



Social Media Policy and User Guide

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June 2017	Updated to reflect current practice and to include Social Media User Guide

You may also be interested in the following policies:

Code of Conduct
Internet and Email

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the Commission for Victims and Survivors (the Commission) policy on the use of Social Media, Social Networking and “blogging” by employees. It sets out the background to the policy, the rules and conditions relating to the use of Social Media, Social Networking and “blogging”, the arrangements for monitoring and how infringements will be addressed.
- 1.2. Social media services and tools involve a combination of technology, telecommunications and some kind of social interaction. They can use a variety of different formats, for example text, pictures, video and audio.
- 1.3. Wikipedia defines ‘Social Media’ as *“media used for social interaction, using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. Social media is the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.”*

2. Purpose of the Policy

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to prevent the unauthorised or inadvertent disclosure of sensitive information through the use of social media by employees. This policy also puts in place a mechanism for the Commission to control employee access to social media whilst using Commission network resources, and also to advise employees as to their conduct on social media relative to the work of the Commission.

3. Scope of Policy

- 3.1. This policy covers the inappropriate use of Social Media, Social Networking and “blogging” and applies to all employees, contractors, and agents operating on behalf of the Commission.

4. Policy Requirements

Social Media and Social Networking

- 4.1. Social media includes web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue. The most commonly-used social media types worldwide are Social Networks, Blogs, Micro-blogs, Wikis, Podcasts, Forums, Photo Sharing and Video Sharing
- 4.2. Current popular social media websites include;
 - Facebook

- Twitter
- Google+
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Flickr
- Bebo
- Tumblr
- MySpace

(Please note this list is not exhaustive.)

- 4.3. Social media / networking can give users the ability to communicate. It applies to multi-media, social networking websites and blogs for both professional and personal use. These resources are used by the Commission as a professional tool, however access for employees on a personal basis should be reserved for break times or lunch.
- 4.4. Authorised staff will have unrestricted access to social media / networking websites. As the Commission has an active Twitter Account, there is a mechanism in place that allows the monitoring and investigation of both current and future social media content involving the Commission.
- 4.5. Unless it is for work purposes and the appropriate authorisation has been obtained, the use of social media / networking sites is **prohibited** at all times on Commission issued mobile phones and electronic devices.
- 4.6. Authorised staff will have access to the Twitter Application on Commission issued mobile phones and electronic devices (Currently Apple iPhones and Microsoft Surface Tablets).
- 4.7. The Commission **prohibits** the use of social media on personal mobile phones and electronic devices (such as i-pads, tablets, etc) by employees during work hours and on work premises unless authorised to do so.
- 4.8. Employees that engage in social media / networking should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on the Commission's behalf or make reference to sensitive aspects of the Commission's work. The Commission reserves the right to request that employees avoid certain subjects, withdraw or delete certain posts, and to remove inappropriate comments that may reflect badly on the Commission and its work.
- 4.9. The Commission will also find the following use or behaviour on these websites outside of work hours / premises unacceptable:

- Making reference to the name of the organisation, location of the office or any references to your job;
- Promoting any views that will negatively impact the reputation of the Commission which seeks to serve equally various members of the community;
- Postings should not include the Commission's logo or trademarks;
- Using social networks to send offensive or harassing material to other users;
- Publishing defamatory and/or knowingly false material about the Commission, your colleagues and/or our clients on social networking sites, 'blogs' (online journals), 'wikis' and any online publishing format;
- Revealing or selling confidential information about the Commission in a personal online posting, upload or transmission - including financial information and information relating to our clients, business plans, policies, staff and/or internal discussions.
- Media/networking postings should not disclose or sell any information that is confidential or proprietary to the Commission or to any third party that has disclosed information to the company.

4.10. Social media / networking engagement and postings must respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws.

