New Media Policy

This document provides information regarding the requirements for planning and suggested best practices for participating in new media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, for all Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) staff. It will be updated periodically to reflect changes in new media best practices and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), National Institutes of Health (NIH), or other federal policies.

Questions or comments about this policy can be directed to nichdnewmedia@mail.nih.gov.
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Introduction

“New media” – emerging technologies used to exchange and share information – offers exciting and innovative opportunities for the NICHD to establish and maintain ongoing relationships with strategic publics. Unlike traditional media, new media allows content producers and content users to actively exchange information and ideas, and invites users to help shape the information. New media expands and complements traditional media activities.

New media includes “social media,” defined by HHS\(^1\) as “a sub-set of 'new media' characterized by online interactions and engagement. Social media does not refer to a specific platform or tool, but rather how the tool is used.” When new media tools are used socially, they help to build relationships, increase transparency, and improve communication both within a group and between the group and its audiences\(^2\).

Although the possibilities and benefits are exciting, new media is not without risks, especially for a government agency. This policy aims to guide NICHD employees and contractors in navigating new media in a way that maximizes the benefits of these platforms and minimizes risks to individuals, the NICHD, NIH, and HHS. The policy outlines requirements and guidelines for NICHD staff that are applicable to all forms of new media. Appendices establish requirements for specific new media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter.

This document uses the term “NICHD staff” to describe anyone who works for the NICHD, including contractors and those on detail; this policy applies to all NICHD staff.

Oversight of New Media Activities

Most oversight for new media activities is managed by the Public Information and Communications Branch (PICB), within the Office of Science Policy, Analysis, and Communications (OSPAC), and by the Information Resources Management Branch (IRMB) within the Office of Administration (OAM) and the Office of Scientific Director and designees.

NICHD Staff Participation in New Media

NICHD staff has two options for participating in new media:

1. Official NICHD New Media Activities: Official channels represent the Institute’s organizational presence in new media and are intended to communicate information on behalf of the Institute as a whole. Any Organizational Unit (OU), including Branches, Centers, Divisions, and Offices, may submit content for distribution via official new media channels.
2. **NICHD-Affiliated New Media Activities**: NICHD OUs may conduct new media activities to further the scientific and programmatic goals of the OU and the NICHD.

The NICHD does not have oversight when employees participate in personal new media activities, in which the employee is representing only him/herself—not the NIH, not the NICHD, not his or her OU, and not the government. Staff should review the NICHD Chief Information Officer message regarding [Appropriate Use of Information Technology (IT) Resources](#), as well as the [NIH Policy Manual Chapter 2806: Limited Authorized Personal Use of NIH IT Resources](#) for requirements and guidance on participating in personal new media activities during work hours or using a government-furnished equipment. Staff should also review the “Accounts for Personal Use” section of the [NIH Social and New Media Policy](#) for guidance on disclaimers and affiliations with the NIH, HHS, and government.

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### Official NICHD New Media Activities

Official NICHD new media accounts are maintained by PICB on behalf of the NICHD Office of the Director. The Office of Education within DIR also maintains official new media accounts on behalf of DIR and the NICHD Scientific Director. These channels are open to all NICHD staff and aim to provide official information on the Institute’s activities. A list can be found in [Appendix E: Official NICHD New Media Accounts](#).

Contributing content to these official channels is the fastest and easiest way for staff to take part in new media. New content is typically posted within a few hours of submission, after review by PICB or DIR. Publishing this information through official channels helps convey the breadth of the Institute’s research portfolio and activities and allows for a consistent new media presence. The NICHD encourages staff to use these channels as a primary means of distributing information via new media.

Examples of content contributions include (but are not limited to):

- Short description of and link to a scientific article by an NICHD grantee.
- Link to an interview with an NICHD scientist posted on a university’s YouTube channel.
- Link to information about an NICHD fellowship that is posted on USAJobs.
- Reminder for conference attendees about the NICHD’s exhibit booth number.
To submit content for an official new media channel, please use the instructions found in Appendix A: Submitting Content to Official NICHD New Media Channels.

**NICHD-Affiliated New Media Activities**

In addition to official NICHD new media activities, NICHD staff can take part in new media on behalf of the NICHD. Because these outreach activities are a direct reflection of the Institute, oversight, and governance for these activities is provided by the NICHD, NIH, and HHS policies. The following approval process and guidelines follow best practices established by the DHHS and NIH.

**Account Approval**

NICHD-affiliated new media accounts require approval before the account is created. The approval process ensures that there is no duplication of existing HHS, NIH, or NICHD new media efforts, that information communicated on behalf of the NICHD is consistent with the overall NICHD mission, and that all new media activities comply with appropriate HHS and NIH regulations.

To create a NICHD-affiliated new media account, staff must:

- **Submit plan for new media activities.** Staff should use Appendix B: NICHD Plan for New Media Activities. The plan serves as an agreement between the NICHD and the OU that all of the guidelines set forth in this and other related policies regarding appropriate use of new media will be followed. The plan helps ensure that the benefits of new media are maximized, while reducing risk to the NICHD, NIH, and HHS. The plan must adhere to NICHD, NIH, and HHS policies for new media and other related policies.

