

St. Petersburg College Social Networking and Media Guidelines

Guidelines have been developed for SPC regarding the use of social networking and media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and college blogs.

Introduction

These guidelines are intended to instruct and enable faculty, staff, students, and alumni who create and administer social networking pages on behalf of SPC. They do not pertain to, nor do they constrain, scholarly, academic or pedagogical use of social media. The goal of social networking is to foster a virtual community for various audiences.

SPC's official website remains the college's central communications vehicle. Social networking and media sites, however, should be used to enhance communications with the college's audiences. Therefore, the college maintains an interest in how it is portrayed on them.

Social Media Basics

The goal of social networking is to foster relations with SPC students and others and encourage them to be advocates for the college.

Purposes of college social networking sites

- Foster interactivity
- Share information
- Create a community
- Support and enable recruiting, retention and alumni relations

When to use social networking

- Use social media to develop long-term relationships
- Use it only when you are prepared with a staff member(s) assigned to develop and respond:
 1. Content is critical and updated information is important in creating a dialogue.
 2. Quick response times are required to appropriately use such social media as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, etc.
- Have established social media objectives
- Have established metrics for success

How to use social networking

- Be transparent
- Be open
- Be authentic
- Avoid traditional marketing plays
- Use keyword rich content
- Develop talking points to guide response

What social media to use

- Use the media in which your target audience will likely be found
- Search for communities where your audience can be found
- Search sites for people mentioning your group

Social networking guidelines

- Don't disparage anyone, the institution or its competitors.
- Always be polite and don't engage in impolite dialogue.
- If you have concerns about responding to a post, consult with management as soon as possible.
- Business and pleasure should not be mixed. You want posts to be about “appropriate” personal experiences.
- Never ask anyone to write a fake endorsement or something they do not believe.
- Never use an off-topic comment for self-promotional intent.
- Use extreme care when communicating with minors or blogs intended to be read by minors.
- Provide a means of reaching you via another communication method, such as email.
- Disclose who you are, who you work for and any other relevant affiliations from the beginning:
 1. Never use a false or obscured identity or pseudonym.
 2. If aliases or role accounts are used for employee privacy, security, or other business reasons, these identities should clearly indicate SPC and provide means for two-way communication with that alias.
- Do not provide confidential information about SPC or any of its students, faculty or staff.
- Do not delete comments unless they are spam, off-topic or defamatory.
- Use spell check.
- Correct mistakes promptly.

There is one area of official policy regarding social networking sites and that is to exercise freedom of speech with responsibility. If activity on a social networking site is reported as violating campus policy as outlined in the college catalog, it will be investigated and handled according to the college disciplinary process. Faculty is guided in their roles as members and representatives of the campus community by the Faculty Handbook.

Privacy guidelines

The options for communicating and interacting online are advancing and changing at a fast pace. The college does not routinely monitor the use of electronic communications by students, faculty and staff on social media sites. However, it is within each individual community member's best interest to be aware of issues related to privacy online. These guidelines have been established to assist individual users in making good decisions to protect themselves.

- Be familiar with privacy options on social networking sites, email, blogs, etc.
- Set appropriate privacy guards for your personal comfort level.
- Be aware that no privacy option protects you 100% from personal information being shared beyond desired boundaries. Information shared online, even with the highest privacy settings (including emails intended for a specific individual or individuals), cannot be protected.
- Be aware that information posted online may be perceived differently depending on the viewer despite intended effect or outcome.
- Incidents reported to college officials that may violate campus policy will be investigated and handled according to the campus judicial process as described in the college catalog.

