



# Social media guidelines



University of  
Lethbridge



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# Introduction

Social media has changed the way we communicate - as an institute and as individuals.

The University of Lethbridge has numerous audiences - students, staff, faculty, alumni, community partners and many others.

Social media allows us to not only broadcast information to our audience, but to engage them in conversations about what is important to them.

The University of Lethbridge encourages and supports the use of social media by employees to connect with students, fellow faculty and staff, alumni and other audiences.

This handbook provides guidance on how to set up and maintain a social media account, developing a strategic plan for social media and dealing with any potential issues than may arise, all while staying within previously established university guidelines.

Social media is constantly changing. As a result, this handbook will continue to evolve. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Strategic Communications and Marketing Unit at [communications@uleth.ca](mailto:communications@uleth.ca).

# Policies

Maintaining social media accounts on behalf of an institute, department or organization requires more planning than your personal account.

Social media at the University of Lethbridge is governed by the same policies that apply to other electronic communications. Read the policies online at [www.uleth.ca/policies](http://www.uleth.ca/policies) and familiarize yourself with them.

All social media sites have their own unique policies. Familiarize yourself with these policies.

For university affiliated accounts -

Each social media account will have an administrator assigned. This person will be accountable for the account, and will be the main contact for all issues regarding the account.

Inappropriate content will be removed by account administrators when requested by Strategic Communications and Marketing.

# Getting Started

Each social media platform offers something different for users, and appeals to a different demographic.

Although there are hundreds of social media sites, below is a list of sites that are the most beneficial for the University of Lethbridge -

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- YouTube

## Facebook

Facebook allows users to build an online community made up of people, organizations, brands and groups.

Users interact on the site by posting text, pictures and videos known as 'posts'. They also comment on, share and like posts from members of their community.

## Twitter

Using short, 140 character messages known as 'tweets', users can broadcast information to the world.

Users on the site follow other users and can also search for information using hashtags.

A hashtag is a word or phrase with the numeral sign before it. E.g. #ThisIsAHashtag.

## Instagram

Pictures are the main feature of Instagram. Users upload pictures, apply effects to them and then post them on the site with a caption and hashtags.

## LinkedIn

This site allows users to connect with other professionals. Think of it the 'Facebook of the working world.'

Users create a profile with their work experience, skills, past employers and references that is searchable by others

Organizations often use LinkedIn to post job listings and research candidates.

## YouTube

Videos are the backbone of YouTube, where users can find thousands of videos on any topic imaginable.

Users post videos, and other users are able to comment on the videos.

Before launching a social media account, it's important to think about what your plan is before you begin.

Brainstorm with members of your department when thinking about social media.

## Why social media?

Before launching a social media presence, spend time determining what you wish to gain through social media.

For example, do you wish to connect with potential students? Provide information to students and faculty? Showcase what your department is up to? All of the above?

Remember that the University's flagship social media accounts are available for your use. Staff in Strategic Communications and Marketing can send out information for you on these accounts.

## Administrators

Think about who will be responsible for the account.

It is fine to have many staff members contributing material to the account, but one person must be designated as the administrator.

This person will be responsible for the daily upkeep of the site (Posting content,

replying to messages etc.). They will also serve as the contact point for the account.

## Content

On social media, it's important to consider what kind of content you plan on posting.

Different sites have different needs for content, as detailed further in these guidelines. When you have established the goals for your social media account, you will be able to determine what kind of content you will develop, and what site would best serve your needs -

### Facebook

This site is a good 'all-in-one' social media platform - it allows you to reach a wide audience easily.

Facebook's algorithm for content display places more value on posts with pictures, links and videos.

A text-only post (E.g. a press release) will not get as many views as a post with other elements such as pictures

### Twitter

This site is meant for quick, easy to

digest news updates.

share work-related information  
and advertise job postings.

It is also useful for having  
conversations with followers.

Posts are limited to 140 characters,  
making it essential to condense  
information.

Twitter is best for units that have  
enough content to post throughout  
the day. Posting every few days  
will not engage your audience.

