTube, and all RMU email domains are run by Google, so if this is a university-sanctioned page, it's best practice to use your RMU employee email. If the account is intended for a university-sanctioned group, please use "RMU" as part of the username.
3. 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.
4. 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 should be to add a description and profile picture to your YouTube page. Your YouTube page will house all your videos.

To begin uploading videos, click the "upload" button in the top right hand corner. A video can be "public," which means anyone can see it, "unlisted," meaning only those with the specific URL can see if, and "private," meaning only you can see it. When you click upload, it will ask you to choose a file from your computer. This process works in a fashion similar to attaching a document to an email.

LINKEDIN

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.