

# Setting up a new social media account

**A guide for RSB  
regional branches**

June 2018



## Social media guide for branches 2018

### Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Should I set up an account?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Could existing profiles or accounts be used to meet your aims?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>What platform do you want to set your account up on?</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Who should run the account?</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>What platform should I set up an account on?</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Twitter</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Overview .....	4
What your account will look like.....	4
How people will interact with your account.....	4
Other features .....	4
How to build your audience .....	5
Other accounts you should follow.....	5
What appears publicly.....	5
What doesn't appear publicly.....	5
How often should you post .....	6
Pros of using twitter .....	6
Cons of using twitter .....	6
Top tips for twitter .....	6
<b>Facebook pages</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Overview .....	7
What your branch account will look like.....	7
How people will interact with your account.....	7
How to build your audience .....	7
What appears publicly.....	7
What doesn't appear publicly.....	8
How often should you post .....	8
Pros of running a Facebook page .....	8
Cons of running a Facebook page .....	8
Top tips for running a Facebook page.....	8
<b>Instagram</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Overview .....	8
What your branch account will look like.....	9

How people will interact with your account.....	9
How to build your audience .....	9
Other accounts you should follow.....	9
What appears publicly.....	10
What doesn't appear publicly.....	10
How often should you post .....	10
Pros of using Instagram.....	10
Cons of using Instagram.....	10
Top tips for running an Instagram page.....	10
<b>What content should you post?.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Technical limitations of a platform.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Content suited for sharing on social media channels .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Social media defamation risks.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Copyrighted content .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Evaluating your progress .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Audience size.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Engagement .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Reach .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Potential reach .....	14
Total/ Post reach.....	14
Impressions.....	14
<b>Other social media channels you may consider.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>YouTube.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Linked In .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Snapchat.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Flickr .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Pinterest.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>General hints and tips for running a social media account .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Introduction

This guide is for volunteers who are thinking about setting up a social media account for their branch, but aren't sure where to start.

The three most common platforms used on a regular basis by people are Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, so this guide will focus on those channels.

Before doing so, please consult the RSB Social Media policy (included at the end of this guide) and also consult the RSB press and communications manager, who can provide guidance on what platform will be best to use to meet your aims and objectives.

## Should I set up an account?

Social media channels are a great way to expand your audience and bring your news and updates to more people online. They also allow for a greater engagement with your audience, and can stimulate discussion, conversation and build an online community.

We want to empower staff and volunteers at the RSB to reach their target audiences efficiently, and increase the visibility of their work they do.

If you want your work and events you are running to become more visible, or wish to create an online community that doesn't already exist, these are great reasons to start a new social media account.

However, setting up and maintaining accounts can take time, so it is important to think strategically about setting up a dedicated account.

Thinking about what your branch wants to achieve in a wider context will help you decide if introducing a dedicated social media account is necessary.

## Could existing profiles or accounts be used to meet your aims?

The RSB already has accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, which reach broad audiences with different interests and that span globally. These accounts must share content that is relevant for as much of those audiences as possible.

If you are planning to share content that is rather specific in topic or suitable for smaller audiences, setting up a more dedicated account may be more effective.

## What platform do you want to set your account up on?

There are a number of things worth considering when deciding on a platform, as all offer slightly different ways of building and engaging with an audience.

Different platforms will also be used by different demographics of people, and finding a platform that is already popular with your target audience is important.

Different platforms also share media differently. Twitter, for example, is suited to short, snappy text-based updates accompanied by images or video, whereas Facebook can allow for a bit more text and detail in page or group posts.

You need to balance all of these elements when considering what platform you want to open your account on.

## Who should run the account?

Someone on the committee that has experience of using social media either personally or professionally is most suited to run your accounts. They should be of good character, willing to commit time to managing the account, and be best placed to know all about the branch to promote it correctly through the accounts.

It is recommended that one to three people can access the account including the Chair, and that all passwords are also shared with the RSB press and communications manager.

## What platform should I set up an account on?

### Twitter



- Number of monthly active users: 330 million (December 2017)
- Available on: desktop and via smart phone app
- Do you need a personal twitter account to run a branch one: No
- Public or private: both depending on settings

### Overview

Twitter is a microblogging site, with users setting up personal or organisational accounts that then share updates in 280 character bursts called tweets.

These tweets can have images or videos attached to them, and can also share hyperlinks to other websites.

80% of twitter interactions are done via the smart phone app, making it a very accessible source of information when on the go.

### What your account will look like

Your public-facing account identity is denoted by a name, logo, a header image, a unique account username that begins with @ called a handle, a biography and a website link if you want to add that too.

This also features a stream of your tweets that are listed chronologically from newest first.

### How people will interact with your account

When you set up an account, you are encouraged to “follow” other accounts, and an aggregation of their tweets will display in roughly chronological order in your own private twitter feed.

People generally follow upwards of one hundred accounts, and with 500 million tweets sent per day, if people choose to follow you, your tweets will be jostling for space and attention on others’ twitter feeds.

### Other features

- You are able to privately message people through Direct Messaging (DMs).
- You can tag other organisations handles in the copy of the tweet, or in a photo.
- You can also use #hashtags, which allow users to click through and see all other tweets that use the same hashtag.



- Users can create lists, which are groupings of accounts for whatever interest suits them. Lists are a great way of bringing people together who work in a certain field, or are all attending the same event. Accounts will be notified when they are added to a list and will be able to view others on the same list. Lists are visible and even those not on the list can see those who are, or what lists your account appears on.

