Social Media Policy
April 2015, revised in July 2015 and November 2018

This document sets out guidelines for how the ICA PR division and its members should approach the use of social media as part of their communications strategy.
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Our online presence

Facebook group
Our biggest online presence is on Facebook. Our Facebook group was created on Jun 25, 2008. It is used to communicate information of interest to members that is not necessarily urgent or time-bound, such as vacancies, events and conference notices, calls for papers, new journals or books. It can also be used for social purposes, for example, to post pictures of members at conferences, or to post comments about events.

The group is public, and its membership includes people beyond ICA. Anyone in the group can post here, but the posts first need to be approved by the Board or Committee. Members may post information that is not directly ICA-related, but, given the nature of the group, it is likely that such information will still be of interest to members.

Twitter account
Twitter is of growing importance for the division. It was created in October 2016. Twitter allows for quick and rapid dissemination of information, issues or events that might interest members whereas posts on Facebook and LinkedIn can be more elaborate and formal. Although we have a smaller community here than on Facebook, a big benefit is that the Twitter account is connected with other communication associations and other ICA divisions. As such, it is a good means of forwarding information, i.e. retweeting. Members and associations occasionally share content with us by tagging us in their tweets. Hashtags can be used to track the sentiment and reach of our tweets, and may be particularly useful when tweeting about conferences.

The feed is public, and anyone can follow it. Members can send message and tag the ICA PRD in their tweets. However, only certain members are authorized by the ICA PRD Board to use the Twitter account (i.e. to tweet, follow users, and more).

LinkedIn group
The LinkedIn group forms the latest social platform for the division. The group was set up in April 2017. It is a useful professional networking tool where we can play an active role in helping members find jobs and connect with others within but also outside of academia, including PR professionals and businesses. Members may thus post information that is not directly ICA-related. Moreover, it is used to help members improve their skills by posting useful information or research.

Similar to the Facebook group, this is also a public group and its membership includes people beyond ICA. Anyone in the group can post here.
Roles

Moderators in general

The ICA PRD Social Media Committee members will be based in each of the regions: UK and Europe; Middle East and Africa; the Americas; India and South East Asia; Australasia. Although the committee members are encouraged to participate on all three social media platforms, they are assigned a specific role as Facebook Moderator, Twitter Moderator, or LinkedIn Moderator. In the event that a moderator receives a complaint, or notes a post that does not appear to adhere to the guidelines set out in the next section, the moderator will consult with the Social Media Coordinator about the appropriate course of action. All communication should be conducted in English.

Their common goal is to grow and inform the ICA PRD community by:
- Gathering and posting information on behalf of members in their region.
- Finding and disseminating relevant information.

Additionally, moderators are encouraged to inform each other on items that could be shared and to share ideas for the social media planning. Ideas could include – but are not limited to – campaigns in a certain theme (e.g. Halloween-themed posts), for a certain event or activity (e.g. to advertise a conference or a call for donations), or for social media activities (e.g. an online question-and-answer session with PR practitioners).

Facebook Moderator(s)

The Facebook Moderator should feel comfortable using their own Facebook account when managing and posting in the Facebook group. Due to the size of the Facebook group, multiple board and committee members are given the responsibility to manage this group. In addition to the general notes above, moderators on Facebook have the following tasks:
- Accept/reject post submissions. This is mostly about rejecting spam, fishy, or otherwise inappropriate posts. It is not a problem if a post does not contain ICA-related information.
- Accept/reject requests to join the group. Facebook users who request to join the group will automatically receive the following question: “To ensure the quality of our Facebook group, we try to accept only those who are genuinely interested in PR research. Please let us know how you are affiliated with ICA or this field of research.” Moderators can use the answers to these questions to distinguish possible spambots from scholars who are genuinely interested in joining.