- **OU leadership reviews plan.** Responsibility for each NICHD-affiliated new media account lies with the OU leadership. Once approved by OU leadership, plans can be emailed to PICB at nichdnewmedia@mail.nih.gov.

- **PICB reviews plan.** If the plan is incomplete or inappropriate, PICB will provide recommendations to the submitter, who may return the plan to PICB with changes. Once approved, PICB will submit the plan to IRMB.

- **NIH name.** PICB will contact the Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) in the NIH OD to obtain approval for the proposed NIH name or abbreviation in the profile of the new media account.
IRMB **reviews plan.** IRMB will review the plan for technology and security related issues. If these aspects of the plan are incomplete or inadequate, IRMB will provide recommendations to the submitter, who may return the plan to IRMB with changes incorporated.

**Account set up.** IRMB will work with the submitter to set up the account so that it complies with all security and technology requirements.

**Apps.gov.** HHS has negotiated terms of service (TOS) agreement that meet federal laws and policies with many new media platforms, including Facebook. The applicable HHS TOS can be found in the [Web Content Management Forum](#), led by the General Services Administration (GSA) for some platforms, such as YouTube, new accounts must be requested through [Apps.gov](#) before the accounts are set up.

**Network security.** For security reasons, some new media Web sites are not accessible through the NIH network. Access to these Web sites must be requested through the [IRMB Security Officer](#).

**Account security.** IRMB will work with the submitter to ensure that all security settings for the new media are appropriate, including the development of secure passwords.

**Notification.** Once the account has been set up, IRMB will notify PICB.

**Final plan.** IRMB will forward the final plan to PICB.

**NIH Notification.** PICB will send the account name and platform to the NIH Online Information Branch to be added to the NIH List of Subscriptions.

**HHS Notification.** PICB will also send the account name and platform to the HHS Center for New Media ([newmedia@hhs.gov](mailto:newmedia@hhs.gov)) to be added to the Directory of HHS Accounts and to the HHS Privacy Team ([HHS.Cybersecurity@hhs.gov](mailto:HHS.Cybersecurity@hhs.gov)).

**Finalize the account.** Once all of the above steps have been completed, PICB will notify the submitter that their account is ready.

**Profile.** The submitter may fill in the profile as described in the plan.

**Friending.** The submitter should “friend”, “follow”, “like”, etc. the official NICHD account(s) as appropriate for the platform, if an official NICHD account exists.
**Post content.** The submitter can begin posting content in accordance with clearance procedures.

**Staff Responsibilities**

All NICHD-affiliated new media accounts and content are maintained by the originating OU and are the direct responsibility of the supervisor of the OU. The supervisor may delegate this responsibility to staff within the OU. Specific responsibilities are described below. A single employee may hold more than one of these responsibilities.

**The Individual(s) Responsible for Administration**

- Work with PICB and IRMB to set up the new media account.
- Add the profile text, account name, and account image as approved in the Plan for New Media Activities.
- Change account details, if needed.
- Require administrator level access to the account.

**The Individual(s) Responsible for Content Creation**

- Ensure the accuracy of the information to be posted.
- Gather content submitted by members of the OU.
- Create content follows all guidelines and regulations, including those for accessibility, privacy, and ethical conduct.
- Ensure that information is written in a professional manner with correct grammar and spelling.
- Does not require administrator level access to the account.
The Individual(s) Responsible for Team Lead

- Review and approves content.
- Ensure that the account complies with this policy, including any changes to account details.
- Serve as the point of contact for new media activities between the OU and PICB, Office of Education, and/or IRMB.

Content Approval

For content to be posted on official NICHD new media platforms, staff should follow the process outlined in Appendix A.

Content posted on NICHD-affiliated new media follows Track 1 of the NICHD clearance process, meaning content review and approval is required up to the Center or Division director (or designee) or Office director level. NICHD staff should use the online clearance tracking system for new media content clearances and should select “Track 1” when creating the request. Doing so ensures that the proper NICHD leadership can review and approve new media content.

Requirements

NICHD staff is encouraged to take part in NICHD-affiliated new media activities within the following parameters. The goal of these requirements is to protect staff and the NICHD from liability and risk. Some of the requirements are based on federal law while others are based on policies at the HHS, NIH, or NICHD levels. Laws are indicated by an asterisk (*) next to the subheading.

Accessibility*

All content posted online by federal agencies must be accessible to persons with disabilities, in accordance with Section 508 of the Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Any non-compliant content shared via new media must be accompanied by a link to an accessible version of the content. Content posted on the NICHD Web site is fully 508 compliant and is the most accessible source of information to share via new media.

HHS has resources related to the Section 508 standards as well as checklists and testing documents for ensuring content is compliant. In addition, the Section 508 Resources area of the NICHD Insider Web site will provide more information.
Links to non-compliant, non-governmental content may be shared via new media if they are accompanied by a disclaimer. See the requirement on External Links for more information.

Availability

All information shared via new media must be publically available. For example, one cannot post information on Facebook that is not available elsewhere, such as on the NICHD public Web site or the NIH Guide\textsuperscript{13}.

