


# Social Media Guidelines

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These guidelines have been prepared by the BCS Social Media Lead for use at BCS. You are welcome to reuse the original guidelines (from EDINA) for your own organisation. If you do reuse them EDINA would be keen to hear from you, as it would be useful to them to know how they have been of use to others.

Contact BCS at [admin@cartography.org.uk](mailto:admin@cartography.org.uk)

If you would like to reference these guidelines, the suggested citation is:

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## INTRODUCTION

The BCS supports society, group or event blogs, microblogs (such as Twitter, etc.) and social media presences (such as Facebook pages). If you are thinking of creating a social media presence or starting a blog **please start by speaking to the BCS Chair of the Publications Committee** who will be able to give you advice on finding the right social media tools and spaces (via the Social Media Team) for your audience and will be able to give you advice on how to get started.

Blogs, microblogs and other social media tools offer greater flexibility in terms of content, tone and timeliness compared with more formal websites and newsletters. They are a less formal and more discursive way to communicate between members or interested members of the public, SIGs or users. However, these presences are still public records so you **always need to bear in mind that you are still representing BCS** when you post and interact in these spaces.

This guide offers practical guidelines and help for setting up and running a BCS social media presence. If you are considering writing about BCS or your work on a personal social media presence (such as a blog or twitter) then please also see the Personal Guidelines below.

## SET UP

**Consult** – Discuss with Council and obtain their approval for any new social media presence. Contact the Chair of Publications and discuss the most appropriate social media platform or strategy for your event/service. Chair of Publications and/or another named back-up person on Council should subsequently be provided with login and password details to ensure continuity of access/posting (or be made an Admin role if they should use their own login/password like Facebook).

**Contact** - Appoint a member of the group or event to be the main contact point for your presence so that one person can maintain a common editorial line and regularly moderate comments.

**Authenticity** - Be sure that your social media presence includes a labelled link to the BCS website (where space is short link back to the relevant official BCS website – e.g. the service website or event page). You should also ensure that you include the following text (linked to BCS website) in the footer of your blog/microblog/social media presence where possible:

<http://www.cartography.org.uk/> The British Cartographic Society is a charitable body,  
Registered Charity Number 240034

Use branding, both project/service logos/colour customisation and BCS and supporters' logos). Ask our Social Media Team or graphic design support for assistance in creating appropriately branded images/logos/backgrounds.

**Disclaimers** - Include any necessary disclaimers (for example that your blog does not necessarily represent the views of all project partners) and appropriate usernames (and/or the project/service name reflected in the URL) consistent with this approach. Ask the Social Media

Lead if you would like any advice on doing this or if your project/service's name is already in use on the service you want to use.

**Profile** - Be transparent about who is posting or contributing to your blog or social media presence (include real names and job titles whenever possible). Ensure that, if applicable, the profile associated with this presence is filled out with a suitable image(s), link(s) to event/service page(s), and the name and role of the blogger/contributor. If several people are editing an event/service blog it may be appropriate to list all of those involved. It is most important to ensure the social media identity relates back to the appropriate event, service or team.

## CONTENT

**Tone** - When setting up a new social media account, or posting to an existing account, it's always good to consider the tone of voice you want to communicate. Be appropriate and professional in presentation and tone, but also consider how you wish to engage with your followers. The [LSE Twitter guide for academics and researchers](#) is a great resource for considering different styles and tones of voice that can be achieved in Twitter's 140 characters. Much of this is easily transferrable to other social media applications too.

**BCS Social Media team have agreed to adopt “a middle ground” approach to our tone in that it is not just factual links, as that can come across as too formal, but that messages should convey personality without becoming too informal.**

le: “Join us at our Annual BCS/SoC conference in September <https://tinyurl.com/y77m4ebu>”  
rather than the formal: “Registration now open for BCS/SoC Conference <https://tinyurl.com/y77m4ebu>”

**Commercially Sensitive Material** – Consider if content may be commercially sensitive (e.g. minutes that have not been agreed, potential partnerships, unpublished research, bids in progress, funding situations) and if it should be published or not. If an item/area/announcement is already public it is likely reasonable to discuss it, but seek advice from your line manager and/or the service/project team manager over any item where the publication status or commercial confidentiality is unclear.

