



Social Media Policy

Category:	Administration
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PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish the University's guidelines on the use of social media by agents of the University acting in that capacity, to safeguard the identity of the University online.

OVERVIEW

Social Media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The use of social media by University staff, faculty, and administration as a communications tool to connect with current, former, and prospective students is encouraged.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all University employees or other University stakeholders communicating via social media as agents of the University. This policy is not intended to stifle or suppress the academic freedom of any University Staff or Faculty member, and we recognize their rights to publish content in the manner that they see fit on their own personal and/or professional pages. This policy governs specifically those pages that represent Algoma University and its departments, groups, or affiliated organizations.

POLICY

General Recommendations

Transparency

- Be honest about your identity.
- If you are authorized by your supervisor to represent Algoma U in social media, say so.
- If you choose to post about Algoma U on your personal time, please identify yourself as an Algoma U faculty, staff member or student.

Accuracy

- Verify information with a source first rather than have to post a correction or retraction later.
- Cite and link to your sources whenever possible.
- If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community and will, in turn, earn Algoma U respect if you are posting on behalf of Algoma U.

Respectfulness

- Be constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.
- Do not take a personal opinion and pass it off as Algoma U's opinion

Thoughtfulness

- There is no such thing as a "private" social media site.
- Archival systems save information even if you delete a post.
- If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it is wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

Confidentiality

- Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Algoma U, its students, its alumni, or its employees.
- Follow all provincial and federal laws regarding confidential information.
- Follow all Algoma U policies and protocols regarding authorization to post information.
- As a guideline, don't post anything that you would not present at a conference.

Liability

- You are legally liable for what you post on your own site and improper posting can lead to liability for copyright infringement, defamation, libel, or obscenities.
- Do not use the Algoma U logo, athletic logo, or any other Algoma U marks or images on your personal online sites.
- Do not use Algoma U's name to promote or endorse any product or cause, or political party or candidate.

PROCEDURES

Social Media Outlets

While we have identified four prominent social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram) within this policy, we understand that these may be replaced by other social media outlets over time, and advise that the general principles stated within this document are applicable to any and all social media outlets.

Guidelines for the Use of Facebook

The following guidelines were drafted in an effort to address use of the Facebook social networking site by the University and its departments. It is important to understand that use of Facebook can create numerous issues for the University.

For example, most people do not realize that by posting University content to Facebook, they authorize Facebook to make copies of the University content posted and to use the content for virtually any purpose.¹

In addition, copyright claims could be asserted against the University if a department inadvertently posted a picture or video to which a third party claims a copyright. Posting of inappropriate content, even if unauthorized, could subject the University to embarrassment or worse.

It is important that “official” use of Facebook by University staff adheres to appropriate guidelines intended to minimize such risks. Questions regarding the use of Facebook or these guidelines should be referred to the Director of Marketing and Communications for Algoma University at Extension 4120.

Facebook Pages

It is generally preferable that information about events, news, or initiatives of the University and its departments be posted to the official Algoma University Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/algomau. The official Facebook Page has been in existence since 2009 and comprises the largest online community of Algoma U students, faculty and staff, as well as interested members of the broader community. As such, it will always provide a larger audience and more opportunities for interaction and viral dissemination of information than a newly-created page that has yet to build its own community.

If a department has a strong strategic rationale for the creation its own presence on Facebook separate from the official Algoma U Facebook Page, that presence must be created as an official “Facebook Page” rather than as a group or a personal profile. A Facebook Page is a profile used by an entity (i.e. a non-individual) for business purposes. Such pages may only be created by authorized representatives of the University.

¹ While a broad “license” to use the content is needed by Facebook to enable it to carry out its services on the site, the terms of the Facebook site at the time of this writing make clear that by posting on the site, you automatically grant to the company “non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook.”

In order to comply with Facebook terms and conditions, and enable the University to track authorized University pages, any department wishing to create such a page must provide the Director of Marketing and Communications with the name and contact information for the individual(s) who will be authorized by the Department to create, operate, monitor and edit the Facebook Page on an ongoing basis (i.e. the "Page Administrator"). Students may not be named as Page Administrators. Any changes in the designated Page Administrator(s) must be promptly communicated to Marketing and Communications.

