Social Media Policy

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Summary of version changes

v1.0. First publication of this report on our website. April 2022.

v2.0. Added Accessibility practices based on new Image Accessibility protocol available on the TMP Policy page; adjusted Days to Acknowledge with added explanation; adapted policy to new template. November 2023.

v2.1. Formatted for PDF export. Adjusted wording in the Days to Acknowledge section to include a link and phone number for the Trans Help Line. Adjusted "trans" to read "trans+" when appropriate. February 2024.

v2.2. Name updates. June 1, 2024.

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Statement of Intent

This social media policy is intended to help ensure that the Transgender Media Portal's (TMP) social media content reflects the TMP's values, and that those commenting on our social media accounts are not causing harm to Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) and disabled trans+ people or perpetuating systems of oppression.

The Transgender Media Portal project, which is based out of the Transgender Media Lab at Carleton University, is ever evolving and learning, and welcomes community feedback. We consider this policy, like many others at the TML, as a "living" document which we will regularly renew and recommit to. This social media policy is a work in progress and will evolve as we learn, grow, and engage in critical self-reflection.

In an effort to work in solidarity with, and be accountable to, the communities we seek to support, we have publicly shared our social media policy, including our values and intentions. The TMP endeavours to be transparent and to respond proactively, rather than reactively, to community feedback. This entails admitting when we've made a mistake, correcting the behaviour, and amending the policy to better reflect our core values and the communities we aim to support.

We welcome feedback on any part of this social media policy. If you would like to suggest changes, raise a concern, or ask a question, please send an email to: transgendermediaportal@gmail.com.

The TMP's Purpose and Guiding Principles

The purposes of the TMP's social media posts are to:

- Bring to the forefront, uplift, and amplify trans+ voices and trans-made art, particularly the voices and art of BIPOC and disabled trans+ filmmakers;

- Raise awareness of the TMP database – an online searchable database of films and videos made by trans+, Two-Spirit, nonbinary, intersex and gender-nonconforming artists;

- Promote TMP news, including job postings and events;

- Create awareness of funding and festival opportunities for trans+ filmmakers, especially opportunities that specifically support BIPOC trans+ filmmakers;

- Share tangible ways of supporting trans+, specifically BIPOC trans+, filmmakers;

- Leverage our institutional privilege to speak out on issues of concern to queer, trans+, Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (QTBIPOC) communities and centre the voices of those most affected;

- Be transparent about the TMP's mission, intent, goals, and inner workings, which allows us to be open and responsive to community feedback as we continue to progress and change as a lab.

Our guiding principles are:

Amplification: recognizing the intersecting structures of oppression that shape the lives of trans+ people, highlighting the work and voices of BIPOC and disabled trans+, intersex, and Two Spirit people.

Availability and Accessibility: creating platforms and spaces that not only include the work of BIPOC, disabled, queer, and trans+ people, but are available and accessible to them.

Diversion: using institutional power to challenge structures of domination, rather than perpetuating them.

Recognition: moving beyond dominant Western epistemological conceptions of gender, race, and sexuality, to embrace alternative, culturally and socially-specific forms of epistemology that broaden and alter our normative understandings of these concepts. Recognizing Indigenous sovereignty and Indigenous communities' ability to form and define their own identities.

Transparency: being and remaining open about the institutional, social, and colonial positioning of the Transgender Media Lab. Maintaining clear and accessible channels for community feedback to our public presence and operations.

Consciousness: remaining conscious of power and how this shapes the Transgender Media Portal's public and private engagements. Actively preventing objectification, tokenism, and other microaggressions.

Authenticity: accurately representing trans+ artists and their work by sharing, promoting, amplifying, and uplifting their work, rather than speaking for or over them.

Monitoring Comments, Private Messages, and Blocking

The TMP welcomes critical debate and disagreement. We also seek to ensure that our social media platforms provide a space for trans+ and BIPOC and disabled trans+ people to engage in discussion without fear of harassment or bigotry.

