KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
Social Media Policy

Social Media has changed the face of communication for institutions, businesses and individuals.

With tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube, Google+, Pinterest, blogs and many more, anyone with an Internet connection can create a compelling web profile, update it and share it with anyone, anywhere, anytime.

Social media platforms offer Kennesaw State University an opportunity to expand our campus, community and connections with our students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, prospective students, families, colleagues, friends and fans around the world.

Kennesaw State supports the use of social media by our employees to connect with our students, fellow faculty, staff and colleagues, alumni, fans and more. This handbook provides guidelines and currently accepted best practices on how to do so safely, effectively, consistently and within existing university guidelines.

In addition to reading or downloading our handbook, please complete the social media checklist which will give you a fundamental understanding of social media and how you can maximize your impact, or even clarify whether you need to have a social media presence.

Social media is by nature constantly changing and evolving. As a result, so will this handbook. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact the University Relations team at socialmedia@kennesaw.edu.

What is Social Media?

The term social media refers to online tools and services that allow any Internet or mobile device user to create and publish content. Many of the sites that house content use personal profiles where users post information about themselves.

The “social” aspect of social media is the result of these individuals finding others with similar interests and interacting with them through online communities, sharing information and knowledge, offering support and networking. Social media also allows for sharing and repurposing of existing content, expanding the reach of your work and enabling others to share your content with their friends and networks.

There are many popular social media platforms, with new ones being created constantly, that appeal to and serve particular audiences in the online social sphere.

How is Kennesaw State Using Social Media?

Kennesaw State is an enthusiastic adopter of social media. These tools enable the university to share what is happening on campus with the world, but, more importantly, they enable us to connect with students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, donors, fans and friends about what is important to them. This “conversation” is what makes social media so different from traditional forms of institutional communication.
Kennesaw State’s official presences on social media are:
• Facebook
• Twitter
• LinkedIn
• Google+

All of the institutional-level sites use the same treatment of the official Kennesaw State colors to communicate with fans, followers and viewers that the content is official institutional information.

In addition to the sites mentioned above, many Kennesaw State departments and programs have launched official social media presences, similarly branded to communicate the information they are presenting is official and reliable.

EXISTING POLICIES — READ THESE FIRST!

Social media usage at Kennesaw State University is governed by the same policies that govern all other electronic communications. Read the policies below before engaging in any social media campaign to clearly understand universally acceptable conduct as part of your official duties at Kennesaw State. Let these policies act also as a basis for your use of social media for personal purposes. If you have official social media duties for your department, faculty, college or other KSU entity, these policies are relevant.

• KSU Employee Handbook
• KSU Faculty Handbook
• KSU Student Code of Conduct
• KSU Copyright and Fair Use Policy
• KSU IT and Technology Policies
• KSU Style Guide
• All other appropriate policies

Note on external advertising: Advertising on behalf of external vendors is prohibited on official Kennesaw State University websites and social media platforms (with the exception of Kennesaw State Athletics through their media rights provider).

Note on social media site policies: All social media networks have their own policies about how they will or will not use your content, what is and is not allowed, etc. Be sure to familiarize yourself with these policies before you launch your site.

We are available to assist you with your social media program. Contact us at 770-794-7553 or socialmedia@kennesaw.edu.

GETTING STARTED

1. Secure the approval of your department head or manager
   If you wish to create a social media page or profile for your department, secure the written approval of your senior manager. Don’t forget to list what your roles and responsibilities will be.

2. Define your goals
   Before jumping into social media for your department, program or office, spend some time determining what you want to accomplish. Understanding this will help you choose the appropriate tools, create relevant content and understand the best way to reach your target audience. Our Social Media Checklist (Appendix A) is a good starting point. Evaluate early what value you plan to offer the audience, make sure there is a clear purpose behind your presence apart from “everybody else is doing it.”

