GUIDELINES FOR CALTECH-AFFILIATED SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Reddit, LinkedIn, Tumblr, and YouTube are online tools and networks that people and organizations use to connect with one another. These services allow users to share content, connect and converse with others, and participate in online communities organized around shared interests.

Both commercial and non-commercial organizations use social media to raise brand awareness, protect reputation, increase website traffic, inform key audiences, and build conversations.

This document provides guidelines for those posting to any social media channel on behalf of a Caltech division, department, club, or other organization. It can also serve as guidelines for individuals associated with the Institute.

The language used on social media may be somewhat more casual than on other platforms, but decisions regarding content should be treated as professionally as that shared through any other communications vehicle. Social media posts can be shared and spread at a rapid pace, so before posting anything, consider whether it could be misconstrued or cause any reputational damage to you, other individuals, to your group, or to the Institute as a whole.

Posts should always be friendly, respectful, and accurate. Those who post on behalf of Caltech should follow these guidelines:

- Remember that you are representing your organization and the Institute
- Use good judgment: do not post content that is confidential, defamatory, obscene, infringes on intellectual property rights, breaches personal privacy, or is injurious or embarrassing to any person or entity, whether Institute-related or not
- In addition, do not share news that has not been vetted or approved (i.e. research papers that have not yet been accepted or published)
- Proofread before you post: take time to check for errors—poor grammar, misspelled names, incorrect or broken links, etc.—before you hit “post”
- Be strategic: whether creating original content or sharing existing content, evaluate whether and how your post helps meet your communication objectives and calibrate accordingly
- Practice good follow up: monitor and participate (when appropriate) in the conversations that your posts inspire as a way of connecting with individual users and ensuring that threads remain respectful and on topic and that they maximize engagement
- Don’t mix business with pleasure: best practices encourage not using a personal account to speak on behalf of your job; that is, if your department or office would like to be on social media, set up a new professional account, don’t use your personal one
- Posting Caltech news or information on your personal account is permitted (and encouraged!), but you should not speak on behalf of the Institute. Please be sure to include a disclaimer in your bio that clearly states “the opinions represented here are my own, not those of Caltech”
- Be a team player: like and/or share content from other Caltech accounts that your followers would find interesting; not only does it help disseminate news further, it helps make people aware of other Caltech-owned accounts
• Be a leader—*and* a follower: like and follow multiple accounts to keep your news feed varied, but be conscientious of what or whom you’re following. As a Caltech-affiliated account, your “like” or “follow” can be construed as support and/or approval. We recommend following accounts that are
  o Reputable
  o Widely recognized/known
  o Non-partisan (current elected officials are OK)
• Ask for help: if you are unsure about the appropriateness of a post or find yourself on the receiving end of abuse, threats, or other red-flag behavior, bring your concerns to the Office of Strategic Communications’ Social Media Manager or Director of Digital Communications right away
• Measure your effectiveness: develop metrics to track audience engagement, impressions, and views on a regular basis