Introduction:

Knowledge Mobilization on Social Media *Risk Assessment Form* is a practical tool crafted to support researchers and graduate students in identifying and managing risks tied to sharing their research on social media platforms. Knowledge mobilization refers to the dissemination of research findings, data, and insights to a wider audience—such as peers, policymakers, or the public—through platforms like X, LinkedIn, or Instagram, with the goal of amplifying impact and engagement. While this process offers significant opportunities, it also introduces risks, including online harassment, misinterpretation of findings, intellectual property theft, and breaches of data privacy. This form is designed to help you navigate these challenges, ensuring that your online engagement safeguards both your personal well-being and the integrity of your research.

Please submit this form after completing at the provided email address on contact us in the footer section of the website.

We encourage you to approach this form with care and attention before embarking on social media activities related to your research. If uncertainties arise, reach out to our resources and knowledge mobilisation team at YorkU for communications, legal, or ethical concerns—for tailored advice and support using the email address on contact us section of this website.

The form is organized into the following key sections:

- **Section 1: Know Your Research** – Evaluate the nature and sensitivity of your research content and its potential risks in a public online space.

- **Section 2: Know Your Platform** – Analyze the features, audience, and risk profile of the social media platform(s) you plan to use.

- **Section 3: Risk Identification** – Pinpoint specific risks based on your research and chosen platform(s).

- **Section 4: Risk Mitigation Plan** – Outline actionable strategies to minimize identified risks while maintaining open engagement.

By completing this form, you'll gain clarity and confidence to share your research effectively online, balancing visibility with safety and ensuring your contributions enrich public discourse without compromising your work or well-being.

Section 1: Know Your Research

Purpose
The purpose of this section is to gather key information about your research to assess potential risks associated with sharing it on social media. This information will help you identify whether the nature of your research could attract unwanted attention, lead to misinterpretation, or pose risks to your safety, reputation, or intellectual property.

Instructions
Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you are unsure about any question, select 'Unsure' and provide additional context in the risk identification section (to be completed in a later section).

Questions

1.1 Does your research involve sensitive or controversial topics that could attract negative attention or harassment online?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

Sensitive or controversial topics might include, but are not limited to, political issues, health data, environmental concerns, or any subject that could be polarizing or attract strong opinions. Sharing such research on social media could lead to harassment, trolling, or other negative interactions.

1.2 Does your research include unpublished data, findings, or intellectual property that hasn't been peer-reviewed or publicly released?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

Unpublished data or findings refer to any research outputs that have not yet been peer-reviewed or made publicly available through official channels. Sharing such information on social media could lead to intellectual property issues, premature disclosure, or misrepresentation of the research.

1.3 Could your research be misinterpreted or misused by the public if shared on social media?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

Misinterpretation or misuse of research can occur when complex or nuanced findings are oversimplified or taken out of context. On social media, this risk is heightened due to the fast-paced nature of discussions and the potential for information to be shared widely without proper context

1.4 Does your research involve identifiable data or information about individuals that could be considered sensitive or private?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

Identifiable data includes any information that can be used to identify specific individuals, such as names, addresses, or other personal details. Sharing such data on social media could violate privacy laws, ethical guidelines, or institutional policies.

1.5 Are there any ethical considerations or institutional policies that restrict how you can share your research?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

Ethical considerations might include restrictions on sharing certain types of data, requirements for anonymity, or guidelines for engaging with the public. It's important to ensure that your social media activities comply with all relevant policies and regulations.

1.6 Does your research have potential applications that could be misused for harmful purposes, such as spreading misinformation or supporting malicious activities?

- Yes

- No

- Unsure

Some research, particularly in fields like technology, social sciences, or health, could be misinterpreted or deliberately misused to support harmful narratives or activities. Consider whether your findings could be taken out of context or used in ways that could cause harm.

Section 2: Know Your Platform

Purpose

This section is designed to evaluate whether the social media platform(s) you intend to use for sharing your research could introduce risks to your personal safety, professional reputation, or the integrity of your work. Social media platforms differ widely in their user demographics, security features, privacy controls, content moderation practices, and potential for amplifying content to unintended audiences. By answering the questions in this section, you will identify platform-specific risks—such as exposure to harassment, data breaches, misinformation, or misuse of your research—that could undermine your knowledge mobilization efforts. The information gathered here will inform the risk mitigation strategies developed in Section 4.

