SOCIAL MEDIA BEST PRACTICES:
BUSINESS VS. PERSONAL USE

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REVIEW VT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY & WEBSITE

Why do we have a policy? *Policy No. 1030: policies.vt.edu/social-media-policy2.pdf*

- To support social media with the preservation and protection of Virginia Tech’s brand identity, integrity, and reputation, allowing University Relations to shut down non-compliant accounts more readily.
- To ensure compliance with VT policies, applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, among all social managers across campus.

Why do we have a website? [vt.edu/social-media]

- To offer social media support and guidance and maintain consistent and aligned external, digital communications to a wide audience from Virginia Tech.

What’s in the website?

- Overview of best practices covered here, with relevant resources and step-by-step instructions and downloadable guides, and access to the campus-wide social media managers Google Group for on-going discussions and sharing of knowledge about social and emerging technologies.
- University master brand and style requirements, including downloadable visual asset templates.
General Best Practices
HASHTAG USE AND TAGGING

Hashtags

- Fit within your post narrative when possible and tag at the end of a post, if you must.
- Use to amplify posts, tap into conversations and/or aggregate groups of posts to look back to later.
- Avoid excessive use and do your research.
- Capitalize each word to prevent confusion.
- Hashtag #Hokies and #VirginiaTech but be cautious when tagging on other words/creating new “brand” hashtags.

Tagging

- Fit within your post narrative when possible and tag at the end of a post in a “cc” manner, if you must.
- Use to amplify accounts, when applicable.
- Avoid excessive use.
- Verify and double-check the account you’re tagging in to see if it’s correct or if an account exists.
Know our main brand hashtags and their intended use. Don’t deviate too much or alter them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hashtag</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
<th>Instagram</th>
<th>When to use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#VirginiaTech</td>
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<tr>
<td>#UtProsim</td>
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<td>#Hokies</td>
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<td>#HokieLove</td>
<td>🏡</td>
<td>📸</td>
<td>Typically for Valentine’s Day and annual fundraising efforts</td>
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<td>#HokieGrad</td>
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<td>Commencement</td>
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<td>#HokieFacts</td>
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<td>History, statistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>#WhyVT</td>
<td>🏡</td>
<td>📸</td>
<td>Promotional marketing</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>🏡</td>
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<td>Alumni</td>
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<tr>
<td>#VTFirstDays</td>
<td>🏡</td>
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<td>Beginning of freshman year</td>
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<tr>
<td>#HokiePets</td>
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<td>#HokieBaby</td>
<td>🏡</td>
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<td>#HokieNation</td>
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<td>📸</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
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<td>#TravelingHokies</td>
<td>🏡</td>
<td>📸</td>
<td>Alumni travel</td>
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<tr>
<td>#HokiesAbroad</td>
<td>🏡</td>
<td>📸</td>
<td>Study abroad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HASHTAGS

DO

Virginia Tech 📢
@virginia_tech

Wow, so many #HokieBaby doctors 😊 heading out into the world after the 2018 VTGradCommunity #HokieGrad ceremony.
😊👏

Virginia Tech 📢
@virginia_tech

No matter how you say "I love #VirginiaTech," just know that we ❤️ you right back! 😄 We welcome our #VT22 international students and can’t wait to have you in #HokieNation!
))*(

DON’T

We #HokieLove graduation. Congratulations and #bestofluck. #Gonna #Be #A #Great #Day at #Virginia #Tech. #Blessed

Eats Natural Foods
July 26 at 10:50 PM · 🌐

If you’re looking for a new bar, consider this one, new at EATS! Coconut cashew. Certified vegan, gluten-free, and non-gmo. #eatsnaturalfoods #blacksburg #virginiatech #welcometoblacksburg #eatsnaturalfoods #nrv #swva #swvafood

purely elizabeth.
TAGGING OTHER ACCOUNTS

DO

Virginia Tech (@virginia_tech)

After 45 years of service to #VirginiaTech and working in almost every area within @vtdsa, @VT_CCC executive assistant, Rhonda Rogers, is retiring. Thank you for your work, Rhonda! 🎉👏

Virginia Tech (@virginia_tech)

@VTCRI is teaming up with @UVA scientists to determine how to accurately diagnose a mild traumatic brain injury that may have subtle or no physical signs, but still leads to long-term damage. 🧠

DON’T

Check out our alum! @VTMattWins @MPC0407 @VTBlackCaucus @bburglat @inclusiveVT @deseriacb @AKAHokie @VT_BGSO @TyrodTaylor @Vtblackalumni @NikkiGiovanniii
CONTENT CREATION: COPYWRITING

Don’t just pull the headlines of stories to use as your post copy.

