s22 irrelevant

ATO use of social media

What you need to know

- Social media gives us the opportunity to promote ato.gov.au as our preferred channel in a very cost effective manner.

- We provide a trusted source of information using communication channels that suit community needs and expectations.

- We update and monitor our social media channels between 8.00am–6:00pm (EST/DST) Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). During peak periods, we also monitor after hours.

More informa

> Social Media · 2014/01/04

> Social media questions and answers

> Official use of social media

> Unofficial use social media

- We read all comments and messages to provide the public with information relevant to their situation in a timely fashion.

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Print Preview

Why social media?

The ATO's Strategic Intent 2015 states:

'People expect convenient and accessible service in their dealings with a contemporary service organisation. We will offer convenient and accessible self-service solutions. We will facilitate online services for all our clients. When direct contact is necessary we will provide various helpful and convenient personalised services'.

Our social media channels are used to support communication strategies by distributing messages on:

	• Twitter – latest updates on new measures, changes to legislation, reminders of due dates, system outages, upcoming events and new products.
	• Facebook – latest updates on a wide range of important information the community needs to know about tax and superannuation.
	• YouTube – videos on various tax administration topics to keep the community up to date with what's new and important about tax and superannuation.
	• LinkedIn – latest updates on new measures, changes to legislation, reminders of due dates, system outages, upcoming events and new products.

> Official use of Facebook

> Official use of Twitter

> Official use of YouTube

> Official use of LinkedIn

Social media case studies

> Case study: B of APS code of conduct

> Case study: B of confidentiality

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Using social media

If you want to post messages to an ATO social media channel, the following documents will help get you started:

- Official use of social media – information governing the approved corporate approach for each channel.

- Unofficial use of social media – explains APSC recommendations on personal use of social media.

- Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04 – information governing the ATO's position on the use of social media.

Principles

Social media must be identified in communication strategy as a tactic, taking into account the nature of the channel and audience. Posts to ATO social media channels are managed based on the following principles:

1.　As custodians, Digital Communities has editorial approval of all content. Assistant Commissioner, Digital Delivery, in ATO Corporate has final editorial approval of all content.

2.　Content owners should follow the relevant instructions depending on whether their request relates to Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or YouTube.

3.　All messages must comply with Official use of social media and Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04.

4.　All requests to use the ATO's social media channels must be discussed with the relevant Relationship Manager before completing a copy of the social media request form. Refer to instructions available for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

5.　Digital Communities will determine priorities based on content that is:

- newsworthy (or something new that we need to promote)

- aligned with corporate priorities and messages

- unlikely to cause any significant reputation issue for the office or put any other operations at risk

- relevant to a significant proportion of the community or key stakeholders/influencers.

6. Messages posted to ATO social media channels must align with our Style guide and Professional advisor and educator (PA&E) brand quality and focus on providing practical assistance as

   well as promoting products and campaigns. For example

   - promotional (campaigns, new initiatives, tax time)

   - informational (news updates, taxpayer alerts)

   - educational (how to guides and demonstrations).

7. Messages must not contain:

   - any personal or sensitive taxpayer information (personas can be used as case studies for illustration purposes)

   - information rated as having a classification of protected, confidential or above

   - any material that is against the APS Values and Code of Conduct

   - material that is offensive.

8. Content owners must liaise with Digital Communities to prepare responses to questions posted about their messages. Responses require senior executive service (SES) clearance within

   24 hours, or 48 hours for more complicated matters.

9. Liking, sharing or re-tweeting content does not reflect any legal or regulatory preference. We share content in good faith and it does not mean we endorse the person or company and their

   views or future posts.

31/03/2016 1:10 PM

s22 irrelevant

s22 irrelevant

Digital Delivery » Digital Communities wiki library » Official use of social media

Official use of social media

Social Media CEI 2014/01/04 defines **official use** as '…when social media channels are used for ATO work purposes as part of an authorised work program or job requirement'.

The only people that can create an ATO presence on social media are members of ATO Corporate's Digital Communities team, as delegated 'gatekeepers' for the ATO's official use of social media. Digital Communities manages, monitors and advises business lines on all aspects of official communication. They assist communication officers with developing content and responding to enquiries on all of our official ATO channels.

On this page:

- ATO on social media
- Considering social media as a communication channel
- Requesting posts
- Best practice principles
- Hyperlinking to third party content
- Responding to a comment or question
- Image design
- Paid advertising

For general guidelines on using social media as an ATO employee, including use in a **personal capacity**, refer to Social Media CEI 2014/01/04, Unofficial use of social media, and Social media case studies.

More information

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Social Media CEI 2014/01/04

ATO use of social media

Official use of Facebook

Official use of Twitter

Official use of LinkedIn

Official use of YouTube

Unofficial use of social media

Contact

To get in touch with the Digital Communities team, email Digital Communities.

If you're considering using social media to support your communication strategy, contact your Relationship Manager in the first instance.

Information for taxpayers is available at Find us on social media.

ATO on social media
The ATO has an active corporate presence on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. Here's how to connect with our channels:

Facebook
Log into your account or sign up to Facebook.
Do not use your ATO email address to register for Facebook.

Go to
facebook.com/ato.gov.au

Click the 'Like' button.

Twitter
Log into your account or sign up for Twitter.
Do not use your ATO issued email address to register for Twitter.

Go to
twitter.com/ato_gov_au

Click the 'Follow' button.

LinkedIn
Log into your account or sign up to LinkedIn. You may use your ATO email address to register, but consider the implications of leaving the ATO or accessing LinkedIn from home. We recommend you use a personal email address.

Go to
linkedin.com/company/australian -taxation-office

Click the 'follow' button.

YouTube
Log into your account, or sign up for YouTube.
Do not use your ATO issued email address to register for YouTube.

Go to
youtube.com/AusTaxOffice

Click the 'Subscribe' button.

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Considering social media as a communication channel
Identify the communication need and target audience
Consider the following:

- Is this part of an overall communication strategy? Social media should not be used in isolation.
- What are you trying to communicate about? Is the problem or issue clearly defined and understood?
- Who is the target audience and what do we know about them? What are their communication channel preferences? Are they likely to be on social media?
- How will the social media activities work with other communication activities?
- What do we expect the target audience to do when they see/hear this communication?
- Have the contextual aspects of social media channels been considered? For example, how will the audience perceive the ATO if they see a serious message in a channel which they use for non-serious interaction (eg YouTube)?
- Consider the intent of the message in context of the compliance model and the audience behaviour archetype. What attitude or behaviour have they demonstrated in the past? Do they fit into the category of willing or trying to do the right thing or not wanting or deciding not to do the right thing?
- How are we going to respond to customers? The channels seek to engage – do you have capacity to respond quickly?

Analyse the communication strategy options
Our brand qualities drive our communication style and tone, as well as give structure and meaning to how we communicate. The brand quality we use depends on our communication intent – who we are communicating with, how we are communicating with them and what we are trying to achieve. Both the message and channel need to reflect the relevant brand quality to ensure we are delivering a consistent experience for the taxpayer.

When using social media, you should aim to use the Professional adviser and educator (PA&E) brand, using helpful, informative, matter-of-fact language to:

- introduce the audience to functional information
- instruct the audience on how to comply or fulfil a specific obligations and
- update and educate the audience on the latest taxation and superannuation information.

Taxpayers' charter requirements also apply in developing a communication strategy. Are we being fair and reasonable? Are we providing complete, accurate and consistent advice and information? Are we using plain, clear language and being open, transparent and accountable?

Is social media the right tool/channel for your communication?
Social media is best used as part of an overall communication strategy, rather than as the sole channel. It should be evaluated against its relevance to specific target audiences and ability to achieve desired communication outcomes.

It is important to understand how well social media tools deliver the communication objectives and how the communication will be perceived by the target audience, as well as the expectations of audiences when using social media.

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Requesting posts

Communication strategists interested in publishing messages on the ATO's social media channels must contact their Relationship Manager in the first instance to discuss the request.

Before preparing content, refer to the following pages for instructions and best practice guidelines on using each channel:

- Official use of Facebook
- Official use of Twitter
- Official use of LinkedIn
- Official use of YouTube.

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Best practice principles

- **Keep messages short and succinct**. Research indicates that ideal Facebook and Twitter posts are between 100 and 120 characters – these are more likely to be shared or retweeted.
- **Images increase engagement by between 93%-200%** depending on the social media channel. LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter all have image-posting capability. Refer to Image design for information on Design Studio services and templates.
- **Paid promotion can be extremely beneficial** – concentrating resources on a single, well-developed post can significantly increase engagement. Paid promotion works best as an element of a complete campaign. Refer to paid advertising for more information.
- **Know your target audience and optimise your posting schedule**. Established professionals are more likely to see your post on LinkedIn, while messages to superannuation and tax professional groups tend to respond well to tweets. Refer to the audience overviews available on the Official use of Facebook, Official use of Twitter, Official use of LinkedIn, and Official use of YouTube pages.

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Hyperlinking to third party content

Where possible, our social media messages should hyperlink to relevant resources on ato.gov.au.

However it may be appropriate to link to a third-party website under the following circumstances:

- if we worked with the third party to develop the content
- if we are working in partnership with the third party
- if we are supporting a third party's initiative
- where the link is not taking our followers to a transactional site.

Refer to Hyperlinking to third party content for more information, including examples of how we link to third party websites on our channels. To check whether you can link to third party web content or add a YouTube video to a playlist on our YouTube channel, email Digital Communities.

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Responding to a comment or question

There are three different response processes:

- General customer service responses are managed by the Customer Response Team. Enquiries made on Facebook (timeline posts or private messages) and general tweets to the ATO are answered using SMART scripting and reference information on ato.gov.au.
- The management of complex or potentially inflammatory messages is the responsibility of Digital Communities. Where posts or tweets have the potential to damage the ATO's reputation, Digital Communities manages responses, liaising with the Media Unit as required.
- Comments made against promotional messages (paid advertisements) are managed by the Customer Response Team. The business line that owns the promoted post is responsible for providing a list of pre-approved answers to anticipated questions or comments.

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Image design

Social media messages are generally more effective when paired with a graphic or video to capture the reader's attention and to encourage them to 'share' the information with other users.

When developing your communication strategy, consider whether an image, animated gif, photo, infographic or video is appropriate for your message, and discuss how to develop this media with your Relationship Manager.

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Paid advertising

All social media channels provide an option for paid promotion. If you've identified that paid advertising is appropriate for your messages, and are interested in using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or YouTube for promotion, contact Corporate Campaigns.

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*If you have any feedback regarding this page, email **Digital Communities**.*

Digital Delivery ▸ Digital Communities wiki library ▸ Official use of Facebook

Official use of Facebook

Guide for communication strategists

This guide provides information on how to incorporate Facebook as part of your communication strategy.

On this page:

- Facebook and the ATO
- Requesting a Facebook post
- Facebook post guidelines
- Evaluating posts
- Facebook terminology

Facebook and the ATO

Facebook is a free social networking website that allows users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages, keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues and connect with brands and businesses. It's the most widely-used social networking site, with 14 million Australian users[1]. Businesses and other professional groups use Facebook to develop company pages to share information, promote services and products, as well as to connect with their customers.

On 1 July 2011, we launched the ATO's corporate Facebook page at facebook.com/ato.gov.au.

Our corporate presence forms a consolidated approach to our current social media activities, and brings the Facebook channel in line with other ATO social media channels such as Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube. We post promotional, informative and educational messages on our page to update and engage the community on a wide range of tax and superannuation information. We also engage with the community by responding to their questions and joining the conversations on our Facebook page.

As at February 2016, more than 88,000 Facebook users 'like' the ATO Facebook page.

Our audience includes a broad cross-section of individuals, businesses, tax professionals, non-profit and community groups, government and super funds. Facebook Insights data has shown that individuals tend to 'like' posts and comment or ask questions, whereas businesses, community groups and tax professionals are more likely to 'share' our posts.

For demographic insights on our Facebook followers, refer to our Facebook audience overview.

Below is a basic snapshot of people who 'like' our page as at February 2016.

