



The Royal College of Pathologists

Pathology: the science behind the cure

Guidance for using and contributing to non-RCPATH social media networks and profiles

1.1 Introduction

Many people use social networks in a personal or professional capacity, whether on Facebook or contributing professionally to discussion forums and websites such as www.doctors.net.uk or Linked-in (<http://uk.linkedin.com/>).

As journalists and policy makers use the internet as a primary source of information, social media dialogue by staff and members of The Royal College of Pathologists' (RCPATH) has the potential to affect the College's reputation.

This document sets out guidance for College staff and those College members who have an official role within the College (eg Honorary officers, College Council members, Directors and Committee Chairs) on using and contributing to social media networks.

2.1 Guidance on using social media and other accounts in a professional or personal capacity

Contributors to websites should be aware that comments can reflect on the reputation of the College, even if the user does not identify themselves as an RCPATH employee or representative. The following are some general guidelines when contributing on-line.

- You are personally responsible for the content you publish on-line, whether in a blog, social media site or any other form of user-generated media.
- What you publish will be public for a long time – be aware of any impact on your privacy and that of others.
- If you use social media in a personal capacity, you should be aware that anything you write about RCPATH or your colleagues may be seen widely, including by the media, colleagues and members. Records placed on-line are permanent and are not necessarily secure. With that in mind, all the same considerations of discretion, accuracy, privacy and integrity that apply during working hours should be followed through online.
- RCPATH expects College representatives and staff to support its work and not to criticise RCPATH policy, or other staff, colleagues or clinicians. RCPATH expects private or business sensitive information to remain secure.
- Be cautious where social and work connections overlap. Staff, members and clinicians who link on-line should be sensitive to potential conflicts of interest and the implications for privacy by making social profiles available to those you know in a professional context.
- Consider including a statement on your social media profile that makes it clear that all opinions expressed are your own.

2.2. Code of conduct

- College members who act in an official capacity are expected to adhere to the College's [Code of Conduct](#), in relation to their activity on-line either in a personal or professional capacity.
- The General Medical Council has also developed [Doctors' use of social media](#) which should also be consulted by College members.

2.3 Contributing to social media sites as a RCPATH representative

RCPATH members who are authorised to speak to the media or in public meetings on behalf of the College can also contribute to external websites and social media sites in the name of RCPATH. However, where an individual participant is identified as an employee or member of the College acting in an official capacity, he/she must refrain from any political advocacy or from the unauthorised endorsement or appearance of endorsement of any (commercial) product or service.

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