



LAKE WASHINGTON  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

# Social Media Guidelines

Updated January 2019



## Overview

Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram are important and influential external communication channels for our community. We encourage their development and use. To assist you in posting content and managing these sites, the college developed guidelines and standards for official LWTech use of social media.

These guidelines and standards refer to external social media where the public can join the conversation, and apply to college faculty, staff, and official/college-affiliated student groups or clubs using social media accounts associated with the college's departments, programs, and offices.

It is assumed, in this document that you have a basic understanding of social media outlets, how to create an account, how to create a page, and how to post, tweet, etc. However, if you need assistance with basic introduction to social media, please contact [marketing@lwtech.edu](mailto:marketing@lwtech.edu) for help.

## Goals for External Social Media at LWTech

LWTech social media goals should align with the [LWTech's mission and core themes](#). They can be described as follows:

- Open, develop, and foster new communication channels and engagement between faculty, staff, students, alumni, prospective students, and the community.
- Share information about programs, events, departments, groups, individual achievements, and other associated external news surrounding LWTech.
- Increase LWTech's local, national, and global visibility and voice.
- Support the college's mission and core themes, goals, programs, and sanctioned efforts, including college news, information, content, and directives.

### LWTech Brand Center

[LWTech.edu/brand](http://LWTech.edu/brand)

### LWTech Communications & Marketing Contact Information

#### Leslie Shattuck

Director

[leslie.shattuck@lwtech.edu](mailto:leslie.shattuck@lwtech.edu)

#### Alisa Shtromberg

Web/Digital Content Manager

[alisa.shtromberg@lwtech.edu](mailto:alisa.shtromberg@lwtech.edu)

#### Kimberly Goddard

Design Services Manager

[kimberly.goddard@lwtech.edu](mailto:kimberly.goddard@lwtech.edu)

#### Sarah Chandler

Communication & Marketing Coordinator

[sarah.chandler@lwtech.edu](mailto:sarah.chandler@lwtech.edu)

#### General Inquiries

[marketing@lwtech.edu](mailto:marketing@lwtech.edu)

#### Website Inquiries

[webmaster@lwtech.edu](mailto:webmaster@lwtech.edu)

## Getting Started

### Starter Tips

Create a personal account and spend some time learning how the social media site works, if you're not already familiar with the social platform. There are a multitude of tutorials that exist online to help you learn more about getting around [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), etc.

Look at what other colleges or similar department groups have done to be successful.

### Evaluate Your Goals

Before creating social media accounts for your department, think about what your primary goals are.

- Who is your audience? Current students, staff/faculty, potential students, general public?
- How will your activity on social media differ from that of the college's social media content?
- What kind of information will you share with your audience to engage them?

Answering these basic questions will help you better visualize which platforms are suitable for your department.

## LWTech on Social Media

Currently the College is active on the following platforms:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#) (company)  
+ showcase pages

[LinkedIn](#) (university)

[YouTube](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Flickr](#)

## Examples of Good Social Media

Community College of Philadelphia

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Portland Community College

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Shoreline Community College

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

Hillsborough Community College

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

## Platform Rundown

Each social media platform offers something different for its users. With each platform reaching a different type of audience. It is important to keep the same tone between various platforms, while utilizing each platform's features to enhance your message.

### Facebook

**Audience reach/type:**

~35+, mature in tone, supports existing relationships, and creates dialog and discussion.

**How to be successful:**

Get likes by engaging with your audience in a meaningful way. Ask questions to get a dialog going. Strengthening brand loyalty is crucial for longevity. Imagery and videos go a long way in creating a brand. Use hashtags and hashtag campaigns.

### Twitter

**Audience reach/type:**

>30, used as a listening source to stay up on issues, Twitter has a much larger social influence than Facebook, but a short life span.

**How to be successful:**

With a limit of 280 characters or less, posts are time sensitive because the tweets come and go quickly. Post multiple times a day, use pictures, smart and timely tweets. Use hashtags and hashtag campaigns.

### LinkedIn Company Page (and Showcase Pages)

**Audience reach/type:**

Professional peer-to-peer networking site. Experts weigh in with their expertise or share data-driven information about your program.

**How to be successful:**

Short, smart, informative, insightful content. Join groups that share your business interests. Job postings and other informative content such as emergency closures, success stories (e.g. scholarships, grants, awards) are acceptable.

### Instagram

**Audience reach/type:**

A photo-focused platform, when used correctly, Instagram can be a highly-targeted, visual advertising medium. It provides brands with [25% more engagement](#) over other social platforms.

