

Social media represents a vast online community where customers, partners, suppliers, and shareholders come together to share information, promote products and services and exchange opinions and experiences. The British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) recognises the limits and risks of social media, and how it can affect our organisation's brand, public image, and core values. We have created this social media policy to lay out a framework of tested social media guidelines and protocols.

As volunteers, committee members or staff of the Society, we should have a passion about what we do and want to share that with our networks. Social media is changing the way we talk to each other, our members, and our stakeholders. We believe in open communication and encourage our volunteers, committee members and staff to tell the world about their work and share their enthusiasm.

This policy covers all BSSS employees, volunteers and members.

Use of any one of these terms within this policy, extends to all employees, volunteers and members.

This policy's purpose is to:

- a) outline the Society's social media guidelines and protocols
- b) outline the rules that apply to both corporate and personal social media use
- c) to explain the company's process when these guidelines are not followed.

We want to promote, encourage and support the effective and innovative use of social media as part of the Society's activities. We also want to provide a safe environment to operate within to protect both the Society, individuals sharing content about the Society, and those viewing the information.

Scope

This social media policy applies to all Society Board, Council and committee members and employees, including paid interns, volunteers, contractors, and seasonal, part-time, and full-time employees. We define social media as any form of electronic communication or application that enables users to create online communities and share knowledge, opinions, media, and private and public messages. The policy covers all social media technology including social networking sites, blogs, community sites, integrated social media and chat forums.

Guidelines

Members that are responsible for representing the Society on social media are required to uphold the Society's image, core values, and brand. Subsequently, we expect everyone to remain fair, professional, and respectful to any BSSS partners, shareholders, customers, members, and/or suppliers.

As a professional body, we and our members collect valuable research and evidence. Although it can be challenging to provide full details of evidence via social media, we expect all members to demonstrate a commitment to only presenting high-quality research and evidence via social media.

When participating in social media activities, you are representing the Society and should use the same good judgement as you would with any other communication in the public arena. Confidential details, material that would damage the reputation of the Society, or could offend your colleagues, our partners and clients or any other related third party, must not be posted.

The majority of our members will also make use of social media in a personal capacity. Whilst not acting explicitly on behalf of the Society, it is possible that your actions may damage the reputation of the Society by association. The Society asks that staff and members act with consideration, posting responsibly when commenting and sharing content online.

Ensure that your personal social media profiles and any related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself with clients and colleagues. Check that you know the privacy levels of your accounts and remember that, if you comment on someone else's public post, your comments may become public too. Even if you have good intentions, you should remember that anything you publish could potentially harm the Society. Please act responsibly.

If in doubt, contact the BSSS office team for guidance before you post on social media.

Representing BSSS on social media

The Society brings together those working within academia, practitioners implementing soil science in industry and all those working with, or with an interest in soils. Members can post updates, messages or otherwise use their accounts in line with the Society's objectives. In doing so, please feel free to:

- respond to enquiries and requests for help
- share blog posts, articles and other content created by the Society
- share insightful articles, videos, media and other content relevant to the Society, but created by others
- post job opportunities, articles and information about the Society
- support new launches and other initiatives
- publish Society announcements.

All are asked to avoid:

- speaking on and/or posting about subjects outside of the Society's expertise
- posting incorrect, misleading content and/or false information
- posting confidential content
- posting and/or sharing offensive and/or discriminatory content
- excessive use of social media which leads to neglecting deadlines and missing work.

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Those who manage social media accounts on behalf of any part of the Society do so on the understanding that the accounts themselves, and all associated assets and IP remain the property of the British Society of Soil Science.

Sharing Work

Social media is a great place to talk about your work, champion the successes of others, and have a dialogue with your online network providing there are no confidentiality issues.

Consider the intellectual property rights and ownership of data. For example when posting or sharing content, consider copyright laws and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others. If the material is not yours, do not use it and don't claim it as being yours. It is that person's choice as to whether to share their material with the world. Before posting someone else's work, check first with the owner. Do not cite or reference clients, partners or suppliers without their approval. When you do make a reference, wherever possible, link back to the source.

Respect the audience

Do not post content that would be considered discriminatory or bullying in nature; cause harassment to others; or be contrary to our values. Be mindful of legislation around protected characteristics as laid out in the Equality Act 2010. This includes making offensive or derogatory remarks relating to sex, gender, age, gender reassignment, race, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or belief. Be considerate of the privacy of others and of topics that may be considered offensive or inflammatory to others. We ask that you do not post messages, status updates or links to material or content that is inappropriate. Inappropriate content includes but is not limited to:

- illegal or criminal activities
- offensive or harassing material
- unsolicited views on social, political, religious or other non-Society matters
- materials relating to cults, gambling, excessive behaviours and self-harm
- abusive, offensive, obscene, vulgar or violent comments
- abuse and threatening behaviour
- stalking, harassing or attacking other users
- offensive or derogatory toward others in regard to race/ethnicity, religion, gender, nationality or political beliefs
- language or content that is disruptive, repetitive, misleading, deceptive, unlawful or fraudulent.
- sharing files that contain viruses, corrupted files, or any other similar software or programmes that may damage the operation or compromise the security of computers and networks.

Questions

Have you posted something that was not true? Be the first to respond to your own mistake. If you notice an issue emerging on social media, or a partner contacts you online with a complaint, please don't try to deal

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with it yourself - refer it as soon as possible to the BSSS team. Things can escalate quickly online, particularly on social media, and can have reputational repercussions that extend beyond social media. Do not hesitate to get in touch if you are at all concerned.

Disciplinary Action

If an employee or member does not follow the guidelines set out in this social media policy:

- Society members could face a disciplinary procedure as set out in the Society Code of Conduct, which could end in termination of membership
- Employees could face disciplinary action, which could result in termination of employment.

Reporting

Other social media users may first become aware of an issue before we do. In this instance, please contact media@soils.org.uk with details of the issue. The issue will be reviewed and managed in line with our Complaints Policy.

For further information on this policy, please contact:

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