

FLORIDA COURTS SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY AND GUIDELINES
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(Details of the document are subject to change)

Introduction

These guidelines are established to prescribe a statewide policy with regard to the use of social media within the context of judicial business and to guide trial courts who are considering establishing one or more trial courts social media sites. It is intended to provide guidance to Florida Court Public Information Officers and/or their designee on the use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other social media in which the courts may participate. Social media tools are intended to be used as part of the Florida Courts Communications Plan to disseminate information and engage with individuals and partners. The way the public and media receives information is changing every day, social media can help update people in a timely and efficient manner.

The use of social media offers courts the ability to communicate messages and information to a large audience to:

- a. Provide real-time information about the court, news and events;
- b. Uphold the integrity of the judicial process and independence of the judiciary;
- c. Improve access to court services;
- d. Promote transparency and accountability;
- e. Improve the administration of justice;
- f. Communicate the value of the third branch of government;
- g. Increase public engagement with the courts; and,
- h. Drive followers to the court's website for additional information and resources.

Content Management

The social media site administrator(s) designated by the court shall:

- a. Use the official trial court-approved account when responding. Do not use personal accounts to respond to inquiries or postings.
- b. Be the only person(s) posting content. They are responsible for monitoring, managing, and removing (when necessary) any posts that do not meet the established rules/guidelines.
 - a. Designate two or three backup administrators to monitor and post to accounts in case the primary administrator is out and/or busy. Passwords will be provided to designated employees.

- b. Passwords and administrative access on all platforms will be changed whenever an authorized employee ends their employment, changes jobs to a position that is not authorized for access to social media accounts, or has access privileges revoked.
- c. All social media sites should have contact information available.
- d. Post at least once a week, if not per day. Should have a minimum activity of once a month. Target your postings to 2-3 times a month. Monitor your Insights.
- e. Comply with the Code of Judicial Conduct.
- f. Take careful consideration when removing/hiding content posted by the public as it can be a violation of user rights.
- g. Post a User Agreement and Disclaimer either on the social media site itself and/or on your website.
 - a. The statement states the policy regarding comments and parameters for participation that is allowed. (See User Agreements, Page 8)
- h. Accept the social media provider's terms of service as a responsibility of each agency.
- i. Link back to the courts website when possible.
- j. When taking pictures of groups, let them know their picture may appear on social media (but, no specific person should be identified – unless it's relevant).
 - a. When taking pictures of students visiting the court house ask permission from the teacher to take and use images of the students and the tour. Explain how you intend to use the images. Verbal consent is OK. He/she may point out certain students you are not allowed to photograph. If you take a group photo to post, ask the teacher to identify those students you are not allowed to photograph. The teacher should know this information.

Likewise, it is good practice to AVOID posting:

- a. Confidential or non-public information;
- b. Political activities (personal or those of judges), including events or stories that include judicial candidates between candidate qualifying and until Election Day;
 - a. Active candidates for office shall not be the primary focus of social media posts, but may appear performing normal court duties or participating in court sanctioned group activities or events.
 - 1. Example: If a candidate wearing campaign paraphernalia is in a photo you wish to use, either crop that person out or Photoshop image.
 - b. Campaign events should not be included in social media.
- c. Events **not** open to the public (post after it is over);
 - a. Be mindful of events where a judge is present and no security has been provided. Post these events once they have concluded.
- d. Your own opinions;
- e. Anything that violates city, state, or federal laws or regulations;
- f. Endorsements of products, private businesses, causes or political candidates;
- g. Copyrighted material without permission;

- h. Anything that constitutes official court business.
- i. Anything that would make the courts look as if they are partial to a cause one way or the other.
 - a. Examples: Breast Cancer Awareness Month; Victims Awareness Month

Social Media Platforms

FACEBOOK

Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them.

