

Social Media Policy

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Introduction

1. Social media is a collective of online communications channels that enable users to create content or to participate in social networking.
2. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to:
 - 2.1 Instant Messaging: e.g. Online Communicator
 - 2.2 Forums: e.g. Google Groups, Whirlpool
 - 2.3 Video and photo sharing sites: e.g. Flickr, YouTube, Instagram
 - 2.4 Social networking websites: e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace
 - 2.5 Wikis: e.g. Wikipedia
 - 2.6 Blogs (personal or corporate): e.g. Twitter, Tumblr, Blogger, intranet pages.
3. Social media has become an essential part of our work and personal lives and has created a fundamental shift in how we communicate with the government, customers, colleagues, as well as our friends and family.
4. Social media provides an online channel for the office of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) to communicate internally with employees and externally with the broader community. Social media allows us to reach a wide audience, disseminate important information, create collaborative relationships with citizens, partners, stakeholders and employees, and to increase the transparency of our organisation and our information.
5. Employees also use social media in a private capacity that can sometimes create a relationship with the workplace.
6. Social media provides a number of opportunities for FWO employees to share and communicate ideas and build engagement internally and with our customers through:

- 6.1 providing a mechanism to receive and give feedback
 - 6.2 sharing and education
 - 6.3 fostering discussion
 - 6.4 delivering support and services.
7. This policy should be read in conjunction with existing policies and guides including, but not limited to, the Media Policy, Protocol for use of IT Facilities, Protocol for the use of Information and the Conflict of Interest Policy.
 8. This policy applies:
 - 8.1 to all employees of the FWO
 - 8.2 to consultants and contractors who are providing services to, or on behalf of, the FWO
 - 8.3 during and after business hours.

Purpose

9. The purpose of the policy is to:
 - 9.1 create an awareness of the avenues and opportunities social media presents for the agency
 - 9.2 guide employees in the engagement with, and responsible use of, social media both in an official and private capacity
 - 9.3 ensure employees are aware of their responsibility to manage the risks associated with using social media, including the prevention of:
 - 9.3.1 deliberate or inadvertent unauthorised disclosure of information or policies
 - 9.3.2 damage to the reputation of the FWO or the Australian Public Service (APS).

Principles

10. The FWO embraces the use of social media and encourages employees to use these communication channels in an appropriate manner.
11. The FWO respects the rights of all employees, as private citizens, to engage in social media without unwarranted intrusion from the workplace.
12. When using social media as a private citizen, or in an official capacity, employees have a responsibility to uphold the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct which extends beyond their actions in the workplace. This includes a responsibility to behave at all times in a way that upholds the integrity and reputation of the agency and APS.
13. FWO employees must be aware of their responsibilities when engaging in both work-related and private use of social media, and take reasonable steps to identify and manage any risks, so that this use does not result in a conflict with their obligations as an APS employee.
14. The FWO has a responsibility to address any incident that might bring into question an employee's conduct in relation to use of social media where they may not have met their APS obligations.

Using social media in an official/work-related capacity

15. Official, work-related use of social media refers to communication in relation to an employee's official duties. This includes but is not limited to using FWO's social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.
16. The FWO Communications Team maintains a social media register which lists the owner, purpose, and employees with access to each relevant social media account. Official FWO accounts must not be created or used unless:
 - 16.1 a risk assessment has been undertaken on the known and possible risks to the FWO in creating a new social media account
 - 16.2 the creation of the account has been approved by the Director, Communications, and recorded in the social media register.
17. Before using approved social media in an official capacity on FWO accounts, employees must:
 - 17.1 have received appropriate training on using and accessing FWO's official social media accounts
 - 17.2 ensure they have received approval from a Senior Executive Service (SES) officer
 - 17.3 have been recorded as a user on the social media register
 - 17.4 have read, and indicated to their manager that they understand, this policy and other relevant FWO policies and guides.
18. FWO employees have access to APS approved social media accounts (e.g. GovDex) and internal FWO sites (e.g. blogs and the comments function on the Intranet news stories) to encourage discussion on APS and FWO activities. Contribution to these sites does not require approval as outlined in paragraph 17; however, employees should be aware that their contributions to these sites should comply with this policy.
19. When using approved social media in an official capacity, employees must:
 - 19.1 act in accordance with this policy and other policies and guides
 - 19.2 uphold the APS Code of Conduct, Employment Principles and Values
 - 19.3 use FWO IT resources appropriately and be aware that their use is monitored
 - 19.4 declare the purpose of their communication and official role to those they are interacting with
 - 19.5 take reasonable steps to avoid a conflict of interest (real or apparent)
 - 19.6 ensure confidentiality is maintained; be aware that comments posted online become public information
 - 19.7 be accurate, professional, impartial, respectful and courteous when conducting FWO business
 - 19.8 not commit the FWO to any activities or actions unless approved to do so
 - 19.9 understand the guidelines and etiquette of the social media account being used, including the privacy settings and preferences and follow these guidelines as long as they do not conflict with this policy
 - 19.10 if a mistake is made, ensure that it is acknowledged and corrected as soon as the mistake is realised

- 19.11 if an error or misrepresentation of the FWO is found, respond with respect and with facts when pointing out the error
- 19.12 not conduct private business using FWO social media accounts.

Using social media in a private capacity

- 20. FWO employees may make public comment in a private capacity as long as they make it clear they are expressing their own views and not those of the FWO.
- 21. An employee is considered to be using social media in a private capacity when they are commenting with a personal profile, not for work-related purposes and not using an official FWO account. Employees are personally responsible for content published in a private capacity on any form of social media.
- 22. An employee is also considered to be using social media in a private capacity if they are using their personal social media account and commenting as an experienced or professional person in their particular field of expertise.
- 23. Employees participating in private social media activity must:
 - 23.1 uphold the APS Code of Conduct, Employment Principles and Values, even when material is posted anonymously or using an alias or pseudonym. Employees should bear in mind that, even if they do not identify themselves online as an APS employee or an employee of the FWO, they could be recognised as such, as social media are public forums
 - 23.2 give careful consideration to listing FWO as their workplace or using a government email address as a point of contact
 - 23.3 ensure that their use of social media during work times is limited and does not impact on their productivity
 - 23.4 not disclose or use any official information gained in connection with their APS employment without appropriate authority to do so
 - 23.5 not use photos or images of work-related activities or other employees in a work context without permission from the relevant manager and the people depicted in the photo
 - 23.6 not make social media comments or post images, photos or content that may damage the reputation of the FWO or the APS
 - 23.7 not post or share any material subject to copyright (e.g. logos, crests, insignia) without appropriate permission
 - 23.8 not use discriminatory, defamatory, abusive or otherwise objectionable language in comments
 - 23.9 not make comments that may damage the reputation of the FWO or cause offence to colleague(s)
 - 23.10 not make personal comment or express personal opinion that could be misconstrued as official comments of the FWO or the APS
 - 23.11 not compromise the employee's capacity to fulfil their duties in an unbiased manner or be so harsh or extreme in its criticism of the government or a Member of Parliament or policies that it raises questions about the employee's capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially.

24. Employees using social media in a private capacity are reminded that they should not rely on a sites security setting to guarantee privacy of their communications as material can still be copied or reproduced elsewhere. Employees should be mindful that whilst they believe they are making a private comment .e.g. on Facebook, if their comments would likely cause serious damage to the relationship between the FWO and the APS or FWO and the employee, damages the FWO's or the APS' interests, or is incompatible with the employee's duties, a connection may be made with their APS employment.

Reporting incidents and concerns

25. Employees should be aware that their use of FWO IT systems, including email, web browsing, data storage and Remote Access System (RAS), is monitored in line with the FWO Protocol for Use of IT Facilities.

26. Any employee who has genuine concerns about the improper use of social media by another employee or contractor should, in the first instance, raise their concerns with their manager.

27. If the manager determines that the matter may warrant further investigation, they should contact People Branch.

Breach of the policy

28. A breach of this Policy may result in action being taken in accordance with the Guide for Handling Conduct Issues or the Procedures for Handling Suspected Code of Conduct Breaches. This may result in disciplinary action, including sanctions under the *Public Service Act 1999* and, in some cases, criminal charges. For further information see the Procedures for Handling Suspected Code of Conduct Breaches and the Guide for Handling Conduct Issues.

Further information

[APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct](#)

[Public Service Act 1999](#)

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

[FWO Protocol for Use of IT Facilities](#)

[FWO Media Policy](#)

[Procedure – Handling Suspected Code of Conduct Breaches](#)

[Guide for handling conduct issues](#)

[APSC Ethics Advisory Service](#)

Document Particulars	
Point of contact	Director, People Services, People Branch (██████████)
Date of review	
Date of approval	17 December 2015
Approver	Executive Director, Human Resources
Approval authority	Executive Director, Human Resources

FWOnet *Find it first on FWOnet*

Home ▶ Support Services ▶ Technology ▶ Policies & Protocols

Policies & Protocols

Welcome

This page lists and describes the IT policies and protocols you must comply with. In particular, you need to be familiar with the [Use of IT Facilities Protocol](#). For advice and assistance contact the [FWO - Service Operations Support mailbox](#).

Policies

Social Media

FWO recognises that most of us use social media in one form or another. In fact, you're encouraged to get involved with our official FWO social media channels, to help us connect with and educate clients.

It isn't complicated, you just need to make sure you think before you act and follow the [FWO Social Media policy \(348 KB\)](#). Watch our [social media video \(52 MB\)](#) for a quick overview of the policy. You can also go to the [Social Media page](#) to find out more about FWO's social media presence generally.

Our social media policy will help you engage with and participate in conversations or interactions within online communities for official, professional and personal use.

