



**Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document 13-02**

# NEFSC Policy and Guidelines for Using Social Media

by the Northeast Fisheries Science Center

March 2013

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NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Serv., 166 Water St., Woods Hole MA 02543

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Northeast Fisheries Science Center  
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

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## Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Documents

**This series is a secondary scientific series** designed to assure the long-term documentation and to enable the timely transmission of research results by Center and/or non-Center researchers, where such results bear upon the research mission of the Center (see the outside back cover for the mission statement). These documents receive internal scientific review, and most receive copy editing. The National Marine Fisheries Service does not endorse any proprietary material, process, or product mentioned in these documents.

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# INTRODUCTION

The Department of Commerce's policy on the [Approval and Use of Social Media and Web 2.0](#) provides specific guidance for operating units and Commerce employees on the use of social media and Web 2.0 while in either your official or unofficial (private or personal) capacity. When using collaborative tools, you need to distinguish between unofficial (private or personal) and official activities, and avoid the appearance of governmental endorsement when conducting personal activities. Following the policy also protects Commerce and its employees from the risks inherent in using these services without the proper approvals and safeguards.

The guidelines for unofficial or personal use do not apply to contract employees, except to the extent that they are using Department of Commerce resources to provide information to the public.

This document – the NOAA Northeast Fisheries Science Center Social Media Policy – is intended to complement the DOC policy and provide specific policy guidance for NEFSC staff on the approval and use of official social media and web 2.0 platforms. The policy also provides specifics on the management and use of those platforms by NEFSC staff.

For more information, contact Teri Frady, NEFSC Research Communications Branch Chief, [Teri.Frady@noaa.gov](mailto:Teri.Frady@noaa.gov) (508)495-2239.

## SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN YOUR UNOFFICIAL (PRIVATE OR PERSONAL) CAPACITY

### Some Rules Apply at Work and at Home

- *The [Hatch Act](#)*: prohibits federal employees from soliciting, accepting, or receiving campaign contributions, **including** through the use of SM/W2.0 technologies. This prohibition includes hosting or posting to a website that includes a link for making contributions to a political party or a candidate in a partisan election, that is, a campaign in which candidates are identified by political party. Additional information is available from the OGC [Ethics Law and Programs Division](#) Web site, by phone at 202-482-5384, or via e-mail at [ethicsdivision@doc.gov](mailto:ethicsdivision@doc.gov).
- *Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch*: These apply whether you are acting in your public or private capacities, **including** when operating as end users on Web 2.0-related sites. According to the standards, for example, statements given in a “hobby area” such as stamp collecting – an area totally unrelated to an employee’s federal position – are presumed to represent only personal opinions. However, if you are commenting in a field that is even remotely related to your position as a federal employee (subject matter or agency), then there is a presumption that you are speaking with the clout of your employment. This presumption can lead to problems when employees unwittingly make statements that are in fact public.
- *Department of Commerce [Public Communication Policy](#) (DAO 219-1)*: If you wish to post or upload to any webspace material that relates to the programs or operations of your operating unit and to your official duties, it must first be reviewed by your supervisor or a public affairs officer at your operating unit. If your posting deals with the products of

basic or applied research in science or engineering, the results of which ordinarily are published and shared broadly within the scientific community, does not contain information that is proprietary, classified, restricted by federal statute, or about policy, budget, or management, then the prior review requirement does not apply, but you should also clearly state that you are providing your own personal opinion and not that of the operating unit, the Department, or the government.

- *Password Requirements:* Even in cases where social websites do not enforce strong password requirements, it is highly recommended that you use strong passwords that conform to departmental standards for length, expiration, and complexity.

## **Using Your Government Computer or Mobile Device for Personal (Private) Purposes**

- Periodically, review the [Commerce Internet Use Policy](#) that allows employees personal use of their government computer and social media platform/web 2.0, provided that access is allowed by the operating unit CIO (it is), use is minimal, and use does not interfere with office operations or involve commercial activities (profit-making or business), partisan political activities, or sexually explicit communications.
- What you do online using government computers or mobile devices is not private, even if it is personal: Agencies are required to monitor this type of use and to enforce individual compliance with agency policies.

## **Separate Your Official and Unofficial (Private) Online Lives**

- Be careful about blurring your personal and professional lives when using social media platform/web 2.0 technologies.
- Do not establish online relationships or affiliations that may result in sensitive (nonpublic and/or restricted access) information about your job responsibilities being revealed.
- Do not use your federal job title when using social media in a personal, unofficial capacity. You may use your title when it is self-evident that you are not posting in an official capacity, for example when posting a resume or listing employment history on a social network profile.
- Do not disclose any information obtained on the job that is not **already** publicly available.
- Remember that information posted on social media platforms/web 2.0 sites is available to a wide audience of users. How you present yourself on these websites will reflect on Commerce and the federal government.