### How to build your audience

- follow accounts that you would like to follow you too as they often follow you back
- advertise your new account on other channels like newsletters
- ask for it to be promoted on the @royalsocbio Twitter account
- Post content using popular hashtags so people can find your account via your content
- Engage with others through liking content or replying where appropriate to increase your visibility to others

### Other accounts you should follow

This list is by no means exhaustive – follow accounts that you think you will benefit seeing content from, and may also be interested in following you back and seeing your content.

- Members and Fellows
- Other branch accounts
- local businesses
- local universities
- academics at those universities
- local news outlets
- local politicians
- local museums
- other science-related local organisations
- bigger science organisations

### What appears publicly

It is important to keep this in mind, especially when running an account that is seen as representative of the RSB. Elements of your account that appear publicly include:

- Your twitter profile
- Your tweets
- Who you follow
- Who follows you
- Tweets you like
- Lists you appear on

### What doesn't appear publicly

- your personal twitter feed
- DMs sent to you
- Your email address
- Your location (if turned off)
- If you are online

### How often should you post

You should tweet three to seven times a week is ideal, although you can tweet up to every hour if you want to. As your content will be competing against others tweeting to appear on people's twitter feeds, tweeting regularly throughout the day is ideal.

### Pros of using twitter

Allows for sharing short bursts of information that can be tagged using hashtags so people looking up certain topics can come across your content very easily. It is also easier to set up, manage and build an audience than the other two platforms are.

### Cons of using twitter

You need to post more regularly than other accounts to ensure your content appears long enough in people's feeds. Twitter can also be somewhat of an echo chamber, so don't take what you are seeing as a common viewpoint or opinion to be representative of an audience as a whole.

### Top tips for twitter

- include images or a video in your tweet as this increases the likelihood of someone seeing and engaging with your tweet
- Download the mobile phone app to allow you to tweet on the go, especially if you are attending an interesting event
- Tag other people's handles in tweets where relevant, they'll receive a notification so are more likely to see your content and may retweet it too
- Pin a tweet to the top of the page so visitors will always see that tweet first. You can include in that key details you can't fit in your biography or an event or competition you want to constantly promote
- Use a free scheduling tool like Hootsuite, Buffer or Tweetdeck to line up tweets ahead of time so you don't have to keep posting in real time
- Post a tweet several different times throughout the week to ensure more people who use the platform at different times see the content
- Retweet content that others may find interesting to add depth to your stream
- See what topics are 'trending' e.g. what hashtags are popular at any given time, and if relevant, tag content with that so others may come across it
- Use hashtags but do so sparingly, so they don't detract from the flow of the tweet. Choose hashtags that aren't too broad so people can find your content easily: #scicomm or #scipolicy is more targeted and therefore more effective than #science
- Post videos that either have subtitles or doesn't require sound – most users browse Twitter with their speakers off
- If you've live tweeted an event or seen a lot of different content that others may be interested in viewing altogether, consider creating a "twitter moment." This links different tweets together into a sequence that people can scroll through, and you can set a title page and tweet the moment out altogether. This can be done on both the app and via desktop.

### Facebook pages



- 2.2 billion monthly active users (December 2017)
- Available on desktop and via smart phone app
- You do need a personal account to manage a page
- All pages are public

## Overview

Facebook's primary function is to set up a personal profile that you use to "friend" others who can then see your profile and information. You will see status updates or media shared by your friends in your personal Facebook feed.

Your status updates and the media you share will show up on your friends own Facebook feeds.

## What your branch account will look like

Organisations cannot set up a personal profile, so instead set up "pages."

Pages are similar to set up and appearance to personal profiles, but have additional features such as opening or closing times, mission statements, the options to leave reviews, contact details and a map function to allow users to get directions to your organisation.

A page most prominently features posts from the page such as status updates, photo albums or videos that users can like and comment on like a post from a personal user.



## How people will interact with your account

You don't become "friends" with a page like you do with other users on Facebook, instead users are encouraged to like "pages" so that status updates and media shared by the page also appear in their Facebook field.

Content that appears on a user's Facebook feed is only visible to that user, and is listed using the site's algorithm so is not chronological. This algorithm makes posts appear in the feed that users are mostly likely to engage with, and ensures posts from one person or page can't dominate or saturate a user's feed.

## How to build your audience

- Advertise your new page on other channels like newsletters
- Post regular content so you remain active and visible
- Post content and encourage others to tag their friends in the comments so people will discover your page
- Invite personal contacts you know to like the page

## What appears publicly

It is important to keep this in mind, especially when running an account that is seen as representative of the RSB. Elements of your account that appear publically include:

- The page itself including logos and header images
- Posts from the page including status updates or photos
- Information about the organisation as listed on the page
- Comments left by people on the posts
- Reviews of the organisation left by people

### What doesn't appear publicly

- Who the admins of the pages are
- Your own personal Facebook profile
- Any activity of your personal profile
- Your personal contact details
- Others who like the page
- Scheduled posts
- Messages sent and received by the page

### How often should you post

Post around once a day to start with as any more frequently and the algorithm will limit how often the posts appear in people's feeds.

### Pros of running a Facebook page

Delivers content directly to the same feeds people use to stay up to date with friends and family. Most individuals have a Facebook profile, so it is likely your target audience will have Facebook profiles.