Instructions

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you are unsure about any question, select 'Unsure' and provide additional context in the risk identification section (to be completed in a later section).

Questions

2.1 Does the platform have a documented history of data breaches, privacy scandals, or misuse of user data that could compromise your personal information or research content?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Platforms with a history of data breaches or privacy scandals (e.g., unauthorized sharing of user data with third parties) may not adequately safeguard your personal information or research outputs, increasing the risk of exploitation or reputational harm. Research recent incidents to assess this risk.

2.2 Are the platform's privacy settings robust enough to allow you to restrict who can view, share, or interact with your posts, thereby protecting your content from unauthorized access or exposure?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Robust privacy settings allow you to limit visibility and interaction to trusted audiences, reducing exposure to trolls, critics, or bad-faith actors. Platforms lacking granular controls may leave your content vulnerable to unwanted attention.

2.3 Does the platform implement consistent and effective content moderation policies to address harassment, misinformation, or other harmful behaviors that could target you or your research?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Effective content moderation mitigates risks like harassment or the spread of misinformation about your work. Platforms with lax or inconsistent policies may fail to protect you from abusive comments or false narratives.

2.4 Is the platform's user base likely to include individuals, groups, or communities that might misinterpret, misuse, or react negatively to your research, particularly if it addresses sensitive or controversial topics?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

The platform's user demographics and culture can influence how your research is received. For example, a platform with a highly polarized user base may increase the likelihood of misinterpretation or hostile reactions to nuanced or controversial findings.

2.5 Does the platform offer features that support accurate and detailed sharing of research, such as long-form text options, embedded links to original sources, or multimedia uploads (e.g., images, videos)?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Features like long-form posts or links to primary sources enable accurate representation of your research. Platforms with restrictive formats (e.g., short character limits) may force oversimplification, risking misrepresentation.

2.6 Does the platform have a reputation for hosting trolling, harassment, or coordinated attacks against users, which could expose you to personal or professional risks?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

A reputation for trolling or harassment signals a higher risk of personal attacks, especially for research on sensitive topics. Investigate user experiences or media reports to gauge this risk.

2.7 Are there clear and accessible mechanisms on the platform for reporting abusive behavior, misinformation, or intellectual property violations related to your posts, and do these mechanisms have a track record of effectiveness?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Reporting mechanisms are essential for addressing issues like abusive comments or plagiarism swiftly. Platforms with ineffective or slow response systems may leave you exposed to prolonged harm.

2.8 Does the platform permit anonymous or pseudonymous accounts, potentially increasing the likelihood of unaccountable harassment or trolling directed at you or your research?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Anonymity can embolden bad actors, increasing the chance of harassment or trolling. Platforms that require real identities or verified accounts may offer a safer environment for sharing research.

2.9 Is the platform widely used by your intended audience (e.g., academic peers, policymakers, industry professionals, or the general public), ensuring your research reaches its target recipients?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Alignment with your target audience ensures your research reaches its intended recipients. Using a platform irrelevant to your audience may reduce impact or expose your work to unrelated, potentially hostile users.

2.10 Does the platform employ algorithms (e.g., recommendation systems, trending topics) that could amplify your content to unintended or hostile audiences, potentially leading to misinterpretation or backlash?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Algorithmic amplification can push your content beyond your intended scope, potentially to audiences unprepared to interpret it or inclined to misuse it. Review the platform's algorithmic transparency to assess this risk.

2.11 Has the platform been implicated in the spread of misinformation or disinformation campaigns that could undermine the credibility of your research if associated with it?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Association with a platform known for misinformation could erode trust in your research, even if your content is accurate. Investigate the platform's role in past disinformation campaigns.

2.12 Does the platform allow third-party access to user data (e.g., through APIs or advertising tools) that could expose your posts or personal information to external entities without your consent?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Third-party data access (e.g., via advertising tools) could expose your posts to entities outside your control, raising privacy or intellectual property concerns. Check the platform's data-sharing policies.

2.13 Are there indications that the platform's ownership or operational policies could be influenced by foreign governments or entities with interests contrary to open science or Canadian values?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Influence from foreign governments or entities hostile to open science could compromise the platform's reliability or lead to censorship, surveillance, or misuse of your work. Research the platform's ownership and geopolitical ties.

