



Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs



Social Media Guidelines for FaHCSIA employees

What is social media?

Social media are emerging media which allow people to discuss and share information online. Tools which aid this interaction can include:

- blogs – opinion articles and information that are regularly updated and commented on by others
- wikis – web pages allowing users to collaborate and extend information by adding, removing and editing content collectively
- podcasting – created by posting an audio file to a website which can then be downloaded via subscription
- RSS (Really Simple Syndication) – allows users to receive updated information from websites, blogs or podcasts without having to regularly visit the original site
- tagging – keyword classification of content carried out by users which yields more relevant and useful search results
- social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, My Space and Twitter - provide a combination of tools designed to help people connect and share information with each other.

What are my responsibilities?

The use of social media websites by public servants is governed by the [APS Values and Code of Conduct](#).

FaHCSIA employees are expected at all times to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be required elsewhere.

This includes:

- being apolitical, impartial and professional
- behaving with respect, courtesy, and integrity
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising the need to maintain confidentiality where relevant
- being sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public
- taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
- making proper use of Commonwealth resources
- upholding the values, integrity and good reputation of the APS.

Please note: the *Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2009/6: Protocols for online media participation* is no longer current and has been removed from the APS Commission website.



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Revisions to the protocols are outlined in [Circular 12/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online \[553kB\]](#). The revisions themselves are attached to the circular and are also found at [APS Values and Code of Conduct in practice](#).

Departmental staff should be aware that using public social networking sites, blogs, video portals or wikis carries the risk of identity fraud and other threats which can result from providing personal information on such sites, specifically details such as age, address and employment details.

Using social media at work

Access to social media sites (e.g., Facebook and Twitter) is provided by FaHCSIA in accordance with the Department's [ICT Code of Conduct](#).

Personal use is only allowed if it is incidental to formal duties and all relevant policies, procedures and guidelines are followed.

FaHCSIA social media accounts

All official Departmental social media accounts must be approved by an SES line manager and created by the Online Communications Section, Communication and Media Branch.

Enquiries can be sent to SocialMedia@fahcsia.gov.au

Please note: The Online Communications section is the **only** authority which can post an official message.

Social media and your privacy

Social media makes it very easy to share information with others. While convenience is their selling point, it also means you need to be more alert when accessing these sites.

- **check your account and privacy settings** – make sure you know who can access any postings you make before you post them. You should also check that you are not revealing more personal information about yourself than is necessary
- **review your posts** – ensure you check your comments before publishing to ensure you have not revealed any inappropriate material
- **consider any "Friends" requests carefully** – think carefully before adding people you do not know to your social networking page. You don't want to reveal more information than you should or end up with inappropriate comments from others on your professional profile.

The do's and don'ts of using social networking

Social media can be a daunting experience at first but by following a few basic guidelines you can protect the Department and yourself from any wrongdoing.

If you need further clarification or information about your responsibilities using social media, contact the [Online Communications Team](#).

Do

- comply with the [Department's ICT Code of Conduct](#)
- ensure the social media site you're using does not conflict with the APS Values or Departmental policies
- be aware of privacy settings and preferences which can restrict access to your personal details
- always get permission to use words, images or materials online that you do not own

- be accurate, impartial and avoid any comment that may be interpreted as a political view.

Don't

- make any statement or comment that may bring the Department, Government or the APS into disrepute
- make any statements which may be interpreted as advocating Government policies or criticising the policies of other political parties or groups
- commit the Department or the Government to any action or initiative through the use of social media
- disclose official information unless you are authorised to do so or if it's already in the public domain
- use a work email address when registering for an account with a social media website.

More information

- Online Communications team can provide advice on using social media: SocialMedia@fahcsia.gov.au
- Workplace Relations Team can provide advice on the APS Values and Code of Conduct: workplacerelements@fahcsia.gov.au
- ICT can provide advice on the FaHCSIA ICT Code of Conduct: ICT.Security@fahcsia.gov.au