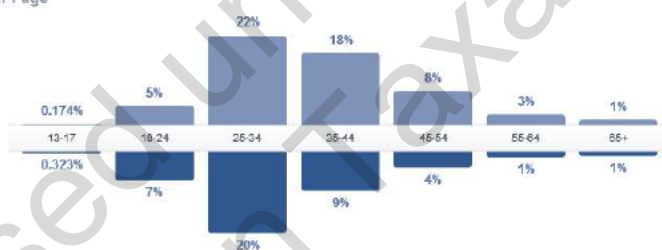The people who like your Page

Country	Your Fans	City	Your Fans	Language	Your Fans
Australia	75,776	Melbourne, VIC, Australia	12,694	English (US)	58,247
India	1,597	Perth, WA, Australia	5,398	English (UK)	25,795
Pakistan	1,333	Brisbane, QLD, Australia	4,637	Arabic	417
Bangladesh	532	Sydney, NSW, Australia	4,390	Traditional Chinese (T...	319
United States of America	442	Gold Coast, QLD, Aust...	1,915	Italian	317
United Kingdom	432	Canberra, ACT, Australia	1,605	Spanish	250
Malaysia	428	Adelaide, SA, Australia	1,158	French (France)	218
Philippines	418	Townsville, QLD, Austr...	768	Portuguese (Brazil)	215
Vietnam	342	Darwin, NT, Australia	440	Simplified Chinese (C...	209
Nepal	321	Dhaka, Dhaka Division...	379	Vietnamese	199

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Requesting a Facebook post
Digital Communities posts a maximum of **two Facebook posts per day**. Details of endorsed posts are available in the Facebook calendar.

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ATO use of social media

Official use of Twitter

Official use of LinkedIn

Official use of YouTube

Unofficial use of social media

Contact

To get in touch with the Digital Communities team, email Digital Communities.

If you're considering using social media to support your communication strategy, contact your Relationship Manager in the first instance.

Information for taxpayers is available at Find us on social media.

If you're interested in publishing messages on the ATO Facebook page, refer to the process outlined below.

- Contact your Relationship Manager to discuss your request as early as possible.
- Your Relationship Manager will assess the suitability of your request for Facebook, and provide guidance around using social media in your communication strategy.
- If your request is deemed suitable, you will be required to complete a copy of the social media request form.
- Your Relationship Manager will liaise with Digital Communities to progress your request. All requests must be sent to Digital Communities **at least** two weeks before the requested publish date to ensure there is sufficient time for editorial, technical and SES clearance. However, please note a two-week lead time does not guarantee space will be available on the channels.
- Digital Communities will make any necessary edits to the requested post/s in accordance with the Style Guide, Professional advisor and educator (PA&E) brand quality, Social Media CEI 2014/01/04 and ATO use of social media.
- Digital Communities will send the request with any editorial changes and recommendations back to your Relationship Manager, who will liaise with you.
- Your Relationship Manager will also discuss image requirements with you, and arrange for artwork to be created, if required.
- Once the social media messages and images have been finalised, you will be required to seek final technical and SES (or delegated) endorsement.
- Your Relationship Manager will notify Digital Communities when the content has been endorsed for publishing.
- Digital Communities will schedule the approved messages in the Facebook calendar and publish the Facebook posts on the agreed date/s.

> In some instances, Digital Communities may need to move your messages in order to accommodate critical requests or the careful management of sensitive media issues. If this occurs, you will be contacted about rescheduling your post/s.

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Facebook post guidelines

As part of your communication strategy, you will need to work with your Relationship Manager to identify whether Facebook is an appropriate channel for your message and audience. Posting to Facebook is only effective where the message is relatable and useful to our audience.

Facebook states that the majority of users are exposed to between 1,500 to 15,000 posts at any given time on their News Feed[2]. Rather than showing people all possible content, the News Feed is designed to show each person the content that's most relevant to them. Of the 1,500+ stories a person might see whenever they log into Facebook, News Feed displays approximately 300[2].

Posts are more likely to appear in a user's News Feed if:

- It is likely they would want to see the post at the top of their News Feed.
- They are likely to interact with the post (ie like, comment on, click on, or share).

Best practice guidelines
To ensure your message is as visible as possible, Digital Communities recommends the following tips to help develop your post:

- Consider the audience's needs. How will the message benefit them?
- Make the post timely, relevant, useful and engaging.
- Build credibility and trust with your audience.
- Ask yourself
  - 'Would people share this with their friends or recommend it to others?' Practical help and assistance messages tend to receive higher engagement.
  - 'Would my audience want to see this in their News Feed?'
- Avoid 'like-baiting' – don't include calls to actions such as 'like', 'comment', 'share' or 'click' in your posts. Facebook penalises this activity and will decrease the number of people who will see your post.
- Ensure your messages don't clash with other competing posts. Digital Communities can assist you with this and you can also check the Facebook content calendar. We aim to limit our content to **two posts per day** to avoid 'spamming' our followers.
- Carefully consider how many posts you need on the topic. Don't over-communicate to your audience and avoid repeating messages as this results in disengagement and page unlikes. **Quality is more important than quantity** in terms of maximising engagement on your post.
- Be as succinct as possible, with a clear call to action (eg 'lodge online', 'install the app', or 'register now').
  - We recommend one to two paragraphs of text at most. Key messaging should be clear and included in the first 200 characters.
  - On a mobile, text over approximately 250 characters including spaces is truncated. Viewers will have to click 'See more...' to view the entire message.
- Contain a hyperlink to more information on ato.gov.au where relevant. If referring to external content, see Hyperlinking to third party content for further information.
- Include an image or video with the post where possible to increase reach and engagement. Videos shared on social media should be no longer than two minutes.

Additionally, all posts to the ATO Facebook page must:

- Meet ATO Style Guide standards.
- Align with the ATO's PA&E brand quality.
- Have received Digital Communities' editorial clearance
- Have received SES or delegate clearance.

Post formats
Refer to the table below for examples of the types of posts frequently published to the ATO Facebook page.
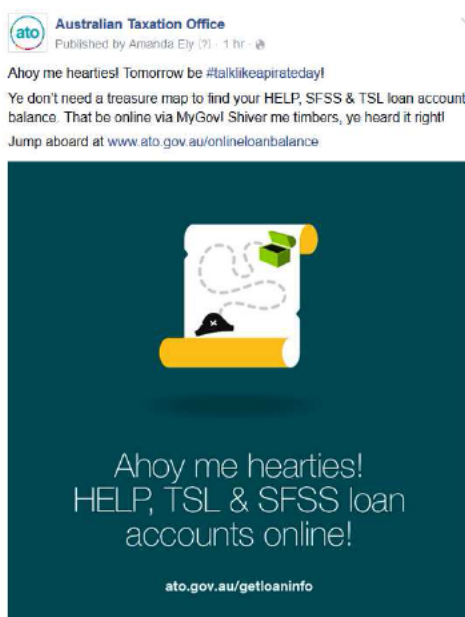
Post type	Example

Image
Post an image with accompanying text and a hyperlink for more information (maximum 250 characters recommended).

Image posts achieve greater engagement than text and hyperlink posts.

Publishing Services is responsible for creating all images. To request an image, contact your Relationship Manager to discuss your requirements.

> **ato** **Australian Taxation Office**
> Published by Amanda Ely (?) · 1 hr ·
>
> Ahoy me hearties! Tomorrow be #talklikeapirateday!
>
> Ye don't need a treasure map to find your HELP, SFSS & TSL loan account balance. That be online via MyGov! Shiver me timbers, ye heard it right!
>
> Jump aboard at www.ato.gov.au/onlineloanbalance
>
> Ahoy me hearties!
> HELP, TSL & SFSS loan accounts online!
>
> ato.gov.au/getloaninfo

Video
Embed a video with accompanying text up to 420 characters (including spaces). Videos must be no longer than two minutes when shared on social media. Followers can watch the video on Facebook by clicking the play icon.

> **ato** **Australian Taxation Office**
> Published by Tiana Pham (?) · 14 September at 12:25 ·
>
> Protect yourself from scammers this tax time. We will not email, call or SMS you asking for credit card or bank details to issue a refund. For tips to protect your identity, visit https://ato.gov.au/identitycrime

Digital Communities and your Relationship Manager will provide advice on the best options to deliver your messages and support your communication objectives, as well as how to leverage the ATO's social media channels. Social media is constantly evolving, providing opportunities to trial new functions or change the way we manage our channels.

Responses
When developing social media messages, you are also responsible for delivering the following:

- You must ensure there is SMART scripting available in order for the social media response team to answer any customer queries about the topic.
- If your message relates to a complex topic or may attract negative commentary, you may need to provide a list of pre-approved questions and answers to ensure we can respond to client questions in a timely manner (within two hours where possible).
- You may also be contacted to assist with responding to complex questions if adequate information isn't available in SMART scripting or within the list of pre-approved questions and answers.

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Evaluating posts

The evaluation of Facebook posts is the responsibility of content owners, as part of their overall communication strategy evaluation.

The ATO social media performance report is available to assist with the evaluation of posts or campaigns. For more information, refer to Social media analytics and evaluation.

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Facebook terminology

Refer to Facebook terminology for a list of commonly-used terms and their meanings.

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References
[1] Social Media Statistics Australia, March 2015
[2] Facebook for Business, June 2014

*If you have any feedback regarding this page, email **Digital Communities**.*

Digital Delivery ▸ Digital Communities wiki library ▸ Official use of Twitter

Official use of Twitter

Guide for communication strategists

This guide provides information on how to incorporate Twitter as part of your communication strategy.

On this page:

- Twitter and the ATO
- Requesting a Twitter post or retweet
- Twitter post guidelines
- Evaluating posts
- Using hashtags
- Twitter terminology

Twitter and the ATO

Twitter is a social network and micro-blogging service that enables users to send short updates and connect to the latest stories, ideas, opinions and news from accounts they follow. There are around 2.8 million Australian users currently on Twitter[1].

Twitter is based on small short messages called 'tweets'. Each tweet is 140 characters long (including spaces) and can contain hyperlinks, photos and videos.

On 1 March 2010, we launched the ATO's corporate Twitter page at twitter.com/ato_gov_au.

Our page offers an effective way to share the latest tax and superannuation information and provide immediate intelligence on current hot topics and issues being experienced by taxpayers. Twitter is an invaluable communication channel for the ATO. It allows the organisation to disseminate messages (tweets) to a willing audience (those who follow the ATO Twitter page) who may then choose to redistribute (retweet) those messages to a wider audience (their followers).

> As at March 2016, more than 40,000 Twitter users 'follow' the ATO Twitter page.

For demographic insights on our Twitter followers, refer to our Twitter audience overview.

Below is a segment breakdown of our followers as at February 2016.
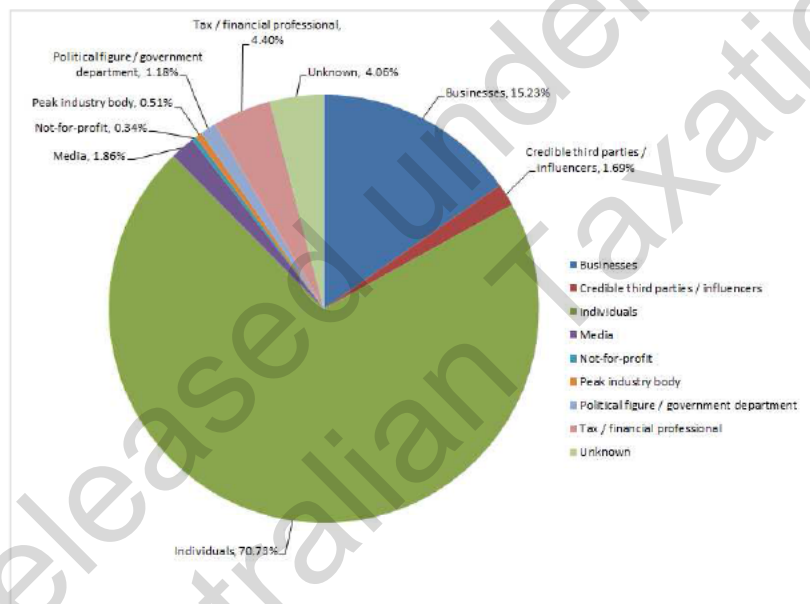
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Requesting a Twitter post or retweet

Digital Communities posts up to 4–6 ATO tweets per day on the ATO Twitter page. Details of endorsed posts are available in the Twitter calendar.

If you're interested in publishing messages on the ATO Twitter page, refer to the process outlined below.

- Contact your Relationship Manager to discuss your request as early as possible.
- Your Relationship Manager will assess the suitability of your request for Twitter, and provide guidance around using social media in your communication strategy.
- If your request is deemed suitable, you will be required to complete a copy of the social media request form.
- Your Relationship Manager will liaise with Digital Communities to progress your request. All requests must be sent to Digital Communities **at least** two weeks before the requested publish date to ensure there is sufficient time for editorial, technical and SES clearance. However, please note a two-week lead time does not guarantee space will be available on the channels.
- Digital Communities will make any necessary edits to the requested post/s in accordance with the Style Guide, Professional advisor and educator (PA&E) brand quality, Social Media CEI 2014/01/04 and ATO use of social media.

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Unofficial use of social media

Contact

To get in touch with the Digital Communities team, email Digital Communities.

If you're considering using social media to support your communication strategy, contact your Relationship Manager in the first instance.

Information for taxpayers is available at Find us on social media.

