

## Social Media Guidelines

The University of St. Thomas, in its commitment to building a responsible and respectful community, has established social media guidelines that apply to all social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, Tumblr, Instagram, Wordpress, Vimeo and LinkedIn to name a few. All individuals professionally associated with the University with access to the officially-sanctioned social networks are expected to exhibit honesty, respect and integrity for the rights and property of all individuals and organizations.

### Open a Social Media Account

University departments and organizations wishing to launch social media accounts should first contact the University's social media specialist at 713-525-3114. **Each account must be** registered with the Office of Marketing Communications through the online Social Media Registration Form and must follow guidelines defined on this site.

### Account Creation Checklist

Incomplete social profiles are a misrepresentation of your organization and the University of St. Thomas—Houston brand. Check the following lists to make sure your accounts are on track:

- Is your logo consistent with the UST brand as outlined in the [Brand Guidelines and Resources](#)?
- Does your Twitter account have a profile image with brand standards, header photo, background and biography?
- Are the images on your Facebook page accurately sized according to proper dimensions?
- Does your biography or about section properly reflect your coordinating stthom.edu website, program name and mission?

## **University of St. Thomas Social Media**

The University of St. Thomas, in its commitment to building a responsible and respectful community, has expanded Communications to include social networks. All individuals professionally associated with the University with access to the officially-sanctioned social networks are expected to exhibit honesty, respect and integrity for the rights and property of individuals and organizations within the social structure.

These guidelines may be frequently updated in keeping with the continuous changes made by social networks. Please send suggestions or questions to the Senior Social Media Specialist in the Office of Marketing Communications at [Socialmedia@stthom.edu](mailto:Socialmedia@stthom.edu).

University departments and organizations wishing to launch social media accounts should first discuss it with the Senior Social Media Specialist at 713-525-3114. Each account must be registered with the Marketing Communications office through an online social media registration form and must follow the social media guidelines defined on this site.

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## **Social Media Guidelines**

Each department is responsible for the content and activity of its own social media accounts. To be associated with the University, all accounts must promote dialogue between the University and the University community and should not be used for promotional or sales material. All University social media accounts must comply with copyright laws and with the policies of the individual social media websites. Social media accounts are intended to supplement traditional marketing plans, not replace them.

### **Guidelines**

When creating a social media account, a departmental stthom.edu email account should be used to access social media sites rather than an individual UST email account (ie. department@stthom.edu instead of smithj@stthom.edu) to ensure continued account access regardless of employment status.

- Each department or program should appoint a primary person and backup person to maintain social media accounts and limit the number of authors and administrators.
- A high standard of writing should be maintained despite the electronic form of communication.
- In keeping with the values of UST, please delete any comments or content from social media accounts that includes:
  - Vulgar or offensive language
  - Personal attacks of any nature, including, but not limited to, those targeting ethnic, racial or religious groups
  - Spam or links to erroneous or inappropriate sites
  - Off topic material
  - Advocation of illegal activity
  - Infringement of copyrights or trademarks
  - Personal or sensitive information
  - Any content deemed by the Office of Marketing Communication to be inappropriate or unnecessary for a University website

Social media accounts not registered with the University and found to be in violation of these guidelines will be removed from the website listing.

Note: Please refer to the University's Acceptable Use Policy for technology resources.

## **Facebook Guidelines**

Facebook is a free social-networking service that allows individuals, groups and organizations to communicate with more than 750 million users worldwide. The University of St. Thomas uses Facebook to communicate with students, faculty, staff, alumni and friends about campus activities and events. The official University Facebook page will be administrated and moderated by the Office of Marketing Communications.

University departments and organizations wishing to create and maintain their own Facebook pages must register their accounts with the University through an online social media registration form and follow all social media guidelines.

### **Creating Facebook Events**

- Only UST events and UST sponsored events will be posted to the Official UST Facebook page and must be approved by the Office of Marketing Communications.
- To request that an event be added to the Official UST Facebook, contact the Social Media Specialist or call 713-525-3114.
- When possible, events should link to complete information and be accompanied by an image.

### **Uploading Photos**

- Only photos highlighting the UST community will be uploaded to the Official UST Facebook page and must be approved by the Office of Marketing Communications.
- To submit a photo to the Official UST Facebook, contact the Social Media Specialist.
- Tag individuals in the photo and caption each photo when possible.

### **Facebook Comment Policy**

The Office of Marketing Communications encourages comments on the official UST Facebook page, but we reserve the right to remove comments that are vulgar, off-topic, spam etc.

## **Google+ Guidelines**

Google Plus is a social networking and identity service that is a "social layer" that enhances many of Google's online properties, and authorship tool that associates web-content directly with its owner/author.