Quick Access



Policies

[SSC IT Security Policy \(1.90 MB\)](#)

[FWO IT Security Policy](#)

Protocols



FWOnet *Find it first on FWOnet*

Home › Employee Info › Ethics and Values › Social media policy

Social media policy

Social media has become an essential part of our work and personal lives and has created a fundamental shift in how we communicate with the government, customers, colleagues, as well as our friends and family. As APS employees, we have a responsibility both in an official and private capacity to behave at all times in a way that upholds the integrity and reputation of the agency and APS when it comes to online interaction.

Principles

When using social media as a private citizen, or in an official capacity, employees have a responsibility to uphold the APS Values, Employment Principles and Code of Conduct which extends beyond their actions in the workplace. This includes a responsibility to behave at all times in a way that upholds the integrity and reputation of the agency and APS.

The agency embraces the use of social media and encourages employees to use these communication channels in an appropriate manner.

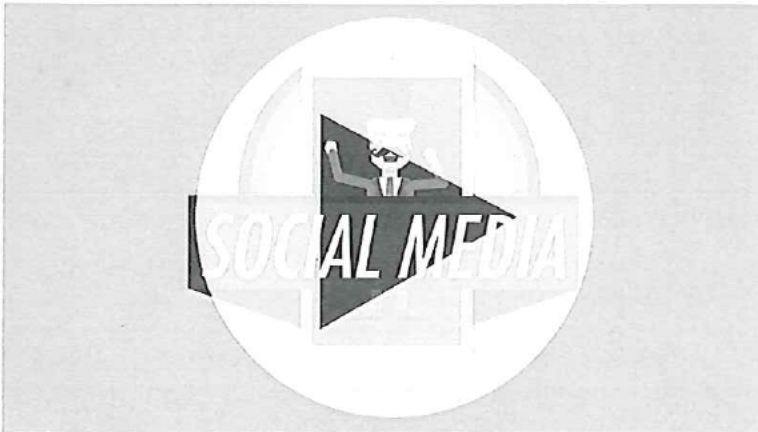
The agency respects the rights of all employees, as private citizens, to engage in social media without unwarranted intrusion from the workplace.

Employees must be aware of their responsibilities when engaging in both work-related and private use of social media, and take reasonable steps to identify and manage any risks, so that this use does not result in a conflict with their obligations as an APS employee.

The agency has a responsibility to address any incident that might bring into question an employee's conduct in relation to use of social media where they may not have met their APS obligations.

All employees need to be familiar with the [FWO social media policy](#), as they are likely to use some form of social media.

Social Media at the Fair Work Ombudsman



The information below should be read in conjunction with the [social media policy](#).

Using social media at work

Reasonable use of social media at work is acceptable as long as it does not impact on productivity.

Using social media in an official/work-related capacity

The [Communication team](#) is responsible for the agency's Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts. Only authorised employees can post and interact on behalf of the FWO.

Using social media in a private capacity

An employee is considered to be using social media in a private capacity when they are commenting with a personal profile, not for work-related purposes and not in an official capacity. Employees are not to disclose any official information and are

Who to contact



Quick access

Related pages

- [Social Media FAQs](#)
- [Social media intranet page](#)
- [FWO's social media strategy](#)
- [FWO's social media policy](#)
- [Conduct and grievance](#)
- [Managing and Reporting Unacceptable Behaviour Policy](#)

personally responsible for content published in a private capacity on any form of social media and should be clear that the views are their own.

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FWOnet

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Social media policy update



Social media is an essential part of our work and personal lives. It's everywhere!

Some of us only use social media in a private capacity. This means using your personal profile on your own social media account.

Others may need to use social media for work-related purposes, such as the FWO's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts.

It's important to know:

- the difference between using social media in a work/official capacity and using it in a private capacity

- that you're accountable for what you say and do on social media

- your responsibilities in online spaces.

Our Social media policy

To help you understand your responsibilities, we've updated the FWO [Social media policy](#) following agency-wide consultation. This included speaking with the Agency Consultative Forum (ACF) and relevant internal stakeholders like Communications, Customer Technology Support and Governance & Information Management.

The policy's aim is simple: to protect staff and agency interests.

What's changed?

- clearer guidance on using social media for work related/official, private and professional use

- references to the current APS Code of conduct, Employment principles and Values

- information about your conduct during and outside work hours

- establishment of a social media register.

We've developed a video to explain the policy in a quick and interesting way – check it out below! [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ's) are also available on the [Social media intranet page](#). We encourage you to go and have a look.



Photo: Click to view the Social media policy video.

Further information

Please visit the [Social media intranet page](#) or contact the [People Branch](#).

By [REDACTED] on 27 Jan 2016 | 0 Comments

Comments

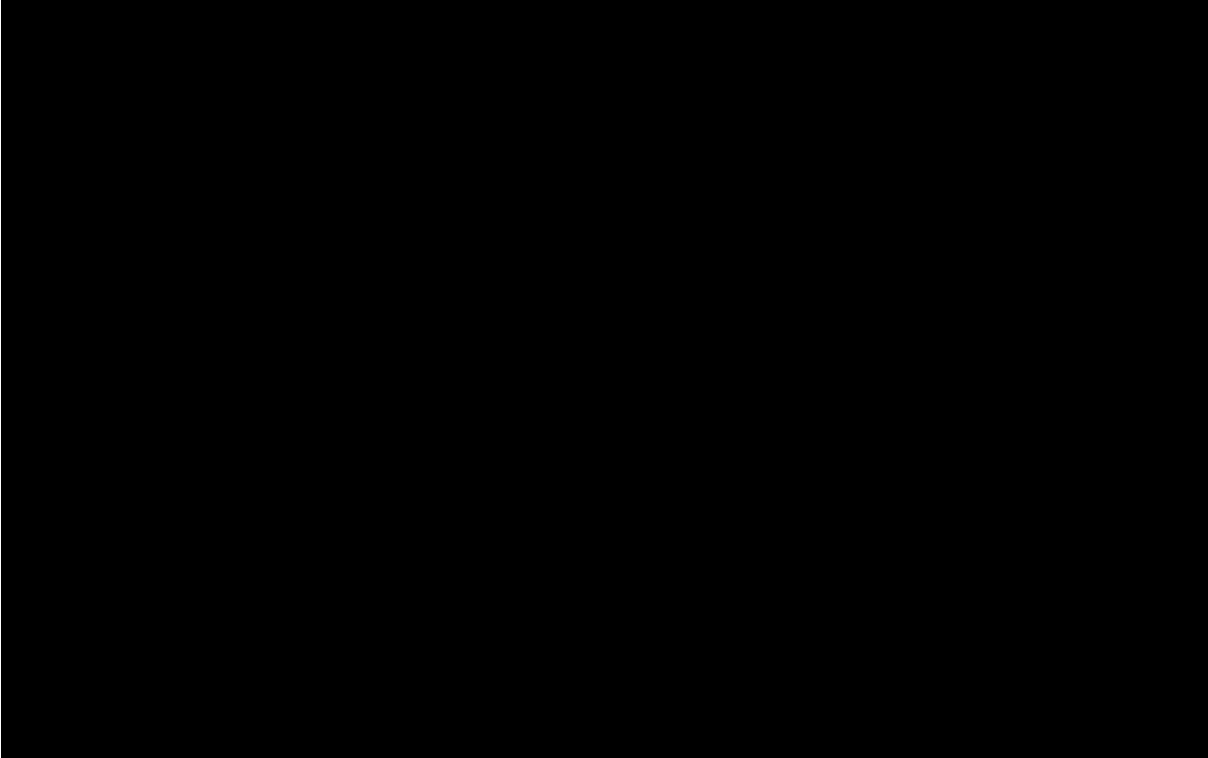
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MANAGING AND REPORTING UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR POLICY

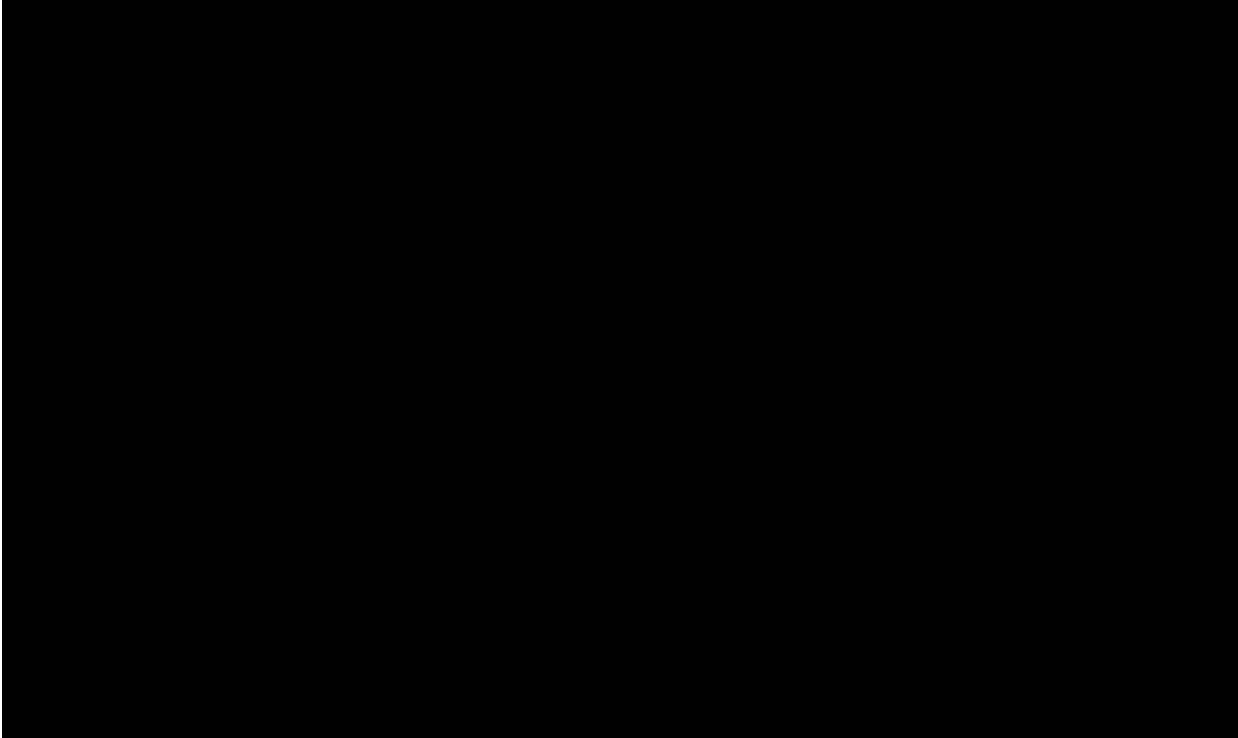
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Attachment A - Categories and Definitions of Unacceptable Behaviour



- 4. Unacceptable behaviour can occur in any setting where there is a connection with work, including during work-organised events, which could occur outside work hours and while off-site; for example, at external meetings or on regional/interstate visits. Unacceptable behaviour may also occur when using personal social media. Employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the agency’s *Social Media Policy*.



