

Why GI uses social media

The GI uses social media to connect with and build networks of people interested in its work and the broader fields of research, policy and information relating to transnational organized crime. Social networks offer new distribution channels for our work, allow us to reach these audiences where they are and provide new ways for GI to start and influence online conversations relating to transnational organized crime.

Our objective for social media is to facilitate and lead global debate relating to transnational crime in this space as we transform the GI into a network of action. We hope to increase the reach and distribution of GI's work and publications using platform-specific strategies and tactics to meet target audiences where they are. This includes building a more global and diverse audience for the GI's work.

To help us meet this objective, we have six central goals:

1. To lead, participate and facilitate online discussion relating to TOC;
2. To increase the number of site users referred by social networks;
3. To grow the right audiences for GI's accounts and work on social platforms;
4. To make social distribution an essential part of new products and reports;
5. To increase engagement rates on GI's social accounts;
6. To raise GI staff's social media skills and use.

The diverse range of expertise, skills and experiences of our staff and network can help us create social media coverage of the GI's work that cuts through the noise and offers real value to our fans. As such, staff use of social media is crucial to achieving these goals, in particular, through broadening the distribution and audience for GI's work online. We expect our staff and network to use social media to promote their work for the GI and support our shared goals as part of our everyday work.

How to get started on social media

- **Find the right platform for you**

The GI uses Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram to share and discuss its mission and work. You don't need to be active on every platform; each has different audiences and different ways you can use them.

Are you a keen photographer or love beautiful visuals? Maybe Instagram is the place for you. Do you want to follow breaking and developing news stories and enjoy fast-paced discussions? Twitter could work well. Want to join professional and personal communities? Maybe Facebook or LinkedIn works best for you.

Think about how you like to work, what you'd like to get from being more present on social media and what platform will best support that. Your comms team is here to help you with that too.

- **Find people to follow and follow people back**

A simple way to be more active on social media is to find relevant and interesting accounts or pages to follow and to follow people back who connect with your account. Start with real-life contacts perhaps and look at who they follow for suggestions. Who are the leading voices in your area of expertise? Social media could be a good way to follow their latest updates.

- **Share others' work**

Share your own work but share other people's too. It's a good way to demonstrate the topics you are interested in or knowledgeable about without always having to share your own work. It's an easy way to interact with followers or other accounts and make connections, while being generous and a good guide to relevant information, stories and accounts for your followers.

The best way to do this is to share links directly and tag the person's account or retweet/share their post. (Just avoid "regrams" on Instagram unless you have that person's permission.)

- **Start with "likes" and build up to comments**

There is a way to like posts on most social media platforms. This is a simple way to interact with others on social, especially if you don't feel completely confident yet. It's also good if you want to be active/supportive/interactive but are short of time.

Social media at its best is all about conversations. If you're not sure how to reply to other people's posts or tweets, start with posts where someone has asked a question, where you can share a constructive take on the topic discussed or where you can help the conversation develop. More on this below.

- **Find your people**

There are thousands of communities who use social media to congregate and communicate. Interested in growing succulents? Try [#succulove on Instagram](#). Love retro football? [@oldschoolpanini](#) on Twitter is for you. BIG fan of disco music? [Facebook has you covered](#).

The same applies to your GI-related areas of interest - do some searches within the platforms and follow hashtags, discussion groups and accounts that feed your knowledge on this topic. (We've got some suggestions for you in our tips list below.)

- **Experiment!**

The best social media accounts have a distinct tone of voice. With individual accounts this is also important - it humanises the account and can encourage more relevant discussion and interaction. Experiment with finding yours - look at what happens when you ask questions, share others' work, add video clips or photos. Do more people respond? Do you enjoy posting more?

Get to know the different platforms and apps by trying out the different tools they have to offer. It'll make you feel really comfortable using the platform(s) of your choice and can offer new ways to be creative. Instagram, for example, has loads of in-built editing tools for video and images to play around with.

7 things you can do to get more from social for work

If you're new to social media or short of time (or both!), a combination of the below can help you stay active and make valuable connections without overwhelming you.