2.14 Does the platform provide analytics or insights into how your content is being viewed, shared, or engaged with, enabling you to monitor its reach and reception?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Analytics tools help you track engagement and identify risks (e.g., unexpected spikes in attention from problematic sources). Platforms without these features limit your ability to monitor and respond to issues.

2.15 Is there evidence that the platform has been used to target researchers, journalists, or public figures with doxxing, threats, or other forms of online violence, which could pose a risk to your safety?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Platforms linked to doxxing or threats against public figures may pose direct safety risks, particularly for researchers in high-profile or contentious fields. Look for evidence of such incidents in news reports or user testimonials.

Section 3: Risk Identification

Purpose

This section aims to gather detailed information on the risk factors you've identified based on your answers in Section 1: Know Your Research and Section 2: Know Your Platform. By documenting these risks, you'll better understand their sources and implications, which is crucial for creating a strong risk mitigation plan. Identifying these risks now allows you to take proactive steps to protect yourself, your research, and your audience when sharing on social media.

Instructions

For each question in Sections 1 and 2 where you answered "Yes" or "Unsure," please include:

- The question number and a brief description of the risk factor.

- The resources you used to learn about this risk (e.g., platform documentation, news articles, expert opinions, or user reviews).

- The key findings that led you to see this as a risk.

Feel free to add any additional concerns or risks you've uncovered that weren't directly addressed in the earlier sections.

Be specific and use examples. For example, instead of writing "the platform is unsafe," say "the platform's weak privacy settings allow third-party apps to access user data, risking exposure of my research."

Character Limit: You have up to 5,000 characters (including spaces) to complete this section. Use this space wisely to be thorough yet concise.

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Suggested Structure

To keep your response organized, consider this format for each risk factor:

Risk Factor 1:

Question: [e.g., 1.1]

Description: [e.g., My research topic is controversial and might draw criticism.]

Resources Used: [e.g., Looked at social media posts about similar topics.]

Key Findings: [e.g., Similar studies faced online backlash, including threats to researchers.]

Risk Factor 2:

Question: [e.g., 2.3]

Description: [e.g., Unsure if the platform moderates content effectively.]

Resources Used: [e.g., Checked the platform's help pages and online forums.]

Key Findings: [e.g., Users report inconsistent moderation, with some harmful comments left unaddressed.]

[Repeat for each risk factor]

Tips for Success

Analyze, Don't Just Repeat: Go beyond restating your earlier answers—explain why they point to a risk. For instance, if a platform lacks strong security features, note how this could lead to data breaches affecting your work.

Add New Insights: If your research revealed risks not covered in Sections 1 or 2 (e.g., recent platform controversies), include them here.

Think Broadly: Risks might involve personal safety (e.g., trolling), reputation (e.g., misinterpretation), data security (e.g., hacking), or ethics (e.g., privacy issues). Cover all relevant areas.

Stay Clear and Focused: Avoid vague phrases like "it's risky." Instead, write something actionable, like "the platform's lack of reporting tools could delay responses to harassment."

Why This Matters

Taking time to pinpoint and understand these risks now will help you share your research with confidence. This section prepares you to tackle these challenges head-on in your mitigation plan, covered in the next section.

Section 4: Risk Mitigation Plan

Note: You do not have to fill this section we will provide you with a risk mitigation plan in this section once you have completed all the sections mentioned above.

The purpose of this section is for us to present your risk mitigation plan. This plan will ensure that we have identified the appropriate mitigation measures to reduce the likelihood of an identified security risk materializing, and/or to lessen the impact in case the identified risk materializes.

When developing your risk mitigation plan, we must address all risk factors that you identified by answering "**yes**" or "**unsure**" to questions in the Know Your Research **and** Know Your Platform sections, we will also add to your risk factors and inform you based on their severity.

Your risk mitigation plan will be developed **with York University Knowledge Mobilisation team**. We will also involve YorkU corporate support services (e.g., IT, security, legal) to confirm the viability and feasibility of the proposed measures we will be providing you with all the support needed.

Mitigation measures will be tailored to the research project and commensurate with the risks identified while considering **open science principles**.

For each mitigation measure you propose, we will also provide you with a **timeline** for its implementation and describe **how you and York University will monitor its effectiveness**.