### Cons of running a Facebook page

People need to actively find and like a Facebook page, so promotion via other channels is essential. It is the hardest platform to set an account up on out of the three.

### Top tips for running a Facebook page

- Videos see a lot of interaction on Facebook, so upload video content where possible
- Include website links in your posts so people can find out more about what you are promoting
- Engage with people who post on your statuses
- Post statuses with that encourage engagement, such as asking followers what species they enjoy spotting in a local wildlife spot, what people's thoughts are regarding relevant news stories etc.
- Scheduling in content to publish for later is a great way to manage content efficiently. When you go to post a status, you can schedule the post to appear later, which is a great feature for lining up content
- Get multiple people to help manage the page, so the workload is shared. Just ensure everyone schedules content on the same platform to avoid duplication
- Share posts from other pages if you are short of content – it will still attract people to your page, just be sure the content you are sharing isn't defamatory or copyright protection

## Instagram



- 800 million monthly active users (December 2017)
- Can only post via the smartphone app but can view on desktop
- Do not need a personal account to have an organisational one
- Can have either a public or private account

### Overview

Instagram is the fastest growing social media channel out of those listed here, and is more popular with a younger demographic than twitter and Facebook.

Users set up profiles that showcase their posts for other users to scroll through. You can also follow others to see their posts appear in your own private Instagram feed.

You can like other posts but you can't share them as your own without an additional third party app.

Post captions can include hashtags that function the same way as those on Twitter. However, because of the larger character limit, often these are not included in the caption but instead grouped together at the end, as they are then not necessarily displayed either but can still be used to find the post.

Like twitter and Facebook, Instagram also has a private messaging function.

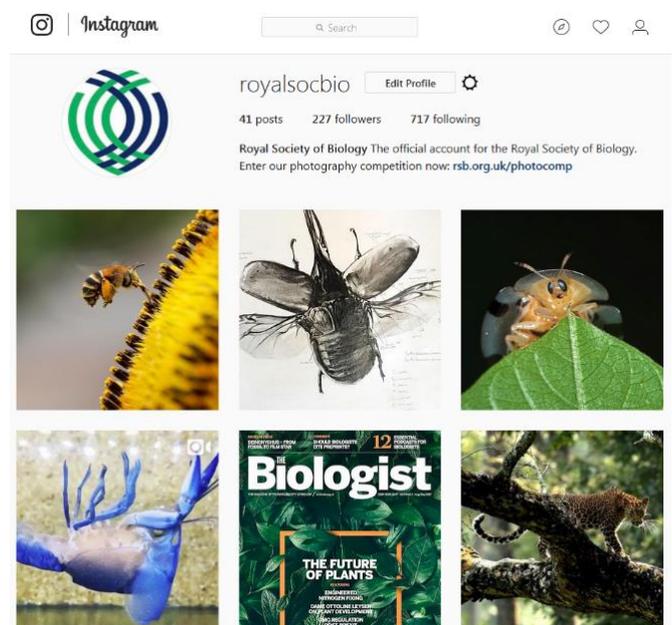
### What your branch account will look like

Your outwards facing account will display all of your posts in rows of three, with details of your account at the top of the page with your profile picture.

Instagram allows users to post “stories,” these are images or video clips that only display for a limited amount of time when played, and that all disappear completely after 24 hours. You can manually save story clips that display at the top of your profile that can be customised into groups, then viewed beyond the 24 hour period.

### How people will interact with your account

Posts from the accounts you follow will appear in your private Instagram feed, which lists posts roughly chronologically, albeit slightly curated according to their algorithm. People will like your posts, comment on them, or are able to share them in private chats that you won't be able to see. They may choose to actively follow your account and view your stories.



### How to build your audience

- follow accounts that you would like to follow you too as they often follow you back
- advertise your new account on other channels like newsletters
- ask for it to be promoted on the @RoyalSocBio Instagram account
- Post content using popular hashtags so people can find your account via your content
- Engage with others through liking content or replying where appropriate to increase your visibility to others

### Other accounts you should follow

This list is by no means exhaustive – follow accounts that you think you will benefit seeing content from, and may also be interested in following you back and seeing your content.

- Local Members and Fellows
- other branch accounts
- local businesses
- local universities
- academics at those universities
- local news outlets
- local politicians
- local museums
- other science-related local organisations
- national science organisations

### What appears publicly

It is important to keep this in mind, especially when running an account that is seen as representative of the RSB. Elements of your account that appear publically include:

- The page itself including your logo, blurb and description
- All posts displayed in rows of three on the page
- What posts you like
- Accounts you follow
- Your current story

### What doesn't appear publicly

- Your own Instagram feed of the posts of accounts you follow
- Private messages you send and receive

### How often should you post

Post between once a day and once a week. People's Instagram feeds do not display posts chronologically, so posts can appear in people's feeds several days after they were originally posted.

### Pros of using Instagram

Visually engaging and a great way to reach a younger demographic on a fast growing platform.

### Cons of using Instagram

Finding visually stimulating and high quality images or videos to use to promote content can be difficult, especially when it is not clear what media may best represent say an event or an update.

