



## **DIT Students' Union- Social Media Use Policy.**

### **Introduction:**

Social media are powerful communications tools that can have a significant impact on organisational and professional reputations. Because they blur the lines between personal voice and institutional voice, DIT Students' Union has crafted the following policy to help clarify how best to enhance and protect personal and professional reputations when participating in social media.

Social media are defined as *media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques*. Examples include but are not limited to LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace.

DIT Students' Union recognises that social media is everywhere and when used wisely can serve to strengthen our efforts to engage with our members. We are therefore keen to ensure all staff are given appropriate support and guidance on the use of social media in the workplace.

Employees need to follow the same behavioral standards online as they would in real life. It is important to inform staff that DITSU reserves the right to monitor staff's usage of social media. Employees are liable for anything they post to social media sites.

### **Terms & Conditions;**

**In addition to the following Policy there are other areas you should pay attention to:**

You must respect the laws of Ireland and specifically, but not exclusively, be aware of your responsibilities under:

- Copyright Act (1963) and as amended
- Data Protection Act (1988)
- Prohibition of incitement to hatred Act (1989)
- Criminal Damage Act (1991)
- Freedom of Information Act (1997)
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act (1998)

In addition, there are company policies in a variety of areas under which all users must operate. These include:

- Mutual Respect & Dignity Policy
- Computing and Information Services Acceptable Use Policy

## **Procedure Set One; Social media guidelines when posting as an individual:**

If an employee's personal internet presence does not make any reference to DIT Students' Union, then the content is unlikely to be of concern to the Union. DIT Students' Union uses social media to supplement traditional press and marketing efforts. As such, employees may wish to use personal social media to share DIT Students' Union news and events. Linking straight to the information source is an effective way to help promote the mission of our organisation and build community. In such cases you may be perceived online as an agent of DIT Students' Union. The following guidelines below apply in those situations, however they are good to keep in mind for all social media interactions.

### ***Think Before You Post:***

There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed

### ***Honesty Is The Only Policy:***

Be honest about your identity. On personal social media, you may identify yourself as a DIT Students' Union staff member. However, you must make it clear that you are sharing your views on a personal level, and not as a formal representative of DIT Students' Union. A common practice would be to include a disclaimer on any personal social media which connect you in any way to DIT Students' Union. Something such as "*The views expressed on this [social media] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of DIT Students' Union.*" Also, never pretend to be someone else when posting about DIT Students' Union. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed on the internet and any such occurrence would reflect very badly on the reputation of DIT Students' Union.

### ***Respect Your Employer:***

Do not use the name of DIT Students' Union to promote any product, cause, political party/ candidate or to make endorsements of any kind. Individuals are free to talk about DIT Students' Union online. However, instances where staff members bring the name of DIT Students' Union into disrepute, or where confidential information relating to DIT Students' Union is divulged, may lead to investigation.

### ***Ask Yourself: Is This Worthy Of Publicising?***

If the content of your message would not be acceptable for a face-to-face conversation then it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in a newspaper or posted on a noticeboard tomorrow or ten years from now?

### ***Protect Your Identity:***

Don't list your home address or telephone number or work telephone or e-mail address on social media sites, unless otherwise instructed.

## **Procedure Set Two; Social media guidelines when posting on behalf of DIT Students' Union:**

Online social media tools provide a low cost and effective method of communication with students. They are a channel which fosters open exchanges and timely release of information. Social media channels are changing the way we work and how we connect with our members. DIT Students' Union is keen to support staff to harness this power and use it effectively. To this end, certain staff members will be appointed to post on behalf of DIT Students' Union. In addition to the general guidelines discussed above, when you are creating or posting to a social media site on behalf of DIT Students' Union you need to:

### ***Be Accurate:***

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. Cite and link whenever possible- that's how you build community. If you do post something in error, be up front about it and rectify the situation. If you need to modify earlier posts be clear that you are doing so, so as not to come across as covering something up.

### ***Be Transparent:***

Always bear in mind that if you are posting under a DIT Students' Union username, other users do not know you personally. They view what you post as coming from our organisation. Be careful and respectful- what you say directly reflects on the organisation.

### ***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 poster and/or DIT Students' Union and its established voice. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable according to DIT Students' Union standards.

### ***Be Time Conscious:***

It's appropriate to post at work if your comments are directly related to accomplishing work goals, such as communicating important updates/messages to students or keeping students up to speed with a campaign or event. However, there is no need to spend an inordinate amount of time engaging with social media. Don't forget your day job!

### ***Be Responsible:***

What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social media on behalf of DIT Students' Union is not a right, so please treat it seriously and with respect.

## **Penalties & Agreement:**

A failure to abide by this policy may result in being denied access to the use of social media in a work capacity as well as other proceedings.

This policy on acceptable social media use supersedes all previous policies on acceptable social media use and will be amended from time to time as required. Any user of DIT Students' Union computer resources is deemed to have made him/herself aware of this policy.

*I have read the DIT Students' Union Social Media Use Policy detailed above, I understand the procedures contained therein and agree to observe them.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_