- Digital Communities will send the request with any editorial changes and recommendations back to your Relationship Manager, who will liaise with you.
- Your Relationship Manager will also discuss image requirements with you, and arrange for artwork to be created, if required.
- Once the social media messages and images have been finalised, you will be required to seek final technical and SES (or delegated) endorsement.
- Your Relationship Manager will notify Digital Communities when the content has been endorsed for publishing.
- Digital Communities will schedule the approved messages in the Twitter calendar and publish the Twitter posts on the agreed date/s.

> In some instances, Digital Communities may need to move your messages in order to accommodate critical requests or the careful management of sensitive media issues. If this occurs, you will be contacted about rescheduling your post/s.

Retweet

Before you request that the ATO retweets another Twitter user's tweet:

- Consider whether the content is relevant to our audience; that is, the individuals, businesses and tax professionals who follow us for the latest tax and super updates.
- Consider whether any hyperlinks or @mentions in the tweet are appropriate for the ATO to share. Refer to Hyperlinking to third party content for guidelines.

If the content is suitable and will benefit our audience, email the following details to your Relationship Manager:

- A link to the Twitter profile.
- A copy of the tweet you wish to retweet.
- The reason/s why the ATO should retweet the content.
- A draft message that can be added to the retweet – up to 93 characters for text (including spaces) and 23 characters for a hyperlink. This allows us to complement the retweet with an ATO-specific message, and include a link to ato.gov.au for more information where relevant.

Your Relationship Manager will liaise with Digital Communities to progress your retweet request.

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Twitter post guidelines

As part of your communication strategy, you will need to work with your Relationship Manager to identify whether Twitter is an appropriate channel for your message and audience. Posting to Twitter is only effective where the message is relatable and useful to our audience.

Best practice guidelines

To ensure your message is as visible as possible, Digital Communities recommends the following tips to help develop your tweet:

- Consider your audience's needs. How will the message benefit them?
- Make the post timely, relevant, useful and engaging.
- Build credibility and trust with your audience.
- Ask yourself
  - 'Would people retweet this for their friends or recommend it to others?' Practical help and assistance messages tend to receive higher engagement.
  - 'Would my audience want to see this in their Twitter feed?'
- Carefully consider how many posts you need on the topic. Don't over-communicate to your audience and avoid repeating messages as this results in disengagement and page unfollows. **Quality is more important than quantity** in terms of maximising engagement on your post.
- Ensure your messages don't clash with other competing posts. Digital Communities can assist you with this and you can also check the Twitter content calendar. We aim to limit our content to **4–6 tweets per day** to avoid 'spamming' our followers.
- Include an image or video with the tweet where possible to increase reach and engagement. Videos shared on social media should be no longer than two minutes.
- Link to relevant content on ato.gov.au. Refer to Hyperlinking to third party content for details about when it is appropriate to link to third party content
- Use relevant hashtags. Refer to the Twitter hashtag guide for information on how to select appropriate hashtags.
- Leverage trending hashtags when relevant to business topics.
- Identify any relevant influencers you can leverage to increase reach. For example, we can:
  - Tweet directly at influencers with an aim to have them retweet our message. These tweets will only appear on their timeline.
  - Mention them in tweets. These tweets will appear on the timelines of our followers as well as the influencer's timeline.
  - Develop tweets for third-party partners to post from their Twitter profile. These tweets can potentially mention our Twitter profile and we can also retweet them if appropriate.
  - Ask your contact to follow us and retweet our content.

Additionally, all tweets on the ATO Twitter page must:

- Meet ATO Style Guide standards.
- Align with the ATO's PA&E brand quality.
- Be 140 characters or less including spaces and links/images/videos.
- Have received Digital Communities' editorial clearance.
- Have received SES or delegate clearance.

Character limits

When writing for Twitter, you have 140 total characters to use, which includes spaces, hyperlinks/URLs, and rich media such as static images, animated images (GIFs) or video. The following table provides a quick guide to character limits for text in your post when you are also using hyperlinks and/or images.

Tweet type	Characters available for text
Text only (not appropriate for the ATO Twitter page)	140 characters
Text with hyperlink (23 characters)	117 characters
Text with image/video (24 characters)	116 characters
Text with hyperlink (23 characters) and image/video (24 characters)	93 characters
Retweet - text with hyperlink	93 characters

Post formats

Refer to the table below for examples of the types of tweets frequently posted to the ATO Twitter page.

Tweet type	Example
Hyperlink Links are automatically shortened to and counted as 23 characters.	(ato) ato.gov.au ✔ @ato_gov_au Claiming a computer or other device this #TaxTime? Here's what you need to know - goo.gl/T6AzJ8 Total characters: 108 (Text = 85 characters including spaces; Hyperlink = 23 characters)
Image Images are automatically counted as 24 characters.	(ato) ato.gov.au ✔ @ato_gov_au Good to chat with #CoffsHarbour #smallbiz @ #CommunityConversation last night!Future events @ lets-talk.ato.gov.au /CommunityConve… s22 irrelevant Total characters: 140 (Text = 93 characters including spaces; Hyperlink = 23 characters; Image = 24 characters)
Video Videos are uploaded to Twitter and automatically counted as 24 characters. Users can watch the video directly from the tweet.	(ato) ato.gov.au @ato_gov_au · Feb 11 Tax professionals: Learn how to use the Client correspondence list tool in the #TaxAgentPortal – watch our video. Client Cor…ence List ▶ Total characters: 137 (Text = 113 characters including spaces; Video= 24 characters)

Digital Communities and your Relationship Manager will provide advice on the best options to deliver your messages and support your communication objectives, as well as how to leverage the ATO's social media channels. Social media is constantly evolving, providing opportunities to trial new functions or change the way we manage our channels.

Responses

When developing social media messages, you are also responsible for delivering the following:

- You must ensure there is SMART scripting available in order for the social media response team to answer any customer queries about the topic.
- If your message relates to a complex topic or may attract negative commentary, you may need to provide a list of pre-approved questions and answers to ensure we can respond to client questions in a timely manner (within two hours where possible).
- You may also be contacted to assist with responding to complex questions if adequate information isn't available in SMART scripting or within the list of pre-approved questions and answers.

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Evaluating posts

The evaluation of Twitter posts is the responsibility of content owners, as part of their overall communication strategy evaluation.

The ATO social media performance report is available to assist with the evaluation of posts or campaigns. For more information, refer to Social media analytics.

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Using hashtags
The Twitter hashtag guide contains information on using hashtags, including a list of hashtags previously used by the ATO.

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Twitter terminology
Refer to Twitter terminology for a list of commonly-used terms and their meanings.

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References
[1] Social Media Statistics Australia, March 2015

If you have any feedback regarding this page, email Digital Communities.

🏢 Digital Delivery ▸ Digital Communities wiki library ▸ Official use of LinkedIn

Official use of LinkedIn

Guide for communication strategists

This guide provides information on how to incorporate LinkedIn as part of your communication strategy.

On this page:

- LinkedIn and the ATO
- Requesting a LinkedIn post
- LinkedIn post guidelines
- Evaluating posts
- LinkedIn terminology

LinkedIn and the ATO

LinkedIn is the first social networking site designed for professionals. LinkedIn allows members to establish and develop their networks of colleagues and peers, and to share industry and business specific information.

LinkedIn receives approximately 3.4 million unique Australian visitors every month[1], with over 300 million users worldwide[2].

On 17 March 2014, we launched the ATO's corporate LinkedIn page at linkedin.com/company/australian-taxation-office.

Changes to LinkedIn's format have seen rapid growth; people are using LinkedIn to develop professional communities and to share information and ideas. LinkedIn offers a unique opportunity to target people in specific industries, locations and occupations with messages that are relevant to them.
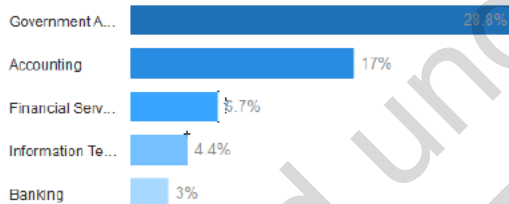
> As at February 2016, more than 18,600 LinkedIn users 'follow' the ATO LinkedIn page.

LinkedIn collects user demographics based on employment, rather than individual data like date of birth, location, or interests. As a result, the audience data we analyse is based on users' employment.

For demographic insights on our LinkedIn followers, refer to our LinkedIn audience overview.

Below is a basic industry breakdown of LinkedIn users who follow our company page, as at February 2016.

Followers by industry:

Industry	Percentage
Government A...	28.8%
Accounting	17%
Financial Serv...	5.7%
Information Te...	4.4%
Banking	3%

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Requesting a LinkedIn post

Digital Communities posts a maximum of **two LinkedIn posts per day**. Details of endorsed posts are available in the LinkedIn calendar.

If you're interested in publishing messages on the ATO LinkedIn page, refer to the process outlined below.

- Contact your Relationship Manager to discuss your request as early as possible.
- Your Relationship Manager will assess the suitability of your request for LinkedIn, and provide guidance around using social media in your communication strategy.
- If your request is deemed suitable, you will be required to complete a copy of the social media request form.
- Your Relationship Manager will liaise with Digital Communities to progress your request. All requests must be sent to Digital Communities **at least** two weeks before the requested publish date to ensure there is sufficient time for editorial, technical and SES clearance. However, please note a two-week lead time does not guarantee space will be available on the channels.
- Digital Communities will make any necessary edits to the requested post/s in accordance with the Style Guide, Professional advisor and educator (PA&E) brand quality, Social Media CEI 2014/01/04 and ATO use of social media.
- Digital Communities will send the request with any editorial changes and recommendations back to your Relationship Manager, who will liaise with you.
- Your Relationship Manager will also discuss image requirements with you, and arrange for artwork to be created, if required.
- Once the social media messages and images have been finalised, you will be required to seek final technical and SES (or delegated) endorsement.
- Your Relationship Manager will notify Digital Communities when the content has been endorsed for publishing.
- Digital Communities will schedule the approved messages in the LinkedIn calendar and publish the LinkedIn posts on the agreed date/s.

> In some instances, Digital Communities may need to move your messages in order to accommodate critical requests or the careful management of sensitive media issues. If this occurs, you will be contacted about rescheduling your post/s.

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Official use of Facebook

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Official use of YouTube

Unofficial use of social media

Contact

To get in touch with the Digital Communities team, email Digital Communities.

If you're considering using social media to support your communication strategy, contact your Relationship Manager in the first instance.

Information for taxpayers is available at Find us on social media.

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LinkedIn post guidelines

As part of your communication strategy, you will need to work with your Relationship Manager to identify whether LinkedIn is an appropriate channel for your message and audience.

Best practice guidelines

Messages are most effective when the content is relatable and useful to your audience. LinkedIn calculates engagement as a percentage.

Engagement = Interactions + New followers + Click-throughs / Impressions

Where:

- Interactions = the number of likes, comments and shares
- New followers = the number of followers gained by promoting the post
- Click-throughs = the number of clicks on content, company name or logo (does not include interactions)
- Impression = the number of times the post was shown to LinkedIn members.

To ensure your message is as visible as possible, Digital Communities recommends the following tips to help develop your post:

- Consider the audience's needs. How will the message benefit them?
- Make the post timely, relevant, useful and engaging.
- Consider how your post fits within the context of our LinkedIn page. Be as succinct as possible, with a clear call to action (eg 'lodge online', 'install the app', or 'register now').
    - We recommended one to two paragraphs at the most.
    - Key messaging should be clear and included in the first 200 characters.
- Contain a hyperlink to more information on ato.gov.au where relevant. According to LinkedIn, company posts that include hyperlinks have up to 45% more follower engagement compared with posts that are text based[3]. If referring to external content, see Hyperlinking to third party content for information.
- Include an image or video with the post where possible. LinkedIn recommends adding images or videos to posts to boost engagement and increase follower numbers.
    - Ensure images can stand alone and include a relevant URL – when users share our content, messages attached to the image are not included.
    - Videos shared on social media should be no longer than two minutes.
- Practical help and assistance messages tend to receive higher engagement on LinkedIn. Give people a reason to share our posts with their friends and family.
- Carefully consider how many posts you need on the topic. Don't over-communicate to your audience and avoid repeating messages as this results in disengagement and page unlikes. **Quality is more important than quantity** in terms of maximising engagement on your post.
- Ensure your messages don't clash with other competing posts. Digital Communities can assist you with this and you can also check the LinkedIn calendar. We aim to limit our content to **two posts per day** to avoid 'spamming' our followers.
- LinkedIn does not allow the use of hashtags. Consider this when designing your communications strategy –you will not be able to use a hashtag to 'anchor' your message across channels.

Additionally, all posts to the ATO LinkedIn page must:

- meet ATO Style Guide standards
- align with the ATO's PA&E brand quality
- have Digital Communities' editorial clearance
- have SES or delegate clearance.

Post formats

Refer to the table below for examples of the types of posts frequently published to the ATO LinkedIn page.

