



Introduction

These guidelines are intended to guide and enable faculty, staff, students, and alumni who create and administer social networking pages on behalf of Morehouse College. They do not pertain to, nor do they constrain, scholarly, academic, or pedagogical use of social media.

The goal of social networking sites is to foster a virtual Morehouse community for various audiences. Although these sites are outside the direct control of the college, the college maintains an interest in how it is portrayed by them. Morehouse's official web site (www.morehouse.edu) remains the central communications vehicle for many of its audiences and should not be neglected in favor of social networking. Rather, social networking should be used to enhance communications with the college's target audiences.

Many of the guidelines pertain specifically to Facebook, currently the most widely used social networking tool, and one guideline in particular addresses the use of Twitter. Ideally, these guidelines will be reviewed and updated annually.

Purposes of college social networking sites

For the college as a whole

- To support and enable recruiting, retention, and alumni relations
- To develop virtual Morehouse communities
- To foster interactivity
- To share information

For academic departments

- To maintain connection to alumni and help foster connections among alumni
- To assist with assessment
- To find opportunities (internships, job leads) for current students

For admissions

- To create community among admitted students
- To assist in yielding students who enroll
- For student groups (ex: The Maroon Tiger, CASA, Student Government)
- To communicate with members (events, communications, pictures)
- To recruit members

For alumni affinity groups such as reunioning classes

- To share information, foster attendance, reconnect

Main Morehouse Facebook site:

- To push news, keep Morehouse top of mind, stay connected
- Friend-raiser (leads to fund-raising)

Violation of campus policy

There is one area of official policy regarding social networking sites, and that is to exercise freedom of speech with responsibility. If activity on a social networking site is reported as violating campus policy as outlined in the Morehouse student handbook, it will be investigated and handled according to the college disciplinary process.

Basic privacy guidelines

The options for communicating and interacting online are continuously advancing and changing at a fast pace. The college does not closely monitor the use of electronic communications by students, faculty, and staff, however it is within each individual community member's best interest to be aware of issues related to privacy online. These guidelines have been established to assist individual users in making good decisions to protect themselves.

1. Be familiar with privacy options on social networking sites, e-mail, blogs, etc.
2. Set appropriate privacy guards for your personal comfort level.
3. Be aware that no privacy option protects you 100 percent from personal information being shared beyond desired boundaries. Information shared online, even with the highest privacy settings (including e-mails intended for a specific individual or individuals), cannot be protected.
4. Be aware that information posted online may be perceived differently depending on the viewer despite intended effect or outcome.
5. Incidents reported to college officials that may violate campus policy will be investigated and handled according to the campus judicial process.

Usage by student and alumni organizations and campus offices

Morehouse College recognizes that student organizations, alumni organizations, and campus offices may use various online media to communicate, promote, and inform others about their programs, services, and activities. The guidelines above, along with information about open and closed groups apply to all Morehouse affiliated online information. Groups choosing to use online services need to be aware that they are using the college's name and that this can impact the image and reputation of specific individuals, the group, and the college.

Photo guidelines

Photos posted on social networking should be done so with the utmost care. Nothing posted online is private, and photos should be regarded as such. The following guidelines should be used when posting photos:

- Photos of children should not be posted without expressed consent from the parents. Even then such photos should be avoided.
- Care should be taken not to post photos of individuals who would object. This may involve obtaining the appropriate permissions.
- Photos posted on social networking sites must be appropriate. As a guideline, they should be photos that could be posted on the college's official Web site. Examples of photos that should be avoided include but are not limited to: photos involving alcohol, nudity, medical and hospital patients, and graphic scenes.
- Appropriate photo credits should be given. Social networking sites still represent Morehouse, and any agreed-to credits must be maintained.

Copyright

Beware that intellectual property may be protected by copyright. Newer copyright statements allow creative but non-commercial uses. One Website that provides content (including music and images) that may be used in this way is www.creativecommons.org.

Logo and titles

For titles of Facebook pages, we recommend using "Morehouse College" for the first two words, as appropriate, for consistency and best results in searches, for example:

- Morehouse College XXXX Department
- Morehouse College Class of XXXX
- Morehouse College Student Government
- Morehouse College Basketball

Use of the college logo on Facebook is not recommended, since there is only one slot for a homepage photo, and it would cause confusion for multiple groups to use the same logo.

Administration

Multiple site administrators are recommended, or at least two so that there's a backup. For student organizations, overlap outgoing and incoming administrators to make sure the transition is smooth.

Site maintenance and updates

The success of any web site depends on keeping the content fresh and interesting. This is especially true in an organizational setting where outdated or stale sites can reflect poorly on the group and on the college as a whole. In addition, subscribers to Facebook fan pages and similar social networking sites are interested in receiving periodic updates - that's what gives your site value to them. While there are no hard and fast rules regarding how often content should be added or updated on such sites, site managers should be aware that the success of any site depends on an ongoing commitment to making updates and engaging with the user community.

Groups vs. pages (Facebook only)

Pages, rather than groups, are the preferred method of creating a Facebook presence. Pages have more flexibility, are easier to brand, and allow a greater number of features, including showing up on Facebook homepage news feeds. Pages were specifically designed for organizations, and should be used as such to represent Morehouse.

Open and closed groups

Morehouse College expects that students, faculty and staff understand the difference between closed and open groups in social networking sites as they post information online. Closed groups often require passwords or approval from the "owner" or "manager" of the group to receive or post information. Open groups often require membership with the social networking site, but do not require membership or passwords to review information posted. In establishing a group in the virtual world please be mindful of how the information posted affects individual members of the college community as well as the college reputation as a whole.

Twitter guidelines

Twitter should include a bio, daily or nearly so updates, active links, and an appropriate image. Tweets should point back to other content.

Support for site managers

For more guidance or feedback on creating and maintaining social networking sites, please contact The Office of Communications, Web Services at webmaster@morehouse.edu.