For the purpose of the Florida Courts, Facebook is used for publishing information to and for court staff, the public, attorneys, media, court participants, and governmental agencies. It can be used:

- a. For public education.
- b. To promote events.
- c. For media relations.
- d. To explain court processes and procedures.
- e. To post job openings.
- f. To gather and monitor news and information.
- g. To highlight activities, awards and recognitions of individual judges or court staff. (See (b) Political activities, Page 2)
- h. To drive traffic to main website.
- i. To inform the public of changes in operations due to emergencies, holidays, or other issues/events impacting access to the courts.
- j. Share reports, press releases, newsletters, new website features, other communication efforts, etc.
- k. Share information on new judicial officers, retirements, and ceremonies.
- l. To share stories from local news affiliates.
- m. For notification of courtroom schedules and court calendars.
- n. To release decisions or information regarding high-profile cases.
- o. To reveal a more personal side of the judiciary, i.e. human interest stories.

The following recommendations should be observed when posting content to Facebook:

- Do post a variety of content (pictures, information graphics, events, etc.) rather than only links.
- Ask for prior approval before posting pictures or information regarding a member of your court or judiciary.

- Do not moderate (non-spam) comments unless it is in violation of User Agreement.
- Try and post 4-7 times weekly and then monitor your insights.
- Highlight “good” news stories happening within your court system.
- Only tag agencies or organizations affiliated with the judicial system that are non-controversial or commercial.
- Collaborate with affiliated entities (local bar, schools, etc.) to share posts to increase exposure.

To set up a Facebook Page:

1. You will need a municipal email address dedicated to social media.
2. Pick a generic name (not your name) to create the primary Facebook base account along with your dedicated social media email address.
3. For Birthday, do not use your birthday. Use a date special to your court, if possible (goes back to 1905).
4. Skip “Step 1” of finding your friends.
5. Skip adding a profile picture and cover photo.
6. You can either skip or add a location.
7. Log in to the email account you provided during the initial account setup. Open the email from Facebook and click on the “Confirm Your Account” button.
8. Go to “Settings” (located in the upper right corner dropdown) and set your Username under the “General” category.
9. Go to “Create Page”
10. Select a Page Category, entities should select Government Organization and enter your Company Name.
 - a. *While you work on your page you can “unpublish” it, so that it is hidden. This is found under “Settings” > “General” > “Page Visibility” and check the box.*
11. Upload profile picture (180px square) and cover photo (851px by 315px).
12. Create a Username for your Page as your Facebook Page URL address. You can only change your Facebook address once.
13. Click on “Settings” to manage the ability of visitors to post comments, videos and photos.
14. Fill out your “About” section.
 - The About section should, at minimum, include: (1) Your website; (2) the Impressum; (3) a short description about your particular court.
 - *There are also additional sections to add more information.*
15. Change the “Template” of your page.
16. To turn off the reviews on your Facebook page:
 - a. On your Facebook page click into "Settings" at the top.
 - b. On the left hand side click into "General", click “Reviews.”
 - c. Make sure “Disable reviews” is checked and save changes.
17. To stop other people from publishing photos, posts and videos on your Page's Timeline:
 - a. Click “Settings” at the top of your Page.

- b. From “General”, click “Visitor Posts.”
 - c. Check “Disable posts by other people on the Page”
 - d. Click “Save Changes”
18. To verify your account:
- a. Click “Settings” at the top of your Page.
 - *You need to have a picture and cover photo to at least be eligible.*
 - b. From “General”, click “Page Verification”
 - c. Click “Verify this Page”, then click “Get Started”
 - d. Enter a publicly listed phone number for your business, your country and language.
 - e. Click “Call Me Now” to allow Facebook to call you with a verification code.
 - f. Enter the 4-digit verification code and click “Continue”
 - If you prefer to verify your Page with a business document, follow the steps above and click “Verify this Page” with documents instead at the bottom left of the window that appears, then upload a picture of an official document showing your business's name and address.
- (After Facebook receives your verification code or business document, your information is reviewed to confirm that it matches public records. A notification or email about your verification status is sent within a few days.)