Post type	Example
Text + Hyperlink (with thumbnail) A text post that includes a hyperlink and thumbnail. Maximum of 600 characters including spaces. This includes the hyperlink, which is automatically shortened to and counted as 22 characters.	Australian Taxation Office Wanting to know the status of your return? You can check the progress of current year returns by using the ATO app. Or you can log into our online services where you can run a progress of return check for current and previous year returns. Find out more about: - our app at https://www.ato.gov.au/app - our online services for individuals at http://lnkd.in/bcV3vX3 less **Australian Taxation Office** ato.gov.au · Our online services provide you with an interactive and secure way to access information, services and functions relating to your personal tax and super affairs.
Text + Hyperlink (no thumbnail) A text post that includes a hyperlink but no thumbnail. Maximum of 600 characters including spaces. This includes the hyperlink, which is automatically shortened to and counted as 22 characters.	Australian Taxation Office Not-for-profit organisations: We have three products specifically aimed to help your tax administrator in their role. Find out more at https://lnkd.in/bGgqZ$e Non-Profit News Service No. 0433 – help for NFP administrators **Non-Profit News Service No. 0433 – help for NFP administrators** ato.gov.au · If you're an administrator, for example a treasurer, office bearer or employee involved in the tax administration of a not-for-profit (NFP) organisation, we have three products specifically aimed to help you in your role. We encourage your...

Image Post an image with accompanying text and a hyperlink for more information. Maximum of 600 characters including spaces. This includes the hyperlink, which is automatically shortened to and counted as 22 characters.	**Australian Taxation Office** While you're lodging your tax return online, check your super at the same time. Combine your accounts and save on fees. Go to https://lnkd.in/bPvdSej TOO MANY **SUPER ACCOUNTS** CAN MEAN TOO MANY **FEES!**
Video Post a video with accompanying text and a hyperlink for more information. Maximum of 600 characters including spaces. This includes the hyperlink, which is automatically shortened to and counted as 22 characters.	**Australian Taxation Office** We're making some changes to our website. See what's coming at https://lnkd.in/bDNFqp7 **A better online experience** youtu.be · A short video to demonstrate some of the changes and new features you will see on our website from August 2015. Find out more at https://ato.gov.au/transformation

Digital Communities and your Relationship Manager will provide advice on the best options to deliver your messages and support your communication objectives, as well as how to leverage the ATO's social media channels. Social media is constantly evolving, providing opportunities to trial new functions or change the way we manage our channels.

Responses
When developing social media messages, you are also responsible for delivering the following:

- You must ensure there is SMART scripting available in order for the social media response team to answer any customer queries about the topic.
- If your message relates to a complex topic or may attract negative commentary, you may need to provide a list of pre-approved questions and answers to ensure we can respond to client questions in a timely manner (within two hours where possible).
- You may also be contacted to assist with responding to complex questions if adequate information isn't available in SMART scripting or within the list of pre-approved questions and answers.

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Evaluating posts
The evaluation of LinkedIn posts is the responsibility of content owners, as part of their overall communication strategy evaluation.

The ATO social media performance report is available to assist with the evaluation of posts or campaigns. For more information, refer to Social media analytics and evaluation.

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LinkedIn terminology
Refer to LinkedIn terminology for a list of commonly-used terms and their meanings.

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References
[1] Social Media Statistics Australia, March 2015
[2] LinkedIn Official Blog, April 2014
[3] The Sophisticated Marketer's Guide to LinkedIn, January 2014

If you have any feedback regarding this page, email Digital Communities.

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Official use of YouTube

Guide for communication strategists

This guide provides information on how to incorporate YouTube as part of your communication strategy.

On this page:

- YouTube and the ATO
- Developing video content
- Requesting a video upload
- Reviewing and archiving videos
- Promoting and evaluating videos
- YouTube terminology

YouTube and the ATO

YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, view, like, dislike and comment on videos. YouTube is one of the world's most popular online communities, and is the preferred online video choice for Australians – there are 13.6 million unique Australian views of YouTube videos every month[1].

On 1 July 2011, we launched the ATO's corporate YouTube channel at youtube.com/AusTaxOffice.

Our corporate presence forms a consolidated approach to our current social media activities, and brings the YouTube channel in line with other ATO social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Videos are uploaded to our channel to keep taxpayers up-to-date with current information and legislative changes to tax and superannuation.

> As at February 2016, more than 6,300 YouTube users subscribe to the ATO YouTube channel.

Below is a basic demographic snapshot of users who subscribe to our YouTube channel.

ALL	MALE	FEMALE	
100%	66%	34%	
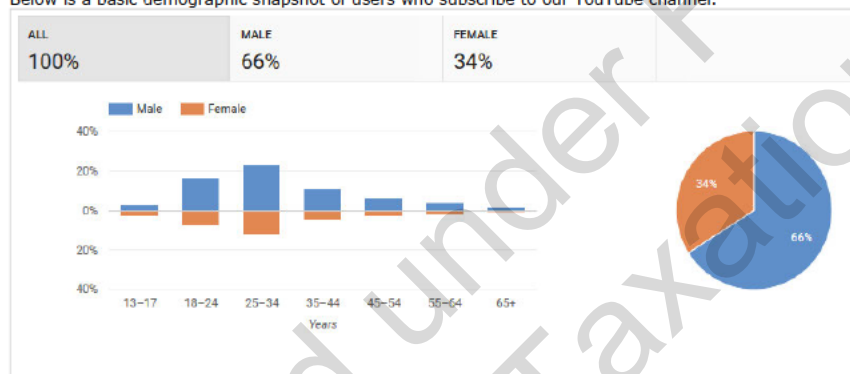
ATO YouTube demographics as at February 2016

Note: Demographic data provided by YouTube tends to be skewed – many users will access our videos without signing in, meaning their account information will not be recorded. While demographics reports may indicate trends in viewers, it is not an accurate reflection of the traffic on our channel.

As expected, the vast majority of our views (94%) come from Australian-based users. Below is a breakdown of the top 10 locations that contribute our total views.

Top locations	Views ↓	13–17	18–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+	Gender
Australia	6,088,992	5.8%	25%	35%	16%	9.6%	6.1%	2.8%	
United States	56,376	4.2%	20%	37%	19%	10%	5.9%	4.2%	
United Kingdom	21,399	2.3%	23%	42%	15%	10%	5.1%	3.2%	
Argentina	19,636	15%	36%	26%	13%	5.2%	2.6%	2.2%	
India	18,446	1.0%	20%	55%	14%	5.1%	1.9%	2.7%	
Poland	16,657	14%	32%	33%	14%	3.7%	0.6%	2.7%	
Philippines	16,236	2.5%	23%	57%	14%	2.5%	0.8%	0.6%	
Japan	15,646	9.7%	41%	30%	13%	3.8%	1.3%	1.8%	
Turkey	14,951	9.4%	31%	38%	14%	4.5%	1.9%	1.2%	
New Zealand	14,092	1.2%	21%	37%	18%	12%	9.0%	2.5%	

ATO YouTube demographics as at February 2016

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Developing video content

Videos can either be developed internally, or outsourced to an external video production company as part of a communication campaign. Depending on business line requirements and budget, videos may be produced in-house or outsourced with the assistance of Design Studio and the Video Production Unit.

If you are considering a video, contact your Relationship Manager as soon as possible, even if an external agency is developing the video. Your Relationship Manager can help:

- Identify any other products and specifications you may need to publish, such as promotional imagery or supporting content on ato.gov.au.
- Determine whether we can create the video in-house or if it needs to be outsourced.

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Contact

To get in touch with the Digital Communities team, email Digital Communities.

If you're considering using video to support your communication strategy, contact your Relationship Manager in the first instance.

Information for taxpayers is available at Find us on social media.

- Step you through the process required to develop, publish, promote and evaluate a video.
- Provide you with indicative costs and can help you source quotes.
- Advise whether your video content is suitable to be shared on the ATO's Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn channels.

Video styles
Our videos should provide educational or support information to help taxpayers meet their tax and superannuation obligations. For example, news and updates, 'How to' instructions, frequently asked questions, promotions. Videos must follow ATO brand guidelines and Social Media CEI 2014/01/04, and should primarily be:

- Promotional – making an offer to the audience in regards to a product or service. Promotional videos may have a specific lifecycle before they need to be removed from our video channels.
- Functional/educational – introducing functional information and a suite of related products and services. For example, instructing the audience on how to comply, or updating the audience with new or more targeted information.

Maximising engagement
All videos intended for the ATO's video channels should:

- Meet promotional or functional brand standards in accordance with our brand management system.
- Aim to create conversations and encourage sharing. Viral videos tend to be helpful or entertaining.
- Have longevity. Videos shouldn't be relevant for six months only.
- Include key messages within the first 15 seconds, including relevant URLs. Viewers are often lost after this first portion of the video.
- Ensure your video has a clear call to action, and include it towards the beginning of the video.
- Direct viewers to ato.gov.au for more information, using an alias where available.
- Be supported and promoted via your communication strategy (campaign or non-campaign).

We recommend that videos are approximately 30–120 seconds long; however, depending on the nature of your audience and the information required, videos may need to be longer. Your account manager will be able to assist with your requirements.

All videos intended to be shared on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn must be no longer than two minutes in length. Refer to Official use of Facebook, Official use of Twitter and Official use of LinkedIn for best practice guidelines on using social media.

Videos **must not** contain:

- any information personal or sensitive taxpayer information (personas can be used as case studies for illustration purposes)
- information rated as having a classification of restricted, confidential or above
- any material that is against the ATO Code of Conduct or APS Guidelines
- material that is offensive.

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Requesting a video upload
Once your video is endorsed by an SES or delegate, supply your Relationship Manager and Digital Communities with:

- A copy of the final, high-quality video.
  - The preferred format is **MP4/MPEG4**.
  - Videos must be **no larger than 2GB**. If you need assistance in reducing file size or changing file format, contact the Video Production Unit.
  - If an external production company is creating the video, ask them to supply you and the master media agency (if you're using one) with the final copy.
- A completed video upload form, which includes the planned release date (ie when you want the video to go live), link to the video file, and full video transcript (ie video dialogue which must be accurate word-for-word; do not include headings or timestamps).

> Your video and all associated information must be provided to Digital Communities **at least five business days** before the desired release date.

Digital Communities will upload and publish your video. The team will then provide you with a direct hyperlink and embed code for the video to be used in communication material.

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Reviewing and archiving videos
As gatekeepers of the ATO's external video channels, the Digital Communities team regularly conducts a review of videos on the channel and contacts content owners to ensure that their videos are still relevant and technically correct.

Content owners are responsible for:

- Reviewing videos to ensure content is relevant and technically correct.
- Advising Digital Communities of any changes that will impact the video.

Depending on the outcome of the review, videos will remain, be edited and uploaded (replaced), or archived from the channel.
Where a video is deemed outdated or contains technically incorrect information, the video will archived and set to private. This means it will no longer be viewable to the public, but the relevant analytics data will remain available.

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Promoting and evaluating videos
All videos should be promoted via channels such as advertising, public relations, and on the ATO's social media channels. Your Relationship Manager will provide advice on the promotion of your video.

The evaluation of videos is the responsibility of content owners, as part of their overall communication strategy evaluation.

The ATO social media performance report provides an overall picture our YouTube channel's total video count, subscribers and views. Digital Communities can also provide raw analytics data on specific videos upon request. For more information, refer to Social media analytics.

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YouTube terminology
Refer to YouTube terminology for a list of commonly-used terms and their meanings.

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References
[1] Social Media Statistics Australia, March 2015

If you have any feedback regarding this page, email Digital Communities.

Digital Delivery ▸ Digital Communities wiki library ▸ Unofficial use of social media

Unofficial use of social media

Unofficial use of social media refers to using social media (including Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter, forums, and blogs) to make public comments in a **personal** capacity.

Unofficial use includes:

- **Professional use:** Using social media to communicate with your academic or professional peers on issues in a field that may not be directly work-related, but is important to maintaining your knowledge and capability.
- **Private use:** Using social media for private, non-work related purposes in your own time, using your own resources as private citizens (for example, your smartphone) or using ATO IT facilities on your desktop.

On this page:

- Expectations
- Failure to comply
- Tips for using social media
- What to do if something goes wrong
- Additional resources.

Expectations

All Australian Public Service (APS) employees are expected to abide by the APS Values and Code of Conduct when commenting and interacting online. The Code of Conduct requires APS employees to behave 'in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS at all times'.

