**Note to the reader**

This document is a recommendation report written for the English and Technical Communication Department at Missouri University of Science and Technology as a part of a course titled Writing for Social Media in Spring 2019. This document was also written for my instructor and classmates in this course. This report is the start of a business relationship with the department and they suggested four social media sites, namely, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, in the beginning of this project. After this report, I collaborated with my classmates to compile our recommendation reports into a single, specific proposal regarding social media use for the department. Then, as a class, we created a short-term social media plan for our client to implement the proposal that we wrote in the previous project. Finally, we carried out the plans that we developed by monitoring analytics of the social media pages as well as related sites to determine the success of our ongoing project.

So, in this preliminary recommendation report, my goal was to make recommendations convincing the department to use, or not use, the social media sites suggested by them to achieve specific goals. The department wanted to know that I am aware of the context of the department’s current practices of using social media well enough to make good recommendations. Therefore, I showed them that I conducted thorough background research on the department to determine their needs and goals regarding the use of social media. I also conducted an extensive literature review to support my recommendations for the use of specific social media sites to achieve those goals and meet those needs. I included specific recommendations regarding voice, kinds of content, and best practices for each site that I advocated for this department to use. I justified the inclusion or exclusion of any social media site using sound logic. The department was least interested to know the technical terms related to social media research, for example, environmental scan analysis, and social media communication audit. I omitted any jargon associated with social media research; rather I focused on the department’s current practices (including mission, vision, and existing brand voice) and contextualized those practices for my audience. I made clear, specific, feasible, and persuasive recommendations in this report to meet the needs and goals of this department.

Social media research plays an important role in technical communication. From this project, I learned how to write a report from a business or marketing perspective, how to persuade the audience by making reasonable recommendations, and how to apply the best practices of using social media sites for my client.

Thank you,

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Social Media Strategic Analysis in English and Technical Communication Department, Missouri University of Science & Technology: Recommendation Report

**Prepared for:** English and Technical Communication Department

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**Date:** March 18, 2019

# Introduction

This report makes recommendations for the use of social media to achieve the marketing goals of the English and Technical Communication department at Missouri University of Science and Technology (Missouri S&T). At the start of this project, this department suggested the use of four social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. In this report, I demonstrate how these four social media sites are appropriate or not appropriate for this department to communicate the value of advanced education in English and Technical Communication to potential students.

I did background research to determine the department’s history, audience, product, brand voice, mission, vision, webpage information, and key players. Also, through this background analysis my goal was to understand the policies, procedures, influencers, and rules and regulations under which the department is currently working. From this analysis, I found that the department currently uses two social media platforms (Facebook and YouTube). This analysis further determined the primary communicative goals, audiences, and the social media needs of the department. The primary communicative goals of this department are as follows: promoting research publications of faculty members, promoting awards and achievements of students and faculty members, presenting biographical information, presenting scholarship information, promoting the department newsletter/magazine, presenting information about available courses, promoting events, promoting job awareness, promoting digital learning, and presenting lectures/presentations.

According to my research, currently, this department is not following the best practices of using social media, and the social media staff are unaware of the social media algorithms and content intricacies necessary to maximize user engagement. However, this department can only generate more interactions and share information with the students through social media, as webpage of this department mostly contains static content.

Considering this department’s communicative goals and social media needs, I recommend that this department operate through Twitter and Facebook. The other two social media sites, YouTube and Instagram, should be excluded. I would suggest some common recommendations for using Facebook and Twitter and some specific recommendations for using both Facebook and Twitter. The common recommendations are as follows:

* Hire social media staff
* Make the Facebook and Twitter accounts easily distinguishable
* Include open-ended questions in posts
* Make the post length short and include visuals within the posts when possible
* Train social media staff on timeline
* Train social media staff on algorithms and intricacies of Facebook and Twitter

The specific recommendations for using Twitter are as follows:

* Use hashtags for breaking news
* Create both organizational and individual Twitter accounts
* Make mobile friendly tweets
* Keep Twitter account up-to-date and consistent
* Create honest and easily accessible posts
* Always be responsive to the posts from other users

The specific recommendations for Facebook are as follows:

* Avoid research publications and big articles
* Post, comment, and participate
* Post useful and enjoyable content
* Make Twitter and Facebook accounts easily distinguishable
* Include credible and consistent post
* Maintain timing and create native content
* Include live campaigns or video streams

These recommendations will improve the department’s overall ability to generate engagement with its audience. However, this department will not only be the beneficiary, but the students and other audiences of this department will also equally benefit from getting up-to-date information and connecting with this department more easily and frequently.

