IDS Social Media Policy

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Social media

1   Introduction

1.1   Social media platforms (social media) are an essential way of increasing awareness, building engagement and developing connections with the Institute, our members, our research publications, and with partners, alumni, funders, media, stakeholders and the broader sector. The Institute uses social media to broadcast information and to start and engage in conversations alongside IDS researchers using social media for direct education and research. The IDS Communications and Engagement Team (CET) hosts and edits IDS content on a series of social media channels including Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Facebook. They also oversee social media content with a connection to IDS that is produced by programmes or projects but is not necessarily hosted by the Institute. Separately, IDS Fellows, staff, students and alumni who are associated and/or currently employed with IDS use social media – in both a personal and professional capacity.

1.2   The many uses of social media mean that while it presents a real opportunity for direct engagement and to increase the reach of research, information shared also has potential to impact negatively on reputation. Therefore, it is important that the Institute provides this policy including guidance to IDS Fellows, staff and students on how best to engage on social media without risk to reputation – both to an individual or to IDS.

1.3   This policy sets out guidance to IDS members for using social media including when creating information to be shared and engaging in conversations either directly on IDS social media platforms or where there is an identifiable connection to IDS. It also offers some guidance on best practice to use social media to increase awareness, expand networks and realise impact from engaging on social media.

1.4   It is important that IDS Fellows, staff and students understand that through association they represent the Institute and that their actions can impact upon the Institute's reputation.

1.5   This policy should be read with reference to the 'Guidance notes on the Secure and Effective use of Electronic Communications policy' document.

1.6   Social mail technologies, platforms and practices are fast-moving. This policy is therefore subject to review to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

1.7   Any queries about the interpretation of this policy should be referred to the Head of Communications and Engagement, who is also responsible for ensuring that the policy is published on the IDS website, intranet and kept up to date.

2   General principles

2.1 The Institute's electronic communications policy has two general principles:

- IDS official social media and other social media with a connection to the Institute must be used sensibly, professionally and lawfully.
- Where social media is used to communicate about a member's work at IDS, or in a way that makes clear an individual works at IDS it is also expected that that individual will behave in a way that does not bring the Institute into disrepute.

2.2   When using social media, whether in an official capacity or in a way that demonstrates an association to the Institute, IDS staff and students should publish information that is in keeping with the Institute's broad values.

3   Definition and scope

3.1   Social media platforms are online media channels that allow information to be created, shared, disseminated and interacted with both publicly and among private networks. Social media is designed to be highly accessible and deploys scalable publishing techniques.

3.2   Social media platforms are continuously and rapidly evolving. Each country and region will have a different platform that is most popular. Examples include:

- Facebook
- Weibo
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Whatsapp
- Signal
- TikTok
- Instant messaging (including SMS)
- Wikis and online collaborations (e.g. Wikipedia)

3.3   This policy is drafted to apply to the use of social media from any device – whether computer, tablet, mobile phone, handheld or wearable device.

3.4   In this policy:

Identifiable Personal Use refers to the use of social media where an individual can be identified as an IDS member. The identification may be through means such as the person's social media name, character, profile or comments.

IDS members includes full-time, part-time and fixed-term employees, Associate Fellows, Emeritus Fellows, Visiting Fellows, trainees, contract staff, temporary staff, agency and home workers. It also applies to all students and alumni of the Institute. For the purposes of this document the term 'members' encompasses all the above groups of individuals.

Content refers to text, video, imagery or audio created to be shared and communicate information on social media.

3.5   This policy has not been designed to apply to the actions of partners or others who hold any associations to IDS via a project or programme. However, the policy maybe referred to should social media guidance be required by an IDS member when working with a partner or within a programme. Should any partner or programme use social media to refer to IDS and its work but in such a way that it presents a risk to either IDS members or the Institute, this must be alerted to the Head of Communications and Engagement immediately.

4 IDS owned social media

4.1 The Institute maintains an active presence on a series of social media platforms. These are managed by the CET and monitored at all times. These are:

- IDS Twitter
- IDS Facebook
- IDS Instagram
- IDS LinkedIn
- IDS YouTube
- IDS Alumni Facebook
- IDS Alumni Twitter

4.2 IDS members are encouraged to engage with IDS owned social media platforms in-keeping with the vision and best interests of the Institute. They can do so by resharing content published by the Institute; commenting on content published or submitting an idea to CET for content that could be published on IDS social media channels.

