

VERMONT LAW SCHOOL Social Media Guidelines

VLS has identified emerging social media technologies as an important medium useful for connecting with students, prospective students and their parents, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters. These tools should be used as a means of communicating with various target audiences and as a method of driving traffic back to the law school's website. Effective strategic use of these tools must include a commitment to maintain and update content on www.vermontlaw.edu first. Updated content on the law school's website can then be repurposed across various social media platforms.

VLS's Social Media Guidelines are intended to assist the VLS community in the use of social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace, and other social media platforms available in today's marketplace. Due to the constantly changing landscape of social media platforms, this is a living document that will be periodically updated to reflect current trends, norms, and best practices in the use of social media.

A general "landing page" of all official VLS social media web presences will be available on the law school's website in the near future. If you have a VLS-related social media website you would like added to this listing, please contact the Web Communications and New Media Manager at vlswcommunications@vermontlaw.edu

And while it may seem obvious, please remember—when you are posting information on all social media outlets, you are posting about and on behalf of VLS.

At anytime if you need assistance or have questions about using social media tools, contact the Web Communications and New Media Manager at vlswcommunications@vermontlaw.edu

GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

In order to utilize social media platforms in an official capacity representing Vermont Law School, please adhere to the following procedure:

- Download and read Vermont Law School's Social Media Guidelines
- Download, complete, and file the Social Media Request for Services form via email to vlswcommunications@vermontlaw.edu
- Discuss your social media plan with the Web Communications and New Media Manager
- Work with the Web Communications and New Media Manager to create your account
- Communicate your social media presence to the VLS community and beyond

Please be advised, social media account names beginning with "vermontlawschool" or "vls" preceding a department or group name are reserved for use as official accounts of Vermont Law School.

Vermont Law School reserves the right to remove postings and comments containing questionable content from official pages.

FACEBOOK GUIDELINES

Strategy

Facebook can be used to communicate with students, potential students, alumni, the general public, and interested community members the way they want to be communicated with. Take advantage of the viral nature of Facebook—spread the word through our "friends' and fans'" networks. Vermont Law School's

Communications Office can assist and advise on the most effective way to use the Facebook platform for your needs.

Types of Facebook Accounts

Page: A stand-alone page that mimics the Profile page of an individual, but is designed to represent an entity rather than an individual. Followers are called *Fans*. For institutional use, departments, student groups, and other official school entities should use Pages to represent themselves to the public on Facebook. The Communications Office must be contacted prior to the creation of an official VLS Page on Facebook and can assist your department or group with the process. Download and submit the Social Media Request for Services form to begin this process.

Group: A collection of people under a common purpose. Groups can be joined by individuals on Facebook who have Profiles, but not by Pages. Groups can be global in nature, meaning anyone is free to join, or closed, meaning an administrator of the Group must approve new members before they are allowed to actively participate on the Group page. Vermont Law School **does not require** that the Communications Office be contacted or the Social Media Request for Services form be filed for Groups to be created. However, if your department or group would like assistance with Group creation, you may submit a Social Media Request for Services form to the Communications Office.

Profile: Individual people hold Profile pages on Facebook. Optional applications can be added to a Profile to enhance the experience. Followers are called *Friends*. Vermont Law School does not assist individuals with the creation of personal profile pages.

Facebook Page Owner:	Use Model	What to Post	Who Will Be Your Fan?
Departments	News, events, sharing thoughts and comments	Department news, events, links to relevant information	Potential and current students
Development and/or Alumni	Relationship management, news, events	Alumni- or donor-related news and events	Alumni, donors, interested community members
Marketing and Communications	News, events, crisis communication	News and events	Potential and current students, faculty, staff, media, interested community members
Student Groups	Events, news, community building	Links to online information and events	Potential and current students

Facebook naming conventions

Think first and foremost about searchability. Search engines such as Google and Twitter’s own search engine will pull up accounts based on key word relevance. Pick something obvious and relevant. That’s how you’ll get followers.

You may use either VLS or “vermontlawschool” as naming conventions. By adding a separate indentifying moniker at the end (alumni, or InternationalLaw, for example), you increase your chances of getting the Facebook name of your choosing.

- Departments—facebook.com/vls[department]
- Alumni—facebook.com/vlsalumni
- Marketing and communications—facebook.com/vermontlawschool

Customizing your page

Stick to simple graphics that represent the VLS brand. Contact the Communications Office for help with graphics and design for your Facebook page.

Available options

Wall postings—messages, photos, videos; allows fans to comment on these. All comments show up on every Fan’s home page list and on all of their Friends’ home page list.

Discussion board—a no-frills message board; allows Fans to post comments that are visible on the Page.

Events—Each Event gets its own page, so it becomes a micro-site. Each event page has its own set of options, including an invite option that you can push out to all the Page Fans. Fan responses to those invites are posted on all Fan/Fan Friends’ home page lists. Event pages are opened and closed by date and then archived as past events on the master Page.

Links—Post links to http:// locations; includes option to include a summary, image from the Web page, and our own comment. New links activate a Fan notification; notifications are ‘on’ by default and may be forwarded both in and outside of Facebook.

Notes—this is a longer copy option that is similar to another page and allows text, photos, links, and ability to link to other Groups and Persons. New notes activate a Fan notification. The Notes application can also be used to pull feeds in from www.vermontlaw.edu.

Video—posting a video library accessible from the Page. New videos activate a Fan notification.

Other custom applications include RSS readers, news feeds, and custom HTML.

Facebook facts (2009)

- the 25–34-year-old population is doubling every six months
- 18–35-year-olds account for 41 percent of all users
- the 35–54-year-old population is growing the fastest—276 percent in six months
- 55 percent of all users are female

TWITTER GUIDELINES

Strategy

Twitter is, in essence, micro-blogging. From a business point of view, it’s a newswire in **140 characters or less**. Use Twitter to release brief news and to provide links to additional information. Use Twitter to inform your followers and drive traffic to web presences containing more detailed information.

TWITTER	USE MODEL	WHAT TO TWEET	WHO WILL	HOW TO
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ACCOUNT OWNER			FOLLOW?	ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE
Departments	Department-related news, events, and links to information	Department-related news and events	Current and prospective students	Answer questions promptly. Respond to comments. Know your followers.
Development and/or Alumni	Relationship management	Alumni- or donor-related news and events	Alumni, donors, interested community members	Answer questions promptly. Respond to comments. Know your followers. Thank them for their support.
Marketing and Communications	News, events, crisis communication	University news and events	Students, faculty, staff, media, interested community members	Answer questions promptly. Respond to comments. Be transparent.

Twitter naming conventions—limit 13 characters

Think first and foremost about searchability. Search engines such as Google and Twitter’s own search engine will pull up accounts based on key word relevance. Pick something obvious and relevant. That’s how you’ll get followers.

Due to Twitter’s 13-character naming convention, you should use VLS as a naming convention. Adding a separate indentifying moniker at the end (alumni, or International, for example) will increase your chances of getting the Twitter name of your choosing. But you may need to get creative with your Twitter name.

Departments—twitter.com/vls[department]

Alumni— twittercom/vlsalumni

Marketing and Communications—twitter.com/vtlawschool

Feeding Twitter to your Facebook, MySpace, and other social media

Contact the Communications Office for help linking Twitter to your other social media outlets.

Customizing your page

The Communications Office can provide you with a generic Vermont Law School template for use on your Twitter page. See <http://www.twitter.com/vtlawschool>