# department Background and current practices

Missouri S&T was established in 1870 in Rolla, Missouri. The mission statement of Missouri S&T is “Missouri S&T integrates education, research and application to create and convey knowledge that serves our state and helps solve the world’s great challenges” (Missouri S&T, n.d.) The vision statement of this university is “Missouri S&T will be the leading public technological research university for discovery, creativity and innovation” (Missouri S&T, n.d.). Missouri S&T’s brand voice emphasizes the importance of an informal and conversational tone with specific guidelines on color and font (Missouri S&T, n.d.).

The English and Technical Communication department encompasses two distinct disciplines: English and Technical Communication. In this department, courses are taught by scholars, authors and researchers with interests ranging from Southern literature and culture, to video game narratives, to the role of communication in technology diffusion. The department does not have any explicit vision and mission statements. However, the department chair’s message indicates that the department seeks to put emphasis on digital learning by balancing the convenience of online courses, study abroad courses, and English as second language to welcome the international students. The department further seeks to promote the humanities in the community while also combating the misconceptions about their degree programs. The department establishes its brand presence by highlighting on research publications and funding, varieties of minors and awards and affiliations of the faculty members and students. This department strongly encourages the students to complete co-ops and internships before they graduate. Overall, the department’s brand voice is influenced primarily by Missouri S&T’s brand guidelines, which is clear on the department’s concise yet friendly tone on all the webpages.

Background research showed that the English and technical communication department uses a university-owned department-website (owned media, Freberg, 2019)) as its primary means of communication. This webpage has a significant amount of static content, for example, an open letter by the department chair, department highlights, such as study abroad opportunities, writing staff of campus publication joining opportunities, student organizations such as Sigma Tau Delta, collaborative work environment, Adobe Technical Communication Suite access, both online and offline program options for master of science, graduate certificate, and graduate minor. These contents are not engaging or interactive. The subordinate pages on the website are not updated in a timely manner. Somewhere near the top of the page the users can see the links of social media account (Facebook and YouTube). This webpage further informs the users that the department releases a newsletter (Panoply) once a year featuring department happenings, alumni news and faculty news.

I found that the department connects and builds relationship with its primary audience such as prospective students and current students, secondary audience such as alumni, parents, and faculty and staff, and tertiary audience such as donors, media and legislators through social media. The key players/influencers of this department who take part in the social media are the associate dean, department coordinator, and department chair. This department’s social media sites are controlled by single authority. The department does not provide any training to its social media staff and allocate any fund for social media growth and use. So, any staff has to learn the intricacies of social media on their own in this department, which can be very time consuming. As mentioned earlier, the department currently has two distinct social media accounts: Facebook and YouTube (Missouri S&T, n.d.). An overview of both the accounts’ activities are given below:

## Facebook

Over the six-month period (September 2018 – March 2019), this department posted seven types of posts on Facebook, which are as follows:

* event announcement
* research publication
* award and achievement
* scholarship/assistantship
* newsletter/magazine
* technology promotion
* course information
* general information

The posts are generally informational, but not engaging; and the posts are made usually late at night. Responses to the posts are generally from faculty and staff at Missouri S&T. The profile photo on Facebook is a beautiful image of palm trees and the beach, but this picture is irrelevant to the vision and mission of this department and the brand identity of Missouri S&T.

A graphical representation of frequency of posts, percentage of types of posts, and community engagement is given below:

### Frequency of Posts

Frequency of posts can be found in Figure 1:

Figure : Frequency of Posts

Results showed that 7 posts were posted in March 2019, 3 posts in February 2019, no posts in January 2019, 1 post in December 2018, 2 posts in November 2018, 6 posts in October 2018, and 2 posts in September 2018 on Facebook. This chart clearly shows that the posts were posted inconsistently, i.e., in some months there were higher number of posts and in some months, there was no post. On an average, the department released one to four posts per month.

### Percentage of Types of Posts

Percentage of types of posts can be found in Figure 2:

Figure : Percentage of Types of Posts

This chart shows that the “event announcement” category comprises of the highest percentage (35%) and both the “technology promotion” and “scholarship/assistantship” categories comprise of the lowest percentage (5%) of posts. Both “newsletter/magazine” and “course information” categories comprise of similar percentage (9%) of posts.

