

# Social Media Standards Guide

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A guide to Neosho County Community College participation in social media

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The Social Media Guide is published by the Marketing Committee at Neosho County Community College. For more information related to topics in the guide, contact the Marketing Committee.

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This document has been developed to provide a framework to guide the College's participation in social media. Having an established framework will help us to build brand equity with our target audiences by reinforcing key messages and establishing a consistent voice to represent the College. Due to the ever-changing nature of social media, the Internet, and the technology, which drives it, we must stay active in watching for changes in trends, best practices and emerging ideas. These standards will be adjusted as issues and new practices arise in conjunction with the overall communication goals of the College.

### **Who should read this document?**

If you are a NCCC employee or affiliate who is either creating and/or participating on a social media platform, it is important that you familiarize yourself with the College's social media standards. It is our goal to ensure that whenever a person is representing NCCC via social media they are familiar with these standards, as well as, our social media objectives.

### **Introduction**

#### **Objectives**

- Build an online community of supporters for the College
- Foster relationships with existing and potential students as well as faculty, staff and the community at large
- Increase enrollment and maintain retention of current NCCC students
- Increase brand engagement and visibility within the community

#### **Parameters that will be used to measure success**

- Participation – the extent to which users engage with Neosho County Community College's content
- Influence – the size of the user base subscribed to your content
- Web traffic – the amount of unique visitors, page views to Neosho County Community College's web site

#### **How does the College define "Social Media?"**

Neosho County Community College defines social media as the combination of technology and social interaction to encourage and create dialogue between the College and its target audiences. The web provides many social platforms where social networking can take place. Neosho County Community College has chosen to participate and be present on a number of these platforms. Some examples of various social media platforms are listed below. The channels listed below represent networks where Neosho County Community College is currently participating.

Essentially, any online platform where dialogue can take place between two or more parties can be considered a social medium.

#### **Social Media Objectives**

**Facebook**

**Twitter**

**You Tube**

**MySpace**

**Blogs**

**Flickr**

**LinkedIn**

**Yelp**

**Facebook – YouTube – Twitter**

## **Neosho County Community College Facebook Presence**

Neosho County Community College utilizes Facebook to provide communications and engage students in dialogue regarding life and education at Neosho County Community College. We have two primary pages in addition to several additional pages with a program specific focus.

### **NCCC's Institutional Page**

This page is the official representation for NCCC on Facebook. The content on this page is updated daily to promote events, important information and stories of interest to the community of fans. This page is utilized to help us engage students, graduates and community members via dialogue about the importance of education and more specifically, the value of getting an education at NCCC.

### **N.C. Panther's Page**

This page is the official page for Peter Panther, the official Neosho County Community College mascot. This page is intended to bring Peter to life as a champion for students as well as a place to foster team spirit for NCCC.

### **You Tube**

NCCC's official You Tube page. Here, you will find a range of videos related to life at Neosho County Community College. The goal of the page is to use a video, a popular medium, to create a more conversational and casual tone.

### **Twitter**

Presently, NCCC has the following twitter handles: ?

## **Which Platforms are Neosho County Community College Present on?**

When approaching social media there are a number of common questions and best practices that can guide the process of community building with social media.

### **Tips, Tricks and other Tidbits**

#### **Facebook Tips and Best Practices**

- **Be relevant and interesting** – Publish valuable and relevant content that is useful to our audience.
- **Have a policy in place** – Clearly state policies somewhere on the page or via a link from the page. Having a policy that states that offensive items will not be tolerated is crucial. That said, deleting comments that might be critical of NCCC is not generally advisable. It is much better to respond or allow another member of the community to respond and sometimes to ignore than to delete. For communities to develop trust, it is important that users feel that you are willing to listen to concerns and able to allow for difference of opinions. Remember, social media is for conversation and discussion. Facebook administrators should feel confident to steward discussions on a range of topics. Facebook page administrators should feel prepared and confident to steward conversations on a variety of topics and should get input from a trusted advisor when unsure how to effectively respond to any topic.
- **Don't just talk to yourself** – Participation is key in the development of a community using social media. Ask questions, encourage interaction allow fans to contribute to your fan page. Be sure to select topics that will spark some feedback and discussion. Doing so provides Neosho County Community College the

opportunity to learn what matters to our fans. The more freedom we provide for fans, the more they will feel at home in our on-line communities.