3. Identify a coordinator
   Determine who will be the primary person responsible for updating and monitoring your site. Ensure that they have the time to check the site at least once a day. This does not require a lot of time, but successful social media sites are updated frequently. Enable easy
engagement with viewers and adjust accordingly in response to timely events and problems. Assign and train a backup coordinator.

4. Create a strategy
The more work you do on the front end, the more likely you are to create a successful social media presence. Define what you hope to accomplish, with whom you wish to engage and what content you wish to share first, and then begin exploring social media tools. Use the social media worksheet found in Appendix A to create your social media strategy.

5. Listen
All social media platforms have their own standards, styles, conventions and expectations. By becoming a user and consumer of social media before you become a producer, you will learn how these communities work, what content is of most interest and who is sharing and talking about your topic, etc. Spending time listening will help you better plan what unique contribution your voice can have.

6. Choose your tools
After listening, you may find the short, 140-character bursts of Twitter are a good fit for your goals. Or you may have photos, videos and a well-developed community that would be best shared via a Facebook fan page or Google+ circles. Choose a tool that best meets your goals and focus on building a strong presence on one or two networks rather than a weak presence on eight networks.

7. Name yourself
Create a profile name that clearly and concisely identifies your program and its Kennesaw State affiliation. Do not identify yourself simply as “Kennesaw State University” as 1) it implies you are speaking for the entire institution and 2) it’s already in use by the University. Make it clear what department you represent at Kennesaw State. This will help your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) positioning and makes it easier for people to find you.

8. Experiment
Complete your Twitter, Facebook or Google+ page or whatever platform you choose and spend time populating it for several days or weeks, sharing it with a small group of people who can provide comments. Have the site up and running well before you plan to launch it publicly so you can become comfortable with maintaining it.

9. Launch
When you are ready to communicate, remember to let your potential audiences know that you are on social media through traditional means such as email lists, incorporating your social media addresses in your email signatures and posting notices on your website. Also, notify others with social media presences and similar interests that your site is live. One of the best ways to do this is by linking to these sites from yours and mentioning them in your posts. Make sure you link to your social media profiles from your own website by including easy-to-find links. Use the social media icons for each platform if possible as this is becoming convention.

10. Pivot, Tweak and Adjust
Once your site is up and running you will find some content is popular, some is ignored and some is just cumbersome. All social media networks come with easy-to-use tracking tools, so you can see which posts are viewed and shared most, which generate comments, etc. Be prepared to realign your strategy in response to who is viewing your site and how they are using it. Social media networks are still evolving so be prepared to evolve with them.

11. Tell us about it
Kennesaw State University has a broad audience of students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, sports fans and more that keeps in touch with the university and each other via social media. Let us know what you are doing so we can help expand your reach by sharing it with these individuals. We want to be aware of the news and developments you are sharing with your audiences.
Email us your links at socialmedia@kennesaw.edu and link up with our existing social media sites when you launch your site (or if you’re already up and running) - and we'll share the love.

Here’s a list of our institutional social media pages:
• Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/kennesawstateuniversity
• Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/ksu_news
• LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Kennesaw-State-University-Students-Alumni-97826?gid=97826&trk=hb_side_g
• Google+: https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/105447280646824880388/105447280646824880388/posts

BEST PRACTICES

We’ve already said that social media evolves and changes constantly so it is hard to nail down concrete best practice for each site. There is some common sense that everybody can agree on to get the best out of your social media presence.

Be Respectful
Anything you post in your role as a Kennesaw State University employee reflects on the University. Be professional and respectful at all times on your social media network and other sites. Do not engage in arguments or extensive debates with naysayers on your site. That’s what email and direct messaging are for.

Be Transparent
Make it clear that you are tweeting/posting/plussing etc. in your role as a staff member for Kennesaw State University. One of the great benefits of social media is that users of social media sites personalize large and complex institutions such as Kennesaw State. Use your own “voice.” Do not ghostwrite posts for supervisors or managers. It’s dishonest and the antithesis of what social media is about.