In addition, new media activities must be open to all who are on that new media platform. NICHD-affiliated new media pages or groups cannot be closed or available by invitation only. For example, a Branch cannot have a Facebook page that is only open to current grantees. In some new media platforms, such as LinkedIn, it is not possible to have an “open” group. In these cases, all persons that apply for entry to the group should be accepted.

Branding

NICHD-affiliated new media accounts must meet the following requirements for account name, profile information, and profile image. These requirements allow NICHD to have a consistent new media presence.

Account Name

When the space is available in the account name, the title, or username of the new media account should include the abbreviation NICHD at the beginning of the name. For platforms that limit the number of characters in the name, NICHD may appear in the profile instead of in the name, but names that include NICHD are preferred.

Profile

This short description informs the audience about the person or OU that maintains the account. It should include a link to the OU’s NICHD Web page or to the NICHD Web page. When possible, the full name of the NICHD and NIH should be spelled out in the profile. For platforms that limit the number of characters in the profile name, the abbreviation NICHD/NIH can be used.

All new media account profiles should include a link to the New Media Policies\textsuperscript{14} on the NICHD Web site. This page includes the Comment Policy, Endorsement Disclaimer, Standard Disclaimer, and Privacy Policy. Each of these is described below.
Profile Image

All NICHD new media activities should be branded with the NICHD logo for new media, which is available on the NICHD Insider\textsuperscript{15}. In special cases, alternative profile images may be approved, but OUs may not have their own logos per the NIH Logo Policy\textsuperscript{16}.

NIH Name and Logo

The Office of Communications and Public Liaison (OCPL) in the NIH OD must approve use of the NIH name, abbreviation, or logo, per the NIH Policy Use of NIH Names and Logos\textsuperscript{17} for the new account. During the account approval process, PICB will seek approval from OCPL for each NICHD-affiliated new media account.

Comments

Many new media platforms allow for comments from the audience. The NICHD encourages this type of public interaction, but reminds staff to follow regulations set forth by HHS.

Comment Policy

The comment policy is a set of guidelines that aims to foster meaningful dialogue and to encourage all participants to act civilly and follow relevant laws and policies. The NICHD’s published comment policy is modified from the HHS comment policy\textsuperscript{18}.

**NICHD Comment Policy** (see http://www.nichd.nih.gov/disclaimer.cfm#comment)

*We encourage and look forward to an active exchange of ideas. To maintain a respectful dialogue, we ask that everyone follow these guidelines:*

- **Be respectful.** Personal attacks, profanity, and aggressive behavior are prohibited.
- **Stay focused.** All viewpoints are welcome, but comments should remain relevant to the conversation at hand.
- **Tell the truth.** Intentional spreading of misleading or false information is prohibited.
- **Do not post:**
  - Solicitations, advertisements, or commercial endorsements
  - Defamatory or fraudulent information
Spam (includes repeated posts, comments, and links to other sites)

Copyrighted or trademarked images or graphics

Documents of any kind

Comments or images that suggest illegal activity or that contain illegal content

Partisan political views

Discriminatory, racist, offensive, obscene, inflammatory, unlawful or otherwise objectionable statements, language, or content

Information that is not publicly available

Participate with caution. You should take personal responsibility for your comments, your username, and any information provided. All comments must be consistent with HHS and NIH policies.

Comments are welcome at any time, however the NICHD will only moderate and post comments during regular business hours.

The NICHD retains the right to remove comments that violate its comment policy at any time. Repeated violation of this comment policy could result in blocking or removal from access as applicable for the new media platform.

This comment policy is valid for all discussions on any NICHD-managed forum, including Facebook and Twitter. We encourage your participation in our discussion(s) and look forward to an active exchange of ideas.

Reporters should not post questions or requests on any new media platform; instead, those questions and inquiries should be sent to PICB through normal channels.

Comments as Records*

All content in government-affiliated new media activities, including comments from the public, is considered an official record and, as such, is subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and records management requirements for new media. NICHD staff should collect and archive comments from the public at least monthly. Comment records will also be useful for internal evaluation of a new media account; including frequency of comments, number of commenters, and subject matters of most interest to the public.
The record should include the comment itself, date submitted, and name or pseudonym of the commenter. Other Personally Identifiable Information (PII) should not be collected per the federal government’s privacy requirements. Methods available for comment archival vary by platform, and may include native or third party comment export, screen shots, or copy and paste of text. Official records need to be retained as defined by the NIH Disposition Schedule. Please see the NICHD policy on Records Management for additional information.

Comment Moderation

If allowed by the platform, comments should be reviewed before they are posted and settings should be such that the administrator is notified when a comment is made. NICHD staff maintaining the account should review and address comments daily. Comments that violate the policy should be removed and archived immediately. Staff should not modify any user comments – comments should be posted or removed in full, not in part.

For platforms that do not allow comment removal, comments that violate the policy should be ignored. If a commenter persists in violating the policy, do not engage that commenter. Post a link to the comment policy and disclaimer, and block the commenter if allowed by the platform.

Ensure that discussions stay policy and politically neutral in accordance with the Hatch Act. Comments of a political nature should be removed and archived.

