

Mailman School of Public Health

Social Media Guidelines

All social media accounts at Columbia's Mailman School must be reviewed and approved by the Social Media team in the Office of Communications. Please contact Meril Cullinan to set up an account and have an existing account added to the Mailman School's [social media page](#)/followed by the School. Each account manager must also be familiar with the [Columbia Journalism School Social Media Guidelines](#) and the [Mailman School editorial style guide](#).

Should you start a social media account? Answer the following questions first:

- To be effective on social media, regular, sustained posting is necessary. Can you dedicate the time to sharing regularly and engaging with other social media users? Will you have regular, interesting content to share?
- Consider your audience: Who are you trying to reach? Are they on social media? If so, which networks? A general principle of digital communications is to “go where people are” so, if your audience is mainly using LinkedIn groups for discussions, engage with them in that space – don't try to move the conversation to Twitter or Facebook.
- Building a healthy social media audience through a brand new account takes time. How long do you plan to regularly maintain your account? If it's less than six months, consider using alternate, existing channels to promote content – the Mailman School account or various Department accounts, for example.
- The Mailman Communications team can help you decide what's right for you: if you have questions or would like help determining if a new social media account fits your needs, contact Meril Cullinan for a consultation.

Content

- All content should be factual, relevant, and timely.
- The tone should be conversational and easy to understand, even for someone who does not work in the field of public health.
- Do not use jargon to explain complex topics/terms.
- Share links to research papers, press releases, and mentions in the news.
- Vary the types of content you post. Popular forms are quotes, photos, videos, internal news, events, and external items of interest liked media clips.
- Curate and share relevant content from affiliates/peers whose work relates to your group, but feel free to add the Mailman editorial voice and tone.
- School accounts should never provide medical advice or express personal opinions.
- Take your time. Twitter posts cannot be edited once published. Be sure to review your language carefully, and always check copy in Word if you do not have someone to proofread your posts.
- Always include your source via tagging (in Facebook) or adding their handle (in Twitter).
- Consider creating a content strategy on your particular group's voice/tone, publishing schedule, type of content, and include regular updates on the status of projects and research for potential funders.

Naming your account

- Use this format: Group's name/acronym + “at Columbia Public Health” in the full name and long description. In the short description, tag the School's social media account. For example:

Facebook: [@Sociomedical Sciences at Columbia Public Health](#).

Twitter: include the Mailman School's handle in your Twitter summary:

PFMH at Columbia

[@PFMH_Columbia](#)

[@ColumbiaMSPH](#)'s Program on Forced Migration and Health (PFMH) trains the next generation of refugee health and humanitarian response workers. Join us.

Visual styles

Refer to the Mailman School's visual identity style guide when using photography or creating other visual assets.

- For icons and avatars, use the CUMC crown, centered as depicted below. For the file and feedback on other graphic elements, contact Diana Gazzia at dg2857@columbia.edu.
- When posting photos, remember to only publish photos for which you have the appropriate permission, credit the photographer accordingly, and do not tag users without prior approval.



Frequency

- Update your feed frequently, but do not post/tweet for the sake of it. Aim for one to three posts per week on Facebook and Google+, and multiple posts per day on Twitter.
- Play with posting times. Many people tend to be active online around 11AM, 3PM, and 8PM. Sunday evening also tends to be a good time for posting.

Links

- Use a tool to shorten URLs. We suggest [bit.ly](#) or [Hootsuite's owl.ly](#).
- Attach links to posts whenever possible

Additional tips for Twitter

- Write tweets that leave 20 extra characters so that others can retweet your posts without maxing out the character limit.
- Use Twitter's "Quote" function (an option when you click "retweet") to share and comment on another tweet.
- Make your tweets "blue:" every tweet should have a link, @ mention, or hashtag. It stands out on Twitter and makes the most of the platform. (For every tweet you include an @ mention, you know at least one person will read it.)
- If you start a tweet with @username, place a period before the @ so it can be read as a message to that user.
- Schedule several tweets in one sitting using [Hootsuite](#)/[Tweetdeck](#)/[CoTweet](#)/etc. This is a great way to manage your social media schedule.