Listen
Consuming social media is essential for you to be a successful producer of social media content. By listening to online conversations on your preferred sites you can maintain a clear and current understanding of what is relevant and of interest to the community.

Be active
Social media profiles require constant care and attention to grow and succeed. If you do not have the time or resources to check in on these sites at least a few minutes each day, then you may want to reconsider jumping in at this time. Your site is only as interesting as your last post. If your post is several months old, visitors will consider it mothballed and will not come back.

Be timely
One of the great benefits, and curses, of social media is the ability to share information instantly with a global audience. Timeliness is also one of the expectations of that audience. Be prepared to move quickly in response to new developments, announcements or emergencies with relevant information on your site.

A short amount of accurate information delivered at the time of need can sometimes be more valuable than a full report delivered well after the issue has passed.

Be careful
Remember, everything you do online will live forever. Think before you post. Anything you share on a social media network even within a closed network is not private. It can and will be shared, stored and spread globally. Don’t post anything online you wouldn’t feel comfortable seeing on the front page of a newspaper or on the CNN Website. Don’t forget to double check your spelling.

Comment
As a consumer, as well as a producer of social media, offer comments on interesting posts and share the good work of others using your sites. Social
media is not only about sharing your news and success, it's about sharing information that is of interest to your readers and viewers. It's called social media for a reason.

**Accept and monitor comments**

A social media site without comments isn't very social. This is two-way communication after all. Be prepared to accept and respond to comments. To protect your site from mischief and trouble, moderate all comments before posting. Understand that not all comments will be positive, and respond to negative comments professionally and by providing any additional information that may help resolve the issue. Post a disclaimer on your site stating that you reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments. Remove those comments containing vulgar language, those that attack any one group or individual and those that are obviously spam.

**Separate personal from professional**

Balancing your professional and personal social media presences can be tricky, particularly if you are an avid user in both arenas. Keep these separate by keeping content about your non-work life on your personal page. And always, always remember which profile you are logged into!

**Be a valued community member**

Don’t just talk about your program or department, share the best information about your area or expertise or that your audience will find valuable from trusted sources outside of Kennesaw State University. This will increase the value of your site and also will ensure you are a valued member of the community and are not just blowing your own horn. Just like in real life - whoever shares wins.

**Don’t use it as an excuse to waste time online**

Endless amounts of time can be spent, and wasted, on social media sites. Limit the amount of time you spend attending to your department’s social media presence to what is needed to post content, evaluate traffic data, review related sites and monitor comments. Limit your personal use of these sites while at work as directed by your department’s guidelines.

**Appendix A: Social Media Checklist**

**Social Media Checklist**

Before you dive into creating a Facebook page, Twitter account or any other social media profiles for your department or yourself, take some time to answer the questions below, writing your answers if it will help to give you a clearer idea of where you need to go...

• **Responsibility:**
  
  Who will have the responsibility for creating, populating, maintaining and monitoring your social media profile? Does this person have the appropriate skills and, most importantly, does this person have the time? List the team members and try to avoid relying only on students.

• **Goals/Measurements:**
  
  What do you hope to achieve? Launch a campaign, promote your department, communicate externally? Who is your audience? Internal communications? Define your goals as clearly as possible and list the promotions tactics you are going to implement (i.e., “We will list our Facebook URL and Twitter handle on all our printed materials”). How will you measure your goals? Increased website traffic? More interaction with current and prospective students? Connecting and engaging with peers on campus and beyond? Once you have defined your goals, look at how you’ll measure them and what tools you need to measure them (Google Analytics, Facebook Insights, Crowdbooster etc.).
• Audience:
Target specific audience groups like prospective students, English faculty members, the class of 1996. This will help you tailor your conversation and content. List your primary and secondary audiences. How will you reach out to them initially? Setting up a Facebook page is not enough; you need a reason to invite people there. A blank page is a party in an empty house.