5 Other social media with a connection to IDS

5.1 In each of the following circumstances, other social media platforms used by IDS members will be deemed to have a connection to IDS and therefore this policy will apply:

- if presence on a social media channel is described as IDS social media, including for education, research and collaboration purposes; and/or
- if the content of the social media channel is specifically about IDS or its staff or students, in whole or in part.

5.2 Consortium websites to which IDS is associated but which are maintained by partners and are not specifically about IDS or its staff, students, research or teaching, are not covered by this policy.

5.3 IDS members must read and observe the following before creating a social media presence that has a connection to IDS:

- Any social media presence that intends to represent the Institute in whole or in significant part, must be approved by CET.
- All social networking sites that represent the Institute in whole or in part shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by IDS and shall have IDS contact information prominently displayed.
- If a non-official IDS site utilises the IDS name under privilege, then the site must clearly state its purpose and relationship to IDS.
- Social media tools provided by IDS or those contracted through third party providers shall also clearly indicate their IDS affiliation, where technically possible.
- Where sites represent the Institute, content owners are responsible for monitoring and maintaining web content in conformity with the IDS Ethical Content and Multimedia Guidelines. These guidelines are available from the IDS website and intranet. For further information, contact the CET.

- The Institute reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this policy.

6 Professional use of social media

6.1 IDS members representing the Institute in a professional capacity in social media must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the Institute, and in accordance with all Human Resources Workplace and Editorial policies. This includes disclosing themselves as IDS members of the Institute within their social media biography.

6.2 The Institute recognises and protects the concept and practice of freedom of opinion and expression as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and the pursuit of scholarship. This right carries with it the duty of IDS members to use the freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for knowledge and truth, grounded in scholarly evidence.

6.3 Where members of the Institute publish comments relating to posts on social media channels, it is expected that the comments will relate directly to the individuals area(s) of expertise. In that case, IDS members may use the Institute's name and give the title of their Institute appointment in order to establish their credentials. This does not restrict the right of an IDS member to freely express opinions in their private capacity as an individual member of society, but statements made in this context should not include the Institute's name, or the title of the person's Institute appointment.

7 Personal use of social media

7.1 The Institute does not seek to intervene in members' use of social media in their personal lives. However, if IDS members identify as being part of IDS within their personal use of social media, they must be aware that their activity could have an impact on the perception of the Institute, directly or indirectly.

7.2 IDS members are personally responsible for how they use social media in a personal capacity, including for the content they publish.

8 Rules for using social media

8.1 In professional use and identifiable personal use of social media, IDS members must:
- Only disclose and discuss publicly available information.
- Ensure that all content published is accurate and not misleading.
- Ensure that all content published complies with all relevant policies of the Institute.
- Expressly state that the stated views are their own and are not those of the Institute (unless they are explicitly authorised by IDS). This means that a personal site or profile must carry this disclaimer and that the IDS-hosted sites/profiles will do so.

- Be professional in nature.
- Adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website.
- Comply with the laws of copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination and harassment, and all other applicable laws.

8.2   In professional use and identifiable personal use of social media, IDS members must not:

- Make any comment or post material that is, or might be construed to be, offensive, obscene, defamatory, discriminatory, hateful, racist or sexist towards any person.
- Make any comment or post material that creates, or might be construed to create, a risk to the health and safety of a staff member, contractor, student or other person, including material that amounts to 'unacceptable behaviour' such as bullying, psychological or emotional violence, coercion, harassment, aggressive or abusive comments or behaviour, and/or unreasonable demands or undue pressure.
- Endorse any campaign or appeal on behalf of the Institute without prior approval or authorisation.
- Make any comment or post material that infringes copyright, is fraudulent, breaches intellectual property rights, constitutes a contempt of court, constitutes stalking, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful.
- Use the identity or likeness of another employee, contractor, student or other stakeholder of the Institute.
- Use or disclose any confidential information obtained in their capacity as an employee or contractor of the Institute.
- Subject to the protection afforded by the UK whistleblowing law as part of the Public Disclosure Act 1998, make any comment or post material that might otherwise cause damage to the Institute's reputation or bring it into disrepute.
- Use profane or offensive language or content.
- Include sexually explicit or pornographic content or links to sexually explicit or pornographic content.
- Include information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Include solicitations of commerce.
- Use the Institute logo unless prior approval from the CET has been obtained.

9   Breach

9.1   Depending on the circumstances, non-compliance with the IDS social media policy may constitute a breach of employment or contractual obligations, misconduct, sexual harassment, discrimination, or some other contravention of policy, procedure or the law. IDS members who fail to comply with this policy may face disciplinary action and, in serious cases, termination of their employment or engagement.