University departments and organizations wishing to create and maintain their own Google Plus pages must register their accounts with the University through an online social media registration form and follow all social media guidelines.

## **Creating Google Plus Events**

Only UST events and UST sponsored events will be posted to the Official UST Google Plus page and must be approved by the Office of Marketing Communications.

To request that an event be added to the Official UST Google Plus page, contact the Social Media Specialist or call 713-525-3114.

When possible, events should include complete information and be accompanied by an image.

## **Uploading Photos**

- Only photos highlighting the UST community will be uploaded to the Official UST Google Plus page and must be approved by the Office of Marketing Communications.
- To submit a photo Official UST Google Plus, contact the Social Media Specialist.
- Tag individuals in the photo and caption each photo when possible.

## **Google Plus Comment Policy**

The Office of Marketing Communications encourages comments on the official Google Plus page, but we reserve the right to remove comments that are vulgar, off-topic, spam etc.

## **Instagram Guidelines**

Contact Marketing Communications to obtain permission to set up an official Instagram account. It is highly suggested that a University of St. Thomas Department Facebook account is used to set up Instagram account (The Marketing Communications Team is to be included on the Department Facebook account). If a Facebook account is not used, use a stthom email account with at least two (2) St. Thomas users (this can be obtained from Institutional Technology on campus). It is NEVER permitted to use a personal stthom.edu account or personal email account to set up a department or official UST social media account.

The University of St. Thomas Social Media guidelines must be followed.

Accounts must be set up using acceptable names. Examples of acceptable names: "University of St. Thomas Astronomy Department," or other names related to the department unless otherwise advised by the Marketing Communications team. Setting up Social Media accounts using just the university name is not allowed (i.e. "UST," "The University of St Thomas," "StThomas Houston," etc.).

## **LinkedIn Guidelines**

LinkedIn is a social networking website for professionals. Users can add people as professional contacts, send messages to their contacts, update their personal profiles to notify contacts about their activities, and both recommend and be recommended by contacts for their professional skills. Additionally, users can join groups to communicate with other professionals within the same sector or industry. Users are also able to ask and answer questions related to the industry they work in.

All LinkedIn updates will be made by the Office of Marketing Communications.

- University associates may request an event posting or status update relating to business, to be posted to the UST LinkedIn account
- LinkedIn content for status updates may include:
  - Notification of official UST events currently in progress or occurring that day
  - Statistics on UST event results and turnout
  - Official UST event cancellations and rescheduling information
  - Upcoming deadlines for UST applications, scholarships and financial aid

## **Tumblr Guidelines**

Tumblr is a microblogging platform and social networking website that allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog. Users can follow other users' blogs, as well as make their blogs private. Much of the website's features are accessed from the "dashboard" interface, where the option to post content and posts of followed blogs appear.

## **Twitter Guidelines**

Twitter is a free social-networking website that allows users to send and read 140-character updates. The University of St. Thomas uses Twitter to keep the university community informed of campus activities and events. The official University Twitter page will be administrated and moderated by the Office of Marketing Communications.

### **Posting Tweets**

- All tweets will be made by the Office of Marketing Communications.
- University associates may request a “tweet” to be posted to the UST Twitter account through the Tweet Request Form.
- Tweets content may include:
  - Notification of official UST events that are currently in progress or occurring that day
  - Statistics on UST event results and turnout
  - Official UST event cancellations and rescheduling information
  - Award recognitions and appointments for UST faculty, staff and students
  - Upcoming deadlines for UST applications, scholarships and financial aid
  - Emergency notifications
- All Tweets will be reviewed before and after being posted. All tweets must be coherent and easy to understand.



## **Vimeo Guidelines**

Vimeo is a video-sharing website in which users can upload, share and view videos. Vimeo attracts over 100 million unique visitors per month and more than 22 million registered users. Fifteen percent of Vimeo's traffic comes from mobile devices.

### **To Submit a video**

All videos must be screened and approved by the Office of Marketing Communications prior to being uploaded.

- The original video source file must be submitted to the Social Media Specialist in the Office of Marketing Communications. Low quality videos and links to videos on other YouTube accounts and or channels will not be used.
- All videos must be 10 minutes or less in length and no more than 10 GB in size.
- All videos must include a short description and title.
- The following video formats may be used:
  - Windows Media Video (.wmv)
  - .3GP
  - .AVI (Windows)
  - .MOV (Mac)
  - .MP4
  - .MPEG
  - .SWF
  - .MKV

## **Wordpress Guidelines**

WordPress is a free and open source blogging tool and a content management system (CMS) based on PHP and MySQL that include a plugin architecture and template system. WordPress was used by more than 23.2% of the top 10 million websites as of August 2013 and is the most popular blogging system in use on the Web.

