

Social Media

Social media is often used in the higher education setting and has demonstrated multiple benefits including increase retention, socialization, collaborative learning, student engagement, sense of control and ownership, along with other benefits for students and instructors. Several considerations need to be taken into account before incorporating social media tools into teaching. This document provides guidance to faculty interested in incorporating these tools.

Social media is defined as internet-based applications which support and promote the exchange of user-developed content and allow for social, interactive, and connective communication and learning. Examples include:

- Social networking (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo sharing (YouTube, Flickr)
- Blogging, microblogging
- Wiki

Key Areas of Consideration

FERPA and Security

Before using social media, check with your department head regarding internal guidelines, pre-existing pages, etc. It is important to consider [FERPA](#) laws and student privacy when using any social media tool. Even when an online space is restricted to specific users, nothing is truly private. Students' grades, LSU IDs, or any other confidential information are not to be posted via social media. If and when possible, use Moodle; it is university approved and supported. Social media such as Facebook and YouTube is not supported by ITS at LSU. Please contact the company's customer service department to report any technical problems or to request support.

Access, Accessibility and Compliance

Faculty members need to ensure the chosen media is in compliance with accessibility guidelines as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) before requiring its use in the classroom. For additional information, please contact Disability Services <http://disability.lsu.edu>.

Copyright and Fair Use

Be cognizant of copyright issues. Be sure not to make copyright materials available globally. Users are liable for uploading or sharing copyright-protected works, not the social media site. It is best to provide a link to original resources if possible. Also, taking Fair Use guidelines into account can help determine when it may be safe/ legal to use/ share materials.

Ownership and Intellectual Property

A discussion of ownership in academia is synonymous with addressing intellectual property. Student ownership occupies a gray area in higher education since there is no standard way of addressing the intellectual property rights of student work. When using social media, the definition of author or owner is blurred and the terms and conditions of these sites often permit the appropriation of users' content. Facilitating discussions or assigning readings about ownership to address ethical and legal content use is recommended (Rodriguez, 2011).

Guidelines

1. Establish a clear purpose for using social media based on the way(s) in which it supports course learning objectives.
2. Set well-defined guidelines. Be sure to let students know if membership and participation is mandatory and what is expected of them. Specify the extent of collaboration.
3. Provide or link to information for technical support and documentation for your students.
4. Keep in mind that some social media tools are available as applications that work on specific devices which may limit those who can use them (i.e., Instagram).
5. Confirm that students are aware of intellectual property issues to ensure potential breaches of copyright law are avoided. Posting work online can be considered publishing and distributing.
6. Determine a clear policy on what constitutes misuse. Expectations for how students should communicate online, "netiquette," should be plainly stated.
7. Provide advice on privacy settings. Something posted in a private area could be shared publicly by others. *Note: A good rule of thumb is: If you would not or should not post it publicly, do not post it at all. Social media sites update their terms of use and the mechanics of their site frequently; check the security and privacy settings of your accounts regularly to ensure your settings and expectations of privacy are met.

Resources/ References

Rodriguez, J. E., (2011). Social media use in higher education: Key areas to consider for educators. *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 7(4).

Wang, R., Wang, R., Scown, P., Urquhart, C., & Hardman, J. (2014). Tapping the educational potential of Facebook: Guidelines for use in higher education. *Education & Information Technologies*, 19(1), 21.

For information on ways to use social media in teaching, visit the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative's 7 *Things You Should Know About* series website: <http://www.educause.edu/research-and-publications/7-things-you-should-know-about/7-things-you-should-know-about-learning-technology-topics?keys=social%20media&filters=>