Twitter Moderators

Due to the importance of timing and speed on Twitter, multiple moderators are given the responsibility to manage the Twitter account. In addition to the general notes above, moderators on Twitter have the following tasks:
- Repeat important announcements over a longer time span. For example, this tweet got retweeted 5-10 times each time it was tweeted again by us:
  [https://twitter.com/ICA_PRD/status/914515270919737345](https://twitter.com/ICA_PRD/status/914515270919737345).
- Connect with relevant Twitter users, including public relations academics, institutes and other divisions, and tag them in our posts when appropriate. Usually, they follow us back in response.
- Share interesting content you’ve found on Twitter with the Facebook and LinkedIn moderators, or post them on Facebook and/or LinkedIn directly.
- Use the right hashtags. Most important are the hashtags #ica_pr and #icaYY. The hashtag #ica_pr is provided by the general ICA board to mark all tweets related to or directed to our division (it should not be misspelled as #ica_prd). The hashtag #icaYY is used to mark all tweets related to the annual ICA conference. Here “YY” is replaced by the last two digits of the year, e.g. the 2018 conference used the hashtag #ica18 (it should not be misspelled as #ica2018 or #ICA18).

**LinkedIn Moderator(s)**

The LinkedIn Moderator should feel comfortable using their own LinkedIn account when managing and posting in the LinkedIn group. In addition to the general notes, LinkedIn Moderators have the following tasks:
- Invite new members pro-actively, including academics, practitioners and possible research sponsors.
- Accept/reject requests to join the group.
- Accept/reject post submissions. This is mostly about rejecting spam, fishy, or otherwise inappropriate posts. It is not a problem if a post does not contain ICA-related information.

**Social Media Coordinator**

The social media coordinator will be responsible for:
- Maintaining contact with the Committee and the Board to grow the division’s social media presence on Twitter and LinkedIn, and maintaining its presence on Facebook (i.e. admitting members to the group, monitoring posts).
- Drafting a social media strategy together with the Committee and the Board.
- Communicating with division members about social media-related news and information.
- Monitoring social media posts to ensure they adhere to the guidelines set out below, and consulting with the Board about cases that cause concern or have prompted a complaint.
General principles of ICA PRD communication using social media

1. Communication on social media should be focused on news that is of interest to members, for example, job ads, events and conference notices, calls for papers, research grant opportunities, calls for participation in research, and announcements about new journals or books. Information should be related to public relations education, research and professional life, but need not be specific to ICA members or division-led initiatives.

2. The division is part of an academic association and debate about research and practice is positively encouraged. The tone of debates should remain respectful of colleagues and their work, and personal attacks are not appropriate.

3. Social media posts on or from the ICA PRD account must not compromise the division’s status and integrity.
   - Social media posts on or from the ICA PRD account must reflect a PR professional / educator / researcher perspective (see also point 1 above).
   - Posts must not be libelous and must not include obscene language.
   - The principles of social media use should align with the other principles underpinning the ICA’s operations, and the division’s operations. See http://www.icahdq.org/about_ica/principles.asp and http://community.icahdq.org/ohana/groups/details.cfm?id=39.

4. The division will ensure that a group of people are charged with the management of social media on an ongoing basis; one person alone cannot manage the work required to ‘do’ social media effectively.

5. The division will use social media as part of its engagement with other communication networks that members already participate in, and as part of its overall mix of communication tools.

6. Because social media is open and unpredictable, some posts may attract trolls – people who post deliberately provocative messages in order to inflame a debate. Principles for responding are:
   - Do not respond reactively; always think before you post.
   - Recognize that simply disagreeing with your post is not trolling, so beware of over-reacting.
   - Use standardized text to respond to anger, in the same way that call center staff use a specific script to respond to angry callers.
   - Keep your response in proportion – check out how many followers a troll has, often it will not be many.
   - Ask questions to clarify comments – it is easy to misunderstand 280 characters. This is also a means of pushing back - trolls tend to disappear once you push them into a conversation.
   - Remember it is not personal; trolls and other tweeters do not know who is on the other end of the line.
   - Do not use obscene language.

7. The PRD Board will regularly monitor its presence on social media (e.g. through Google Alerts) and will review its social media policy when necessary

8. The PRD Board reserves the right to remove posts that do not comply with the principles set out above. The person who has posted the offending content will be contacted directly by the board to explain why the content is being removed.

9. The PRD Board is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of social media posts.