- **Be real** – Social media is all about being authentic and honest. Our goal is to be honest and upfront about who we are as a College. Social media provides an opportunity for us to have a real two-way conversations with users in a social setting where people have chosen to connect with us.
- **Pay attention** – Social media is a real time communications channel. Often the best moment for response has passed in a matter of hours. Our goal is to monitor conversations (listen) about our brand and respond in a timely manner. Offering a response makes fans feel as if we really are listening and care enough to address their questions or concerns.
- **Don't get lazy** – Update frequently. Find a happy medium where fans are engaged but not turned off.
- **Share** – If you see a news article that would be interesting and relevant to your fans, share it. If you notice something on campus that you appreciate share it. If you are curious what students think – ask!

## **FAQ Section**

### **What should you do if you want to create a presence for your department, event or group on Facebook?**

If you are a representative of a Neosho County Community College department, program or organization, we encourage you to be involved in social media and want to do all that we can to support your efforts. Ideally, we can be executing on a concerted social media effort where the College's social media activities benefit those of individual programs and vice versa.

In order for a program to have a social media presence that is officially recognized and promoted by the College, the program must agree to follow the standards outlined in this document. When your social media presence is approved by the College, it will also be posted on the Colleges website under official media profiles.

### **Official Recognition of Social Media Profiles**

Neosho County Community College departments and programs may be included on the NCCC Social Profile Index after creating a social media profile and complying with these standards.

### **Neosho County Community College Online Interaction Policy**

Neosho County Community College is excited to participate on social media and other online channels with students, staff, friends, and community members – welcome!

By participating on social media profiles and websites officially administered by Neosho County Community College Community

College, it is understood that user-generated content on college social media profiles or websites does not reflect the opinion or interests of Neosho County Community College or its officers and must not be inappropriate in nature (see below). All participation and user-generated content appearing on Neosho County Community College social media profiles is subject to this agreement.

We ask all participants on Neosho County Community College social media profiles and websites to act appropriately and respectfully with the other participants in our online community. We ask that all participants on NCCC's social media profiles refrain from derogatory content, which includes, but not limited to, content which is illegal, blatantly profane, violent, sexual, pornographic, discriminatory, or otherwise defamatory.

Content that is considered spam, commercial, or intended to sell, advertise, or promote goods, services, organizations or individuals is also deemed inappropriate.

All content deemed inappropriate will be removed at the discretion of a Neosho County Community College online administrator.

All content posted on pages and websites administered by Neosho Community College is subject to applicable copyright laws. Users may only post content of which they are the owner(s) or have written or licensed permission from the copyright owner to share the content (i.e. under an attribution Creative Commons license).

Neosho County Community College accepts no responsibility or liability for any data, text, software, images, videos, messages, audio, or other content, which is generated by and posted publicly by users other than Neosho County Community College in its official capacity. Neosho County Community College accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever for the content of any target third-party site linked from this page.

### **How can my program be involved?**

Neosho County Community College reserves the right to amend or modify this agreement at any time. All modifications are effective on the revision date. Neosho County Community College is not required to notify individuals who follow or "like" pages, profiles, or websites for changes to become effective. Neosho County Community College thanks you for your participation in creating a safe, respectful, and vibrant community. We look forward to sharing with you!

In the event of a crisis concerning a post of a comment, video, picture or Tweet that contains derogatory content on a social media page that represents Neosho County Community College, we have developed the following policy for approaching the situation. If you are unclear as to what kind of action to take, please contact Tim Jones or consult with another Social Media Administrator.

### **Removing A Facebook post**

It is best to respond in the thread of discussion rather than create a new post.

Posters may accuse the college of censorship. In the event that this occurs, a response can be provided that states the following:

"NCCC adheres to the Statement of Rights and Responsibilities provided by Facebook. We only remove posts that are in violation and threaten the safety of discussion in this forum."

- Provide the link: <http://www.facebook.com/terms.php>

### ***Please Note:***

*Try to find ways to vary the language of the quote above so it doesn't sound too prescribed. Remember, social media is conversational.*

### **Steps to consider before removing a post:**

1. Determine that a violation of Facebook policy has occurred
2. Take a screen grab of the post (hit command shift 3 on a Mac or PC and the image will be automatically saved to your desktop)
3. Print the post and physically mark up the actions taken (actions listed in steps 4 and 5)
4. Report the author of the post
5. Delete the post
6. Send any history of actions taken to Tim Jones

## Transparency

In the world of social media everything happens in real-time at lightning speed. Even if a post is removed or changed chances are that many posters have seen the post. It is important that there is a sense of transparency on all Neosho County Community College Social Media pages and accounts.