1. **Take 5 minutes a day**

We are all busy and if you're struggling to start or stay active on social media, set aside five minutes a day to help build it into your work. If you've only got five minutes, use it to share and update on your work or try one of the tips above.

2. **Join groups or build and follow lists**

On Facebook and LinkedIn there are lots of professional communities organised into groups, for example Facebook's [Standing Group on Organised Crime](#) or LinkedIn's [Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Initiative](#). Searching for topics you are interested in within these platforms and looking at how active the groups are should provide a good sense of whether it's right for you. Join a couple that feel relevant and get involved in discussions; test them out and leave or stay in the most useful to your area.

On Twitter, you can follow lists or build your own. This is a great way to save time on Twitter, whether it's a list of breaking news sources or experts in a particular region or topic area, it's a quick way to spot conversations to join, insights to RT or stories to follow and to get a sense of what that group is discussing at a given moment.

3. **Ask questions/join discussions**

Got a gap in your knowledge on a topic? Want to find out others' experiences or expertise on an issue? Include quotes in some of your posts focused on open answers that can help progress a topic or start a constructive conversation. Try to think about what response your question might get and think about how you can word it to get the best possible response. Thank people who engage in the way you intended

4. **Plan how to be more regular with your work updates**

Consistency is everything if you are looking to grow an audience on social media and a little bit of planning can go a long way. Firstly, set a bare minimum for how often you update. A rough guide depending on which platform you're using:

- 2-3 times a week on Facebook
- 2-3 times a week on Instagram
- 2-3 times a day on Twitter
- At least 3x a week (including group posts) on LinkedIn

If it helps you, think through what those posts might look like at the beginning of the week and come up with some regular formats: a question post, a link sharing your work, a round-up of what you've read this week, a promotion for a GI event - draw up a list of go-to types of post so you don't always have to think on your feet. Twitter even allows you to schedule tweets ahead of time. Mix these formats with replies, shares of others' posts and light-touch interactions and hey presto, you've got an active account even when time is tight.

5. Use it as an open notebook

This can be a great way to attract the "right" audience (e.g. people who you'd like to have follow and interact with your work and who could enhance it) and make social a simple part of your day-to-day activities. Think of your account as a rolling or open notebook on the topics or projects you are currently working on. What new insights have you come across? What questions are outstanding? What stats or multimedia have you collected along the way? Who have you been speaking to? What have you been reading to inform your work? If it's a project that's under embargo, you can still share these details in a series of posts afterwards.

Talking about your work in an open and interactive way will not only help the GI communicate its mission but can also inform what you do and your area of knowledge by connecting you to others with an interest in this area.

6. Use it for research

Social media isn't the only place conversations happen and contacts can be found, of course, but it's a great place to search for additional sources, new contacts and to gauge how communities of interest are reacting to topics or discussing them.

7. Tag GI and your colleagues' work

When GI launches a new report, event, podcast or blog, sharing it on your social accounts is a huge help in getting word out. Doing this consistently will really help the GI to grow its reach and audience. Add a tag to the relevant GI account on your chosen platform and any colleagues' handles to credit them.

If there is something you do every day or week on social media that works for you, share it on the GI Slack or tell your colleagues.

Ideas and inspiration for engaging on social

Here are some accounts that follow best practice when creating content for social media audiences and engaging on social and some that regularly test the limits of social platforms:

[Bloomberg QuickTake](#) on Twitter

[Rukmini Callimachi](#) on Twitter

[NHS England](#) on Twitter

[UNHCR](#) on Twitter

[Channel 4 News](#) on Facebook

[Refinery 29 Money Diaries](#) group on Facebook

[World Economic Forum](#) on TikTok and Facebook ([more on its strategy here](#))

[Planet Money](#) on TikTok

[Sophia Galer](#) on TikTok

[BBC News](#) on LinkedIn ([read more on its strategy](#))

[Melinda Gates](#) on LinkedIn

And [LinkedIn itself](#)



FOR EVERY \$1 A WHITE MAN EARNS



A HISPANIC WOMAN EARNS 53¢



[Open Society Foundations](#) on Instagram

[The Guardian](#) on Instagram

[The Economist](#) on Instagram

[Mona Chalabi](#) on Instagram

These are some media-related and more-anglophone examples. We'll discuss these and cover more examples in training sessions. If you spot interesting or engaging posts and accounts on social media, share them with your colleagues on Slack.

