Viterbo University
Social Media/Personal Web Sites and Web Logs Guidelines

Viterbo University recognizes that social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, etc., and personal Web sites, Web logs, or blogs, can be an effective tool for exchanging information and raising the visibility of the university. Therefore, employees are permitted to contribute content about Viterbo University and their work; however, there are a number of guidelines employees are asked to follow when maintaining university-sponsored blogs or when posting information about the university on personal social media sites, blogs or other forms of user-generated media. We ask that you keep in mind the mission of Viterbo University when unsure what or how to post.

1. **Participation may be part of your job.** Viterbo may request that employees maintain work-related, supervisor-approved social media accounts or blogs, which can be managed and updated during work hours, e.g., admission, alumni, communications and marketing, and faculty recruiters. It is expected that employees will use their real name rather than writing anonymously or under a pseudonym, and disclose or explain their role at the university.
   
   *Ask yourself:* Is what I’m doing productive to Viterbo and in my and Viterbo’s best interest?

2. **Social sites are public, permanent, and retrievable.** Your messages on the social Web can be read by anyone. You are searchable and what you say can spread and stays online forever. Use common sense. Assume that even if you don’t identify yourself as a Viterbo employee on a particular site, the vast and growing repository of data on the Web will make you identifiable to outside parties as such. Similar to university email, employees should have no expectation of privacy when using or posting on social media Web sites.
   
   *Ask yourself:* Would I be comfortable with my supervisor, colleague, or president reading this message?

3. **Official groups or pages must be supervisor-approved.** Groups and fan pages on social media sites are easy to create and promote, making it difficult for users to identify ‘official’ pages. However, these pages require input and maintenance to be effective. If you feel there’s a need and value to generating a group or page for Viterbo, ask your supervisor before allocating time or resources on the endeavor.
   
   *Ask yourself:* Have I carefully thought about this group/page, and will it benefit Viterbo as a viable part of my job?

4. **Official group or page administration.** Usernames and passwords for official groups or pages on sites such as Facebook, or a Viterbo sponsored blog, should be kept with the official department and should use Viterbo email (________@viterbo.edu) for administrative correspondence.
   
   *Ask yourself:* In my absence, or if there is a personnel change, will Viterbo be able to access the administrative rights to its sponsored pages?

5. **Be respectful and of good moral character.** Avoid posting any content derogatory or in defamation of Viterbo University, its services, employees, students, constituents, or competitors. Similarly, employees should not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, or embarrassing to another person employed by the university, or the university itself. Think before posting and when in doubt, don’t press “Send.”
   
   *Ask yourself:* Will this message offend anyone, e.g., parent, student, family member, or vendor?
6. **Be transparent; identify yourself, be professional.** If you choose to include Viterbo in your profile on a social site, conduct yourself professionally there. Be transparent and identify yourself clearly as an employee of Viterbo in any business-related discussions. Be yourself and feel free to say what is on your mind, but do so respectfully. Your opinions should be apparent as yours and not represent the views and opinions of Viterbo.

   *Ask yourself:* Am I misrepresenting myself and/or Viterbo and contributing to the conversation in an engaging, interesting, and productive manner?

7. **Be nice.** Don’t vent, bash, or poke fun at people, businesses, companies, brands, competitors, or geographical locations. Do feel free to ask questions and share your opinion in a respectful manner. Think before posting and when in doubt, don’t press “Send.”

   *Ask yourself:* Could this message be misinterpreted or offending to anyone not in the ‘original circle’ your message was intended to reach?

8. **Mind the competitors, but don’t openly initiate or engage in competition.** Watch them, but don’t harass them. Follow them, but do not republish their messages. Do not be contradictory or engage in ‘mudslinging’. Take the competitive high road. Always view bios or profiles before engaging.

   *Ask yourself:* With whom am I interacting?

9. **Don’t sell.** Social networks are great places to identify opportunities and develop relationships, but they are not appropriate venues for a sales pitch.

   *Ask yourself:* Would I be annoyed if I were the recipient of such propaganda?

10. **Be the first to respond to your own mistakes.** If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly.

    *Ask yourself:* Have I been honest about and apologized for my error?

11. **Protect confidential and proprietary information.** Social computing blurs many of the traditional boundaries between internal and external communications. Be mindful of the difference.

    *Ask yourself:* Am I sharing information that is potentially proprietary or otherwise sensitive?

12. **Don’t forget your day job.** Make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job. Personal blogging generally should be done on personal computers and on personal time, as to not interfere with work performance.

    *Ask yourself:* If I’m using work time for a discussion via social technologies, is this discussion in keeping with the performance of my job duties?

13. **Be aware of liability.** You are legally liable for what you post on your own site and on others.

    *Ask yourself:* Is what I am posting going to come back to haunt me?

If social media and/or blogging activity, whether it be university sponsored use or personal use, is interpreted to be detrimental or damaging to the university, its reputation, or the community, disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment may be enforced.

For any questions about these guidelines or any matter related to the university’s policy on social media, personal Web sites, Web logs, and other user-generated Web content contact the vice president of communications and marketing at 608-796-3041 or pgkerrigan@viterbo.edu.