## **INTERNET SECURITY**

Social media users may make themselves vulnerable to security breaches by trusting circles of friends and colleagues and disclosing personal facts more readily. The same phishing,

social engineering, and Web 1.0 threats (worms, trojans, etc.) may be used to exploit a friend's trust.

When you join a social media website, you may identify yourself as an employee of your department. This may happen intentionally in your profile, or unintentionally if you register with your noaa.gov email address. Your self-identification creates a departmental internet footprint, which is valuable information to our adversaries. As more federal employees self-identify on social media websites, the federal footprint on social networking grows, creating a target-rich environment to help our adversaries target specific individuals to launch various social engineering and spear phishing attacks.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN YOUR OFFICIAL CAPACITY**

At present, in our official capacities we may only submit material to be posted on official accounts using DOC-approved platforms. You, your branch, or your division may apply to NOAA for an official account. However, NOAA has not approved many, if any, such accounts at a level lower than that of a line office financial management center—in our case, that means at the regional office or science center level.

The NEFSC has only one official account, the research blog. We routinely send links to newsworthy items posted on the NEFSC website to the NOAA and NMFS social media outlets, which include Facebook and Twitter accounts, and a Flickr photo collection. The NEFSC may eventually choose to develop its own accounts, but for now we are contributing to the larger efforts of NMFS and NOAA.

You may submit posts, tweets, and photos for official accounts. The Research Communications Branch will assist you in developing content, or you may develop it on your own. All social media content submissions must be coordinated through the NEFSC's Administrative Point of Contact (APOC) Teri Frady ([Teri.Frady@noaa.gov](mailto:Teri.Frady@noaa.gov)).

## **General Guidelines**

- The NOAA Fisheries social media activities must align with, support, and complement the [Department of Commerce's Social Media Policy](#).
- Fisheries social media content should be factual and reflect and amplify the agency's position, policies, findings, and information.
- The audience for all Fisheries-run social media channels is the general public so the information posted should be in plain English and non-technical.
- Fisheries' staff should avoid direct responses to criticisms posted on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube hosted by the agency. The need for a response should be discussed with your public affairs officer or the NOAA Fisheries Communications and External Affairs Office first, and posted only by the manager of the relevant platform.

## **Department of Commerce-Approved Social Media Platforms**

Go to the [DOC Social Media Approved Services Page](http://www.osec.doc.gov/webresources/socialmedia/DOC%20Approved%20Agreements.html) for the latest list. The URL is: <http://www.osec.doc.gov/webresources/socialmedia/DOC Approved Agreements.html>

## Developing Content

Here are some tips:

- **Relate content to NOAA Fisheries website links.** Content about the topic should link to a NOAA or NMFS webpage if possible.
- **Shorten links:** URL links must be shortened by using either federal government approved [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) or <https://go.usa.gov/short-link> creators.
- **Write posts in plain language.** The audience for all NOAA Fisheries websites and social media outlets is the general public; highly technical posts or posts that link users back to content that is too complicated will probably not be used.
- **Be prepared to discuss or respond to questions regarding your post or photo.** NOAA social media accounts are monitored and moderated. Account managers sometime come back to us to help them develop responses to questions or comments that come in.

### Contributing to NOAA Fisheries' National Facebook Page

[www.facebook.com/usnoaafisheriesgov](http://www.facebook.com/usnoaafisheriesgov)

The NOAA Fisheries Facebook posts links to content that has either already has been posted on NOAA Fisheries websites or that leads back to Fisheries websites for more information.

Facebook posts are usually limited to *two per day* for the entire NOAA Fisheries Facebook account. Posts will be made on a first come, first serve basis depending on the immediacy or relevance.

Send content for posting to [Teri.Frady@noaa.gov](mailto:Teri.Frady@noaa.gov).

To have content posted on the NOAA Fisheries Facebook page, send:

- A short description of the event, news, or activity; description should be written for a general public audience
- The URL for the content that you wish to communicate. Please include a federal government approved [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) or <https://go.usa.gov/shortened> link.
- A short description of what is found at the URL link

To submit a photo or video for posting on the NOAA Fisheries Facebook page, send:

- Image or video file and title
- Captions:
  - Maximum 140-word description of the image or video; caption should also include some additional context tying the image back to a NOAA Fisheries Program office or field of work.
  - Caption *must* include the url for the related NOAA Fisheries website for further information.

Please note: All videos are uploaded to the NOAA Fisheries Video Gallery (using Brightcove) and its YouTube channel *prior* to sharing on Facebook. This is a required element for all federal government social media outlets.