### Community Engagement

Community engagement with the posts can be found in Figure 3.

Figure : Community Engagement on Facebook

This chart shows that the “comments” were almost absent for all the posts. Also, users hardly shared any post with others (friends and families). It shows lack of engagement from the consumers (in this case primarily students). However, the posts were continuously being liked (or reacted) by the users, that showed the interest of the users on the posts. But on close scrutiny, I found that the posts were liked mainly by the staff and faculty members of mostly English and Technical Communication department or sometimes by other department’s staff and faculty members (@EnglishTechComDepartmentMST, n.d.).

## YouTube

At present, YouTube page has twelve videos and this account is infrequently updated. The primary content of this page is related to interviews of faculty member, department chair, and associate dean, program information (minor), and some presentations/lectures by the faculty members. Videos are posted inconsistently, for example, the last video was uploaded 4 months ago, and the second last video was uploaded 11 months ago. The YouTube channel feels like a location to store videos that are produced for the department.

A graphical representation of frequency of posts, percentage of types of posts, and community engagement for YouTube is given below:

### Frequency of Posts

Frequency of posts on YouTube can be found in Figure 4.

Figure : Frequency of Posts

This pie chart shows that in 2018 only 12% (3), in 2016 only 10% (1), in 2015, 39% (4) and in 2014, 39% (4) videos were posted. In 2017, no videos were uploaded on YouTube. It clearly shows the infrequency and inconsistency of the post uploads. It can be further understood that the videos are old and not updated recently on YouTube.

### Percentage of the Types of Posts

Percentage of the types of posts on YouTube can be found in Figure 5:

Figure : Percentage of Types of Posts

There were total 12 videos among which 57% (7) represented faculty or biographical information, 32% (4) represented lecture or presentation, and 11% (1) represented minor information categories. There were no videos on students or student organizations or community engagement on YouTube. The present categories of video on the YouTube indicate towards the dryness of the content.

### Community Engagement

Community engagement with the posts on YouTube can be found in Figure 6:

Figure : Community Engagement on YouTube

This chart shows that the community engagement was negligible on YouTube. Only 4 videos were liked and only 1 video was commented on YouTube. No one shared any videos. From the YouTube analytics, I was only able to infer the number of times one video was viewed by the users. Although, the number of videos does not indicate the number of viewers as same people can view one video several times.

Overall, I found that the department’s primary communicative goals are as follows based on the current practices on the social media:

* promoting research publications of faculty members,
* promoting awards and achievements of students and faculties,
* presenting biographical information,
* presenting scholarship information,
* promoting the department newsletter/magazine,
* presenting information about available courses,
* promoting events,
* promoting job awareness,
* promoting digital learning, and
* presenting lectures/presentations.

# Social media sites

I conducted an extensive literature review on previous social media research to suggest the application of best practices of using social media sites to the English and Technical Communication department. In the previous literature, I found that during the past ten years, social networking sites (SNSs) have become increasingly important and now form a key area of academic research (Constantinides *et al.*, 2013; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The overwhelming growth of SNSs, along with increased internet access capabilities offered by mobile devices, dramatically changes the social, political, and personal behavior of people (consumers). So, in order to more effectively communicate with the consumers in the new digital age, changes have to be made to the organizations’ integrated marketing strategies at the expense of traditional media (Constantinides and Stagno, 2012). I further gathered information about the four social media sites, i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, suggested by the department, from various reputable resources. Also, I studied how algorithms work on the social media platforms. An overview of these four social media sites and social media algorithms are given below:

## Overview of Twitter

Twitter is a micro-blogging system deploying short messages of 140 characters or less called “tweets” (Cook et al, 2014). Microblogs offer a way to make small pieces of writing available online and these microblogs often have features that allow users to grow a network of followers, for example, Twitter (Fagbule, 2018). Lotan et al (2011) state that Twitter does not encourage reciprocal sharing, but Twitter helps enable rapid information flow. Jansen et al (2009) state that Twitter messages exhibit information that stimulate a large number of audiences to follow, retweet, and recite brief narrative descriptions.

## Overview of Facebook

Facebook is an American online social media and social networking service company. Facebook has more than 2.2 billion active users as of January 2018. It receives prominent media coverage, including many controversies such as user privacy. Instagram is one of the products of Facebook company.

