Policy on Institutional Participation in Social Media Applications for Marketing Communications

Category: Marketing and Communications;
Jurisdiction: Vice President, External Relations;
Approval Authority: Executive Team;
Established on: March 2, 2010;
Amendments: None.

General Statement

Social Media are online communications applications in which individuals shift fluidly between the role of audience and author. To do this, users use social software that enable anyone to post, comment on, share, or aggregate content and, in the process, form communities around shared interests. Examples of social software are Wordpress (blog), Facebook, Twitter, MySpace (social networking), YouTube (video), Flickr (photo), Second Life (virtual reality), and Diggit (news aggregation).

Lakehead University has a limited official presence in Social Media applications and this presence is seen mainly in Facebook and YouTube. To date, the institution's participation in Facebook has been restricted to the Recruitment Office and the Office of Communications for marketing communications purposes, for the primary objective of generating brand awareness and building relationships with prospective and current students.

Many departments and some administrators and faculty members wish to be able to use specific Social Media vehicles to recruit students, promote programs and research initiatives, and establish ongoing relationships with their respective audiences. While it is recognized that
there are risks inherent to the use of social media, Lakehead University also acknowledges that the benefits of leveraging social media to achieve specific institutional goals can outweigh the risks if undertaken with appropriate protocols.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Policy is twofold: to identify those units, departments, and individuals who are permitted to participate in sanctioned Social Media applications in an official capacity on behalf of Lakehead, and the scope of such participation; and to guide those same departments and individuals in their engagement in such applications. The Policy outlines best practices and delineates a Protocol for Social Media set-up, creation of a Profile, and maintenance of Content as well as protocols around initiating and continuing a dialogue. The Protocol will ensure transparency and long-term maintenance of Social Media activities while making sure activities and efforts are cohesive and executed in the best interest of the University.

**Policy**

Lakehead University presence in social media applications is focused on specific social media applications for marketing communications until further notice - please refer to Appendix A for a list of these applications. All Faculties, faculty members, and administrative units wishing to use Social Media applications for marketing communications as identified in the Policy must complete an Application to Sign Up under the Protocol section of the Policy and submit it to the Office of Communications, care of the Webmaster - see Appendix B - Logistics. Lakehead University forbids the promotion of third parties as providers of social media solutions; Lakehead will take part only in social media activity in which the University has a clear responsibility and accountability for managing the process.

All units/individuals who engage in approved Social Media are expected to adhere to the Protocol - see Appendix B. The Office of Communications - with PPG approval - reserves the right to disable a unit or individual profile that does not adhere to the Protocol - please refer to Appendix C - Best Practices.
All those who engage in Social Media applications utilizing University computer and network resources may do so only for purposes related to their research, their studies, the discharge of their duties, their official business with the university, and other university-sanctioned policies.

**Review of Policy**

The Office of Communications will explore the social media environment on an ongoing basis and review the Policy annually to ensure that it continues to meet University needs. Any changes to the Policy will be communicated to the University community.

**Appendix A: Applications Currently Approved**

- Facebook,
- YouTube,
- Flickr,
- Twitter via Facebook,
- Blogs

The list above indicates the social media sites where Lakehead University is already active. If you want to participate in any of the above social media sites, please submit an "Application to use Social Media" to socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca

**Appendix B: Protocol**

Primary Contact: Communications
Social Media Advisory Committee: Director of Communications, Webmaster, Manager of Recruitment, Director of Risk Management and Access to Information. The committee can be reached at socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca

**Logistics**

In order to ensure that applicants secure a user name for a particular application (and not lose it to other applicants), applicants will take the following steps:

1. Sign up
2. Set up a profile
3. Fill out and send application form to the Office of Communications, c/o the Webmaster at socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca

The Webmaster will contact the applicant within two weeks or less.

Application to Use Social Media
If Lakehead University does not already have a presence within the social network that you would like to use, please sign up to reserve our name (Lakehead University). Use generic account information (socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca) to first get started and immediately alert the Social Media team (webmaster) by emailing the Social Media Profile setup, Account Information and a Social Media Application Form to: socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca. Please remember that when you create a Social Media profile representing Lakehead University, Lakehead University automatically becomes the owner of the account.

Reserving a Lakehead Profile
Be authentic and transparent; include your name, your company name (Lakehead University), and your title or position. Students, prospective students, and others will listen more to people whom they know and trust, so let people know who you are.