### Top tips for running an Instagram page

- Follow lots of other accounts to get your profile on their radar, and also to pursue for inspiration
- Use lots of hashtags to promote your post so others will find it and then your account
- Choose photos that are visually stunning – photos of wildlife do particularly well on Instagram when tagged with #naturephotography #animalphotography #wildlifephotography
- Engage with people who comment on your posts
- Update the link in your description page to a page you want people to visit after they visit your profile, such as your branch page
- Promote on other channels like twitter and Facebook
- People will be viewing your posts individually on their feed but when they visit your profile they'll see all of your posts, so ensure your images are complementary and look good together – maybe choose a common colour theme
- Post videos that either have subtitles or doesn't require sound – most users browse Instagram with their speakers off

### What content should you post?

You need to tailor the media you want to share with the platform's capacities, to ensure it reaches users. Different platforms have different specifications for media size, and this also changes depending on where on the platform you are posting content.

## Technical limitations of a platform

	Facebook post	Twitter tweet	Instagram post
<b>Copy</b>	62,206 character limit	280 character limit	2,200 characters
<b>Web links</b>	Supported	Supported	Not supported
<b>Hashtags</b>	Supported	Supported	Supported
<b>Photos: GIF, JPEG and PNG</b>	Up to 5MB  Minimum: 600px by 335px  Recommended: 1200 by 628px  Aspect ratio: not defined	Up to 5MB  Minimum: 600px by 335px  Recommended: 1200px by 628px  Aspect ratio: 16:9	Up to 5MB  Minimum: 612px by 612px  Recommended: 1080px by 1080 px  Aspect ratio: between 1.91:1 and 4:5
<b>Videos</b>	Up to 1.75 GB  Minimum width: 600px  Aspect ratio: 4:3  Maximum duration: 45 minutes	Up to 512MB  Minimum width: 600px  Aspect ratio: between 1:3 and 3:1  Maximum duration: 2 minutes 20 seconds	Up to 50MB  Minimum width: 600px  Aspect ratio: between 1.91:1 and 4:5  Maximum duration: 60 seconds
<b>PDFs</b>	No	No	No
<b>Other documents</b>	Can be uploaded to a Facebook group only	No	No

If you have a video made from an event, consider starting a YouTube channel to promote it, whereas if you want to share a PDF of a calendar, consider that few platforms allow display PDFs correctly, so you may have to reformat your content to share those updates instead.

Different platforms are suited for different media, and you should tailor your content to what a platform shares best.

### Content suited for sharing on social media channels

- Events you are organising
- Regional grant scheme deadlines
- Your branch page on the RSB website
- Upcoming committee meetings people may be interested in attending
- Local science-based news and updates
- Interesting news or comment articles to do with the biosciences
- Events ran by partners or similar organisations your audience may find interesting
- Popular bioscience content such as interesting wildlife videos or photos
- Competitions, awards and grants available from the RSB

- RSB news stories
- Promoting other accounts on other platforms

For Instagram, you will need to find a high quality image or video as the basis of your post, and then add what you want to promote in the caption. Remember you cannot hyperlink websites in the caption of an image, so be sure to add the hyperlink to the profile description where it will be clickable.

### Social media defamation risks

When content published implicitly or explicitly conveys something damaging and untrue about an individual, group or organisation, this is considered to be defamation or is said to be defamatory.

Posting or sharing defamatory content can have legal consequences, including having to pay large settlements to victims if they decide to sue for damages alongside the costs of legal fees. Sharing includes retweeting tweets, so even if you state that “retweets are not endorsements” on your account, it won’t absolve you from liability if someone decides to sue.

As a general rule, do not publish or share content that could be seen as damaging to the character of a person, group or organisation, especially if it cannot be substantiated.

### Copyrighted content

Before you post images, video or any other content that you did not create yourself, it is essential you first check the content is licenced for reuse.

Images and videos are often published under usage rights called licences, that stipulate if and how they can be reused, manipulated, how they should be credited or if you have to pay to use them.

The Creative Commons (CC) licence is a group of several [public copyright licenses](#) that enable the free distribution of an otherwise [copyrighted](#) work. Content that is published under a CC licence is free to use, but may require attribution or may be allowed for non-commercial use only.

The following websites outline what licence their content falls under, with many being available under a CC licence:

- <https://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/>
- <https://www.pexels.com/photo-license/>
- <https://commons.wikimedia.org>
- <https://pixabay.com/>

You can also search for images published under a CC licence on their website:  
<https://search.creativecommons.org/>

If you are unsure of the licence of an already published image, reverse google image search the image and find when it was first posted online. If you cannot find any explicit allowances to reproduce the image, proceed with caution when considering posting the image.

If you find the image or video listed on a website that requires a paid subscription such as Shutterstock, do not publish.

You can read more about copyright of images and photographs on the [GOV.UK website](#)