### ***Contributing to NOAA Fisheries' National Twitter Feed***

[www.twitter.com/usfisheriesgov](http://www.twitter.com/usfisheriesgov)

Twitter content primarily leads back to a website URL for more information. For NOAA Fisheries, items for Twitter should focus on NOAA Fisheries activities, with the purpose of increasing traffic to Fisheries websites. "Retweets" should be appropriate and relevant, and must not advertise an organization's services or products, in line with federal government policies.

The number of daily Twitter posts and retweets is *unlimited* for the NOAA Fisheries Twitter account. Updates will be made on a first come, first served basis. Twitter has a large media following and breaking news on Twitter is encouraged; however, it is important to coordinate and cooperate with the NOAA Communications and External Affairs/Public Affairs.

To have an update posted to Twitter, send the following information to [Teri.Frady@noaa.gov](mailto:Teri.Frady@noaa.gov)

Text for the post:

- Must be 140 characters or less
- Should be written for a general public audience
- Should *always* end with a link to the full piece of content. Please include a federal government approved [www.bitly.com](http://www.bitly.com) or <https://go.usa.gov/>shortened link.
- Should include, when possible, the name of other aligned organizations that may be interested in or benefit from the tweet or organizations that may react negatively to it (e.g. endangered species issues would be of interest to the US Fish and Wildlife Service). We can add their "@name" as an additional marketing technique that has become commonplace.
- Should include, when possible, the name of the member of Congress associated with the content (e.g. district where the news is taking place, district where the project is ongoing, district where people are benefiting from NOAA Fisheries activities). Although NOAA Legislative Affairs will have the final say on any tweets including Congress associated content.

### ***Contributing to NOAA Fisheries' National Image Gallery (by way of Flickr)***

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/gallery/images/](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/gallery/images/)

Flickr is an image-hosting web tool that provides a place for to store, organize, and share photos. For NOAA Fisheries, Flickr is more of an internal tool that drives the external Image Gallery. It makes images and their stories available to a large number of users, allowing for further understanding and conversation about the images. It also feeds the image gallery's abilities to upload directly to Facebook and Twitter, among other social media options.

Images and associated content for posting should be sent to [Teri.Frady@noaa.gov](mailto:Teri.Frady@noaa.gov). No more than 10 new images will be posted to the NOAA Fisheries Image Gallery every Wednesday unless: A special topic gallery is needed for a news announcement or “rollout.”

For *each* image that you would like to have posted in the NOAA Fisheries Image Gallery, please include the following:

- Ensure that the image is in the public domain: that is, an image that can not be protected by copyright. In general, any photo taken by you as part of your work qualifies.
- Image size: Suggested width of at least 1200pixels x 1200 pixels, jpg format.
- Include a url link to a related NOAA Fisheries website for further information (do not shorten using Bitly or go.usa.gov)
- Include a url link to the original image on a NOAA website
- Include the following in a caption (as much as you can provide): when, where and why the image was taken; the names and affiliations of **all** people pictured; explanation of what is going on -- why it means something about NOAA Fisheries; a credit for the photographer (name, affiliation)

### *Contributing to NOAA Fisheries’ National YouTube Channel*

[www.youtube.com/usnoaafisheriesgov](http://www.youtube.com/usnoaafisheriesgov)

The Department of Commerce has an agreement with YouTube that allows each line office within NOAA to have *one* YouTube channel. The NOAA Fisheries YouTube channel ([youtube.com/usnoaafisheriesgov](http://youtube.com/usnoaafisheriesgov)) is intended to encompass all our offerings.

An unlimited number of *high-quality* videos can be posted each day. However, submissions of first-hand raw footage (e.g., biologist “helmet cam” or “time-lapse”) must be vetted through the NOAA Fisheries Ocean Media Center by first contacting them at [omc@noaa.gov](mailto:omc@noaa.gov).

If you are interested in submitting a video for posting on the NOAA Fisheries YouTube channel, please contact APOC [Teri.Frady@noaa.gov](mailto:Teri.Frady@noaa.gov). **Only** videos submitted an official APOC will be considered for posting.

Please note: All videos are uploaded to the NOAA Fisheries Video Gallery (using Brightcove) *prior* to sharing on YouTube. This is a required element for all federal government social media outlets.

# **Procedures for Issuing Manuscripts in the *Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document (CRD) Series***

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## **Clearance**

All manuscripts submitted for issuance as CRDs must have cleared the NEFSC's manuscript/abstract/webpage review process. If any author is not a federal employee, he/she will be required to sign an "NEFSC Release-of-Copyright Form." If your manuscript includes material from another work which has been copyrighted, then you will need to work with the NEFSC's Editorial Office to arrange for permission to use that material by securing release signatures on the "NEFSC Use-of-Copyrighted-Work Permission Form."

