

The Guidelines and the Social Media Policies of the Royal Archaeological Institute

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1. Introduction

After establishing a Facebook Page and having recently hired a part-time Social Media Communication Officer, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* is establishing a greater social media presence. In order to establish guidelines for social media use and to separate the private and public roles of different officers as social media users, it has been deemed appropriate to present a policy document for general use.

This document is based on benchmark documents provided by the guidelines of the Department of Archaeology at the University of York, written by Hadley and Rayner in 2012 (see <http://www.york.ac.uk/archaeology/contactus/social-media/#tab-3>), and the Social Media for Staff Policy Template issued by the JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) in the UK in 2014 (<http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/ManageContent/ViewDetail/ID/3443/Social-Media-for-Staff-Policy-Template-10-February-2014.aspx>). Even if the first is more a handbook, it gives a model for incorporating advice into instructions, whereas the second document provides a template for staff members of organisations to draft suitable policy documents for their organisations. The latter template has been modified for use here, where appropriate. These documents should be seen as guidance only and not taken to replace proper legal advice in any problematic cases.

Institutions and organisations such as the *Royal Archaeological Institute* are becoming increasingly aware of the numerous benefits of social media, while at the same time, the adoption of these forums in everyday practice may present some issues. Policy documents aim at providing consistency within the organisation; regulating practice in order to provide clear boundaries for officers, and defining the voice and tone for the members in order to minimise the risk of reputational damage and in the worst case any legal disputes.

In the case of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, this document is a living document and sections will be added as and when the use of different channels widens. At the moment, the document covers the Facebook and Twitter only, but is likely to be extended soon to include Instagram and blogging policies.

2. Position statement

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* recognises the numerous benefits and opportunities which a social media presence offers. This learned society aims to build relationships and work with the wider archaeological community to share information and news and promote the *Royal Archaeological Institute*. We will actively use social media to engage appropriately with our members, archaeologists, those interested in archaeology and the wider public to enhance the profile of the society, increase public awareness of its activities and promote both the *Royal Archaeological Institute* and the study of archaeology in the British Isles in a wider European context and in many ways yet to be discovered.

A social media account provides a flexible delivery platform. The *Royal Archaeological Institute* will use it to supplement the traditional paper, e-mail and web-page based part of our communications. We will restrict its use to officially authorised officers in situations where they actively communicate in its name, even if we actively encourage our officers to make effective and appropriate use of it; to engage in conversations with colleagues and the community as well as sharing appropriate outputs on different media. However, within the social media channels of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, we ask our members to follow the guidelines provided here by the *Royal Archaeological Institute*.

In order to provide clarity and consistency for staff, while recognising the corresponding challenges for the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, we have restricted the use of the content management in social media to authorised and named officers/and some common- sense boundaries. Our approach is therefore to support members and authorised officers to engage with our community, while providing appropriate guidance on best practice.

Members and officers of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* are expected to refresh their knowledge of relevant updated policies (available on our web site), which apply in this context, particularly the e-Safety Policy, Communications Policy and Acceptable Use Policy that are currently formulated by the Communications Committee of the Royal Archaeological Institute. The current statutes contain a Disciplinary Policy that allows Council to remove membership from an offending member.

3. Authorisation and Review

The social media policy has been approved by the council of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* on March 9, 2016.

Any questions relating to this policy should be addressed to the Social Media Communication Policy Officer (SMCO) who can be contacted via e-mail (media@royalarchinst.org) or using a form on our web site.

The content, appropriateness and impact of this policy will be monitored and updated regularly to reflect the changing online environment, technologies and the active use of different social media platforms. The policy may also be amended where particular concerns are raised or as the result of an incident.

4. Scope of the Policy

For the purposes of this policy, social media is defined as any online interactive communication tool which encourages participation and exchanges. Common examples include; Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Skype, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. Currently, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* uses, and this policy covers, Facebook and Twitter, but it will be extended and updated as appropriate.

This policy applies to all officer communications which directly represent the *Royal Archaeological Institute* or are placed on one of its platforms. It applies to online communications posted at any time and from anywhere, whether to an individual, a limited group or the world, when posted as a formal representative of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*.

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* respects privacy and understands that officers may use social media forums in their private lives. However, even if the *Royal Archaeological Institute* in general acknowledges that personal communications can include personal and political views that are not shared by all members, it is reminded that good manners, inclusive attitudes and common sense are cornerstones of any interpersonal communication and within the scope of this policy, especially when any views are presented as a comment or reply on any of the official social media channels of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*.