### Tips on Transparency:

1. If asked, be sure to identify yourself as a Neosho Community College Social Media Representative. This will insure that the perception of something being hidden does not occur.
2. Let the social community discredit individuals who post questionable opinions.
3. Do not delete a post unless it contains derogatory language or pictures focused at a religious group, ethnic group, or gender.

## Neosho Community College Crisis Management

### How do you avoid a crisis?

It is not always possible to avoid a crisis, but here are some helpful hints that can at least enable you to catch it early on.

**Monitor** – It is important to monitor your social media pages on a daily basis. This will insure that you are alerted of any issues.

**Develop** – Create a list of your contributors and communicate with them regularly.

**Plan** – In the event of a crisis be sure to have a plan in place, know where the Rights and Responsibilities information for the College is housed so that you do not have to search for it. Most importantly, in the event of a social media crisis, remember to stay calm, think through your strategy before responding and if you are unsure of what to do, contact Tim Jones or another Social Media Administrator for advice.

Neosho County Community College has established standards as all department and program communications are extensions of the overall college communication efforts. When browsing the web or participating in social media, Neosho County Community College visitors experience NCCC as a whole whenever interacting with any NCCC entity, be it the main NCCC homepage or a department's Facebook profile. Individual departments and programs are representative of the entire college experience, and vice versa.

Because of this inclusive organizational view held today, it is imperative to coordinate efforts with every unit of the institution and develop strategies to maximize a visitor's experience with any NCCC entity both on and offline. These online communication standards supplement the overall college marketing plan and seek to coordinate communications and messages and increase their effectiveness.

The overall goal of communication on the web and on social media is to develop a community and foster relationships with NCCC visitors. To encourage an overall "NCCC" experience, common branding, communication elements, and structure must be followed. This will help ensure a pleasurable experience by visitors who are seeking information or are interested in communicating with NCCC.

Disconnected, irrelevant, unplanned, and contradictory messages are frustrating and encourage abandonment from college interaction and communication. These standards seek to provide relevant, connected, and valuable information to NCCC's audiences. Happy audiences and well-connected communities can lead to great returns.

## Infrastructure

**Page structure.** All websites and social profiles must adhere to the sponsor's terms of service (e.g.

Facebook pages must adhere to Facebook's terms of service). Specific infrastructure considerations:

**Facebook:** All unit and departmental social profiles must be Fan Pages, not groups or profiles. Individual, personal profiles for organizational use are against Facebook's terms of service. Neosho County Community College requires Fan Pages as they are open, non-selective of membership, easy to administer, and easily integrated into other college pages. Pages also provide a comprehensive analytics package on viewers and fan involvement that can be used to improve the page.

**YouTube:** Departments and programs are encouraged to create YouTube channels only if they are able to regularly update the channel with new content (recommended: 1 video every 6-8 weeks).

**Twitter:** Departments and programs are encouraged to create Twitter profiles and tweet on content valuable to their target community. Department and program Twitter feeds should follow other NCCC departments to encourage increased audience participation.

**LinkedIn:** Departments and programs at Neosho County Community College are not permitted to create departmental profiles on LinkedIn, but may form groups and discussion communities.

**Open information.** All official college profiles are intended to be non-exclusive and open for viewing.

Avoid making information private or having a membership required to view information.

## The Standards

**Linking and connection.** For social media to be most effective within the Neosho County Community College network of profiles, it is imperative for departments and programs to link between all of their profiles, their departmental website, the main college website, and the main college profiles. Many social networks have spaces for more information, websites, favorite pages, and other ways to promote other links. Many users who find social profiles are interested in both the department's page and other information. Making NCCC information hyperlinked and easy to find encourages engagement and leaves visitors more informed and satisfied. We're in the business of providing valuable info to our visitors!

**Unique URLs.** Many social profiles allow for the creation of a unique link or URL to the page. If given the opportunity, departments and programs should create a unique URL for their profiles. When choosing a URL, make sure to include both the word "Neosho County Community College" and some identifying keywords of the department or program.

## Operation

**Administration.** At least two administrators should be appointed to each social media profile or website. At least one must be a Neosho County Community College staff member or faculty. Students who serve as administrators should understand these standards and proper action on the web. Upon departing Neosho County Community College, it is the responsibility of a profile or site administrator to find an appropriate replacement.

