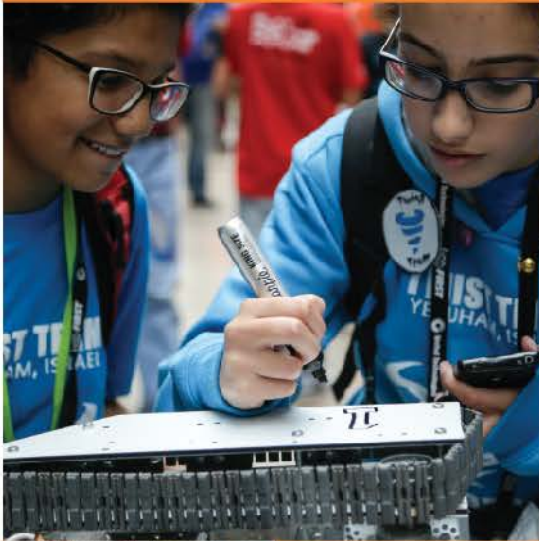




**FIRST  
TECH  
CHALLENGE**

*Training and  
Support*



## **FIRST Tech Challenge Social Media Guidelines**

[www.firstinspires.org](http://www.firstinspires.org)

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FOR INSPIRATION & RECOGNITION OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

## Introduction

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Social Media is now more prevalent than ever. People, businesses, and organizations all have social media pages. This translates into a greater level of responsibility and accountability for everyone. Your online presence says a lot about who you are as an individual or as a group. You should be intentional when creating your online presence and make sure that your social media footprint represents you or your team in a positive light and doesn't make your team or organization look bad or ungracious. Always remember that once you post something to the internet, it will essentially be there forever.

Social media is a great way to create and spread your team's brand. Creating a strong social media presence can help your team be successful in your community outreach, finding sponsorships, or even just participating in the world wide community that is *FIRST*! Our social media guidelines are meant to help you be successful in creating your team's individual brand while also helping you connect with our *FIRST* network.



## Creating an Online Presence

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Before you begin you should think about why you want to create an online presence. Is it to share information? Is it to spread the word about *FIRST* in your community? Is it to thank your sponsors? Is it to connect with other *FIRST* teams and alumni? Is it to teach about robotics? You need to identify your purpose so that you can decide the best route to take.

For example, if it is just to share information, a website is often an easy tool with which to do that. However, if you are making regular updates to the information you are sharing, then perhaps Facebook or Twitter is a better strategy. We talk about the various options below.

The next question you should ask yourself is who are you trying to communicate with? The general public? The volunteers in your state? Students at your school and in your community? Parents and sponsors? Again,

this will impact the choice you make: we recommend that you find out which platform your target audience is using the most and start there.

Remember, bigger isn't always better. Don't try doing too much at once or you might end up making more work for yourself and will have a harder time being successful. How much time and resources can you devote to this project? Is it something you can do each week? Every day? A couple times a year? Most social media outreach works best if there is a regular presence.

Lastly, what is the personality you want to create with your presence? Is it professional? Is it silly? You need to identify the tone that you want to set so that you can be consistent and people will know what to expect.

## General Guidelines and Recommendations

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FIRST has policies about the use of our name and logos. Be sure that you have read the [FIRST Branding & Design Standards information](#). This is a super helpful document.

Always remember that you are representing FIRST and FIRST Tech Challenge and to bring your GRACIOUS PROFESSIONALISM online with you.

You are going to need an email address to create your online presence. Choose a name that clearly states who you are (such as FTCTeam1234@gmail.com) and make sure a few people have the name and password and access.

Whatever online presence you create, be sure to make it clear that you are affiliated with FIRST and/or FIRST Tech Challenge, using the logos, and directing people to the website so they can find out more.

Be sure that whatever your plan is that you stick with it. Most social media platforms work best if you maintain a posting momentum (with the exception of a website). For example, if you start out posting once a day on Facebook and then drop to once a month, your posts are going to get lost in the newsfeed and result in a lower reach.

Use your analytics to see how you are doing at achieving your goals. If your numbers are low, you might need to adjust how often you are posting or the time of day. Do a search for ways to improve your online presence and there will be tons of articles out there with advice.

Cross-post, but not too much. If you have a website and Twitter, mention your website on Twitter, especially when you post new information. On your website, have a link to your Twitter feed.

### **Website Recommendations**

A website is a great way to share information with the public. A website, once created, only requires a little maintenance as people expect the information to be pretty static.

#### **Tips:**

Make the webpage easy to navigate: people should be able to tell what the pieces of the page are and how to get around.

Update your page at least 3-4 times a year. You can upload new photos, change the dates or season logos, etc to keep it a little fresh and up-to-date.

