CLOUD COUNTY
Community College

EMPLOYEE
SOCIAL MEDIA
GUIDELINES

Cloud County Community College prepares students to lead successful lives and enhances the vitality of our communities.
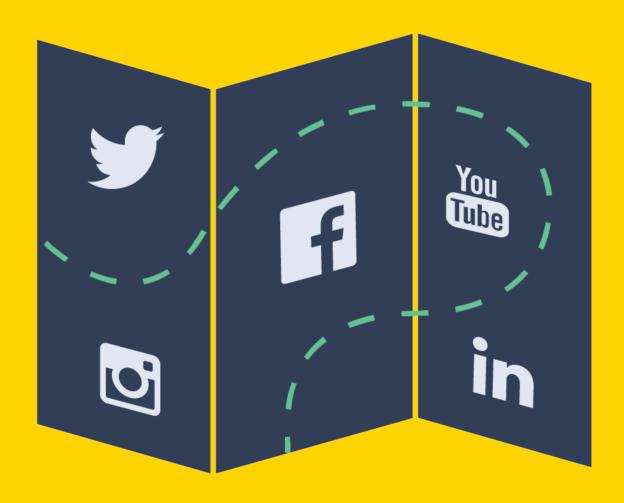
These guidelines were developed for faculty, staff and administrators at Cloud County Community College who create and administer social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube on behalf of the college. The college supports the use of social media as a valuable tool to disseminate information and create a thriving online community.

These sites reflect on the college and should therefore be written and structured in an appropriate, ethical, professional and lawful manner.

The rapid growth of social media technologies combined with their ease of use and pervasiveness make them attractive channels of communication. However, these tools also hold the possibility of a host of unintended consequences. To help you identify and avoid potential issues, we have compiled these guidelines. They are examples of best practices from various institutions and are intended to help you understand, from a wide range of perspectives, the implications of participating in social media.

What are the procedures for creating a college-related social media page?

If you would like to create a page on behalf of a campus organization, department, or program, contact the Director of Marketing, Jessica LeDuc, at jleduc@cloud.edu with information about what type of account you are considering, a proposed title for the page that includes the name "Cloud County Community College," a paragraph to describe the group or department, and the names of those who will administer the account. It is also required that the Marketing Director be an administrator on the account, and be provided with usernames and passwords.

The Marketing Department will help you get started and explain the expectations of having a Cloud County account. Keep in mind that having an active social media account is very important – even when classes are not in session.

Do not post confidential or proprietary information about Cloud County, its students, its alumni, or your fellow employees. Use good ethical judgment and follow the College's policies and federal requirements, such as the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

What are the expectations for posting on social media on behalf of Cloud County Community College?

It is our responsibility as a college to educate and keep positive relationships with every member of our community. With that in mind, we want those representing Cloud County to consider a few ideas as you post on college-related accounts.

1. Be kind
2. If you wouldn't say it to someone in person, don't say it online
3. Always be aware and mindful of what you like and share.
4. If you see something on social media that violates campus policy, please report it to Jessica LeDuc (jleduc@cloud.edu).
5. Don't use abusive or racist language (See rule #1)
6. Allow others to fairly share thoughts and opinions (See rule #1)
7. Correct mistakes such as typos and incorrect statements
8. Be accurate about the facts.
9. Have fun!

Note: If you are posting from a private page about a Cloud County matter and administer a Cloud County-related page, we encourage you to disclose that the posting does not represent Cloud's views.

If you ever have any question about whether a message you are crafting is appropriate to post in your role as a Cloud County employee, talk with your supervisor or the Marketing Department before you post.

Social Media Guidelines When Posting as an Individual

Cloud County uses social media to supplement traditional press and marketing efforts. Employees are encouraged to share College news and events that are a matter of public record with their family and friends. Linking straight to the information source is an effective way to help promote the mission of Cloud County and build community.

When you are using social media for personal purposes and might be perceived as an agent/expert of Cloud, you need to make sure it is clear to the audience that you are not representing the position of the College or Cloud

County policy. While these guidelines apply to those instances where there is the potential for confusion about your role as a Cloud agent/expert versus personal opinion, they are good to keep in mind for all social media interactions. When posting to a social media site, you should:

• Do No Harm
Let your Internet social networking do no harm to Cloud County or to yourself, whether you're navigating those networks on the job or off.