Response to Comments

Staff should take advantage of the interactive nature of new media, but should follow HHS Guidance on When and How to Engage over New Media Platforms. Removal of comments that are inaccurate or opinionated, but not in violation of the comment policy can cause a lack of trust in the OU that maintains that new media account. In many cases, it is appropriate to post a follow-up comment that objectively corrects the inaccuracies rather than to remove comments.

NICHD-affiliated accounts may only favorite, follow, retweet, or otherwise interact with other government-affiliated new media accounts to avoid any confusion that the NICHD is endorsing a non-government or commercial entity. Thus, for instance, an NICHD-affiliated account cannot favorite, follow, or retweet material from a grantee site.

NICHD-affiliated accounts may only respond to comments or messages directed to the account. They may not be used to initiate conversations with any other new media accounts, including any other NIH-affiliated new media accounts.
Content

Audit

The NICHD OD and PICB will review new media content periodically and make suggestions as appropriate. Similarly, the HHS Office of New Media can review or audit NICHD-affiliated new media content at any time.

Budget

Discussion of specific data concerning NIH, NICHD, or program budgets should link to existing official budget information available through the NIH Research Portfolio Online Reporting Tool (RePORT), NICHD Web site, or other vetted channels. Appropriate factual statements related to the budget (i.e., “the HHS budget passed today”) are acceptable, but opinions about the budget or budget process are prohibited.

Copyright/Intellectual Property*

Information, images, graphs, video, and other content covered by copyright laws should not be posted directly to a NICHD-affiliated new media site without permission. Linking to material that is copywritten is acceptable.

Embargos

NICHD staff should follow standard practice in discussing research prior to publication in a scientific journal. Research presented at a scientific meeting that will later be published should not be discussed beyond the information or date presented at the meeting. Research submitted to a scientific journal should not be discussed publically in any forum, including new media, until the journal embargo has been lifted.

Frequency

Each NICHD new media account must be used to post content at least once per week. Any account that does not meet this goal for a period of two months must be closed or “retired”. PICB and IRMB must be notified of the retirement. This process prevents NICHD from having many unused new media accounts.

Disclaimers

These disclaimers can be found at the NICHD Policies and Disclaimers Web page. In addition, the External Link Disclaimer should be applied to any links going to non-government sites if
possible for that new media platform. Specific language for the NICHD disclaimers is as follows:

**External Link Disclaimer**

Links to "external sites"—those not maintained by the NICHD— are provided only for convenience. The HHS, NIH, and NICHD are not responsible in any way for external sites and do not endorse or support the products, services, or information that they may describe or offer. Please note that non-government sites may have privacy and other policies that are different from the NICHD’s policies.

**Standard Disclaimer**

Information (including text, multimedia content, and user comments) shared through new media platforms does not necessarily represent the views of the NICHD, the NIH, or the HHS. For official information, visit the [NICHD Web site](#).

The NICHD may provide users with health information for educational purposes only. We urge you to consult with a qualified health care provider for diagnoses and for answers to your personal medical questions.

**Ethics**

NICHD-affiliated new media activities must comply with federal and NIH ethics and conduct policies and regulations. The [HHS Ethics Program](#), [NIH Ethics Program](#), and the Ethics section of the NICHD Insider provide additional information about ethics-related issues.

**Evaluation**

New media activities should be evaluated and may include reviewing metrics, identifying lessons learned, and determining whether the effort successfully met project goals. Each new media platform has different methods of data collection and different metrics that can be collected. Evaluation methods should be described in the Plan for New Media Activities.

**External Links**

**Disclaimer Page**

Any external links shared by NIH staff via new media must be accompanied by a disclaimer page that indicates to visitors that they are being directed to a non-NIH Web site, per the [NIH Social and New Media Policy](#). To create a link or URL (Uniform Resource Locator) that will send visitors first to NICHD’s disclaimer page, then to the link of interest, staff may use the...
following URL format: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/external.cfm?theURL=X, where X is the desired URL. For example, a URL that brings the visitor to the disclaimer page, then to a video on YouTube about the NICHD’s scientific vision is: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/external.cfm?theURL=http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVNuljmprCk. NICHD staff can use the NICHD’s disclaimer language (see above) as is or with modifications.

URL Shortener

For those platforms with a small number of characters per post, it may be desirable to shorten URLs using a “URL shortener”. The federal URL shortener\textsuperscript{26} is the preferred URL shortener. For example, the above URL, with disclaimer, to the YouTube video about the NICHD’s scientific vision can be shortened to: \url{http://go.usa.gov/NXU}.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)*

All NICHD OUs should ensure that their new media communications are in compliance with FOIA requirements issued by the NIH FOIA Office. For more information on how to request records under the FOIA Act, please view the NIH FOIA Code of Federal Regulations.

Information Collection*

Asking open-ended questions of your audience can be a good way to engage the public and to gather feedback. However, certain practices fall outside the regulations for soliciting information. These include the following:

- The Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)\textsuperscript{27} defines how federal advisory committees operate, with special emphasis on open meetings, chartering, public involvement, and reporting. This law prohibits agencies from seeking consensus advice outside of the structure and public scrutiny of a formally established advisory committee.