## Instagram

This site is a picture hosting  
site, and units that plan to use it  
must be prepared with enough  
photographic content to post.

Instagram is best for 'organic' shots  
- that is, shots that are not set up  
or posed (E.g. promotional shots  
used in your marketing materials).  
Users frequently upload photos  
directly from their smart phone  
onto the site.

## YouTube

For the university's purposes, all  
videos should be uploaded to our  
official YouTube channel.

## LinkedIn

This site is best for organizations  
that have a large workforce and a  
sizeable HR department. Users can

## Listen and observe

Before launching your social media account, it's a good idea to have a look at what other organizations are doing on their accounts.

Research other organizations on social media and see what is popular and appeals to users.

See what these organizations do, and note anything that you find interesting.

Observing is the best way to see what unique contribution you can make on social media.

## Maintenance

With social media, consistency is key. Although social media isn't as demanding as other communication channels, consider the time it will take to post content, view and respond to comments and monitor and see what other users are talking about.

## Analyze and adjust

After your account has been active for a while, it's essential to monitor what is happening on your account.

Analytic tools, such as Facebook Insights and Twitonomy, provide you easy to understand data on metrics such as when people are viewing your page, what content is the most popular and the demographics of your audience.

After reviewing the data, you can tweak your approach so that you are maximizing your social media reach.

# Measuring account success

It's important to keep track of a few critical numbers to gauge your impact within the online world.

## Analytics

Strategic Communications and Marketing will help you keep track of your social media success by sending you simple forms throughout the year.

Facebook has a free, built-in analytical platform called Facebook Insights. Insights will give you information that will help you understand what exactly is going on with your social media account.

For Twitter, there is a free website ([www.twitonomy.com](http://www.twitonomy.com)) that allows you to easily see how your account is doing.

For analytics on other social media platforms, such as Instagram or LinkedIn, please contact Strategic Communication and Marketing for assistance.

## Evaluation

After analyzing the data, it's essential to see if there any areas for improvement.

For example, you may notice that your posts get the most views in the morning.

In that case, plan to do the majority of your content posting in the mornings.

Also examine what content is popular with users. Is there a particular 'thing' (Behind the scenes videos, pictures, short videos) that is shared a lot, or that attracts a lot of comments?

# Technical Guidelines

ULethbridgeXXX, if applicable.

## Branding

For profile pictures and backgrounds, official university logos, colour schemes and photography should be used.

Please consult the Digital Asset Database for high-quality logos.

Using University logos and colour schemes helps to create a unified brand presence.

## Naming

When naming your account, please use the following guidelines.

### Facebook

Your account should be as follows  
- facebook.com/ULethbridgeXXX

E.g. facebook.com/  
ULethbridgeFacultyofEducation  
E.g. facebook.com/  
ULethbridgeCounsellingServices

This naming protocol helps users easily find the pages when searching Facebook.

### Other social networks

For other accounts, use

# Best Practices

## Across all platforms

### Be respectful

Anything posted on university-affiliated social media accounts reflects the University as a whole. Be respectful and professional at all times.

### Tone

Social media is unlike other traditional forms of marketing and communications in its tone.

It's acceptable to be less formal when using social media, compared to more traditional communication methods.

When addressing a user, it's acceptable to use their first name. For example, "Hey Lori, thanks for getting in touch with us. Can you give us some more details?"

### Listen

Being a listener on social media is essential. Observe online trends and conversations to maintain a clear understand of what is popular on social media.

### Be active

Social media requires constant attention and maintenance. If you don't have the time to check in at least a few times a day, reconsider investing in social media.

Remember, your social media site is only as relevant as your last post.

### Be timely

One of the great benefits of social media is the instant reach of the content you post.

With social media, it's more important to send out a small amount of information (A photo, a quote etc.) than waiting for enough information to send out at one time.

### Be Timeless

Think before you post - after all, everything on social media sites is available to the public and will last online forever. Don't let this stop you from being creative and having fun - just post content you would feel comfortable sharing in person.