**DO**

Virginia Tech 🌟@virginia_tech · Jun 4
Converting carbon dioxide into green, sustainable energy? 🌿再生能源 Doing what plants do, but in a beaker? 🌿acio
“Sure, why not?” — @VT_Science researchers

**DON’T**

VT Chemistry
@VTChemDept

Prof. Amanda Morris’ chemistry lab mimicking how plants energize in bid to create clean, sustainable energy

Amanda Morris’ chemistry lab mimicking how plants energize in bid t...
Morris and her student researchers are trying to mimic the ways plants use sunlight to convert carbon dioxide to storable food.

vtnews.vt.edu
THE UNIVERSITY authorizes the creation and use of university social media accounts, provided their use is professional, protects the reputation and brand of the university, aligns with university priorities, and complies with other Virginia Tech policies and applicable state and federal laws and regulations, and is guided by the Virginia Tech Principles of Community.

Policy Section 2.2.4 — Business and Personal Use of Social Media
HOUSE RULES FOR PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTS

Have commenting guidelines visible on your Facebook business page, and you can also point users to vt.edu/social-media

About our page

Virginia Tech welcomes your comments on our Facebook page and encourages interaction among Hokies around the world. We ask that you use the Virginia Tech Principles of Community (http://inclusive.vt.edu/vtpoco.html) as guidance in your posts and remain true to the spirit of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

We review all comments made. Comments may be removed if they are off-topic, defamatory, an unauthorized commercial solicitation, or an attack, or if they contain illegal suggestions or use foul language. We reserve the right to terminate access to the page by repeat offenders.

Please email us at socialmedia-g@vt.edu with any concerns about the content on this site. Comments made to this page are the opinions of the authors, not of the university.
By having a social media account that indicates you work at or attend Virginia Tech, or if you run an account for your unit, you may be perceived as being a spokesperson for Virginia Tech. It is essential that you do not speak for Virginia Tech, the institution, but that you represent your unit or role at the university accurately. To mitigate any potential issues, be mindful of the following:

- Keep personal accounts separate from your role at Virginia Tech when possible. If there is overlap, ensure your personal views are not viewed as official Commonwealth of Virginia communications. (You may include a disclaimer in your About section, but users still have a hard time separating the two.)
- Stick to your area of professional expertise.
- Double-check that what you’re posting is accurate. When in doubt, don’t post or ask for help.
- Questions/comments that are related to a news story or press release should be referred to @vtnews on Twitter and/or the Media Relations Director of University Relations: vtnews.vt.edu/contact

Ask yourself: “Is my personal page really more of a business/university-affiliated account?”
BEFORE WE GET TO THE GOOD STUFF

WE SHOULD PROBABLY CLARIFY THAT WE ARE NOT LAWYERS
Why does your personal social media activity matter?

- Is sometimes the first impression of you for employers, potential partners, etc.
- You can’t take it back — the internet is forever
- Nothing is private
- Anonymity can be skirted
- Improper use can cause you to miss out on opportunities without you ever knowing
- Proper use can help your future endeavors
The First Amendment
The Bill of Rights of the United States of America, 1791

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.
Why does this matter?

Freedom of Speech is the right of people to express their opinions publicly without governmental interference, with notable exceptions.
Freedom of speech includes the right:

- Not to speak (specifically, the right not to salute the flag). *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).

- Of students to wear black armbands to school to protest a war ("Students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate."). *Tinker v. Des Moines*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).


Freedom of speech does not include the right:

- To incite actions that would harm others (e.g., “[S]hout[ing] ‘fire’ in a crowded theater.”). Schenck v. United States, 249 U.S. 47 (1919).


- Of students to make an obscene speech at a school-sponsored event. Bethel School District #43 v. Fraser, 478 U.S. 675 (1986).

The First Amendment

So, I can pretty much say what I want, right?

Um...sorta

Just because you can say what you want (with notable exceptions) and not be arrested by the government, it doesn’t save you from real-life consequences.
What does this mean?

The First Amendment does not protect you from:

- Criticism
- Shame/mockery
- Loss of privacy/anonymity
- Professional and academic consequences

The laws protecting the free speech of private employees vary from state to state, aside from specifically protected speech like labor organizing.
It’s complicated

ACADEMIC FREEDOM vs. FREE SPEECH

PUBLIC vs. PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

HAVING A CLEAN SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE AND PARTICIPATING IN POSITIVE, RESPECTFUL ONLINE CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHERS

LITERALLY EVERYONE

TWEETING OBSCENITIES AND Hoping THAT YOU’RE COVERED BY FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM
CASE STUDIES
“Can this get me fired?”
As she made the long journey from New York to South Africa, to visit family during the holidays in 2013, PR professional Justine Sacco, 30 years old and the senior director of corporate communications at IAC, began tweeting acerbic little jokes about the indignities of travel.