• Engagement:
Social media is not about me, me, me! It’s a constant conversation and just like actual conversations, getting to know somebody and engaging in small talk is sometimes more valuable than messaging and going for the big sell right away. How are you going to engage informally with your audience? Some of the most popular items on the Kennesaw State University Facebook page are about the seasonal pictures we post and what to do on a sunny day! As well as posting content, ask questions and chat with your audience. It’s called social media for a reason.

• Listening:
For all your time spent talking on social media networks, you should spend twice that amount listening. What are people saying on similar pages and sites? What are people saying about you? Who is talking? List who is talking, about what and where? This gives you a valuable head start.

• Content:
What content will you share? Is it news or designed to engage readers? Are they images or videos? List the content you plan to share on social media and the kind of posts you think are most likely to be successfully shared. How are you going to engage your users with content? How will you gain input from them, and how will you build their loyalty?

• Evaluation:
Schedule an evaluation of your efforts based on the plan you’ve outlined through your answers. Be ready to pivot and alter your content and strategy based on what you find works and what doesn’t. Regular evaluation should be part of your efforts. It’s O.K. to fail sometimes as long as you learn. Set out your timeline and remember this isn’t a project; it’s an ongoing campaign.

We are always here to advise or help.

Appendix B: Facebook
A Facebook fan page can be a great way to promote the activities of your department or program; showcase accomplishments and events; engage with students, faculty, staff, alumni and the community; and create a forum for conversation and discussion. It can host pictures, video, questions and notes.

Facebook Fan Page vs. Facebook Group?
It’s usually better to create a fan page rather than a group for your department or program. The chart below compares the features offered by fan pages and by groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Fan Page</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allows distinct URLs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indexed by search engines such as Google</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrator can access visitor statistics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion features and forums</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be cross-promoted on other fan pages</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to create events and invitations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter or blog feeds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible to unregistered people</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fans can leave comments and “likes”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can send out bulk messages to your members</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information posted on your wall will appear on your fans’ walls</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The administrator’s personal information isn’t listed</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to create a Facebook fan page:

1. To set up a Facebook fan page for your Kennesaw State University department or program, first secure the approval of your department chair or program manager. Unlike on your personal Facebook page, on this page you will be speaking for the University. Include a statement on the page that states you reserve the right to remove any inappropriate content. See Appendix F for a template.

2. Your icon or logo should be compliant with existing brand guidelines. Contact University Relations for assistance if in doubt.

3. To create a fan page, you’ll need to have a Facebook account. Look into getting a generic email address for your department or you can set up the account with another email address. Go to www.facebook.com and fill out the form on the homepage to set up a new account.

4. Once you’ve set up your Facebook account, go to www.facebook.com and log in with your user name and password.

5. Then go to www.facebook.com/pages/create.php

6. You may want to use the category “Local > Education” or you may prefer to use “Brand, Product or Organization > Nonprofit.”

7. For “Name of Page,” choose something that will clearly identify your organization; include Kennesaw State and your department.

8. Click on the “Create Page” button.

9. Now you’re ready to start adding items to your fan page. Here are some ideas to help you build your fan page:
   - Avoid sending too many updates to your fans - five a day maximum
   - Highlight new Facebook features when they are added. Talk specifically about how to use new features and ask others to share their experiences with the new features.
   - Mention when your website is updated, whether it’s new photos, videos, an upcoming event, etc.
   - Add links to drive traffic to your department or organization’s website.
   - Like or Favorite other Facebook pages that have topics similar to your Facebook page.
   - Monitor comments on your Facebook wall daily and respond to those that warrant it. Encourage two-way communication. Delete those comments that include personal attacks, vulgarity or racial / other slurs. However, do not delete comments simply because they are critical. Respond on the wall or directly to the individual with additional information.
   - Ask staff and co-workers to “Share” or “Post” to your Facebook page. Ensure their comments also follow the guidelines above for professional university communications.
   - Include a link to your Facebook page in your email signature.
   - Include your social media information in promotional materials.

