



IBMS Regions and Branches: guide to using social media

Social media is an effective way for IBMS region and branches to communicate with their local members and potential members. It can help you to promote your events and activities, to network with other followers and to talk about biomedical science news and local topics.

The IBMS encourages regions and branches to use social media in a creative, positive and engaging way to communicate with your members.

Some of the ways regions and branches can use social media are:

- Promoting branch activities
- Supplementing physical meetings with virtual support to enable continuation of the discussion i.e. #IBMSChatWales
- Encouraging wider participation and deepening the original debate
- Enabling members to choose when they participate, so reducing the time restraint
- Posting documents, presentation notes and follow-up information both prior to and post meetings.

To maintain consistency and control, ideally you should nominate one person to look after social media. We ask that you let us know the contact details of that person, as well as details of any accounts you set up so that we can follow you and promote your efforts on our accounts as well.

Before you set up an account

All regions and branches **must contact** the IBMS Communications Manager prior to opening an account. They must read this guidance document and agree to abide by its terms.

The account name must be agreed before opening the account and a profile logo will be provided, which must be used.

What channels do we recommend?



Twitter

Twitter is about concise content – ‘tweets’ of 280 characters or fewer, including spaces. It relies heavily on links and images.

The IBMS’s account is called [@IBMScience](#). Our audience is mainly biomedical scientists but there are also followers who are science students and are looking for more information as well as healthcare companies, government and university departments and professional bodies.

Use Twitter to tweet about your events, branch meetings and local biomedical science news.

Always be mindful that it is an IBMS branch/region account and all content represents the IBMS not the person managing the account. Whilst it is recommended that tweets have a personal touch, never use the account to vent your anger or engage in negative activity.

Always remain positive and on message – disengage if users become offensive and use the report and/or block functions if the messages you receive are abusive.

Retweeting is endorsement – only retweet if it is relevant to your branch/region account.

Do not post or retweet job vacancies, unless from the [@IBMScience](#) account or from our [Jobs Board](#). Our contract for job vacancies is with Redactive, our magazine publishers, which precludes us from promoting any other vacancies.

Be mindful of who you follow. Ensure you check an account's tweets before you follow them as there are many spam and fake accounts on Twitter.

Use hashtags (#) to highlight key terms in your messages, which will make them easier to search and, if popular and used by lots of other accounts, can start trending. For example: use #biomedicalscience instead of biomedical science.

Use images where possible. Tweets with images gain far more attention than those that don't. Always ensure your images are copyright free, there are lots of websites where you can find them – we recommend using www.pexels.com. If you don't know where the images came from, don't use them.

When should you tweet?

Aim to be consistent with your tweets and make sure the frequency is sustainable. Spread your messages throughout the day and remember quality over quantity. If you need content or ideas always check out the IBMS account, a retweet of our relevant messages to your branch/region is one way to post.

If you are unable to tweet at least every few days then Twitter isn't for you. We suggest you set up a Facebook Group instead where other users can contribute and keep the content flowing.



Facebook

The IBMS uses Facebook to engage followers with biomedical science news and content found on the web as well as links to our own news stories, events and information. The page is open to the public, meaning anyone can like, follow and comment on our page.

If an IBMS region and branch wishes to create a Facebook account, we recommend that you create a Group. This will allow you greater control over who sees the posts and what they can comment on.

You can choose to make the Facebook Group private and by invite only, or public for anyone to become a group member and post in the group.

Responding to enquiries on social media

For general enquiries always reply as soon as you can and ensure the user knows who they are speaking with, add your name after your response i.e. Thanks, Dan. This will help to personalise the conversation and ensure that the enquirer knows who they are talking to.

For longer conversations either Twitter or Facebook private messaging should be used and then recommend that the conversation is moved to email (if more than 3-4 messages are received). This can also involve passing on the email address communications@ibms.org for the IBMS to deal with.

Dealing with abuse

Abuse of any kind is not acceptable and should be reported using the appropriate social media channel's reporting tool.

More information to report abuse online

Twitter: <https://support.twitter.com/articles/20169998>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/help/181495968648557>

If a Facebook comment is insulting or inappropriate it can be hidden and will only be seen by the person who wrote it and their friends and can be used whilst deciding whether to delete the comment or contact the person who wrote it to change or remove their comment.

In extreme cases the user can be blocked. If the user is found to be an IBMS member their details and the abusive message should be reported to the Head of Membership who will decide on the appropriate course of action. Email: LyndaRigby@ibms.org

Dos and don'ts of social media

Do

- **Engage and respond.** Interaction with an audience, credible conversation and quick responses to any comment or query are key to building up a relationship with a social network audience.
- **Ensure consistency** across all media platforms to avoid confusion of message. However, do tailor material and the message to the nature of different outlets – what works on Facebook will be different to Twitter.
- **Try to add value.** Provide worthwhile information and perspective. IBMS' work is being represented on these social media sites, whatever content is published may reflect on the IBMS.
- **Always adhere to quality over quantity.** The best messages are well thought out and encourage engagement, whilst lots of messages about the same thing will be ignored.
- **Correct errors quickly.** It happens and when it does always admit and openly correct errors.
- **Think before you post.** Remember that anyone, anywhere, anytime can see what you post.
- **Retweeting and sharing is endorsement.** Remember that any retweeting or re-posting of material, even if it's from a credible course, can be perceived as endorsement.

IBMS Regions and Branches guide to using social media **Don't**

Don't break the law.

Social media may be fast, global and informal but the posting of content is still covered by law and standard practice as for any form of publication. Even repeating or retweeting information is still breaking the law if material:

- includes defamation, libellous and derogatory comments
- is racist and/or sexist
- misuses personal data and information
- breaks copyright
- illegally uses trade marks
- is confidential

Do not bring the IBMS into disrepute.

Dan Nimmo is the IBMS Communications Manager and is the person responsible for the social media accounts at the IBMS. You can contact him for any help or enquiries you have on using social media: dan.nimmo@ibms.org.



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