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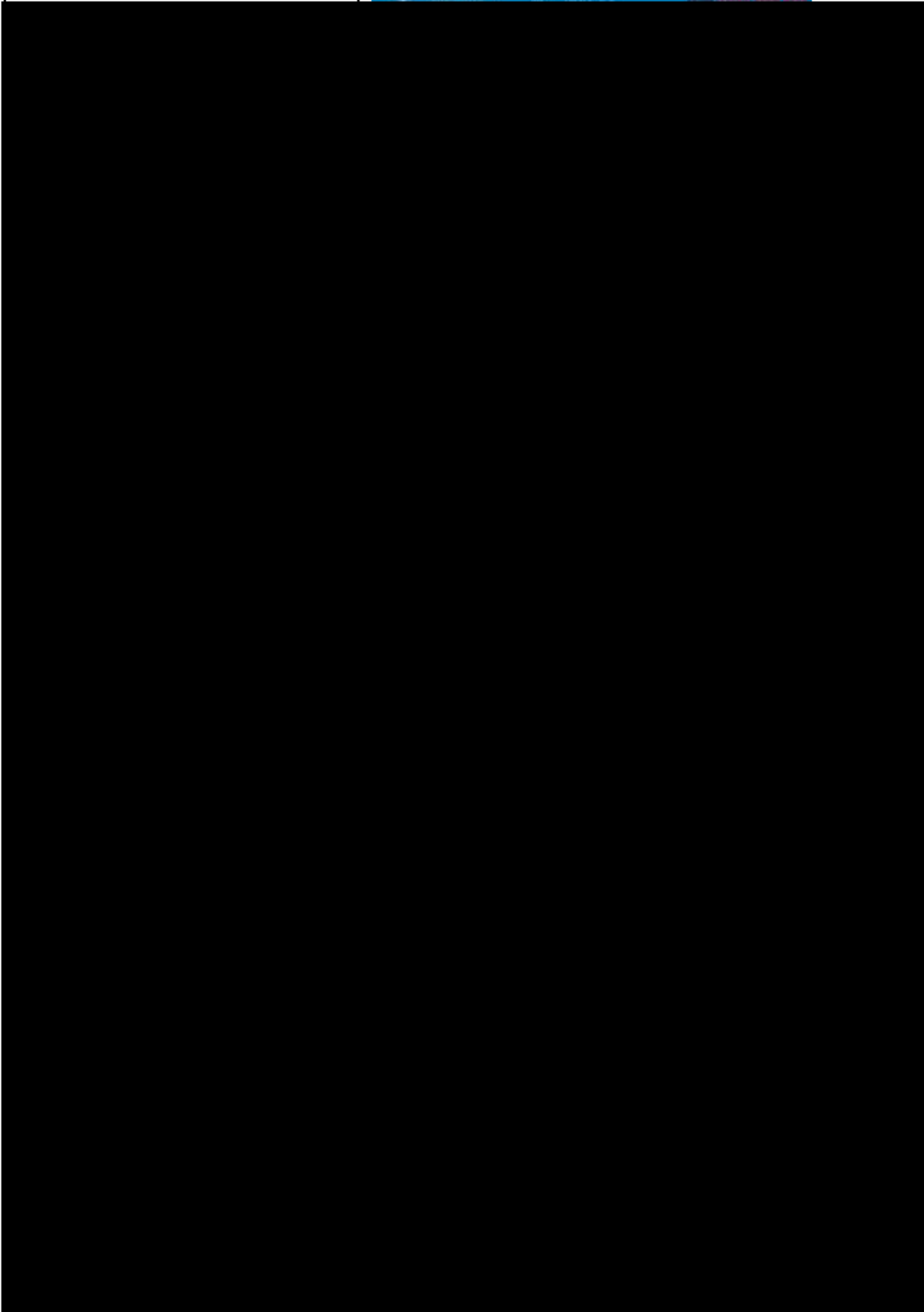
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3.8.8. Social Media

166. Staff must take special care not to post sensitive or classified information on public websites, such as forums, blogs, and social networking sites. Even unclassified information that appears to be benign in isolation, such as a GPS data in a picture, could, in conjunction with other information, have a considerable security impact on themselves, other staff, FWO and/or the government.⁹⁵
167. Staff must also be aware of the risks of any personal comments or opinions expressed:
- 167.1. being misinterpreted as official policy;
 - 167.2. that may offend, harass or bully other colleagues;
 - 167.3. that may damage the reputation of the FWO and/or APS; *and*
 - 167.4. information they post on websites could be used to develop a detailed profile of their lifestyle and hobbies in order to attempt to build a trust relationship with them or others. This relationship could then be used in an attempt to:
 - 167.4.1. solicit sensitive or personal information about colleagues or clients; *or*
 - 167.4.2. implant malicious software on systems by tricking them to opening attachments.
168. Due to the nature of the business model surrounding many of these websites, staff should avoid using these types of websites. As this is not always practical for all staff:⁹⁶
- 168.1. Staff using social media:
 - 168.1.1. Should avoid posting personal information, such as the following, on websites:
 - 168.1.1.1. Past and present employment details
 - 168.1.1.2. Personal details, such as birthday, tax file number, or contact details
 - 168.1.1.3. Schools or institutions
 - 168.1.1.4. Clubs or hobbies
 - 168.1.1.5. Educational qualifications
 - 168.1.1.6. Current work duties
 - 168.1.1.7. Work contact details.
 - 168.1.2. must use the privacy settings to minimise the number of people who can access the content. These privacy settings must be reviewed regularly for changes to website policy and ensure the settings remain consistent.
 - 168.2. The *FWO Social Media Policy* discusses in detail staff obligations on the use of these public websites, be it for personal or official purposes. It also identifies which websites are the approved websites where authorised staff may post information authorised for wider release.


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<p>books, compact discs or DVDs (...more)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sponsored travel • benefits under loyalty schemes such as frequent flyer schemes • airlines competition prizes • meals or other hospitality • accommodation and hire car discounts • entertainment, such as meals, seats at sporting or theatre events or golf days • discounts on commercial items. <p>All employees must read and understand <u>Practical Guide: 8 – Gifts & Sponsorship</u></p>	
<p>Online activities</p> <p>APS employees have unprecedented opportunities to open up government decision making and implementation to contributions from the community. In a professional and respectful manner, APS employees should engage in robust policy conversations.</p> <p>The <u>Social Media Policy</u> gives more guidance about when you can comment, when you need approval to do so and the principles that apply when participating online.</p> <p>There are some ground rules when participating online. The APS Code of Conduct and Values, including <u>Public Service Regulation 2.1</u>, apply to working with online media in the same way as when participating in any other public forum.</p> <p>The requirements include (...more):</p>	

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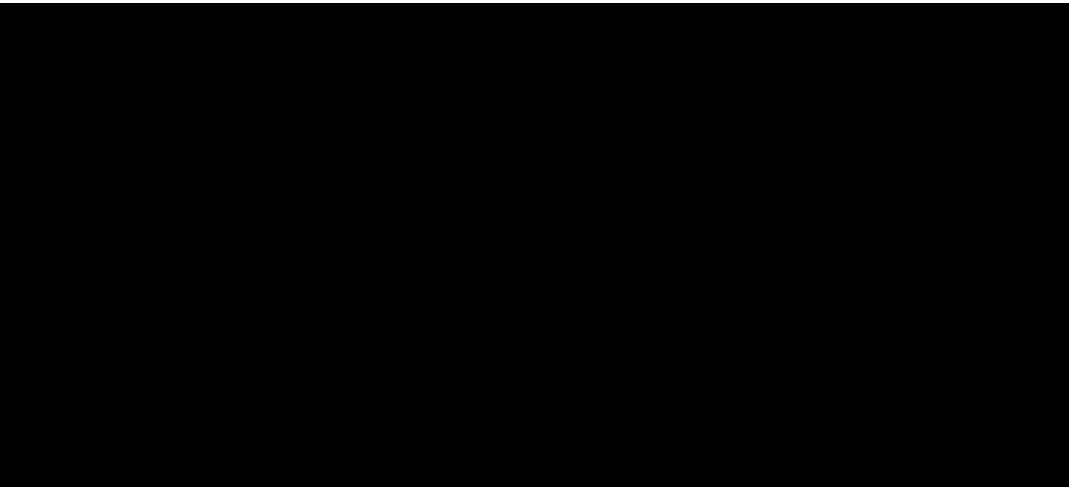
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- being apolitical, impartial and professional
- behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
- delivering services fairly, effectively, 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.

All employees must read and ensure they understand the FWO Social Media Policy when commenting either as an APS employee or a private citizen.

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Review activity – Question 4

Joseph has a bad day at work. He goes home and vents his frustration on his Facebook page writing a number of defamatory comments about his manager. A number of his colleagues are 'Facebook friends' and so see his comments.