APS Circular 2012/1 states:

When APS employees are making public comment in an unofficial capacity, it is not appropriate for them to make comment that is, or could be perceived to be:

- *being made on behalf of their agency or the Government*
- *compromising the employee's capacity to fulfil their duties in an unbiased manner -particularly where comment is made about policies and programmes of the employee's agency*
- *so harsh or extreme in its criticism of the Government, a member of parliament, or their respective policies, that it raises questions about the employee's capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially. Such comment does not have to relate to the employee's area of work*
- *so strong in its criticism of an agency's administration that it could seriously disrupt the workplace. APS employees are encouraged instead to resolve concerns by informal discussion with a manager or by using internal dispute resolution mechanisms*
- *a gratuitous personal attack that might reasonably be perceived to be connected with their employment*
- *unreasonable criticism of an agency's clients and other stakeholders*
- *compromising public confidence in the agency or the APS.*

> ATO staff using social media to interact online in an unofficial capacity need to adhere to all associated ATO policies in addition to the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct.
>
> **Interacting online can include sharing, retweeting and commenting on other people's content.**

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Failure to comply

Failure to comply with relevant policies may be in breach of the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct. Consequences may result in the removal of system access, prosecution and/or disciplinary action, including action under the Procedures for determining whether an employee has breached the APS Code of Conduct and imposition of sanction.

If it is determined that the APS Code of Conduct has been breached, one or more of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- reprimand
- reduction in classification
- re-assignment of duties
- deduction from salary, by way of fine
- reduction in salary
- termination of employment.

It is important to note that even if you state your views are your own, comments found to be in breach of the APS Code of Conduct may lead to reprimands or penalties.

> The same rules apply when accessing social media on your work computer, home computer, or personal device.

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Tips for using social media

The below tips and guidelines will assist you when interacting online.

What to do	What not to do

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Official use of Facebook

Official use of Twitter

Official use of LinkedIn

Official use of YouTube

Contact

If you need further advice on using social media in a personal capacity, contact Digital Communities.

Make it clear that your views and opinions are your own, and not those of the ATO or the Federal government. Be aware that simply stating your views and opinions are your own does not mean the APS Values and Code of Conduct rules do not apply.	Do not post comments that may be interpreted as an official statement on behalf of the government or the ATO.
Behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of the APS – your behaviour is still bound by the APS Values and Code of Conduct. Inappropriate comments made outside of work hours can still have consequences if found to be in connection with your employment.	Do not post offensive, harsh or unreasonable criticism of the ATO or its clients, post racist comments, obscene material, or personal attacks against the ATO, other ATO employees or clients.
Understand that the ATO does not support the use of ATO issued email addresses on social media sites for private purposes. ATO email use is however acceptable for professional purposes.	Do not use your work email address when registering on social media sites for private purposes.
Consider carefully whether you should identify yourself as an APS/ATO employee.	Do not risk any liability for the ATO by providing online recommendations or referrals for friends and or associates.
Think carefully about what you post online – your posts, tweets and photos effectively last forever and become a public record. Even if you delete a post or photo later, that record may still be stored by the host site and used as evidence.	Do not post information or images that may damage your personal or professional reputation or that of your colleagues or the ATO.
Before you put photos online, ask colleagues and friends for their permission to post photos they're included in.	Do not post photos of colleagues or friends online without their permission. Do not use images that contain ATO buildings/structures in the background, as this can potentially risk the security of your workplace.
Understand that bullying or harassing behaviour by ATO employees will not be tolerated. Inappropriate social media use (outside of the office) can still be considered work-related and subject to Workplace Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination CEI 2015/02/05.	Do not use social media as an avenue to bully or harass other ATO employees or clients.
Be aware that people online may disguise their identity. Protect yourself, your family and your colleagues from the risk of identity fraud and other threats.	Do not disclose any personal information, such as age, address, banking and financial information, passport, drivers licence, employment details or information about work related activities and events.
Understand how to use privacy settings to restrict access to content.	Do not expose yourself, your colleagues, family or friends to risk of fraud, identity theft and abuse of privacy.

Social media help pages
For information on safety and security for your personal social media accounts, the following support pages are available:

- **Twitter:** Visit Twitter support - Safety and Security.
- **Facebook:** Visit https://www.facebook.com/help/379220725465972/ by copying and pasting the link into your Firefox browser.
- **LinkedIn:** Visit https://help.linkedin.com/app/safety/home by copying and pasting this link into your Firefox browser.

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What to do if something goes wrong

If you are concerned that you may have inadvertently breached the APS Values or Code of Conduct on your personal social media account(s), let your manager know as soon as possible to get some advice on what to do next.

If you believe one of your colleagues has engaged in conduct that does not comply with the social media policy, let your manager know as quickly as practicable. Your manager may need to discuss options with your colleague to help them understand the risks associated with posting online.

If you're approached on social media to provide advice or information, and you are not authorised to act as an official ATO representative, do not engage in the conversation – just as you wouldn't if you were approached in person by the media. There are specialist areas within the ATO that have received appropriate training and support to comment online.

You can direct people to the ATO website or ATO social media accounts for further information on how to contact the ATO if they require assistance.

If you need further advice, contact the People Helpline, Media Unit or Digital Communities.

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Additional resources

If you use social media in either an official or unofficial capacity, you need to ensure you have read and are familiar with Social Media CEI 2014/01/04. The social media policy is there to help you and can be used in conjunction with the Social media case studies, which demonstrate examples of how ATO staff should and should not use social media, and the impacts of breaching the policy and guidelines.

Watch the social media policy video, which provides an overview of how to use social media and comply with the policy, and tips to stay in control.

Other useful links include:

- APS Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online (social media)
- APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct
- Public Service Act 1999
- Conflicts of Interest CEI 2014/06/10
- Employee Self-Service > Performance & Professional Development > Learning and Development > *Security, Privacy and Fraud* e-self-directed course

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If you have any feedback regarding this page, email *Digital Communities*.

Social Media - CEI 2014/01/04

What you need to know

- This Chief Executive Instruction (CEI) sets out your responsibilities for the official and unoffic
  use of social media including the requirements of APSC Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the
  Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online.

- Also refer to links on the right hand side menu for the Social Media CEI guidelines, the CEI ir
  PDF, some questions and answers, and a short video to assist with the application of the pol

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1. What is this policy about?

This policy sets out your responsibilities for the official and unofficia
including the requirements of APSC Circular 2012/1: Revisions to th
on making public comment and participating online.

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2. What are the principles for the use of social media?

The ATO uses a range of social media including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and other
social media to inform, engage and communicate with stakeholders and the Australian
community.

The ATO is committed to best practice in the use of social media for the communication and
delivery of services to our customers through:

- Fostering a culture of openness, trust and integrity in our online activities

- Ensuring the privacy and security of employees and taxpayers' information is protected

- Using social media channels appropriately at all times

- Complying with all applicable laws and Government policies.

3. What are your responsibilities?

- When proposing to use social media in an official capacity, you are to contact the Digital Communities team for approval of your message. Only staff from this team with the required authorisation are able to post information on official ATO social media sites.

- Maintain accurate records of online activities.

- When using social media in an unofficial (professional or private) capacity, it is important not to make inappropriate comments as those comments may still have consequences if found to have a connection with your employment.

- You are to maintain the same high standards of professional conduct and behaviour online as would be expected in other forums

- Note that the use of social media in an official or unofficial capacity is subject to the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct

- Comply with the Proper Use of Information Technology Equipment - CEI, this includes requirements on limited personal use.

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4. Using social media generally

- Making comments on social media channels is no different to commenting on any other channel.

- Making comment online is becoming increasingly common for ATO employees in official, professional and private capacities (such as commenting on social media, blogs and forums).

- Failure to comply with social media policies may result in disciplinary action.

5. Who is covered by this policy?

This policy applies to all ATO employees including contractors.

6. Consequences

- Not complying may result in a breach of the APS Code of Conduct.

- Contractors may also be in breach of the terms of their ATO contract or agreement.

7. More information

For more information about this policy:

- See our social media case studies
- Watch the Social Media Video (video transcript)
- Contact Digital Communities

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Social Media CEI Guidelines

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1. What is the official use and unofficial use of social media?

- Official use is when social media channels are used for ATO work purposes as part of an authorised work program or job requirement.

- Unofficial use includes making public comments in a professional or private capacity. Professional includes non-work related but is relevant to maintaining your professional expertise. Private capacity is non-work related, used in your own time using your own resources.

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2. Digital Communities

- Digital Communities provide advice on the best use of channels to achieve communication objectives.

- Assess social media proposals and communication strategies to ensure:

  ◦ Consistency with the ATO's preferred way of communicating with customers

  ◦ Integration across other digital channels, eg email and SMS

  ◦ Adequate risk management strategies are in place.

- Approve messages for social media for official purposes.

3. Tips for using social media in an official capacity

- Be accurate, professional, impartial, apolitical, respectful and courteous when participating online.

- Behave with honesty and integrity at all times.

- Be aware of and observe the laws covering libel, defamation, privacy and the protection of intellectual property.

- Be aware that you may be identified as having a perceived or real conflict of interest if using or referring to ATO information online.

- Recognise that some Government and ATO information needs to remain confidential.

- Approval in writing from an authorised person (usually an SES officer or their delegate) is required before posting words, images, links or other material, eg audio and visual content.

- Our social media messages should hyperlink to web content for more information. In most instances link to a page on www.ato.gov.au as our preferred source of information, or other channels such as our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to link to a third party website.

Do not:

- Make any comment that could be interpreted as a political view, or disrespectful or discourteous.

- Disclose or provide false or misleading information for official purposes in connection with your APS employment.

- Make any statements or post material online that may compromise the interests and reputation of individuals, the Government or the ATO.

- Commit the ATO or the Government to any action or initiative appropriate authority.

- Post photos online of work-related activities and events or containing ATO images, eg signs uniforms, flags, buildings, without permission from relevant managers and others in the photo.

- Do not expose taxpayers, yourself or your colleagues to risk of fraud, identity theft and abuse of privacy.

4. Tips for using social media in an unofficial capacity – professional and private

- When making comments online, clarify they are your personal views and consider carefully whether you should identify yourself as an APS/ATO employee.

- Consider carefully what you post online as it will be online forever and is a public record. If you are planning to post photos that include colleagues, seek their permission before doing so.

- The ATO does not support the use of ATO-issued email addresses on private social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. You may use your ATO email address for professional social media sites such as LinkedIn.

- Inappropriate social media use for bullying or harassing behaviour by employees towards other employees or others that occurs either inside or outside the workplace is not tolerated.

- As far as reasonably practical, protect yourself, your family and colleagues from the risk of identity fraud and other threats.

- Understand and use privacy settings where possible.

- Do not risk any liability for the ATO by providing online recommendations or referrals for friends or associates.

- Do not disclose any personal information or information about work related activities and events.

- Do not post:
  ◦ Comments that may be interpreted as an official statement on behalf of the Government or the ATO

  ◦ Offensive, harsh or unreasonable criticism of the ATO or its customers

  ◦ Racist comments, information or images that may damage your personal reputation, your colleagues or the ATO.

- Personal attacks against the ATO, other employees or customers.

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5. Who is covered by these guidelines

These guidelines apply to all ATO employees including contractors.

6. More information

For more information about this policy:

- See our social media case studies
- Read ATO use of social media
- Watch the Social Media Video (video transcript)

Contact Digital Communities
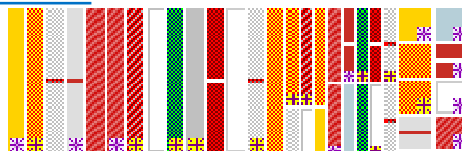
Date of effect: 01/12/2014

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Social Media questions and answers

What you need to know

- The APS Values and Code of Conduct apply to official and unofficial use of social media.

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1. Why is social media important?

As part of the ATO reinvention we are making our services for business and people more contemporary, easier to use and more accessible. Customers can now communicate with us using the ATO's official social media channels; at any time, in any manner and from any place that suits them. Employees of the ATO can use social media in an official or unofficial (professional and private) capacity with some restrictions on behaviour as required by the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

2. What is the difference between official and unofficial use of social media?

Official use is when social media channels are used for ATO work purposes as part of an authorised work program or job requirement. Unofficial use includes making public comments in a professional or private capacity. Professional includes non-work related but is relevant to

maintaining your professional expertise. Private capacity is non-work related, used in your own time using your own resources.

3. I'm unsure if a comment or post I wish to make on social media is appropriate or not?

If you're unsure about whether or not a comment or post is appropriate, it's probably an indication that it might not be appropriate. The same rules apply for sharing content on your profiles. Don't publish or comment in haste. Remember what you post may be stored online forever and has the potential to reach a wide audience very quickly. Consider the tone, content and intent of your posts – are these consistent with the APS Values and Code of Conduct? Your personal comments could be viewed as official ATO comment, even when made unofficially.

4. I'd like to identify where I work at my social media profile, can I do so?

Unless you are commenting in an official or professional capacity, it is recommended you use generic terms to identify your place of work, e.g. 'Australian Government', 'Government employee' or 'Public servant.'