**How to be successful:**

Engage people on a personal level. Try to show a different point of view, look back at history, and show off the campus/department. Showcase students and alumni and most of all have

fun, while being appropriate. Hashtags are accepted and highly recommended. Adding to your Instagram story often can help fuel engagement and drive viewers to visit your profile.

## **Other Platforms**

If you are interested in exploring other social media platforms beyond what is in this document (e.g., Snapchat, Reddit, etc.), please contact the [Communications & Marketing department](#).

## **Best Practices**

Social media is a great avenue for marketing your brand, but also a great way to engage with your audience. It is important to follow some basic practices to keep the audience interested in a social and positive environment while promoting the brand.

## **FERPA**

The [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) laws apply to LWTech's social media. Information that contains addresses, personal email, photos, phone numbers, date or place of birth, grade level, or location on campus of students, cannot be shared without the sole permission of the student.

If any of this information is disclosed, including a photograph of the student and/or a photograph of the student's intellectual property, you must have a [signed release form with permission](#) and provide a copy to [Communications & Marketing department](#). It is encouraged that you keep a copy for your own records as well.

Permission for minors, such as LWTech high school students or the children in the Early Learning Center, must be obtained from parents or guardians as well.

## **Privacy**

Information about individual employees, students, or someone associated with LWTech, should not be named or discussed on social media without their permission. The same rule applies for confidential (e.g. internal policies, procedures, information from informal conversations) and proprietary information or similar information of third parties. Minor information requires permission of parent/guardian.

## **Timing and Frequency**

Typically, weekday mornings are considered the most popular time of day for posts. However, LWTech's main data insights show that post reach typically peaks between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. Try to post at different times of day and follow insights to see when posts engage your users the most. [Check out some more tips on when to post](#).

Finally, you should be posting at least once a day; on Twitter, 2-5 tweets/day is acceptable.

## Etiquette

When using an officially recognized social media channel associated with LWTech, assume at all times that you are representing LWTech. **Avoid personal opinions and views** that are not those of the college, program, department, etc. Use good judgment for your posts, because content can spread anywhere, once it is posted.

Social media is not the right place to discuss or speculate on internal policies or operations. Exercise discretion, thoughtfulness and respect for your colleagues, associates and the college's supporters/community (social media fans).

A healthy dialog with constructive criticism can be useful but refrain from engaging in dialogue that disparages colleagues, competitors, or critics.

Be mindful that all posted content on LWTech social media outlets is subject to LWTech's [code of conduct](#).

## Copyright

Be aware of copyrighted material. If you are allowed to use or link to material or images, give proper credit to the original source. Do not take images from places like Google/Bing image search, unless they are copyright, royalty free assets. Keep records of permissions received.

## College Brand

When referring to the college on social media, and elsewhere, please use "Lake Washington Institute of Technology" or "LWTech" in order to stay within the college's brand.

The following are incorrect references to the college and should **NOT** be used:

- LWIT
- LWT
- Lake Washington Tech
- Lake Washington Technical College
- Kirkland College
- Lake Washington Community College

Be sure to also follow brand guidelines for correct color and font usage where applicable. See [LWTech.edu/brand](http://LWTech.edu/brand) for more information.

## Visual Assets

If you are in need of visual assets to include with post copy, you may use images from the college's [Flickr account](#). You may also use online images that are not copyrighted and available for commercial use without attribution, such as those found at [Pixabay.com](http://Pixabay.com). Please contact the Marketing department if you have any questions.

## Emergencies

During an emergency situation, LWTech Communications and Marketing, asks that the departments refrain from posting any content on Social Media, except to re-post from LWTech's main social media accounts. Such measures should be followed until emergency protocols are lifted.

## Management

Administrative privileges and login information should be given to LWTech Communications & Marketing. In addition, it is recommended that at least two people manage and contribute to your social media accounts.

## Brand

Imagery associated with LWTech should remain consistent with [LWTech's brand](#). **Social media avatars and logos should use one of [LWTech logos](#)**. Additional guidance with graphics and design, such as adding your department's name/title to the logo can be provided by [Communications & Marketing](#).

## Naming Convention

To remain consistent with the brand, all social media account names should be preceded with "LWTech". This applies to departments, programs, organizations, student-related organizations, etc.

Examples:

Facebook: LWTech Marketing

Twitter: @LWTechMarketing

## General Tips for Posts

- Pictures and video generate more attention than text.
- Keep text copy short and precise.
- Check grammar and spelling.
- Use #hashtags where appropriate, but do not overuse a particular hashtag, or use too many.
- Post a variety of relevant, valuable and engaging content. Examples include articles, links, photos, videos, and event information.
- Be accurate with information and check/verify your sources and references.
- Check spelling, grammar, and keep the language clean and proper.
- Use a weekly or monthly planner and schedule your posts several days in advance.