Profile
- Name: Your Name and if possible your department/unit name, and title
- Organization: Lakehead University
- Email: socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca
- Add as much of Lakehead's information as possible (address, toll-free, fax, url)
- Set privacy settings to be as open as possible while still within the social rules of the community. Nothing is secret, but sometimes "friends" or "connections" don’t want their information publicly shared so this should be respected
- If Lakehead University is already present within the particular Social Network, email the Social Media Application Form to socialmedia@lakeheadu.ca. The Social Media team will review the application and determine next steps. These steps may include a
recommendation on how best to participate in an existing Social Network or how to develop a new Profile, or a recommendation against engaging in the requested activity. The team's recommendations will depend on the context.

Social Media Application Form

Why an Application Form? The applicant must demonstrate that his/her Social Media efforts can potentially benefit the University and that the investment in time and human resources can be justified. This can be expressed in goals or objectives such as "increasing awareness," "increasing traffic," "encouraging dialogue," or similar relevant marketing goals and objectives. The applicant must be held accountable to the institution for time and resources expended.

Inclusion of a Rationale, Goal, and Strategy will ensure that the Social Media activity is aligned with Lakehead's overall goals and that the activity is supportive of -- and not conflicting with -- other University initiatives.

Applicants must include what constitutes success in their endeavour and how they intend to measure it. Measuring success will allow us to see how well the medium works, learn from it, and in cases of success, apply the learning to other areas at Lakehead.

The Form

Click here to submit the Social Media Application Form

- Applicant Name
- Phone/Email
- Department
- Reports to
- Type of Social Media (Please refer to Appendix A for a list)
- Name of Page
- Tagline
- Rationale for Use
- Goal
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- Strategy
- Success Measures

Appendix C: Best Practices: Use of Social Media in the Lakehead Community for Marketing Communications

Be Honest and Responsible:
Be real, add value, and don't say anything that would be embarrassing. Don't say anything you wouldn't want to see on the front page of a major newspaper.

Emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way people work and engage with each other. Individual interactions represent a new model: not mass communications, but masses of communicators that provide a forum for personal interaction and idea exchange.

Learn: As an institution of higher learning, we believe in the importance of open exchange and learning--between Lakehead and students, prospective students, partners, and the public, and among the many constituents of our organization and societal ecosystem. The rapidly growing phenomenon of user-generated web content--blogging, social web-applications and networking--is creating important arenas for engagement and learning.

Contribute: Lakehead--as an educator, as an innovator, and as a citizen--makes important contributions to the world, to the future of business and technology, and to public dialogue on a broad range of societal issues. As our activities increasingly focus on the provision of transformational insight and high-value innovation, it becomes increasingly important for Lakehead to share with the world the exciting things we're learning and doing, and to learn from others.

Exercise Good Judgment:
1. Know and adhere to applicable Lakehead Policies and Guidelines
2. You are personally responsible for the content you publish on blogs, wikis, or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time.

3. Identify yourself; give your name and, when relevant, your role at Lakehead University when you discuss Lakehead or Lakehead-related matters.

4. If you are invited to participate in a forum to express your personal opinion -- as a guest blogger, for example -- write in the first person and make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of Lakehead.

5. If you publish content on any website outside of Lakehead and it has something to do with work you do or subjects associated with Lakehead, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent Lakehead University's positions, strategies, or opinions."

6. Respect intellectual property (e.g. copyright), fair use, and financial disclosure laws.

7. Don't disclose Lakehead's or another's personal, confidential, or other proprietary information without permission of the owner of that information; ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to Lakehead.

8. Don't cite or reference students, colleagues, funders, or partners without their consent. When you do make a reference, where possible link back to the source.

9. Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or introduce or refer to obscene or indecent material, or otherwise engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in Lakehead's workplace. Show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory--such as politics and religion.

10. Find out who else is blogging or publishing on the topic, and cite them if appropriate.

11. Be aware of your association with Lakehead in online Social Networks. If you identify yourself as a member of the Lakehead University community, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and students. Bottom line: good judgment is paramount regardless of whether an employee's online comments relate directly to his/her job or not.
12. Don’t pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don’t alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.

13. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. Lakehead’s brand is best represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on Brand Lakehead, whether you intend to do so or not.

14. Don’t defame the University or make comments or references that are likely to bring the University and/or its members into disrepute.

15. Make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job or commitments to the Lakehead Community.

16. Respond to your social media friends. If you initiate social media activities, be there to answer questions and participate in the dialogue, year round. During vacations and other longer absences, make sure a Lakehead colleague is there in your place. You can slow down on your activities, but don’t stop

Review Period: Annually;
Date for Next Review: 2019-2020;
Related Policies and Procedures: To be determined;
Policy Superseded by this Policy: None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;
Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;
Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.