TMP team members **reserve the right to delete comments/tweets/posts and private messages, and to block people from the TMP social media platforms at our discretion.** [It is at the discretion of the TMP team member monitoring our social media to discern](#) whether or not a comment or private message was made in good or bad faith.

If the problematic/harmful comment or private message is deemed to have been made in **bad faith:**

- Delete the comment/message and block the person ASAP; we do not give second chances for malicious comments, tweets, posts or private messages (refer to: "How to block trolls/users from the TMP Facebook page" below).

If the problematic/harmful comment or private message is deemed to have been made in **good faith:**

- Delete the comment ASAP and send the person a private message letting them know that their comment violates our social media policy and values. Explain specifically which aspect of the policy it violates, why their comment is problematic/harmful, and encourage them to research the issue/topic. It is not the onus of POC to educate. Refer to Template for Educational Interventions below.

- If the person responds defensively or aggressively, it is at the discretion of the person monitoring the TMP social media to decide whether or not to respond. If they choose to respond, refer to Template for Educational Interventions, Response 2 below.

Comments that should be deleted, include (but are not limited to):

- Posts that are racist, anti-trans, anti-queer, sexist, ableist, anti-fat, ageist, or sexually inappropriate

- Posts that attempt to tone police or silence legitimate criticism of racist, anti-trans, anti-queer, ableist comments/behaviour

- Posts that reinforce social structures of domination related to gender, sexuality, disability, race, ethnicity, physical appearance, body size, age, mental health, neuro(a)typicality, or religion

- Posts that misgender someone or include a person's deadname

- Posts that included unwelcome sexual comments/attention/photos

- Threats of violence or incitement of violence toward someone

- Posts that "out" an aspect of a person's identity without their consent

Templates for Educational Interventions

Response 1

When problematic and/or harmful comments are deemed to have been made in good faith by someone who is potentially willing to learn, the following template can be used for sending the person a private message.

> Hello,
>
> Your comment on our [*Facebook page, Instagram account, or Twitter account*] under our post about [*summarize post*] dated [*date*] violates our social media policy and values. Our social media policy, including our core values, can be found at this link: [*include link*]. Your comment specifically violates section [*"name of section"*] of the policy as it [*give brief explanation of how the comment is in violation of that section*]. For this reason, we have deleted your comment.
>
> Comments such as yours are problematic and harmful because [*briefly explain why*]. We encourage you to take the time to research the issue on your own. Please also familiarize yourself with our social media policy to avoid making further harmful comments on our social media platforms.
>
> Thank you,
>
> TMP Social Media Team

Response 2

If, after sending the message above, the person responds aggressively or defensively, the TMP social media coordinator is under no obligation to respond a second time.

However, if the coordinator decides to respond again, here is a template that could be used:

> Hello,
>
> We thought you would be open to learning about this. We are including another resource here, which we encourage you to take the time to read. Again, we encourage you to research this issue. [*include link to resource*]
>
> Thank you,
>
> TMP Social Media Team

Support for Team Member Monitoring Social Media

If the TMP team member tasked with monitoring harmful comments needs support, they can:

- Ask for another member of the TMP to review a comment to help determine whether or not the comment was made in good or bad faith if the primary monitor is unsure.

- Ask the TMP Slack #Communications channel for support

- Ask the TMP's designated second responder if they have the capacity to block or address the person who made the harmful comment.

    - If the second responder is at capacity, they can ask TMP Director (Laura Horak) to block or contact the person who made the harmful comment

How to Block Trolls/Users

TMP Facebook Page

- Using [Facebook Business Suite](#), we are able to block an account by clicking the messages tab, clicking the troll's profile, and using the "ban" button. This prevents the user from accessing our page, commenting on our posts, and messaging us.

- If the troll/user has commented publicly on our page, remove the comment asap.

- If the troll/user has sent us a private message, move the message to our spam folder so it won't be immediately visible but can still be available as needed.

