

## Rhode Island School of Design Social Media Guide

**How can RISD's social media accounts help promote your news and events?**

**Could creating a unique account for your department / organization be helpful?**

**How can you make your account as engaging as possible?**

RISD's Media Group will answer these questions and more in this social media guide, which aims to help staff, faculty and students decide if and how social media can help achieve the goals of their department / organization.

While most of the discussion here will be aimed at the most popular social networking sites – such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Flickr – these guidelines apply to other social media platforms as well.

*For additional guidance and information about social media at RISD, contact Jaime Marland at [jmarland@risd.edu](mailto:jmarland@risd.edu).*

### **RISD on Social Media**

The RISD Media Group operates RISD's institution-wide social media accounts on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), Snapchat [RISD1877], [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#) and [Vimeo](#). From these accounts, we share news about and images of the RISD community, particularly amplifying the accomplishments of faculty, students and alums, along with news from the broader art and design world that our followers find of interest. Our presence on these sites is constantly growing, recently passing 38,000 followers on Facebook, 21,000 on Twitter and 17,500 on Instagram.

Sharing your news / events / photos via RISD's accounts can be an effective (and easy!) way to reach thousands of people inside and outside the RISD community. Email your ideas for social media posts to Jaime Marland and she'll let you know if it'll be a good fit for RISD's accounts.

### **Should Your Department / Organization Have a Unique Social Media Presence?**

In addition to sharing your group's news via RISD's social media accounts, it could be helpful to create an account specific to your department / organization. Having active and engaged specialized accounts can be a great way to connect with specific audiences. Conversely, having several accounts at RISD sharing the same information, especially if some aren't consistently active, can make it harder for people on social media to connect with us.

Consider these questions to decide if creating a unique account will help achieve your goals:

- Is your purpose broader than promoting one event or publicizing one piece of information?
- Do you want to participate in a conversation where you interact with people on a regular basis?

**If you answered NO to either question**, it will probably be most beneficial to promote your news through RISD's accounts. Jaime Marland can help you do so.

**If you answered YES to both**, consider the following:

- Are the people you want to engage active on the social media channels you are considering?
- Will engaging your key audience on social media help achieve your department / organization's goals?
- Will you have fresh / valuable content to share on a regular basis and will you be able to do so with frequency (ideally once a day minimum on Facebook and Instagram; several times a day on Twitter)?
- Is there at least one person, but ideally two, in your department who can be consistently responsible for updating your social account content, monitoring the conversations and engaging?
- Will targeting your intended audience through a new unique account be a more effective way to engage them than doing so from RISD's main accounts?

**If you answered NO to these questions**, it will probably be most effective to reach your audience via RISD's main accounts. Reach out to Jaime Marland for more information.

**If you answered YES to these questions**, it will likely make sense to create a unique social media presence for your department / organization. Read on for advice on getting up and running.

### **Creating Your Social Media Presence**

Once you've determined that having a unique social media presence will help achieve your department / organization's goals, the next step is to set up your account(s).

1. Decide which social media platform(s) are the best fit. There are many options to choose from, each offering varying ways to share content and engage followers. For example, Facebook offers the opportunity to engage more deeply with followers and is conducive to sharing many photos, while Twitter offers a chance to share short in-the-moment news updates and single photos. Instagram is best if you have a desire to share compelling visuals but don't want to get into too much copy or conversation.
2. Create your account(s). Pick a handle and write a description in the "about" section that together clearly communicate what your account is about, who is running it and that it's affiliated with RISD (for example, Apparel Design's handle is "@RISDApparel" and its about description reads, "Apparel Design Department at Rhode Island School of Design").
3. Send Jaime Marland the link to your new social account(s) and tell her who will be managing it. Jaime will follow your account and look for opportunities to amplify the content you share through the RISD accounts. She'll also stay in touch to share social media tips, feature updates and the like.

4. “Follow” RISD’s institution-wide accounts and other accounts related to your department so the accounts can “talk” to one another (e.g. on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)).
5. Decide how you’ll measure impact to inform your approach. Will you track “likes” and “followers”? Will you use analytics to understand which content is most of interest to your audience?
6. Spread the word about your account. Let the people you want to reach know about your new social media presence by, for example, including your handle in other communications and following people.