- The Paperwork Reduction Act\textsuperscript{28} (PRA) prohibits many types of information collection without prior approval by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

- Social Media, Web-Based Interactive Technologies, and the Paperwork Reduction Act\textsuperscript{29} applies the PRA to new media. This Executive Memorandum states that open-ended requests for public feedback and “suggestion box” type information gathering fall under the general solicitations exclusion of the PRA. However, non-open-ended surveys and multiple-choice questions “are subject to the public notice and comment requirements of the PRA and must have OMB approval before use.” Information about NICHD’s OMB clearance procedures and content can be found on the NICHD Insider\textsuperscript{30}.
Multimedia

Audiovisuals (Podcasts, Videos & Vodcasts)

The NIH Policy Manual Chapter 1183: NIH Publications and Audiovisuals: Preparation, Review, Approval, and Distribution requires that IC publications or audiovisuals be approved by the NIH Office of Community and Public Liaison (OCPL) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs (OASPA), HHS.” This policy applies to “All NIH audiovisual projects and exhibits, including material slated for posting on YouTube, social media portals, and other new media outlets.” Staff interested in creating and posting podcasts or videos on social and new media platforms should contact PICB to discuss and complete HHS Form 524A Audiovisual Clearance Request; once completed, PICB will submit the form to NIH OCPL.

To allow for cross-promotion of videos and for collection of accurate metrics, all videos must be posted on the official NIH YouTube channel, which is maintained by the NIH Office of the Director. To submit videos to the official NIH YouTube channel, contact PICB by emailing nichdnewmedia@mail.nih.gov. No other video hosting Web sites may be used.

OMB requires that all videos that are posted on YouTube also be posted on an official government Web site – this can be accomplished by embedding the YouTube video. A link to the government Web site where the video can be found must be provided in the YouTube video description. To embed your video on the NICHD Web site, contact NICHD submissions at NICHDsubmissions@mail.nih.gov.

Please note that all videos posted online must meet HHS Section 508 requirements for accessibility. See NICHD’s Guidelines for Posting Videos document for additional information.

Images

Any image of a person, including non-copywritten images, may not be used without a signed release. The Internet Site Photo Permission Form can be found on the NICHD Insider. Photos already on the NICHD public Web site have previously been approved; please contact PICB for additional approvals.

Neutrality*

All information posted via new media, including content and comments, must be policy and politically neutral. NICHD staff cannot advocate for or against policies, laws, regulations, political parties, or policymakers at the local, state, or federal level, per the Hatch Act. In addition, content should follow the guidelines in the Comment Policy.
Plain Language*

NICHD OUs should comply with the Plain Writing Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-274), which requires the federal government to write in simple, easy-to-understand language. The Act defines “plain writing” as writing that the intended audience can readily understand because the writing is clear, concise, well organized, and follows best practices for plain writing. Furthermore, the Act specifies that plain writing must be used in any writing that is relevant to obtaining Federal benefits or services or comply with Federal requirements.

Privacy*

Like all online government activities, new media activities are governed by regulations related to Personally Identifiable Information (PII). Currently, HHS only approves the use of new media platforms that have a Terms of Service Agreement that includes PII protections.

Refer to Guidance for Agency Use of Third-Party Websites and Applications for more details on the requirements to protect individual privacy when new media platforms are used. This Memorandum states that the “the agency should collect only the minimum [PII] necessary to accomplish a purpose.”

Privacy Policy

The NICHD Privacy Policy (below) is adapted from the HHS privacy policy and NIH privacy policy. It can be found on the NICHD Policies and Disclaimers Web page.

The NICHD does not collect any personally identifiable information (PII) about you unless you choose to provide that information. Any PII you chose to provide will not be shared by NICHD with any other organization or government agency except as required by law. Non-PII to your visit to this Web site or to a third-party Web site may be automatically collected and temporarily stored. For more information on privacy issues, please view the Disclaimers and Policy section of the NICHD Web site.

Recruitment of Study Subjects*

OUs that plan to use new media platforms as a method of recruitment for study subjects should adhere to the human subject protection regulations at 45 CFR Part 46 and 21 CFR Part 56, which require that an Institutional Review Board (IRB) review and approve all research activities, including the use of advertising and plans for protecting the confidentiality of actual and prospective subjects.
See the NIH Social and New Media Policy, the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP), and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for additional guidance regarding the use of social media for recruitment of study subjects.

Security

IRMB will review each Plan for New Media Activities and assist NICHD staff in setting up new media accounts that comply with Information Technology (IT) security requirements. Currently, HHS approves use of only those new media platforms that have a Terms of Service Agreement that meets IT security requirements. Please note that new media tools that have not been approved by HHS and IRMB are not allowed.

NICHD recommends that staff members adhere to the summary of best practices noted below when using new media platforms.

