## Use Facebook for

- connecting with your peers and coordinating study using closed groups
- finding out what's going on at your institution through relevant pages
- discovering initiatives, competitions, promotions and jobs
- keeping up with professionals and following what they have to say

## Use Pinterest for

- gathering ideas, particularly if you're a visual learner
- storyboarding ideas
- developing a portfolio
- creating a visual reading list

Don't stop there – consider the merits of other social media tools and environments. Do some research – how are others using tools, and what kind of problems are they solving?

## Get more advice

There's more help at go.**shu.ac.uk/socialmedia** including ideas for managing your digital footprint and how to use social media responsibly.

*This leaflet was last updated in October 2014.*

# Sheffield Hallam University

# Using social media for learning

## A guide to becoming strategic

# Using social media for learning

## Identify your principles

An important part of using social media strategically is setting yourself some principles. Being clear about your reasons for using particular sites or tools and considering your online behaviour can have a powerful effect on your education and your ultimate career.

Here are some principles you might want to adopt.

### 1. Be responsible for your use of social media. Make sure what you write is

- positive – don't complain about your course or individuals, undermine others or vent frustrations about your job
- of a good quality – check the authenticity of things you share or retweet, avoid slang language and check your spelling
- properly thought through – pause before you post, avoid using social media when angry or emotional, and don't post when drunk

### 2. Articulate your use of social media by

- identifying what you want to achieve
- clarifying why you use particular tools, when, how and what for
- choosing carefully your contacts, friends and who to follow



### 3. Make sure social media reflects how you want to be seen, by

- taking care about what you share – your content reflects your values and personal principles, and some values or positions might harm your education or career
- taking as much control as possible over how you're portrayed by others – for example, untagging yourself from unsuitable photos and content
- considering the use of separate personal and professional profiles (while understanding that there is no such thing as private)
- getting a professional-sounding email address and user names
- reviewing your content impartially and making adjustments – are you as witty and insightful as you think you are?

## Use social media strategically

With a set of principles in place, you can then become strategic. There's no set recipe for this, but here are some tips.

### Take a look at what's out there

There's more to social media than just Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Search for the Conversation Prism – it's a chart showing the current range of social media tools and the kinds of activities they're good for.

### What are other people doing?

Identify a key figure in your subject area, Google them and see how they use social media tools for professional use, and whether they include personal use. Check Twitter profiles – often professionals will set out a statement about how they use social media.

### Put the purpose first

What do you need to achieve? What's the best tool for the job? Do some research.

### Be selective and keep it simple

Even the most dedicated can struggle to keep up. Effective use of social media takes time and commitment. If you
find it a bit overwhelming at times, stick to just one thing to start with.

### Get organised

Write your strategy down. Think about how you'll use the tool, and plan your time.

### Review your strategy

As your studies progress, your needs will change, and it shouldn't stop when you leave university.

## How to use different social media

Here's some examples of how some social media can be used to support and enhance your learning

### Use Twitter as

- a search engine to find out what others are saying and thinking, what resources they're sharing, and alternative angles to a discussion
- a survey tool to inform assignments and projects using hashtags to collate contributions or by adding a link to an online questionnaire
- an opportunity to be part of the conversation – with the professional world at your disposal you can contribute your own unique perspective to discussions

### Use LinkedIn for

- finding out about industry experts and their networks via company pages
- promoting yourself for placement, internship and job opportunities
- joining groups of discussion – initially to observe, and later to contribute
- demonstrating what you've learned and how you've applied it