5. I'm upset about the way the ATO is portrayed in news media, can I respond using my social media account?

No. The Media and Issues Management team responds to media issues on behalf of the ATO.

6. Friends know I work at the ATO and have approached me via social media for as regard to their tax affairs, what should

Explain that the ATO has services dedicated to assist the public and direct them to Contact us.

7. My social media user profile is set to private. Can I publish whatever I want?

No. Having a private social media profile does not entirely prevent access to or redistribution of content you share or create. Your connections may still document or share your content without your permission, making them more public than you originally intended. The APS Values and Code of Conduct apply to your use of social media in a personal capacity.

8. Can I have 'freedom of expression' when using social media?

Yes. But you should be mindful not to make comment that could damage the community's view of the integrity, impartiality and effectiveness of the ATO and wider APS.

It is quite acceptable for APS employees to take part in the political life of their communities. The APS Values stipulate that the APS is, among other things, 'apolitical, performing its functions in an impartial and professional manner', but this does not mean that APS employees must be apolitical in their private affairs. Rather, it means that employees should avoid behaving in a way that suggests they cannot act apolitically or impartially in their work.

9. Is it ok to share information about colleagues, the ATO, its clients or client data?

No. Content you share via social media platforms should never include classified data. You should not share information about colleagues without their permission. Any information you post to social media should not bring into question your, or the ATOs, ability to work professionally, efficiently and impartially. Taxpayer information should never be shared on social media.

10. If I publish or distribute content to the internet anonymously or using a pseudonym, do the APS Values and Code of Conduct still apply?

Yes. As an APS employee, regardless of how you choose to use social media, either anonymously, with a pseudonym or using your own name, your behaviour is still bound by the standards of the APS Values and Code of Conduct.

11. As a manager I am concerned one of my staff members is using social media inappropriately – what do I do?

In the first instance you should have a discussion with the staff member citing ATO policy on Social Media and the APS Code of Conduct. You also have the option to contact the ATO People Conduct team for further advice via the People Helpline (e.g. inappropriate post).

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12. I have been approached via social media by members of the news media to comment or provide information on the ATO. What should I do?

Refer all instances of media contact to the Media Unit or Media and Issues Management.

Scenario

Scenario for discussion:

An ATO employee posts derogatory remarks on their private Facebook account about their colleagues and the customers they serve. The posts are only accessible by the employee's account 'friends', which includes 50 friends and family members. The employee has not identified who they work for in their post, although their profile does note they work for the ATO. The employee did this in their own time as a way of 'blowing off steam,' however they did not disclose any private information. These comments can be seen as having a

connection with the employees APS employment and may therefore be in breach of the APS Code of Conduct.

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Social media case study: Breach of APS code of conduct

What you need to know

- As an APS employee, you need to be aware that if you post or share unacceptable material social media, you could be in breach of the APS Code of Conduct.

- When using social media, you need to consider whether your posts could impact on your employment.

- APS employees need to act professionally, apolitically and impartially when making official o unofficial comments online.

- The Australian public demands high standards of behaviour and ethical conduct from APS employees.

- All APS employees are required to uphold the APS Values, Employment Principles and Cod Conduct.

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Example scenario

James Williams is an Australian Taxation Office (ATO) employee who has a satirical Twitter account using a pseudonym (Dwayne Brewksi @Labouralltheway). He posts and re-tweets negative messages and images related to government policies and departments, political parties, politicians and well-known political and social commentators. James's Twitter profile includes the statement, 'These opinions are mine, not my employer's'.

He has recently posted the following tweet:

Dwayne Brewski
@Labouralltheway

Follow

@Political_party The current government is f#$*ing hopeless. U get a pay rise and we dont even get our EBA #auspol #fatcat

Reply   Retweet   Favorite   More

3:41 PM - 22 April 2014 - Embed this Tweet

The ATO received a complaint naming James Williams as the owner of the 'Dwayne Brewksi @Labouralltheway' Twitter account. The ATO is of the view that the post is unacceptable and that action needs to be taken to address the matter.

James's comments may have breached the APS Code of Conduct, as set out in section 13 of the Public Service Act 1999. The APS Code of Conduct outlines that an APS employee must:

> (3) when acting in connection with APS employment, treat everyone with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
>
> (11) at all times behave in a way that upholds:
>
>> (a) the APS Values and APS Employment Principles, and
>>
>> (b) the integrity and good reputation of the employee's agency and the APS.

There are a range of options available to the ATO. Before deciding on the appropriate action, consideration needs to be given to the specific circumstances in this

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In the example provided, James would be invited to provide an initia complaint, which would be considered before deciding on the appropriate action.

Other considerations on the appropriate action include:

- the source of the complaint – family versus member of public versus other employee

- who has access to the comment/post

- tone of comment – language used

- whether this a one-off comment or if James made similar comments in the past

- James's position/role in the ATO

- whether James has previously been warned about unacceptable posts he has made on social media.

The available actions to address concerns with an employee's use of social media include:

- A conversation to advise the employee that they have not met the ATO's expectations, confirm the employee understands the expectations, and explain the consequences if the expectations are not met in the future.

- Counselling – a discussion of how expectations have not been met with a focus on future behaviour. The counselling will include warnings on the consequences of further failure to comply with expectations. A record of the counselling will be kept on the employee's personnel record for up to two years, and longer if subsequent counselling or action under the ATO Procedures is taken.

- Action under the Procedures for determining whether an employee has breached the Australian Public Service (APS) Code of Conduct and imposition of sanction (the ATO Procedures) may be taken. If it is determined that the APS Code of Conduct has been breached one or more of the following sanctions may be imposed:

    ◦ reprimand

    ◦ re-assignment of duties

    ◦ deduction from salary, by way of fine

    ◦ reduction in salary

    ◦ reduction in classification

    ◦ termination of employment.

Key points

- APS employees' use of social media in an unofficial capacity is subject to the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct.

- Although James hasn't identified himself or his employer on h[...] have considered that his identity and employer would be revealed at some point.

- Having the disclaimer of 'These opinions are mine, not my employer's' on his Twitter profile does not mean James is able to post comments which do not comply with the APS Code of Conduct.

- Social media sites are public forums, and as such employees need to ensure they don't make comments about their work, or comments that are obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful to or about their work or about another person or entity. Doing so may be a breach of the APS Code of Conduct.

- When using social media, you need to think about what it is you are posting and whether or not you will appear to be professional, apolitical and impartial to the public.

- Employees should familiarise themselves with the Social media CEI 2014/01/04 and video, APSC Circular 2012/1, and check Unofficial use of social media for guidance on whether their messages breach APS/ATO policies and procedures.

You can find more information from the ATO and APSC about using your personal social media accounts using the links below.

Related links

- APSC Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online (social media)

- APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct

- Public Service Act 1999

- Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04

- Unofficial use of social media

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Social media case study: Breach of confidentiality

What you need to know

- As an APS employee, you are responsible for implementing and maintaining security practic This ensures the safety of other employees, business operations, information, information technology (IT) systems, property and other resources.

- Protecting information about taxpayers is essential for the maintenance of public confidence the tax system.

- In addition to legislation, the ATO has an obligation of confidentiality a person who voluntarily provides information.

- The secrecy provisions in Division 355 of Schedule 1 to the *Taxation Administration Act 195* (TAA 1953) protect information obtained under or for the purposes of all taxation laws excep *Tax Agent Services Act 2009*.

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Example scenario

Zara Sokolofsky is a new APS 3 starter in one of the ATO's call cent few weeks in training, Zara is excited to finally 'be at work' on the ph her first day on the phones, Zara takes a 'selfie' in front of her work station to share with friends and family on Instagram.

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Instagram is a social networking application that allows users to take photographs and share them online. Users can select various filters when taking their photos, and can share the images instantly on Instagram or other social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. Friends can follow users to see the photos as soon as they appear.

Zara has 207 followers on her Instagram account – most of them are friends and family, but there are a lot people who have followed Zara simply because they like her photos. Zara

posts the following photo on her Instagram page:

s22 irrelevant

Zara's team mate Keeva follows Zara on Instagram and notices the photo. Keeva can see a client's name and tax file number (TFN) on the screen behind Zara, and asks her team coach whether or not she should mention it to their team leader.

Zara's team leader calls Zara in to discuss the situation. Zara admits about what was on her computer screen, and hadn't intended to breach the policy. Zara's team leader directs her to the Privacy and Taxpayer Confidentiality – CEI 2014/06/06 on myATO, and explains that further investigation may be required. Zara's team leader also explains that there are penalties for failing to comply with the CEI, such as:

- By posting the photo, Zara may be found to have breached the APS Code of Conduct, and if so, sanctions may be imposed which range from a reprimand to termination of Zara's employment.

- Unlawful recording or disclosure of protected information carries a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment.

Zara contacts the People Helpline to get more information and advice.

Key points

- Zara's photo is a confidentiality breach – she has inadvertently disclosed a client's TFN on social media. As an APS employee, Zara is responsible for using protected and personal information in accordance with the relevant legislation – this includes recording personal information, even accidentally. Refer to Privacy and Taxpayer Confidentiality – CEI 2014/06/06 for more information on your responsibility to protect personal and protected information.

- Zara's photo could also be seen as a breach of the APS Code of Conduct, which requires employees to 'behave at all times in a way that upholds APS Values and integrity of the APS'. Zara's breach could be considered to undermine the public's confidence in the APS to protect their personal information. Refer to Circular 2012/1 for more information about how the Code of Conduct applies to using social media.

- The hashtags Zara has used on her photo (#firstday #newjob #grownup #ATO) make her post searchable – other people looking for photos about similar topics may find this image. This increases the number of people likely to view the customer's TFN and significantly increases the risk of compromising the customer's identity.

- Even if Zara takes her image down from Instagram straight away, it will still be available on the company's servers, and can be subpoenaed if criminal charges are laid.

Related links

- Privacy and Taxpayer Confidentiality – CEI 2014/06/06

- Privacy and taxpayer confidentiality

- APSC Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidan
comment and participating online (social media)

- Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04

- Unofficial use of social media

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Social media case study: Breach of terms and conditions of employment

What you need to know

- As an ATO employee, you are required to uphold the APS Values, Employment Principles a Code of Conduct.

- You must take all reasonable steps to identify, avoid and manage any conflicts of interest. A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests could appear to, or are likely to inappropriately influence the performance of their duties.

- When using social media, you need to consider whether your posts could impact your employment.

- APS employees need to act professionally, apolitically and impartially when making official o unofficial comments.

- APS employees may have political views and opinions in their private lives, but you're encouraged to think about how and where you choose to discuss them.

- As an ATO employee, you are responsible for implementing and maintaining security practic You must protect and secure ATO assets, including information, IT systems and property.

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Example scenario

Pranay Chowdhury is an ATO employee. On his desktop computer at work, Pranay accesses LinkedIn to get news and updates from his friends and colleagues, and news websites. Pranay 'likes' and follows the news feed of Daily Prophet, the online news website, which regularly appears in his feed sharing opinions about what is happening across Australia. Pranay sees an opinion piece in the Daily Prophet about potential job losses in the public service. The article states that the ATO has to cut 5,000 employees by the end of the year, and the journalist's view is that the ATO will pressure its employees to take voluntary

redundancies, to get the numbers down quickly.

Pranay is upset by these rumours and starts an open forum on LinkedIn dedicated to exposing government departments who are bullying their employees into taking voluntary redundancies. Much of the discussion is political in nature and Pranay is the forum's administrator. He boasts to his colleagues that his forum has over 1,000 'likes' and shares the page with his friends in the office. Pranay uses his computer at work to access and share information with the LinkedIn group.

