



Social Media Guidelines

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Introduction

- UW Extension (UWE) has been active with many forms of social media and continues to use these tools to reach out to both existing and new audiences. We recognize that social media provides an opportunity to share widely the positive impact that UWE has on the people of the State of Wyoming and that it allows us to quickly disseminate timely, research-based resources to populations with information needs.
- As part of a social media strategy, UWE also recognizes two distinct roles for social media in Extension: promoting events and sharing news/information, and engaging in conversations with the public. Each of those roles requires different resources and time commitments from Extension personnel. Before creating and managing a social media account/channel, it is strongly suggested that the individual(s) responsible for posting content consider which role(s) will be used.

Objectives

- Social media use by UWE personnel supports the following objectives:
 - To build new and enhance existing relationships with Wyoming residents
 - To become part of community conversations in order to increase responsiveness to community needs
 - To provide greater accessibility to Extension educational resources
 - To reach learners that Extension has not traditionally reached

Account setup/management

- Setting up and/or managing social media accounts with UWE involves assuming responsibility for the professional use of the accounts. Please use the following guidelines:
 - Accounts should use an official UWE logo/image as a profile picture.
 - Usernames on accounts should represent an official role/position within UWE, not the individual employee's name.
 - Use standardized naming conventions
 - There should be multiple administrators on an account to assure longevity and continuity
 - A disclaimer such as the one below should be included on each account:

This account is recognized by the UWE; however, the views and opinions expressed in this account are not necessarily those of Extension or the University of Wyoming.

Posting content

- Be professional, respectful, and non-judgmental
- Participate frequently – daily is best, weekly is a good minimum
- Stay on topic – only post information relevant to the audience you are cultivating
- Engage followers – ask questions and invite discussion when appropriate
- Follow copyright and trademark regulations
- Don't promote commercial organizations or products
- Use hashtags and links to connect your audience to relevant content when appropriate
- Participate as a peer and community member

Responding to posts

- Respond to questions/comments in a timely manner
- Delete (without comment) content or responses that are profane or inappropriate
- If there is incorrect information in a comment/post, respond with factual information
- Offer links to more information and credible research when possible
- Remember that, to the public, your responses represent all of UWE

Assessing effectiveness

- Plan an annual social media assessment to determine if objectives are being met
- Keep track of the number of new contacts/audience members
- Determine demographic reach and plan for new targets

Resources

- For more examples of social media advice for Extension professionals, visit:
 - [Purdue Extension Social Media Guidelines](#)
 - [The Ohio State Extension EdgeU Tech Page](#)
 - [eXtension Social Media Guidelines](#)

This document was assembled using advice and suggestions from several existing social media guides. Acknowledgement and appreciation are extended to:

- *University of Wyoming*
 - *eXtension*
- *The Ohio State University Extension*
 - *Purdue Extension*

A downloadable copy of this document can be found at: <http://www.uwyo.edu/uwesupport/>