- Business Suite additionally allows us to "assign" messages to people who have access to the page. If team members notice harmful messages, they could assign the messages to the person responsible for monitoring the TMP social media, so they can ban them or respond to them.

TMP Twitter Account

- Go to the profile page of the account you would like to block, click the more [...] icon on their profile page, select "block" from the menu, and click "block" to confirm.

- If the troll/user has mentioned the TMP in a tweet, report the tweet and block the user asap. To report the tweet, click the [...] icon at the top of the tweet, select report tweet and choose "It's abusive or harmful."

- If the troll/user has sent us a private message, report the message, then delete the message and block the user. To report the message, click on the [...] icon next to the message and click report message. To delete the message, click on the [...] icon next to the message and select "delete for you."

TMP Instagram Account

- Go to the profile page of the account you would like to block, click the [...] icon in the top right of their page, and select "block." You can also report the account first by selecting "report."

- If the troll/user has sent us a private message, report the message, then delete the message and block the user. To report the message, go to messages in Instagram, click on the user's name, tap and hold down on the message, click on "report." To delete the message, go to messages, find the user's name, slide the name to the left, click "delete.

Language

- Include a land acknowledgement in our bio on our social media accounts

- Be mindful of language with ableist connotations

- When referencing colonial names of places on Facebook and Instagram, explicitly state, for example, "in the city colonially called Ottawa," or use Indigenous names of places - e.g. Tiohti:áke (Montreal) - or refer to the treaty - Treaty 4 (Regina). See: https://native-land.ca/

Amplifying BIPOC and disabled trans+ and Two Spirit voices

- Create specific content to promote the work of local Two Spirit filmmakers

- Create specific content to promote the work of BIPOC and disabled trans+ filmmakers

- Follow and promote relevant BIPOC and disabled trans+ and Two Spirit accounts and events

- Create content that links to BIPOC and disabled trans+ filmmakers' Patreon accounts, GoFundMe pages, and other fundraising efforts

Speaking Out

The TMP will use our social media platforms to speak out on current events that are of concern to the communities we seek to represent. We think it would be disingenuous to include BIPOC and disabled trans+ filmmakers in the TMP database and not also leverage our institutional privilege to support, uplift, and amplify marginalized voices, especially in times of need. We aim to, and currently do, support the work of trans+ and trans+ BIPOC and disabled filmmakers through our BIPOC Trans+ Filmmakers webpage and Support Trans+ Artists page, in our monthly emails, and by promoting and creating awareness of projects, films, and events created and organized by BIPOC and disabled trans+ artists.

Leveraging our institutional privilege to speak out on issues of concern to QTBIPOC and disabled communities and centre the voices of those most affected is one of our core values and goals. However, it is important that we do not speak for marginalized identities, but rather that we echo and uplift the voices of those who are most affected by, and are already speaking on, the event and/or issue of concern. Below is the protocol for ensuring this happens.

When a current event occurs, and is identified by a TMP team member as an issue that we should publicly support, the team member should raise the current event/issue over the TMP Slack account or at a team meeting. Once it is collectively decided that we should draft a statement of support, the social media team will:

Research the current event/issue

- Find out what the communities and people most affected are saying about the issue/event. We are looking here for primary sources, not news reports.

- Find community organizations and resources, and link to them in order to connect our social media followers with organizations that may be seeking volunteers and/or donations.

- Find out whether any trans+ or BIPOC and disabled trans+ filmmakers are working on projects or films related to this issue, or speaking out on the topic. If yes, include links to their work/statements in the social media post.

Draft Statement

- The statement should link to primary sources and encourage our followers to first and foremost read and listen to the voices of those most affected.

- Revisit the TMP mission statement/values and write a statement that reflects the mission and values of the TMP without explicitly naming these values (the purpose isn't to promote our values, but to refer back to the values to inform how we write the statement)

- Name and condemn the issue/oppression but avoid taking up too much space in the statement -- the purpose is to amplify the voices of those most affected by directing our followers to their social media accounts, videos, resources, fundraising pages, not to speak for or over them.