Do’s:

- Understand that employees should have no expectation of privacy when using social media tools
- Immediately notify the NICHD ISSO, nichdisso@mail.nih.gov, if a security or privacy breach occurs or is suspected
- Limit your personal use of new and social media, as mandated by the NIH Manual Chapter 2806, NIH Policy on Limited Authorized Personal Use of NIH Information Technology (IT) Resources

Don’ts:

- Use NIH e-mail addresses to establish personal accounts or as an identifier during participation in personal or unofficial social and new media activities
- Post material or statements that could give the impression that you are representing NICHD, NIH, HHS or the Federal Government
- Share your personal information to avoid personal attacks and minimize the chance of information being harvested for the purpose of social hacking and impersonation
- Encourage other users to share personal information
- Discuss any NICHD related information that is not considered public information
- Engage in vulgar or abusive language
- Endorse commercial products, services, or entities
- Endorse political parties, candidates, or groups
Appendix A: Submitting Content to Official NICHD New Media Channels

To submit new media content for distribution through official NICHD channels, please email the information below to nichdnewmedia@mail.nih.gov. These details will help with verification and posting of your content. Please note that any missing information could delay posting. When possible, advance notice is appreciated and ensures that important topics can be addressed in a timely manner.

- Name of person submitting content
- Organizational Unit (OU): Branch, Office, etc. within NICHD
- Desired new media channel(s): Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, etc.
- Desired date/time of post: Please indicate whether the content is time sensitive.
- Content: Include a link to existing content when possible, preferably from a government Web site. Please note:
  - Any image or video content must be 508 compliant.
  - The Facebook character limit is 420.
  - The Twitter character limit is 140.
Appendix B: NICHD Plan for New Media Activities

To initiate NICHD-affiliated new media activity, provide as much detail as possible for your new media plan and request approval from the supervisor of your Organization Unit (OU). Once the OU supervisor approves the plan, E-mail the plan to PICB at nichdnewmedia@mail.nih.gov.

1. Name of person creating the plan
   
   Christina Stile and Dayle Stein

2. Organization Unit (OU): Branch, Office, etc within NICHD
   
   PICB

3. Proposed new media platform: Facebook, Twitter, etc.
   
   Facebook and Twitter

4. What are your objectives?
   a. Explain what you are trying to accomplish with this new media activity. Examples: share information about funding opportunities with perinatal researchers, alert medical students to fellowship and loan repayment programs.

   By having a presence on Facebook and Twitter, NICHD hopes to:
   
   • Increase NICHD’s reach and recognition within the research and academic communities by showcasing news and accomplishments
   • Educate the public on important child and human development topics and disseminate existing NICHD consumer resources more broadly
   • Engage directly and actively with people and organizations interested in the mission and research of the NICHD
   • Improve transparency by informing taxpayers and lawmakers of the results of research funding and future research opportunities

   b. Explain how your objectives further the overall mission of the NICHD. Example: reaching out to perinatal researchers about funding support for projects that can add to the research base to help ensure that all children are born healthy.
Increasing NICHD’s reach and recognition within the research community can help NICHD attract the best and brightest investigators and students to its work and to its research and training opportunities.

Translating research findings and educating the public can help encourage changes to behavior and clinical care that improve health outcomes for infants, children, mothers, adults, and communities.

Engaging directly and actively can provide the people and organizations most interested in NICHD’s work with research-based information about topics they care about and work to promote; it can also allow NICHD to understand how it is perceived by important audiences.

Increasing transparency by informing the public of the results of research funding will increase public trust in NICHD and help bolster broader public support for federally funded research in general.

5. Who is your intended audience and what are their communication needs? Examples: perinatology researchers, medical students, parents.

- **Researchers, students, grantees and potential grantees** – Researchers and students want information on specific funding opportunities as well as general information on NICHD priorities, news, and events. They may also want to connect with others in their field.

- **Consumers** – The public, and parents in particular, want reliable and research-based information in the areas of health that NICHD studies. They are looking for information that can inform the environmental and behavioral choices they make as well as to inform decisions they make with their health care professionals.

- **Health nonprofits, research organizations, associations, and conferences** – Topically related organizations who are on Facebook and Twitter want to be able to find news from likeminded organizations such as NICHD and recycle relevant scientific stories to their members.

- **Policymakers and Congressional Staff** – People responsible for allocating funding for scientific research want to know the outcomes this funding has produced. Facebook and Twitter can be used to keep policymakers and their staffs informed throughout the year, not just when budgets are approved.
6. What key messages are you trying to convey?

- **NICHD conducts and supports important research related to infants, children, adults, families, and communities.**
- **NICHD is a reliable source of evidence-based information on child and human development health topics.**
- **NICHD translates discovery into better health for ordinary Americans, by:**
  - Reducing infant deaths and improving infant health;
  - Improving the health of women, men, and families;
  - Understanding reproductive health and fertility/infertility;
  - Learning about growth and development;
  - Examining, preventing and treating problems of intellectual and developmental disabilities and disorders; and
  - Enhancing well-being of persons through the lifespan with optimal rehabilitation research.

7. Why did you choose this new media platform? How will this platform rather than others best meet your objectives, audience, and messages?

