

SIS Communications Social Media Guidelines & Best Practices

The McGill School of Information Studies recognizes the importance of social media and is committed to supporting staff, faculty, students, and student groups to engage knowledgeably with this medium.

This document aims to raise awareness of relevant McGill policies and to provide best practices to support effective use and governance of social media channels by the School's community. *This is a living document expected to change in response to developments in McGill, Faculty, or School policy.*

SCOPE

These guidelines apply to McGill and third-party social media channels directly related to the School and managed or contributed to by SIS staff, faculty, students, student groups, and alumni, including:

- School-managed channels, *e.g. SIS Wiki, official SIS Facebook page.*
- Channels used for teaching purposes, *e.g. course-related blogs.*
- Channels not managed by the School, *e.g. student association blogs, informal SIS-related student Facebook groups, SIS Wikipedia article, alumni LinkedIn group.*

These guidelines are designed to supplement existing McGill guidelines and policy. Where relevant, McGill policy overrides information found in this document.

RELATED MCGILL GUIDELINES & POLICIES

Students, staff, and faculty of the School of Information Studies are responsible and accountable for their actions and statements using social media, and are to be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Key McGill guidelines and policy:

- **McGill Social Media Guidelines**
<http://www.mcgill.ca/newsroom/socialmedia/guidelines>
- **Code of Student Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures**
secureweb.mcgill.ca/secretariat/sites/mcgill.ca.secretariat/files/code-student-conduct-discipline-
- **Responsible Use of McGill Information Technology Resources**
<http://www.mcgill.ca/secretariat/sites/mcgill.ca.secretariat/files/Responsible-Use-of-McGill-IT-Policy-on-the.pdf>
- **Guidelines for Blogs & Wikis at McGill**
www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/GuidelinesforBlogsandWikisatMcGill.pdf
- **Policy on Email Communication with Students**
www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/E-mail-Communications-with-Students-Policy-on.pdf
- **Policy on the Use of Wordmark and Insignia of McGill University**
<http://www.mcgill.ca/files/secretariat/WordmarkandInsigniaofMcGillUniversity-Policyontheuseof.pdf>

Social media-related questions may be directed to the McGill Communications Dept. at info.communications@mcgill.ca

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GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES FOR STUDENTS, GROUPS, FACULTY, & STAFF

Communication

- Official channels (e.g. McGill email) are to be used for official university-related communication rather than social media channels. See *McGill Policy on Email Communication with Students*.

Conduct

- Students are expected to conduct themselves courteously, honestly, and with academic integrity. See *McGill Code of Student Conduct*.
- Faculty, staff, & students: “Exercise good judgment. Do not post confidential information about the University, students, alumni or colleagues. Use good ethical judgment and follow university policies. Do not post photographs of people without their consent. Consult McGill's Computing Code of Ethics. Don't post anything you would not present publicly.” From *McGill Social Media Guidelines*.

Connections

Although decisions by students, staff, and faculty to connect socially through social media sites such as Facebook are left to individuals, the School recommends the following as best practice:

- It is recommended that faculty and staff do not initiate social media connections (e.g. Facebook or LinkedIn) with students. This keeps an even playing field for all students and helps to avoid issues such as blurring of professional boundaries and perceived or real favoritism.
- If instructors accept or initiate social media connections, it is recommended that such connections are formed when the student is no longer in the instructor's course and is not anticipated to be in a future course taught by the instructor.

Management

- All creators and managers of McGill-related social media channels (including McGill-hosted blogs and wikis) are expected to be familiar with McGill communication and conduct policies and to manage channels in accordance with applicable policies.
- Groups are expected to ensure that account administrative details, including related passwords, are documented and effective knowledge continuity processes are in place. Channels should be implemented, managed, updated, and dismantled/archived with reference to social media governance best practice. See, for example, *Tufts University Social Media Best Practices & Guidelines* <http://webcomm.tufts.edu/policies-and-guidelines/social-media-best-practices-and-guidelines>.

Representation

- Official social media channels managed by the School will be indicated as such. If creating a non-official School-related social media channel (e.g. LinkedIn group, student blog), creators are requested to indicate clearly that the channel does not represent the School of Information Studies or McGill University. If in doubt, please contact the School Director.
- The McGill insignia and wordmark are not to be replicated in social media channels without the university's consent. See *McGill Policy on the Use of Wordmark and Insignia of McGill University*.

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GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICES FOR SIS ADMINISTRATION

The School's social media channels will be used to strategically supplement official, primary communication channels in support of the School's vision, mission, and goals.

Management

- The authority to create new social media accounts in the name of the School will be granted by the Communications Committee and/or School Director. Proposed new social media accounts will be reviewed and evaluated for suitability, impact, and sustainability.
- Social media channels managed directly by the School should fall under a clear governance framework which documents responsibility, purpose, audience, update frequency, administration, reporting, and exit strategy/deactivation/archiving.
- Documentation is to be created for existing channels by designated staff if not already in place. Channel documentation will be reviewed by the SIS Communications Committee.
- Each media channel will have two active administrators assigned at all times with clear delineation of responsibility. Where possible, institutional accounts will be created to minimize account loss risk. If leaving the School, staff holding accounts and passwords will ensure accounts are transferred to an active staff member.
- Existing active and inactive accounts/channels will be reviewed annually by the Communications Committee. Channels will be deactivated following social media best practices, e.g. using a contextual notice pointing users to website vs. account deletion.

Maintenance

- Messaging functions on School-managed accounts are to be disabled if possible. If used, messages will be responded to promptly in accordance to the School's service standard.
- SIS-managed channels are to be checked once a week, at minimum, and all user-supplied content reviewed.
- Public "non-official" channels (e.g. Wikipedia, LinkedIn) are to be monitored on a monthly basis.
- Irrelevant items may be deleted by moderators (e.g. irrelevant comments, commercial postings). Social media best practices (e.g. Tufts University) will be followed for responding to critical posts. If issues arise, the Communications Committee and/or Director are to be notified in order to ensure a coordinated approach and to update these guidelines, as needed.

Publicity

- Active social media channels managed directly by the School (e.g. SIS Facebook) will be publicized on the front page of the SIS website site and listed in the McGill's Social Media Directory ([www.mcgill.ca/newsroom/social media](http://www.mcgill.ca/newsroom/social%20media)). Sites deemed inactive by the Communications Committee will be removed from the directory.

This document is to be updated on an annual basis in the Spring Semester by the Communications Committee to reflect current School needs and to integrate updates related to McGill policy and guidelines.