Best practices

These four recommendations provide a roadmap for constructive, respectful and productive use of SPC's social media accounts:

- **Be respectful** - Respect your audience and your coworkers. Take care not to engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the workplace. All SPC members can be viewed as representatives of the college, which can add significance to your public reflections on the organization.
- **Get your facts straight** - To ensure you are correctly representing SPC or its work consider reaching out to the relevant SPC staff member before posting material. This courtesy will help you provide your readers with accurate insights, especially when you are posting material outside your area of expertise.
- **Be mindful of your public image** - Consider the image you want to portray to the public. Be mindful that what you post may be viewed by parents, students, administrators, and community members, and may stay in the public eye for a long time.
- **Use your best judgment** - Remember there may be consequences to what you post. Consider your content carefully. If you are about to post something that makes you slightest bit uncomfortable, review these guidelines and think about whether to post the material.

Standards for appropriate conversation

SPC believes it is important that online conversations on its website and other social media tools remain professional and respectful. SPC monitors comments prior to posting to ensure compliance with its Social Networking and Media Guidelines. SPC reserves the right to decline to post comments, remove comments if they are inappropriate or otherwise violate the SPC Social Networking and Media Guidelines.

Reasons for removing or not approving comments

- The comment is not respectful.
- The comment is not relevant to the topic.
- There is reason to believe that the person is misrepresenting himself/herself.
- One person is dominating the conversation.
- The comment may be deemed obscene or include obscenities.
- The comment may be deemed defamatory.

Note the Legal Liability section of this document for more details.

Usage by student and alumni organizations and campus offices

SPC recognizes that student organizations, alumni organizations and campus offices may use various online media to communicate, promote, and inform others about their programs, services and activities. The guidelines above apply to all SPC affiliated online information. Groups choosing to use online services need to be aware that they are using the college's name and branding and that this can impact the image and reputation of specific individuals, the group and the college. SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office **MUST** be contacted before there is a launch of any social media account that will be considered an official account representing the college or its departments, programs or clubs.

Photo guidelines

Photos posted on social networking should be done so with the utmost care. Nothing posted online is private, and photos should be regarded as such. The following guidelines should be used when posting photos:

- Photos of children should not be posted without expressed consent from the parents. Even then such photos should be avoided.
- Care should be taken not to post photos of individuals who would object. This may involve obtaining the appropriate permissions.
- Photos posted on social networking sites must be appropriate. As a guideline, they should be photos that could be posted on the college's official website. Examples of photos that should be avoided include but are not limited to: photos involving alcohol, nudity, medical and hospital patients, and graphic scenes.
- Appropriate photo credits should be given. Social media sites still represent SPC, and any agreed-to credits must be maintained.

Copyright

Beware that intellectual property may be protected by copyright.

Administration

Multiple site administrators are recommended or at least two so that there is a back-up. A representative of SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office **MUST** be included as an administrator or be provided the password for a social media account considered an official account representing the college and its departments, programs or clubs.

Site maintenance and updates

The success of any website depends on keeping the content fresh and interesting. This is especially true in an organizational setting where outdated or stale sites can reflect poorly on the group and on the college as a whole. In addition, followers on Facebook pages and similar social networking sites are interested in receiving periodic updates. That's what gives your site value to them. Site managers should be aware that the success of any site depends on an ongoing commitment to making updates and engaging with the user community.

User guidelines for social networking and media

As a user, you agree NOT to –

- Upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any content that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive or harassing and/or brings unwanted attention toward members.
- Impersonate any person or entity including, but not limited to, a SPC official, forum leader, guide or host or falsely state or otherwise misrepresent your affiliation with a person or entity.
- Collect or store personal data about other users in connection with prohibited conduct.
- Upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any content that infringes any patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright or other proprietary rights of any party.
- Upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any unsolicited or unauthorized advertising, promotional materials or any other form of solicitation.
- Upload, post, email, transmit or otherwise make available any material that contains software viruses or any other computer code, files or programs designed to interrupt, destroy or limit the functionality of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment.
- Use obscene language or imagery, disrupt the normal flow of dialogue or otherwise act in a manner that negatively affects other users' ability to engage in real time exchanges.

Legal liability

You are personally responsible for the material that you post on SPC's social media sites. You can be held personally liable for any material deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous (whether pertaining to SPC, individuals, or any other company). In essence, you post material at your own risk. Outside parties actually can pursue legal action against you (not SPC) for postings.

