

**MARKETING AND MEDIA RELATIONS**

## **Social Media Guidelines**

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Emporia State University

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**DRAFT**

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## Overview

Thousands of current and future students, faculty, staff, alumni, and donors are utilizing social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr, YouTube, and many others to stay connected. Emporia State University believes that having a presence in these areas will allow the University to broadcast information and interact with the broader public in an enriching way. In order to operate within these mediums effectively, Emporia State has developed a Web Presence policy to ensure that any and all interactions on behalf of ESU represent the University's best interests.

ESU encourages the University community to be actively involved with social media. These guidelines are broad in nature to accommodate any differences in online venues while maintaining a universal code of conduct. As the landscape of social media changes, the policy may need to be adjusted.

## What is Social Media?

Social media refers to media that is designed to be disseminated through social interaction. Specific examples of social media sites include:

- **Facebook** - A social networking website intended to connect friends, family, and business associates.
- **Twitter** - A social networking and micro blogging service that enables its users to send and read other user messages called *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page.
- **LinkedIn** – A business oriented social networking website intended to connect colleagues and business associates.
- **Flickr** – A social media web site/service which serves as a mechanism for posting and sharing images and videos for public or private purposes.
- **YouTube** – A social media web site/service that enables users to upload, share and view videos.

## Purpose

Emporia State University recognizes the need for a strong presence in the social media realm. ESU encourages colleges, departments, programs, groups, and entities to join in the use of social media to further cultivate enriching relationships with University constituents and stakeholders.

The purpose of the guidelines contained within this document is to ensure that any and all social media interactions on behalf of ESU represent the University's best interests.

All social media accounts recognized by Emporia State University will be listed on the <http://www.emporia.edu/socialmedia> website.

# Social Media Guidelines

## General Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices

Online collaboration and social media tools provide low-cost communication methods which foster open exchange and learning. While social media tools are changing the way we work and how we connect with the public, official Emporia State University communications must maintain integrity and accuracy. When creating or posting to a social media site, you need to:

### Seek Approval

Any messages that act as or may be interpreted as the 'voice' or position of Emporia State University or a college/school/unit must be approved by the University or the director of the school/college/unit or their designee.

### Be Accurate

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

### Be Transparent

If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of Emporia State University, clearly state your role and goals. Keep in mind that if you are posting with a university username, other users do not know you personally. Users will view your posts as coming from the University. Be careful and be respectful. What you say directly reflects on the University. Discuss with your supervisor the circumstances in which you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

### Be Timely

Assign an administrator who can regularly monitor postings and content. Aim for standard times for postings and updates. The recommended minimum for frequency is once to twice a week. Be sure not to overload your updates. Followers will stop paying attention if you overload them with information.

### Be Responsible

What you write is ultimately your responsibility. If you wish to participate on behalf of the University, be sure to abide by its standard practice guidelines.

### Respect Others

Users are free to discuss topics and disagree with one another, but please be respectful of others' opinions. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive 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. Post information about topics such as Emporia State University events only when are sure it will be of interest to the readers. In some forums, self promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to negative repercussions.

### Be Thoughtful

If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain topics in your role as an Emporia State University employee, ask your supervisor before you post.

### Use of the Emporia State University Logo

Use only official Emporia State University logos and marks as directed by ESU Marketing. Further information web identity standards can be found at <http://www.emporia.edu/web>.

#### Sources:

The best practices and guidelines above were compiled through internal staff perspectives and published sources. The following published sources were used in the development of this document.

- i. DePaul University: [http://brandresources.depaul.edu/vendor\\_guidelines/g\\_socialmedia.aspx](http://brandresources.depaul.edu/vendor_guidelines/g_socialmedia.aspx)
- ii. University of Michigan, Office of the Vice President for Communications: [http://mmd.umich.edu/forum/resources\\_socialguide.php](http://mmd.umich.edu/forum/resources_socialguide.php)
- iii. Grand Valley State University: <http://www.gvsu.edu/socialmediaguidelines.htm>
- iv. Washington State University: <http://www.vancouver.wsu.edu/marcomm/social-networking-guidelines>
- v. Colorado State University: <http://socialmedia.colostate.edu/>

# Facebook Best Practices

## What is Facebook and how can it be useful to my organization?

Facebook, found at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), is a social networking site that offers an ideal opportunity to showcase your department or group, encourage participation, network, and build recognition. Emporia State University encourages the use of Facebook to connect with prospective and current students, staff, faculty, partners, and alumni. The following guidelines are intended to help Facebook users conduct their online activities in a successful, productive, and legal manner.

### Group/Page Name

- Establish a name that resonates with users and the University.
- Facebook has Pages and Groups – know which one will work for you.
  - Pages are accessible by the general public – they are searchable and can be seen by anyone even if they are not registered or logged in. Pages allow for applications and the opportunity to supply more in-depth information. There is no way to e-mail fans using a Facebook Page – notifications go to the Updates tab.
  - If you are planning on only inviting people who are registered Facebook users you know, choose a Group. Notifications to those in your Group will appear in their Facebook Inbox like an e-mail. If personal communication is your goal, forming a Group is a better option.
- Limit the description of your group's mission statement to one paragraph.

