Social media is a great way to communicate BGS science, activities, achievements and services. This guidance is for BGS staff using social media as a way to communicate BGS science and technology. This guidance is based on the Social Media Guidance for Civil Servants (Cabinet Office, 2012) the NERC Electronic Communications Policy (NERC, 2013d) and the NERC Code of Conduct.

Seven top tips:

- Learn by example. Look at people already using social media to see best practices.
- Enjoy it. Get your team involved. Think of interesting and fun things to share. Engaging with the online community can be rewarding and impact positively on society and your work.
- Participate frequently. For microblogs (e.g. Twitter) that’s daily or weekly, for blogs (e.g. Blogger) that’s weekly or monthly — minimum.
- Post photos, comments and links to websites and articles. Ask questions, respond to other users, share content and don’t be afraid of adding an appropriate level of humour.
- Do not engage with ANY users who are aggressive or abusive. Accounts that try to initiate negative responses from you are referred to as ‘Trolls’, ignore them.
- If you use your personal account to talk about work be aware the online audience includes journalists and your peers. If in doubt about the appropriateness of previous content have a clean-up or start a new account.
- New branded BGS social media channels will be set up and operated with the authorisation of the appropriate Director of Science or Technology and in consultation with BGS Corporate Communications & Publications. These are purely for communication of BGS science and information. They are, and will remain, the property of the BGS.

Seven rules to remember:

- BGS staff using social media must act with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality.
- Avoid commenting on government policies & practices, controversial issues, personal attacks and politics. Postings considered inappropriate may result in disciplinary action.
- BGS’s computing facilities must not be used to distribute material which might reasonably cause offence or be considered socially unacceptable or embarrassing to yourself or others.
- Unless authorised to do so, staff must not give the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the BGS in personal websites or blogs. Phrases such as ‘BGS employee but views my own’ should be used (although this is not recognised as legal defence).
- Posting information which is privileged or has been supplied in confidence is not acceptable. Permission should be obtained before posting photos or video taken by other people.
- Staff are permitted to use their own personal social media channels to communicate their work for the BGS. A personalised mix of work and non-work related postings is acceptable as long as these conform to these guidelines. The careful addition of sensible personal postings will help to make your social media engagement more interesting and effective.
Check the accuracy and sensitivity of your comments, use your common sense, if unsure either seek advice or don’t post.

Reference


Category:

- OR/14/019 Broadcasting the science stories of BGS