To Schedule Facebook Posts in advance:

1. Create your post at the top of your Page's Timeline.
 2. Click next to “Publish” and select “Schedule.”
 3. Below “Publication”, select the date and time when you want the post to publish.
 4. Click “Schedule.”
- (You can schedule your post up to 6 months in the future (more months are shown, but if you select more than 6 months out, Facebook won't accept it). You can schedule the minutes at 00-, 10-, 20-, 30-, 40- or 50-minute marks of the hour.)

TWITTER

For the purpose of the Florida Courts, Twitter is used to interact with the news media, public, attorneys and other government entities. It can be used:

- a. For public education.
- b. To promote events.
- c. For media relations; (posting press releases or newsletters, for example.)
- d. To explain court processes and procedures.
- e. To post job openings.
- f. To release decisions or information regarding high-profile cases.

- g. To gather and monitor news and information.
- h. To highlight activities of individual judges. (See (b) Political activities, Page 2)
- i. To drive traffic to main website.
- j. To inform the public of changes in operations due to emergencies, holidays, or other issues/events impacting access to the courts.
- k. For notification of courtroom schedules and court calendars.
- l. Share information on new judicial officers, retirements, and ceremonies.
- m. To share stories from local news affiliates.

The following recommendations should be observed when posting content to Twitter:

- **Ensure your post is right the first time when posting to Twitter. You can't edit.**
- Use relevant hashtags to easily find related posts and draw attention to events or resources. But, don't use too many hashtags – 2 or 3 are acceptable.
- Retweet relevant articles - news media or bar association – appointment of new judges, for example.
- Consider using third-party applications that allow you to schedule posts in advance.
- Do not retweet from unreliable sources or anything that is not relevant.
- Tweet regularly. Post at least once a week, even if it is “evergreen” or non-time sensitive information.
- If you need to shorten a URL, go to <http://tinyurl.com/>.
- Use embedded links whenever possible to redirect users to your website.

To set up a Twitter account:

1. You will need a municipal email address or an email which is dedicated to social media.
2. Enter the name, email, password, username and click Sign Up.
3. Confirm your Twitter account. Twitter will send you a confirmation email, so check your email and look for the verification email from Twitter. Once you open it, click on the link provided.
4. Upload a profile picture and a cover photo.
5. Fill out your “About” section and website.
 - You only have 140 characters.
6. If you want to verify your twitter account you will need to fill out a form (<https://support.twitter.com/articles/20174631>) and will need an email address associated with the company or organization.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a community built on the power of visual storytelling by sharing photos and videos. It is commonly referred to as “the Facebook of photography”. Similar to Facebook or Twitter, everyone who

creates an account has a profile and news feed. Twitter, Instagram and Facebook have a very intertwined and transparent relationship.

For the purpose of the Florida Courts, Instagram is used to share photos with court staff, the public, attorneys, media, court participants, and governmental agencies. It can be used:

- a. To promote events.
- b. To provide information about courthouses through photos such as - interesting art, buildings, rooms, signs, etc.
- c. To highlight activities, awards and recognitions of individual judges or court staff. (See (b) Political activities, Page 2)
- d. To inform the public of changes in operations due to emergencies, holidays, or other issues/events impacting access to the courts.
- e. To share photos from new judicial officers, retirements, and ceremonies.

The following recommendations should be observed when posting content to Instagram:

- **Do not post anything you wouldn't want reused, reproduced, or redistributed.**
- Use relevant hashtags to easily find related posts.
- When applicable, share the post on your Twitter or Facebook accounts - this is done by linking.
- Post photo collages of one event.
- Post at the right time of day - There's statistical proof that mornings, midday, and early evening are highly active for Instagram. Thursday and Sundays are also ideal, while Friday nights and Saturdays are not usually active.
- Track Instagram statistics and activities with Iconosquare (<https://pro.iconosquare.com/>).

To set up an Instagram account you will need a mobile phone:

1. Download the app (found in the Play Store or App Store).
2. Create an Account Using an Email Address.
3. Choose a recognizable username (perhaps the same as what you use for twitter and/or Facebook).
4. Upload a profile picture.
5. Add your business name and phone number (this is optional).
6. Chose to follow people or "Skip" this step.
7. Tap on the profile button on the bottom right to see your account, then tap on the "Edit Your Profile" button at the top of the page. This is where you complete your profile.
 - a. Be sure to fill out the website and bio fields. This is the ONLY place on Instagram that allows you to use a URL. For example, if you were to post a URL in the text of a photo you're sharing, people who see it won't be able to click it.
8. Set up social sharing (optional). This is where you can link your Facebook and twitter accounts.

