



# **SOCIAL MEDIA AT BLOOMSBURG UNIVERSITY**

**Guidelines for University Communications and  
Marketing Professionals**

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These guidelines were created by Bloomsburg Office of Marketing and Communications.  
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# Social Media Guidelines

Bloomsburg University utilizes social media websites, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, to build and maintain relationships with prospective and current students, alumni and community, as well as university faculty and staff. BU also uses social media to promote its mission and core values, highlight its offerings, showcase student, faculty and alumni achievements, along with promoting and spotlighting campus events.

These are guidelines for BU's online marketing and communications through social media websites to ensure, when representing BU and/or an affiliation of BU, users comply with uniform policies and present one clear message. These guidelines apply to users when they're participating in social media for work and during personal online activities that may give the appearance they're still speaking for and representing the university. Misuse or abuse on these sites will be handled accordingly.

## What is social media?

Social media is an online media that expedites conversation by quickly delivering content among a mass of readers, viewers and listeners, who then can participate in the conversation by further creating and developing more related content. Blogs, social networks and websites such as Wikipedia, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Flickr, MySpace and Blogger are examples of social media that provide online channels for people to share knowledge, exchange opinions and connect with others.

## Where can BU be found in social media?

**Twitter** - <http://twitter.com/BloomsburgU>

Twitter is an online social networking site where members can post short updates and connect with other members through online profiles or cell phone text messages. Effective applications for the use of Twitter would be to re-broadcast blog headlines, news releases, testimonies, statements, announcements, accomplishments, and facts. The university uses Twitter for local real-time updates and announcements. Other uses may be to alert the university community of emergency broadcasts, epidemics, incidents and schedule changes.



Legal implications of Twitter relate primarily to the privacy of members who follow the university's Twitter account. These risks can be mitigated by restricting settings and use of follow ability.

**YouTube** – <http://www.youtube.com/BUTVCH8>

YouTube is an online social networking site where members can post videos, comment on videos, provide video responses, mark videos as favorites and subscribe to video channels. YouTube has a distinct following of segmented demographic audiences who

regularly spend multiple hours per day on the site and login frequently. YouTube has a captive audience and provides advertising opportunities.

Effective applications for university use of YouTube would include posting videos to recruit students and faculty, profile student and faculty achievement, cover and promote campus events, spotlight alumni and donors, communicate with university audiences and highlight the university experience academically and socially. Videos are produced by Bloomsburg University and cannot be rebroadcast outside the YouTube channel network without written consent by the university.



**Facebook** - <http://www.facebook.com/bloomuniversity>

Facebook is an online social networking site where members can create videos, update their status, create photo albums, post photos, post videos, write on their wall, instant message with other members, send internal e-mail to other members, find friends, add friends, become fans of groups and organizations. Facebook integrates the best features from other sites like Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and MySpace.

Effective applications for university use of Facebook would include posting messages, photos and videos for recruiting students and faculty, profiling student and faculty achievement, covering and promoting campus events, spotlighting alumni and donors, communicating with university audiences and highlighting the university experience academically and socially.



BU uses Facebook primarily to access a loyal audience with frequent visitors or logins. Members, specifically students, often spend hours on Facebook every day. Facebook is a captive audience with targeted demographics and advertising opportunities.

## **What's the purpose of social media?**

Social media offers the opportunity for people to freely engage in conversations with others who share similar opinions and preferences, such as a connection with and passion for Bloomsburg University. Social media has helped to initiate new conversations, respond to feedback and maintain an active dialogue with friends, fans and others.

Involvement in social media can help grow a brand, strengthen a connection between groups, such as Bloomsburg University, to new audiences and enable groups to become aware of honest opinions, compliments, concerns and criticisms about them.

## **General guidelines for social media use**

1. Be responsible in your communication – There is no such thing as a “private” social media site. What you post has a longer shelf life than you do, as archival systems save information even if you delete a post. The key to responsible behavior is to be honest, thoughtful and aware of your audience. Be sensitive about linking content, photos and video. Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement.
2. Be transparent and authentic, be yourself – It’s very important to be honest about your identity. Never hide your identity for the purpose of promoting Bloomsburg University or acting as a voice of the university through social media. The essence of community is the idea that it exists so you can support others and they, in turn, can support you. Learn to balance personal and professional information, as well as the important role transparency plays in building a community.
3. Be accurate – Make sure to verify information with a source rather than post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible; after all, that’s how you build a community. If you make an error, correct it quickly and visibly to earn the respect of your online community.
4. Respect copyrights and fair use – Always give people proper credit for their work and make sure you have permission to use something before you publish. Only those authorized by Bloomsburg University may use the university’s brand and logos. Do not include Bloomsburg University branding or logos in your personal postings.
5. Remember to protect confidential and proprietary information – Online conversations and postings, including video and photos, are not private. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Bloomsburg University. Use good ethical judgment and follow BU policies and federal requirements, such as FERPA.
6. Productivity matters, respect the university’s time and property – Bloomsburg University computers and your work time are to be used for university-related business. It’s appropriate to post at work if you have been instructed to do so or your comments are directly related to accomplishing established work goals. Maintain your personal sites on your own time using non-BU computers.
7. Endorsements – Do not use Bloomsburg University’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause or political party or candidate. It’s important to consider the associations you want to share with potential applicants, donors and research funding agencies (i.e. better to link with the National Science Foundation than your favorite local bagel shop).

8. **Monitoring comments** – Welcoming comments to your site helps build credibility and community. However, if you chose to delete comments be sure to have clear policy on unacceptable posts that is easily seen by users. In general, if the comment is within context with the conversation, then they should be approved regardless if they're favorable or unfavorable to Bloomsburg University.
  
9. **Be relevant** – Social media sites are meant to be interactive, current and engaging. If you find your site is irrelevant, has few posts or receives little traffic, it's best to kill the site and focus energies on other communication vehicles.

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