

Trinity Western University – Social Media Guidelines

Final Draft September 4, 2009

Social Media is changing the way in which we communicate. It's augmenting the length and breadth of our message and opening communication to more unique audiences. Trinity Western University is a big supporter of social media and has put together a set of guidelines and strategies that will help its staff and faculty harness this new social technology.

While all Trinity Western University employees are welcome to participate in Social Media, we expect everyone who participates in online commentary to understand and to follow these simple but important guidelines. The goal is simple: to participate online in a respectful and relevant way that represents the spirit, community and intentions of TWU.

There are many Social Media sites. Facebook and Twitter are two of the largest but there are also blogs, networking sites like LinkedIn, and picture and video sharing sites such as Youtube and Flickr.

Before starting a social media account for your department, interested employees and/or administrators of the account must first fill out the *Social Media Brief* and submit it to Ucomm. This will determine if an account is needed and if it will benefit the department and the university as a whole. Administrators may realize that what they would be messaging about is already being done on other accounts throughout the university. Social media is an extension of TWU's message and while it may be novel to have an account, the University's intention is not to create confusion for our audience by having too many accounts. There is however opportunity to become an administrator on present accounts. This will be determined after submitting the Social Media Brief.

While it may be obvious – remember you are engaging in social media on behalf of Trinity Western University. As an employee you understand the University's commitment to respect the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of ideas. Your reputation and TWU's are best served when you express yourself professionally.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

- 1) **Starting.** Before beginning to set up a social media account start by filling out the *Social Media Brief*. It will ask you specific questions about your purpose, goals and objectives, target audience and how you plan to administer the account.
- 2) **Register.** Please register your account and administrator(s) with University Communications. This will help TWU track multiple accounts, support your endeavours, and will keep account of passwords in case administrators change.
- 3) Do **NOT** use the word "official" in your *Bio*. The use of "official" is reserved for Trinity Western University proper and the TWU Spartans department.
- 4) **Choosing a name.** When choosing a name incorporate this format: TWU *name* ie: TWUstudentlife etc.
- 5) **Visual Identity.** Consult the Social Media Visual Identity Guide on the intranet for templates to help make your site as professional as possible.
- 6) **Be transparent.** Be honest about your identity. Never hide your identity for the purpose of promoting TWU through social media.

- 7) **Be accurate.** Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first rather than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that's how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.
- 8) **Be respectful.** You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while responding to tweets from others.
- 9) **Be a valued member.** Make sure you are contributing valuable insights specific to your account. Don't post information about topics that your audience is not interested in reading. Do not self-promote. Self-promoting behaviour is viewed negatively and can lead to loss of privileges.
- 10) **Think before you post.** There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. Be very aware of what you post as it reflects the TWU.
- 11) **Maintain confidentiality.** Do not post confidential or proprietary information about TWU, its students, its alumni or fellow employees. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties TWU may be in litigation with. Use good ethical judgment and follow university policies and the law.
- 12) **Management.** Assign an administrator who can regularly monitor postings and content on a regular basis. Aim to update 1-2 times a week at minimum, and no more than 5 times a day.
- 13) **Crisis Communication.** Never participate in social media when the topic being discussed may be considered a crisis situation. Refer all social media activity around crisis topics to Media Relations.

Note: All media inquiries must be referred to the Senior Media Relations Specialist or VP of Communications.

Questions? Contact Media Relations at extension 3369

TWITTER STRATEGY FOR TWU

Twitter is at its essence a micro-blogging site. Tweets are small sentences consisting of pictures and text not exceeding 140 characters. As a user of Twitter you can follow others as well as have others follow you and build your following by updating frequently with information that is interesting to your followers. TWU has two official Twitter Accounts: They are **TrinityWestern**, and **TWUSpartans**.

These two official accounts aim to give followers a snap-shot of the goings-on of the university ranging from university news and student activities to sports scores and institutional news.

Specifically the **TrinityWestern** account is tweeting about university news, announcements, undergraduate and graduate information, student life led activities and sports information. It's intended to give a solid snapshot of the university. This is administered by a team from various departments on campus including media relations, enrolment management and student life.

TWUSpartans account is tweeting about all things Spartans including scores, news on players, coaches and the university sports industry. This is administered by the TWU Sports Information Director.

The goal of these two accounts, who share tweets with each other, is to collaborate and promote the entire University.

Before starting a twitter account, administrators must fill out the Social Media Brief and submit it to Ucomm. This will determine if a twitter account is needed and if it will benefit the department and the university as a whole. Administrators may realize that what they would be tweeting is actually already being done on other accounts. Social media is an extension of our message and while it may be novel to have an account, the University's intention is not to create confusion for our audience and/or followers by having too many accounts.

There is opportunity to become an administrator on present accounts. This will be determined after submitting the Social Media Brief.

GENERAL TWU TWITTER GUIDELINES

If you feel that your department would like to start a Twitter account, and has been given the okay, we've created a set of guidelines to support you in this process. While it may be obvious – remember you are engaging in social media on behalf of Trinity Western University. As an employee you understand the University's commitment to respect the dignity of others and to the civil and thoughtful discussion of ideas. Your reputation and TWU's are best served when you express yourself professionally.

- 14) **Starting.** Before beginning to set up a Twitter account start by filling out the *Social Media Brief*. It will ask you specific questions about your purpose, goals and objectives, target audience and how you plan to administer the account.
- 15) **Register.** Please register your Twitter account and administrator(s) with University Communications. This will help TWU track multiple twitter accounts,

support your endeavours, and will keep account of passwords in case administrators change.

- 16) Do **NOT** use the word “official” in your *Bio*. The use of “official” is reserved for TrinityWestern & TWUSpartan accounts.
- 17) **Choosing a name.** When choosing a name incorporate this format: TWU *name* ie: TWUstudentlife etc.
- 18) **Visual Identity.** Consult the Social Media Visual Identity Guide on the intranet for templates to help make your twitter site as professional as possible.
- 19) **Be transparent.** Be honest about your identity. Never hide your identity for the purpose of promoting TWU through social media.
- 20) **Be accurate.** Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It’s better to verify information with a source first rather than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that’s how you build community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly. This will earn you respect in the online community.
- 21) **Be respectful.** You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while responding to tweets from others.
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