

Otis College of Art and Design
 Public Presence Committee
 Social Media Guidelines
 September 2009

Wikipedia defines **Social Media** as “media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques.” The full entry can be found [here](#). This area of the web has grown exponentially in the last few years and it has become a common way for people to interact with Otis. For example the College has 1402 Facebook Fans and its YouTube channel has 953 subscribers with 43,157 channel views. The following social media sites have an active Otis presence-

Site	Maintained By	Profile Name	Comments
YouTube	Library	Otis College	
Flickr	Admissions	Otis Admissions	
Twitter	Admissions	Otis College	
Facebook	Admissions	Otis College	
Wikipedia	Library	N/A	Otis is listed and updated periodically
Blogs	Various	Various	See Blogs section

One of the key elements of a social media site is the open landscape in which participants interact with one another and with organizations. This provides a less formal level of communication and participation. It also necessitates that an organization be willing to “let go” of message control. In other words, Otis can control what it says on these sites but we should not attempt to control what others say in response to something we post or something they say about us. There is risk associated with this but it also allows for authentic exchanges and shows that we understand the community norms of these sites. In agreeing to these terms we are more likely to benefit from our presence on these sites, and even be seen as a model or leader.

With all that said, we do need to ensure that when there is an Otis sanctioned/official presence on a social media site that it meets certain criteria and is consistent with the Otis brand. This document contains guidelines for that purpose. Any questions about the guidelines or other questions related to Otis and social media sites can be directed to the [Public Presence Committee](#).

Approved Social Media Sites

In addition to the sites listed above the following are sites may be considered for an official Otis presence (partial list)

Site	Focus	Comments
Yelp	Local reviews	Otis is reviewed

Guidelines for all sites

Many of the guidelines for an official Otis presence on a social media site are the same for any use of the College's image(s) and descriptions in any format. As a resource please see the College's [Editorial Guide](#). It may be saved as a pdf after following the link.

Copies of the Otis logo and logotype may be used but must be taken directly from the Otis logos [section](#) of the website. Photos of the College may be originals or may be taken from the Otis Flickr site. Photo credit should be given where appropriate.

The use of profanity, derogatory language and other inappropriate comments may never be used. If an Otis site receives a comment or review that contains such language it will be reviewed and may be removed. This is not meant to be confused with a critical or unflattering remark- such comments should remain.

Questions about academic or administrative policies at Otis should only be answered by those with direct knowledge of the issue. It is fine to express personal opinions on a subject but not fine to guess about requirements/rules/responsibilities and such. Inquires of such nature should be forwarded to the appropriate office.

Facebook- Groups v. Pages (revised 04-02-10)

There can be a lot of confusion about the differences between a page and a group on Facebook. In basic terms a page is like an individual profile except it is for an organization. A group is a collection of individuals.

As Facebook has moved away from Groups, we have amended this section. There may be multiple sanctioned Otis Facebook pages. All pages must use the naming convention- Otis XXX. For example, the main College page is Otis College of Art and Design. The Admissions page is Otis College Admissions.

Facebook provides a wide range of apps for pages. Any apps beyond the basic ones offered should be vetted through the PPC prior to being made active.

~~As such there will be only one Otis page on Facebook. Groups officially linked to the College are not limited. Current sanctioned groups include the Admissions Group and the Alumni Group.~~

Blogs

There is a through section on blogs that can be found at this [section](#) of the Otis website.

Creating an official Otis Presence

Answer the Question- why do I want a site?

- Possible reasons why you should use social media.
 - Departments can use social media as another outlet to reach students and as a way to rapidly dispense valuable information to prospective students in a forum that is most comfortable for them.

- Using social media can help “humanize” a department, giving the public a personal and transparent view of the school.
- Posting your message on a social network can result in a viral effect, thus increasing your chances of the message being seen.

Pick the correct site for you

As noted earlier, Otis has an active presence on several sites. Choosing the correct site is important to ensure that you achieve your intended goals. Consider the following-

- Facebook
 - With more than 300 million users, Facebook is the world’s largest social network. Departments using Facebook can share valuable information through status updates, events, photos, notes and more. For the moment Otis will only have one official “page” but many “groups.” This policy will be revisited periodically to see if additional pages should be added.
- Twitter
 - Twitter is a quick and easy way share information with the public. “Followers” interested in what you have to say will subscribe to your account as a way of getting to know you or to learn about the valuable information you may dispense. You can use Twitter to post links to photos, videos and more.
- YouTube/Flickr/Other Video Sharing Sites (e.g. Vimeo)
 - Otis only uses YouTube and Flickr on a college-wide level.
 - If your department has photography or video they would like to share with the College YouTube and Flickr page, please send your materials to the [Public Presence Committee](#).
 - Note: If you have photos and videos to share, you can also post them to your department’s Facebook group or incorporate them into your Otis web pages.

