



RCSI

RCSI

Social Media Toolkit



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1. Introduction

Supporting our colleagues to engage on social media is an important objective for the RCSI Communications Department. We want to equip you with the skills and confidence to communicate on social media in a way that builds your own personal profile and amplifies our institutional efforts to enhance our reputation online.

This toolkit provides some important information on RCSI's social media policy along with guidance on how to get started, how to set objectives, how to create content and how to track your progress.

The Communications Department is here to help. Please [get in touch](#) for advice and guidance, or drop in to our Social Media Clinic, which takes place from 11am-12pm each Friday.

We wish you every success with your social media engagement!

RCSI Communications Department

2. RCSI Social Media Policy

Introduction

RCSI embraces the use of social media by staff to connect with students, researchers, business partners, alumni and colleagues as an important tool of engagement.

When using social media staff members are asked to be considerate, to be transparent and to understand that they are representing the College and that their actions can impact upon RCSI's reputation.

RCSI recognises the use of social media for open dialogue and the exchange of ideas where it is beneficial for the College and/or individual in their work or research capacity.

Staff must observe the following guidelines before creating a social media presence, or engaging in online discourse that has a connection with RCSI.

Reference

[RCSI Dignity at Work Policy](#)

[RCSI Disciplinary Procedure](#)

Guidelines

1. All official RCSI sites or pages, on Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, LinkedIn, etc., must be authorised by the [Communications Department](#). Any sites or pages existing without prior authorization will be subject to review when discovered and may be amended or removed.
2. Updating these social media sites are at the discretion of the departmental owner. Sites that are not kept current may be de-activated.
3. All social networking sites shall clearly indicate that they are linked to RCSI and shall have RCSI contact information prominently displayed.
4. Staff representing the RCSI via social media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of RCSI and in accordance with all human resource and media policies regarding authorized spokespersons. This includes disclosing themselves as RCSI staff members and using an approved official account.
5. (i.) No confidential or proprietary information about RCSI or its students, faculty, staff or alumni shall be posted on a social media site. Employees who share confidential information without the expressed written consent of both their Head of Department and HR place themselves at the risk of disciplinary action up to and including dismissal in accordance with RCSI Disciplinary procedures.

(ii.) All applicable laws, regulations and College policies must be strictly adhered to, including without limitation, those pertaining to copyright and intellectual property rights, employee or student conduct, use of RCSI resources, information and data and student privacy.

(iii.) No single departments' social media site represents the College as a whole. Consider this when naming pages and accounts and selecting profile pictures or icons such that it clearly specifies the College department that is being represented.

(iv.) Departments that have one or more social media pages or would like to start one should contact [the Communications Department](#) to inform them.

(vi.) The College name or logo may not be used on personal social media pages or sites or to endorse a product or support a cause, political or otherwise.

6. Social networking content and comments must not contain any of the following forms of content:
 - (i) Profane or offensive language or content
 - (ii) Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination in any manner or form
 - (iii) Content that is or is likely to be defamatory
7. The RCSI logo is not to be used on social media accounts without approval.
8. We reserve the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy.

Social Media and Personal use

When accessing social media via the RCSI's internet, staff members must do so in accordance with the IT policies, which require them to use these resources 'reasonably', in a manner that does not interfere with their work, and is not inappropriately or excessively accessed and does not breach this policy or other IT policies. Whether or not use was reasonable in the particular circumstances will be a matter to be determined by the user's Head of Department.

Official RCSI Social Media platforms

RCSI (Official) is currently active on six social media platforms, all of which serves as a means to communicate with different audiences in different ways.

- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/rcsi123>
- Twitter https://twitter.com/RCSI_Irl
- YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/RCSIIrl>
- Instagram https://www.instagram.com/rcsi_irl
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/rcsi>

3. Social Media Planning

Setting Social Media Goals

The key to success on social media is being really clear about what you want to achieve by developing a short plan with goals and targets.

1. Determine your objectives

Social media can be an effective way of building your profile, enhancing your reputation, establishing and deepening relationships and raising awareness. Think about what you hope to achieve through your engagement on social media. For example, do you want to build your profile in your field of research and with potential funders and collaborators, or do you want to increase public awareness of the disease area you are researching?

Some further objectives might include:

- Awareness: growing interest in our work
- Advocacy: building a community who will share our content and advocate for us
- Relationships: connecting with researchers internationally

Your objective will determine your approach to social media – the type of content you will create and share, the people you will engage with and the messages you choose to convey.

2. Make S.M.A.R.T. Social Media Goals

The most important aspect of any social media plan is to set S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goals.

Examples of SMART goals include:

- Gain 200 twitter followers by the end of the year
- Achieve 3 mentions on Twitter a month
- Engage with 2 research collaborators in other institutions in a month
- Grow awareness of our work by sharing two 'behind-the-scenes' insights into our research lab per month

Setting very specific goals such as these will help you to build social media engagement into your day-to-day work.

3. Choose the correct metrics to measure success

Metrics will help you focus on your performance and make changes Track metrics that clearly demonstrate how social media is contributing to business results. These could include:

- Reach
- Audience engagement
- Blog visits
- Relationships built
- Knowledge sharing

4. Getting started

Building a social media presence

Although social media channels may seem less formal, it is always important to remember that your online activity is subject to data protection and freedom of information regulations, and therefore users must adhere to sound guidelines on participation in social media.

Please exercise discretion when posting in public spaces and please do not comment on RCSI matters in any social media space which could be construed as offensive, legal or cause disrepute.

