Introduction

What is Social Media?

Social media consists of web-based tools used to interact with people through text, images, or sound. These tools include online networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Google+, Foursquare, and blogs among others fall into this arena, too. Undoubtedly, other social media outlets will be available soon.

Our purpose for social media

When Emporia State uses social media networks its main purpose is to showcase the University’s attributes in order to recruit and retain students.

Building a community anchored by your school, department, office, or organization and populated by your fans (prospects, recruits, students, alumni, donors, friends, etc.) is what social media is all about.

Other goals for our social media programs are:

• Communicate information to our internal and external audiences
• Give incoming and current students, as well as alumni and friends, a sense of belonging or connection to the ESU community
• Provide a forum for our audiences to ask questions or give us feedback
• Provide a platform for telling Emporia State’s story for marketing and fundraising purposes

Why are guidelines good for us?

Social media is a great but somewhat unknown and still changing tool for Emporia State University to use in recruitment, retention, and community building. Since it is still somewhat novel, however, it makes sense to align all our efforts to achieve the maximum positive results.

It is in all of our best interests, too, that we navigate around any pitfalls that could cause the university, us personally, or any of our readers harm.

That is where these guidelines fit in. We do not want to stifle individuality or creativity, but wish to have some guardrails, if you will, that can keep us all on the same path as we travel toward our common goal of good communication.

Think of it as word of mouth

Social media is simply word of mouth advertising. We can use it to speak to our audience and expand our audience. But as everyone knows, word of mouth can be the best or worst advertising in the world. It’s all about the conversation.
Social Media Guidelines

Before entering the social media universe

Step 1 — We all should answer the following questions:
• Who are you trying to reach?
• What do you want your audience to hear?
• What social media method is best for the task?
• What tool will best support that interaction?

Step 2 — We need to measure our results:
• How will you know if you’ve reached your audience?
• How will you know if your communication was successful?

Step 3 — We need to verify and submit our plan:
• Have I sought approval of the appropriate dean/chair/directors?
• Have I obtained specific permission and approval from the University Social Media Manager?
• Have I filled out and submitted the form located on the Marketing and Media Relations website?

Emporia State’s social media outlets
Our current outlets monitored by Marketing and Media Relations are:
• Facebook - http://www.facebook.com/emporiastateuniversity
• Twitter - https://twitter.com/ - /emporiaUni
• YouTube - http://www.youtube.com/user/emporiastateuniv
• Flickr - http://www.flickr.com/photos/emporiastateuniversity/

So you want to create a social media outlet?
Marketing and Media Relations is your destination to successfully get your new social media network launched.

You can get your outlet going by contacting the Social Media Manager at Marketing and Media Relations. We have a survey to fill out that will help you pull together a plan that should ensure your outlet’s success.

You can find the form at the Marketing and Media Relations website or contact the Social Media Manager.

What type of Facebook page?
Fan pages, sometimes called “business pages,” are usually seen as the official page of a school, business, brand, etc. This is the main voice on Facebook for your department, organization, office, or team.

People can “like” your page to join the community, thus receiving your information and being able to comment on your page.

Fan pages are the best communication method for Emporia State University entities.

Another type of page offered by Facebook is the group page. Groups can be a good way to promote a specific topic of interest and create a buzz among people who join as members. Discussion boards can draw people in to talk about common interests or debate issues. One advantage of Facebook groups is that you send messages to members of your group en masse.

You can also create an event page that can be a great promotion or advertisement for a game, class, contest, lecture, movie, anything you want to stir up interest in and invite people to attend or participate in.
YouTube
YouTube is primarily for sharing videos. You can post videos about your program, department, organization, etc., and anyone in the world can access them for viewing. It is a great promotional tool.

Emporia State has a channel operated by the University Webmaster. Departments are restricted from having their own YouTube channel and instead are encouraged to make use of the official ESU YouTube channel found at:
http://www.youtube.com/emporiastateuniv.

The process to submit your videos to be included on the ESU YouTube channel is outlined here:
http://bit.ly/qn2Tkp (copy paste the link into your browser)

Flickr
Emporia State will maintain a single Flickr presence maintained by the Social Media Manager. The official Flickr presence is stocked with photographs taken by ESU Photography and posted for your use on the Emporia.edu domain only. The official Flickr page can be found at:

This is the only official Emporia State Flickr account and we will be happy to upload pictures for you.

The process to submit your photos to be included on the ESU Flickr channel is outlined here:
http://bit.ly/qn2Tkp (copy paste the link into your browser)

The Reply
Social media is fast-paced communication. It is vital that you reply to any question or comment within two hours of receiving it during regular business hours.

During other times, reply as soon as possible.

Whenever you cannot make a complete response, let the person know that you are working on their question and will get back to them as soon as you can.

If the social media manager contacts you about answering a question or comment that has been posted on the ESU Facebook page, the above rules apply to your response time. If you want to reply directly to the post, you must inform the social media manager of your progress and how you resolve the issue.

This applies even if you take the discussion offline.
Best practices for ESU social media

Marketing and Media Relations offers this information as guardrails on your journey down the social media highway.