**Moderation.** Departments and programs must develop terms of use which detail allowed user generated content, moderation processes, and grounds for deleting inappropriate material. Departments and programs are responsible for content posted on social profiles and websites.

**Planning.** Departments and programs should develop a general plan for communication on social profiles, including answering the following questions:

- Who are we talking with on our profile?
- What do our fans want to hear or see?
- Who is responsible for posting?
- To what should we reply and how often should we reply?
- How often should we post content?

- Who will the administrators be?
- How will we promote our profile?
- How will we know our profile is successful?

## Logos and Titles

**Logos and profile images.** Use of the Neosho County Community College Community College “NC or panther” logo is reserved for the official college social media profiles and their respective profile images. Departments and programs are encouraged to adopt a Neosho County Community College Community College or departmental logo as a profile image to increase brand awareness.

As outlined in the Logo and Graphic Standards from the Neosho County Community College “in most cases, the Neosho County Community College logo is the official mark of the college and should be used to represent college departments and programs.”

To encourage brand awareness, pictures of a single individual or groups as a departmental profile image are not appropriate.

**Titles and profile names.** It is important to appropriately name social media profiles, both to encourage search engine optimization and to avoid confusion with other Neosho County Community College entities. Be sure to identify Neosho County Community College as well as the individual department or program when creating a profile name. Do not use the term “NCCC” or other acronyms in a title or profile name. Do not use the same or closely similar titles to other Neosho County Community College departments and programs. Because profile names can not be changed in some instances, it is recommended that page administrators request the approval of Tim Jones, or the Marketing Committee.

### Sample profile name:

Neosho County Community College – Marketing and Public Relations

The above naming model is a safe way to ensure search engine optimization and compatibility with other departments and programs.

## Posting and Content

**Types of content.** Departments and programs are encouraged to create content of all types on social media profiles. Multiple forms and styles of content engage audiences. The primary forms of content delivered via social media are as follows:

**Text** – Website copy is generally informative in nature. Blog entries, notes, and longer documents can spark conversation and ideas. Comments, posts, and status updates are meant to be quick and easily read. Many resources exist on posting successful, appropriate, and valuable text content.

**Images** – Photos are the most engaging type of content across social media networks garnering more clicks than video. Photos, graphics, and other pictures are a great way to visually communicate and show what your department and program is all about. Photos of events, classes, programs, facilities, and other fun items can provide value to fans. *Recognizable images of people must have a release waiver by the person in the image to be posted and tagged.*

**Audio** – Podcasts, interviews, music, and other audio is considered good content for audiences.

**Video** – Multimedia is highly popular content on the web. Videos that highlight events, programs, people, ideas, or courses are great ways to reach out to audiences and provide value. Even simple video recorders can be used to send a message today. Some post-production or scripting during the video provides some extra quality which viewers will enjoy. *Make sure to gather talent release forms for all recognizable individuals appearing in videos.*

**Value.** The goal of social media is to provide valuable content and conversation to audiences. The result of delivering value is usually connected audiences, improved relationships, and a strongly developed community of fans.

In all communications, try to provide value to the audience and offer incentive to participate and engage with the department or program.

**Comments and conversation.** All administrators on social media profiles speak on behalf of Neosho County Community College. It is important to avoid posting personal claims, observations, or opinions under the name of the college, a department, or program. Identification of individuals who are administrators is important when necessary. It is not necessary to hide or conceal one's identity when promoting Neosho County Community College on social media profiles. Transparency and open disclosure when discussing events or programs will gain respect with fans and the community.

The best way to think about interacting online is to be a person and be social. The same rules of human interaction and conversation exist on social media! Be respectful, be fun, be conversational, and don't hog the conversation (meaning, provide value to the fans instead of talking about yourself the whole time!)

It is important to engage in conversation with fans and audiences when interacting with social media profiles; they expect the "social" in social media. Frequently, fans and visitors may leave comments, questions, replies, or other messages. Promptly reply and communicate with these individuals – by doing so, departments and programs can develop important relationships and valuable trust with their fans and audiences. If an answer to a question is not known, it is best to research the answer or direct the commenter in the right direction.

Developing processes and strategies to regularly monitor and reply to comments will establish departments and programs as highly interactive, encouraging audiences to develop relationships with the department or program.