- a. After you log into your Facebook account, specify that you want to share to your Courts Page and not your profile. Tap “Share to” and then select the right page.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network with hundreds of millions of members, and growing rapidly. LinkedIn’s mission is to connect the world's professionals to make them more productive and successful.

For the purpose of the Florida Courts, LinkedIn is used to connect with professionals in the same industry, current and former employees, job seekers, or those with similar interests. It can be used:

- a. To post and view jobs.
- b. To build and maintain your professional network.
- c. For media relations; - posting press releases or newsletters, for example.
- d. To drive traffic to main website.
- e. To promote events.
- f. To share articles of interest.
- g. To inform the public of changes in operations due to emergencies, holidays, or other issues/events impacting access to the courts.

YOUTUBE

For the purpose of the Florida Courts, YouTube is used to share information with court participants, news media, the public at-large, and other governmental agencies. It can be used:

- a. To share positive, court related events with the public.
- b. To help people understand the courts; including self-help, how-to, or what to expect videos.
- c. To supplement training of court staff. (internal videos)
- d. For job recruitment.
- e. To improve self-represented litigants’ access to justice.
- f. To stream court events or archived hearings.
- g. To highlight issues of concerns, such as jury scams, etc.

The following recommendations should be observed when posting content to YouTube:

- Do include a video description.
- Ensure videos obey copyright and licensing laws (when using images or music.)
- Double check video and thumbnail dimensions for accuracy.

- Turn off commenting, if necessary.
- Provide transcripts for captioning.

User Agreements

If you have an active social media account these are suggested guidelines to be posted on the social media platform's site, if possible, and/or on the website for your particular Court. You should tailor the statement for your particular jurisdiction and it should be vetted by your individual court and General Counsel. It is as follows:

Terms of Use

This is a public site. The **COURT** uses it to share information about events involving the **COURT**. We update and monitor this account during regular business hours. Any comments you post here can be shared with the public or third parties without further notice. All comments and postings are subject to Florida's broad public records laws. All posts are subject to the Terms of Service of the host site.

Advertisements are placed here solely by **XXXX** and are not chosen or endorsed by this court, nor does the court get anything of value for them.

You cannot transact any court business using **XXXX**. Requests for information beyond what appears here, including public record requests, must be made in person, by mail, or to (insert email address here).

Code of Conduct

The **COURT** welcomes comments to the posts here and sharing information they contain. But, all content posted here must be respectful and relevant to the subject being discussed. Please do not include any personal information about you or anyone else. This includes your address, email address, or phone number. Please do not post any case specific inquiries. We will review tweets, messages, and posts, but cannot commit to replying. If you have specific questions or are wishing to request a public record, we ask you contact **EMAIL**.

Inappropriate Comments

The **COURT** has the right to hide or delete inappropriate content from this page, including but not limited to content that is irrelevant, inaccurate, misleading, redundant, hateful, uncivil, or disrespectful; content that constitutes or solicits an act that violates law, Rules of Court, or the Code of Judicial Conduct; attacks or complaints against others; financial or commercial solicitations; comments about a candidate for public office or party; or content that violates Facebook's or Twitter's policies. Inappropriate content that is hidden or deleted may still be disclosed to the public or third parties without further notice. Content that violates Facebook or Twitter's policies may be reported. Repeated inappropriate comments will result in the user being blocked without further notice.

External Links

The **COURT's** social media accounts may contain links to external websites. Please note that the appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute the endorsement of the **COURT**. The **COURT** is not responsible for the accuracy of any content and does not exercise any editorial control over the information you may find at these locations.