If you have an idea for a social media campaign or might need social content, get in touch with Abigail Davies, our resident social media expert and multimedia communications specialist.

In the next part of this guide you will find:

- [GI's social media policy](#) - how we approach social networks as an organisation
- [Guidance on personal vs professional social media profiles](#)
- [A note on libel and defamation law](#)
- [Dealing with relationships with donors on social](#)
- [What to do if things go wrong](#)

Our social media policy

In addition to the guidance at the beginning of this document, please use these guidelines **when posting to a GI-branded account or about the GI and its work on social media** or other online forums. This is about creating a constructive environment on social media when discussing the GI and its work, as well as making you feel comfortable online.

1. **Think before you post:** this is good practice in terms of thinking about the objective of your post and how to make it work, but especially important if you are reacting to something, starting or joining a conversation or voicing an opinion on a sensitive topic. Ask yourself: what conversation could this post start and is that my intention?

Always read your post back before publishing - that pause could be vital in certain situations, not to mention avoiding pesky typos.

2. **Don't post anything you wouldn't want quoted:** some people call this the BBC/boss/parent rule - don't say anything relating to the GI you wouldn't want to see quoted as part of an article or news broadcast (or that you wouldn't be comfortable saying in front of your employer or family).

If you are posting on or engaging with a potentially sensitive topic or something likely to elicit strong views online (politics or climate change, for example), think about how you might deal with the reaction and whether it puts the GI or its work at risk. You may be able to reword or reframe what you are saying to help avoid negative responses.

3. **Engage in relevant debate on GI areas of interest but stay on topic:** if someone else wants to get personal, walk away. This isn't about everyone agreeing on an issue, but about responding and engaging with people who are discussing the topic at hand and

fostering a constructive conversation.

4. **Remember that you may be misunderstood:** character limits and text-based posts in particular often don't help us convey tone or context, so remember you can be misunderstood. Another good reason to re-read your post before you send it.
5. **Give credit where it's due:** if you are sharing someone else's report, responding to an idea or reacting to someone's work, credit them and tag their account if appropriate. (If you are sharing it with a critical post, remember that tagging them could start a discussion or encourage others to get involved.)
6. **Commenting on donors or partners:** the GI wants to lead and participate in constructive discussion of all issues relating to TOC. The actions of donors and partners are a part of this and, therefore, up for discussion, but we should consider if social media is the right platform for this.

If you want to critique the actions of a donor, funder or partner of the GI on social media, think carefully before you post – is what you are saying evidence-based? Are you endangering the work of colleagues and should you forewarn them? Is this a criticism that should be taken directly to the donor rather than aired publicly?

7. **Privacy:** respect the privacy rights of colleagues, partners and beneficiaries, particularly when posting photos and videos. Posting personal or identifiable information (including times, location and travel information) may raise safety and security concerns.
8. **Don't feed the trolls:** follow our best practice guidance for engaging with other social media posts and users and don't reply to accounts that are deliberately going off-topic or trying to derail a conversation.

Personal vs professional profiles

Finding your voice on social media means showing your personality and this means there is often an overlap with elements of your personal life or interests outside of work.

If your profile is set to public, meaning anyone can see your posts, just remember that these posts could be connected with your professional profile and work. Make sure you feel comfortable with sharing these updates with a professional audience. If so, great! It can also help humanise our social media profiles and connect with followers in a different way.

If you are using a public account that could have a professional audience, you should mention GI in your bio. It makes it easier for relevant audiences to find your account and follow your work.

If you'd prefer a stronger line drawn between work and personal life, you can have a **public and a private account**. To restrict who can find or see your private (personal) account you'll need to change your privacy settings. Here's how you can do that:

On Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and TikTok, you can set your account to private, meaning only the accounts you give permission to can see what you post.

