Social Media Guidelines for Students

Coventry University Group

Coventry University

Social Media at University

For just about everyone, social media has become an important part of everyday life, but it's not always used in class to support students. Social media has great potential to increase collaboration, connection and understanding, and with good knowledge of the principles surrounding social media and its uses, you can use it effectively in your learning. These guidelines will help you better understand the most effective ways to use social media in university, be it by running a blog, chatting with friends or collaborating on a project with your peers.

Your teaching staff may direct you to certain social media platforms while you study, and you should make sure you understand the full extent of what they do before you start using them. This means you should read all the terms, conditions and privacy policies, and listen to what your instructor has to say about why you should use the website. Don't forget most sites offer a way to opt-out of tracking technologies used to gather your data!

Sometimes you will have to use social media for your course; if this is the case then you will always be given an opt-out alternative to use, you can contact you Module Leader to arrange this and it will not affect your grade in any way.

"Social Media" sites can include a range of different services online, which include but are not limited to:

- Blogs (e.g. Medium, WordPress)
- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia, WikiAnswers)
- Social networking platforms (e.g. Twitter, Facebook)
- Photo-sharing (e.g. Flickr, Instagram)
- Online Forums (e.g. Reddit, Quora)
- Messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp, WeChat)

Your Data on Social Media Platforms

You as the student are the "Data Controller", and are ultimately responsible for the protection of your data outside of university-controlled websites, which means you should **fully read the terms and conditions of websites and services you sign up to use** before you start posting to them.

Since the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect this year, most online services offer a way to opt-out of "cookies" and other methods websites use to track your activity online. Be conscious of how your data may be stored or used across the web, and adjust the settings of your browser to ensure you are being secure.

Copyright and Social Media

Copyright is the legal right that a content creator has over their original work. The creator can decide what they and others can and cannot do with the content they have created. This can cover any type of media, including but not limited to: photographs, videos, essays, music or any other media, and helps stop things like plagiarism from happening. The creator of content that you wish to share may not wish for it to be used in that way. This falls under copyright requirements, which can restrict the use and sharing of content, so check what - if any - copyright is attached to the content you want to share. For more information, check out the Social Media Policy section on copyright/intellectual property.

Assessment and Social Media

Assessment is an important part of your course, and social media can be a part of it, for example you may be asked to build a blog website using WordPress instead of a reflective essay. If for any reason you do not want to use a social media site for your course, you can request an alternative from your Module Leader.

Appropriate Conduct on Social Media

Be respectful (and legal!) when you use social media websites; as a rule, don't do anything against either the terms of the social media website or the University's codes of conduct. This means not engaging in behaviour that is **discriminatory, offensive, harassing, bullying, defamatory or breaches someone's privacy/copyrights.** This is not a complete list, but using some common sense and following codes of conduct will ensure your activity is appropriate.

In addition to this, be professional when using social media sites, and don't forget that your posted content may be shared wider than your intended audience, so ensure your posts are appropriate for all users. If you have an issue/problem with the course or staff, do not state these on social media where it would be more appropriate to take these up with a member of staff officially and the University can take action.

Concerns about unacceptable conduct on social media sites must be reported to the Social Media Team (socialmedia.mea@coventry.ac.uk) who will take appropriate action and escalate as required. This includes any of the above stated unacceptable behaviour, and anything covered in the Social Media Policy, which can be found on the Student Portal at: https://share.coventry.ac.uk/students/Registry.

Concerns about unacceptable conduct on teaching and learning sites must be reported to the relevant Module Leader, Course Director, Faculty or Campus Registrar who will take appropriate action and escalate as required. This also covers the actions mentioned above.

For any other concerns, contact your tutor in the first instance.

Golden Rules

For the social media platform you are looking to use, find out what personal information is accessible by it before you use it so you're aware of what happens to your data, this is usually in the terms and conditions/privacy policy of their website.

Remember, the University is not responsible for your data on the platform or what the website chooses to do with that data, so be aware of this before signing up to use the platform.

Act respectfully to others on the platform, as you represent the University and yourself, and your activity may be shared elsewhere.

Make sure your passwords are strong, secure and never shared with anyone else.

Respect copyrights on content you share/use, which may mean not using the content if you do not have permission to.

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