Blogging

4.11. Use of the Commission's systems and work mobile phones to engage in blogging is **prohibited** at all times. The use of personal mobile phones and electronic devices for blogging is **prohibited** during work hours or on work premises. If an employee participates in blogging using personal mobile phones or systems, outside of work hours and work premises, they should adhere to the following:

- Employees are prohibited from revealing any confidential or proprietary information, trade secrets or any other corporate material when engaged in blogging outside of work hours;
- Employees shall not engage in any blogging that may harm or tarnish the image, reputation and/or goodwill of the Commission and/or any of its employees and/or clients;
- Employees are also prohibited from making any discriminatory, disparaging, defamatory or harassing comments when blogging or otherwise engaging in any conduct prohibited in the Commission's **Harassment Policy**;
- Employees may not attribute personal statements, opinions or beliefs to the Commission when engaged in blogging;

- If an employee is expressing his or her beliefs and/or opinions in blogs, the employee may not, expressly or implicitly, represent themselves as an employee or representative of the Commission;
- Employees assume any and all risk associated with blogging; and
- The Commission's trademarks, logos and any other intellectual property may also not be used in connection with any blogging activity.

Monitoring

4.12. Where applicable all Commission employees should adhere to the restrictions in place and take cognisance of the prohibited activities in the Commission's **Internet and Email Policy**.

Requests for Social Media Access

4.13. Any Commission employee, who requires access to social media / networking websites for work purposes, should place a request in writing to their Line Manager.

4.14. All staff requiring access to social media / networking websites for work purposes, will be required to complete the Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding at Annex B.

5. Compliance with this Policy

5.1. Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

5.2. Additionally, the Commission may at its discretion seek legal remedies for damages incurred as a result of any violation. The Commission may also be required by law to report certain illegal activities to the proper enforcement agencies.

6. Policy Review

6.1. The social media policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and will be provided to the Board for approval.

7. Variation

7.1. The Commission reserves the right to vary this Policy as it deems appropriate to include compliance with any legal requirements.

Annex A - Social Media – user guide

- 1.1. The use of social media by the Commission for Victims and Survivors is essential for meeting the objectives in the 2016-17 Communications Strategy, which are to:
 - Use the communications function of the CVS to drive forward the lasting legacy commitment for victims and survivors
 - Raise public awareness of the CVS corporately and the work it carries out
 - Create a more proactive communications function.
- 1.2. Social media can be effective as a stand-alone communications tool, and can also complement other communications activity such as media releases, web posts, seminars, emails etc. Communicating via social media could help the Commission reach its target audience where traditional methods aren't so effective.
- 1.3. Target audiences include:
 - Victims & Survivors who are aware of the CVS but have not been effectively communicated with
 - 'Hidden victims' with no or limited knowledge or exposure to the CVS
 - Wider civic society who have disengaged or disinterested on impact of conflict
 - Media
 - External stakeholders
 - Internal stakeholders
- 1.4. Currently, the commission has two active social media accounts – Twitter and YouTube. It has been proposed that a Facebook page will be set up. It is envisaged that we will use other social media platforms such as Google + and Vimeo in the future.

Considerations for content

- 1.5. It is important to maintain the appropriate 'tone' of the Commission when posting – social media is less formal than other platforms but we need to choose our language carefully.
 - Text should be edited to suit the medium, e.g use shorter sentences, add hyperlinks to longer content etc.
 - Careful consideration should be given when sharing posts from other organisations – they should be aligned with the general mission and vision of the Commission.
 - As part of our engagement activity, we want to be seen to support our stakeholders and encourage their achievements.

- When sharing, liking or retweeting, keep in mind the need for balance – don't share or retweet posts from the same type of organisation while ignoring another's
- Photo captions must be accurate and permission sought from those pictured.
- Links should be created to bring the user back to the main Commission website.

Sharing or retweeting

1.6. If you're creating a post/writing a tweet – be mindful of defamation.

1.7. The CIPR (Chartered Institute of Public Relations) defines Defamation as follows:

Defamation is the act of making a statement about a person or company that is considered to harm reputation, for example by lowering others' estimation of the person or company, or by causing them to lose their rank or professional standing. If the defamatory statement is written down (in print or online) it is known as libel. If it is spoken, it is known as slander. There are exceptions to this – for example, posting a defamatory statement online or recording it on a podcast would both be examples of libel.

