Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Policy on Social Networking and Social Media

Note: If you are unsure whether this policy applies to you please contact the Secretary to the College (email: secretary@tcd.ie).

Contents

1. Introduction
Social networking and social media are powerful communication tools which can have a significant impact on organisational and professional reputations. Trinity College Dublin has developed a policy to help clarify how best to use these tools to the professional benefit of the College, its staff and students. Examples of social networking websites are Blogging, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Wikis etc.

Both in professional and institutional roles, employees need to follow the same behavioural standards online as they would in real life. The same laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, students, alumni, donors, media and other university constituents apply online as in the real world.

2. Scope
The scope of this policy is limited to Trinity staff and students, in their capacity as members of the Trinity community, using social media in the tcd.ie domain or on any other social networking website.

This policy also applies to people external to the College posting material to social networking sites within the tcd.ie domain.

3. Legal and policy basis
Information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the **legislation** in force at the time. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- Copyright and Related Rights Acts 2000, 2004 and 2007
- Data Protection Acts 1988 and 2003
- The Child Trafficking and Pornography Acts 1998 and 2004
- Defamation Act 2009
- Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989

Information posted to social networking sites must adhere to the College **policies** in force at the time. Particular attention must be paid to the following:

- Dignity and Respect
- Accessible Information
- Use of the College's trademarks
- IT and Network Code of Conduct
- Intellectual Property

4. Policy

The tcd.ie domain provided for social networking is to facilitate a person's work as a member of staff or student of Trinity College and/or for educational, training, or research purposes. Social networking on the tcd.ie domain must not be used for any commercial or significant personal use.

Media queries received as a result of material posted on a social networking site by a Trinity staff member should be referred in the normal way to the College's Communications Office.

All Trinity staff and students, in their capacity as members of the College community, creating a social networking site externally or within the tcd.ie shall include a:

1. Privacy Statement [1]
2. Linking Statement [2]
3. Comment policy [3]

Trinity staff and students, in their capacity as members of the College community, posting material to any social networking site and people external to College posting material to the social networking sites within the tcd.ie domain shall not:

1. Post information which is confidential and proprietary to the College
2. Post material that could be deemed to be threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile towards any individual or entity
3. Post phone numbers or email addresses of any member of the College community, office or external entity without their express permission
4. Infringe on the rights of Trinity College Dublin or any individual or entity, including privacy, intellectual property or publication rights
5. Promote or advertise a commercial product or solicit business or membership or financial or other support in any business, group or organization except those which are officially sponsored by Trinity College Dublin
6. Post chain letters, the same comment multiple times, or otherwise distribute "spam"

7. Allow any other individual or entity to use their identity for posting or viewing comments
8. Post comments under multiple names or using another person's name
9. Post digital media (audio, video, photography) without securing the written permission of the original copyright holder should such copyright exist.

5. Breaches of Policy

Any breach of this policy could result in a member of the College staff or student body or person external to the College losing access to social networking facilities in the tcd.ie domain and in the case of Trinity staff or students could result in disciplinary action.

6. Best Practice Guidelines

Trinity staff and students posting material to social networking sites shall adhere to the following best practice guidelines:

- **Think twice before posting:**
  Privacy does not exist in the world of social media. Consider what could happen if a post becomes widely known and how that may reflect both on the poster and the College. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created, and comments can be forwarded or copied. If you wouldn't say it at a conference or to a member of the media, consider whether you should post it online.
- **Strive for accuracy:**
  Get the facts straight before posting them on social media. Review content for grammatical and spelling errors. This is especially important if posting on behalf of the College in any capacity.
- **Be respectful:**
  Understand that content contributed to a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas. Responses should be considered carefully in light of how they would reflect on the person posting the message and/or on the College.
- **Remember your audience:**
  Be aware that a presence in the social media world is or easily can be made available to the public at large. This includes prospective students, current students, current employers and colleagues, and peers. Consider this before publishing to ensure the post will not alienate, harm, or provoke any of these groups.
- **On personal sites, identify your views as your own.**
  If you identify yourself as a Trinity College student or staff member online, it should be clear that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution. [4]
- **Photography:**
  Photographs posted on social media sites easily can be appropriated by visitors. Consider adding a watermark and/or posting images at 72 dpi and approximately 800x600 resolution to protect your intellectual property. Images at that size are sufficient for viewing on the Web, but not suitable for printing.
- **Rules:**
  Become familiar with the terms of service and policies of sites and networks in which you participate.

7. Procedures for social networking in the tcd.ie domain

1. The College will from time-to-time provide social networking services for the use of College staff and students.
2. Material posted to social networking sites inside or outside the College will not be moderated with each person being responsible for the material they post to such websites.
3. Social networking services provided on the tcd.ie domain will have a clearly advertised Notice and Take Down procedure available to users of the service(s).
4. The Secretary to the College will be responsible for administering the Notice and Take Down procedure and will have the absolute authority to remove material from social networking sites on the tcd.ie domain which is considered to be in breach of legislation or College policies or is deemed to be an imminent risk to the health and safety of any individual(s).
5. Procedures for private feedback will be provided to users of the tcd.ie domain whereby a user will be able to respond directly to a person who posted material to a public website

8. Notice and Take Down Procedure

The College operates on a "notice and takedown" procedure for College operated social networking and/or blogging. If you have any complaints or objections to material or content including user messages posted on the College's webpages, or if you believe that material or content posted on such webpages infringes any intellectual property that you hold, please submit the form below to secretary@tcd.ie.

Once the form has been submitted the College will take the following actions:

1. During normal working hours (9am-5pm Monday – Friday GMT) acknowledge receipt of the complaint within a 24 Hour period. At all other times acknowledge receipt of the complaint within a reasonable timeframe.
2. Make an initial assessment of the complaint within 24 hours of acknowledging receipt of the complaint. The College may make contact with the complainant during this initial assessment period for the purposes of verifying the complaint.
3. Where the College considers it appropriate it will remove the content which is the subject of the complaint pending a full investigation.
4. Any removal will be on a "without prejudice" basis and shall not constitute any admission of responsibility on the part of the College or any other party.
5. Upon making a final determination on the complaint the College may:
   a. Decide to reinstate or not remove the content;
   b. Amend the content at its discretion;
   c. Permanently remove the content.

All complaints shall be in the format prescribed below. Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Incomplete forms will not be processed.

Notice and Take Down Request Form

[Fill out our 'Notice and Take Down Request Form' here](#)

Appendix 1 - Model Wording for inclusion on all social websites

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the posts and comments on this blog do not reflect Trinity College Dublin or any other third party mentioned or referred to on the blog. They should be understood as the personal opinions of the author only.

Comment Statement

All readers are encouraged to leave comments. While all points of view are welcome on the blog, only comments that are courteous and on-topic will be posted. All comments will be reviewed by the author and responded to (as needed) prior to posting on the blog. The author reserves the right to post comments at his or her discretion. Spam and comments endorsing commercial products or services will not be posted.

Contributors to this blog are fully responsible for everything that they submit in their comments, and all posted comments are in the public domain.

Privacy Statement

Any email addresses, names, or contact information received through this blog will not be shared or sold to anyone, unless required by law enforcement investigation.

Linking Statement

This blog may contain external links to other sites. The author does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of information on other web sites. Links to particular items in hypertext are not intended as endorsements of any views expressed, products or services offered on outside sites, or the organisations sponsoring those sites.

John Coman
24 March 2010