In discussions on the forum, Pranay is asked questions about how the ATO is running their redundancy process and answers them by uploading an internal ATO report directly from a corporate SharePoint site to the LinkedIn group. The report provides employees with information about the redundancy process and is marked for 'internal use only'.
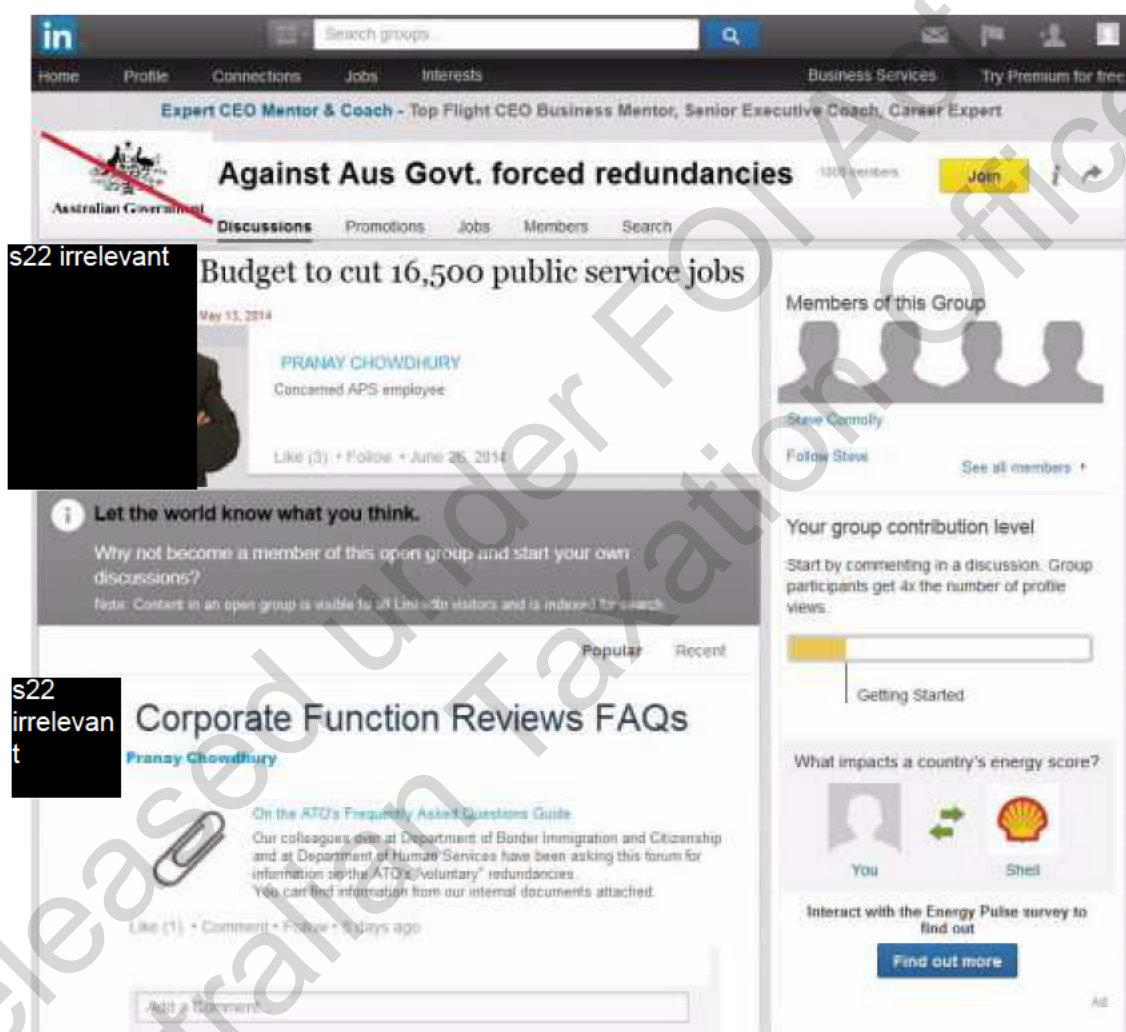
One of Pranay's team members raises the issue confidentially with the team leader as she is concerned Pranay's activity will reflect negatively on their team. Their team leader signs into the forum, and reviews Pranay's 'private use' of ATO resources, before contacting the People Helpline for advice.

Key points

- Social media sites are public forums. Employees should avoid making public comments that could be viewed as inappropriate or appear to be a conflict of interest. Refer to the Conflicts of Interest CEI 2014/06/10 for more information.

- When using social media, you need to think about what it is you are posting and whether you will appear to be professional, apolitical and impartial to the public. Pranay's comments are inflammatory and political, which would lead an outside observer to wonder if Pranay could do his job effectively.

- Posting comments on social media channels is the same as publicly making a statement or publishing an article. If you don't abide by the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct, APSC Circular 2012/1 and ATO policy, it may result in disciplinary action.

- Unless you have the authority to speak on behalf of the ATO or the government on social media, you should not post comments that may be interpreted as an official statement.

- You should familiarise yourself with:

  - Social Media CEI 2014/01/04

  - APSC Circular 2012/1

  - Unofficial use of social media

  - Social media policy video.

- Pranay has breached policy by uploading internal information to a public forum. All information created, collected or received by the ATO is considered official information. Where information is not intended for public release and is not sensitive, it must be referred to as UNCLASSIFIED. The document should not be released in a public forum.

- As an ATO employee, you are responsible for implementing and maintaining security practices. You must protect and secure ATO assets, including information, IT systems and property. Pranay uploaded an internal document to a public forum. Refer to the ATO Security – CEI 2014/06/07 for more information about maintaining safe security practices.

Related links

- Conflicts of Interest – CEI 2014/06/10

- APS Values

- APSC Circular 2012/1: Revisions to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online (social media)

- Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04

- Unofficial use of social media

- Social media policy video

- Security – CEI 2014/06/07

- How to security classify information

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Social media case study: Cyber bullying

What you need to know

- APS employees must comply with the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct.

- This requires employees to treat each other with respect, including on social media.

- Social media is a public forum and comments can potentially be seen by any member of the public.

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Example scenario

Sharona Bignell is an ATO employee and a regular user of Facebook. Sharona has over 350 Facebook 'friends' including close friends, family members, old school friends and a range of other acquaintances. Sharona doesn't identify herself on Facebook a she is Facebook friends with about 60 people who she has worked various roles in the ATO.

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Sharona posts the following status update to her Facebook account:

Sharona Bignell
Only 1 more week until holidays! #countingdown #excited
Like · ... · 9 minutes ago ·

Kevin Bevan is an ATO employee who became Facebook friends with Sharona when they worked in the same team a few years ago. Kevin adds a comment on Sharona's post:

BIGnell, You sound like a fat girl. (___y___) ...

When Sharona sees Kevin's comment she is shocked and offended. She is also embarrassed to realise that other ATO employees may have seen Kevin's comments. To make matters worse, a few of Kevin's friends add their own offensive comments to Kevin's comment, which

can all be seen on Sharona's Facebook page.

Sharona sends Kevin a private message. She explains that his comment was offensive and asks him to remove it. Instead of doing so, he sends her a rude reply and, shortly after, he posts a status update which Sharona interprets as being about her:

Kevin Bevan

Wow. Some people need to get over themselves and learn how to take a joke. #fatgirls

Like · Comment · 3 minutes ago · 🌐

👍 15 people like this.

Write a comment …

Sharona is devastated and makes her team leader aware of Kevin's posts.

Key points

- Inappropriate comments posted on social media may have consequences within the workplace if a connection with your employment can be established. This may be the case even if your comments are posted using your own computer or device outside of work hours.

- Effectively, Kevin has cyber-bullied Sharona. Cyber-bullying is any behaviour using digital technologies (such as mobile phones or computers) that could reasonably be considered humiliating, intimidating, threatening or demeaning to a person.

- Kevin's comments could be seen as disrespectful and discourteous and harassing and a personal attack against another ATO employee.

- Kevin should think about how his Facebook comments reflect [on him as a public] servant.

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- Sharona may need to reconsider who she keeps as a Facebook 'friend' and be more mindful when accepting or sending friend requests.

- Sharona may also need to review her privacy settings to limit who can view and post on her Facebook page.

- When using social media, if you're unsure about how a post might be viewed, it's a good idea to reconsider whether you should post it.

- Employees should be familiar with the Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04 and refer to Unofficial use of social media for guidance on whether their messages would breach APS/ATO policies and procedures.

Related links

- APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct

- Social Media – CEI 2014/01/04

- APSC Cyber-bullying

- Workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination – CEI 2015/02/05

- Harassment, bullying and discrimination

- Unofficial use of social media

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Social media case study: Identifying as an ATO officer

What you need to know

- APS employees have the same right to freedom of expression as other members of the community, subject to legitimate public interests, such as the maintenance of an impartial and effective public service in which the community can have confidence.

- However, anyone who posts material online should make an assumption that at some point their identity and the nature of their employment will be revealed.

- You should not rely on a site's security settings for a guarantee of privacy, as material posted in a relatively secure setting can still be copied and reproduced elsewhere.

- Comments posted on one site can also be used on others under the terms and conditions of many social media sites.

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Example scenario

It's often tempting to help out other people online with their enquiries, particularly when you know the answer. Social media allows us to connect with others in new ways and gives us an opportunity to solve problems in immediately. However, it's important to consider all of the risks associated with being perceived as an authority in an online community – from providing incorrect information and advice that can have negative outcomes to others, to being threatened or trolled online.

Small business/individual income tax call centre operator Sung Tran follows the ATO Facebook page. While browsing his Facebook feed on the bus on the way into work one morning, Sung noticed a question regarding rental property deductions that he often answers in the call centre. Sung knows the answer to the question off the top of his head, and knows the website alias Imani needs to answer his question. Because Sung follows our Facebook page, he's familiar with the format and style of responses the Digital Communities team uses to respond to enquiries, so he posts an answer to Imani on his phone:

Imani Afolayan 01:29
Hi ATO! I own my own house, but I'm renting it out when I'm working inter-state. Can I still claim rental property deductions, even though it's my home?

Sung Tran 08:21
Hey Imani! I double checked on our website, and you can definitely claim deductions if you're renting your home out. Have a look at www.ato.gov.au/General/Property/Residential-rental-properties.
If you need some more help, just PM me!

Sung's answer is technically correct, and will help educate Imani on claiming rental property deductions. However, in responding to Imani, Sung has inadvertently identified himself as an ATO officer, and established that he is a credible authority on the topic and made an offer to provide further personalised assistance.

Comments made on social media are publicly visible, and essentially there forever. Because Sung has offered to help Imani on social media, other Facebook followers feel comfortable asking Sung for assistance. By the end of his phone shift, Sung has received nine enquiries through his Private Messages inbox from members of the public asking for advice on managing their rental property deductions. While Sung can answer some of the questions, some of them need expert advice or a private binding ruling. When he explains this to the people who have sent these questions, Sung receives abusive messages and posts on his feed. Other users, noticing that Sung has mentioned 'our website', start writing political slurs and derogatory comments about the government and the ATO on Sung's page.

Key points

APSC Circular 2012/1 recognises that APS staff may choose to engage in social media:

> 'Outside the role of their APS employment, employees may wish to make public comment in a professional or a private capacity… APS

employees may generally make public comment in a private capacity, so long as they make it clear they are expressing their own views.'

Sung hasn't done anything wrong in the example above – he's tried to be a good internet citizen and help someone out. The information Sung has provided is technically correct, and offers Imani an opportunity to 'help himself' by reading up on our website.

However, because Sung has identified himself as an ATO employee, and answered as though he is speaking from a position of authority, other users have targeted him.

Points to consider before responding to online questions:

- Am I sure about the information I'm about to post? If someone does use this information, could it impact on them negatively?

- Is this information clear and concise? Could someone read it and understand what I'm trying to say?

- Am I putting myself at risk? Do I need to think about my personal security? Am I likely to be targeted by 'trolls' or negative backlash?

- Is my response appropriate? Would anyone reading this think I was responding on behalf of the ATO? Am I respectful, honest and apolitical?

- Do I have authority to act as a spokesperson in this capacity?

> The ATO has a social media team to manage our presence on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn. The Digital Communities team is responsible for day-to-day management and development of all of the ATO's social media, and develops responses to customer enquiries and comments in collaboration with Customer Services and Solutions.

Find out more about how we manage social media using the links below.

Related links

- Social Media CEI – 2014/01/04

- Official use of social media

- Unofficial use of social media

- Digital Communities SharePoint

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Information and data   Travel
Property

Social media case study: Privacy settings

What you need to know

- As APS employees, we need to ensure when we interact online, we consider how our actions may be perceived by others.

- The speed and reach of online communication means that comments posted online are available immediately to a wide audience.

- Material online effectively lasts forever, may be replicated endlessly, and may be sent to recipients who were never expected to see it, or who may view it out of context.

- Anyone who posts material online should make an assumption that at some point their identity and the nature of their employment will be revealed. You should not rely on a site's security settings for a guarantee of privacy, as material posted in a relatively secure setting can still be copied and reproduced elsewhere.

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Example scenario

Doug North works in Superannuation, developing IT solutions to make it easier for customers to find their unclaimed 'departing Australia superannuation payment' online.

Doug's team has just finalised their part of the project on time and under budget, and the team decides to go out for drinks on Friday afternoon to celebrate. They drink a lot. Doug takes photos as the afternoon progresses, some of which might be embarrassing to his team members.

Doug posts the images on his Facebook account, and tags everyone so that the photos pop up on their newsfeeds. Doug hasn't asked for the consent of his team members before posting or tagging. Doug is fairly new to Facebook, and hasn't realised that the photos can be seen by all Facebook users. Some of Doug's high school friends see the photos and start sharing the images with tags such as #taxdollars and #hardatwork.

s22 irrelevant Doug North - with Arjuna Kaur, Ursula Ferreira, Logan MacCrum, Pich Soun, Dani Takacs, Nala Mhasalkar
You guys are amazing!!!