- Be conversational and check your mentions tab. When you reply to someone and they @ reply to you, your Twitter ID appears in their feed—potentially broadcasting it to hundreds of followers
- Un-follow/follow often
- Common terms:
 - RT = Retweet
 - MT = Modified Tweet
 - REPOST = RTing yourself
 - ICYMI = In case you missed it
 - FF = Follow Friday
 - HT = Hat tip (saying thanks)
- Use no more than three hashtags per post. They are a great way to build a community and stimulate conversation, especially an official hashtags created for a specific events.

Suggested Mailman hashtags:

Grand Rounds on the Future of Public Health (#FuturePublicHealth)	#HealthyCities
Mailman Faculty related: #msphProf	#FoodPolicy, #obesity
#Aging	#Genetics, #Genomics
#BigData, #HealthIT, #mHealth, #HITsm, #healthtech	#GlobalHealth
#Cancer, #Diabetes, #PTSD, #HIV, #AIDS, #flu, #virus, #MECFS	#HealthComms, #HealthSystems, #Healthcare
#ChronicDisease, #NCD	#ACA, #obamacare
#Environment, #ClimateHealth, #climatechange	#brain
#Disaster, #Emergency	#PopHealth
#Education	#vaccines, #vaccineswork, #immunization
#Ebola, #malaria, #polio	#SexEd
#publichealth	#vaping, #marijuana
	#nutrition, #malnutrition

Additional tips for Facebook/Google+

- Keep posts and descriptions short. Try for 50 words or less.
- Use the link tool when posting rather than pasting the URL in your post. For example, using bitly.com, this: <http://www.mailman.columbia.edu/news/professor-rob-ert-fullilove%25E2%2580%2599s-work-behind-bars-helps-provide-college-opportunity-new-york-state-> was abbreviated to this: <http://bit.ly/1qeWReN>.
- When appropriate, revise automated title and description for your links to clean up content and reduce redundant information. For example, after pasting in the URL a recent news item, the title appeared like this: “Benefits of PTSD Treatment Going Unmeasured, Says Institute of Medicine Report 06/20/2014 | News...” it can be changed by simply clicking on the link title to this: “Benefits of PTSD Treatment Going Unmeasured, Says IOM“
- When promoting your event, add it first as a Facebook event using the tool. Then share it in your feed and upload photos, updates, in a central location.
- Share posts by affiliates and partners to help build a natural synergy among our peers.
- Respond to comments and questions quickly; delete spam as soon as possible.

Social media fundraising tips

- Recognize your supporters via social media by tagging funders in posts about projects they support.
- Thank institutional and individual donors when you receive a substantial gift.
- RT and share supporters' content that is related to your subject area.
- Suggest your followers follow your supporters by using the #FF hashtag. They will appreciate it and may return the favor, broadening your reach to other funders and colleagues.

Metrics & engagement

- Track your following and engagement. Several low-cost tools exist to help with the tracking process. Crowdbooster, Sprout Social, and Hootsuite are some examples. Most, especially Hootsuite, will help simplify your posting process by enabling you to schedule posts. These tools will also save you the time it takes to compile key statistics. For example:
 - Twitter:** New Following, Tweets, RTs, Potential Impressions, Replies, Mentions, Favorites
 - Facebook:** New Page Likes, Posts, Post Likes, Post Shares, Engagement, Impressions, Comments, Paid Reach
 - Google+:** New Following, Views, Actions on Posts
- Devote a couple minutes every morning for a quick checkup. Look at your "mentions" tab in Twitter and your "insights" tab in Facebook. Do not forget to check to see if you have received any direct messages
- Consider viewing your new followers' profiles. You may want to like them back.

Integration with other platforms

- Link to your social media accounts from your webpages (top right spot in your header tends to be the most successful), in your email footer, and on your newsletter
- Add social sharing buttons to editorial content, such as Web-based newsletters and blogs
- Periodically include email list subscription information in posts that link to your original content and/or events
- Direct posts back to your Web site whenever relevant

Helpful links

- Mashable.com—Social Media News and Web [Tips](#)
 - [Mashable Twitter Guide Book](#)
- Lynda.com Essential Twitter training (log on to LYNDAL through Columbia portal: <http://www.lynda.com/portal/columbia>)

For additional questions and resources, or to set up a one-on-one consultation contact Meril Cullinan (mc4164@cumc.columbia.edu.)