Responsibilities as an officer apply regardless of the medium being used. All social media communications which are presented in an officer role or on the platform account by the *Royal Archaeological Institute* might affect its reputation, whether the latter are made either in a private or professional capacity, and must comply with relevant policies which guide officer and member conduct.

There is additional guidance and/or the latest version of this document on content hosted on the web pages of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* available at <http://www.royalarchinst.org/about/social-media-policy-document>.

Communications made in an officer status and/or relevant to this policy are those made through official channels using the name of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*. All communications in these channels or platforms are within the scope of this policy (and are subject to the Communications Policy).

Personal communications are those made via a private social media account, such as a personal profile, blog or wiki. These communications are subject to this policy, if made as comments or replies within the channels or platforms of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*. In all cases, where a private account is used which clearly identifies the *Royal Archaeological Institute* it must be made clear that the officer is not communicating on behalf of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*. An appropriate disclaimer, such as:

“the views expressed here are my own” should be included, especially in the case of those persons directly handling the social and traditional media communications of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*.

Private communications which do not impact upon the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, are outside the scope of this policy, but still within the law and good manners.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

There are clear lines of responsibility for social media use within the *Royal Archaeological Institute*.

The SMCO is responsible for

- Keeping up to date with technology, platform and policy developments related to any of the channels used
- Reviewing and updating all relevant documentation
- Delivering guidance on social media
- Taking a lead role in responding to and investigating any reported incidents
- Making an initial assessment when an incident is reported and involving appropriate council members and external agencies if required
- Maintaining a directory of the social media accounts of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*

Officers, and members where appropriate, are responsible for

- Knowing the contents of the policy and its procedures
- Ensuring that any use of social media is carried out in line with this and other relevant policies
- Having appropriate skills if they engage in social media communications
- Agreeing with the SMCO upon the official and event-based use of an institutional account
- Seeking relevant authorisation for official special postings that fall outside the remits outlined in this document prior to their publication
- Regularly monitoring, updating and managing content he/she has posted via the accounts of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*
- Carrying out an appropriate review of the impact of the engagement in different social media by the *Royal Archaeological Institute*
- Ensuring that all officers and members attending any events with live or active social media use are made aware of the policies of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, accessible online
- Making sure the appropriate privacy policies are applied and communicated to all public in any public events where social media is used
- Adding an appropriate disclaimer to personal accounts
- Reporting any incidents in line with section 11 below

The Council of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* is responsible for

- Approving the most recent social media policy document
- Supervising that the SMCO as well as other officers follow the guidance provided and take into consideration any laws, inclusive attitudes, good manners and common sense
- Addressing concerns or questions regarding posts or comments via official and personal accounts
- Reporting any issues or outcomes to the SMCO, or escalating the matter to involve appropriate agencies
- Authorising posts, where designated
- Seeking additional relevant guidance or training if required

6. Behaviour

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* requires that all officers using social media in their official role adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.

Officers will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of colleagues or make ill-considered comments or judgments about colleagues. Any criticism of archaeologists, organisations or community or local group members should be constructive and evidence-based.

Digital communications by officials as officials must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Where an incident is reported, refer to section 12 below. Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the *Royal Archaeological Institute* and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior officer /SMCO, and escalated where appropriate. The subscribers or users breaching the guidelines and good manners will be blocked or removed from a channel if appropriate. The Council of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will take appropriate action when necessary.

Where conduct is found to be unacceptable, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will deal with the matter internally, guided by the council. Where conduct is considered illegal, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will report the matter to the police and other relevant external agencies, and may take action according to the Disciplinary Policy.

The following general guidelines apply to officers posting content via social media:

The Do's

- Check with the SMCO initially or with the Honorary Secretary before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the institution; the Council makes official policy decisions on the support of any controversial social media figures or campaigns (to follow, share or retweet)
- Use a disclaimer when expressing personal views
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other people's materials and acknowledge the author
- Express opinions but do so in a balanced and measured manner
- Manage your social media presence on behalf of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*

- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Set up a shadow system i.e. a colleague who can edit posts
- Seek advice and report any mistakes to the Honorary Secretary in the first instance and President and the Council in more problematic cases

The Don't's

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the *Royal Archaeological Institute* into disrepute
- Don't use the logo of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* on personal accounts
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content in relation to a learned public and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances
- Don't present party political or religious views when in the role of an officer

7. Security

Officers are responsible for ensuring that passwords and other access controls for the social media accounts of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* are of adequate strength and kept secure. Passwords should be regularly changed, and under no circumstances should passwords be shared outside the Council. Staff should be familiar with privacy settings and ensure that these are appropriate for both content and intended audience.

