

## GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR STUDENTS

### INTRODUCTION

1. Social media<sup>1</sup> is a fun part of everyday life, but it can carry risks. This short guide is intended to help you avoid any pitfalls, while still making best use of social media for study and research as well as social purposes.

2. Despite the immense opportunities represented by social media, there are significant risks, not least business, legal, and reputational. Social media allow individuals to communicate with a potentially huge audience, and given the interpersonal nature of their form, can blur the lines between a personal voice and an institutional voice. Those using social media in a personal capacity need to bear in mind that their comments could be taken to reflect on LSE.

### GUIDANCE

3. **Think about your personal safety.** Don't reveal data about you that:

- could be used to impersonate you/steal your identity (date and place of birth, for example)
- might reveal your actual whereabouts or when you're not somewhere (at home, for example) - so think about who you share your location with
- might cost you money (look out for scams and freebies: anything that looks too good to be true, usually is!)

4. **Get the tone right.** Never forget that your postings, whether they are on a blog or public Facebook site, can be read by millions. Ensure your tone is right and strike the right balance between informality and formality.

5. **Think twice before posting.** There is no such thing as privacy on the internet. Word spreads quickly. Search engines can turn up posts years after they are created - even after you think you have deleted them - and comments can be forwarded or copied. Inappropriate or inaccurate comments which are damaging to a person's reputation should be avoided, as they could result in a claim of libel. Do not say anything online that you would not say in public. Think carefully about posting anything which you would not want a future employer to read.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this document, 'social media' is defined as media that enable social interaction via the internet and personal mobile devices. A more detailed definition of terms is contained in Annex A.

**6. What might seem anonymous usually isn't.** Your use can be tracked, even if you think you have an anonymous user account.

**7. Make it accurate.** If you are making a serious contribution to a debate via social media, make sure you get all your facts right, as you would when writing an essay or a report. If your content is associated with LSE then it reflects on LSE's reputation for quality.

**8. Be respectful.** Content on a social media site could encourage comments or discussion of opposing ideas – the audience is far wider than your peers. Consider all comments and responses carefully in light of how they would reflect on you or LSE. Be aware that any misuse of social media might attract complaints from other students, which may result in disciplinary action.

**9. LSE logo.** The LSE logo, which is produced in various forms, is a registered trademark and a key part of the School's identity. Its use is tightly constrained and it is most unlikely that any use on social media will be authorised. For any requests about the logo, contact [designunit@lse.ac.uk](mailto:designunit@lse.ac.uk).

## CONTACTS, RESOURCES AND ADVICE

10. If you encounter misuse of social media, such as posting of inappropriate content, please report it to Kevin Haynes, Head of Legal and Compliance, [k.j.haynes@lse.ac.uk](mailto:k.j.haynes@lse.ac.uk).

11. You are encouraged to read [the School's policy on social media](#).

## **ANNEX A: About this document**

### ***Disclaimer***

Policy elements of this document cannot be changed without DMT approval.

### ***Target audience(s)***

LSE students

### ***Process***

This policy is being developed in accordance with PAS 124:2011 'Defining, implementing and managing website policies and standards: code of practice' which is produced by the British Standards Institute (BSI).

### ***Goals***

1. To enable the School and its students to use and benefit from social media.
2. To protect the School and its students from the risks of social media.
3. To set and manage expectations for the use of social media by LSE students.

### ***Scope***

- Included:
  - Social media channels of communication.
  - School content, or information about the School, shared/communicated through School, personal or third party channels.
  - School channels used to share/communicate School, personal or third party content, or information about the School, individuals or third parties.
- Excluded:
  - Channels of communication other than social media channels.

### ***Definition of terms***

- Social media – Digital services provided via digital networks (internet or private) which allow individuals to share content and information between one or more other individuals. Examples include Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, etc.