**Ownership rights and copyright.** By posting content on social media profiles, departments and programs affirm that they own or have the right to post and display that content. It is essential to attribute all images, multimedia, and textual content to the original author or owner, providing a web link whenever possible.

All images and video which depicts individual people in a recognizable way require collection of a photo release form from each person in the photo or video.

Departments and programs must comply with all copyright and intellectual property law.

## **Privacy**

**Privacy.** Audiences expect and require confidential and private matters to remain that way. Never reveal personal information about people such as current locations, home addresses, phone numbers or other information about a student, faculty member, employee, or other community member in any fashion. Never reveal confidential, proprietary, or otherwise private information about any person, organization, or Neosho County Community College and its students, employees, or alumni.

Information provided publicly by an individual on social media profiles, comments, and websites are sharable (such as first and last names, especially if they actively participate on your page), but try to avoid using more than an individual's first name unless given permission to share on social media sites. Be mindful of existing federal laws such as HIPPA and FERPA which prohibit disclosure of certain personal information. In addition, remember to practice good ethical judgment.

If permission is given through an official Neosho County Community College photo release, departments and programs may tag photos, videos, and other items to individual users or groups. Tagging can potentially engage and invite others to participate with Neosho County Community College social media pages.

## Step 1.

Email Tim Jones from the Neosho County Community College Marketing Committee to discuss your Facebook needs and determine if it would be best to incorporate your department or event into the main page or if it will be best to create a new fan page to achieve your goals. It's important to consider your overarching goals, have representative administrators and a strategy in place before publishing a page.

## Step 2.

Determine what type of page is best for your goals. Should I set up a Facebook Group or Fan Page?

**Fan Pages** – are designed to be brand profiles and typically created by the official representative organization. They are dynamic and media-rich, and allow HTML, Flash, and embedded applications. They support updates from external blogs and can be promoted with Facebook Ads. Content posted to fan pages appears in the Facebook news feeds of fans and can be a powerful way to provide updates and share relevant information with friends.

### Setting up a Fan Page

- Go to <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php> to start your Facebook page.
- Here you need to select whether your Facebook page is the category of a, "Local Business," "Brand, Product, or Organization," or "Artist, Band, or Public Figure" and type the name that you wish Facebook visitors to see when they visit your page. And remember, you cannot change the name after you set up a fan page so make sure you select the name you want.
- After signing an electronic signature, your page is all set up and the next step is to upload content and photos.

**Groups** – unofficial brand communities started by social network members. A Facebook group can be created by anyone for discussion and networking around any topic. There is little room for customization allowed on group pages as well as different communication policies. Groups fewer than 5,000 members and group administrators can send messages to all members that will appear in their inbox. Administrators can also restrict access to members of the group. Unlike on the fan page, posts and discussions that occur on group pages do not get published outside of the group.

### Setting up a Group

- Go to <http://www.facebook.com/groups/create.php>
- Group name: fill in your desired group name. This is what will appear on the site will be used by the public to identify the group.
- Network: Choose your desired network. Options range from Global to local and networks that you individually belong to.
- Description: Include a brief description of your group. Give any information about your group that may entice people to join.

### Steps for setting up a presence of Facebook:

- Group Type: Choose the category that you believe your group would best fit in (i.e. Business, Student Group, Just for Fun, etc.). Then select a more narrow field from the examples of the group type (i.e. Community Groups, Academic Groups, etc.).
- Recent news: (not required) if you wish to include any recent news that may interest the members of your group include it here.
- Upload photo: Here you can upload a JPG, GIF or PNG file.
- Website: If the group you are creating already has a preexisting website, you can add the URL address to direct people for more information.
- Access: You are able to decide what level of access and security you want the group to have.

You can choose the group to be open (anyone can join and invite others to join and see group information and content). Choose this option if your goal is to be large and you're open to anyone to join. You can also choose it to be a closed group (administrators must approve requests for new members to join and only members can see the wall, discussion board, and photos).

- Invite Members: Go through your friend list and select those who you feel would like to join. If you're not connected to them through an existing Facebook account and "friend" connection you can ask them to join via their email address.

Our goal in developing standards is to provide every program and Neosho County Community College representative with the necessary tools to maximize the opportunities available via social media. These standards reflect the big picture view of how to approach social media. Of course, implementation will require administrators to develop additional tactics to guide the day-to-day activities that will help you accomplish your goals.