Disclaimer

The **COURT** accepts no liability or responsibility whatsoever: for the contents of any target site linked from this page; or for any data, text, software, music, sound, photographs, images, video, messages, or any other materials or content whatsoever generated by users and publicly posted on this page.

Maintenance

RECORDS RETENTION

Communications on Florida Court Social Media accounts should only contain transitory messages. Transitory messages are created primarily for the communication of information, as opposed to communications designed for the perpetuation of knowledge. Therefore, Social Media account administrators shall adhere to the following when it comes to records retention for posts on social media:

TRANSITORY MESSAGES

This record series consists of those records that are created primarily for the communication of information, as opposed to communications designed for the perpetuation of knowledge. Transitory messages do not set policy, establish guidelines or procedures, certify a transaction, or become a receipt. The informal tone of transitory messages might be compared to the communication that might take place during a telephone conversation or a conversation in an office hallway. Transitory messages would include, but would not be limited to: E-mail messages with short-lived, or no administrative value, voice mail, self-sticking notes, ~~and~~ telephone messages, and content published on court social media platforms.

RETENTION: Retain until obsolete, superseded or administrative value is lost.

THIRD PARTY APPLICATIONS

Consider using third-party applications that allow you to schedule posts in advance. Applications you may consider using are:

Hootsuite (<https://hootsuite.com/>): You are able to manage multiple Twitter, Facebook (profiles and pages), LinkedIn, WordPress, Instagram, and Google+ networks all from one place – the HootSuite dashboard. The management system allows you to monitor, engage, and measure the results of social campaigns. There is a basic free plan and a range of plans allowing more users and features for purchase. You can post to Instagram via Hootsuite, but you need to have both apps on your phone. You are able to download an analytics report with the \$10 pro plan.

TweetDeck (<https://tweetdeck.twitter.com/>): You are able to manage Twitter and Facebook accounts. You can access the free service via the web or you can download the desktop application. TweetDeck’s allows you to add as many columns as you would like for as many different profiles. You can create a dedicated column for posts you want to schedule a head of time. There is no mobile app, nor built-in analytics.

Buffer (<https://buffer.com/>): You are able to manage Twitter, Facebook (profiles, groups, and pages), LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google+ networks all from one place. You can schedule the times that posts should be shared or add updates to your Buffer queue and it will be posted for you throughout the day - and at the best times. There is a basic free plan (allows for 1 social account/platform) and a range of plans allowing more users and features for purchase. You do not have access to social analytics with the free service.

Sprout Social (<http://sproutsocial.com/>): You are able to manage Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, LinkedIn, Instagram (send and receive comments only) accounts. You are able to schedule, monitor and analyze each social channel. The analytics provide useful data like engagement percentage and how your social channels are trending over time. Via the Queue, you can post at pre-scheduled times (versus selecting a date for each one individually). There is a free 30-day trial, and plans range from \$59 to \$500 per month.

(Note: Instagram does not allow outside apps to post directly to Instagram.)

SUGGESTED EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE

Cameras:

- **SONY – DSCWX220** (around \$200.00)
- **Nikon COOLPIX B500** (around \$260.00)
- **Canon PowerShot SX720HS** (around \$330.00)

Photo Editing Apps for iPhone:

- **Diptic (FREE)**

- Create collages with photos and videos. Super Customizable — Tons of layouts to choose from. Save your own customized layouts for re-use. Add text captions, filters, colored borders, textured borders & more. You can send via email, or share by uploading directly to Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or any app that accepts JPGs and/or video files.
- **VSCO (FREE)**
 - Shoot and edit your images with superior mobile presets and advanced camera controls. Save the image to your camera roll to share on social media. Can share to Facebook via app.
- **Snapseed (FREE)**
 - 24 Tools and Filters, including: Healing, Brush, Structure, HDR, Perspective. Opens JPG and RAW files. Selective filter brush. All styles can be tweaked with fine, precise control. Share images to social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).
- **Photo Grid (FREE)**
 - Multiple features, including: Grid, Photo Editor, PinBoard, Video Slides, Stitch, and Poster. You can customize over 300 layouts for Instagram and create pictures with special effects.