By the time Sacco had touched down, tens of thousands of angry tweets had been sent in response to her joke.
You can’t say that
#FireKenStorey

UT’s faculty handbook follows guidelines from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which state that “[professors] should be free from institutional censorship or discipline” when speaking in their capacities as independent individuals. A school should only discipline a professor, AAUP says, “if [there are] grave doubts concerning the teacher’s fitness” to teach.

The university asserted in a separate statement to ABC News that Storey’s comments were not representative of its views, since he did not make them in his capacity as a faculty member. Yet on Aug. 29, 2017, UT announced it had fired the adjunct professor, writing, “We condemn the comments and the sentiment behind them, and understand the pain this irresponsible act has caused. Storey has been relieved of his duties at UT.”
Employers care about your social media etiquette

Tweet costs user her NASA internship, after a crude interaction with Member of the National Space Council

Naomi 🎁 H @______ 22h
EVERYONE SHUT THE UP

I GOT ACCEPTED FOR A NASA INTERNSHIP

158 t129 ❤️ 3 447

Homer Hickam @HomerHickam 3h
Language.

1 t ▲❤️ 3

Naomi 🎁 H @______ 2h
Suck my ___ and I'm working at NASA

1 t5 ❤️ 65

Homer Hickam @HomerHickam 2h
And I am on the National Space Council that oversees NASA.

28 t1 ▲❤️ 3

Social Media

Recently, it was called to my attention on Twitter that someone was being hired by NASA and that they were using the F-word in a tweet about it.

I'm a Vietnam vet and not at all offended by the F-word. However, when I saw NASA and the word used together, it occurred to me that this young person might get in trouble if NASA saw it so I tweeted to her one word: "Language" and intended to leave it at that.

Soon, her friends took umbrage and said a lot of unkind things but long after I was gone as I immediately deleted my comments and blocked all concerned.

Later, I learned she had lost her offer for an internship with NASA. This I had nothing to do with nor could I since I do not hire and fire at the agency or have any say on employment whatsoever. As it turned out, it was due to the NASA hashtag her friends used that called the agency's attention to it long after my comments were gone.

She reached out to me with an unnecessary apology which I heartily accepted and returned with my own. After talking to her, I am certain she deserves a position in the aerospace industry and I'm doing all I can to secure her one that will be better than she lost. I have also talked to the folks that had to do with her internship and made absolutely certain that there will be no black mark on her record.

-- Homer Hickam
What happens in the classroom does not stay in the classroom

A former UT sociology professor was fired for Facebook group comments in response to a student disagreeing with her research. Shortly after, the professor was arrested and charged with assault after confronting her former student in a supermarket.
“But I’m tenured”
“This is research”

A psychology professor causes angry Internet uproar after sending out fat-shaming Twitter post that he claims was for “research purposes.”
Free speech ≠ free from consequences

As a result, this UNM professor:

- Had to work with the faculty co-advisers of the psychology department’s diversity organization to develop a plan for sensitivity training on obesity (for himself to undergo).
- Was assigned a faculty mentor for three years to meet with on a regular basis to discuss potential problems.
- Had his work monitored by the chair of the department.
- Issued an apology to the department and his colleagues for his behavior.
- Could not serve on any committee involving the admission of graduate students to the psychology department for the duration of his time at the university.
"Her comments, although disgraceful, are protected free speech under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. Additionally, although Professor Jarrar used tenure to defend her behavior, this private action is an issue of free speech and not related to her job or tenure. Therefore, the university does not have justification to support taking any disciplinary action."
Free speech ≠ free from consequences

Fresno State president Castro wants donors to know that tweets do not define the university

As a result, this Fresno State professor:

- Lost respect from the university
- Took a Twitter hiatus and made her account private

Fresno State president wrote in a statement: “Jarrar’s conduct was ‘insensitive, inappropriate, and an embarrassment to the university.’”
“But I work here”
Keep politics out of it

Vice Chancellor resigns after complaints from conservative groups about his comments on social media

Mike Mullen
@NCSU_MikeMullen

Yet another indication of the lack of ethical values inherent in Trump supporters. She trusts a president who does not tell the truth. Wow.

Clyde Haberman
@ClydeHaberman

Speaks for itself. Wyoming woman interviewed about Trump by @nytimes at a rally of his: "I can't really say that anything he says is true, but I trust him."

11/6/18, 7:14 AM

Mike Mullen, PhD '87
@NCSU_MikeMullen

Yesterday I tweeted a message that has, rightfully, resulted in many pushing back. I believe my track record on respect for others speaks for itself, but unfortunately, I did not live up to that record yesterday.