9.2   If an IDS member notices inappropriate or unlawful content online relating to IDS, or content that may otherwise have been published in breach of this procedure, the IDS member should report that content to the CET to respond to.

9.3   If directed by the Institute, an IDS member must remove, and cooperate with all attempts to remove, any comment, post or other online content that the Institute deems to be in breach of this policy or any other Institute policy.

10   Managing and reporting issues in social media

10.1   If a significant issue arises within social media, particularly one affecting or implicating the Institute or its staff or students, the following steps are recommended:

- Identify the nature of the issue, content published, those discussing the issue, the forums used and the extent of the commentary along with any legal ramifications.
- Contact the CET and Strategic Leadership Team if appropriate. This will then prompt an assessment of the published content for accuracy/defamation/legal issues/organisational sensitivities.

10.2   The CET, with Strategic Leadership input, will determine the appropriate response to any issues on social media. It should be noted that if a sensitive or negative issue is being discussed in a public or social media forum, a response from the Institute could inflame an issue by making the 'protestors' believe the Institute is 'worried' about their discussion. It therefore is recommended that IDS members alert the CET and/or Strategic Leadership Team to discuss any response including checking any response against the values, mission and strategy of the Institute.

11.   Using images/video/audio

11.1   Great care must be used when using any images/video/audio on social media, including those obtained by IDS members in the course of their work. This is because once imagery is published on social media, its distribution cannot be controlled and it can be shared very widely and quickly. IDS members are expected to follow the IDS Ethical Content Guidelines and make reasonable attempts to ask for permission (informed consent) before sharing any content where the participant (contributor) maybe identifiable. This includes explaining to the contributor how the content will be used in work-related social media.

11.2   In particular, IDS members should not post content that might:
- Be embarrassing to any individual featured or that could be construed as placing an individual in a negative or false light.
- Cause someone to believe that their name, image, likeness or other identifying aspect of their identity is being used, without permission, for commercial purposes.
- Identify the individual or their specific location without their informed consent.
- Use any image that distorts the reality of the situation being represented.

11.3 Special care must always be taken when dealing with images of vulnerable groups, (e.g. minors, patients or research subjects). Generally speaking, such images should never be used for social media posting or distribution unless prior permission is obtained.

11.4 Most images and videos are subject to copyright and occasionally trademark, design and other intellectual property protection. IDS members should verify that their use of images and/or video is:

- Covered by a relevant exception for teaching or research.
- Falls within explicit licence terms of the image or video.
- Covered by copyright permission (as distinct from privacy clearance) to use the image or video in the way proposed.

11.5 Further advice on the use of images is contained in the IDS Ethical Content Guidelines available on the IDS website and intranet.

12   Best practice guidelines

12.1 For a successful social media presence that enhances professional reputation and increases the awareness and engagement with research, IDS members should:

- **Provide a new perspective on an issue or conversation:** apply expertise and insight to give a fresh slant on a topic.
- **Be relevant, accurate and timely:** provide useful information on time and do not publish misleading information.
- **Be respectful:** be professional at all times as this can directly reflect on perception of the individual and IDS.
- **Follow and engage:** actively participate in conversations to maintain a clear and current understanding of what is relevant and of interest to the community.
- **Recognise that social media content can and will live forever:** be aware that social media is not anonymous, and acts as a permanent record. It is a means of engaging directly and building reputation that lasts.
- **Separate the personal from the professional:** there is no clear line between an IDS member's work life and personal life. One should always be honest and respectful in both capacities. IDS members should always publish on social media keeping in mind that other people may know their identity and it is not anonymous. They should never write anything that they would not say openly to all parties involved.
- **Avoid hazardous materials:** refrain from posting or linking to any materials that are defamatory, threatening, harassing, indecent, discriminatory, infringe copyright, constitute a contempt of court, or are otherwise unlawful.
- **Keep confidentiality:** refrain from posting any confidential or proprietary information.
- **Be aware of privacy obligations:** these should always be considered prior to posting information on any forum of social media, especially if the identity of an individual can be ascertained from the information provided. In particular, personal information gained through employment or association with IDS should not be posted in social media.
- **Identify, if appropriate:** when relevant, IDS members should identify their affiliation with the Institute and their area of specialisation.

Revision History

Version	Date updated	Owner
1	April 2021	Head of communications and Engagement
2	January 2022	Head of Communications and Engagement

For all enquiries about this policy, please contact ceu_m@ids.ac.uk