RCPsych Social Media Strategy and Guidelines

Introduction

This document is intended to provide general guidance on social media for

- College Officers, including Faculties, Sections and Divisions.
- the membership generally
- Staff who administer College social media accounts

Using social media can benefit an organisation in many ways. For example, it can bring greater attention to and awareness of the organisation's work, improve its reputation, allow fast communication with like-minded people, encourage feedback, increase openness and establish that organisation as an authoritative voice.

The guide aims to make the use of social media less threatening, but also sets the parameters and principles as how best to use social media, without being too prescriptive.

What are 'social media'?

There are many definitions of social media but, broadly speaking, it refers to the use of web and mobile technology to communicate, engage and exchange content with other people. Well-known examples include Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, Google+, blogs etc ...

The influence of social media should not be underestimated. After Google, Facebook is the second most visited site on the web, closely followed by YouTube. Twitter is ranked number ten.

Advantages and Disadvantages of different Social Media

When deciding to get involved in any form of social media, whether as an individual, clinician or as an organisation, it is important to consider the advantages and disadvantages of the medium and what you want to get out of it. We have concentrated here on the three main social media which are relevant to individual clinicians, but also to the College as a multi-faceted organisation. (See Page 5)

Doctors' personal use of social media

Rather than re-inventing the wheel, we would suggest that members who are interested in using or have concerns in using social media, whether professionally or in a personal capacity, should consult the following publications:

- The General Medical Council has produced some useful guidance on 'Doctors' use of social media'. The guidance explains the standards expected of doctors when communicating through social media rather than face-to-face or through other traditional media, in line with '*Good Medical Practice*'. Its remit is therefore broader than advice on personal use of social media and addresses the boundaries between the use of social media between your public and private life, and online information that can easily be accessed by others.
- The Royal College of General Practitioners has also produced a 'Social Media Highway Code'. This is a practical and encouraging guide for doctors and other healthcare professionals who use social media and want to ensure they get the most out of their online communications, while ensuring they meet their professional obligations and protect their patients.

When using your personal social media accounts, it is important to make it clear that you are giving personal views or comments, and not the views of the College.

College Officers, Committees, Faculties, Sections, Special Interest Groups
We are keen for members and staff to use and communicate through social media freely and openly, while remaining aware of to our professional responsibilities.

If different sections of the College are interested in developing a presence through social media, they should contact the Communications Department which will be happy to discuss the following:

- A proper strategy needs to be in place to decide exactly what you want to achieve, set your targets and goals.
- Decide which social media best suits your needs and who is going to be responsible for the content. This is not a short-term project – it requires time commitment and continuity.
- Ensure a robust system is in place to monitor and maintain pages.
- Ensure that the content follows the principles in terms of reputation as set out in this document.

New College social media accounts must not be set up without prior consultation with the Communications Department. It is important to make it clear when using College social media accounts that you are representing the College.

Don't forget - maintaining an effective social media presence is hard work and can be time consuming. Successful Facebook and Twitter pages need to be updated several times a day with a regular stream of fresh and original content. Stale or stagnating pages reflect badly on an organisation.

Why does the College use social media?
The College uses social media as a communications tool. Through our various accounts and blogs we aim to engage with the membership, medical students, journalists, patients and carers, and anyone with an interest in mental health or our work.

We can use social media to have a dialogue with people, to share our views, promote our work and drive traffic to our website. But it is important that our use of social media is both co-ordinated and effective.

Reputation
The College is responsible for all content posted through its social media channels. Although sites such as Twitter feel very 'immediate' and 'of the moment', remember that whatever is written or published will stay online for a very long time. It is therefore important that the College's use of social media is always:

- **Professional** – a high standard of conduct should be observed online, as in the workplace.
- **Respectful** - do not make any comments via the web that you would not make in a personal or professional capacity.
- **Accurate** – if anything inaccurate is posted, make sure this is corrected immediately. If needed, an apology should be given.
- **Confidential** – remember that what you say can be seen by anyone.

