



Australian Government

Commonwealth Superannuation Corporation

# Social Media Guidelines

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## Version 0.1

### Overview

These are guidelines for the professional use of social media by CSC staff – that is, where the employee makes reference to CSC related issues on social media and/or identifies themselves as an employee of CSC.

Use of and access to social media channels, whether in an official capacity or in an unofficial professional or private capacity, is governed by the APS Values and Code of Conduct. CSC employees are expected to maintain the same high standards of conduct and behaviour online as would be expected elsewhere. The requirements include:

- behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- delivering services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to the Australian public
- being sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public
- taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
- making proper use of Commonwealth resources
- upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS
- not acting in a way that would call into question the APS employee's ability to be apolitical, impartial and professional in the performance of their duties.

The Australian Public Service Commission has published guidance on making public comment and participating online: <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-circulars-and-advises/2012/circular-20121>.

## Official use of social media platforms

### Authorisation

Before engaging in social media as a representative of CSC, you must become authorised to comment. You may not comment as a representative of CSC unless you are authorised to do so. To become authorised to comment in an official capacity, you should gain approval

from (at a minimum) your Manager, and from the Senior Executive, Member and Employer Services.

### **Follow CSC policies and procedures**

Your behaviour on social media in business hours should be consistent with CSC policies and guidelines, in particular the *Employee Handbook* and *Use of Information & Communications Technology Policy & User Guide*.

### **Transparency and disclosure**

Disclose you are an employee/contractor of CSC, and use only your own identity, or an approved official account or avatar. Disclose and comment only on information classified as public domain information.

Be honest about your identity. If you are authorised by your supervisor to represent CSC in social media, say so. If you choose to post about CSC on your personal time, identify yourself as a CSC staff member. Never hide your identity for the purpose of promoting CSC through social media.

If you participate in or maintain a social media site on behalf of CSC, clearly state your role and goals. Discuss with your supervisor when you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

### **Monitoring**

Ensure you have adequate time and resources to monitor feedback across all of your social media channels. If you do not have the capacity for 24/7 monitoring, consider turning off commenting outside business hours (if this functionality is available), or make it clear the hours that the site will be monitored.

### **Content**

Do not start a social media account if you will not be able to keep it fresh and contribute in a regular and sustainable way. Consider developing a content plan over the short, medium and long term. Social media should be a consistent and reliable experience for your audiences.

### **Account maintenance**

Social media often spans traditional boundaries between professional and personal relationships. Use privacy settings to restrict personal information on otherwise public sites. Choose profile photos and avatars carefully. Be thoughtful about the type of photos you upload. Keep up-to-date with new features and functionality which will help you meaningfully engage with your audiences.

## **Accuracy**

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible. *Remember there is no spell checker in social media.*

If you make an obvious error or mistake, correct it quickly and visibly. Do not chase up minor problems – social media is accepting of a certain level of informality. In general, do not delete an error or mistake unless there are legal reasons to do so. Your audiences will understand honest mistakes.

## **Currency**

Listen to conversations across social media channels – ie Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn – to maintain a clear and current understanding of what is relevant and of interest to CSC audiences.

## **Relevance**

Do not post information about topics like CSC events or promotions unless you are sure it will be of interest to readers. Self-promoting behaviour is viewed negatively in social media.

## **Confidentiality**

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about CSC, scheme administrators, scheme members, Board members or your fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow CSC and APS policies and guidelines.

If you discuss a situation involving individuals on a social media site, be sure that they cannot be identified. As a guideline, don't post anything that you would not present at a conference.

## **Reputation**

Uphold the CSC's mission and values. Don't include political comments or comments on social issues except in support of positions CSC has already taken.

## **Endorsement**

Do not use a CSC account to endorse any product, vendor or site unless you have permission from your supervisor.

## **Advice**

Do not provide financial advice to members and be aware of your limitations in being able to provide general advice. If in doubt, refer members to our call centre.