### **Facebook Recommendations**

Facebook is a wonderful tool to share information with people, including photos, upcoming events, and progress reports. Facebook requires regular maintenance, at least weekly, but daily is even better.

#### **Tips:**

Check in regularly to reply to comments and messages.

Post at least once a week, although 1-2 times a day is optimal to ensure your followers are able to get your content in their newsfeed.

Be sure to follow and re-share the [FIRST](#) and [FIRST Tech Challenge](#) Facebook pages, as well as your local FIRST Tech Challenge community on Facebook (teams, Affiliate Partner page, etc).

### **Twitter Recommendations**

Twitter is an online tool for sharing information fast and quick. You are limited to 140 characters, so this is a perfect tool for regular, short updates. Twitter requires daily maintenance to be successful, because the information moves fast. Tweets also use hashtags to align the Tweet in searchable conversations or social media/twitter trends.

#### **Tips:**

There is such a thing as too much, so while Twitter is ideal for posting a lot of little sound bites, the recommended number of tweets is about 3-5 a day to maintain a good balance.

Mix it up: post quotes, pictures, and video links in addition to text-only Tweets.

Be sure to follow and re-Tweet the [FIRST](#) and [FIRST Tech Challenge](#) Twitter feeds, as well as your local FTC community (teams, Affiliate Partner page, etc). To be a part of the conversation, we use the hashtags: #omgrobots #morethanrobots #ftc #omgftc

### **Instagram Recommendations**

Instagram is a visual community where you take a photo and post it with a brief tag. Instagram is quick and easy if you have a phone that takes pictures, but it does require regular, weekly posting in order for your posts to be seen.

#### **Tips:**

Be sure to follow the [FIRST Instagram](#) account, as well as your local FTC community (teams, Affiliate Partner page, etc).

### **YouTube Recommendations**

If you are interested in using videos to connect, then this is the platform for you. This is not a platform that requires regular updating, but it would work best when paired with one that does to announce when you've posted a new video.

#### **Tips:**

Make sure you are posting quality videos! Learn how to use video editing tools, add text and sound, etc.

Post original video content! Be entertaining!

Make careful decisions about your thumbnails (image alongside the video link), titles, and descriptions. Before they see your video, this is the first impression you create. Be descriptive and original.

Be sure to follow the [FIRST](#) and [FIRST Tech Challenge](#) YouTube channels, as well as your local FTC community (teams, Affiliate Partner page, etc).

## Blog Recommendations

Blogging can be a great way to share detailed information with your community. A post is generally 300-500 words long. Topics can include status updates on the robot design and build, competition updates, instructions on how to do something, etc. Blogging doesn't require consistent maintenance, but 1-2 times a week is a good way to maintain an online presence.

### Tips:

More than the other platforms, blogging requires lengthy writing, so make sure it is good writing.

Add one or two photos to your post to create visual interest.

Be sure to follow the [FIRST Tech Challenge](#) blog, as well as your local FTC community (teams, Affiliate Partner page, etc).



# 2016-2017 *FIRST*® Tech Challenge Title of Manual

## Appendices

## Appendix A – Resources

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### **Game Forum Q&A**

<http://ftcforum.usfirst.org/forum.php>

Anyone may view questions and answers within the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge Game Q&A forum without a password. In order to submit a new question, you must have a unique Q&A System User Name and Password for your team.

### **FIRST Tech Challenge Game Manuals**

Part I and II - <http://www.firstinspires.org/node/4271>

### **FIRST® Headquarters Support**

Phone: 603-666-3906

Email: [FTCTeams@firstinspires.org](mailto:FTCTeams@firstinspires.org)

### **FIRST Website: [firstinspires.org](http://firstinspires.org)**

[FIRST Tech Challenge Page](#) – For everything *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Volunteer Resources](#) – To access public Volunteer Manuals.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Event Schedule](#) – Find *FIRST* Tech Challenge events in your area.

### **FIRST Tech Challenge Social Media**

[FIRST Tech Challenge Twitter Feed](#) - If you are on Twitter, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge twitter feed for news updates.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Facebook page](#) - If you are on Facebook, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge page for news updates.

[FIRST Tech Challenge YouTube Channel](#) – Contains training videos, Game animations, news clips, and more.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Blog](#) – Weekly articles for the *FIRST* Tech Challenge community, including Outstanding Volunteer Recognition!

[FIRST Tech Challenge Team Email Blasts](#) – contain the most recent *FIRST* Tech Challenge news for Teams.

[FIRST Tech Challenge Google+](#) community - If you are on Google+, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge community for news updates.

## Feedback

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We strive to create support materials that are the best they can be. If you have feedback regarding this manual, please email [ftcteams@firstinspires.org](mailto:ftcteams@firstinspires.org). Thank you!