Creating new social media accounts
Any social media account in the College's name or related to the College's work must have permission from the College's Social Media Group. Requests to establish a new account should be made to Deborah Hart, Director of Communications and Policy: dhart@rcpsych.ac.uk

Whenever the College is considering starting a new social media initiative or campaign, it must be clear what the aims and objectives are. Some questions that need answering are:

- What are the aims and objectives of the new initiative?
- Who is your audience going to be?
- What will your audience be interested in?
- What information are you going to tell them – and why?
- What will be the benefits to the College?

The individual or group proposing the new account must demonstrate that a new and separate social media presence is needed i.e. that the aims and objectives cannot be achieved through existing presences. They must also demonstrate that the right resources are in place to maintain the new presence.

It may be preferable to consider setting up an 'individual account', for instance as Chair of a particular Faculty, Section or Division.

All accounts must have a 'named owner' who takes day-to-day responsibility for maintaining and updating the presence. This can either be a member of College staff or a College member. If the named owner is a College member, a member of College staff must also be involved and they should liaise closely with the Social Media Group.

A central record of all the College's social media accounts will be kept by the College's Social Media Group. This is to ensure there is no risk of a person leaving the College, or standing down from a College position, and leaving the College with no access rights.

The information that will be held centrally should include:

- Contact details for the account's named owner (phone number and email address)
- The account username
- The account password

The named owner will be responsible for informing the Social Media Group if any of this information changes.

Tone
All social media content originating from the College should come across as professional.

Social media environments tend to be informal, so adopting a natural and friendly tone is appropriate. However "txt-speak" must not be used, and incorrect spelling or grammar is not acceptable.

Level of engagement
Social media accounts must be updated regularly and consistently. Specific guidance on the level of engagement for different types of social media can be found further on in this document.

Accounts should be monitored regularly to ensure that comments/queries addressed to the College are responded to and that any inappropriate posts or interactions are dealt with.

Closing dormant accounts and blogs
Accounts that are no longer needed or are not being updated regularly should be closed. If an account has not been used for 6 months or used incorrectly, the account will be closed. A message should be posted announcing to users/followers that the account will

be closed. If appropriate, the message should direct users/followers to other relevant College social media accounts or the College website.

Legal considerations
Social media are still a relatively new phenomenon, and in legal terms, it is a developing area. While the medium may be different, many of the legal considerations associated with print and broadcast need to be borne in mind (such as libel or defamation). There have recently been a number of high profile cases surrounding social media. English law has tended to use established areas of the law as a starting point in cases to date. However, the Defamation Act 2013 became law in April 2013 and within this Act there are special provisions for the online world. This may have implications for the College's Facebook page.

Staff involved in College social media activities
The guidance above is relevant to members of staff involved in social media activities within the 'College'. See also the 'Staff Social Media Policy' which has been produced by the College's Human Resources Department.

Review of Social Media

Twitter: a micro-blogging services that enables users to send and read posts of up to 140 characters, 'tweets', which can include links to websites, videos and documents.
Twitter is undoubtedly a growing popular communications tool for providing relatively instant updates, thought and information. There are over 200 million active users and Twitter handles more than 1.6 billion searches per day. It is a useful way of holding conversations with relevant individuals, such as actual and potential clients. To get the most from Twitter, you need additional software. Twitter is also a short-lived activity and you need to monitor the system regularly throughout the day. Although Twitter is free and easy to use, it does have a hidden cost in terms of the management time it requires.

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Easy to use: accounts are quick to set up and Tweets can be easily sent from mobile devices.	Difficult to manage without specialist software.
Massive audience potential: it is possible to have a dialogue with people/organisations you may not normally be in touch with.	Unfocussed audience: anyone can follow you.
Able to react quickly to events: can communicate directly and immediately with your followers.	Need to constantly monitor: it is not easy to know how many people are reading or paying attention to your Tweets.
Can send private messages to people: conversations are possible and easy.	People have to follow you to get private messages.
Can use as a promotional tool.	People tend to ignore overly promotional items.
Limited to 140 characters: can automate the sending of messages.	Too much automation removes personalisation: more complicated or nuanced messages can be lost.
Highly open – anyone can see your updates and share your communications with their followers by ReTweeting.	Need to constantly monitor and be online: Tweets are 'of the moment' and are soon lost in people's Twitter streams and it is not easy to know how many people are reading or paying attention to your Tweets.
Can have several accounts for specific purposes.	Extra time needed to manage these different personas. People may be more critical on Twitter and it is important to respond to comments.