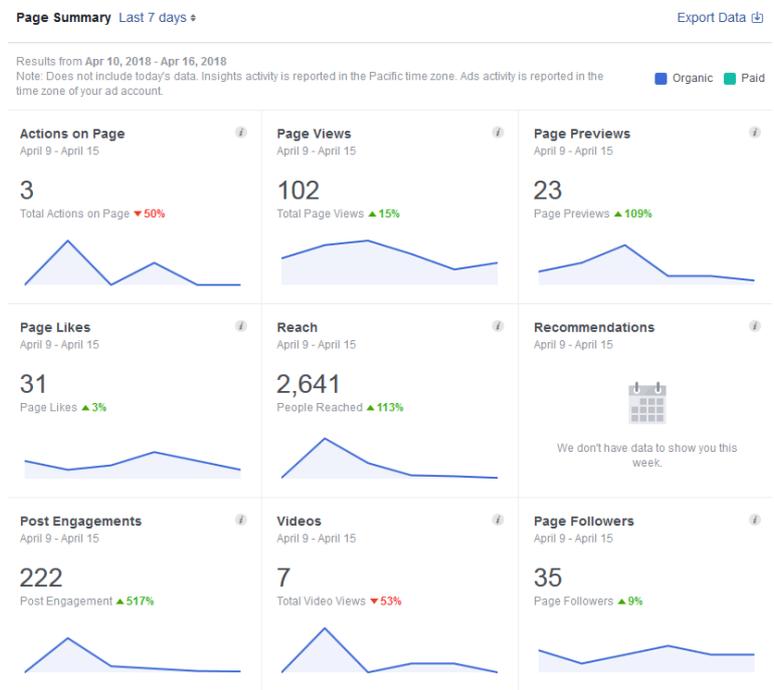
## Evaluating your progress

Once your account is up and running, you need to think about how you'll monitor the success of the account and its impact.

It is best to look back at the account and its activities once every quarter, or once every six months. Once you have your first review of the account activity, use it to set reasonable targets for the next evaluation time period.

It's good to consider all three of these metrics when setting targets for your account.

You can view stats for each post, or for a whole account. The image to the right denotes all of the stats available under the 'insights' tab on a Facebook page that you manage.



Because Instagram is mobile based, evaluating posts beyond the number of likes or audience size is tricky, and requires a third party platform, but these metrics are more than adequate to note when starting out.

## Audience size

This is denoted by the number of people who follow or like your account.

If you are looking to measure the number of people you are bringing into your network, use the number of people who follow or like your page.

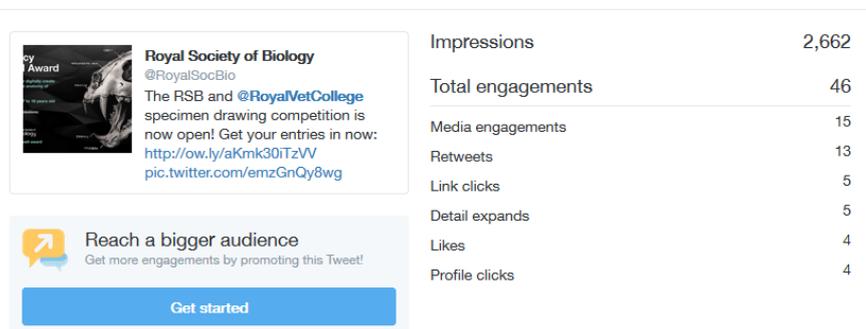
## Engagement

This is slightly different for each platform, but generally encompasses people interacting with your posts such as liking them, retweeting them, clicking through to links, and even expanding images or clicking through to your profile through the post.

To measure engagement, use the figures that come from comments, likes, retweets or click numbers.

On twitter, you can view the engagement and other stats for each individual tweet, available via a mini graph icon under each tweet.

### Tweet Activity



## Reach

A post is said to reach someone if it appears in their feed and they view it whilst scrolling.

Posts tend to appear in the feeds of others, even if they are not following your account or liking your page. If their friends engage with a post, especially in large numbers, they are more likely to see that content.

Users can also view posts friends have engaged with if you check out their activity.

For twitter, some tweets may also be viewed multiple times by the same account. Therefore reach isn't always just the number of people who follow your account or like your page.

The total people who see posts is therefore said to be the post's reach. Reach can be broken down into:

### Potential reach

The potential number of people a post may reach, estimated on the account or page audience.

### Total/ Post reach

The number of people a post definitely reached. For Facebook posts, this is listed per post.

### Impressions

A term specific for twitter, this is how many times the tweet was read by.

## Other social media channels you may consider

### YouTube

Great if you have a lot of video content you want to share.

### Linked In

Similar to Facebook in set up, you can make a profile and build a network of others you know.

People use it more for professional network building as it allows people to list their career history, their specific skillsets and current employment status.

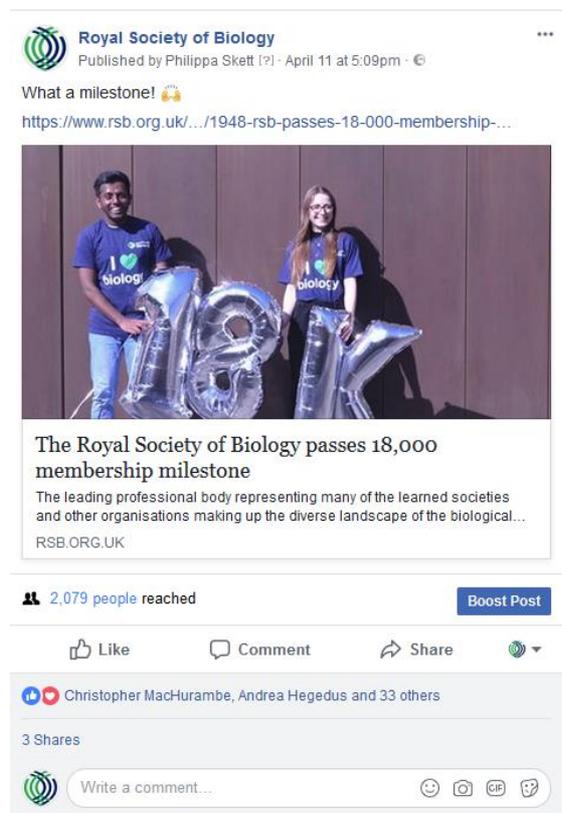
This is great for reaching early career researchers through to professors, as many active academics will have an account.