Has Joseph potentially breached the APS Code of Conduct?

- **Select the correct response. Then click the 'Done' button.**

When you select No

No

Incorrect!

A 2011 Fair Work Australia (FWA) decision upheld the dismissal of an employee for writing defamatory comments about his employer. The FWA member hearing the matter commented that it did not matter that the comments were written on the employee's own time or on his own computer.



In the mind of the FWA member:

- the comments the employee made were inappropriate
- there was a clear connection with the employee's work (in that he commented about his manager)
- the organisation had appropriate behavior policies in place (and the employee knew what they were)
- the employee knew he had work colleagues as 'Facebook friends' and that they would see the comments he had made.

➤ Click the 'Next' button to continue.

When you select Yes

Yes

Correct!

A 2011 Fair Work Australia (FWA) decision upheld the dismissal of an employee for writing defamatory comments about his employer. The FWA member hearing the matter commented that it did not matter that the comments were written on the employee's own time or on his own computer.

In the mind of the FWA member:

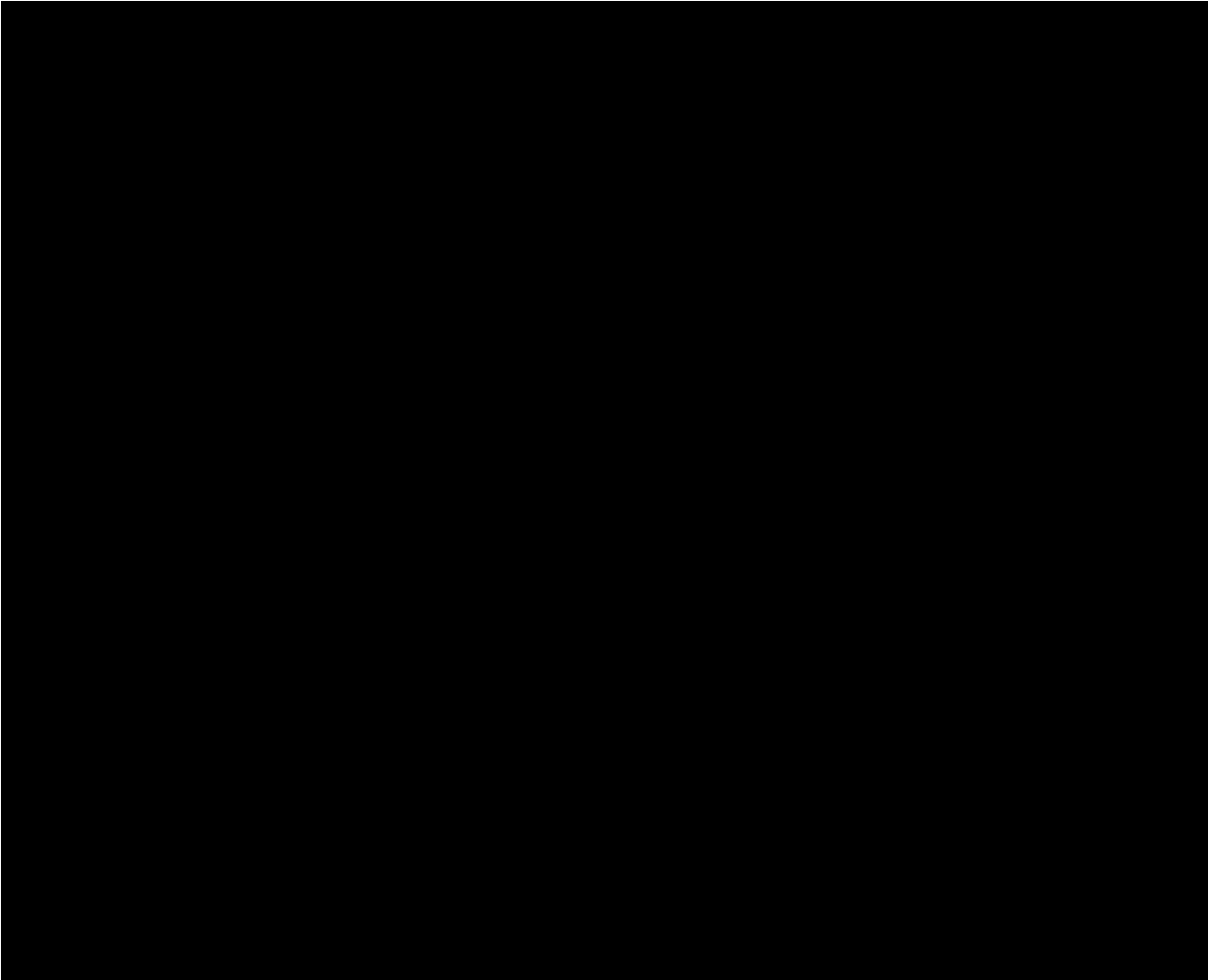
- the comments the employee made were inappropriate
- there was a clear connection with the employee's work (in that he commented about his manager)
- the organisation had appropriate behavior policies in place (and the employee knew what they were)
- the employee knew he had



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Information Technology Security

 Fair Work



Social networking

Social networking has become a popular channel for communication both at work and outside of work. Its benefits are enormous but its potential negative impact are of equal magnitude.

Social networking sites like Facebook are a popular phenomenon on the internet. As with all internet use, a limited amount of social network browsing is permitted so long as it does not interfere with an employee's work duties. Many social networking sites give the option for a user to identify his or her current place of employment.

We recommend that you do not identify yourself as an employee of the FWO and you should be aware of the impact your online



behaviour may have. No agency material or information is to be stored on or accessed via social networking sites.

[Click here for more detailed information provided in the FWO Social Media Policy.](#)

➤ **Click the 'Next' button to continue.**

Question 2

Karen created a page on Facebook for FWO employees to join and talk about work. It is an open forum and any topic can be discussed. This is acceptable as it is a closed group and only people invited to this group can join in the discussion.

- **Select the correct response. Then click the 'Done' button.**

True

(The text below appears if user selects this option)

Incorrect.

No FWO agency information is to be stored or discussed via social networking sites.

- **Click the 'Next' button to continue.**

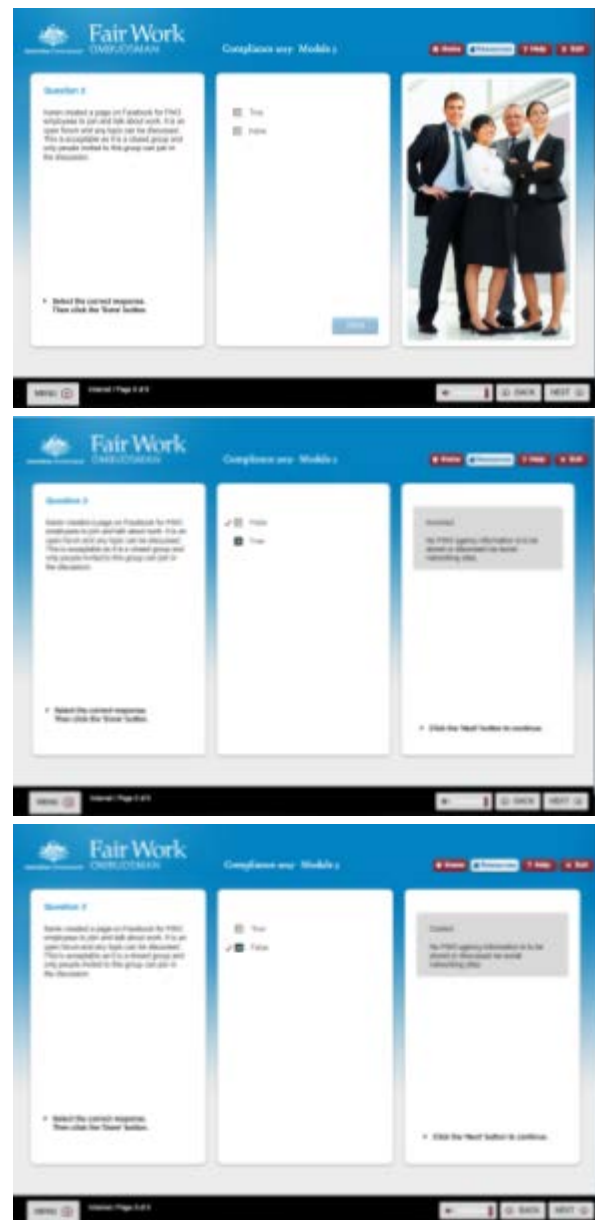
False

(The text below appears if user selects this option)