## Overview of Instagram

Instagram is an online, mobile phone photo-sharing, video sharing, and social network service (SNS) that enables its users to take pictures and videos, and then share them on other platforms (Frommer, 2010). The idea behind the site is to share photographs and videos by using a hashtag so that other users can find the photographs. The basic difference between Facebook and Instagram is that Instagram offers a number of special filters that allow users to change the colors and resolutions of the photographs before they post them.

## Overview of YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing website which allows users to upload, view, rate, share, add to favorites, report, comment on videos, and subscribe to other users. It offers a wide variety of user-generated and corporate media videos. As of February 2017, there were more than 400 hours of content uploaded to YouTube each minute, and one billion hours of content being watched on YouTube every day.

## Overview of Social Media Algorithms

Social media accounts are governed by algorithm which is also known as invisible digital identity (Tufekci, 2017; Beck, 2015). Beck and Tufekci state that the algorithms track and manipulate the users’ social, personal, and political behavior. They also encourage the Twitter users to learn how to identify algorithms. Besides, Cook et al. (2014) talk about the sock puppets, bots, meat puppets, and cyborgs which are also automated or falsely created Twitter accounts. Additionally, Ding (2009) emphasizes on the misperception and misconception related to social media accounts and Bode and Vraga (2015) talk about the understanding and correcting misconception related to social media accounts. Smith (2015) talks about how a blog writer has created a false persona on social media account and tried to establish his ethos. All these studies indicate towards the importance of learning the intricacies of social media account not only on the surface level, but also on the deeper level (algorithmic level).

Regarding algorithms in Twitter, Peters (2019) say that the Twitter algorithms rank tweets which are recent and relevant. Timeline in Twitter works in reverse chronological order, so the timing for tweets is crucial. If tweets do not create engagement soon after being shared, then it is unlikely to be seen by others. This timeline is also related to the key, likes, replies, and retweets, and native content. So, the understanding of Twitter algorithm can help a social media person to create engagement on Twitter account.

# Recommendations

I would suggest the English and Technical Communication department to continue with Facebook account and include Twitter account considering its primary communicative goals. I would further recommend that this department should exclude YouTube and Instagram from their consideration. In this section, I will first discuss the reasons and justifications for using Twitter and Facebook, then I will offer some general recommendations for the best practices of using Twitter and Facebook, and finally, I will talk about some specific recommendations for using Twitter and Facebook.

## Reasons and Justifications for Using Twitter

Considering the primary communicative goals of this department (particularly research publication), I offer several reasons for using Twitter based on the previous scholarly publications. Social media has become a valuable marketing tool for publishers to promote research articles (Thelwall, Haustein, Lariviere, & Sugimoto, 2013). Thelwall *et al.* also said that publication venues such as journals and conferences used Twitter for connecting with researchers. Another study (Wong, Piraquive, & Levi, 2018) showed that the journals with social media profiles (for e.g., Twitter) had higher academic metrics. Ortega (2017) said that Twitter was an important platform for journals as studies had shown that journals with Twitter accounts had higher number of Tweets and citations of their articles, when compared with other journals. Chan et al. (2015) said that some journals had created online journal clubs to encourage community discussions about articles. Most used Twitter, but some used other social media tools such as blogs, live videos, and podcasts (Rezaie, Swaminathan, Chan, Shaikh, & Lin, 2015; Thoma & Lin, 2014). Twitter account would be further helpful in accomplishing this department’s another goal, i.e., event promotion about conferences. Raamkumar et al. (2018) talked about the Twitter usage at conferences and the way more user participation in a Twitter network could change the entire network structure. Their research showed that humanities and social science journals irrespective of their standing in the citation network, were involved in Twitter outreach.

Rosenstiel et al (2015), conducted a survey to explore how Twitter changed the way people got the news, what kinds of thought leaders, journalists and organizations people followed on the network, and how people reacted to added elements on Twitter, such as advertising and promoting tweets. According to their research, Twitter users are usually younger than the other social media users and those users act differently when they follow breaking news. They become even more participatory by commenting, posting and sharing at moments when the events are moving fastest. This department’s primary audience is potential students and current students. Students are usually younger, and they follow tweets daily and several times a day. This fact can be substantiated by Rosenstiel’s (2015) study which says that 9 in 10 Twitter users use Twitter for news and a vast majority of them follow Twitter daily. This study also found that the school/education related topics were among the most sought topics on Twitter. This department also comes under “education” or “school” category. So, Twitter should be a viable option for this department. Potts (2014) showed the relevance of Twitter in case of Mumbai Attacks, where actors located and validated data, formed and established network, and redistributed knowledge. So, for any event promotion, which is one of the primary goals of this department, Twitter can be a plausible option to quickly share information and redistribute knowledge.