### Snapchat

This is very popular with younger users, usually those in higher education or earlier. This social media site is only app based, and allows users to send images that expire after a set number of seconds. Building a network is difficult, but does reach a demographic many other social media sites do not.

### Flickr

This is a photo sharing site, with the ability to post albums that users can scroll through and download photos from. Flickr is useful if you take lots of photos at your events and want to make them accessible.



## **Pinterest**

This is great for sharing images and things like recipes, craft tips, or other lists and snippets of info that others then 'pin'.

### **General hints and tips for running a social media account**

- Social media sites are constantly changing and updating, and to get the most out of these features you should look to use your account as regularly as possible to get used to the platform and explore its features.
- You don't need to only use the account when posting or scheduling content; take time to scroll through your twitter and Instagram feeds or visit other Facebook pages to see how others use the platforms and see what people do well.
- If you have personal accounts already, see what organisational accounts you already follow and see what they do and what you think works well.
- If you are struggling to keep up with maintaining your account, ask others to help, and even draw up a schedule to ensure you are all posting consistently. Maybe take charge for a week or a fortnight at a time before allowing another admin to take the lead.
- Line up your content using scheduling platforms such as Hootsuite for twitter and Instagram, or scheduling posts ahead of time on Facebook. Hootsuite allows you to author posts then set the time and date the post will be published, regardless of whether or not you are online
- Although the press and communications manager is unable to help you post or schedule content, if you need further help or advice do contact them, and they can provide more specific guidance and help.

And finally, have fun with it! Social media is meant to be fun, accessible and friendly, so ensure your posts reflect that and the personality of your branch.

**Philippa Skett**  
**Press and Communications Manager**  
**June 2018**

# RSB social media policy and guidance

July 2018

## Table of Contents

Social media use within the RSB.....	2
What platforms count as social media? .....	2
Representation of the RSB online .....	2
Published content versus sharing content .....	3
Opening new RSB accounts .....	4
Social media rules of conduct .....	5
Rescinding access to accounts.....	7
Social media defamation risks.....	7
Copyrighted content rules and guidance .....	7
Publishing or sharing photos of people on RSB accounts .....	8
Personal social media use for employees.....	8
Press contacts and enquiries .....	8
Further help and guidance .....	8

## Social media use within the RSB

At the Royal Society of Biology (RSB), social media platforms are used to raise the profile of the RSB and communicate RSB activity.

There are accounts on many social media platforms that are representative of the whole organisation, but there are also a number of accounts that represent subsets of RSB activity, such as branches or Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

Individuals who can be identified as employed by the RSB are also likely to hold a number of social media accounts.

Social media platforms publish and share content at a fast pace to potentially very large audiences, so it is essential that the use and management of any accounts that could be considered as representative of the RSB reflect the values of the Society.

This policy outlines what is expected of any social media account associated with the RSB, including personal accounts run by those who can be identified as RSB employees. It also includes guidance for when considering setting up a new RSB account and deciding on content to publish.

## What platforms count as social media?

Broadly, 'social media' refers to online platforms that allow users to set up accounts and facilitate communication and networking with others.

Well-known social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, but there are hundreds of sites that can be classed as social media platforms, with different platforms optimised to deliver content or interact with audiences in different ways.

Accounts publish or share content with others, either publicly or privately, and this content may include text such as statuses or tweets; discussions such as forum posts, photos, images, illustrations, video or audio.

Platforms will also allow users to do a number of things beyond posting content from their account, such as start or join groups or fan pages, advertise events or products, leave reviews for businesses and share varying degrees of private information and updates.

## Representation of the RSB online

Activity of the RSB can be represented in a number of ways online. Accounts on platforms may look to communicate all of the activity of the RSB to a broad audience, or focus more specifically on a subset of RSB activity, to communicate to a more narrow audience.

### RSB main accounts

On many popular platforms, there are dedicated accounts that represent the RSB as a whole and publish and share a wide range of content to a target audience.

Examples of these include the [RSB Twitter account](#), [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#). These are henceforth referred to **RSB main accounts**.

These accounts look to build an audience that is broadly interested in the RSB, and these accounts will look to publish information on a wide range of RSB activity.

The content for these accounts is curated and the activity maintained through direction of the RSB press and communications manager.

## **RSB subset accounts**

Accounts can also be set up to represent subsets of RSB activity; these accounts publish content specific to that subset.

These are henceforth referred to as **RSB subset accounts**, and look to build audiences that are primarily interested in content more specific to that subset of activity.

There are a number of markers that indicate that an account on a social media platform can be reasonably assumed to be an RSB subset account or an RSB main account.

Such markers include, but are not limited to:

- Use of RSB logos, either partially or as a whole
- The RSB name, either abbreviated or in full
- RSB email addresses, for example used as logins listed as contact details
- RSB boilerplates or any copy that states or implies that the platform is a channel of, or associated with the RSB

RSB subset accounts may be set up by those involved with the activity. Accounts may be set up to represent:

- SIGs and their members
- committees and their members
- branches and their committee members
- advisory groups and their members
- departments of the RSB and their staff
- activity run by RSB staff or volunteers associated with the RSB
- RSB publications

It is reasonable to assume that any activity of an RSB subset account may be interpreted as being a reflection of views of the RSB as a whole.