• Does It Pass the Publicity Test?
If the content of your message would not be acceptable for face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, or in another medium, it will not be acceptable for a social networking site. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or 10 years from now?

• Be Aware of Liability
You are personally responsible for the content you publish on blogs, wikis, or any other form of user-generated content. Individual bloggers have been held liable for commentary deemed to be copyright infringement, defamatory, proprietary, libelous, or obscene (as defined by the courts). Increasingly, employers are conducting web searches on job candidates before extending offers. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time – be sure that what you post today will not come back to haunt you.

• Maintain Transparency
The line between professional and personal business is sometimes blurred: Be thoughtful about your posting's content and potential audiences. Be honest about your identity. In personal posts, you may identify yourself as a Cloud County faculty or staff member. However, please be clear that you are sharing your views as an individual, not as a representative of Cloud County Community College. If you identify yourself as a member of the Cloud community, ensure your profile and related content are consistent with how you wish to present yourself to colleagues.

• Be a Valued Member
If you join a social network, make sure you are contributing valuable insights. Don't hijack the discussion and redirect by posting self-/organizational-promoting information. Self-promoting behavior is viewed negatively and can lead to you being banned from websites or groups.

• Think Before You Post
There's no such thing as a "private" social media site. Search engines can turn up posts and pictures years after the publication date. Comments can be forwarded or copied. Archival systems save information even if you delete a post. If you feel angry or passionate about a subject, it's wise to delay posting until you are calm and clear-headed. Only post pictures that you would be comfortable sharing with the general public (current and future peers, employers, etc.).

• Take the High Ground
If you identify your affiliation with Cloud County in your comments, readers may associate you with the College, even with the disclaimer that your views are your own. Remember that you're most likely to build a high-quality following if you discuss ideas and situations civilly. Don't pick fights online.

• Respect Your Audience
Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in Cloud's community. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered sensitive, such as politics and religion. You are more likely to achieve your goals if you are constructive and respectful while discussing a bad experience or disagreeing with a concept or person.

• Correct Mistakes
If you make a mistake, admit it. Be upfront and be quick with your correction.

• Monitor Comments
Most people who maintain social media sites welcome comments – it builds credibility and community. However, you may be able to set your site so that you can review and approve comments before they appear. This allows you to respond in a timely way to comments. It also allows you to delete spam comments and to block any individuals who repeatedly post offensive or frivolous comments.

• Protect Your Identity

While you should be honest about yourself, don't provide personal information that scam artists or identity thieves could use. Don't list your home address or telephone number. It is a good idea to create a separate email address that is used only with social media sites.

• Don't Use Pseudonyms

Never pretend to be someone else. Tracking tools enable supposedly anonymous posts to be traced back to their authors.

• Use a Disclaimer

If you publish content to any website outside of Cloud County and it has something to do with the work you do or subjects associated with Cloud, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent Cloud County's positions, strategies, or opinions."

A common practice among individuals who write about the industry in which they work is to include a disclaimer on their site, usually on their "About Me" page. If you discuss higher education on your own social media site, we suggest you include a sentence similar to this: "The views expressed on this [blog, website] are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cloud County Community College." This is particularly important if you could be perceived to be in a leadership role at Cloud County.

• Do not Use the Cloud County Logo or Make Endorsements

Do not use the Cloud County logo or any other Cloud County marks or images on your personal online sites. Do not use Cloud County's name to promote or endorse any product, cause, or political party or candidate.

• Be Responsible

What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social computing on behalf of Cloud County is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. Keep in mind that if you are posting with a College username, other users do not know you personally. They view what you post as coming from the College. What you say directly reflects on the College. Discuss with your supervisor the circumstances in which you are empowered to respond directly to users and when you may need approval.

• Be Accurate

Make sure that you have all the facts before you post. It's better to verify information with a source first than to have to post a correction or retraction later. Cite and link to your sources whenever possible – that's how you build community.

• Press Inquiries

Postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a social media posting or requests information about the college, contact the Director of Marketing at 243.1435, ext. 267, or by email at jleduc@cloud.edu. You should also confirm that any information you post has been publicly disclosed.

Questions?

Questions about the social media guidelines should be sent to Jessica LeDuc at jleduc@cloud.edu.

Cloud County Community College prepares students to lead successful lives and enhances the vitality of our communities.