

Title: Social Media Policy for the IMPact e-Journal: Twitter - @IMPactHEJournal

Author: Dr Rachel Spacey

Date: 13 April, 2021

1. Context

The *IMPact e-Journal* recognises the benefits of using social media across the Higher Education (HE) sector in terms of promotion, networking and disseminating work whilst acknowledging that it also carries an element of risk in terms of its immediacy and effect upon the reputation of individuals, departments and institutions. While the University of Lincoln (UoL) encourages staff to engage with social media in its various forms (e.g. blogs, social networking forums, video and image sharing websites) it is important to be mindful of both the potentially positive and negative impacts its use can generate.

This policy sets out the principles and operational aspects of use of the *IMPact e-Journal* Twitter account to be agreed by its Editorial Board. It sits alongside and draws upon the UoL's [Social Media Policy](#) (v 1.5) (2018). Colleagues are directed to Section 4 of the UoL policy which sets out expected standards of behaviour (p.4).

2. About the account

The *IMPact e-Journal* Twitter account was set up in 2017 to accompany the launch of the journal by LHERI. It was managed by a member of LHERI staff but ceased to operate when they left the university in 2019. The account has since been reactivated and requires a social media policy to support it.

3. Purpose

Twitter is a powerful form of communication. It was estimated in 2019 that 1 in 40 academics in the US and the UK use Twitter (Academic Positions, 2019). It is a useful platform for facilitating interactions between academics across institutions and disciplines, for growing professional networks and for dissemination.

The *IMPact e-Journal* Twitter account is an important marketing and promotional tool for the journal, its authors and the editorial team in the following ways (Taylor and Francis, 2021):

- Increase in visibility, awareness and profile of the *IMPact e-Journal*
- Increase in 'reads' and 'downloads' of *IMPact e-Journal* articles
- Increase in citations of *IMPact e-Journal* articles
- Increase in the number of submissions from authors internally
- Increase the number of submissions from authors externally.

4. Operational issues

4.1 Tweeting

Tweets are free-to-post, short, 280-character messages. *IMPact e-Journal* tweets would be free text messages using a conversational, slightly informal style but which contain timely important communications, such as a URL link to the journal website or a specific publication (Emerald, 2021). Twitter would be used to enhance the digital presence of *IMPact e-Journal* highlighting key events and publications. These would focus on the following:

- Notification of a published item in *IMPact* with the title and URL of the item¹, an indication of what the article is about (if not obvious from the title) and a relevant hashtag which would assist with searchability across the Twitter platform (e.g. #studentexperience #pedagogy #wideningparticipation)
- Communications promoting *IMPact e-Journal* to raise awareness among staff and students both at UoL and more widely across the HE sector
- Tweets highlighting calls for submissions from staff and students both at UoL and more widely across the HE sector and highlighting the supportive peer review process
- Specific calls for submissions on a particular theme or for a forthcoming special issue (e.g. #callforpapers)
- Highlighting the Open Access nature of the journal to serve as a reminder that the articles can be easily accessed without a subscription or a log in, in line with the UoL *Open Access Publications Policy* (e.g. #openaccess)

At present, one of the editorial board members (Dr Rachel Spacey) has the log in and password details for the Twitter account. Dr Spacey has volunteered to tweet for *IMPact e-journal* but is happy to share this role with other members of the editorial board as required. In terms of the regularity of tweeting, once every two weeks is suggested as a minimum to maintain a current Twitter presence. In addition, Twitter analytics for the *IMPact e-Journal* account will be turned on in order to review impressions across the platform over time.

4.2 Retweets

Retweets are another important aspect of a Twitter account as they help create a sense of community by helping Twitter followers (e.g. retweeting about writing or publishing opportunities available to students and staff at UoL or more widely as well as relevant HE conferences which *IMPact* readers and Twitter account followers might find of interest).

4.3 Responsibility

Staff are personally responsible for their professional behaviour when they communicate on social media including Twitter, however, since this is a UoL affiliated account it could bring

¹ Most URLs are too long for Twitter and so a shortening service is recommended. The University of Lincoln uses: <https://lincn.ac/>

the university into disrepute and so “*Employees should use the same safeguards, sound judgment and discernment as they would with any other form of communication about the University of Lincoln in the public sphere*” (UoL, 2018, p.4). One way to ensure this is to adhere to a safeguard set out by UoL, by “*Making sure that the communication has a purpose and a benefit for the University*” (ibid., p.5). Therefore, to conform to expected standards of behaviour, content posted on the *IMPact e-Journal* Twitter account will focus on the four types of subject set out in section 4.1 above.

It is suggested that the individual member of staff tweeting from the *IMPact e-Journal* Twitter account is individually responsible for any content they tweet. If there is a negative reaction to a tweet (i.e., someone replies disparagingly to the tweet or retweets it with a derogatory quote), the member of staff must report to the Editors-in-Chief and the editorial board **before** responding. Following consultation the individual responsible for the tweet can use their discretion as to whether they respond to or ignore the individual. ‘*When Tweets Go Wrong*’ is a useful article which explores in greater detail the ways in which academics might respond to negative reactions on Twitter (van Alstyne, 2020). If a negative reaction involves someone sharing the *IMPact Journal* Twitter account content beyond Twitter, then the member of staff must consult with the Editors-in-Chief and the Editorial Board in the first instance for advice.

This policy is subject to annual review by the *IMPact e-Journal* Editorial Board.

5. References

Academic Impressions (2019) *Why Academics Should Use Twitter*. Available at: <https://academicpositions.com/career-advice/why-academics-should-use-twitter#:~:text=Twitter%20has%20a%20lot%20of,that%20number%20continues%20to%20grow> (accessed 13 April 2021).

Emerald (2021) *How to... Use Twitter for Academic Research*. Available at: <https://www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/how-to/research-methods/use-twitter-academic-research> (accessed 13 April 2021).

Taylor and Francis (2021) *A guide to Twitter for researchers*. Available at: <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/research-impact/a-guide-to-twitter-for-researchers/#> (accessed 13 April 2021).

University of Lincoln (2014) *Open Access Publications Policy*. Available at: <https://cpb-eu-w2.wpmucdn.com/blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/dist/8/8024/files/2013/08/Open-Access-Policy-xbi23u.pdf> (accessed 13 April 2021).

University of Lincoln (2018) *Social Media Policy*. Available at: <https://hr-internal.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/policies-and-procedures/#SocialMedia> (accessed 13 April 2021).

Van Alstyne, J (2020) When Tweets Go Wrong. *The Academic Designer*. Available at:
<https://theacademicdesigner.com/2020/when-tweets-go-wrong/> accessed 13 April 2021).