Appendix C: Twitter

With its 140-character updates, Twitter is a great way to get timely information out to your audiences. More importantly, with more than 75 million users, it’s an excellent way to engage with and hear from those with similar interests.

Creating a Twitter account:

1. Go to http://www.twitter.com and click on “Sign up now.”
2. For “Name,” give the name of your department or program.
   • Next, choose your username – this will become part of your Twitter address and also will be how you are identified when tweeting and responding to tweets. Choose a username that clearly identifies your department or program. Examples: Kennesaw State University English; Kennesaw State University Nursing, etc.
   • For email, use a group mailbox that several members of your department or program can check if possible, rather than your personal email address.

3. Next, click “Settings” and fill out that information. Under the one-line bio, include a brief descriptive text about your department or program. Then add a link to your website.

4. Before you start tweeting, build the list of those you will be following. Seek out other Kennesaw State accounts, other accounts for people and programs in your field and others who are tweeting about keywords that are relevant to your interests. Read, retweet and respond to these tweets to begin building your online network.

5. Start tweeting! Remember, Twitter is a conversation, not a megaphone. Use yours not only to share interesting news and information about your program, but to share news from other sources, to respond to and ask questions and to get to know your audiences better.

6. Consider using an app. There are many free online applications that make updating and monitoring your Twitter presence much easier. Check out TweetDeck, Buffer and HootSuite for starters.

7. There are some standard actions and conventions in Twitter that you should learn:
   • Reply — Reply to someone else’s tweet. Your reply will also show up on your Twitter.
   • Retweet — One of the best ways to engage with the community on Twitter. Retweeting means you are sharing someone else’s tweet on your Twitter. A retweet is formatted by adding RT in front of the @ sign and the other person’s user name, followed by the original content of their tweet. Example: RT @barcablog: national media reacts to Vandy’s win — http://vucommodores.blogspot.com/2010/01/national-media-reacts-to-vus-win.html
   • URL shortener — URL shorteners are free online services that take a long URL and reduce it to just a few characters. These are highly important when you’re limited to just 140 characters. Examples are bit.ly and ow.ly and tinyurl.
   • Hashtags — Hashtags are keywords added to a post prefaced by the # symbol. Readers can click on or search for hashtag terms to read tweets just about that topic. i.e. - #nursing; #degrees; #learning

Appendix D: YouTube

YouTube is a popular way to reach large audiences with video. Kennesaw State University strongly discourages departments from setting up their own YouTube channels. We instead encourage them to use the official Kennesaw State University YouTube channel. The benefit to Kennesaw State is that it enables you to access a much larger audience than you would on your own channel. The benefit to the viewers is they are then linked in with all of the content KSU has to offer on YouTube.

For more information about KSU’s YouTube channel, email socialmedia@kennesaw.edu

Appendix E: Google+

Why Google+?
Google+ has quickly become a major rival to Facebook. People who like Google+ say they like the clean, uncluttered presentation of their information. They like how easy Google makes it to protect their privacy
(It may not be any less invasive than Facebook, but at least Google makes it seem easy to retrieve your information.) Google+ has a significant growth rate, much faster than that of Facebook or Twitter. More importantly, where Facebook and Twitter try to get you to be on their site, many millions of people are already on Google’s sites: Gmail, Google Calendar, Google Docs, Google Reader and Youtube, to name a few.

Google is rolling out a navigation system across its products that subtly and effectively promote Google+. The next time you go to Google, even the Google homepage, look for the black bar at the top. Then look in the upper-left corner and you’ll see a button that says “You+.” That’s where you get started on Google+.

Once you have started, Google+ is literally in your face. If you use a tool like Gmail, you’ll see a red notification box alerting you to any update to your posts or posts you’ve interacted with. It’s really easy to check them without even leaving the page. Google’s search is now using the +1 button (the Google+ version of a Facebook “Like”) to help influence its search results. You’ll see more and more blogs now adding Google+ “+1” buttons to the existing Facebook and Twitter buttons.