*Facebook and Twitter best meet the objectives, audience and messages stated above. Statistics from the Pew Internet and American Life Project support the choice of these two networks.*

- **Facebook is the most popular social network among U.S. adults; Facebook and Twitter are engaged with daily at a higher proportion than other social networks, such as LinkedIn.** -source
- “Pew Internet’s research has found that Facebook seems to support intimacy and relationships among groups of people.” -source
- **Women use social networking sites more than men, with almost half of female internet users using social networking sites on a typical day (48%), compared with 38% of male internet users.** -source
- **11% of social network site users, or 5% of adults, have posted comments, queries, or information about health or medical matters. “These are not yet mainstream activities, but there are pockets of highly-engaged patients and caregivers who are taking an active role in tracking and sharing what they have learned.”** -source
There is a compelling case for how stories can be amplified and shared through social networks; sharing a story through social networks can increase the reach and prominence of NICHD among researchers and related health organizations. A friend’s endorsement (through a like, share or retweet) of a story originated by NICHD on Facebook or Twitter could carry enough weight to engage that person in meaningful behavior change.

We propose one strategy and set of messages for both platforms at this time. After six months, we propose looking at the metrics of each platform to determine if we need to differentiate the strategies based on the audience each platform attracts. We suspect, for example, that Twitter may attract researchers, students, and advocacy groups whereas Facebook may attract a broader consumer audience, but we would like to see if those suppositions are borne out.

8. Who will be responsible for the following? List the name and hours per week allotted (may be the same person).
   a. **Team Lead**: Responsibilities include review and approval of content and serving as the point of contact with PICB or OE and IRMB.

   *John McGrath (1 hr/week)*

   b. **Administration**: Responsibilities include setting up the new media account, changing the account details when needed (admin rights required).

   *Dayle Stein (less than 1 hr/week)*

   c. **Maintenance**: Responsibilities include posting of content and comment moderation (admin rights required).

   *Dayle Stein (3 hours/week)*

   d. **Content Creation**: Responsibilities include creating content to be posted with the new media account (admin rights optional).

   *Dayle Stein (5 hours/week) with assistance from the Web Content Development contractor*

9. How many times per week do you expect to post to your new media account? One post per week is the minimum required to start a new media account.
Facebook posts will begin 3 times per week during the first month, increase to 4 times per week during the second month, and increase to daily posts, if sustainable, by the third month of implementation.

Once launched, Twitter posts should be daily, including both original content and retweets.

10. List three sample posts.

An example of an NICHD news story, targeting research community audience:

Facebook: NICHD director Alan Guttmacher, MD, shared exciting neuroscience findings from NICHD researchers recently at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience. LINK: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/resources/spotlight/112311-highlights-neuroscience-research.cfm

Twitter: NICHD director Guttmacher shared exciting #neuroscience findings at the @SFNtweets annual meeting. LINK: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/resources/spotlight/112311-highlights-neuroscience-research.cfm

An example of an NICHD news story, targeting consumer audience:

Facebook: Don’t let the word “mild” fool you. Concussions are brain injuries and mean serious business. Learn more about NICHD’s research into concussions, helmets, and football. LINK: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/resources/spotlight/020612-concussions.cfm

Twitter: Even a “mild” concussion can cause big problems. NICHD researchers have been focusing on concussion research. LINK: http://www.nichd.nih.gov/news/resources/spotlight/020612-concussions.cfm

An example of an evergreen resource with a timely spin and tie-in with general interest news, targeting consumer audience:

Facebook: April is National Autism Awareness Month. Did you know that the NICHD is doing important research about the causes and treatment of Autism? LINK http://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/asd.cfm

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1 Tagging the post on FB will cross-post it to that Page’s wall, and tagging another account on Twitter can get it on the radar of at least that group, with the chance they might choose to RT your post.
2 We recommend using a link shortener for Twitter. If the link is .gov, use the go.usa.gov URL shortener.
11. Identify how you will determine whether or not your new media efforts are successful, including how frequently you will assess your new media activity and what metrics you will collect. Examples: number of likes on Facebook, number of followers on Twitter.

**Frequency of Analytics**

*Monthly report*

**Metrics to Collect**

**Facebook**

- Total likes as of the same day of the week
- Weekly total reach as of the same day of the week
- Timestamp and content of published stories
  - **Story metrics**
    - Reach
    - Engaged users, i.e., the number of people who have clicked on a story
    - People talking about this, i.e., likes, comments, and shares together
    - Virality, i.e., percentage of people who liked, commented, or shared your story out of the total number who saw it
    - Additional notes as needed

**Twitter**

- Follower count as of the same day of the week
- Number of @Replies or mentions
- Number of DMs
- Timestamps and content of tweets
- Additional notes as needed

12. What is the account name? Consult the Account Name requirement and platform appendices for specific guidance.

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3 Note: As of this writing, Facebook keeps post-specific metrics for only 28 days
13. What is the profile text? Consult the Profile requirement and platform appendices for specific guidance.

Facebook: The NICHD, part of the National Institutes of Health, conducts and supports research on topics related to the health of children, adults, families, and communities.4

Twitter: NICHD, part of NIH, conducts and supports research on topics related to the health of children, adults, families, and communities.

14. What profile image will you use? Paste the profile image below. Consult the Profile Image requirement, platform appendices, and Logo Policy for specific guidance about profile images.