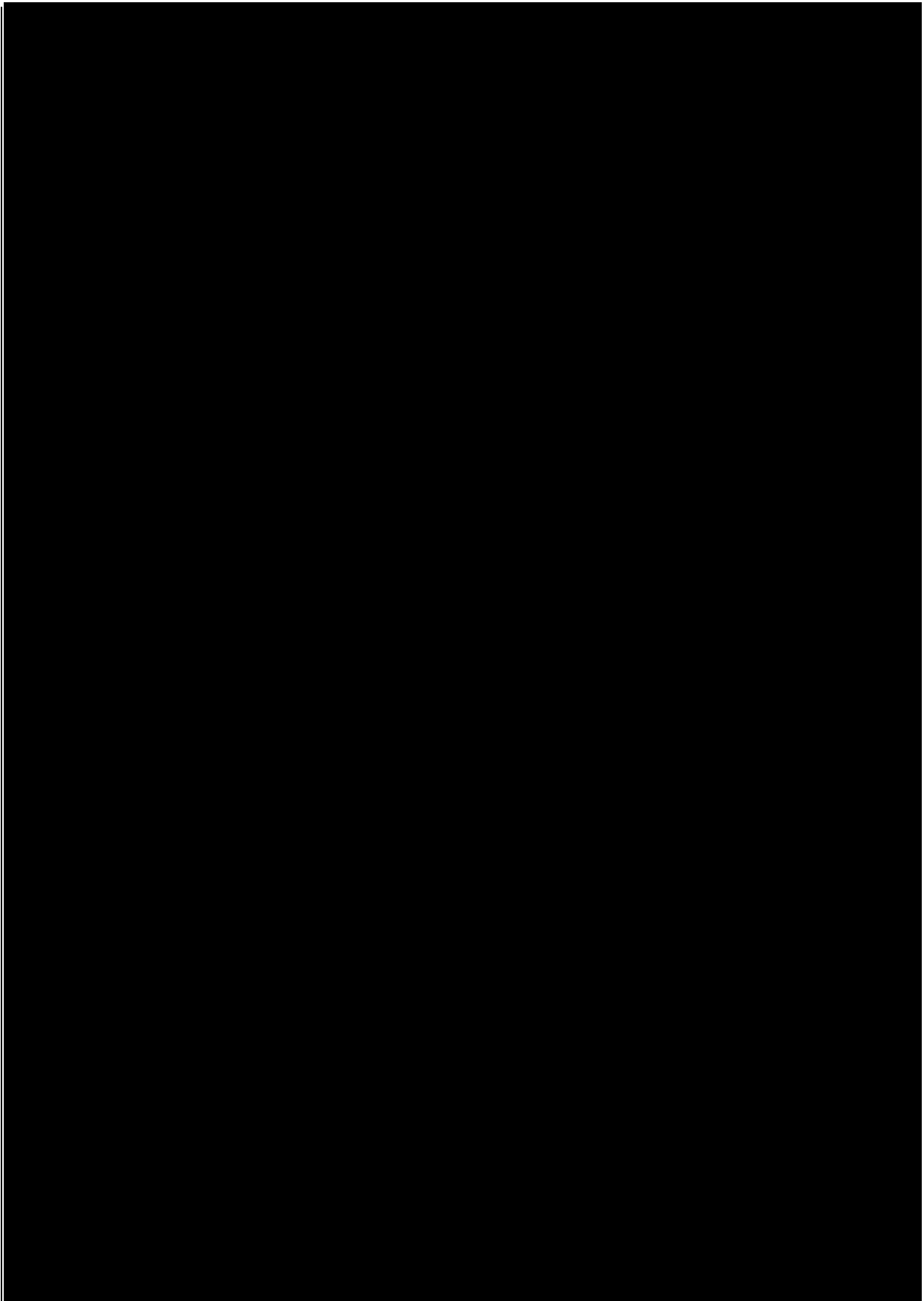
Correct.

No FWO agency information is to be stored or discussed via social networking sites.

- **Click the 'Next' button to continue.**



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Managing Social Networking

Social networking has become a popular channel for communication both at work and outside of work. Its benefits are enormous by its potential negative impact are of equal magnitude.

- **Click each button to hear more information. Then click the 'transcript' button to view script.**



Social networking (Audio and transcript will appear once user clicks on button)

Transcript

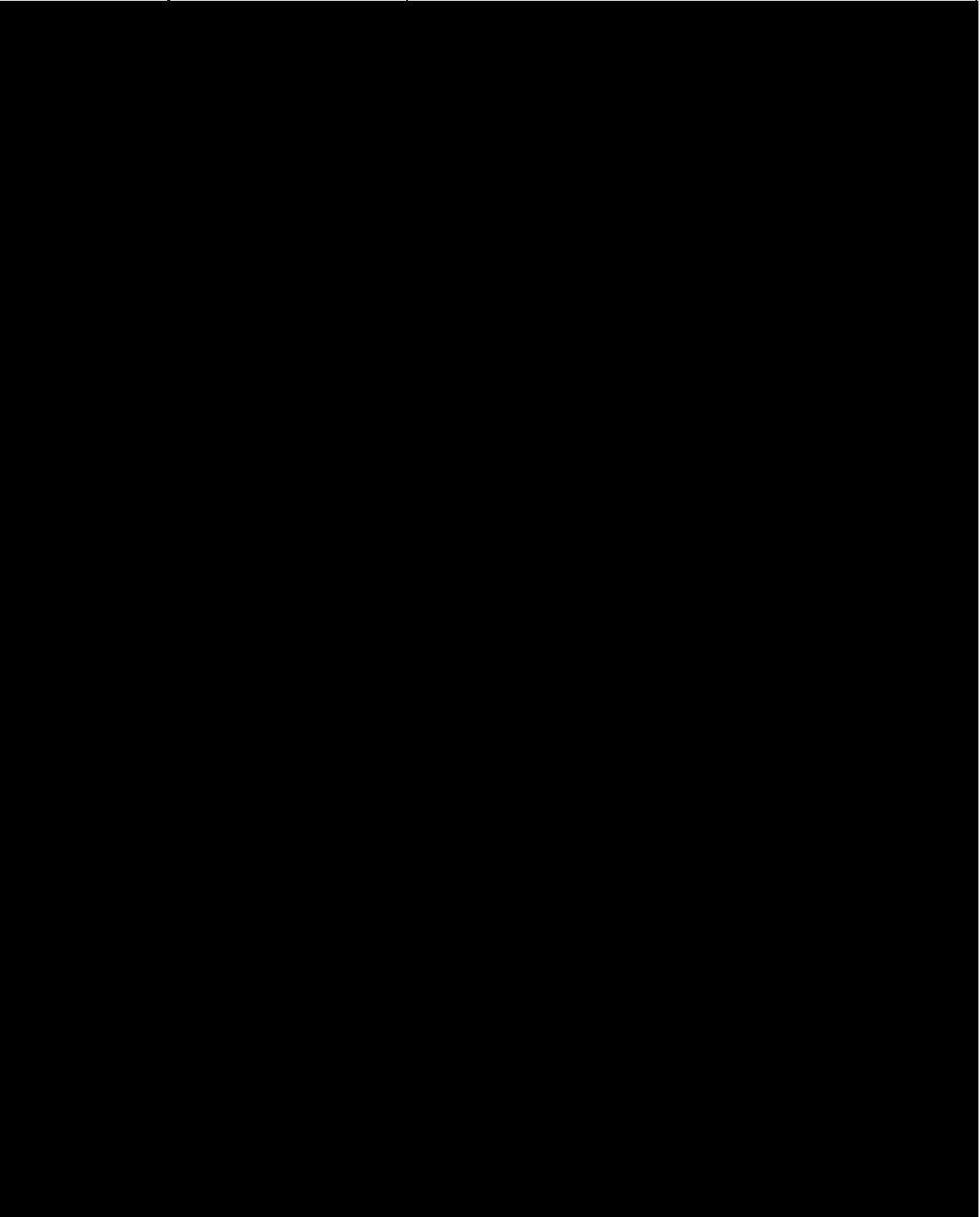
Social networking sites like Facebook are a popular phenomenon on the internet. As with all internet use, a limited amount of social network browsing is permitted as long as it does not interfere with a staff member's work duties. Many social networking sites give the option for a user to identify his or her current place of employment. You are reminded that if you choose to identify yourself as an employee of the Department, you should be aware of the impact your online behaviour may have. No agency material or information is to be stored on or accessed via social networking sites.

[Click here for more detailed information provided in the FWO Social Media](#)



Policy.

Click the next topic button.



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Protocol for the Use of Information

