Customer Services Social Media Guidelines

This document is available at:
G:\Marketing and Communication\Promotion\Social Media\Guidelines for social media
Updated May 2018.
This document aims to outline some best practice tips for staff working on the Customer Services Social Media Team.

It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of rules and regulations but rather a list of tips to ensure consistency and quality across the accounts regardless of who is posting.

Newcastle University Library has a number of social media accounts which can be viewed by anyone [here](#).

### Newcastle University’s Social Media Guidelines

It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with Newcastle University’s social media guidelines created by the Digital Marketing and Social Media Team.

These and other useful information can be found on G: [here](#).

A list of Newcastle University’s social media channels can be found [here](#).

### Yammer

Yammer is a social networking service used at Newcastle University.

The ‘Social Media Forum’ Group is a place for members of the university’s Social Media Forum and those working with social media to discuss best practice on social media, issues that may arise and plan for future forum meetings. You can increase the awareness of an event or a service by posting the details on there.
The Customer Services Social Media has grown organically since 2010 and we have learnt a lot of things during this time. We believe in experimenting with different formats & approaches—if it does not work, move on. If it does work, great—use it again or build on it.

We have not adopted the approach of one person taking a day because this can be hard to manage with different shift-patterns, holidays and sickness. Admittedly this may result in a ‘free for all’ approach but it does mean that there is not one distinctive voice per day but an overlap of styles creating the ‘nclroblib’ character.

**Tone of Voice**

The tone of voice we try to convey is conversational, engaging, authentic and trustworthy. Ideally the aim is not to appear as some sacred, grandiose, scary institution but as an approachable, enthusiastic source of information for our users.

“The Robinson Library sassed me and comforted me.

Get yourself a library that can do both.”

- @GraceMelville

**The Customer Services Team:**

Christina Taylor

Lydia Nelson

Helen Anderson

The CS ASlibs, in particular Karina Forrest also keep an eye on the channels.
General Best Practices

- Market the benefits of the library to people, offering them something valuable.
- Post high-quality visual content. Visual posts get more engagement.
- Brevity = clarity. You do not have to use all the available word count.
- Remember what is posted is public. Whilst it can be deleted, it takes very little time for someone to take a screen shot.
- Catch mistakes early. If we do get called out on something, acknowledge it. Do not delete the evidence.
- We want to be seen as speaking for the library, not for an individual. Therefore we do not attach names or initials to a post.

- Whilst there is no need to be glued to the screen every minute of the day, we do need to be present on the channels and logged in at least once a day to check for any mentions, comments, questions and complaints. Obviously it can be more than once a day if time allows and for a channel like Twitter, which is real time updates.
- Spelling & grammar are important. If you are talking about the names of locations or the libraries, please use capital letters even if you shorten the name e.g. ‘the Robbo’.
- If you are sharing any links, make sure that the link works & check where it leads to
- Similarly, if you are reposting anything, check who you are reposting.
- Avoid library jargon.
- If using gifs – make sure you know the context of the gif, that it is relevant & that it is not overly branded.

- Address feedback, be it positive or negative. If we can not answer something, say so but then refer it to someone who can. Always let people have their say & if applicable, try and turn a negative into a positive.
- Having said that, do not feed the trolls – it is alright not to get involved if there is not a way out of the conversation or someone is abusive.
General Best Practices

- If you want to ‘like’ posts that the work accounts have posted, do so from your own personal accounts not the work accounts.
- DO NOT USE ALL CAPS LOCKS!
- Do not share the passwords.
- If using a public computer please remember to log out afterwards.
- Try not to mix up any personal accounts with the work accounts.

Not sure of something?

If you’re not sure about something you’ve created, if you’re not sure whether something should be answered or not, whether something should be posted or not... anything whatsoever, please ask!

Yes, there are a lot of different shift patterns within the Customer Services Social Media team but there is a member of the team in every day and if all else fails you can email the team on lib-rstwitter@ncl.ac.uk.

Social Media Email

lib-rstwitter@ncl.ac.uk is the email for the whole Customer Services Social Media team.

lib-socialmedia@ncl.ac.uk is a library-wide email, going to people who run social media accounts or who are interested in it.

lib-creatorsocialmedia@newcastle.ac.uk will email all those involved with running the social media accounts at the Walton and Law Library as well as the Customer Services Social Media Team.
There is already a bank of images & videos to use if you wish to. We own the copyright to these so they can be reused or modified anyway you want.

G:\Marketing and Communication\Promotion\Social Media\Photographs - copyright cleared
G:\Marketing and Communication\Promotion\Promotional Photograph
www.flickr.com/photos/newcastleunilib

If you would like to add to that and create your own stuff, great! A few things to bear in mind:

- Whilst we do have a lot of freedom on the social media team, our content is representative of the library. Content needs to be of as high a quality as it can be, not going to cause offense… basic common sense really.

**Photographs**

- High quality images are wonderful & their value in conveying a message can not be underestimated.
- When you take a photo check before you post it – is the subject visible? Is it in focus? No amount of filters will make a bad photo presentable.
- If people are the subject make sure you have their permission.
- Check the framing of the picture, if someone is in it, make sure nothing is growing out of their heads, and check that there is nothing unsuitable in the background.
- Take a picture ‘but’ of an app so you can check the quality of it first before posting it onto social media.

**Videos**

- Check the length of the video, if it is too long, people will not watch it. The average length of a YouTube video is 4.4 minutes.
- Check the framing & sound levels if applicable.
- Newcastle University’s Video Production Guidelines.
Text-based posts/posters etc.

- Text-based pictures are handy if you are limited by a word count and are an attractive way to present information.
- ALWAYS resize images from corners NOT the side. It keeps the proportions correct.
- Less is often more.
- Think about the layout of text.
  - Avoid ‘widows & orphans’ and words by themselves on lines.
- If including a web address, don’t include http://
- If you want text in Bold and there is a Bold version of the font (such as with Bario1) use that instead of simply selecting the ‘Bold’ button.
- Not got a suitable font? Many websites offer free downloads.

Stock Photography

We prefer not to use stock photographs. However if you must use them, be respectful of copyright rules, make sure the image is not overused & that we do not subsequently overuse it ourselves. There are some interesting stock photo websites out there such as gratisography.com & pixabay.com whilst Newcastle University’s repository for photography & marketing materials is located in the University Photo Library.

- There is additional design advice on G: here.
- The library’s Visual Identity Guidelines can be found here containing information about using the Visual Identity & templates for ‘official’ materials.
- 25 Epic Graphic Design Tips for Non-Designers.
- Social Image Resizer Tool.

Special Collections

Pictures from Special Collections are available through Collections Captured. They can be used on social media but you need to say where they have come from. For example, on Twitter tag @ncilibspeccoll. Special Collections also have their own system for promotion so don’t promote any exhibitions until they started to do so.