Facebook icon: Modified NICHD logo

Facebook cover photo: Provided

Twitter icon: Modified NICHD logo

15. Approval (include name of approving official and date approved)
   a. OU approval
   b. PICB or DIR approval
   c. IRMB approval

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4 This is our suggested revision so the most important information should come first in the sentence. The About text is limited to 165 visible characters on Facebook (without requiring the user to expand) and absolutely no more than 140 characters on Twitter. Additionally, on the Info tab, in another field other than About, we suggest copying over the bulleted list from http://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/ for more concrete examples of research areas.
Appendix C: Resources

- How To Use Social Media Strategically in the Federal Government (General Services Administration)
- Social Media (Howto.gov)
- HHS Learning Management System (LMS) Courses relevant to using new media strategically to promote an OU or program, such as Marketing Essentials: Introduction to Marketing.
- Science Communication Practical Guides (SciDev.net)
- NIH Plain Language Training
Appendix D: Summary of Selected New Media Platforms

Each new media platform has advantages and disadvantages, as well as its own technical specifications. This table includes summary information for selected new media platforms. All platforms listed below have [Terms of Service Agreements](#) with HHS; so they can be used by NICHD staff. Applications such as [Hootsuite](#) can be used to assist with managing new media activities on multiple platforms and with collection of metrics for evaluation of new media activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Platform(s)</th>
<th>Works well for…</th>
<th>Not as good for…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio sharing</td>
<td>Podcasts, Blog Talk Radio</td>
<td>Broadcasting interviews, discussions, tutorials, etc. Can be one-time or series.</td>
<td>Content that could be expressed just as easily in text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogging</td>
<td>Wordpress, Blogger, Tumblr</td>
<td>Telling a story; sharing in-depth information</td>
<td>When there aren’t resources or content to post regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dashboard</td>
<td>Hootsuite</td>
<td>Scheduling posts for future times/dates, posting to more than one platform.</td>
<td>Posting to one platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-blogging</td>
<td>Twitter, Posterous</td>
<td>Providing real-time updates; obtaining feedback; interacting at conferences.</td>
<td>Circumstances in which there aren’t resources to participate regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo sharing</td>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td>Sharing photos, diagrams, and other images. May be used in combination with other new media platforms.</td>
<td>Circumstances in which few photos are available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional networking</td>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>Audiences that involve many professionals.</td>
<td>Situations when the primary goal is to interact with general public, not professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Engaging with stakeholders and building community; obtaining feedback.</td>
<td>Situations when there aren’t resources to participate regularly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video sharing</td>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>Broadcasting events, interviews, tutorials, etc.</td>
<td>Situations when content could be expressed just as easily in audio or text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Official NICHD New Media Accounts

Facebook:  

Twitter:  

YouTube:
Appendix F: Facebook

If your new media activities are planned for Facebook, please follow these requirements in addition to the requirements listed in the NICHD New Media Policy.

Account Name

The Facebook Page name should include the acronym NICHD first, then the name of the OU. Facebook allows 75 characters in the name of a Page.

Example: The Facebook Page for the NICHD Division of Special Populations could be: “NICHD Division of Special Populations”. The URL could be: http://www.facebook.com/NICHD_DivisionofSpecialPopulations.

Profile

The profile must include the following text as the first paragraph: This is the Facebook page for [OU full name (abbreviation)], a part of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The [OU abbreviation] aims to [description of aims]. Visit [URL for OU Web site or NICHD Web site] for more information. Visit ____ to view NICHD’s disclaimers and policies.

Example: This is the Facebook page for the Division of Special Populations (DSP), a part of the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), within the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The DSP aims to address and eliminate health disparities by encouraging participation of diverse populations in biomedical and behavioral research within the United States and abroad. Visit http://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/org/dsp/ for more information. Visit ____ to view NICHD’s disclaimers and policies.

Content

Facebook posts typically allow for a broader reach to your audience than posting on the NICHD Web site alone. There is a maximum of 420 characters allowed for a Facebook status update.

Resources

- Facebook Guidance⁴³ by HHS
- Facebook Guidebook⁴⁴ by Mashable
Appendix G: Twitter

If your new media activities are planned for Twitter, please follow these requirements in addition to the requirements listed in the NICHD New Media Policy.

Account Name

The Twitter account name should include a keyword describing the nature of the organization or program. Twitter allows 15 characters in a profile name.

Example: The Twitter account for NICHD’s health education program Back to Sleep could be @backtosleep.

Profile

The profile must include “at NICHD/NIH” after the full or abbreviated name of the OU or program. You have 160 characters to use to describe the subject matter of your Twitter account, link to your OU Web site or the NICHD Web site, and link to the disclaimer page.

Example: “Back to Sleep” at NICHD/NIH aims to reduce the risk of SIDS. See go.usa.gov/8LH for details, _____ for disclaimers.

Content

Twitter posts are time sensitive and are often used to convey real time information. Each Tweet may contain a maximum of 160 characters. URLs are frequently made shorter using a “URL shortener”; see the requirement External Links for details.

Resources

- Twitter Guidance by HHS
- Twitter Guidebook by Mashable
- Guide to using Twitter in university research, teaching and impact activities by the London School of Economics and Political Science.
Bibliography


14  NICHD. () New Media Policies. Retrieved from: 

15  NICHD Insider () Logo for New Media. Retrieved from: 

16  NICHD Insider. () Logo Policy. Retrieved from: 