FWO IT

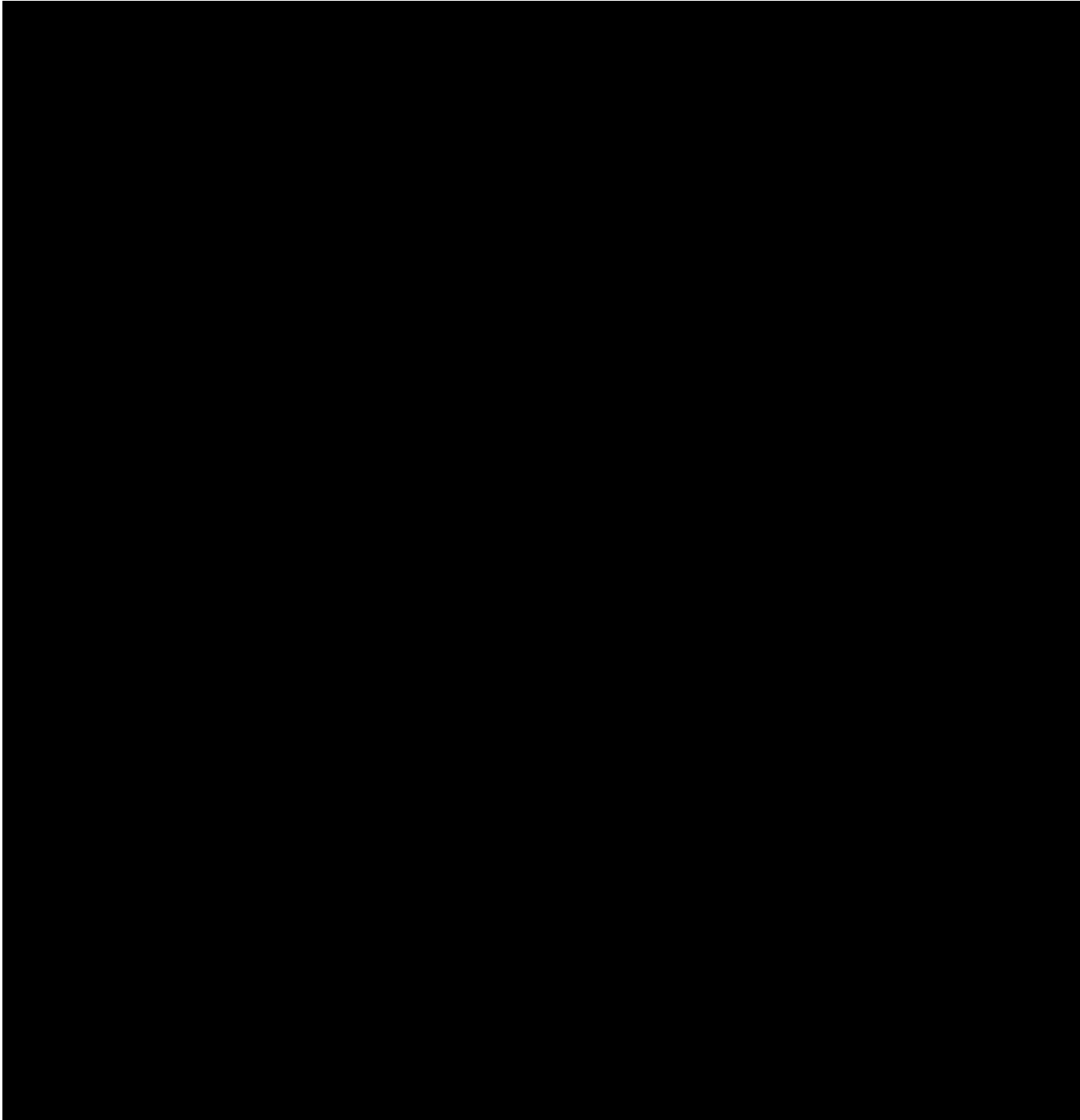
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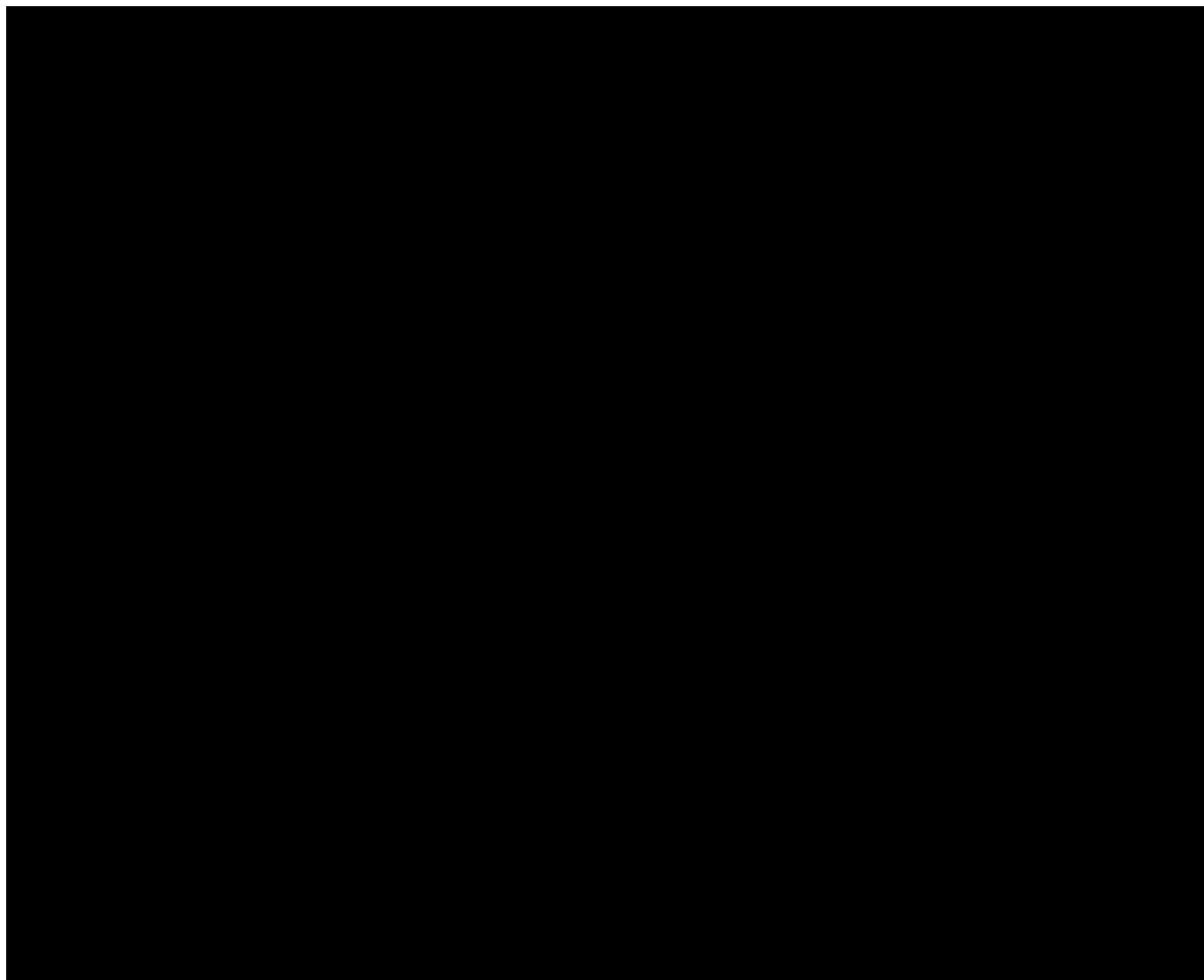
6. Participating Online

34. Web 2.0 provides us with unprecedented opportunities to open up government decision making and implementation to contributions from the community. Should APS employees engage in policy conversations, they should do so in a professional and respectful manner.
35. Equally, as citizens, we should also embrace the opportunity to add to the mix of opinions contributing to sound, sustainable policies and service delivery approaches.
36. In all online participation you must actively and carefully consider whether you should identify yourself as either an APS employee or an employee of FWO.
37. There are also some ground rules to participation. The Code, including Public Service Regulation 2.1, apply to working with online media in the same way as when participating in any other public forum.



The requirements include:

- 37.1. being apolitical, professional, and accountable
 - 37.2. behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
 - 37.3. being trustworthy and acting with integrity
 - 37.4. dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to remain confidential
 - 37.5. being respectful of people including their rights and heritage
 - 37.6. taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
 - 37.7. making proper use of Commonwealth resources
 - 37.8. upholding the Code and the integrity and good reputation of FWO and the APS.
38. You should ensure that you fully understand the Code and how they apply to official or personal communications. If in doubt,
- 38.1. stop and think about whether to comment and what to say,
 - 38.2. refer to the Code,
 - 38.3. consult our policies,
 - 38.4. seek advice from someone in authority at FWO, *or*
 - 38.5. consult the Ethics Advisory Service in the Australian Public Service Commission.



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Protocol for the Use of IT Facilities

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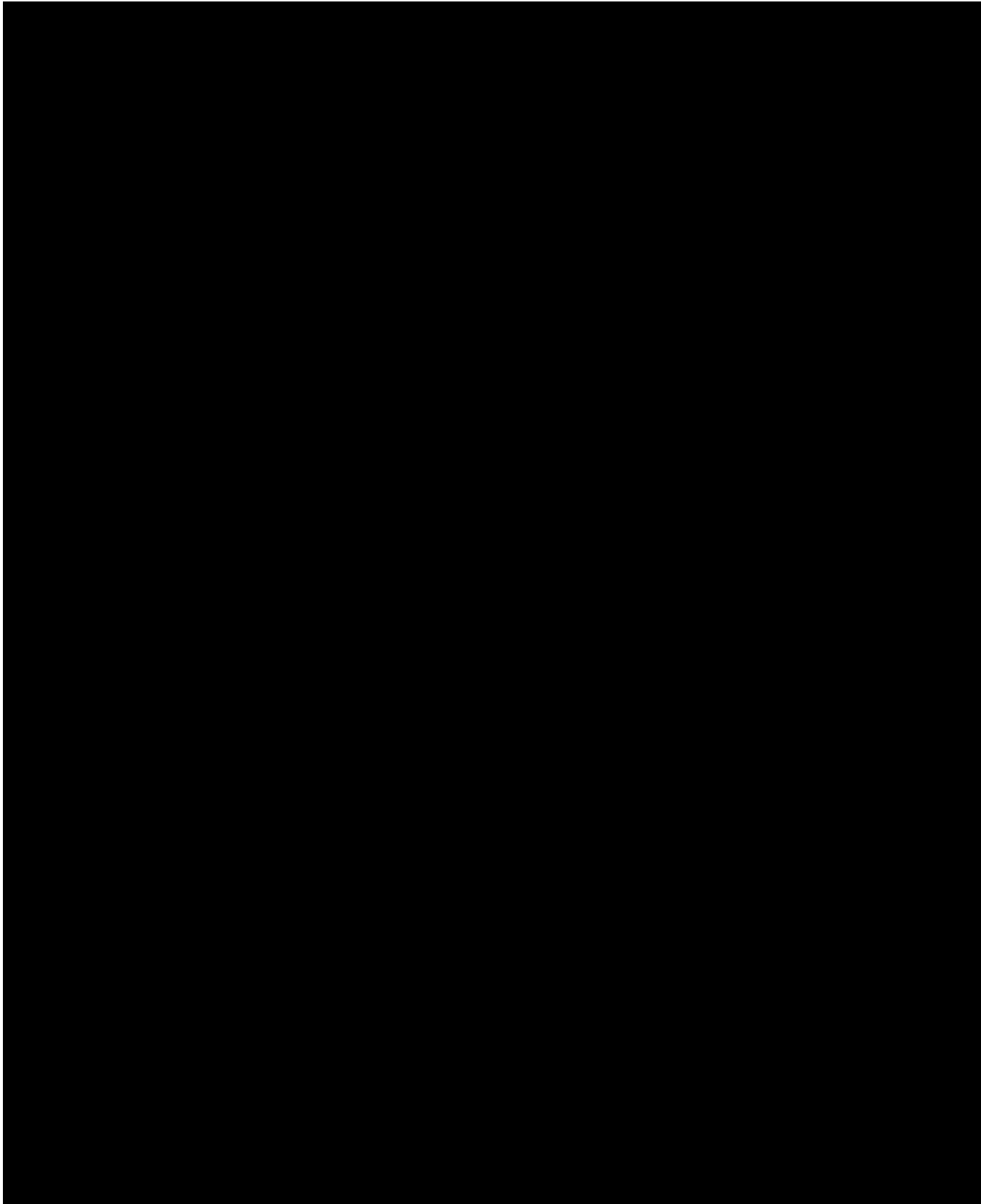
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4.2.4. *Social Networking*

58. Social networking sites like Facebook are a popular phenomenon on the Internet. As with all acceptable use, a limited amount of social network browsing is permitted.
59. Many social networking sites give the option for a user to identify a current place of employment. You are reminded that if you choose to identify yourself as an employee of the FWO, you should be aware



of the impact your online behaviour may have.