## **Submissions Guidelines**

A suitable length of submissions will generally be 500 words, although longer pieces may be accepted under the discretion of the Office of Marketing Communications.

Use of videos, photos, screenshots and other visual content is encouraged. Only images that the author or University owns or has permission to use may be posted, including: paid-for royalty-free stock photos, images in the public domain such as those available as part of Creative Commons, or images photographed by the author or University staff. If the image requires creator credit, please provide the sourcing information, so that we can be sure to attribute it properly.

We encourage writers to use formatting such as sub-headings, bulleted lists, and bold fonts to highlight key concepts, when applicable.

Authors should provide a bio to be included with the blog post. Bios should be less than 60 words and include any other relevant links you wish to display (e.g., your blog; Facebook Page; Twitter handle; website URL, etc.).

## **After Publication**

We will promote blog posts via Twitter, Facebook, and other relevant social platforms. Authors are encouraged to promote their posts through their own networks, as well.

We are happy to allow our published authors to repurpose their posts elsewhere, but subsequent publication of your blog post should cite the University of St. Thomas blog as the original source and provide a link to the article on <http://www.stthom.edu/TheDome>

## University of St. Thomas Blogger Code of Ethics

### **Purpose:**

All blogs hosted by the University of St. Thomas are designed to elevate the brand of the University and its schools, and drive traffic to the UST website, stthom.edu.

The Office of Marketing Communications oversees the blogs by hosting the websites, recruiting blog authors and providing technical training. While faculty bloggers have the academic freedom to post their own content or have a school or department designee post it for them, they work with the understanding that the blog posts reflect the University of St. Thomas and their respective department or school and may read by a large audience.

MarCom will prescreen faculty content on The Dome blog for style and work collaboratively with the author on content change requests. MarCom reserves the right to remove content from its sites that are: illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, invasive of privacy or otherwise injurious or objectionable. MarCom retains the right to deactivate a blog at any time.

### **Rights for Content You Submit:**

By posting your content to a UST blog, you are granting the University of St. Thomas a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual, and worldwide license to use your content in connection the University, including, without limitation, the license rights to copy, distribute, transmit, publicly display, publicly perform, reproduce, edit, translate and reformat your Content, and/or to incorporate it into a collective work.

You grant University of St. Thomas permission to use your name for attribution purposes.

## University of St. Thomas Blogger Code of Ethics

Bloggers must adhere to the University's code of conduct (student, faculty and staff), and should practice the following conduct when writing University blog posts:

### Be Honest, Accurate and Fair

- **Never plagiarize.**
- **Do not oversimplify** or highlight incidents out of context. Make certain that blog entries, quotations, headlines, photos and all other content do not misrepresent.
- **Never publish information you know is inaccurate** — and if publishing questionable information, make it clear it's in doubt.
- **Be accountable** for what you post.  
Admit mistakes and correct them promptly.

### Be as Transparent as Possible

- Reveal your identity as much as possible (name, photo, background info, etc.)
  - Reveal your personal affiliations and conflicts of interest.
  - Distinguish between advocacy, commentary and factual information.
  - Distinguish advertising from factual information or commentary and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two.
  - Cite and link to sources whenever feasible.

### Include Photos with Copyright Ownership

- Never distort photos without disclosing what has been changed. Label montages and photo illustrations.
- Only publish photos for which you own the copyright or have written permission to use.

### Promote Interactivity

- Post on a regular basis.
- Attempt to be entertaining, interesting and/or relevant.
- Encourage comments and discussion.
- Build relationships by responding to e-mails and comments regularly.

### Minimize Harm

- Treat sources and subjects as humans deserving of respect

- Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by blog content.
- Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.
- Be cautious about identifying children, juvenile suspects, victims of sex crimes and criminal suspects before the formal filing of charges.
- Recognize that gathering and reporting information may cause harm or discomfort.
- Pursuit of information is not a license for arrogance.
- Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention.
- Show good taste. Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity.

### **Write with Full Disclosure, Be Accountable**

- Full disclosure is required by any UST blogger.
- Disclose conflicts of interest, affiliations, activities and personal agendas.
- Explain each blog's mission and invite dialogue with the public over its content.
- Deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests and resist their pressure to influence content. When exceptions are made, disclose them fully to readers.
- Be wary of sources offering information for favors. When accepting such information, disclose the favors.
- Expose unethical practices of other bloggers.