On **Twitter**, you can also bookmark tweets if you want to save something privately. This can be a good alternative to "liking" a tweet.

On LinkedIn, you can select which elements of your profile are visible to search engines outside of the network and can turn your profile from public to private. As LinkedIn is built around professional profiles, however, it's best to assume that what you share there will be connected to your professional life whatever is publicly available or not on your account.

On Facebook, check your privacy settings to find out who can view your posts. You can set different privacy settings for individual posts, but if you are using this as a personal account consider [setting future posts to "Friends" only in the settings tab](#). You can also limit who can see past posts, how people can find you, whether your profile will appear in search engines and who can see posts you are tagged in.

A note on libel and defamation

Social media posts are subject to defamation and libel laws. This section is not intended to scare you from using social media, but just to make you aware of how these laws apply online. While these vary from country-to-country, to be on the safe side, adhering to [libel laws](#) used in parts of the UK is a good rule of thumb as they are some of the strictest.

A post can be libellous if it contains something defamatory (damaging to a person's or company/organisation's reputation) and [you can be sued for damages for posting it](#). You can be sued for libel simply for repeating someone else's defamatory statement - this includes RTing or reposting a libellous statement made or information posted by another account. This can be an easy mistake to make as it's not hard to repost something, even by accident, and forget about it.

You can also be sued for libel even if your post does not name the individual in question. If they can be identified from your post or repost, you could still be sued.

Deleting a libellous post is not a sufficient defence. You can still be sued after removing a post and the longer it is left online the worse things can be. A private account is also no protection if you are posting defamatory statements - someone could easily screenshot your posts and share them more widely.

Think before you post - is there any libel risk? If in doubt, don't post or consult with the GI team. Be particularly careful when resharing the posts of others and apply the same caution. There are some exceptions to libel law in England and Wales, for example, when a statement is made in parliamentary proceedings. However, given the international audience that GI reaches following this jurisdiction alone in such circumstances is insufficient.

How to report on more serious social media issues

Should you be on the receiving end of unwanted or abusive social media attention to your individual account - don't panic. Here are some steps you can take:

1. **Talk to someone:** if you don't know how to respond, are getting overwhelmed by social media or are receiving or being exposed to frequent or high volumes of abuse, speak to your team, manager or GI comms team for support.
2. **Don't feed the trolls:** if someone is replying to you or a brand account in a way that is off-topic or deliberately trying to derail a conversation, do not respond. This is trolling and trolls thrive on the oxygen of attention.
3. **Report abusive or spam posts:** you can report abusive or spam posts. The more we do, the more the platforms learn about detecting such abuse.
4. **Block or report abusive or spam accounts:** the same goes for reporting or blocking users. On Twitter, you can also mute an account which means you will no longer see tweets from that account but they won't know you've muted them - a useful tool if you think someone might use a block as a badge of honour.
5. **Correct mistakes - quickly:** if someone points out a genuine error or mistake, thank them and get a correction made. Be transparent if any social media posts are deleted as a result.

If you come across misrepresentation of the GI's work, correct it with factual information and, whenever possible, a link to additional information. Notable comments or trends should be shared with supervisors and/or forwarded to substantive departments for information purposes.

6. **Look at who is posting:** take a breath before you engage or reply to someone - who are they? What does their account tell you about their motives or possible agenda? Are they spoiling for a fight or a genuine member of GI's target audience?
7. **Engage in constructive criticism:** if someone is angry, vocal or aggressive in tone but they have a point or are a part of the GI's community or intended audience, consider

taking the conversation off of social media. Sometime's our most vocal critics can become our strongest advocates, but social media isn't always the best place to have a one-to-one discussion about an emotive issue.

8. **Don't worry if you don't have all the answers:** if someone is posting about GI work that you haven't been involved in or asking you to defend an organisational or operational decision, don't feel you have to answer on GI's behalf. Take steps 5 and 6. Pass their comments on privately to the comms team. You can acknowledge this if you wish but be deliberately broad and don't apologise: "I've passed your comments on to the team", for example.