WHOI Social Media Guidelines

Social media = blogs, commenting, wiki, social networks, etc.

WHOI employees are doing work that is of great interest to those within the scientific community and those outside of it. We encourage you to communicate about your work through various social media, including blogs, wiki networking sites, and community boards. The guidelines below are aimed to provide helpful, practical advice.

If you participate in social media, please follow these basic principles:

- Stick to your area of expertise and provide unique, individual perspectives on what's going on at WHOI and around the world.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments— do not post spam or remarks that may be off-topic or offensive.
- Always pause and think before posting. When a response is appropriate, you should reply to comments in a timely manner, but always pause and think before posting. Good questions to ask yourself: Is my language unnecessarily inflammatory or impolite? Could my words or phrasing be taken in a way other than how I've intended?
- Respect proprietary information, content, and confidentiality.
- When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- Know and follow the existing WHOI policies.

The Internet is a constantly evolving technology, so it is impossible to assemble every circumstance that an individual might encounter, but the following should provide guidelines for you to follow.

WHOI Rules of Engagement

Abide by Existing Policies

This document supports existing WHOI policies and is not intended to supersede them. It is your responsibility to understand the following Institution policies and abide by them. Some violations of these may require more drastic measures which you should try to avoid.
- Privacy policy (http://www.whoi.edu/page.do?pid=18997&&ct=901&cid=121)
- Harassment (http://www.whoi.edu/page.do?pid=18997&&ct=901&cid=903)
- Respectful Workplace and Violence Prevention (http://www.whoi.edu/page.do?pid=18997&&ct=901&cid=905)
- Misconduct in science (http://www.whoi.edu/page.do?pid=18997&&ct=901&cid=902)
- Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy (http://www.whoi.edu/page.do?pid=18997&&ct=901&cid=422)
- Intellectual Property Handbook (http://www.whoi.edu/fileserver.do?id=134466&pt=2&p=107670)

Personal Responsibility

Blogs, wikis and other forms of online dialogue are typically individual interactions, not Institution communications. WHOI individuals are personally responsible for their posts. Use common sense and think about the consequences of what you write. Remember that the general public needs to be able to distinguish between your personal statements online and official communications and statements from the Institution.

If you make a mistake online, quickly apologize, and correct the mistake. In a blog, if you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If you are the content owner of a blog, it is your responsibility to filter what is written in the comments should the need arise.

Intellectual Property – don't share secrets

Anything you post is accessible to anyone in the world that has access to the Internet. While it is appropriate to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, it is NOT appropriate to publish any technology or knowledge that has been developed by you or any other employee at WHOI. Content requiring a non-disclosure agreement or considered WHOI Proprietary should NOT be published on any social network—even in spaces set up to restrict access to WHOI employees only. If the judgment call is tough, on secrets or other issues discussed here, ask a supervisor or WHOI legal help before you publish.

Publications, Articles, Papers, Posters & Presentations

Remember that published articles fall under the rules of copyright. You may provide a link to your paper on the publisher's site, but in many cases, because of signed publication agreements, a scientist/author of an article does not necessarily have the legal right to post the published version. MBLWHOI Library staff can help you understand what rights you retain in a publication agreement, and where and what version of your work can be posted on personal and third-party websites.

For posters and other presentations, it is important to obtain permission from all co-authors and co-creators prior to posting. One should also consider the format of the files. It is usually a better choice to use a non-editable format for a poster or presentation (PDF or image).

Images, audio and video files may also be copyrighted or fall under the category of intellectual property. Make sure you have checked with your supervisor, Media Relations, or the MBLWHOI Library or before posting any multimedia related to WHOI.

Don't write anonymously

If you comment publicly about any issue in which you are engaged in your capacity as a WHOI employee, even loosely, you must make your status as a WHOI employee clear. You should also be clear about whether you are speaking for yourself (presumably the normal case) or for WHOI. Nothing gains you more notice in the online social media environment than honesty - or dishonesty. If you have a vested interest in what you are discussing, be the first to point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be judicious in disclosing personal details.

Add Value

There are a lot of words written on the Internet. The best way to get yours read is to write about what people value. Social communication from WHOI should help our colleagues, partners, co-workers, and interested public. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, appreciate oceanography, solve problems, or understand WHOI better—then it's adding value. Background information you choose to share about yourself, such as information about your family or personal interests, may be useful in helping establish a relationship between you and your readers, but it is entirely your choice whether to share this information.

Be Respectful

Whether in the actual or a virtual world, your interactions and dialogue should be respectful. This includes avoiding the obvious, such as ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, etc., but also proper consideration of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as politics, political statements on scientific topics, and religion.

Don't forget your day job

Make sure that your online activities don't interfere with your assigned tasks. If in doubt, consult your supervisor.

Quality matters

At the very least, use a spell-checker. You don't have to be a great or even a good writer to succeed at this, but you do have to make an effort to be clear, complete, and concise. At best, add to the general discussion with information supported by facts, preferably published, peer-reviewed data or conclusions (see "Citing sources" below).

Media attention

If your social media content attracts media or any special attention, please refer all inquiries to the Media Relations Office. They will either help you wade through both the negative and positive aspects or handle the inquiries directly.

Citing sources

As with any research paper, citing the sources for your information acknowledges its origin, and lends credibility to your work by showing the evidence of your research. It reveals the authenticity of your information and enables your readers to locate your information sources. To facilitate the reader's ability to find these sources, it is a good idea to link to the sources, as well as any other links related to the information you are providing. Remember: you should only post articles with permission of the publisher. If you have any questions, you can seek guidance from the MBLWHOI Library.

No comment on legal matters

Do not comment on work-related legal matters unless you are a WHOI spokesperson and have WHOI's legal and management approval to do so.

Disclaimers

Whether you publish to a blog or some other form of social media, make it clear that what you say there is representative of your personal views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of WHOI. In your own blog, you should include words similar to the following standard disclaimer:

> *"The postings on this site are my own and do not represent positions, strategies or opinions of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, its partners, or its funders."*

Questions

If you have questions about what is appropriate to post on a social media site, before you post, please discuss with your supervisor, contact Communications, the Web Communications Manager or Media Relations.

Resources

Communications (includes Media Relations, Image Management, Web Communications)
    Fritz Heide, fheide@whoi.edu
    http://www.whoi.edu/sbl/liteSite.do?litesiteid=2177&articleId=17966
    Group Contacts: http://www.whoi.edu/sbl/liteSite.do?litesiteid=2177&articleId=3707

MBLWHOI Library (http://www.mblwhoilibrary.org)
    Lisa Raymond, lraymond@whoi.edu
    http://www.mblwhoilibrary.org/services/publishing-your-work

CIS Help Desk, helpdesk@whoi.edu

Office for Technology Transfer
    David Knaack, techtransfer@whoi.edu
    http://www.whoi.edu/main/technology-transfer