## Reasons and Justifications of Using Facebook

Several reasons and justifications can be presented to continue with the Facebook account as one of this department’s social media based on the previous scholarly research on social media. Antoniadis *et al.*, (2015) said that Facebook is the main choice of college students. According to him, there are high rates of penetration of social media in the 17-24 age groups, with almost 63 percent of the users accessing Facebook through the mobile device. According to Ellison *et al.*, (2006) Facebook was originally created for college students. They stated that the millennial generation is defined as the “always connected generation” because of their deep involvement with digital technology, the internet and SNSs. They also explained the plethora of studies exploring the patterns of SNSs usage by teenagers and undergraduate students. So, this social media prone generation always poses challenges and opportunities to engage with colleges and universities, which run their businesses on the traditional media (website, newsletters, magazines and so on).

Regarding Facebook, different researchers voiced different opinions. For example, Park *et al.*, (2009) conducted a factor analysis to identify the main reasons that drove students to use and participate in Facebook groups and they found that the students used Facebook for socializing, entertainment, self-status seeking and information retrieval. Facebook has become the main medium for students, affecting their life satisfaction, social trust, civic participation and political engagement (Valenzuela *et al*., 2008). Nkhoma *et al*., (2016) developed a model of student motivation in learning that was based on the four main Facebook characteristics, namely, interaction, communication, social relationships and participation in groups and community, highlighting the benefits a university can derive in terms of teaching. Nadkarni & Hofmann (2012) discovered two basic social needs when using Facebook: the need to belong and the need for self-presentation. All these previous studies indicate towards the importance of using Facebook as a social media in any university or a specific department for their primary consumers (students), who are heavily dependent on Facebook for any communication purposes.

## Common Recommendations for Facebook and Twitter

Some common recommendations for using Facebook and Twitter considering the application of best practices are as follows:

* Hire social media staff. At present there are no social media staff in this department. According Dr. Hercula (one of the faculty members in English and Technical Communication department), at present there is no budget allotted for social media staff. So, my recommendation is to allot some budget for social media staff, as it is difficult for students and faculties to take this extra responsibility over their regular commitments. In order to run successful social media accounts, a well-trained social media staff is required.
* Make the Facebook and Twitter accounts easily distinguishable. Currently, the department’s Facebook and Twitter pages are almost similar. So, my suggestion for this department would be to create distinguishable contents on Facebook and Twitter, i.e., Facebook and Twitter pages should be easily differentiated. For example, research publication, research grant information, current events, and emergency events can be promoted on Twitter. Facebook can be used for student activity related events, student organization, student conference etc.
* Include open-ended questions in posts. Both for Facebook and Twitter posts, this department should include open-ended or engaging question. Questions can be in the form of “Q&A” or generic, so that, the students feel the urge to interact with the posts.
* Make the post length short and include visuals within the posts when possible. For both Facebook and Twitter, posts should be short and include visuals. Twitter only allows 140 characters. At present, some of the Facebook posts of this department is very long, but almost all the posts contain some visuals (photos, icons etc.). I would suggest that this department continue posting visuals, but they should shorten the post size. A research study by Socialbakers (2013) conducted on a random sample of 5000 Facebook pages. That study revealed that photos were the most engaging post types on Facebook, accounting for 93% of activities done on the site.
* Train social media staff on timeline. I would recommend that this department train the social media staff on timeline. Social media staff of this department should be aware of how the timeline works and generates more engagement on Twitter and Facebook. Previous studies also substantiated this fact. For example, Rosenstiel’s study (2015) revealed that the Twitter users relied mostly on two paths for discovering or finding news on Twitter, though there were potentially many more. So, mostly users accessed the latest news and live events by scrolling through the timeline. Also, in a blog (@mjahr, 2016, February 10), I found that people who turn on “Show me the best tweets first” from the timeline settings, tend to tweet and retweet more than others.
* Train social media staff on algorithms and intricacies of Twitter and Facebook.Social media staff should be trained on algorithms and intricacies of Twitter, because if the staff are not educated enough to differentiate between the false accounts and real accounts, and unable to understand how bots, cyborgs, algorithms etc. work on social media, then various kinds of obstacle might appear on using social media. Also, this department will fail to create engagement through Twitter, as algorithms play a major part in creating engagement with the post. On Facebook, the staff should be aware of how algorithms look for those contents that create interactions, how algorithms prioritize the posts which have comments and chatting, how algorithms rank the posts higher which have engagement (like, comment and share), how algorithms prefer native content over the content that will take the user to another site, and how algorithms prioritize the credible brand page.