Video Apps for iPhone:

- **iMovie (\$4.99)**
 - You can add a voice-over or soundtrack, even insert title slides and apply titles and transitions—all on the phone.
- **Videolicious (FREE)**
 - Choose the already existing photos or video to include, in the order you want them to appear. Then use the app to record a story behind the photos or video. You can skip this and just add music from either the app itself or iPhone playlists.
- **Magisto (FREE)**
 - Upload your photos and/or videos (or shoot some videos on your iPhone). Choose a video style. Select a soundtrack from the library (or upload your own). Choose a title for your clip, which will appear at the beginning of your video (or not...it's not a mandatory step) and VOILA, you're done!

Graphic Apps for iPhone:

- **Font Candy (FREE)**
 - Allows you to mask your photos with captions or simply overlay your images with text. Allows you to mask your images with hand-picked fonts, create intricate designs with symbols, or add clever captions to your photos.
- **Word Swag (\$4.99)**
 - Use Word Swag to: Make your own stylish quotes. Make beautiful graphics for Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr. Make graphics for your blog. Caption

your photos. Create announcements and flyers. Give your words a designer look. Word Swag also includes 590,000+ free backgrounds.

Photo Editing Apps for Android:

- **Picframe (\$0.99)**
 - PicFrame helps you combine multiple photos into amazing looking frames and share them with your friends and family. With 36 fully adjustable frames, rounded corners, adjustable photo effects, shapes, adjustable border width, background patterns and an easy border color picker you will always have a unique look.
- **A Color Story (FREE)**
 - A Color Story focuses on fresh photos, bright whites, and colors that pop. The app has—over 100 carefully crafted filters, incl. purchases; over 40 movable effects, incl. purchases; over 20 FREE tools, including curves; custom filters saved from your editing steps.
- **Adobe Photoshop Fix (FREE)**
 - Has tools that help you heal, smooth, liquify, lighten, darken, adjust color, paint, add vignettes, tweak exposure/contrast/saturation, and defocus.

Video Apps for Android:

- **Magisto (FREE)**
 - 1. Upload your photos and/or videos (or shoot some videos on your iPhone). Choose a video style. Select a soundtrack from the library (or upload your own). Choose a title for your clip, which will appear at the beginning of your video (or not...it's not a mandatory step) and you're done.
- **PowerDirector (FREE to \$5.00)**
 - Full HD movie maker power comes to your phone, with video effects, transitions, & voice over for video. Rotate, split or trim video. Make a movie with Full HD picture using simple video FX, transitions, & custom voiceover or audio soundtrack.
- **Adobe Premiere Clip (FREE)**
 - A quick automatic video editor that fixes up your videos into a highlight reel set to great music, or a powerful manual tool that lets you tweak everything from lighting to slow motion effects.

Graphics Apps for Android:

- **Font Studio (FREE)**
 - Font Studio lets you add beautiful typography to the photos you like. At the same time, combine it with elaborate filters, cool stickers, picture frames and artwork to help you make beautiful, rich and creative photos.
- **PixelLab (FREE)**
 - Offers a wide selection of presets, fonts, stickers, backgrounds, and more than 60 unique options that you can customize.

Video Editing Software for Computers:

- **iMovie, Final Cut Pro or Adobe Premier** (for Apple computers)
- **Edius or Adobe Premier** (for Windows computers)

Photo Editing Software for Computers:

- **Adobe Photoshop**
- **Adobe Photoshop Elements**

Designing Graphics and Editing Photos/Video (via the web):

- **Canva** (www.canva.com): Free, but you can purchase premium graphics and photos.
- **Be Funky** (www.befunky.com): Free. Photo Editor, Collage maker and designer.
- **PicMonkey** (www.picmonkey.com): Free, but there is a premium membership for additional features.
- **Piktochart** (piktochart.com): A limited version of the tool is available for free and offers 10 infographic templates to choose from. For a monthly fee, you get access to hundreds of templates and icons, as well as integration with SlideShare, PDF, and more.
- **Magisto** (www.magisto.com): Free, creates videos for you automatically from your photos and videos.