### Group/Page Administrators

- Choose administrators who are directly affiliated with the Emporia State University office/entity/organization that is being represented through the Facebook account. Make sure at least two administrators are Emporia State University faculty/staff members.

### Profile Image

- Facebook enables the use of a large profile image (50x50 pixels).
- Refrain from using only the ESU word mark or 'Power E' logo as your account(s)'s profile image, as they tend to be overly used and lack individuality. The University encourages the creation of a profile image that reflects your ESU unit but allows for individuality as well.
- Ensure proper resolution of the logo.
- If your unit is in need of an official unit identifier or if you would like help in creating a profile image for your social media accounts, please contact Emporia State University Marketing at [webmaster@emporia.edu](mailto:webmaster@emporia.edu).

### Managing Groups/Pages

- Don't get defensive – use discretion when addressing negative comments and provide constructive feedback.
- Remove a post if deemed inappropriate.
- Respond to questions or statements made by your fans by posting content on your own Wall.

### Engaging Friends/Fans

- Encourage open conversation. Allow your fans to freely post content and photos on wall posts and discussion boards.
- Avoid sending too many updates to your fans. A good rule of thumb is to send out one or two updates per week.
- Highlight new features when and if they are added. Talk specifically about how to use new features and ask others to share their experiences with new features.

- Utilize Facebook's many applications to make your page more dynamic. Add photos, videos, discussion boards, RSS feeds, etc.

### **Promoting Groups/Pages**

- Add links to drive traffic to your department or organization's website. When editing Detailed Info, include links to other ESU websites on Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.
- Become a fan of other ESU pages.
- Request that staff and co-workers "Share" or "Post" your Facebook page.
- Include a link to your Facebook page in your e-mail signature
- Include your social media information in promotional materials.

# Twitter Best Practices

## What is Twitter and how can it be useful to my organization?

Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service found at [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com). It enables users to send and receive other users' updates known as tweets. Tweets are limited to 140 characters posts and are shown on the user's profile page and sent to other users who have elected to follow them (known as followers). Senders can choose to make their updates accessible to anyone, or limit access to only an approved list of individuals. Tweets can be posted via the Twitter website, external applications, or through text messaging on a phone.

### Profile Username

Please note that a "username" and a "name" are two separate items.

- Establish a username and name that resonate with followers and the University.
- The username and profile picture will be the most viewed part of your Twitter profile.
- Optimizing your profile for Twitter searches:
  - A carefully selected name is the most crucial part of being found in searches. This is because most users will not search for you by your exact username and will add spaces that do not match your username.
  - Make sure the name includes words you believe will be used when searching for the profile; ESU, Emporia State University, etc.
- The "one line bio" will appear with the username and name in search results. Use this area to note your relationship to "Emporia State University" if your username and name have not already made this clear; For example, only using "ESU" may create confusion since there are several universities whose names also create the same acronym.

### Group/Page Administrators

- Choose administrators who are directly affiliated with the Emporia State University office/entity/organization that is being represented through the Twitter account. Make sure at least two administrators are Emporia State University faculty/staff members.
- An administrator is someone who will always have the current password needed for a particular username. This is because Twitter itself does not have a way for multiple people to uniquely access one account.

### Profile and Background Images

- Twitter enables the use of a small profile image (700k maximum) and a background image (800k maximum).
- Refrain from using only the ESU word mark or 'Power E' logo as your account(s)'s profile image, as they tend to be overly used and lack individuality. The University encourages the creation of a profile image that reflects your ESU unit but allows for individuality as well.
- Ensure proper resolution of the logo or image used.
- Use one of the approved twitter background images available from Emporia State University Marketing.
- If your unit is in need of an official unit identifier or if you would like help in creating a profile image for your social media accounts, please contact Emporia State University Marketing at [webmaster@emporia.edu](mailto:webmaster@emporia.edu).

### Managing Profile/Account

- Tweet regularly - appoint more than one person to tweet if needed to continue regular content.
- Humanize your tweets by posting them in a personal style.
- Include links to drive followers to your website. Inbound links also improve your page rankings with search engines.

- Don't over post information that is not interesting to your followers. If needed, create separate accounts for different groups of followers.
- Understand why people follow you. If your followers want information about the group you represent, they probably don't want to know your daily activities.

### **Engaging Followers and Viewers**

- Follow others - this allows communication between you and your followers and is part of Twitter etiquette. Strive for a 1:1 ratio between followers and those you are following. Otherwise, Twitter may identify your account as spam and delete it.
- Engage followers by asking questions and collecting feedback.
- Respond to questions or statements from your followers. Do this publicly if the response is interesting and acceptable for all to see. If not, use the direct message feature.
- Don't get defensive - use discretion when addressing negative comments and provide constructive feedback.

### **Promoting Your Twitter Profile**

- Add a link to your department or organization's website on your Twitter profile.
- Follow other official ESU pages to cross-promote.
- Include an invitation to follow your organization on Twitter in your e-mail signature.
- Use word of mouth to encourage people to follow you.
- Include your social media information in promotional materials.