- Do not post material that is illegal, sexually explicit, obscene, defamatory, derogatory, related to alcohol or drug use or in violation of copyright laws.
- Do not post any material regarding any student's educational record, or other confidential information regarding any student, whether you identify the student or not, as you may violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and may subject yourself to discipline and/or discharge.
- Our social media sites are not for commercial use. Any advertisements or other for-profit materials not authorized by SPC are strictly prohibited.
- SPC reserves all rights to refuse to post any material or remove any material that violates these guidelines, violates SPC policy or is otherwise inappropriate.

Company privileged Information

You may not post material regarding any confidential information related to SPC's policy, strategy, financials, members, etc. You may not use the SPC logo and/or trademarks without SPC's express written permission.

Press inquiries

Postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you, contact SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office at 727-302-6526.

Support for site managers

For more guidance or feedback on creating and maintaining social networking sites, please contact Social Media Manager Lise Fisher in Marketing and Strategic Communications Office at fisher.lise@spcollege.edu. She will guide you to the appropriate resource.

Guidelines for specific social media accounts

Some of the college's main social media platforms are blogs in WordPress, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Below are some guidelines for creating and maintaining these accounts. The college also is active in a variety of other social media platforms not listed here.

If there are any questions about using these main social media platforms or others, please contact Social Media Manager Lise Fisher in Marketing and Strategic Communications Office at fisher.lise@spcollege.edu.

Blog guidelines

The college maintains several blogs on a variety of topics in WordPress. A tutorial showing how to post on a WordPress blog is available at http://codex.wordpress.org/Writing_Posts. If you have an idea for an official college blog, contact SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office. A logo and title for the blog can be discussed at that time. Blogs should have a specific topic or focus and at least one dedicated blogger who routinely posts and checks content. An active blog should be updated regularly with at least one post a week. Contact information for the blogger generally is included with a blog. Often the tone of a blog post is conversational. A post's length can vary from several paragraphs to a few sentences depending on the nature of the post. Many include links or multimedia elements.

Facebook guidelines

The college has a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/stpetecollege. Before requesting to launch another page for a college department, program or club, consider sharing content on the college's existing page. It has an established audience interested in topics related to SPC and is routinely updated and moderated.

Remember that SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office **MUST** be contacted before there is a launch of any social media account that will be considered an official account representing the college or its departments and programs.

Like all social media accounts, a Facebook page needs to be routinely updated and monitored. It is recommended that new content be posted on the page daily Monday through Friday.

A representative of SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office **MUST** be made an administrator of any Facebook account considered an official account representing the college and its departments, programs and groups.

Use of the college logo on Facebook is not recommended. It already is used on the college's Facebook page and would cause confusion for multiple groups to use the identical logo.

Twitter guidelines

The college has a Twitter account at @spcnews. Before looking to launch an account, look at whether content can be shared on this existing account. It has a following and is regularly updated and moderated.

Remember that SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office **MUST** be contacted before there is a launch of any social media account that will be considered an official account representing the college or its departments and programs.

Like all social media accounts, a Twitter account needs to be routinely updated and monitored. It is recommended that new content be tweeted daily Monday through Friday. Tweets should include active links that point back to other content, generally what is on the college website. Other aspects of moderating a Twitter account include monitoring for spam, cultivating followers, and developing the use of hashtags.

A representative of SPC's Marketing and Strategic Communications Office **MUST** be provided the password and other information necessary to access and maintain any Twitter account considered an official account representing the college and its departments and programs. Twitter accounts should include a bio, a link to content on the college's website, and an appropriate image. For titles of Twitter accounts, it's recommended to use "SPC" for the first three letters, as appropriate, for consistency and best results in searches.

Use of the college logo on Twitter is not recommended. It is used on the college's Twitter account and would cause confusion for multiple groups to use the identical logo.