Such activity includes, but is not limited to:

- the content posted and shared
- pages and posts liked
- the groups or forums joined
- other accounts followed and interacted with
- content viewed

These accounts will be monitored by the RSB press and communications manager, but the responsibility for curating content and ensuring the account adheres to the RSB social media rules of conduct falls to volunteers or staff associated with the RSB groups running the accounts.

## **Published content versus sharing content**

**Published content** in this instance refers to content that is posted by the account, which is then shared to its audience.

Examples of published content includes sending a tweet, posting a Facebook status, or posting an Instagram photo.

**Shared content** is content that is not originally published by an account, but still shared with an accounts followers. Platforms can enable an account to share content that they did not publish such as being able to retweet tweets or repost images.

Even if content shared is still linked to the original publisher (such as in a retweet), accounts can still be liable for sharing content that may be problematic.

An account will still be held responsible for sharing media that may be considered defamatory, feature photos of those who have not expressed their permission to be photographed, or break other rules of conduct outlined in this policy.

For more information, see *Social media defamation risks*, below.

### Opening new RSB accounts

Before opening a new RSB account, those who wish to do so must:

- contact the RSB staff member who directly oversees their activity for guidance and advice
- obtain approval from the RSB press and communications manager to run the account; who will set it up on their behalf

All associated RSB social media accounts have to be added to the RSB communications matrix, which lists all communications channels of the RSB and is available to all staff on the S:// drive.

### Setting up a new RSB main account

These are to be set up by the RSB press and communications manager, and due consideration should be made for the following to decide if a new account is necessary:

- Who is the target audience of the platform?
- Is this target audience one the RSB needs to engage with?
- Why does the RSB need to engage with this audience?
- Could existing profiles or accounts be used to engage with this audience?
- What content needs to be communicated to this audience?
- What platform is best suited to sharing this content?
- How will content for this platform be curated?
- How will content for this platform be published or scheduled?
- How will the audience be established and grown on this platform?
- For how long will the account be open and active?
- How will the impact of the account be measured?

### Setting up an RSB subset account

It is unlikely approval will be granted to set up a new RSB subset account if the platform does not already have an account dedicated to representing the whole of the RSB.

Consider the following to decide if a new account is necessary:

- What are the overall aims of the group/ department/ project or committee?
- Does fulfilling these aims require communication and engagement with a certain audience?
- Could existing profiles or accounts be used to meet these aims?
- Is there evidence that the target audience uses this platform?
- What content will be shared with this audience?
- What platform is best suited to sharing this content?
- For how long will the audience need to be engaged?

The logistics of running an account also need to be considered:

- Is there someone who knows how to set up and maintain an account on this platform?
- How will content be curated?
- How will content be published at a schedule suitable for the platform?
- How will an audience be established, engaged with, and grown?
- For how long will the account be open and active?
- How will the impact of the account activity be measured?

Practicalities of running the account, security and long term goals of the account, also need to be considered:

- Who will be able to access the account and hold passwords?
- Who will be expected to publish content and when?
- How will the account be promoted through other channels?
- How will activity be brought to an end (if the account is temporary)?
- Are there financial costs with running the account?
- Will the account managers have sufficient time to manage the account actively?

Unless these questions can be answered sufficiently, it is unlikely permission will be granted to set up and run an RSB subset account.

If permission is granted, the RSB press and communications manager has resources to help volunteers and staff members in running an RSB subset account, which they will share upon request.

### Social media rules of conduct

Staff and volunteers must adhere to the following rules of conduct when managing an RSB subset account or RSB main account.

Staff and volunteers should also be aware of, and adhere to, the [RSB Code of Conduct](#) when conducting themselves online.

Posted or shared content:

- must be interesting, engaging and informative
- must be timely and relevant
- must be relevant to the interests of the target audience
- must be age appropriate for the target audience
- must only include media that is licenced for reuse (See *Copyrighted content*, below)
- must be free from spelling and grammatical errors
- must be free from profanity or indecent material
- must be accurate and not risk being defamatory (See *Social media defamation risks*, below)

Content that should not be published or shared:

- Any personal information regarding members, volunteers or staff
- Confidential or sensitive information, unless explicit permission to share has been obtained
- Meeting minutes that are not for public circulation
- Financial information including bank account or credit/ debit card details
- Legal, constitutional or financial proceedings of the RSB
- Photos of people, especially those underage, from whom permission to publish photos of them has not been obtained (See *Publishing or sharing photos of people*, below)

#### Artwork, logos, branding and style:

- All RSB logos must be provided by the RSB press and communications manager to ensure they are of appropriate quality and adhere to style guidelines
- Logos should not be created or redesigned independently: should a new logo be needed, this must be discussed and approved by the Head of Membership and Marketing
- Banners, headers and other permanent imagery used elsewhere on the account should be approved by the RSB press and communications manager
- If a logo cannot be used, it must be clear to users that they are interacting with a page associated with the RSB
- Media posted must adhere to the style and copy guidelines of the RSB
- Copy must be authored in the third person unless posted from an account that represents an individual role

#### Political affiliation and sponsorship:

- The account must remain politically neutral, through the content of media it posts and shares and also through the actions and interactions of the account itself
- The account must not be used to generate income
- The account must not post, like, share or otherwise endorse sponsored content