Here are some easy steps to get you started in Google+:

1. Sign up
   You need to register for a Google+ profile. This is pretty easy, especially if you’re already using Gmail.

2. Upload avatars
   As with any social network, one of the very first things you want to do is get rid of the default profile image by adding some of your own images. It’s best to add pictures of yourself, not logos of your organization on your personal page. You can create a business page later; start with creating a personal profile. Make sure your profile picture looks good as a square. Because your profile picture will mostly be seen as a tiny 32 x 32 pixel image, it’s best to use your face.

3. Include interesting information in your bio
   Google is first and foremost a search engine, so it helps to fill out your “about” page as completely as possible. Google will use this to help other people connect with you on Google+ and in other Google searches. If you already have fleshed out your Google+ profile, this section will be pre-filled for you. But take a look it to see if this represents you the way you want it to.

4. Fill up your links
   While you’re editing your “about” page, be sure to pay attention to the “other profiles” section. Here is a list of some links to consider including:
   - Links to other social media networks
   - Links to your business sites
   - Links to special pages on your website

5. Look for interesting people
   If you’re not following people, Google+ can be a boring, barren wasteland. So start circling all sorts of people who seem interesting. The search field in Google+ keeps getting better. Here are some ways to find interesting people:
   - Search for people with the same occupation
   - Search for people interested in the same topics
   - Search for people with the same hobbies
   
**Bonus tip: Search for shared circles.**
A quick way to find lots of interesting people is to import other people’s circles. As people share circles, you can incorporate those circles into your existing circles or into a new separate circle. But you might be waiting a long time to see a “shared circle” show up in your stream. To jumpstart this feature, simply search on the term “shared a circle with you.” This pulls up
the shared circles. You can add search terms to narrow those shared circles to ones you find interesting.

6. Play around

Nothing helps you get started better than spending some time on Google+. In addition to following people, be sure to +1 their posts and comment on them. Try resharing posts to specific circles of people. Experiment with Hangouts, the video chat feature. Play with the type of posts they share on Google+. Some people are simply reposting their blog links. Others are finding Google+ to be a phenomenal tool for sharing pictures and videos.

7. Creating your organization page

On the right hand column, halfway down the page is a multicolored icon and next to it the label ‘Create a Google+ Page’ - click on it.

It now brings you to a menu screen. Pick a category that is most appropriate, for us it will be company, institute or organization. You now enter the name you are going to give the page, best to use your department title and include Kennesaw State University too. Also, link to your department website if you have one. Select a category such as education and schools and then select the content appropriateness, hopefully any Google+ user; then create your page!

You can now customize your pages’ profile. You get 10 words as a tagline to describe your mission or purpose or describe your department and you also get the chance to add a picture. The same rules for adding a personal picture apply here. You then get the chance to tell others in your personal circle about the page and its existence. If you do or don’t, you can now click “finish” and your page is live in Google+!

Google+ now provides you with a handy checklist of tasks and ideas to incorporate the page more deeply in Google+ and get its name known more widely.

Google+ should not be underestimated as a social media network or tool. It is your chance to directly influence Google and will be an integral part of the search results for anybody searching for you within Google. Use this to your advantage!

Appendix F: Terms, Conditions and Behavior Template

Please email feedback to socialmedia@kennesaw.edu

The Kennesaw State University Facebook page is a community. It’s your fan page and we encourage you to post comments, photos and links. Of course, some fan-posted user content won’t necessarily reflect the opinions or ideals of Kennesaw State.

Kennesaw State University’s code of conduct exemplifies excellence, honesty, responsibility and integrity. It applies to every aspect of our university, including all actions and comments made by everyone on our Facebook page.

We encourage conversations and an exchange of ideas, but please voice your opinions in a respectful manner. We reserve the right to remove any user content violating Facebook’s Terms of Use and the KSU code of conduct.

And the most important rule of all in social media: don’t do anything silly.