Facebook: a networking site where users register and create a personal profile. You can then add other users as 'friends' and exchange messages, including notifications when they update their profile. Users can also join or create common interest groups.
Many of us will have our own personal Facebook pages which allow us to keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues. Facebook is massive with over 1 billion users and around 50% of the adult population in the UK use Facebook. However, it also has value in helping boost and promote brands and organisations, in particular those which are consumer facing. In order to gain the most from Facebook, a considerable degree of management is needed to target the right people and engage with them.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Massive audience – you can reach large numbers of clients.	Unfocussed audience.
Accepted method of communications.	Few controls on communicating.
Easy to create content such as multiple videos and photos and you are not limited to 140 characters, so posts are more detailed.	You can waste time chatting to unknowns.
More permanent – posts remain on your wall for a long time after they are uploaded.	Difficult to attract new fans – people have to actively 'like' you.
Low costs to set up and use.	High costs required to manage your account.
Simple to set up marketing campaigns.	Users don't like marketing campaigns.
Can target specific demographics.	Can be low numbers of the required demographics.

LinkedIn: offers features aimed at establishing professional networks.
LinkedIn is an excellent tool for business and professional networking with over 200 million users. It is a highly valuable tool in finding suitable business suppliers and partners. The array of features means that it is not completely intuitive, and it needs some time to learn the system and how best to use it well. To ensure that you get the most from LinkedIn, you need to regularly update your entries, set up group discussions or participate in these. LinkedIn has hidden costs in terms of time required to operate it successfully.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Excellent business networking tool.	Most users only use it for their professional profile, not networking.
Potential for finding new business or professional leads.	Precise controls on search need 'paid' upgrade.
Ability to create focused groups for discussion.	Few people actively engage, most just watch.
Wide range of connection features.	Many of these features are hidden and not obvious.
Can find and connect with useful people.	Can be overwhelmed with too many requests for connections
Excellent profile and recommendation system.	Need to regularly update your entries

YouTube: a free video-sharing website, a subsidiary of Google, on which users can upload, view and share originally created videos. It provides a forum for people to connect, inform and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original-content creators and advertisers, large and small.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Quick and easy way to share videos.	No restriction on comments – negative comments about your videos/channel can be left by users.
Billions of users worldwide.	Searchability depends on how well you have tagged each video – poor tagging can mean people are unable to find your content.
Uploaded videos will stay on YouTube indefinitely, unless they are deleted or removed by YouTube.	Developing new video content can be very time-consuming.

Blogs: regularly updated websites, maintained by an individual or organisation, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, and other materials such as graphics or video.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Personal voice – opportunity to express personal opinions on key issues.	Time-consuming – can take a while to write blog entries and upload.
Effective way of updating people on projects that you are working on or involved in.	Difficult to monitor impact –not easy to know how many people are reading blogs.
Potential for interaction – if a comments box is provided and responses from readers are encouraged.	

Other social media include:
Google+: a social networking site owned and operated by Google. It is the second largest social networking site in the world and according to Wikipaedia has 500 million registered users. Google+ components include Circles**,** Huddle**,** Hangouts**,** and Sparks**.**

Wikipedia: an online encyclopedia which is a collaborative effort by volunteers from all around the world. It has three core content policies that dictate how and what kinds of information should be presented in the articles:

- Neutral Point of View - The content should be presented in a manner which present all views fairly and without bias.
- No Original Research – Wikipedia articles must not contain original research. All content must be verifiable.
- Verifiability – The content should come from a reliable source which can be verified by readers. All citations should lead back to reliable published research.