For more information, NEFSC authors should see the NEFSC's online publication policy manual, "Manuscript/abstract/webpage preparation, review, and dissemination: NEFSC author's guide to policy, process, and procedure," located in the Publications/Manuscript Review section of the NEFSC intranet page.

## **Organization**

Manuscripts must have an abstract and table of contents, and (if applicable) lists of figures and tables. As much as possible, use traditional scientific manuscript organization for sections: "Introduction," "Study Area" and/or "Experimental Apparatus," "Methods," "Results," "Discussion," "Conclusions," "Acknowledgments," and "Literature/References Cited."

## **Style**

The CRD series is obligated to conform with the style contained in the current edition of the United States Government Printing Office Style Manual. That style manual is silent on many aspects of scientific manuscripts. The CRD series relies more on the CSE Style Manual. Manuscripts should be prepared to conform with these style manuals.

The CRD series uses the American Fisheries Society's guides to names of fishes, mollusks, and decapod

crustaceans, the Society for Marine Mammalogy's guide to names of marine mammals, the Biosciences Information Service's guide to serial title abbreviations, and the ISO's (International Standardization Organization) guide to statistical terms.

For in-text citation, use the name-date system. A special effort should be made to ensure that all necessary bibliographic information is included in the list of cited works. Personal communications must include date, full name, and full mailing address of the contact.

## **Preparation**

Once your document has cleared the review process, the Editorial Office will contact you with publication needs – for example, revised text (if necessary) and separate digital figures and tables if they are embedded in the document. Materials may be submitted to the Editorial Office as files on zip disks or CDs, email attachments, or intranet downloads. Text files should be in Microsoft Word, tables may be in Word or Excel, and graphics files may be in a variety of formats (JPG, GIF, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.).

## **Production and Distribution**

The Editorial Office will perform a copy-edit of the document and may request further revisions. The Editorial Office will develop the inside and outside front covers, the inside and outside back covers, and the title and bibliographic control pages of the document.

Once both the PDF (print) and Web versions of the CRD are ready, the Editorial Office will contact you to review both versions and submit corrections or changes before the document is posted online.

A number of organizations and individuals in the Northeast Region will be notified by e-mail of the availability of the document online.

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**MEDIA  
MAIL**

## **Publications and Reports of the Northeast Fisheries Science Center**

The mission of NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is "stewardship of living marine resources for the benefit of the nation through their science-based conservation and management and promotion of the health of their environment." As the research arm of the NMFS's Northeast Region, the Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) supports the NMFS mission by "conducting ecosystem-based research and assessments of living marine resources, with a focus on the Northeast Shelf, to promote the recovery and long-term sustainability of these resources and to generate social and economic opportunities and benefits from their use." Results of NEFSC research are largely reported in primary scientific media (*e.g.*, anonymously-peer-reviewed scientific journals). However, to assist itself in providing data, information, and advice to its constituents, the NEFSC occasionally releases its results in its own media. Currently, there are three such media:

*NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-NE* -- This series is issued irregularly. The series typically includes: data reports of long-term field or lab studies of important species or habitats; synthesis reports for important species or habitats; annual reports of overall assessment or monitoring programs; manuals describing program-wide surveying or experimental techniques; literature surveys of important species or habitat topics; proceedings and collected papers of scientific meetings; and indexed and/or annotated bibliographies. All issues receive internal scientific review and most issues receive technical and copy editing.

*Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document* -- This series is issued irregularly. The series typically includes: data reports on field and lab studies; progress reports on experiments, monitoring, and assessments; background papers for, collected abstracts of, and/or summary reports of scientific meetings; and simple bibliographies. Issues receive internal scientific review and most issues receive copy editing.

*Resource Survey Report* (formerly *Fishermen's Report*) -- This information report is a regularly-issued, quick-turnaround report on the distribution and relative abundance of selected living marine resources as derived from each of the NEFSC's periodic research vessel surveys of the Northeast's continental shelf. This report undergoes internal review, but receives no technical or copy editing.

**TO OBTAIN A COPY** of a *NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-NE* or a *Northeast Fisheries Science Center Reference Document*, either contact the NEFSC Editorial Office (166 Water St., Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026; 508-495-2350) or consult the NEFSC webpage on "Reports and Publications" (<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/nefsc/publications/>). To access *Resource Survey Report*, consult the Ecosystem Surveys Branch webpage (<http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/femad/ecosurvey/mainpage/>).

**ANY USE OF TRADE OR BRAND NAMES IN ANY NEFSC PUBLICATION OR REPORT DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT.**