1.8. Even if you are retweeting, liking or sharing a social media post, there's still a risk of defamation – so check carefully before linking to other online sources

- Consider whether a statement can be proved before writing or using it (in print or online) – in English law, the onus is on the person making the statement to establish its truth
- Speculating or adding the term 'allegedly' to online content that links to or repeats defamatory information does not exempt it from the law

Responding to negative posts

1.9. The nature of social media means it is interactive. While we welcome feedback on our services from stakeholders and the general public, we must be prepared to respond to difficult questions and comments.

1.10. In the Facebook page, settings will be adjusted to ensure content can be shared but comments will be 'disabled' to mitigate risk. If however, a negative post is discovered on Twitter, there are steps to deal with it.

- Assess - Is it positive or negative?
- Evaluate - Is it true?
- Respond - Invite the individual to contact the Commission via email/post, or if they are making a complaint, issue them with guidance on our complaints process (via website link).
- Another option is to respond with a Direct Message.

- If it is a question, respond with our policy position – with a link to the appropriate part of the website
 - If it's a negative comment on what we do (with no basis on fact) - monitor but do not respond
 - If it's a mistaken comment on what we do – gently respond to clarify
 - Ask yourself – will responding to the tweet help answer their question, or will it annoy them?
- 1.11. **Don't block the individual - if they are intent on trolling the account, they will just come back with a new identity!**
- 1.12. It's not advisable to delete negative comments on social media channels unless they contravene the terms and conditions of the social platforms containing them (e.g. racial hatred comment on a Facebook Page status update).
- 1.13. If we do delete comments then we should direct our social media followers to the policy of each channel – Twitter and Facebook. Here is a link to the Facebook policy: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/communitystandards>
- 1.14. The diagram below is a useful guide on responding to tweets:

DISCOVER:

SOCIAL MEDIA POST IS DISCOVERED.
IS IT POSITIVE?

YES

NO

EVALUATE:

IS IT TRUE?

Y

N

TROLLING

Does the person have a profile, blog, or website dedicated to bashing others?

N

Y

INFLAMED

Is the post a rant, joke, ridicule, or satire?

N

MISGUIDED

Are there erroneous facts in the post?

Y

N

UNHAPPY

Is the post a result of a negative customer experience?

Y

N

RESPOND:

MONITOR ONLY

Avoid responding to specific posts; monitor for relevant information & comments.

FIX THE FACTS

Respond with factual information and cite with links to sources.

GENTLY CORRECT

Thank them for their feedback, and gently correct the facts.

RESTORE

Rectify the situation directly if possible, point to where help can be obtained, and/or direct to customer support.

FINAL EVALUATION

Will responding help the poster and/or readers (e.g., a clarification)?

N

Y

LET IT STAND

If the original post is positive, respond with gratitude and add value to the conversation. If it is negative, no response is needed.

CONSIDERATIONS:

TRANSPARENCY

Disclose your connection to the business.

JUST THE FACTS

Stick to the facts and cite your sources by including links to reference material.

TIMELINESS

Respond in a timely manner, but take time to formulate a careful response & have it double-checked as needed.

TONE

Respond in a tone that reflects the mission and values of your company.

RESPECT

Always respond with gratitude, gentleness, and respect whether or not the individual responds in kind. Never "stoop" to an offensive level with your language.

Annex B



Acknowledgement of Receipt and Understanding

I hereby certify that I have read and fully understand the contents of the Commission for Victims and Survivors Social Media Policy.

I certify that I will adhere to the guidance and training provided by the Commission for Victims and Survivors in the safe, responsible and ethical use of Social Media

I acknowledge that the Commission reserves the right to modify or amend its policies at any time without prior notice.

These policies do not create any promises or contractual obligations between the Commission and its employees. My signature below certifies my knowledge, acceptance and adherence to the Commission's policies, rules, regulations and procedures.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____