## Monitoring & Moderating

## General Moderating Guidelines

LWTech encourages our fans, followers, and friends to share their thoughts with one another by commenting on a story, feature, tweet, or post that speaks to you. We encourage lively, thoughtful and civil conversation.

- Comments must be relevant to a topic discussed and to the point.
- Keep your comments clean and constructive.
- Excessively long comments—as determined by the site’s editor—are subject to editing for length, clarity and space limitations.
- The following posts and comments will be removed:
  - Posts that are off-topic, abusive, contain profanity, are threatening in tone or devolve into personal attacks.
  - Spam or similar comments promoting a product, service or entity unrelated to the discussion.
  - Political statements, including comments that endorse or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions, are prohibited under state law ([RCW 42.52.180](#)).
  - Religious statements, including comments that endorse or oppose any religious activities or opinions.
  - Anonymous comments or posts.
  - Posts and comments that promote, foster or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
  - Illegal activity or encouragement of illegal activity.
  - Information that could compromise the safety of LWTech faculty, staff or students.

LWTech reserves the right to review all comments and remove comments that violate any of the conditions noted above. LWTech may provide links to third party websites. These links are not under LWTech’s control.

## Responding to Users

It is important to engage and respond to people through your social media channels.

- Try to respond to all comments if possible as soon as possible after they appear.
- Beware of trolls, who post controversial or emotion evoking text to elicit a negative response. If the comment breaks the moderating comments guidelines, you can delete it.
- Avoid removing something because you do not like it. If you’re stuck on a response, contact the [Communications & Marketing department](#) for advice on an appropriate response.
- Do not engage someone in a continual back and forth that is negative.

- Appropriate responses can include thanking someone for their opinion, insight or contribution to the conversation, favoring or retweeting a tweet.

## Press/Media

If LWTech or a member of the faculty, staff or a student is in the news (positive story) you're welcome to post links to the news story.

In the rare instances where negative news events involving our school, faculty, staff, or students arise, refrain from commenting on LWTech social media platforms.

If media attempt to contact you via social media, contact the [Communications and Marketing department](#). Short of simple requests for clarification on calendar items, all media requests should go through media relations in the Communications and Marketing department.

## Platforms In-Depth

### Facebook

#### Profiles (personal accounts) vs. Pages vs. Group

Users create profiles (personal accounts) and post content to an audience of their choosing (friends, friends of friends, public, filtered audience, etc.). LWTech employees and students should utilize their profiles to administer Pages and/or Groups. **Profiles not associated with a person that look like an organization (e.g. Facebook account where you login as program-department@lwtech.edu), should be avoided as they can create confusion.** You may create a second personal Facebook profile using your LWTech email account, but realize that you will be managing two Facebook accounts! Note that when a profile account is an administrator to a Page, personal information is not posted via Page unless the user chooses to reveal him/herself.

#### Pages

Pages help businesses and organizations share stories and connect with people by building a following of fans via "Likes". In most cases people should create pages to share stories about their department or program. When you create your page, ensure that you fill in as much information about the program/department in the About section.

#### Groups

Groups provide a space for people to communicate about shared interested privately or publicly. Groups should be utilized when long discussions are relevant. Profiles can be administrators of Groups, but cannot post as a Group, unlike in Pages. Think of Groups as a discussion Forum.

## **Content/Photos/Videos**

To help achieve good engagement, it is encouraged to keep the content rich by including photos or videos in your posts. If your posts do not contain either, keep the copy short and concise.

When posting links, assure that photos are in the preview. Often Facebook preview will pull image or images automatically from the link and will give the option to choose which image is visible. Sometimes there are no images available from link previews; Facebook gives the option of adding a photo. Refer to the **copyright** section for more information on using photos.

It is encouraged that video posts should be playable from posts. In most cases you will be posting YouTube videos, which can be viewed in Facebook.

## **Tagging**

Use the @ symbol to tag other pages when referring to other organizations, businesses or brands. This will give your page more exposure as well as the other page(s).

## **Twitter**

### **Accounts**

When establishing a Twitter account, you must use your LWTech email account to register it. Communications and Marketing should have access information as well. Add a short bio, program/department link and profile image and banner. Remember, tweets are limited to 140 characters.