In addition, the department's initial page creator must include an appropriate representative of Marketing and Communications as an additional Page Administrator. Although Marketing and Communications does not intend to actively engage in maintaining department pages, this designation will enable Marketing and Communications to properly track University Facebook Pages and respond more quickly in the event of a problem, such as the unavailability or departure of the staff member who has administrative control of the page.

Students will, from time to time, create Facebook groups. Any such groups using a University trademark in the name of the group should be brought to the attention of the Marketing and Communications department, and a member of which may request to join the group for the purposes of monitoring. Any group that uses a University trademark without allowing access by Marketing and Communications will prompt a request to Facebook to be removed as an unauthorized use of a University trademark.

Posting of Content

The following issues should be considered prior to posting content to a Facebook Page (e.g., text, a photograph, or video):

General Content Issues

Remember that content posted may be redistributed through the Internet and other media channels and may be viewed by the general public. If deleted or modified, older versions may continue to exist online. Content should not be posted unless it furthers the University's education, teaching and research mission. Share only information that is appropriate for the public.

- In order to avoid discrepancies and minimize the need for updating, Facebook Pages should not be used to post detailed policy or procedure information, for example, program admission criteria. Rather, users should be directed to the official University publications for such information.
- Do not include any personally identifiable information that can be used to locate someone offline. This includes anyone's screen name, personal photo, hobbies, identification numbers such as social insurance numbers or student ID's, addresses and phone numbers (other than an authorized business address or business phone number).
- Do not upload, post, transmit, share, store or otherwise make publicly available on the Site any private information of any third party, including, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, Social Insurance Numbers and credit card numbers;

- Generally speaking, content should not be posted if it depicts a dangerous activity, unless approved by the Director of Marketing and Communications. If approved, a legal warning/disclaimer may be appropriate. Consult Marketing and Communications for assistance.
- Content must not be posted if it is not clearly suitable for all ages.
- Do not post content that could create a security risk for the University. Examples include but are not limited to images of restricted access research areas and information technology facilities.
- Do not post content that shows (or may be perceived to show) someone getting hurt, attacked or humiliated, that might be considered racist, bigoted or demeaning to a particular group of individuals, that depicts activity that is (or may be perceived to be) illegal, for example drug use, or that could otherwise compromise the reputation of the University.

Use of University marks

Pages should feature the department's official name. Departments also are encouraged to use photographs that depict attractive features of the campus and campus life.

Note that use of University marks, such as logos and graphics, must be approved by the Marketing and Communications Department. Questions regarding the use of University marks should be directed to the Director of Marketing and Communications for Algoma University at Extension 4120.

Use of copyrighted or proprietary materials

When publishing music, art, copyrighted photographs or texts, snippets of copyrighted video, or information considered to be a trade secret by a University contractor:

- The University would have to secure written permission prior to using/incorporating any copyrighted or proprietary materials. Questions regarding the appropriateness of a posting should be addressed to the Director of Marketing and Communications.
- The safest course is to use only materials created by the University for such purposes. Contact Marketing and Communications for assistance.

Use of people's images

Generally speaking, prior permission (i.e. a release) must be obtained from individuals whose images are identifiable. For that reason, it is always best to use content, such as photographs or videos, provided by Marketing and Communications specifically for this purpose. Assistance with releases, or answers to questions about exceptions to the requirement for a release, can be obtained from the Marketing and Communications Department.

- Do not post content that might be embarrassing to an individual or that could be construed as placing an individual in a bad or false light.

- Do not post content that might cause someone to believe that his/her name, image, likeness or other identifying aspect of his/her identity is being used for commercial purposes without permission.
- Special care must always be taken when dealing with images of “special populations,” e.g., minors, health care patients, research subjects. Stringent legal requirements apply. Generally speaking, such images should never be used in this type of context.
- Commercial use, e.g., sales of merchandise: The provision of on-line services or the sale of University publications, products or paraphernalia via “E-commerce” is only permitted in accordance with University policies and procedures. Contact Marketing and Communications for more information.