6:00 AM - 10 Nov 2018

7 Likes

Mike Mullen, PhD '87
@NCSU_MikeMullen

I will continue to advocate for equity, and I sincerely apologize to those I have offended.

10 Nov 2018

133 Retweets 257 Likes
Your private conversations aren’t private

You may want to take a better look at employees. We are a very proud VT family and I do not want this person working with my nephews who are attending now or any VT students.

Lori’s Post

4/4 Violin · $150
Mark As Sold Request Payment

Your black I don’t deal with black people I’ll get one from music shop.
Owner is white

Always do the right thing no matter what even when everyone else is doing the wrong thing.

Works at Virginia Tech
All roads lead to social

Professor’s email at U of Houston about body odor, referencing some cultures, raises concerns about how to broach this delicate topic, if at all.

“Please take shower every morning. If you have a quiz or test, please do not skip taking daily shower. Most Americans shower twice daily once in the morning and once before going to bed.

“Please use deodorant/antiperspirant or light perfume after taking shower.

“Please change your shirt on daily basis.

“If you do eat spicy/garlicky food, please use mouth wash.”
You can’t do that

You may be entrepreneurial, but before putting something out on social media, consider if your activities are:

- Legal on campus
- In violation of research grant parameters
- Endangering the reputation of your college and associated faculty members
“But I’m a student”
NPR: Harvard Rescinds Admission Of 10 Students Over Obscene Facebook Messages

Students traded sexually explicit memes and messages that sometimes targeted minority groups in a private Facebook group chat, in an effort to “gain access” to a more popular meme group.
No takebacks

Parkland shooting survivor’s Harvard acceptance is rescinded after previous tweets including racial slurs resurface.

1/ THREAD: Harvard rescinded my acceptance.

Three months after being admitted to Harvard Class of 2023, Harvard has decided to rescind my admission over texts and comments made nearly two years ago, months prior to the shooting.

I have some thoughts. Here’s what happened.

Kyle Kashuv @KyleKashuv

10/ Harvard deciding that someone can’t grow, especially after a life-altering event like the shooting, is deeply concerning. If any institution should understand growth, it’s Harvard, which is looked to as the pinnacle of higher education despite its checkered past.

11/ Throughout its history, Harvard’s faculty has included slave owners, segregationists, bigots and antisemites. If Harvard is suggesting that growth isn’t possible and that our past defines our future, then Harvard is an inherently racist institution.

But I don’t believe that.
Think before you post

Virginia Tech: August 2019

Reposting to @PYNance and @VTSandsman

I'm gonna bully your kid on campus

Am i in trouble for my tweet being honest?

6:40 PM

Hi, thanks for asking. This reads as a threat, which is bad. If this doesn't reflect your intended actions, then we recommend removing this tweet. We appreciate you second-guessing your words. — Fairen H.

6:47 PM

University of Missouri: April 2013

What do you do with a student like this? She posted this on Twitter today. Since it was a public post, I feel no need to hide her identity. (J2000 is our Cross-Cultural Journalism class):

Annette Jenkins @NettieJay9

I hate J2000. Raise your hand if you don't really give a damn about minorities. #SorryImNotSorry #JSchoolProblems

She followed that tweet with this:

Seriously guys. I'm going to be selling corn to white farmers. I don't need a culture reporting class. #JSchoolProblems

She's probably a second semester sophomore. She's a science and Ag Journalism major, minor in Rural Sociology. Appears to be from Missouri or Kansas.

Thoughts?
How to be a good online citizen and protect your future
Be digitally literate

Digital literacy is “the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills,” as defined by the ALA.
POSITION YOURSELF FOR SUCCESS

- Put on a marketer’s hat when writing something for public consumption.
- Keep your audiences tailored and narrow (i.e. utilize Facebook lists)
- Consider a private account or an account with a “no student zone” (protect your tweets and Instagram posts to ensure you know who’s following you).
- Go through your social history and remove anything questionable.
- AND ALWAYS – think before you post.
BE RESPONSIBLE

- Do not speak as the university.
- Don’t post anything that you wouldn’t want future employers and other coworkers or supervisors to read.
- Be aware of internet safety, such as sharing personal information with others.
- Know how social media algorithms share your personal interests.
- Do not engage in cyberbullying, trolling, or other activities that may cause harm to others online.
- Regularly audit your online personas to see if they reflect who you are and make sure that they positively reflect you.
- Always refer to the VT handbook and university policies. Contact socialmedia-g@vt.edu if you have any VT social media questions.
OR...JUST AVOID SOCIAL MEDIA ALTOGETHER

ASK YOURSELF: “DO I NEED REALLY NEED THIS ACCOUNT?”
QUESTIONS?

SOCIALMEDIA-G@VT.EDU