

IMOS Social Media Guidelines

Version 1 – February 2015

Purpose of these guidelines

These social media guidelines have been developed to guide IMOS staff and partners to prevent unwanted consequences such as misrepresentation, compromise of confidentiality and damage to the reputation of individuals and IMOS.

These guidelines do not apply to the personal use of social media by any staff members of IMOS, although it should be noted that the guidelines contain broadly applicable advice for appropriate use of social media and that they can therefore be used as a guide for new social media users generally.

Why participate in social media?

Information is now exchanged more openly, in more detail and more rapidly than has ever occurred in history. As technology supporting information exchange advances, and costs come down, more people will increasingly engage in social networks supporting interactive conversations. As a result, social media is now an extremely powerful vehicle for the public exchange of information and views.

IMOS recognises its stakeholders' use of, and participation in, online communities to learn, advocate, collaborate, exchange and contribute for professional and personal development. Participating in social media offers IMOS a way of being engaged with its communities and staying in touch with sentiment, attitudes and current thinking around Marine science, research infrastructure and related issues.

Who can represent IMOS?

The Director of IMOS and the IMOS Communication Managers are administrators of the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/IntegratedMarineObservingSystem>) are authorised to post on behalf of IMOS. Any individual can post to the page but they do so in their capacity as individuals or representatives of other organisations. Individuals are encouraged to post relevant articles, photos of their current work etc.

IMOS related sites, such as those representing nodes or facilities or represent specific projects or conferences, do not require approval of the IMOS Director. However, IMOS and its collaborators benefit from unified branding/identity and a separate Facebook presence may not be required. A discussion with the IMOS Director or Communicating Managers might help to determine the necessity or otherwise of a separate page.

What principles guide our content?

Broadly speaking, IMOS content in social media should be related to marine issues. It should be apolitical and not aligned with views of any one collaborator in preference to, or in opposition to, views of another. Content posted in social media should enhance the reputation IMOS and not put it at risk.

Content should broadly satisfy the following criteria:

- external articles should be sourced from a reputable outlet
- claims or opinion should be based on sound scientific methodology
- images representing the work of partners/collaborators must satisfy relevant codes of conduct, confidentiality restrictions etc. of those organisations
- people represented in photographs should be aware of the posting and compliant with it
- does not imply alignment of IMOS with a view/opinion likely to be divisive within IMOS collaborating community
- unlikely to cause offence to any stakeholders (i.e. should be sensitive to diversity, including cultural and national differences)
- presents a novel finding or phenomenon for information and discussion
- does not compromise confidentiality of IMOS data or other information

Should IMOS actively participate in online conversations?

Social media is all about the conversation; it is a public dialogue through which participants discover, inform and learn. IMOS should participate when its input adds to the conversation in a positive, scholarly way. This is particularly important when posts or comments misrepresent IMOS's position or responsibilities.

Moderation of comments on IMOS social media platforms

In general, it is best to let the conversation happen naturally and only intervene to correct inaccuracies or present alternative views (based on sound research). Participants tend to moderate one another through rebutting inaccurate claims and through steering the conversation back on topic.

There are, however, individuals and factions who seek to use social media for inflammatory or defamatory purposes. In these instances, IMOS has the right to remove such comments from its social media platforms.

IMOS staff use of social media

IMOS recognises the positive role of social media, supported by an open and inclusive policy. It is to be expected that staff will engage with social media as private individuals and will, from time to time, comment on issues relating to IMOS. In the spirit of empowering and entrusting employees, staff should feel free to do so.

The responsibility of staff is to ensure that in putting their opinions in the public arena they are not putting the reputation of IMOS at risk. Staff should also be aware that public comments can put their own professional and personal reputations at risk.

It is good practice to distinguish one's personal views from those of their employer. Staff should make their best effort to be clear in which capacity they are commenting.

Codes of conduct which apply to other forms of staff behaviour and interaction also apply to online communications. When staff refer to their colleagues or organisational policy in public dialogue, all relevant staff policies and guidelines of that organisation apply.

IMOS staff who engage with social media should:

- be transparent – acknowledge sources appropriately and be honest about identity
- protect their privacy – do not divulge personal information that may potentially compromise privacy or professional confidentiality
- maintain confidentiality – do not compromise personal confidentiality or that of other staff, Members or IMOS data/information
- be accurate and appropriate – check facts and stay on the topic
- be respectful – of other people, their cultural differences and varying perspectives. Be respectful of IMOS time and resources too.
- be responsible – comments can be spread and they will endure in cyberspace. Be mindful of the future impact of what is said publicly.
- add value – think about the real value of your contribution before posting

Related Policies and Guidelines

- [UTAS Social Media Policy \(December 2014\)](#)
- [UTAS Social Media Guidelines \(December 2010\)](#)
- [ICT Services and Facilities Use Policy \(December 2014\)](#)
- [UTAS Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy \(February 2011\)](#)
- [UTAS Electronic Communications Policy \(December 2014\)](#)