Collecting User Information

University departments should not use Facebook to collect personal information of users, as Facebook terms and conditions impose significant requirements and restrictions on the collection of personal information of users. In the case of minors, significant additional penalties can apply to violations.

Other Do’s and Don’ts

- Pages must be monitored and updated on an ongoing basis by the departments or units that create them to enable rapid response to any problems that may arise and to ensure an engaging, interesting environment for visitors. To be effective, pages must be dynamic and will require updating more frequently than a Web site. A stale page will likely cause more damage to the image of an entity than having no page at all.
- Posting Share buttons on a University Web site: A “Share Link” is a button and/or a text link appearing on a web page that, upon being clicked by a user, enables the launch of a sharing mechanism through which users can share with others or post to their own member profile, links and content from that page. Use of such links is permissible and users should consult with Marketing and Communications for details.
- Remember that the privacy of student education records is protected by law. Generally, the university must have written permission from a student in order to release any information from a student's education record. In order to comply, the University’s email system (and not Facebook) must be used when communicating about an issue involving a specific student.

Questions and Reporting Problems:

Facebook accepts complaints regarding abuse and other issues, for example harassing messages, via hyperlinks placed throughout Facebook’s Web site. This can be done via “Report” links below a piece of content, or by locating the appropriate links on the Facebook “help” page. Problems or concerns regarding the use of Facebook or a University Facebook Page should be reported immediately to Marketing and Communications.

Guidelines for the Use of Twitter

Algoma University has an official Twitter account at www.twitter.com/algomau , maintained by Marketing and Communications. It is preferable that University departments channel appropriate Twitter announcements through this account via Marketing and Communications to take advantage of the growing community of “followers” already in place.

If a department wishes to create its own Twitter account, Marketing and Communications should be notified about the new account so that it can be “followed” by @algomau , both to ensure that Marketing and Communications can monitor “tweets”, and to allow @algomau to “re-tweet” announcements when appropriate. Similarly, newly created accounts should always “follow” the @algomau account, and should always include the @algomau handle so that Marketing and Communications is aware of the tweet and can re-tweet if appropriate.

When using Twitter, please keep in mind that:

- Content should not be posted unless it furthers the University’s education, teaching and research mission. Share only information that is appropriate for the public.
- While tweets can be deleted from a Twitter homepage, those tweets have already been disseminated to all of the account’s followers and potentially re-tweeted to numerous other users. It is therefore important to ensure that information is both accurate and appropriate before it is posted
- A Twitter account is not very useful unless it has a substantial number of followers. A good way to increase the number of followers for a new account is to seek out the Twitter accounts of people and institutions that should be interested in your tweets and begin to follow them. Often they will reciprocate.

Guidelines for the Use of YouTube

Algoma University has an official YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/user/algomauniversity or www.algomau.ca/youtube.

Some departments or programs may desire to have a separate channel to promote their own activities and initiatives. When a department or program creates its own YouTube channel, the Director of Marketing and Communications must be provided with the name and contact information of the individual(s) who will be authorized by the Department to administer that channel. Students may not be named as YouTube channel administrators. Any changes in the designated channel administrator(s) must be promptly communicated to Marketing and Communications.

In addition, when a department creates a separate YouTube channel, an appropriate representative of Marketing and Communications must be included as an additional channel administrator. This designation will enable Marketing and Communications to properly track University YouTube channels and respond more quickly in the event of a problem, such as the unavailability or departure of the staff member who has administrative control of the channel.

As with other online initiatives, content should not be posted to a University YouTube channel unless it furthers the University's education, teaching and research mission. Share only information that is appropriate for the public.

Guidelines for the Use of Instagram

Algoma University has an official Instagram account with the handle @algomau, maintained by Marketing and Communications. Marketing and Communications is constantly monitoring social media trends to see which new platforms might benefit the University.

Some departments or programs may desire to have a separate Instagram account to promote their own activities and initiatives. When a department or program creates its own Instagram account, the Director of Marketing and Communications must be provided with the name and contact information of the individual(s) who will be authorized by the Department to administer that account. Students may not be named as Instagram administrators, but may be authorized to post photos to department accounts. Any changes in the designated account administrator(s) must be promptly communicated to Marketing and Communications.