## Specific recommendations for Using Twitter

The specific recommendations for using Twitter considering the application of best practices of using Twitter are as follows:

* Use hashtags for breaking news (any event or any publication). Hashtag is a great way to indicate that this department’s content or topic is relevant. This relevance will get the tweets in front of an interested audience. A stable hashtag helps to form the engagement from the users. Previous studies, like, Rosenstiel’s (2015) study showed that the Twitter users mostly relied on brand accounts and hashtags related to those brands. According to Potts (2014), hashtags are the immutable mobiles (unchangeable). She said when hashtags were established for a particular event, networks of actors were easier to build.
* Create both organizational and individual Twitter accounts. I would suggest that the employees have individual Twitter accounts along with the department account to foster engagement. Previous researchers, like, Rosenstiel (2015) found that the users followed the individual writers, journalists and commentators more than the institutional accounts because of personal attention and connection. Same fact was noted by Lotan et al (2011). They found that it might be more effective to let the journalists control their individual accounts, and build audiences through the individual accounts, than to disseminate information through official accounts. In their study, they found it effective because users at the time of disaster or emergency tried to seek news from a person (human) rather than depending upon an organization (non-human).
* Make mobile friendly tweets. Nowadays, mostly students want to get information by using smartphone. In order to make mobile friendly tweets, I would recommend taking the following steps:

1. There should be a link to mobile-friendly websites.
2. Smarter ads should be run on the mobile.
3. Tweets should be tweeted at the right time.
4. Tweets should have big, bright images.
5. Tweets should not be broken into multiple parts.
6. A string of obscure hashtags should not be used.
7. Too-detailed profile picture should not be used on mobile-friendly tweets (Dugan, 2015).

* Keep Twitter account up-to-date and consistent. Although this department does not have any Twitter account, the previous usage on social media accounts like Facebook and YouTube indicates that the posts are highly inconsistent, i.e., sometimes in one day there were 4 posts and then on another day there were no posts. Sometimes, within few minutes, 4 to 6 posts were posted. According to Peters (2019), Twitter algorithm can flag an account as a bot if someone tweets every minute. Also, if consistent post is missing, Twitter algorithm does not show the tweets to them who has timeline settings turned on in their accounts. Peters (2019) also mentioned that the up-to-date Twitter account helps to build credibility, so this department should update the account frequently. Broken links on tweets can harm credibility of an organization. Lastly, to get prioritized on Twitter, it is important to engage with the followers, posts, and to be online on time.
* Create honest and easily accessible posts and always be responsive to the posts from the users. I would recommend this department responding to the audience and always sharing honest information about any event, award or achievement or other communications in order to engage with the audience. Previous researchers, like, Warner et al. (2014) put emphasis on the six themes of using social media: listening to the audience; engaging instead of fundraising; sharing relevant, valuable and actionable content, being honest, accessible and responsive; using social media as part of a multi-channel strategy; and measuring content. This research also talks about the actionable content, i.e., every tweet should contain an open-ended question or some idea which might trigger the audience to respond to it by retweeting. This process will certainly increase engagement.

## specific recommendations for Using Facebook

The specific recommendations for using Facebook considering the application of best practices of using Facebook are as follows:

* Avoid research publications and big articles. I would recommend that the department avoid research publications and big articles on Facebook posts, because many previous researchers say that the students use Facebook for entertainment purpose. Previous studies showed that the undergraduate students in Turkey used Facebook primarily for social activities and entertainment and rarely for educational reasons (Akyildiz and Argan, 2011). Antoniadis et al. (2015) examined a sample of 535 students of TEI of Western Macedonia and identified four main patterns of social media usage by college students. They also confirmed that the patterns of using Facebook excluded the education purposes.
* Post, comment, and participate on Facebook. I would suggest that this department post, comment, and participate on Facebook regularly. Previous studies, like, Assimakopoulos *et al.* (2017) showed how Facebook could be an opportunity for universities to market themselves. They found that the student activity on Facebook Website (FBW) was centered around posting, commenting, and participating in discussions. So, the English and Technical Communication department also needs to post regularly, reply to the student’s comments, and participate in the discussion to keep the Facebook page active. Their study inferred that it was the responsibility of the universities to activate SNSs for public relations and direct marketing tools by enriching them and stimulating interactions with prospective students (users). The lack of excitement and innovative applications on Facebook makes it difficult to connect with the future students.
* Post useful and enjoyable contents. Usefulness, ease of use and enjoyment affect intention to use Facebook positively (Assimakopoulos *et al.,* 2017). So, useful topics for current students such as relevant events, any course information, student organization activities, and student diversity programs should be promoted on Facebook. As the primary audience of this department is students, this department has to take care of the student’s needs. At present, there are almost no posts related to student activities and organizations. There are many student activities going on throughout the year in the university, such as, St. Pats, student diversity program, and international student day celebration. These activities should be promoted on Facebook as students want to see some relevant and enjoyable content on Facebook rather than just boring posts of research publications and faculty information. Students know that the faculty information and faculty awards and achievements can be easily seen on the department website and university website—but social media is all about interaction. Students cannot interact or form any network with faculty information and awards and achievements. However, by including student activities, students can try to seek information about those events or activities, comment and share their ideas, and actively participate on Facebook. According to Whiting and Williams (2013), 88% users use social media sites for social interaction and 80% users use social media sites to seek information. So, if the posts are not interesting to the students, they will not seek any information about that posts and participate in the discussion. It is also the responsibility of the department to see the ease of use of Facebook. Students should interact with the posts easily and there should not be any barrier or complications in interacting with the posts.
* Include credible and consistent post. According to Facebook algorithm, a brand’s credibility depends upon how consistently that brand is posting on the social media. So, this department should post consistently, i.e., at least 3 to 4 posts every day in regular intervals. Consistent posting can help the Facebook page remain up-to-date. One of the drawbacks with this department’s current Facebook practice is that it posts inconsistently, i.e., sometimes in a day there are 5 posts and sometimes in a day, there are no posts. This practice can be detrimental to the department’s credibility.
* Maintain timing and create native content: Currently, the posts are posted on Facebook page of this department mostly at midnight or after 12 am. During that time, most of the people are inactive on Facebook. So, these posts are unable to create interaction. So, the posts should be posted when the consumers are online (mostly day and evening time). As Facebook prefers native content, this department should use the links that take the users back to its own site sparingly.
* Include live campaigns or video streams. I would suggest the department to conduct some live campaigns and videos on Facebook. One of the reasons for many businesses, such as “Patnjali Ayurved,” an Indian company, to be successful is that they conduct aggressive live campaigns on Facebook. Live videos can create engagement and students can not only interact with the videos, but also can share the videos with their friends and families.

## Recommendations for Excluding Instagram and YouTube

I would recommend the department to exclude Instagram and YouTube from their consideration. This recommendation is based on my literature review, and in the following section I will discuss the reasons and justifications for excluding Instagram and YouTube.

### Reasons and Justifications for Excluding Instagram

I would suggest excluding the option of Instagram as one of the social media accounts based on the previous scholarly research on social media. Sheldon and Bryant (2016) found four factors of using Instagram in their study: surveillance/knowledge about others, documentation, coolness, and creativity. Surveillance includes “To interact with friends,” “To see visual status updates of friends,” “To see what other people share,”, “To like the followers’ photos,” “To creep through other peoples’ posts,” and “To have fun.” Documentation includes “To depict my life through photos,” “To remember special events,” “To document the world around me,” “To commemorate an event,” “To remember something important,” and “To share my life with other people.” Coolness includes “To become popular,” “To be cool,” “To self-promote,” and “To provide ‘visual status updates’ for my friends.” Creativity includes “To show off photography skills,” “to create art,” and “to find people with whom the user has common interests.” These uses and gratifications for Instagram pointed out by Sheldon and Bryant are not synchronous with the primary communicative goals of this department. Also, this study showed that surveillance played the most important factor on Instagram, which does not coincide with the primary goals and consumers of this department. Although the goal of event promotion comes under one of the uses pointed out by Sheldon and Bryant, still, events can be easily promoted through Twitter and Facebook. Lotan *et al.* (2011) said that people resorted to mostly Twitter to enquire about any emergency situation and locate information. So, emergency event news or other current happenings can be easily promoted through Twitter and Facebook.