Wikipedia, by its own admission, is not a reliable source, it is instead a tertiary source like other encyclopedias. It usually uses reliable secondary sources, which vet data from primary sources. It would be recommended not to cite Wikipedia articles.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Anyone can edit.	Anyone can edit so this may be too open for some applications, for example confidential documentation. However it is possible to regulate user access.
Easy to use and learn.	Open to SPAM and vandalism if not managed properly.
It is instantaneous so there is no need to wait for a publisher to create a new edition or update information.	Requires Internet connectivity to be able to edit or view a page.
It keeps track of every edit made and it's a simple process to revert back to a previous version of an article.	The flexibility of Wikipedia's structure can mean that information becomes disorganised. As Wikipedia grows, the community can plan and administer the structure collaboratively.
It widens access to the power of web publishing to non-technical users.	
Wikipedia has no predetermined structure - consequently it is a flexible tool which can be used for a wide range of applications	

Appendix 1

College social media accounts

The College's Twitter accounts
The College has a central Twitter account, which is run by the Communications Department: **@rcpsych**

Contact Liz Leicester eleicester@rcpsych.ac.uk or Will Pickering wpickering@rcpsych.ac.uk for further information

Purpose
The College's Twitter presences aim to:

- Provide followers with up-to-date news and information from the relevant part of the College.
- Publicise the work of the College, its Officers and members.
- Communicate with people who may not receive information via the College website, College newsletters, or other College publications.
- Publicise mental health reports and stories generated by other organisations and media outlets.
- Share interesting items about mental health.

Principles of use

Frequency

- The central College Twitter feed @rcpsych must be updated at least once a day.
- Devolved College Twitter feeds must be updated at least once a week, and preferably more frequently.

Voice

- Our Twitter feeds may be viewed as an official 'voice' of the College, and should therefore come across as professional and expert.
- If a tweet is being posted in response to a tweet from another user, try to reflect the tone of their tweet.

Content

- Tweets are public so should only include information the College is happy to communicate publicly. They should not make any reference to information that is confidential, or which could be considered inappropriate or defamatory.
- Tweets cannot exceed 140 characters in length. Use http://bit.ly to shorten urls.
- Tweets which are an obvious attempt to 'sell' products should be avoided, as this may be a turn-off to followers. Twitter should be used as an additional communications tool for the College, and not simply as a marketing tool.

Interacting with other users

- ReTweet (RT) Tweets from other users if they are relevant to mental health and are likely to be of interest to the College's followers. In general on Twitter, a RT does not imply endorsement – but try to avoid highly political or controversial issues, or issues which may conflict with the College's view or position.
- Feeds should be checked regularly (preferably once a day) for Tweets from other users that require or deserve a response.

- Other users may ask the College questions via Twitter. If an answer can be easily given, this should be done promptly. More complex issues should be referred on through official channels. If the College cannot answer, don't be afraid to say this.
- The College is not able to provide advice to individuals about mental health issues. If someone asks a direct question, decide if it is appropriate to respond. Replying with a link to a relevant College information leaflet may be appropriate.
- Sometimes the College will be asked to RT content from other Twitter users. There is no single rule for this - each request should be considered individually.
- Some users may use Twitter to be critical of the College or psychiatry, or to send deliberately vexatious or antagonistic tweets. Do not respond or engage in discussion/argument.

Monitoring
All College Twitter accounts should be regularly monitored. Impact can be evaluated in a number of ways including:

- Number of followers.
- Click through rate for links – bit.ly provides data on each link generated through it, including number of clicks and location detail.
- Number of RTs for each Tweet.

The College Facebook Page

Contact Deborah Hart dhart@rcpsych.ac.uk for further information

Purpose
The College Facebook pages aims to:
- Be the College's publically facing Facebook presence
- Engage members and the public in the role and work of the College
- Share information, news, updates, products and resources in an informal way
- Communicate with people who may not receive information via the College website, College newsletters, or other College publications
- Have a dialogue between the College centrally, members and the general public
- To share images and videos relating to the College's work, as appropriate.

Principles of use

Frequency
- The main College Facebook page should be updated at least three times a week, and preferably daily.
- Pages should be monitored daily for inappropriate comments, photos or links left by other users. These should be removed as swiftly as possible.

Voice
- Posts on College Facebook pages may be viewed as an official 'voice' of the College, and should therefore come across as professional and expert.
- The content will be written uniquely for the Facebook page and will not be linked to the College's Twitter feed.

Content
- All content should be original, and not cross-posted from other College social media accounts. For example, it may be tempting to link a Facebook account to a Twitter feed to pull in content automatically. However, Facebook and Twitter are different networks with different features and communities. Often, people who like using Facebook don't like using Twitter, and vice versa.