Every effort will be made by the Council and designated officer or service provider to keep security software up to date. Appropriate security measures will include the use of enhanced filtering and protection of firewalls, servers, routers, work stations etc. to prevent accidental or malicious access of IT systems and social media accounts.

8. Use of Other People's Materials

Sharing content such as images, photographs and video is extremely popular and easy to do via social media sites. While this may have value, there is a real risk of breaching the rights of individuals who own the different media e.g. images rights, patents, copyright in a blog, or rights associated with collaborative outputs. All officers should ensure they have permission or other justification to share content in this way through the official channels of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* or in comments to Facebook posts or replies to Twitter tweets. Content

is particularly risky where it is commercially valuable, unpublished, confidential and/or sensitive.

Some people do not wish to share their own image in the web. Thus, the officers must try to ensure that the audience in filmed or photographed events are aware that this filming or photographing takes place and the material will be shared as a promotion. This can be done either in announcements or placing notes at the door, if a lecture or conference. If an individual specifically makes clear they do not wish a photograph to be used, this must be honoured. If a lecture is filmed, the officer opening the session can suggest where to sit, if one wants to avoid being captured on film. If any event has children present, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will take extra care and try to ensure that any necessary written consent is acquired from a parent / carer.

Officers will not post any images, photographs, videos, text etc. via social media sites without appropriate permission from the rights holders. If unsure, officers are advised to check permissions attached to digital content prior to posting via social media. When live-tweeting, the officers should discuss the matter with the scholars presenting and if unsure avoid any PowerPoint slides or presentation photos containing specific graphs, find-photographs or maps.

Further information and guidance is available from the SMCO (media@royalarchinst.org).

9. Personal Information

Personal information is information about a particular living person. No personal information will be shared via social media sites without consent, unless it is in line with our Data Protection Policy. Authorised officers posting content or setting up accounts are responsible for ensuring appropriate informed consents are in place. Officers should include their name, their *Royal Archaeological Institute* email and officer status where possible. It is at their discretion whether they wish to post additional contact information. Officers must keep other officers' personal information safe and secure at all times. When using social media sites, officers should only with consent publish officers' personal information.

10. Training

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* wishes to make it clear to officers and members what our policy contains and the reasons behind it. We will provide officers and members with additional guidelines and further information on e safety and effective practice, and the SMCO will be on hand to answer any queries and address any comments.

Officers authorised to use the social media accounts of the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, will receive guidance on relevant safeguards and acceptable practice before access is granted, if they have not been involved in approving the previous update of this policy New, or temporary officers, will also be directed to this policy document and given verbal or written instructions as part of the induction process.

Additional training may be offered to officers and members on social media practice, if a need arises.

11. Incidents and Response

Any breach of this policy could lead to some form of disciplinary response. Where a breach of this policy is reported to the Council of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* this matter will be dealt with seriously and in line with the mutually agreed practices. The *Royal Archaeological Institute* will act immediately to prevent, as far as reasonably possible, any damage to an individual, their rights or the *Royal Archaeological Institute*'s reputation. Any stakeholder or member of the public may report an incident to the *Royal Archaeological Institute*. This should be directed immediately to the SMCO and/or Honorary Secretary. Where it appears that a breach has taken place, the SMCO and/or Honorary Secretary will review what has happened and decide on the most appropriate and proportionate course of action. The clearest of cases will be dealt with by removing the offending content or blocking the issuer from different pages or channels, if possible. Any more serious matters will be discussed first with the President and then in Council, if a need arises. Where the SMCO considers the incident to be serious, this will also be reported immediately to the President.

Where officers are in receipt of offensive, unacceptable content via social media, this should be reported to the SMCO or e-mail or web administrator as soon as possible.

Where questionable content has been received by the *Royal Archaeological Institute*, the SMCO must be informed prior to any response being submitted.

12. Feedback and Further Information

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* welcomes all constructive feedback on this and any other policy. If you would like further information on social media, or wish to send us your comments on our Social Media Policy, then please contact: media@royalarchinst.org.

13. Web pages as a source of information

Nowadays, web pages are not considered as such as social media. However, the web pages of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* provide a more stable source of information and they give an extra resource to link information to Facebook posts and Twitter tweets. In the future, it is also expected that the SMCO has an input into the web pages and their maintenance, so the need for current updates is made clear here. Nevertheless, currently, a nominated honorary officer will take the main responsibility of the web site.