#### Harassment and bullying:

- All account activity must comply with the RSB's [Discrimination and Equal Opportunities Policy](#) and [RSB Code of Conduct](#); harassment, insults, bullying, intolerance and any other form of behaviour or discrimination prohibited in the workplace is also prohibited online

#### Account maintenance and upkeep:

- The account must not be used for personal use
- The account must appear to be active and not appear to be neglected
- Information linked to the account must be accurate and kept up to date

#### Account access and security:

- The press and communications manager must have login passwords to all RSB subset accounts and RSB main accounts
- Passwords must be managed in accordance with the [RSB password policy and guidance](#)
- RSB subset accounts and RSB main accounts should only be accessed on devices that are password protected
- Others should not be allowed to access devices that are linked to RSB subset accounts and RSB main account
- Only the RSB press and communications manager should change the password on a regular basis for an RSB subset account or RSB main account
- Those posting to the account can change the password if there is an immediate risk to the account's security, but must inform the RSB press and communications manager of the new password as soon as possible following such an incident, and also explain the security risk in full
- Contact details listed publically to an account should only be of RSB office phone numbers, or RSB email addresses
- An RSB account or subset account should not be linked to a personal mobile number for security or login purposes

## Rescinding access to accounts

The RSB press and communications manager is able to rescind access or shut down RSB main accounts and RSB subset accounts without notice if there is evidence the account is in breach of any of the above rules of conduct, but specifically if:

- The account has become inactive for a substantial amount of time
- The security of the account is compromised
- The account is a threat to the security of other platforms
- The account is a threat to someone's personal security

## Social media defamation risks

Media that implicitly or explicitly conveys something damaging and untrue about an individual, group or organisation, is considered to be defamation, or is said to be defamatory.

Posting or sharing defamatory content can have legal consequences, including having to pay financial settlements and/or legal costs to those who feel they have been defamed. This cost depends on the scale of the perceived reputational damage the publishing or sharing of defamatory has caused.

Media should not be published or shared that could be seen as damaging to the character of a person, group or organisation, but especially if it cannot be substantiated.

Simply sharing what others have said still means users may be liable for defamation and be penalised as a result, even if they were not the original author of the defamatory content.

For more help on understanding defamation or have further questions, contact the RSB press and communications manager. More information on [defamation is available online](#).

## Copyrighted content rules and guidance

Photographs, illustrations and other media will generally be protected by copyright. This means that a user will usually need the permission of the copyright owner(s) if they want to share the content on their own accounts. The copyright owner(s) often are those who have created the media, but may be their employers or organisations to which they have sold that media. More information on the copyright of images and photographs on the [GOV.UK website](#).

The owner of published media can share their work under certain licences which stipulate if and how they can be reused, manipulated, how they should be credited or if they require payment for use.

If explicit allowances to reproduce the image cannot be found, they should not be published, especially if they appear on a site that require a paid subscription to download media from, such as Shutterstock.

Creative Commons (CC) is a non-profit organization that has created copyright licenses that outline the conditions for the distribution of copyrighted work. The organisation has put together three layers of licenses that clearly state how media can be shared, edited, and credited.

Media that is published under certain CC licences are free to use, but may require attribution or may be allowed for non-commercial use only. More information about the licences can be found on the [Creative Commons website](#).

Images published under a CC licence are available on the [Creative Commons website](#).

Media available through the [Wikimedia Commons](#) is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution/Share-Alike License](#), and is a good source of free to use, educational media.

## Publishing or sharing photos of people on RSB accounts

Photos should not be published or shared of people from whom permission to publish or share these images has not been obtained. This is especially important for those under the age of 18, and when parental consent is required.

When considering taking photos at an event, organisers should be contacted beforehand to find out whether all or just some of the attendees have consented to having their photo taken and or distributed.

Any photos taken that may still feature those who have not consented to having their photo taken must not be made public and deleted as soon as possible after the event.

For more advice on photographing and recording children during events and activities, please consult the [NSPCC Guidance](#) and also the RSB press and communications manager.

## Personal social media use for employees

The following applies if an RSB staff member is considering or already has a personal account or profile that they maintain irrespective of their job role or employment at the RSB.

Individual's personal accounts can be linked to the RSB in a number of ways, not only through the information they actively choose to disclose regarding their employment but also through:

- The copy they post or share
- The pages they like or groups of which they are a member
- The posts in which others have tagged or mentioned them
- Other information posted elsewhere regarding employment status and linked to their identity e.g. job titles on LinkedIn, the 'Our team' page on the RSB website

If individuals are identifiable **in any way** on social media channels as a current employee of the RSB, it is recommended that they also disclose prominently and where appropriate that the views or opinions they publish are their own and not representative of the RSB.

However, **any such disclosure does not exclude staff from being held accountable** if they are found to be non-compliant with any RSB policy that states clearly the expectations for staff behaviour and the consequences of falling short of these.

It is therefore recommended that all staff take measures to ensure content they post or share anywhere online is consistent with the behaviour expected of RSB staff and could not be seen to be at odds with the values of the organisation.

## Press contacts and enquiries

If staff or volunteers associated with the RSB are contacted by any member of the press for any reason, they must contact the press and communications manager in the first instance and seek advice before replying.

## Further help and guidance

For other questions regarding social media, [contact the RSB press and communications manager](#).

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