### Interact

Broadcasting is boring. A vibrant

social media presence requires that you interact with other users - commenting, sharing, asking questions etc.

If you find yourself facing a comment or question you don't feel comfortable enough to answer (E.g. someone asks a specialized question you do not know the answer to), feel free to pass the issue along to someone who would know.

## Comments

The great thing about social media is that it allows large organizations, like the University of Lethbridge, to be personable to people.

Be prepared to accept and respond to comments, both positive and negative.

# Facebook Best Practices

## Events

Promote events by creating a Facebook event page. This allows you to track which users have sent their RSVP to the event, and makes it easier for people to see all the vital details in one location.

If the event requires registration or ticket purchase, add a note directing users to your website. E.g. “Thanks for signing up! Make sure you register/buy your tickets at [www.ulethbridge.ca](http://www.ulethbridge.ca).”

## Likes

If you wish, you can ‘like’ other pages on Facebook. Do not rely on this as a news source - when you are using Facebook on behalf of an organization, the page you will spend most of your time on does not show anything from pages you have liked.

Use common sense when liking pages. Your page will be a representation of the university. Do not like brands, companies, political parties or religious organizations that would reflect badly on the university.

## Links

When posting a link to an external

website, use [bitly.com](http://bitly.com).

Bitly is a free website that allows you to take a link and shorten it to a very short link. Sign up for an account, and use it to shorten your links.

Shortening your links makes your posts clean and clutter-free and Bitly allows you to see analytical data on the users who clicked on your link.

# Twitter Best Practices

your tweet -

E.g. - Great news! RT @ULethbridge  
Students are smartest in country,  
according to report.

## Hashtags

A hashtag, a pound sign (#) followed by a word or phrase, helps users find your content.

Monitor what hashtags prominent  
Twitter users in your field use.

Consult Page 13 for popular University-  
affiliated hashtags.

## Direct Messages

Use Direct Message for private  
conversations, dealing with negative  
issues, getting contact information and  
other off-topic discussions.

Avoid using automated direct messages.  
Users prefer a personalized message, not  
a robotic generic greeting.

## Links

Due to the 140 character limit on Tweets,  
it's important to shorten links. Use your  
Bitly account to shorten links.

## Retweet

Use the RT button rather than copying  
and pasting a tweet to avoid plagiarism .  
It's best to include a few words before the  
start of the RT to add some context to

# Other Networks

## Best Practices

### YouTube

The University of Lethbridge has an official YouTube channel where we upload videos.

For maximum visibility, videos should be uploaded onto the official university YouTube page.

To upload your video to the page, please contact Julia Mitchell, Marketing Specialist in the Strategic Communications and Marketing Unit.

### Instagram

Instagram relies on regular updates of engaging photos. Instagram is currently only available as a mobile app and is ideally viewed on your mobile device.

Therefore, photos do not have to be extremely high quality, rather they can be shot using a smart phone.

Applying hashtags to photos allows users to easily find them while searching the site. Refer to page 13 for popular hashtags related to the University of Lethbridge.

# Hashtags

## University of Lethbridge

specific

#ULethbridge

#ULeth

#ULethbridgeAlumni

#Pronghorns

## Geographical

#Lethbridge

#YQL

#AB

## Education

#ABPSE

#HigherEd

#ABed

#InspiringEd

#EdTech

## Other

Use [hashtags.org](https://hashtags.org) to find hashtags related to the topic you are tweeting about.

# Crisis Communications

If you are a University of Lethbridge staff member who is responsible for managing a social media account that represents a unit or department on campus, your account may be used in crisis communications, depending on the situation.

The Office of Communications in University Advancement requires access to your account(s). This access will strictly be used for using your account in the event of an emergency, and will not be used to monitor or advise on your activity.

Allowing Communications to have access to post to your account allows us to quickly share important information with the greater U of L community, ensuring that we reach as many people as possible.

Once you have established your account, please email [socialmedia@uleth.ca](mailto:socialmedia@uleth.ca) for further instructions on granting access to Communications.