If none of these seem to fit the bill, let us know and we can work with you to identify other possible solutions.

Creating your site

- Decide who will own your department’s Social Media account
 - The person who works on the social media account for your department should be familiar with Social Networking in general. (You can have more than one person working on your account)
 - Designated person(s) should be available to update and monitor your department’s social media account on a regular basis.
- Fill out this brief [LINK] questionnaire and return to the Public Presence Committee.
 - The form will help us better understand what you hope to gain through your site.

- After the form is filled out the PPC will set up the account for you with the desired functions you request. The PPC will also upload the approved University logos and avatars (if appropriate).
- Suggested: Meet with the Public Presence Committee to discuss your social media account and your ideas in person.

I Jumped the Gun- I already have a site

- That's ok! We're pleased you set up an account to represent Otis. However, we ask that you contact the Public Presence Committee so they are aware of the various Otis related social media accounts out there. The PPC will also make sure you receive the approved College graphics.

Update, Update, Update

- Update often
 - Social media is about building and maintaining relationships. If you have a long-distance friendship with someone, the best way to build that relationship is through frequent communication. Social Media is the same way. You can't expect to have a meaningful connection with your followers if you offer them nothing in return. Facebook administrators should plan on updating at least **four** times a week. Twitter users should update at least **once a day**, Monday through Friday.
 - Updates can come in many forms. Notes, pictures, useful links, facts about your department, status updates etc.
- Respond to comments in a timely manner.
 - If someone walked up to you at your place of business and asked you a question, would you a) answer them right away? Or b) wait 12 hours. The answer *hopefully* is a). Monitor your site to see if people have questions, and try to answer them right away. If you don't know the answer, respond anyway. Be honest by saying you don't know the answer, but you'll find it and get back to them ASAP. Please make sure you help the fan/follower by getting them in contact with the right person.
- Remember, you are the voice of the College when you post to your department's account.
 - Do not post sensitive information about employees, students or Otis College.
 - If you have to ask someone whether it's sensitive information or not, chances are, it probably is.
 - Do not discredit other schools or programs. Follow the cardinal rule by treating everyone as you would like to be treated.
 - Minimize mundane personal details. You are the voice of your department. Therefore "I had McDonald's for lunch" does not make a good post or update.
 - You're not as funny as you think you are. Keep jokes to a minimum unless you're 100% sure you won't offend "followers" or "fans."
- How to deal with vulgar/inappropriate comments.

- It is not the Otis' intent to censor students; however, inappropriate public messages sent to the College through social networking means must be reported. Examples include:
 - Messages that intimidate, harass, threaten, attack or embarrass another student, staff or faculty member.
 - Messages that engage in illegal activity
 - Messages sexually explicit in nature
 - Messages that contain unnecessary vulgar words
 - If a student makes inappropriate remarks that may have breached the Student Code of Conduct [LINK], you should report it to Student Affairs, your own department head and the Public Presence Committee before taking action.
- How to deal with negative comments.
 - If there is a negative comment, do not ignore it. Try to diffuse the situation by turning the comment around and asking, "How can I help you?" Think of a way to change the commenter's perspective in a constructive way.
 - Example: "I heard that no one gets a job after graduating from Fine Arts
 - Possible reply: "Have you tried talking to our Career Services folks? They can talk with you about the possibilities after graduation and offer specific examples of Fine Arts alums who are successful.

How Do I know if this is working?

- With any major endeavor in higher education, it is important to know if your efforts are giving you a return on your investment. It's strongly encouraged that you keep track of how your site is doing.
 - One of the great things about social media sites is that they have great tools for analyzing performance. For instance Facebook has "insights", Twitter has "[twitalyzer](#)", Flickr has analytics, etc.
 - Just as it is important to update your site regularly checking on performance is critical to success. If you are updating, people should be viewing, interacting and commenting. If they are not then you may want to check in with the Public Presence Committee to talk about possible options to improve things.
- Be patient!
 - Sometimes it takes quite a while before a new site takes off. For instance the Otis Facebook page grew very slowly for the first year it was in existence. It took months to go gain the first couple of hundred fans. Now it adds several fans a week and is over 1400 total.
- Sometimes it just doesn't work out

- Social media often works out well. Sometimes though, it doesn't and that is okay. If you have made some changes and you are still not getting the results you want then it might be time to call it a day and move on. Let the Public Presence Committee know if you are planning to discontinue a site. We can work with you to decide if the content should be removed and what you might want to do next.

Remember, social networking is meant to extend your information and activities in new ways. It is not a magic bullet and it is not meant to replace other things you are doing. Let us help you, keep us posted and chances are very good that things will work out!

One final note- in true social networking fashion these guidelines borrow **heavily** from the ones developed by [Davenport University](#). We are thankful for their willingness to share!

Rev. 04-02-10