14. Facebook page

So far the main social media channel of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* has been the Facebook page. The Facebook page belongs to the organisation, but it is administered by the officials of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* through their private accounts. They can swap between acting as private persons and the 'organisation'. For security reasons, holiday and work backup and continuity, it is wise to share the authorisation to access the page between more than one officer, even if the SMCO is considered the responsible one.

Facebook contains a series of tools that enable registered users to befriend other people, send one another private messages, share photographs and videos and much more. The users cannot befriend a page, but they can 'like' it and a page can 'like' them.

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* uses its Facebook page to promote itself as an organisation and give more information about the *Royal Archaeological Institute* and its activities. The main

outputs are longer original messages that are meant to be Facebook only messages. When possible, the posts from the *Royal Archaeological Institute* share an image from its activities, a link to its web page or links to such documents.

The Facebook Page Insights allow following the impact the page has within Facebook. The *Royal Archaeological Institute* will aim at improving general awareness of its activities and membership provision and increase the numbers of page ‘likes’, post views and interaction. In principle, the Facebook page will only promote its own activities, though the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will also remind its members of other events and sometimes share Facebook page posts from other organisations. These include, for example the British Archaeological Association, whose members may reciprocally with the RAI attend each other’s lectures, and the Society of Antiquaries of London, where we meet regularly and who hold a series of public lectures.

The tone will be neutral but enthusiastic, and the voice will be that of a modern learned society speaking to the general public, incorporating professional archaeologists, in polite but promotional language. The intended audience is educated people. As specified above, posts will not contain party political or religious points, they strive to be gender neutral and inclusive – and the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will always expect the same standard of behaviour from all people who engage with the page, including its members and own officers.

Please note that any persons violating the guidelines in Sections 6, 8 and 9 will be blocked from the page. Any person sharing improper material (indecent, derisory, insulting or attacking a named person) in the visitor posts section will be blocked in the similar manner. All criticisms, if any, should be constructive and written in a positive manner.

15. Twitter account

Twitter allows users to post 140 character messages (known as tweets, as indicated above) that are publicly viewable by anyone – including those not on twitter – although users can opt to make their tweets private. Users with Twitter accounts can then follow the tweets of others who they follow (followers/followees). These lists are also almost always public. This makes Twitter a very on-the-spot, real-time mode of communication: an account owner can actively participate to a degree of their choice by replying to tweets, re-tweeting (sharing tweets sent by others) and

addressing tweets to other account owners. Most Twitter users will know in real life only a small portion of those they follow (cf. Hadley and Rayner 2012, 2).

The account owners can also participate in discussions marking the topic with a hashtag (#). Popular archaeological hashtags are for example #archaeology, #heritage and #dayofarch (Day of Archaeology). These hashtags can be searched in the Twitter search engine and the reactions and discussions may be read afterwards – helpful in relation to conferences and such events.

Many archaeologists, organisations, departments and academics use Twitter actively and it is an important tool in sharing information for example during conferences. Active Twitter-using organisations include the Society of Antiquaries of London (@SocAntiquaries), the Roman Society (@TheRomanSoc), Historic England (@HistoricEngland) and the Council for British Archaeology (@archaeologyuk) and its different groups.

The *Royal Archaeological Institute* will use Twitter for short daily tweets, with images when possible, and selected retweets of those organisations the *Royal Archaeological Institute* follows. Effective Twitter use will require daily interactive engagement during office hours. The most regular engagement is aimed to take place during term time and during the *Royal Archaeological Institute*'s major events. Some content may be scheduled using Tweetdeck or other interface providing similar service.

Use of Twitter will be somewhat more informal and instant than Facebook use, but the guidelines in Sections 6, 8 and 9 and in the previous section in relation to Twitter policies stand. Similarly, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* expects the same kind of considerate, good-mannered behaviour from its members who engage in the *Royal Archaeological Institute* Twitter feed. Any account holders making discriminatory or insensitive comments will be 'unfollowed' or blocked.

In the first instance, the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will follow as many as possible of the relevant archaeological organisations in the British Isles, or involved in the study and promotion of British archaeology. Only a small number of individuals, mainly different officers of the *Royal Archaeological Institute* will be followed. It is worth noting that retweeting does not mean endorsement, only that the *Royal Archaeological Institute* acknowledges that a relevant event takes place or that a topic is discussed in archaeological circles and wishes to make its followers aware of different events or current topics.

Similarly to Facebook, Twitter has a range of analytics with which we can follow our impact and the public's engagement.

References

Hadley, P. and Rayner, H., 2012. *Social Media and the Department of Archaeology: A guide to using social media for staff and students*, <http://www.york.ac.uk/archaeology/contactus/social-media/#tab-3> (accessed in November 2015)

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