### **#Hashtags**

Hashtags are a great way to tag a post by adding the “#” symbol in front of a word or phrase (cannot have spaces) to make it easy to search posts. For example, if you are running a campaign with a #SetYourFuture, anyone could click that hashtag and would see a search result of all posts using that particular hashtag. Research hashtags before using generic ones. If you want to brand your hashtags, but are not entirely confident about your words or phrases, contact the [Communications and Marketing department](#) and they will be glad to give you some tips!

### **Tagging**

Tag other Twitter accounts by using the @ symbol. Remember when you tag other accounts they will see your tweet, which gives you more exposure.

If you start a Tweet with an @TwitterAccount, that is considered to be tweeting straight at the account but publicly visible.

### **Direct Messages**

Direct messages are limited to 10,000 characters and can be very useful for side conversations and dealing with negative feedback and comments and informal conversations.

### **Content/Photos/Multimedia**

Shorten links by using services such as [bitly](#) or [ow.ly](#) to save character space. Photos no longer take up character space so it is encouraged to use photos and videos to keep the content

quality rich. If you need help learning about these services, contact the [Communications and Marketing department](#).

## **LinkedIn**

### **Company Page**

Just as in Facebook, company pages are administered by individual profile users. A separate account is discouraged just to administer the company page.

LinkedIn allows only one company page per email domain (@lwtech.edu), therefore only one LWTech Company page may exist. However, LinkedIn has a feature called [Showcase Pages](#) to address the issue of companies having a multitude of sectors and departments. At LWTech we encourage departments to establish a Showcase Page. To get help with creating a Showcase Page, please contact the [Communications and Marketing department](#).

### **Content/Photos/Multimedia**

Similar to Facebook, try to include content-rich material that include photos. LinkedIn also previews images in links, but it chooses the image for you. However, you can upload an image to replace the default image. It does not utilize hashtags, but does allow tagging of people and organizations with an @ symbol.

## **Instagram**

### **Account/Profile**

Instagram is an exclusively mobile social media platform therefore, you must download the app on your mobile device (it is available for iOS and Android devices). It is viewable from a [web browser](#), but posts can only be made from a mobile device.

### **#Hashtags**

Hashtags are utilized the same way as on Twitter. They are highly encouraged and useful. There are not character limits in Instagram, therefore users often use large amounts of hashtag words and phrases. We encourage the use of hashtags, but keep the number of hashtags low: quality not quantity. Instagram allows for no more than 30 hashtagged items per post.

### **Tagging**

Tagging with an @ symbol is also a feature in Instagram. Tagging can be done by mentioning the user name in the caption (e.g., @TheLWTech) and/or on the image itself. Utilize either of these tagging methods to give your profile exposure.

### **Content/Photos/Multimedia**

Instagram does not allow links in the posts except in the profile description. Avoid including links in your posts as they will be difficult for users to utilize.

Videos are limited to 15 seconds and can include sound.

Photos are your primary avenue of communication to your followers. Avoid posting photos of flyers or other similar materials that are text heavy.

## Other Platforms

You might be inclined to consider other social media platforms. Here is a summary of some of the most popular platforms outside of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.

- **Flickr:** Image and video hosting social network with 3.5 million images uploaded daily.
- **Google+:** Platform with 300 million monthly active users and used for relationship marketing with over 53% positive interaction between Google+ and brands.
- **Pinterest:** Photo microblogging social media platform; has 70 million users of which 80% are women.
- **Reddit:** Platform used for entertainment and news, where registered community members can submit content in text and link format.
- **Snapchat:** A mobile based messaging application for sharing moments with photos or videos and options to caption or doodle. Snapchats can be shared with friends or posted to a user's story. Snapchats can be viewed for 10 seconds and then it disappears. This platform is becoming popular among brands.
- **Tumblr:** Microblogging platform best used for sharing photos, videos, audio, quotes, text with over 420 million users and 217 million blogs.

If you need help learning about these services, contact the [Communications and Marketing department](#).

## Final Remarks

If you are an employee of the college, be vigilant of protecting the [college's brand](#).

LWTech's logos and/or visual identity cannot be used for personal social media without college permission.

We support reposting of LWTech material on your personal social media account(s). It helps us spread the word about our great school and programs. Remember that 70-percent of our students hear about us through word of mouth.

LWTech does not monitor personal websites and social media, but will address issues that violate established HR, Editorial, Graphic and Social Media guidelines.

Employees of LWTech should follow full disclosure rules in order to protect the school's reputation. When commenting about the school on social media (even if you're commenting on an LWTech social media site), whether positive or negative, please disclose your relationship with the school.