Interacting with other users

- College Facebook pages should be monitored regularly for comments and replies.
- Comments that require or deserve a response should be dealt with swiftly.

Monitoring

All College Facebook accounts should be regularly monitored. Impact can be evaluated in a number of ways including:

- Number of 'likes'.
- Number of comments in response to a post.
- How many people are 'talking' about the page.

LinkedIn

A LinkedIn page has been set up which advertises College events and publications. However, it is not clear who is managing or monitoring this page and its purposes. We would suggest that CALC and/or the Publications Department should consider leading on this page as LinkedIn is most appropriate social media to publicise events, new publications, or items of professional interest.
http://www.linkedin.com/company/the-royal-college-of-psychiatrists?trk=hb_tab_compy_id_508152

Purpose
LinkedIn is the professional/business sicoal media communications tool. It was agreed that members from Faculties, Divisions etc might set-up accounts to discuss specific issues.

Principles of use
Monitoring
The member setting up the LinkedIn account will monitor and ensure the account is in active use and used appropriately

YouTube

The College YouTube channel
The College has an official YouTube channel: http://www.youtube.com/rcofpsychiatrists

The channel was created in December 2010 and is managed by the Communications Department.

Purpose
The RCofPsychiatrists YouTube channel aims to share well-made and interesting videos about psychiatry and mental health. It is an opportunity to show psychiatry in a positive light, and promote it as an attractive career.

These videos do not need to have been made by the College. Members are welcome to submit videos they have made for consideration.

Principles of use
Decisions about whether a video is suitable to upload to the channel are made by the Communications department. It is important to keep the channel fresh by uploading new content. However, YouTube does not require updating on a daily basis like other social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Monitoring
YouTube provides statistics on the numbers of channel views, upload views and channel subscribers.

People can leave comments on the channel. These should be regularly checked and any inappropriate comments removed.

Blogs

College blogs
The College has a large number blogs, including the President's blog, 21 Prescot Street blog, film blogs, and overseas blogs. All blogs are overseen by the College's Blog Editor, Dr Peter Hughes.

Purpose
The College blogs aim to reflect interesting aspects of psychiatry and psychiatric practice. Many are aimed primarily at psychiatrists and mental health professionals, but it is hoped they will also be read by people with a general interest in mental health.

The blogs reflect the author's personal views and experiences, and do not necessarily reflect the official view or position of the College.

Principles of use
Blogs should be updated at regular intervals. All blogs are designed to be interactive, and readers are encouraged to share their views and comments via a feedback form at the bottom of each webpage.

The Website Manager has day-to-day editorial control of all blog content.

Monitoring
Blog responses are read by the Website Manager before they are published online. Inappropriate or offensive comments will not be published.

Google Analytics will be used to monitor the number of hits and visits to blog pages.

RCPsych Wikipedia page

There is a Wikipedia page for the Royal College of Psychiatrists: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RCPsych. The page was created in June 2006.

There is also a page for the MRCPsych qualification: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MRCPsych. This page was created in January 2009.

Purpose
By its nature, the Wikipedia page provides a neutral and easy to understand overview of what the College does.

Principles of use
It is not advisable for the College to edit any pages directly related to the College, other than to correct any mistakes or remove vandalism. This is in adherence to Wikipedia's content policies.

Monitoring
This will be carried out by the College's Information Service.

Appendix 2

RCPsych Social Media Accounts
(As of August 2013)

Twitter Accounts

@rcpsych
Run by: Liz Fox, Media & Communications Manager efox@rcpsych.ac.uk
Will Pickering, Public Affairs Manager wpickering@rcpsych.ac.uk

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Main RCPsych FaceBook page
Run by: Deborah Hart, Director of Communications & Policy
dhart@rcpsych.ac.uk

References

Alexa, the web information company www.alexa.com/topsites

CIPR Social media: CIPR Social Media (#ciprsm) Best Practice Guide: May 2011 Edition

General Medical Council: Doctors' use of social media

Graham Jones: Social Media: Pros and Cons: http://www.grahamjones.co.uk

Twitter http://twitter.com

Royal College of General Practitioners: Social Media Highway

RCPSYCH Social Media Group
August 2013