## **YouTube Guidelines**

YouTube is a free video-sharing website that allows users to upload, view and share video material. The University of St. Thomas uses YouTube to share videos of campus activities, events and promotions with the university community. The official University YouTube account will be administrated and moderated by the Office of Marketing Communications.

### **To Submit a Video**

- All videos must be screened and approved by the Office of Marketing Communications prior to being uploaded.
- The original video source file must be submitted to the Social Media Specialist in the Office of Marketing Communications. Low quality videos and links to videos on other YouTube accounts and or channels will not be used.
- All videos must be 10 minutes or less in length and no more than 10 GB in size.
- All videos must include a short description and title.
- The following video formats may be used:
  - Windows Media Video (.wmv)
  - .3GP
  - .AVI (Windows)
  - .MOV (Mac)
  - .MP4
  - .MPEG
  - .FLV
  - .SWF
  - .MKV

The Office of Marketing Communications cannot rip or extract videos from DVDs. Please contact Media Services at [media@stthom.edu](mailto:media@stthom.edu) for assistance in formatting videos. Three weeks should be allowed for video processing and uploading.

## **Marketing Communications Web Video Production Policy**

The demand for web video is rapidly increasing. Because the trend will more than likely continue to grow, this document is intended to educate people wanting to share their video on the official UST YouTube Video Channel to assist in producing the highest quality video on the web. Like all promotional materials, videos produced and uploaded by the University of St. Thomas must be of the highest quality to properly represent both the university and the brand. These guidelines are intended to set minimum production quality standards. Videos that do not meet these standards will not be posted to The University of St. Thomas' YouTube Channel. The purpose of the video should be professional in nature. Ensure that the content is accurate and not ambiguous or misleading. All content in the video should be appropriate for the audience.

### **Video Quality Guidelines**

- Video output should be well lit and should not appear dark on-screen, creating difficulty in seeing the features of the subjects in the video.
- All shots should be clearly focused and well framed. Close-ups should focus attention, not distract the viewer.
- Video output should be stable, not shaky. A tripod should be used whenever possible to reduce "camera shake." If tripod use is not possible, camera shake should be very minimal.
- All titles or other text added to the video must be proofread for accuracy and proper grammar. Misspellings, typos and poor usage are unacceptable and will require recreating the section of the video.
- Any additional graphics or animations should be professional, appropriate and necessary for the message of the video. Graphics and animations must be clean, clear, undistorted and fit on the screen.
- All fade in/fade outs, effects, etc. should add to the message of the video and must be smooth, not abrupt or choppy.
- All dead air should be edited out, so the video is seamless from beginning to end.
- For videos showcasing speakers, panels and events, make a version of the video specifically for online use. For example, trim down or cut out extended introductions. An online audience wants to see the main attraction. If needed, include speaker bios in the written YouTube description.

## Video Technical Standards

- Audio Format: MP4, QUICKTIME or WMV preferred
- Minimum Video Resolution SD, HD, 360, 720p, 480p, 1080p
- Aspect Ratio: The aspect ratio of the original source video should always be maintained when it's uploaded: Uploaded videos should never include letterboxing or pillar boxing bars.
- Testing: Since there is no way to re-upload videos, it's important to test that your audio and video quality are satisfactory before you release your video to the Office of Marketing Communication for posting onto YouTube. Once a video becomes popular, the number of views, user ratings, user comments and other community data cannot be transferred if another, higher quality version of the same video is uploaded. Make sure you get it right before you go public!
- Original Video Source: The less a video is re-encoded prior to uploading, the better the YouTube video quality. We encourage you to provide original videos as a source format for upload.



## **Advertising Guidelines**

All social media and online advertising purchases, including social media ads, must be coordinated with the Office of Marketing Communications. The Office of Marketing Communications has sole authority to execute advertising commitments and contracts and the responsibility to ensure that consistent University design and copy standards are met. The Office of Marketing Communications is available to assist any university department in developing an integrated marketing communications plan which may include online advertising. For more information, contact Sandra Soliz at [solizs@stthom.edu](mailto:solizs@stthom.edu).

## **Connect with UST**

Facebook: <http://www.stthom.edu/Facebook>

Admissions Facebook: <http://www.stthom.edu/AdmissionsFacebook>

Twitter: <http://www.stthom.edu/Twitter>

Youtube: <http://www.stthom.edu/Youtube>

LinkedIn: <http://www.stthom.edu/LinkedIn>

Instagram: <http://www.stthom.edu/Instagram>

Google+: <http://www.stthom.edu/GooglePlus>

Tumblr: <http://www.stthom.edu/Tumblr>

Vimeo: <http://www.stthom.edu/Vimeo>

Wordpress: <http://www.stthom.edu/TheDome>