

ISMA GUIDANCE ON INDIVIDUAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA (drawn from BBC policy wording)

1. Introduction and principles

Social media can be a valuable tool for ISMA members, including Trustees, to disseminate information and connect with their audience. Additionally, social media can serve as a useful guide for members who are not affiliated with ISMA in their personal lives.

This document aims to provide guidance to those who use social media for both personal and professional purposes. It is important to note that ISMA does not have any employees at present. The purpose of this Guidance is to provide direction for the use of social media for members, anyone working alongside ISMA and its representatives, while ensuring alignment with ISMA's values. Although our members are not obligated to follow this guidance, we hope they will find it beneficial. By adhering to these guidelines, we can uphold our commitment to accuracy and professionalism.

The primary objective of this Guidance is to promote safe and effective use of ISMA's online accounts by its representatives. It also encourages individuals to be mindful of their personal online activities and the potential impact on ISMA's reputation, as online identities can be easily traced. The overarching principle of this Guidance is to ensure that all online activities align with ISMA's values and contribute to its mission.

2. Rules and expectations of social media use for all colleagues (employees, contractors and freelancers)

The following rules and expectations apply to all those working alongside ISMA, for professional and personal social media accounts taking into account that all those working for ISMA will be freelancers and self-employed.

1. Always behave professionally, treating others with respect and courtesy at all times: follow ISMA's Values.
2. Don't bring ISMA into disrepute.

The following list of dos and don'ts provide guidance; they are not definitive.

Things to do:

For all ISMA colleagues:

- a) Do always treat others with respect, even in the face of abuse
- b) Do assume anything you say or post will be viewed critically.
- c) Even if you are posting in what appears to be a 'private' group, or you have locked down your privacy settings on your accounts, do apply the same standards as if you were posting publicly.

- d) Do be aware that there is no difference between how a personal and an ‘official’ account is perceived on social media: disclaimers do not offer protection.
- e) If you know you’ve got something wrong, do correct it quickly and openly.

Things not to do

For all ISMA colleagues:

- a) Do not be drawn into ill-tempered exchanges, or exchanges that will reflect badly on you, or ISMA.
- b) Do not post when your judgement may be impaired.
- c) Never use your ISMA status to seek personal gain or pursue personal campaigns.

Expressions of Opinion on Social Media

Nothing should appear on your personal social media accounts that undermine the perception of ISMA’s integrity.

Expressions of opinion on social media can take many forms – from straightforward tweets, posts or updates, sharing or liking content, following particular accounts or using campaigning or political hashtags. You should consider carefully every comment before posting.

Avoid the temptation to post quickly and without thinking about the language you are using or how it could be perceived.

Use of emojis can – accidentally, or deliberately – undercut an otherwise impartial post.

The impartiality requirements begin when you start representing ISMA: they are not retrospective.

4. Disclaimers

Disclaimers written in biographies or personal profiles such as “my views, not ISMA’s” provide no defence against personal expressions of opinion that conflict with this Guidance and should not be used.

(last updated March 2023)