Setting up a social media account

- Consult with your supervisor/manager and obtain their approval for any social media presence. Discuss if social media is the right platform for your department/research, who your target audience is, how the account will be managed and the type of content you will post.
- Questions to consider include:
 - How do we want to be portrayed? What reputation do we want?*
 - What does our audience look like?*
 - Who are we creating content for?*
 - Why are we on social media?*
 - What do we want to offer our audience?*
- Further guidance on how best to get started is available from the [Communications Department](#).

Social media owner

- Appoint a member of the team, project or service to be the main owner for your account. This person has the responsibility for posting relevant content and for moderating engagement/comments.
- Use a shared department email address for your account. This will allow other staff to take over should you leave or change your role. Moreover, maintaining an account with a colleague or small group of colleagues can help make the account a success by spreading the workload. If you do not already have a shared email account you can request one via helpdesk@rcsi.ie

Branding and identity

Naming your account

- The main College Twitter username is @RCSI_Irl
- To ensure your username is easily identifiable with RCSI, we recommend prefixing your name with one of the following two options:

@RCSI_XX
@RCSIXXX

- Your username cannot be longer than 15 characters. Your name can be longer (50 characters), but usernames are kept shorter for the sake of ease.

- Do not use the following: RoyalCollege/RCS/RCS_
- Do not be tempted to use an internally focused name. While this makes sense to your colleagues, current staff and students, it is not so recognisable to the public.
- The key point is to make your username memorable, easily identifiable and, if possible, visibly connected to RCSI. If you are unsure which option to use, or are concerned that the above options aren't appropriate for your Twitter account, please contact the Communications Department.
- If you plan to use other multiple social media accounts, we recommend using the same username across all your accounts for consistency.
- Include a brief and up-to-date biography of your department. Use any necessary disclaimers and include a link to the RCSI website.

Logo and Visual Identity

- Speak to the RCSI Design team for guidance on the RCSI Logo to ensure you are using the logo correctly.
- Please note that logos created specifically for your group are not permitted under RCSI's visual identity guidelines. Please follow up with design@rcsi.ie if you would like to find out more about how we use the logo.
- Other accounts, such as research-group accounts or project accounts can use another image but please check this use with the Communications Department.
- The identity of your account must relate to RCSI and to your department/faculty/research group.

Posting on social media

Tone and authenticity

- Be appropriate and professional in presentation and tone

Frequency

- By setting up a social media account, you are committing to maintain it, so publish regularly and relevantly. This is critical to your success
- If a social media presence is not being updated regularly, then the best course of action may be to formally close it.
- Social media use is not a substitute for having important content on a website

Content

- Follow the principles of 'writing for the web'
- Write succinctly and clearly
- Consider the reader and their attention. Just because a platform might allow a lot of text does not mean that you should post a lot of text
- Be focused. Ensure you post items that have relevance to your target audience
- Ensure your own postings do not breach copyright/ GDPR
- Be thoughtful. If you have any questions about whether it is appropriate to write about certain kinds of material in your role as an RCSI employee, or how to respond to negative feedback, ask your manager or contact Communications before you post
- Be responsive. Encourage comments and respond to those who have questions. Retweet relevant posts from others - followers like to see that you interact with your community.

Images

- **Copyright** Be aware when using images and logos from other people/organisations in your tweets or profile.
- **Do you have written permission to use them?** If not, copyright infringement could lead to legal proceedings. Please ensure that you have the correct permission to share images.
- **Consent:** Do you have the consent of the subject of the photo to use the image on social media? Please ensure you are familiar with your responsibilities under GDPR.
- **Work with RCSI's Design team on your collateral.** Maximise your use of imagery and create consistent visuals. Work with Design to ensure your visuals are visually impressive and adhere to brand guidelines.
- **Include images.** People are three times more likely to engage with posts that include visual content. Visual content captures people's attention and encourages deeper engagement.
- **Do not** use generic stock images. Avoid images that simply blend into the background

Tips

Bitly

Bitly allows you to easily shorten, share, manage, and analyse your links.

Bitly makes links more manageable and promote sharing. It's far easier to copy/text a short URL than a long one.

Find out more in the [Bitly Basics video](#).

Hashtags

A hashtag is a word or keyword phrase preceded by a hash #.

The right hashtags will help those who may be interested in your topic to be able to find your work when they search for a keyword or particular hashtag. Hashtags help to draw attention to your posts and encourage interaction.

It's important to not use more than two hashtags per post on Twitter. Studies have shown that too many hashtags lead to less interactions.

When posting about RCSI research, you are encouraged to use #RCSIdiscover.

Tagging

Tagging on social networks is very popular, and it's a good way to make your content more visible to the right people. However, it's important to practice good online etiquette and to tag relevant and industry-related profiles only.

Users can be tagged in the body of a post using the @ symbol, or tagged in the accompanying image.

5. Support from RCSI Communications Department

Social Media Workshops

The RCSI Communications Department runs workshops for researchers and academics on social media, and amplifying their impact online. [View upcoming workshops](#) or email communications@rcsi.ie

Social Media Consultations

If a department/person wishes to book a consultation on what type of social media platforms would benefit a particular department's requirements (e.g. for an event, a guest lecture/seminar or research etc.) you can schedule a consultation with the Communications Department. To do this, contact Kate O'Sullivan on 01 402 2196 or email kateosullivan@rcsi.ie

Social Media Clinic

Colleagues are invited to ask questions and discuss challenges with the Communications Department in person. Visit the RCSI Communications office, 123 St Stephen's Green, from 11am to 12pm every Friday.

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