#TeamAwesome #nightout #workhard #playhard

s22 irrelevant
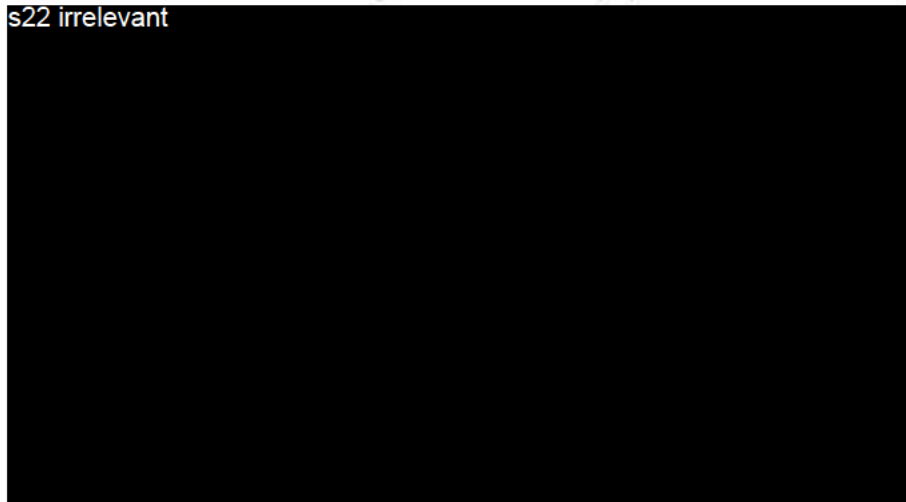
Like · Comment · 2 days ago ·

67 people like this.

Write a comment ...

Lewis Phillips   20:59
Go Northie! Who says tax office guys are boring?! Your #taxdollars #hardatwork".

A local journalist (a friend of a friend) sees the photos and approaches the local office for comment, asking why ATO employees were photographed drinking at 3.00pm on a Friday afternoon. Site Leadership contacts Doug's manager, who calls an emergency team meeting to discuss what happened. Doug and his team mates haven't done anything wrong. The event was planned out of work hours, and all staff had received manager approval to leave work early that day. While the photos may have been embarrassing to some of the team, no laws were broken, and it is not suspected that anyone has breached the APS Code of Conduct.

However, how these photos are perceived puts Doug and the others at risk – members of the public don't know the context of the situation, or the outcome

of the evening. Doug's friend has inadvertently outed Doug and his colleagues as ATO employees on a public post. Anyone who uses Facebook can see the images, who is tagged and can identify where they work, which may pose a security risk.

Key points

The APSC Circular 2012/1 raises the following points employees need to consider when interacting online:

- Behave in a way that upholds the good reputation of the APS – your behaviour is still bound by the APS Values and Code of Conduct. Inappropriate comments or actions taken outside of work hours can still have consequences if found to be in connection with your employment.

- In this case, the team hasn't done anything wrong – they obtained managers' approval to leave work early, and arranged the event in their own time.

- Carefully consider what you post online – it will be online forever and is a public record. Even if you take a post or Tweet down from your profile, it exists on a server somewhere and may be subpoenaed.

- As far as reasonably practical, protect yourself, your family and colleagues from the risk of identity fraud and other threats. Don't post comments, information or images that may damage your personal reputation, your colleagues or the ATO, and don't post images of colleagues without their permission.

- Think carefully before you disclose any personal information or information about work related activities and events, and if you do post, check to see whether Location Services (which tags your current location) is turned on.

- Understand how to use privacy settings to restrict access to content. All social media channels provide security options to allow you to decide who can see what posts – you can choose to release your posts publicly (all Facebook users), to friends (only people you have allowed on your Facebook wall) or to individual users.

Doug could have shared the photos in other ways:

- as private messages to each team member

- as a private post, by selecting 'Post to' and picking who he wished to share the images with

- by setting up a shared album and selecting 'Contributors only'.

Doug and his colleagues can also choose to hide images they are tagged in until each user allows it onto their page. Use the following links to find out how to upgrade your privacy settings:

- Twitter

- Facebook

- LinkedIn

If you are concerned that you may have inadvertently breached the Code of Conduct or Values on your personal social media accounts, let your manager know as soon as possible to get some advice on what to do next.

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Information and data   Travel
Property

Social media case study: Security

What you need to know

- As an APS employee, you need to be aware that what you are posting and sharing on social media is public.

- When using social media, you need to consider whether what you are posting could impact on your safety.

- ATO employees can choose to identify themselves as such on social media channels, but should consider the potential risks when doing so.

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Example scenario

Dwayne Brewski is an ATO compliance officer who has joined LinkedIn. He has listed his employer and role as part of his personal profile, using his work computer and work email address. He uses LinkedIn during work hours, running it in the background while he works. Dwayne receives a request to connect from a friend of a friend on LinkedIn, Axel Brickman, who works for a major accountancy firm. Axel sends Dwayne a number of InMails (LinkedIn's email service), asking questions about Dwayne's compliance work for the ATO. Dwayne explains that he's fairly low in the chain of command, but has been assisting with investigations into small businesses and the 'cash economy'.

Axel mentions that his bricklayer brother-in-law has been sent requests from the ATO to provide invoices and receipts, and asks Dwayne for some more information. Dwayne
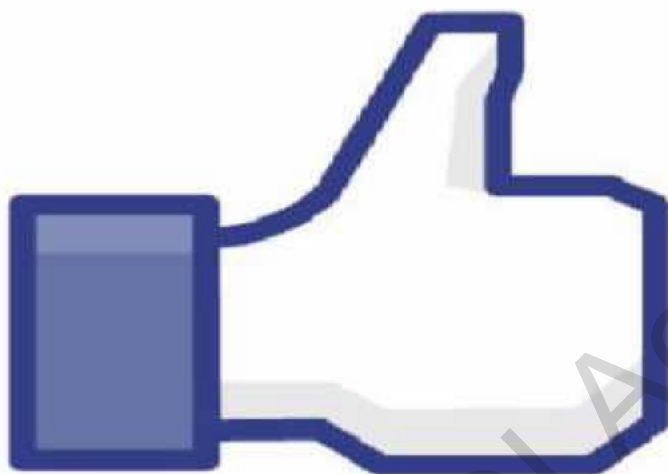
sends the following InMail:
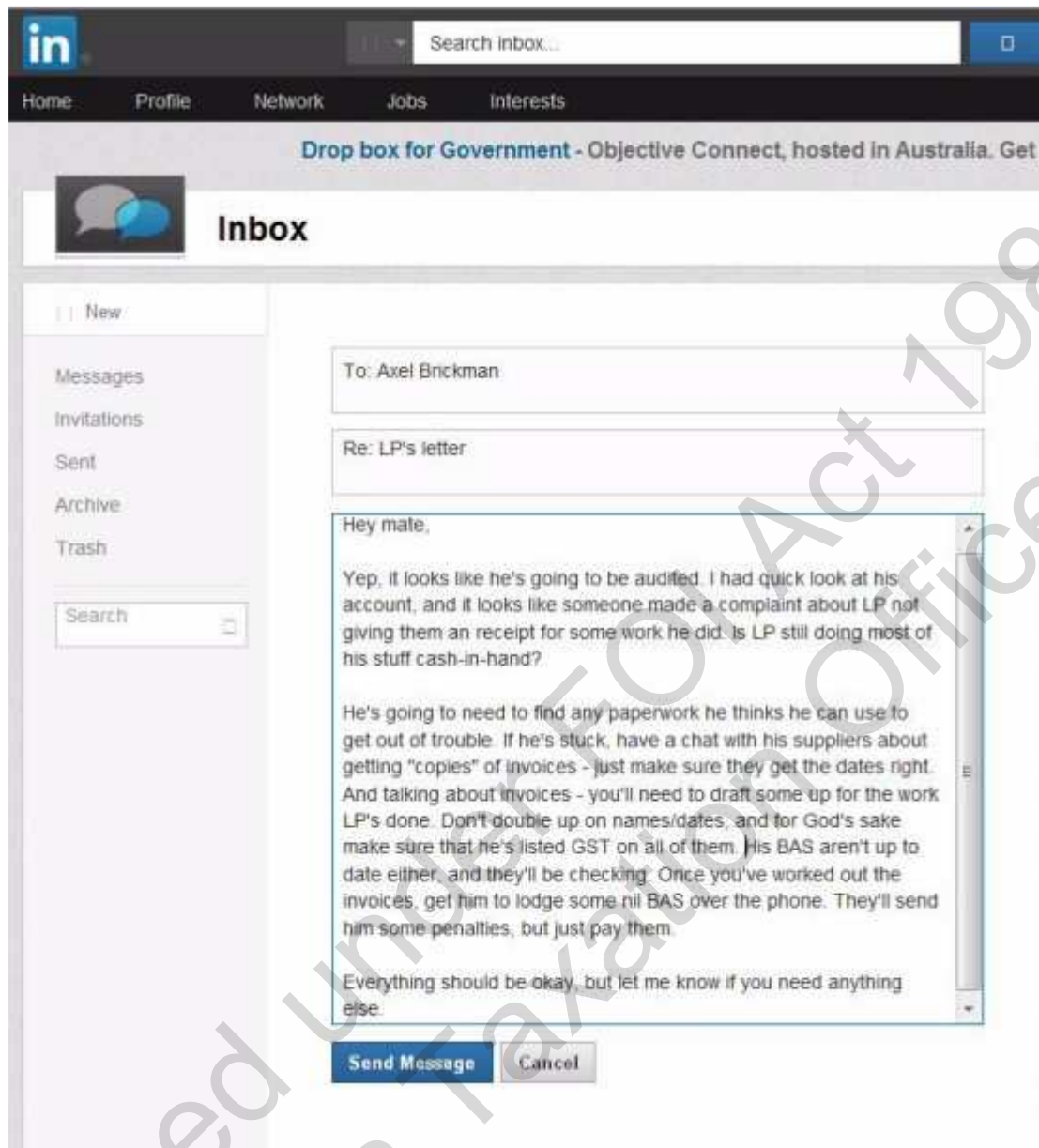
A grateful Axel mentions Dwayne's help on a later post to LinkedIn:

s22 irrelevant

Axel Brickman

Huge shout out to my mate **Dwayne Brewski** for getting my BIL out of hot water – thanks for the audit advice…

Like (156) · Comment (27) · Share · 9h ago

One of Axel's connections on LinkedIn, Hunter Michaelson, sees Axel's post. Hunter is an accountant who specialises in small business income tax returns, and has a number of clients who have received requests from the ATO for additional information.

Hunter is a 'second degree' connection to Dwayne – this means that Hunter can view most of Dwayne's profile, including his position and employer, on Axel's profile. Hunter identifies that Dwayne does actually work in the compliance field for the ATO and decides to contact Dwayne directly using InMail.

Hunter sends Dwayne a list of clients who have received audit letters, and threatens to report Dwayne to the ATO for illegally accessing taxpayer information if he doesn't help. Hunter tells Dwayne that he has copies of Axel's posts and emails, and is prepared to lodge a formal complaint with the ATO if the audits aren't resolved immediately.

Dwayne doesn't know what to do next.

Key points

This is a serious matter, but one that could occur because of the presumption that LinkedIn is for professional networking.

- Dwayne is responsible for multiple breaches of Security – CEI 2014/06/07
  - information accessed about clients without authorisation and against 'need to know' principles
  - information provided to unauthorised person.
- Dwayne has also breached Proper Use of Information Technology Equipment – CEI 2014/04/05

    ◦ unauthorised access to official information.

Dwayne's best choice is to discontinue the conversations with Hunter and as quickly as possible discuss the matter with his manager. If an allegation of impropriety is substantiated, there are usually two possible outcomes:

- action under the APS Code of Conduct is considered

- the allegation is determined to be a criminal matter warranting referral to the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions.

In considering action under the APS Code of Conduct, depending on the circumstances, other action may be considered more appropriate including:

- counselling, training or education to raise knowledge/awareness

- mediation, or some other form of resolution.

Dwayne will also need to complete Security incident report as soon as practicable after a security related incident. Security incidents that must be reported include:

- unauthorised access or compromise of official information

- confrontation, threat or harassment of employee, whether in person, by telephone or mail (including email and/or other electronic means)

- misuse of ICT systems, including user and administrator accounts and services (for example, internet, email and software applications and services).

To help protect himself while online, Dwayne should consider updating his personal LinkedIn settings to increase his security and whether he should report Hunter's behaviour to LinkedIn administrators. For information on setting up a secure LinkedIn account, visit help.linkedin.com/app/safety/home

Related links

- APS Values, Employment principles, and Code of conduct

- People helpline

- Resolving workplace allegations and complaints

- Proper use of information technology - CEI 2014/04/05

- Security - CEI

- Social media - CEi 2014/01/04

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