### **Building and Maintaining Your Social Media Presence**

With your account set up, you’re ready to start connecting and communicating on your chosen social media platform. The following best practices will help you foster a strong and engaged presence.

*Be active.* Regularly monitor your account and share updates – ideally once a day minimum for Facebook and Instagram, and several times a day for Twitter. If you find you don’t have information to share this often or aren’t able to do so on a regular basis, it may make sense to close your account and share information through RISD’s institution-wide accounts instead.

*Join the conversation.* While it’s important to share your department / organization’s news and events, it’s also valuable to discuss broader topics that are of interest to your audience. Share information / articles and participate in conversations other people initiate.

*Engage with your followers.* Monitor what people are saying about you and foster conversations with them when appropriate. Seek to assist people who are looking for information. If you aren’t sure how to respond to a comment or concern, Jaime Marland can provide guidance.

*Grow your audience.* Post your handles on your website if you have one, and in other communications such as print pieces you develop. Retweeting the RISD accounts can help you reach more people, too, since those accounts have robust audiences.

*Be timely.* Participate in the conversation as they happen, and share current and relevant news. If you are sharing something that’s not very timely, let your followers know that – for example, “Great article from Thursday’s *Providence Journal*...”

*Be accurate.* Maintain your credibility by being a source of valid information. Avoid speculating and thoroughly research facts before posting. Cite your sources and provide links. If you find an inaccuracy in something you post, correct it as soon as possible. It is ideal to leave the original post visible and issue a correction to maintain transparency.

For information that is subject to change, such as a requirement or policy, it will often be best to direct users to the place where the most current information lives (e.g. on [risd.edu](#) or [events.risd.edu](#)) rather than posting the information directly.

*Build a strong and positive RISD presence.* Our community’s numerous social media accounts together inform people’s opinions of us. Seek to share information and engage in a manner that reflects [RISD’s mission](#). Refrain from posting content and liking or following users or pages that reflect personal interests and/or that may be in conflict with RISD’s mission.

*Respect your audience.* When deciding what to share, keep in mind the diverse values and points of view in our community. Avoid content that may be deemed offensive or defamatory.

*Keep confidentiality.* Do not publish confidential information (especially being mindful of [FERPA](#) and [HIPAA](#) rules) or disclose proprietary information such as unpublished details or financial information about projects underway. Respect the wishes of our partners, alumni, and donors regarding confidentiality of current projects and/or donations.

*Follow copyright laws.* As an art and design school, we strive to set a particularly good example in this area. Always attribute work to its author/source, providing links when possible, and ensure you have proper permissions to post photos and videos.

*Inform yourself.* Each social media site has unique terms of service: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Tumblr](#), [Instagram](#), [Vimeo](#). These are legal obligations that you agree to abide by when you sign up for the site. It is good practice to read them thoroughly and follow the rules.

*Keep up with the latest social media trends.* Regularly reading social media news and information will help you stay on top of new features and best practices. For examples, [mashable.com](#), [socialmedia.org](#) and [socialmediaforcolleges.com](#) can be helpful sources.

### **Content + Deletion Policy**

RISD social media accounts are intended to inform users of RISD-related news and events and to foster community. Anything posted on official RISD social media sites by employees or students – including RISD-funded organizations such as student clubs – should be in good taste and the institution reserves the right to edit or delete disparaging posts, personal opinions or inappropriate content as it sees fit.

### **Personal Use**

Be mindful of blurring your personal and professional life on social media. Don't use RISD's name or logo on any non-RISD social pages you maintain for your own personal use. Social posts on personal accounts should not indicate that you are speaking on behalf of RISD the institution or individual departments. You are responsible for what you post on your own personal page and on the pages of others. Remember, everything on the Internet is public and searchable.

### **Emergency and Crisis Situations**

*Know how to handle an emergency.* In the event of a crisis situation, it's critical that everyone in our community receive consistent and up-to-date information. RISD's main accounts will actively share the most recent updates; share that information from your account if you can. Sharing information found on third-party pages or content not approved by RISD may lead to false or confusing information about an issue or emergency reaching the community and spreading online. Please do not post any non-crisis information until you are notified that the emergency is over.