

WHO Policy for the individual staff use of social media at WHO headquarters

Preamble

If you are a WHO staff member at headquarters and use social media such as Facebook, Flickr, Google+, Twitter and/or YouTube, or if you maintain your own blog or post comments on other people's blogs, this policy is for you. It is designed to protect you and the Organization, by setting parameters for your use of and conduct on social media.

At all times, even when you use social media for purely personal purposes

Purely personal purposes means that on social media you don't express opinions about WHO or discuss WHO's work or your work at WHO.

1. You cannot represent the Organization

On social media, you cannot represent the Organization, a cluster, department or unit as an individual staff member, whatever your position (except for the Director-General and official WHO spokespersons). WHO headquarters maintains a single, corporate account on select social media platforms; these accounts are managed by the Department of Communications. If you would like to raise awareness of your cluster, department or unit on social media, please contact the Department of Communications below to benefit from WHO's strong presence on social media.

2. Don't give your visual presence on social media an official appearance

For the design (profile, banner, background) of your social media accounts, don't use the WHO emblem (the UN symbol surmounted by the Aesculapian staff and serpent), the logotype (combination of the emblem and the name of the Organization) or photos where you stand in front of the WHO emblem or logotype. All these things might give the web site, social media account or blog an official appearance. Finally, choose a Twitter handle (e.g. the WHO Twitter handle is @WHO) that could not be mistaken as a WHO-organizational handle. You may retweet WHO tweets or share WHO posts (video, audio, text, image) and WHO blog comments "as is".

3. You are an international civil servant

Exercise a sense of responsibility. As a WHO staff member, you are at all times an international civil servant, and the *WHO Staff Regulations and Rules* ([LINK](#)) apply at all times, whether you are working or not. Your conduct and opinions often reflect on the Organization. Even if you are not an official WHO spokesperson, the public may perceive you as such, and journalists may quote what you say on social media. The Department of Communications offers formal social media training to help strengthen your social media knowledge, skills and judgement and your familiarity with relevant WHO policies.

4. Reflect WHO's core values and ethical principles

The highest standards of conduct, competence and performance are expected of all WHO staff members in order to reflect the Organization's values of integrity, independence, impartiality and technical excellence. Project loyalty to the Organization's goals, mission, priorities and policies; integrity and honesty in actions and decisions that may affect WHO; impartiality and independence from external sources and authorities; discretion; respect for the dignity, worth and equality of all persons; respect for diversity; accountability; technical excellence. For instance, staff members must refrain from participating in any activity that is in conflict with the interests of WHO or might damage WHO's reputation. Social media may not be used to voice

WHO Policy for the individual staff use of social media at WHO headquarters

personal grievances or to criticize WHO, either directly or through third parties. Any such grievances or criticism of WHO should be addressed through the normal internal channels.

5. Responsibly use corporate time and ICT resources

You can use social media and the WHO Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, including Internet access, provided that these activities don't interfere with your job duties and don't conflict with the *WHO Acceptable use of information and communication systems policy* (LINK).

When discussing work-related issues on social media

In work-related tweets, you can talk about WHO, WHO's work and your work at WHO within limits. For instance: "WHO releases new TB report LINK" and "I am now going to participate in a WHO lunchtime seminar on child obesity" would be appropriate. "Am dealing with another disease outbreak, am overwhelmed" would reflect badly on WHO staff and would not be appropriate. "WHO delighted that world report on TB is now available in sign language" would look like an official WHO statement and would not be appropriate. "Please, support the proposed WHO resolution on voluntary targets for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases" would not project impartiality and would not be appropriate.

6. Formal WHO training prerequisite

If you want to discuss work-related issues on social media, you need to participate in formal social media training offered by the Department of Communications and successfully pass an exam that tests your social media knowledge, skills and judgment and your familiarity with relevant WHO policies. Directors, Coordinators and all WHO staff with supervisory responsibilities also need to participate in this formal training.

7. Views, opinions are yours

On Twitter, use a disclaimer that flags the content as your own and not as content representing the Organization's policies or official statements (i.e. Tweets here are not official WHO statements. For these, follow @who). Similar disclaimers apply to other social media platforms. If you have a blog and talk about work-related issues, add a disclaimer to each page. Be aware, however, that these disclaimers don't free you from the obligations you have as a WHO staff member and international civil servant (see para 3.).

8. Seek approval from your supervisor

Before you post, blog, tweet or comment work-related issues, seek approval of the content from your supervisor. It is important to monitor how the public receives your messages and to report any distortions or risks to WHO's reputation to your supervisor and the Department of Communications. You will find an explanation of some good practices that have been used successfully in the social Web in WHO's *Social Media Etiquette* (LINK), including how to foster effective engagement with social media audiences and to avoid criticism.

9. Respect copyrighted/confidential/embargoed information

Refer to Part VIII – *Information Products of the WHO e-Manual* (LINK) before posting any WHO information products and ensure that the Manual requirements are followed. Do not divulge confidential 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. (These obligations do not cease with separation from service). Do not divulge

WHO Policy for the individual staff use of social media at WHO headquarters

embargoed information; the break of an embargo would mean it would be prematurely lifted with potentially damaging consequences for WHO and/or partner organizations. Also, do not use the names of colleagues without their prior knowledge and agreement. The information that you publish can lead to further information disclosure, profiling of targets for scams and exploitation by hackers.

10. Demonstrate technical excellence

Provided you have sought approval from your supervisor and the Department of Communications (see para 7), feel free to speak on subjects within your area of responsibility and expertise, relying on your knowledge and expertise, without exceeding it. Ensure that your content is accurate and up-to-date.

Oversight

The Social Media Team in the WHO Department of Communications is monitoring traditional and social media on a daily basis for potentially negative implications for WHO. This also includes WHO staff members' work-related use of social media to help ensure that the Organization has effective risk management. The Coordinators of the Flagship Communications Team (YouTube) and the Media Team (all other social media platforms) will inform staff members if it is considered that their use of and conduct on social media is violating the present policy.

Compliance

The Organization may start disciplinary action if staff members violate this policy. The Director-General may impose disciplinary measures on staff members who are found to have committed misconduct under the *WHO Staff Rules and Regulations*.

Formal training and questions

It is difficult to predict or cover here all the challenges that you may face when engaging yourself on social media. When in doubt about the implications of an action or decision, you should seek advice from the Department of Communications before you act.

The Department of Communications offers briefings and formal training to help you strengthen your social media knowledge, skills and judgment and increase your familiarity with relevant WHO policies. You may also request a special briefing for a specific group in the house, e.g. units or departments, to see how you can help build a successful WHO brand from the inside out.

Department of Communications:

- Chris Black, Flagship Communications Team (YouTube), blackc@who.int
- Monika Gehner, Media Team (all other social media platforms), gehnerm@who.int
- Sari Setiogi, Media Team (all other social media platforms), setiogis@who.int