

Email, Text Messaging, Tweeting—Which Guidelines Apply?

Guidelines	Email	Text Messaging	Tweeting
1. Depending upon job description, this medium may be an essential tool for efficient, effective, and appropriate conduct of business.	✓	✓ Become even more productive: Search online for abbreviation lists. Sign up for alert or reminder services.	✓ Used effectively, will build visibility and relationships.
2. Writer should consider user- and receiver-related costs (in fees or time) to their company or agency when using this medium.	✓	✓ Consult manager about any fees and limitations. Because free online text messaging services may not be sufficiently reliable or secure, they may not be appropriate for business communications.	✓ Expected to be live and timely, so requires regular updates. Set clear objectives and use metrics to gauge return on investment.
3. Communication should be of reasonable duration and frequency and not interfere with performance of the organization's business or the writer's or other employees' duties.	✓	✓	✓ See item 2 above.
4. Use of this communication medium on company- or agency-owned devices, equipment, or sites may be inspected, monitored, reviewed, or discovered in legal proceedings.	✓	✓	✓
5. Without encryption, this medium should not be used to communicate confidential, proprietary, or otherwise sensitive information.	✓	✓	✓ Encryption does not apply. Do not post sensitive information in this format.
6. This communication takes place in the open.	See item 4 above.	See item 4 above.	✓ Except for any private Direct Messages, which can be seen only by sender and recipient.

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7. With a disclaimer, label any personal or unapproved content sent/posted via this medium that should not appear to be an official communication of the organization. Otherwise the writer might be perceived as representing the organization and unintentionally damage or create liability for the organization.	✓	✓	✓ Applies to reader/follower comments posted on Twitter and blog sites. Unapproved content should not appear on an organization's Twitter website(s).
8. All content sent/posted via this medium with the organization's name, address, logo, etc., should be approved, current, accurate, appropriate, and work-related.	✓	✓	✓
9. Work-related content sent/posted via this medium should be written clearly, proofread for mechanical errors, and appropriate in level of formality. The style should meet standards set by the work group or larger organization.	✓ If sent from a hand-held device, consider using a disclaimer such as "Sent quickly from my mobile phone."	✓	✓ Conciseness is not optional. To meet the 140-character space limit, select key words as if writing a newspaper article headline. Beware of any ambiguity.
10. The same "voice" or style should be used for all content.			✓ Branding is important. But the same person does not have to write all of the content for one Twitter site.
11. Content sent/posted via this medium that is evidence of the company's or agency's functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities should be filed and saved according to the organization's records management requirements.	✓	✓	✓ The organization may also want to track readers' comments. © 2013. The Writing Center, Inc., 129 Willowbrook Lane, West Chester, PA. All rights reserved.