

5 tips for WHO staff having their own social media accounts

If you are a WHO staff member at headquarters and use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs, you may find the following tips useful. HQ social media policies (one for the Organization, one for staff) and good practice documents here: <http://intranet.who.int/homes/new/>. The benefits of telling the WHO story on social media outweigh risks. Yet, a few tactics may be useful to protect yourself and the Organization.

1. When setting up your personal accounts, use non-official design and names.

Choose a Twitter handle and Facebook address that could not be mistaken as WHO and that honors your status as an international civil servant. For the design (profile, banner, background) of your social media accounts, don't use the WHO logo or photos where you stand in front of the WHO logo or building. And do not include WHO in your Twitter handle or address. All these things might give the social media account or blog an official appearance.

2. Views and opinions on social media are yours. Use a disclaimer.

Whatever your position in WHO, views and opinions on social media are yours. Only the corporate accounts ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#), [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Storify](#) and [foursquare](#)), the WHO spokesperson (@haertlg) and the Director-General can represent the Organization on social media (you representing WHO on social media is the same as you issuing a press release on behalf of the Organization). You can indicate your job title, but use a disclaimer. For example, on Twitter, use a disclaimer such as "Tweets here are not official WHO statements. For these, follow @who." On blogs about your work, add a disclaimer to each page.

3. You're an international civil servant. Be a good ambassador.

For you as a WHO staff and international civil servant, the *WHO Staff Regulations and Rules* apply at all times. You are expected to live up to the highest standards of conduct such as respecting diversity, being impartial and demonstrating technical excellence. For example, when you talk about WHO and your work, feel free to speak on subjects within your area of responsibility and expertise. Speak as if you are going to be quoted as a WHO spokesperson (even though you are not). Always represent the Organization positively.

4. Use your best judgment.

Whether you talk about WHO, your work or about personal matters, assume that personal is never private on social media. For nobody. Social media are media. For you as a WHO staff in particular, even if you're not an official WHO spokesperson, the public may perceive you as such, and journalists may quote what you say on social media. Would you be comfortable seeing your tweet quoted on CNN, being asked about by your mother or having to justify to your boss? Never divulge confidential or embargoed information, or information known to you by reason of your official function which has not been made public, except in the course of your duties or by authorization of the Director-General. Respect the privacy and integrity of colleagues and people outside the Organization.

5. How to draft tweets?

Use existing hashtags if you want to see a tweet spread as far as possible, but better check in what context a hashtag has been used already. If possible, don't use all 140 characters in a tweet, better use 120 max. Otherwise, if someone replies, there may not be enough space. Whenever possible, include a short link pointing to a WHO web product. This helps avoid misunderstandings and adds legitimacy to your posts. Most URL shortening platforms (for example [goo.gl](#)) allow you to monitor the number of clicks achieved. 50 more tips for better tweets: <http://burson-marsteller.eu/2013/03/50-tips-for-better-tweets/>