60. Staff must also be aware of the risks of any personal comments or opinions expressed:
 - 60.1. being misinterpreted as official policy;
 - 60.2. that may offend, harass or bully other colleagues;
 - 60.3. that may damage the reputation of the FWO and/or APS; *and*
 - 60.4. information (see paragraph 61.1 below) they post on websites could be used to develop a detailed profile of their lifestyle and hobbies in order to attempt to build a trust relationship with them or others. This relationship could then be used in an attempt to:
 - 60.4.1. solicit sensitive or personal information about colleagues or clients; *or*
 - 60.4.2. implant malicious software on systems by tricking them to open attachments.
61. Due to the nature of the business model surrounding many of these social networking sites, staff are advised they should avoid using these types of websites.⁷ As this is not always practical, staff using social media:
 - 61.1. Should avoid posting personal information, such as the following, on websites:
 - 61.1.1. Past and present employment details
 - 61.1.2. Personal details, such as birthdays, tax file number, contact details
 - 61.1.3. Schools or institutions
 - 61.1.4. Clubs or hobbies
 - 61.1.5. Educational qualifications
 - 61.1.6. Current work duties
 - 61.1.7. Work contact details.
 - 61.2. Must use the privacy settings to minimise the number of people who can access the content. These privacy settings must be reviewed regularly for changes to website policy and ensure the settings remain consistent.
 - 61.3. Must maintain separate professional and personal accounts when accessing websites.
62. No agency material or information is to be stored on or accessed via social networking sites. More detailed information is provided in the *FWO Social Media Policy*.

⁷ Especially staff holding higher level security clearances, or undertake high profile or sensitive work.

Social media

Frequently asked questions

Social media

Version 1.0

January 2016



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General:DB-747273/1.1

Social media Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

What is the difference between using social media in an official/work related capacity and in a private capacity?

Official work-related use of social media refers to communication in relation to an employee's official duties. This includes, but is not limited to using FWO's social media accounts including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Social media use in a private capacity is when an employee is commenting with a personal profile, in a private capacity, not for work-related purposes and not using an official FWO account.

An employee is also considered to be using social media in a private capacity if they are using their personal social media account and commenting as an experienced or professional person in their particular field of expertise.

When I use social media in a private capacity, what are some of the things that I should be aware of?

- always act in a professional manner and use your judgement before posting comments. Remember your out of hours conduct has the potential to impact on your employment
- make it clear that you are expressing your own views
- remember that at all times you must uphold the APS Values, Employment Principles, Code of Conduct and the integrity and good reputation of the FWO and the APS
- don't make a comment on behalf of the FWO unless you are authorised to do so
- don't disclose or use any official information in connection with your APS employment
- don't make a personal comment or express a personal view that could be misconstrued as an official comment on behalf of the FWO or the APS
- think carefully before posting or sharing any photos or videos; don't post them if they may damage the reputation of the FWO or the APS or if the people in the photos can be identified as agency employees
- ask yourself if it is possible that the comments you propose to make might cause offence to your colleague(s)
- always take reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest (real or apparent).

What do I do if I am asked to write an article on social media (i.e. LinkedIn) in a private capacity, because I work at the FWO?

As a private citizen, it is not appropriate for you to provide comment on the FWO unless appropriate approval has been given beforehand. If you are approached and want to make comment in a private capacity because of your experience with the FWO, you should discuss this first with your supervisor and then contact the [Policy, Media & Communications Branch or People Branch](#).

Do I need to gain approval if I need to comment in an official capacity, and if so, who do I ask?

Yes, approval must be obtained before using social media in an official capacity. Employees are required to have received appropriate training, have SES approval, recorded as a user on the social media register and have read and understood the social media policy and other relevant FWO policies and guides. The central point of contact for further information for commenting in an official capacity is the [Policy, Media & Communications Branch](#).

Can I access social media when I'm at work?

Yes you can, however, be mindful of how much personal time you spend online as it should be limited and not impact on your productivity. Please refer to the [Protocol for the Use of IT Facilities](#). You should also avoid, posting any work contact details on non- work related social media sites (i.e. LinkedIn, Facebook, Myspace) such as your work email address or phone number. If you are unsure, contact the [Policy, Media & Communications Branch](#) or refer to the [Social Media policy](#).

Remember that while reasonable personal use of IT resources such as email, internet and phone is permitted, they are provided to you primarily for work purposes.

Can I invite work colleagues to be my Facebook friends?

Yes, you can invite work colleagues to be your friends on Facebook, however, avoid commenting about work. Remember, once you make a comment, it may be made available to other people who you did not intend to see it.

If I see a post by an official FWO social media channel, can I share the message?

Yes, as long as you don't change the messaging in any way. If you see a message on social media from the FWO that you want to share with your friends and family feel free to do so!

Can I include FWO documents on my Facebook page?

No. It's important that your professional or personal Facebook or other social media profile is clearly marked as your personal profile and not able to be perceived as an official source of agency information.

Can I comment on another agency's blog or a news website?

Yes, but remember you are commenting as a private citizen and not in your role as a FWO employee. It is important that you do not post information that could be interpreted as an official position or statement on behalf of the FWO unless you have permission to do so.

Where can I go if I have more questions?

Further information can be found on the social media intranet page or in the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [Outside Work Policy](#) and the [Protocol for the Use of IT Facilities](#).

Alternatively, please send an email to HR@fwo.gov.au or contact one of the [team members in the People Branch](#).

Social Media

Date: 11 October 2012

Presented by:

– Workforce Support Section, Human Resources Branch

– Online Content & Social Media, Communications Branch



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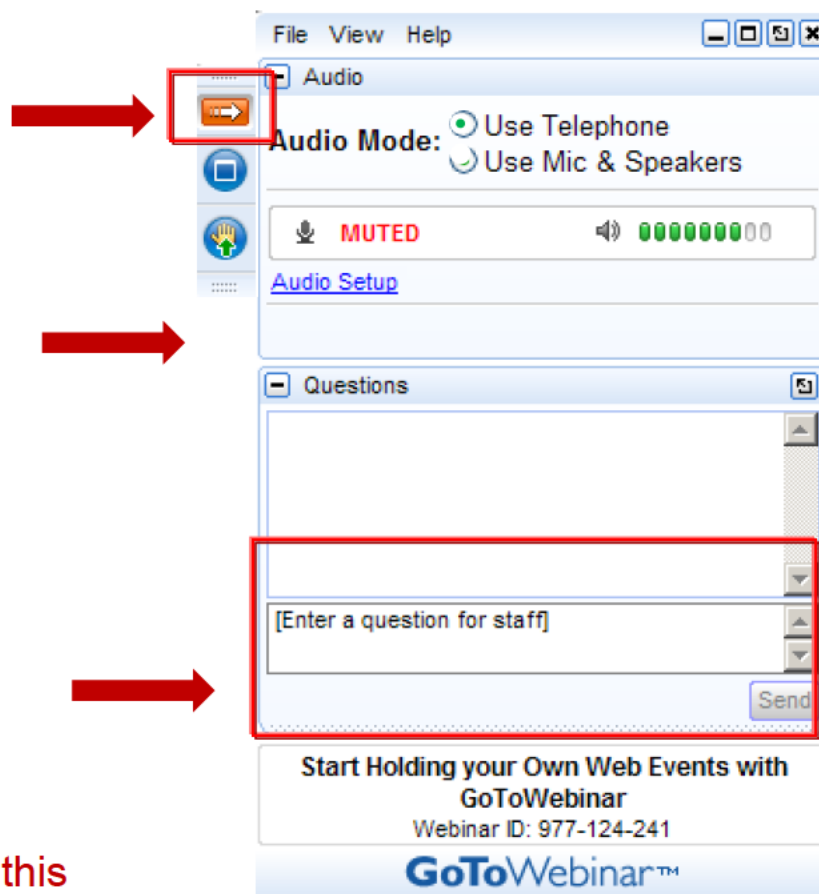
A few tips to help you navigate this webinar:

Your control panel will minimise automatically. Click on this orange arrow to expand it.

Don't forget to dial in using your 9-digit code and audio PIN

When you are ready to ask a question, type it in the Questions field and hit send. Your question will not be visible to any other participants.

Please note: all participants will be muted during this session. You will be able to submit a question in writing.





Presenters:

[REDACTED] – Workforce

Support Section, Human
Resources Branch

[REDACTED]
Online Content & Social Media,
Communications Branch

Overview

- Why the buzz?
- Commenting in an official capacity
- Commenting in an unofficial capacity
- General Principles
- Questions to consider
- Key points to remember

People Poll!

- Have you ever used these popular social media forums?
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn
 - Twitter
 - YouTube

Why the buzz?

Engage: Government 2.0 :

“Online engagement by public servants, involving robust professional discussion as part of their duties or as private citizens, benefits their agencies, their professional development, those with whom they are engaged and the Australian public.

This engagement should be enabled and encouraged.”