**Copyright and Take Down** - Always ensure all links, images, slides etc. are appropriately credited, linked to, and that the content involved is responsibly created in as much as it is reasonable to check (e.g. not the result of copying, piracy, etc.). This both means ensuring your own postings do not breach rights/copyright and do not link to any dubious (pirated, copied, unlicensed) materials, and ensuring that images are cleared for use (or are [Creative Commons](#) licensed and appropriately credited). If a complaint is made or a copyright holder would like their material to be removed from the site, please ensure that you follow the [BCS Take Down Policy](#)

**Frequency** - Please publish regularly and relevantly. Think about length, presentation, quality (of content, writing and spelling) of your posts and ensure that they are consistent with expected professional standards. See the ‘Updating Your Blog’ section below for more information. By setting up a social media presence you are committing to update it regularly. If the account is to be used only sporadically for a specific purpose (e.g. news, service update, or an event that only

runs at a specific time of the year), ensure that this is clearly stated on the account. Additionally, communicate if there is to be a pause or a break in use of the presence, e.g. tweet or write a blog post explaining why the account will not be updated for a period of time.

**Comments** - Comment moderation should be used to limit the potential for spam or abuse (this will be possible in most but not all social media spaces). Moderate comments regularly. If moderation is not available in a social media space (e.g. Twitter) then you should monitor comments and “garden” (remove spam posts, respond to others as needed) regularly. Ensure that there is a secondary contact for the blog/presence so that comments can be viewed, moderated and responded to in the event of the primary contact being away from the office for any extended period. See **Moderating Comments** section for more information. Do remember that people may submit a *Freedom of Information (FOI)* request through social media channels and we are **legally required** to respond. Forward any FOIs about BCS or services to the BCS Helpdesk: [admin@cartography.org.uk](mailto:admin@cartography.org.uk).

**Exit Strategy** - If a social media presence, particularly a blog or microblog, is not being kept up to date then the best course of action may be to formally cease updating it (and post a final comment that indicates that it will no longer be updated), take a copy of your posts for archiving and, in some cases, subsequently remove it.

## MODERATING COMMENTS

When you have a new comment on your blog you should work through the Comment Moderation Flow Chart (see end) which will help you decide the best action to take (if any comment falls outside this guidance please contact the Social Media Lead and appropriate updates and changes will be made to the chart).

As a broad guide, any comments received should be published (or removed/reported as spam) as soon as possible. You may also want to respond to what has been said, in which case you should always respond in a professional and measured tone that reflects BCS communications practice. Remember that you are representing the organisation in your response.

The following may be worth bearing in mind when responding to comments whether on your BCS blog or postings on others' blogs:

- **Transparency** – Disclose your connection with BCS and/or with your event/service/team.
- **Sourcing** – Cite any relevant sources using URLs, references, videos, images, etc.
- **Timeliness** – Make sure you reply quickly to the original comment (inside 48 hours if possible and quicker if the comment is particularly time sensitive). For microblogs you will want to monitor responses or comments at least once every day. Take time to create a good response but, if needed or appropriate, you can always add a further follow up comment afterwards (e.g. if you are dealing with a comment about a service downtime or bug).
- **Don't Stifle Discussion** – It is appropriate to publish both positive and negative comments and, if you feel that additional information or correction is needed you can and should add this publicly. The more transparent your blog can be, the more trusted it will be.

- **Be Fair** – It is not always possible to judge tone from textual comments so please ensure you do not make your commentators look bad or lose face, even if you are correcting a criticism or misconception. Anger is not a professional response to criticism. Try drafting your response then leaving it a few minutes. Then read over it again and you may wish to ask Council members or a colleague to check it before posting publicly.
- **Measure** – Keep a record of comments (whether received or posted by you) so that they can be noted for relevant metrics and learned from. Some comments may also help highlight strengths, weaknesses or opportunities for your project or service.

## EXISTING SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCES AT BCS

A current list of active presences can always be found at: <http://www.cartography.org.uk/useful-links-and-resources/>

## QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

If you have any questions about these guidelines please contact the Social Media Lead who welcomes any suggestions of improved wording, new areas to be covered or requests for clarifications. If you would prefer to raise questions or comments anonymously then you are very welcome to do so. Please email: [BCSmediateam@gmail.com](mailto:BCSmediateam@gmail.com)

## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

If you require any of the above guidance in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact the BCS Admin team ([admin@cartography.org.uk](mailto:admin@cartography.org.uk)).

## FLOWCHART FOR DEALING WITH COMMENTS ABOUT BCS