Apart from that, Instagram primarily focuses on images or pictures. Sometimes, research publications, events, awards and achievements, and course information cannot be communicated only through images. As Twitter is a more text-based forum, the department can achieve its goal by tweeting on Twitter. Another limitation of Instagram is that it can be only accessed through mobile. Although the statistics show that the mobile handsets are now the most popular form of access to social networking sites (Lunden, 2014), still the increased use of mobile platform has nothing to do with this department’s values. Many students (key audience) and their parents, and other secondary audiences of this department may not feel comfortable with using mobile phones. As a part of a state university, this department should comply to the rules of equal treatment to the students and parents. So, this department should not consider Instagram to communicate, as it can become a stumbling block to access many users and this social media site does not coincide with the goals of this department.

### Reasons and Justifications for Excluding YouTube

Finally, I would recommend this department to exclude YouTube as one of the social media sites from their consideration. Hanson and Haridakis (2008) conducted a research study to explore the uses and gratifications of users watching and sharing videos on YouTube. Results showed that ninety-one percent of the students used YouTube to watch news. Students said that they mostly watched and shared comedy format news rather than traditional format news. Those who were in the favor of traditional format news said that they sought information, however, those who were in the favor of comedy format news said that they sought entertainment. Comedy format news seekers were more in number. Considering this department’s primary goals (course information, research publications, awards and achievements and so on), it can be inferred that the videos related to this department will be traditional format and dry videos. So, following Hanson and Haridakis’ research, I could confirm that these kinds of videos will not work with the primary consumer (students) of this department.

# Conclusion

The English and Technical Communication department at Missouri University of Science and Technology suggested me four social media sites: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube at the start of the project. I conducted a social media strategic analysis recommended by Freberg (2019) in order to suggest this department what is the application of best practices of using social media and which site(s) would be suitable for this department to be successful in social media use. I also did an extensive literature review on the previous social media research to come up with the reasonable recommendations.

My background research showed that this department maintains two social media platforms currently: Facebook and YouTube. This department is more active on Facebook than YouTube. However, at present the Facebook posts fail to spark conversation and generate engagement with the users. The best practices of using Facebook, such as, short post, timing, visuals, open-ended questions, and live campaigns and videos streams are not followed currently. YouTube videos are dry and not up-to-date. Mostly, this department is using this YouTube platform as a repository of videos. Based on the analysis of these two platforms, types of posts and interactions on those platforms, and this department’s webpage and published materials, I set up this department’s primary communicative goals: promoting research publications of faculty members, promoting awards and achievements of students and faculty members, presenting biographical information, presenting scholarship information, promoting the department newsletter/magazine, presenting information about available courses, promoting events, promoting job awareness, promoting digital learning, and presenting lectures/presentations.

Based on these goals, I would suggest this department to continue with Facebook and include Twitter as their primary social media platforms. I would further suggest them to exclude YouTube and Instagram from their consideration. I would offer some common recommendations for using Facebook and Twitter, and some specific recommendations for using Twitter and Facebook separately. The common recommendations are as follows:

* Hire social media staff
* Make the Facebook and Twitter accounts easily distinguishable
* Include open-ended questions in posts
* Make the post length short and include visuals within the posts when possible
* Train social media staff on timeline
* Train social media staff on algorithms and intricacies of Facebook and Twitter

The specific recommendations for using Twitter are as follows:

* Use hashtags for breaking news
* Create both organizational and individual Twitter accounts
* Make mobile friendly tweets
* Keep Twitter account up-to-date and consistent
* Create honest and easily accessible posts
* Always be responsive to the posts from other users

The specific recommendations for Facebook are as follows:

* Avoid research publications and big articles
* Post, comment, and participate
* Post useful and enjoyable content
* Make Twitter and Facebook accounts easily distinguishable
* Include credible and consistent post
* Maintain timing and create native content
* Include live campaigns or video streams

These recommendations are based on the previous scholarly research publications and my background research on this department. These recommendations are synchronous with the line of application of best practices in social media. The department will benefit from these recommendations in terms of its overall social media use and practice. Eventually, the department can generate more interactions and share information with its audiences (primarily students) more easily by implementing those recommendations while operating through Facebook and Twitter.

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