## **Risk**

Assess the risk of engaging in a particular form of social media, whether from an official, professional or personal point of view.

There's no such thing as a 'private' social media site. Search engines can turn up posts years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it is wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed.

## **Legal issues**

Adhere to the Terms & Conditions of Use of the relevant social media site. This usually includes not posting or responding to material that is offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful.

## **Tips for handling negative posts**

### *Take a deep breath*

It's important to be calm, thoughtful and strategic when dealing with a negative post. The person who wrote the post is often upset and may have launched a personal attack; never respond in kind. Take the time to consider whether and how to respond. As a general rule, CSC does not want complaints played out in the public domain.

### *Analyse*

You'll want to have a conversation, either publicly or privately, with members of the CSC community. It's fruitless to try to have a conversation with a 'rager' (the social media term for a person who is chronically angry) or a 'troll' (the term for people who enjoy stirring up trouble). You can usually tell the difference by looking at other posts by that person.

### *Confirm facts*

Make sure you know the facts and current CSC policies and procedures related to the post. Contact a supervisor in the affected area. He or she may have handled similar issues before, or even encountered the same person, and can help you craft a response.

### *Sympathise*

Often people who are upset simply want to know their complaint has been heard. Saying, 'I'm sorry that you're unhappy. How can I help?' can go a long way toward turning a complaint into a conversation.

### *Consider going offline*

In many cases, the person who wrote the post will be willing to talk with you if you provide a work email address. Do not post your personal work email in a public forum – use a generic CSC address such as [communications@csc.gov.au](mailto:communications@csc.gov.au). It is important to preserve people's privacy or to get all the facts before finding a resolution.

### *Clarify*

Sometimes social media posts are so brief that they can be misunderstood. Make sure your intent is clear. You also may want to be sure you understood the intent of the person who posted; if the person seems upset or the topic is sensitive, you may want to do this offline.

### *Monitor*

Often a broad, hostile statement draws no attention at all. Keep an eye on it, and if no conversation develops, leave it alone. You may want to contact the person privately to see if you can provide assistance.

### *Let your group help*

Frequently, other members of your social media community will spontaneously rise to your defence with counter-arguments and useful information. Allow time for this to happen.

*Use the channel's rules*

Every social media channel has rules in its Terms & Conditions of Use regarding hate speech, harassment and similar attacks. Cite these rules when you remove such posts and, if necessary, block repeat offenders.

*Keep records*

Keep electronic and/or print records of any correspondence which needs to be escalated for whatever reason. In most instances you will need to use screen capture technology as there is no easy way to 'save' a social media discussion.

**Personal use of social media platforms**

CSC supports staff who choose to use social media in their capacity as private citizens, however they should be aware that content published on social media sites is publicly available - even on their personal accounts.

In situations where staff are involved in online discussions that relate to CSC products, and general information is not available or will not suffice as a response, you are required to:

- identify yourself as a CSC employee if you refer to CSC, its people, products and services
- ensure you do not imply in any way that you are authorised to speak on CSC's behalf
- be mindful that your behaviour is still bound by the APS Values and Code of Conduct, even outside work hours
- not include CSC logos in your postings
- disclose only publicly available information. This includes information available on relevant CSC websites or in annual reports.
- where the information is available on the internet, you should provide a direct link to the page so if changes are made to the content/rules, people continue to access the most current information
- use a disclaimer to ensure your views and opinions are understood to be your own and not those of the department. An example of a disclaimer is: 'This site (or post, or content, etc) is for discussion purposes only and does not represent the official views of CSC. Any views expressed on this site are those of the individual site author only.'  
A disclaimer is required when you:
  - refer to the work done by CSC and its administrators
  - comment on any CSC-related issue
  - or provide a link to a CSC website.

Where staff members participate in a discussion not directly related to their work but that draws on their expertise in a field, this would be considered personal use. However staff should not reveal information about CSC that isn't publicly available.