

How to use social media responsibly

A guide for students

On Twitter

- consider your audience and your profile. You might want to use one account for professional or academic use, and another for informal and personal use.
- name accounts intelligently
- monitor your followers list regularly
- think before you tweet, and remember that you can make your account private

On LinkedIn

- remember it's a professional environment
- don't link to personal Facebook or Twitter accounts without good reason
- set your profile to private until you're ready to share it – it'll be public by default

Whichever social media tool you're using, keep to these principles.

1. Think about your privacy, but remember, 'private' settings don't prevent content being downloaded.
2. Think about how your use of social media makes you appear to others.



What will your strategy be?

You can make conscious decisions about the way you portray yourself, which will help decide what your digital footprint looks like.

You may want to

- think about what you want your social media use to say about you
- consider what you want to achieve, and which tools would be best for the job
- keep your personal and professional identities separate
- check security settings regularly
- communicate positively, not negatively
- choose quality over quantity
- Google yourself regularly
- untag yourself from photos or posts that could show you in a negative way

Make sure you don't

- use social media to complain or vent frustrations
- share personal pictures or information that will reflect badly on you
- announce when you're on holiday (and leaving your home empty)
- express concerns about others, even if you think you are anonymous
- connect with people you don't personally know, or at least without there being a purpose for the connection
- forget to log out of shared machines

Get more advice

There's more help at go.shu.ac.uk/socialmedia including ideas for using social media strategically and managing your digital footprint.



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How to use social media responsibly

Social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are a part of everyday life. Used well, they can add to your learning experience at university, and make you more employable when you graduate. But used poorly, they can cause lasting damage to you and others.

Your responsibility

By enrolling as a student at SHU, you agreed to abide by the University's IT regulations, including use of social media.

Ignorance is no defence if things go wrong, so make sure you read the regulations. There's a link to them all at the bottom of every *shuspace* tab.

Find **IT Regulations** in 'Information & IT'.

Find **Disciplinary Regulations** in 'Misconduct'.

Code of conduct

Within the disciplinary regulations, there is also a code of conduct. This states that while you are a student here, you must act

- in accordance with all University regulations
- within the law
- with respect for the dignity and rights of others, irrespective of their background
- with respect for the property of others and the proper use of University facilities
- with regard to the health and safety of others
- with regard to the University's good reputation
- with honesty

When on placement or in employment, you must also act in accordance with your employer's codes and regulations.

What are the consequences of behaving irresponsibly online?

If you do something irresponsible online, as well as damaging your own reputation and potentially harming others, you may be subject to formal disciplinary procedures and possibly lose your place at the University.

The disciplinary regulations clearly set out the behaviour we expect from our students. They apply to all your activity, including on the internet and on social media sites. This includes using social media to defame the University, or in a way that could bring the University into disrepute.

What counts as irresponsible?

Use your common sense. If it's hurtful, defamatory, libellous or inappropriate in the physical world, it is online too. Irresponsible behaviour can include

- making derogatory comments about individuals or organisations, even as a joke
- sharing confidential information about others
- sharing sexually explicit, racist, homophobic or inflammatory material
- flaming or trolling – deliberately provoking arguments, or disruptive behaviour
- making allegations about others

There are two golden rules to follow.

1. If you wouldn't say it to someone's face in a public place, don't say it online.
2. Don't rely on privacy settings – anyone who can see your content can download it, copy it, take a screen shot and then share it publicly.

What is a digital footprint?

Your digital footprint is the data trail left by your interactions in the digital world.

It's a public record of

- what you said
- what was said about you
- what you liked, retweeted or shared
- where you are or have been

This information is often used for marketing purposes and employer checks. It also makes it very easy for others to gather information on you in order to impersonate or commit fraud.

Less public, but something you need to remember is that there is also a record of

- what you've clicked on
- what you've searched for
- your IP address

Managing your digital identity

With a few simple steps you can decide how others see you in the digital world – and protect your personal information. Here's how.

On Facebook

- use settings that determine who sees your posts
- set your timeline so only friends can see it
- avoid making individual posts visible to 'friends of friends' and 'public'
- don't share any personal details
- remember, everyone may see which pages you like, so take care, and if in doubt – unlike
- functionality and privacy settings often change, so check them regularly