First though, you are never totally unknown on the web. Anything posted could be traced back to you and the university.

Following are some best practices that you can use to boost the success of your social media. Remember that we are here to help you develop any of these practices.

Establish an internal process
Before launching your site or network:

• Make sure you have made your dean/chair/directors aware of your plan
• Have a method to ensure information is accurate and current
• Develop a system to securely manage passwords and administrator access
• Put in writing your rules for replying to comments and in what timeframe, who is responsible, and appropriateness
• File your plan with Marketing and Media Relations

Marketing
Raise awareness of your communication efforts by:

• Link back — Provide links back to a unit's web page(s) from the social networking sites

Terms of use
Know the terms of service for the site being used. Also, understand that by using any site there is implicit agreement not to:

• Send or post unauthorized commercial communications (spam)
• Upload viruses or malicious code
• Solicit another user's login information or access her account
• Bully, intimidate, or harass any user
• Post content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or violent
• Do anything unlawful, misleading, malicious, or discriminatory

Be Sociable
Post your rules of use on all Facebook sites. The rules will clarify the university's official position on monitoring sites, removing comments, and more. Following is an example of a Facebook statement of rules:

We encourage you to leave comments, photos, videos, and links on our Facebook page that are relevant to Emporia State University and appropriate in light of the University’s status as a state, non-profit institution. Comments that are inappropriate or offensive are subject to removal without notice. They include comments that:

• Include profanity or obscene images
• Contain information that is not factual
• Promote commercial enterprises; sell, or solicit offers to sell, goods or services for personal gain
• Promote a political candidate or political party
• Are determined by the site editor to be inappropriate for the university’s page(s)

Please be civil and refrain from personal attacks.
Comments posted to Facebook pages do not represent the opinions of Emporia State University.

Logos and other images
Please contact the Social Media Manager for your social media profile and background images. Profile images and layouts need to be approved by the Social Media Manager.

Profile or site name
The Social Media Manager will work with you in selecting an appropriate name for your site. All names used need to be approved by the Social Media Manager.

Content and Images
Your scope for social media content and images is wide open with just a few guidelines that fit the university’s mission and brand identity. Content and images should:

• Be related to university business
• Have permission of the people in the images

Remember that all images, video, audio, or newspaper, magazine, and journal articles are subject to copyright law.
Privacy issues

It is well documented that social media can have a dark or destructive side we must be aware of and avoid at all costs. Besides personal harm that could be brought to members of our audience, here are other issues to consider in everything we put on our pages:

- Defamation lawsuits
- Copyright, patent, or trademark infringements
- Privacy or human rights complaints
- Criminal charges related to obscene or hate content and images
- Damage to Emporia State’s reputation

Do not give out phone numbers, addresses or other personal information about yourself or anyone else without their permission.

You must understand or seek appropriate university guidance to make certain Emporia State social media outlets comply with the following:

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that protects privacy of student education records that include information about grades, transcripts, or student identification numbers.

The Protected Health Information (PHI) regulation makes it a federal offense for any faculty, staff, students, or anyone else affiliated with the university to publicly comment about any specific university health services patient.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) applies to any comments made on social and online media concerning someone’s health records and is subject to federal prosecution.

Other issues include patient contact. Any medical or health related entity associated with Emporia State should refrain from giving medical or health advice to specific patients via social media. Any patient information gathered from a social media outlet should not be entered into a patient’s medical record without the patient’s knowledge and permission.

Athletics

Emporia State University Athletics is governed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and violations of its rules could cause a student-athlete to lose eligibility or a program or the school to be punished.

The best practice in regard to any information connected to the Athletic Department and all of its NCAA-sanctioned sports programs is to contact the Athletic Department sports information director or compliance director before publishing.

Posting information that has been released by sports information or has already been placed on the Athletics website is permitted without contacting the department.
Other

Crisis Communication
In event of a crisis situation, readers of your social media should check at the bottom of the ESU homepage and click on Campus Security for alerts.

Common sense guidelines
Please review these ideas meant to help you with content and other issues of conduct. These items are meant for your protection and aid, as well as for the good of Emporia State University.

• Honesty is the best policy in all content
• Answer the question! Do not forward the user to a Webpage. You may include the URL to a page in addition to answering the question.
• Write clearly and accurately
• Avoid jargon
• If you make a mistake, acknowledge it and correct it
• Make certain you disagree with other opinions with respect
• Disclose any conflicts of interest
• Keep private topics private
• Strive to use only photos and images that look professional and are a good reflection on Emporia State
• On contact information, it is best to use a departmental e-mail account rather than a personal e-mail address
• Make sure you have good links to your department, organization, or group website from the social media outlet
• It is best to have a link to the university’s home page – http://www.emporia.edu
• Remember that social media is all about conversations and building relationships
• Write with a conversational tone
• The whole world’s watching and perception is reality
• Try to avoid online slang (lol, rotfl)
• Keep in mind that no matter what social media outlet you are using, if it has anything to do with the University, everything you say or do is representing Emporia State’s brand identity