Commenting in an official capacity

- Facebook page – [fairwork.gov.au](https://www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au)
- Twitter account – [@fairwork_gov_au](https://twitter.com/fairwork_gov_au)
- YouTube channel – [Fair Work Ombudsman](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)
- Run by Marketing and Community Engagement Team
- Why are we using social media?
- What are we using it for?
- What are our posting guidelines?

How can you help?

- Email signatures – social media logos

FairWork Infoline 13 13 94
eNewsletter

www.fairwork.gov.au



- Ideas for posts? Let us know – contact 

- ‘Like’ us - www.facebook.com/fairwork.gov.au



Quick Quiz!

- What is the most frequently accessed social media website?
 - Google
 - Facebook
 - LinkedIn



Making a comment outside APS employment – Unofficial

Professional

- Subject matter expert

Private

- As a private citizen

Think before you act!

As an APS employee you have the same right to freedom of expression as other members of the community –

- subject to legitimate public interests, such as **maintaining an impartial, effective public service in which the community can have confidence.**

Read our Social Media Policy!

- Compromise you?
- Harsh or Extreme?
- Public Confidence?
- Disrupt the Workplace?
- Representing FWO?
- Real or perceived conflict of interest?
- Disclosure of Information?
- Photos? Images?
- Records?
- Endorsements?

Commenting in an unofficial capacity

“If you wouldn’t email the information directly to your manager, **make sure it doesn’t end up online**”

- the APS Code of Conduct still applies when using social media.

People Poll!

- Have you read the FWO Social Media Policy?
 - Yes, I've read it thoroughly
 - I've skimmed it
 - It's on my To Do list
 - Do we have a Social Media Policy?

Political comments

APS Values includes:

‘the APS is apolitical, performing its functions in an impartial and professional manner’

- This does not mean that APS employees must be apolitical in their private lives

It does mean that employees should avoid behaving in a way that suggests they can't act apolitically or impartially in their work.

General principles

Do not make comment that is, or could be perceived to be:

- on behalf of the Agency
- compromising the employee's capacity to full their duties in an unbiased way
- so harsh or extreme in its criticism
- so strong in its criticism of an agency's administration that it could seriously disrupt the workplace
- a gratuitous personal attack
- unreasonable criticism of an agency's clients or other stakeholders
- compromising public confidence in the agency or the APS.

Questions to consider

- Could the comments reasonably be expected to cause clients or stakeholders to lose confidence in the employee's ability to work impartially and professionally?
- Would the comment be likely to undermine the reputation of the individual agency or the APS?
- Are the comments in line with how the community in general expects the public service to behave?
- Are these comments lawful? E.g. do they comply with anti-discrimination legislation, etc.

Uphold the APS Values and Code of Conduct!



People Poll!

- When I make comments on my facebook page I make them at home on my own computer so no matter what I say my comments can't be considered by my employer.
 - I agree
 - I disagree

- You are entitled to your own views
- Consider the guidance we provided today
- Think twice before you post!



People Poll!

- I make sure that my privacy settings on my social media accounts are set so that only my friends can see them. This means that I can be assured of privacy.
 - I agree
 - I disagree

- Don't rely on privacy settings
- Your comments can reproduced
- Others can post on your page



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People Poll!

- I love blogging on-line!! As a private citizen I have opinions about and can say what I like about any Government policy in my blog.
- I agree
- I disagree

- As a private citizen you can express your own view
- Have a think about the role you have in the APS
- Can your comments be interpreted as harsh or extremely critical of the Government



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HELP

- Your manager
- Agency policies
- HR
- Communications
- Ethics Advisory Service – 02 62023737

Questions

- Let's answer some of your questions.

Key points to remember

- Only certain people in the Communications team can speak on behalf of the FWO (comment on an official capacity)
- Read and respect the social media policy
- Use commonsense - think before you act
- Protect privacy - your own, other people's and the agency's
- Uphold your APS responsibilities
- If something goes wrong then let someone know

Further Information

- FWO Social Media Policy
- Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Circular 2012/1: Revision to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online
- APSC Ethics Advisory Service (EAS) phone (02) 6202 3737 or email ethics@apsc.gov.au

Questions?

Contact: [REDACTED], Workforce Support
Section [REDACTED]

Contact:

[REDACTED], Online Content & Social Media

[REDACTED], Online Content & Social Media

Email: socialmedia@fwo.gov.au



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SOCIAL MEDIA WEBINAR QUESTIONS:

- **Q: does a candidate have the right to know if an organisation is using social media to check them out?**

In general there is no requirement for an organisation to tell a candidate that they will be checking social media forums. In light of the increasing popularity of this practice it might be prudent to assume that this will be done, and act accordingly.

- **Q: Does the FWO have any plans to look at peoples social media profiles when making recruitment decisions?**

Currently, viewing relevant social media sites is not part of the selection methodology used to make recruitment decisions.

- **Q: In email, if you're corresponding with an employer and you have built some rapport with them, do you still have to address them as Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms etc, or can you say "Hi John/Jan"**

When communicating with members of the public by email it is very important to ensure your language and tone are professional. This is not only important for the purposes of the communication, but also because these records may be used in settings such as a court hearing where use of unprofessional or overly informal language can reflect poorly on the agency. Adopting a slightly more personal approach by using a first name (eg Dear John) may help to maintain rapport and a friendly approach to a matter, as long as you have established that the recipient is happy to be addressed by their first name. Using very informal language, such as in "Hi John", would likely be too informal. The use of such casual language can have the effect of undermining the role and authority of the agency. It may seem appropriate when matters are progressing in a friendly matter, but it is then very difficult to re-establish a level of formality and distance if a more authoritative approach is later required. The golden rule in all your communications should be, 'if in doubt, err on the side of formality'.

- **Q: would it just be safer to remove FWO as my place of employment from my Facebook page? What implications does it have if show that you work for FWO on facebook?**

The FWO Social Media Policy states that employees should give careful consideration to the appropriate use of their work email address (rather than personal email address) and potential implications of identifying themselves as an agency employee when registering on social media sites. This is because when you have listed as your employer you have established a nexus with your employment. It is however, ultimately up to you whether you list FWO as your employer. Consider, when participating on line, how would you act in the 'real' world if you were wearing a FWO name badge or other form of uniform so that others can see who you work for?

- **Q: How does the FWO handle negative tweets?**

It really does depend on the type of negative tweet we get. We will respond to any genuine enquiry or question, regardless of whether it's negative or not. If it relates to the handling of a specific case, we'll ask for more information via a private message and try to get someone from FWO to contact them directly. If it's a general statement, there'll be an assessment based on the tweet itself as to whether it's necessary to reply. And if it's someone mistaking us for Fair Work Australia (the most common scenario), we'll try and politely explain to them in a reply that we're different organisations.

- **Q: Is it just your own individual comments that you can be reprimanded for? What if a friend (non APS EE) writes something grossly inappropriate on my facebook wall; or uploads a photo that is not appropriate ?**

You can't be held responsible for the actions of another person (unless of course you legally *are* responsible for them), however you *can* be held responsible for your responses to those actions. If something is posted on your Facebook page and you are genuinely unaware of it then you cannot reasonably be held responsible. However if you are aware, or become aware, of something inappropriate then we would expect you to take appropriate action such as removing the post and/or clearly disassociating yourself with the inappropriate behaviour. If it were discovered that you were aware of something inappropriate and had done nothing then it could be perceived that you agree with, or endorse, the inappropriate behaviour.

- **Q: Should we all be entitled to restriction allowance if we are indeed restricted in our public comments? Are we in fact employed at all times?**

When we are employed as a Public Servant we are employed under the conditions set out in the *Public Service Act 1999* (PS Act). The PS Act requires that we behave in accordance with the APS Values and Code of Conduct (the Code). The Code which is set out in Section 13 of the PS Act. Section 13 (11) states that an APS employee must at all times behave in a way that upholds the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS. APS employees can make public comment in a private capacity so long as they make it clear they are expressing their own views and are not making comment that is not upholding the Values, the integrity and good reputation of the APS. This is essential to the effective and impartial operation of a service in which the public can have confidence.

The requirement to act in accordance with the Code exists both in social media and in our other normal social interactions. For example, we can be held accountable for an inappropriate comment or action that is heard or seen by another person outside

of work. The main difference is that verbal communication said in the context of a social gathering is transitory (only you and the person/people in the vicinity heard your comments or witnessed your action). In the case of social media you are making a **permanent record** (yes, even deleted entries are on permanent record). Social media is generally available to a wide audience and you have limited or no control over the reproduction and dissemination of any record. As such the comment, action or other record will have a perpetual lifespan, and could influence an issue or decision in the future just as much as on the day the comment was made. The golden rule here is 'if you put it in writing, assume it will be seen'.

- **Q: If I like a page that exposes dishonesty of politicians can I get in trouble.**

Maybe, it would depend on the situation. When deciding whether to like the page, it is important to remember you have an individual right to participate in public forums and debate, however you must ensure you do so as *yourself, as a private citizen*. Be careful about creating a perception that you, as a *FWO/APS employee*, are supporting a political issue or campaign. When participating in public forums, and particularly political debate, try to avoid any connection, even indirect, with your employment and wherever possible accompany your views with a statement to the effect of 'these are my personal views, and are not to be regarded as being the views of any group or organisation with which I am associated.'

Keep in mind that even if you include a disclaimer such as this, as a Public Servant you must still avoid making comments in a personal capacity which:

- compromises your capacity to fulfill your duties in an unbiased manner;
- is so harsh or extreme in its criticism of the Government, a member of parliament, or their policies, that it raises questions about your capacity to work professionally, efficiently or impartially;
- is so strong in its criticism of the agency's administration that it could seriously disrupt the workplace;
- is a gratuitous personal attack that might reasonably be perceived to be connected with your employment;
- contains unreasonable criticism of the agency's clients and other stakeholders; or
- could compromise public confidence in the agency or the APS

Please refer to the Social Media Policy and the APSC Circular 2012/1 for additional information. This circular is published for the information of all public servants.