- Avoid referencing the names of political leaders and focus on the policy/issue at hand.

- Put the statement into an informational graphic for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

- If the current event necessitates, the TMP will commit to being part of the solution. After the statement is made we will discuss solutions in future team meetings. This might involve looking internally to make changes that are in line with our political commitments.

Seek Approval

- The person who writes the statement will submit it to the TMP research team for review either via Slack or at a meeting. After the statement has been approved by

the team, it will be posted to our news/events webpage, social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram), and we will send an email (that is distinct from our monthly emails) to the TMP listserv.

Hashtags

- Be mindful of using hashtags that will draw attention to trolls and terfs, e.g. do not use hashtags such as #trans.

- We will only use hashtags for specific film festivals and campaigns, e.g. #InsideOut21.

- See the section on Accessibility below for accessible ways of using hashtags.

Interacting with Other Social Media Accounts and Content

Due to the institutional position of the TMP as a federally and provincially funded project at a public university, the lab holds power. As we aim to use and redirect our power back to trans+ artists and communities, namely BIPOC and disabled trans, Two Spirit, nonbinary, intersex, and gender-nonconforming creators and spaces, our social media presence should adhere to this core value. We must, thus, be conscious of who we are directly and indirectly promoting by sharing, following, and publicly interacting with (e.g. liking posts, etc). We should, additionally, follow and engage with BIPOC and disabled, trans, Two Spirit, intersex, and gender-nonconforming creators and community organizations.

Following Accounts

We will not follow accounts whose posts, organizations, or accounts:

- do not align with the core values of the Transgender Media Portal, as stated above

- have antagonistic, aggressive, or hateful relationships with historically marginalized groups

- perpetuate racism, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, or other forms of oppression in their imagery, language, and/or interactions with members of those groups.

- LGBT organizations that lack trans+ and BIPOC leadership.

Retweeting and Reposting

On the whole, we will retweet and repost items such as:

- Posts that promote trans-made films, including festivals

- Funding, festival, and job opportunities for trans+ filmmakers

- Thoughtful writings by and/or about trans-made film and art

- Criticisms of cis-made, cis-centered films with trans+ characters

- Fundraising for trans+ filmmakers and trans-made films

- Fundraising for trans+ survival (including for medical care, transition-related-expenses, support during tough times, etc.)

- When retweeting and reposting fundraising initiatives, do a Google search first to determine if there are any potential issues with the particular fundraiser

- Posts by trans+ artists that are in line with the project's political commitments and core values (see above)

On the whole, we will not repost/retweet items such as:

- The murder of trans+ people

- LGBT organizations without prominent trans+ leadership or that don't align with the TMP's political vision

- Personal posts by trans+ artists that are not about art or politics

- General political news

- Anything pro-police or anti-sex-work

- Anything by trans+ people whose politics do not align with the project's political commitments and core values (see above)

Requests to Share Content

From time to time, the TMP receives requests to share content to our social media channels, e.g. calls for actors to audition for the role of a trans+ character, calls for submitting to an art exhibition, funding opportunities for filmmakers, calls for submissions to a film festival, etc.

The social media coordinator should assess each individual request to determine if it and the organization making the request align with our values. If they do align with our values, we will share the content to our social media channels and disclose in the post that we've been asked to share it.

Publicly Posting the TMP Social Media Policy

Given that one of our core values is transparency, we will:

- Publicly post the TMP Social Media Policy to our website

- Include a link to the policy on our Instagram link tree, Twitter account, and in the "About" section of the TMP Facebook page

Team Members Posting to our Social Media Platforms

TMP Research Assistants are responsible for monitoring the TMP social media platforms.

To support the RA who is tasked with creating content for the TMP social media channels, a second RA will be assigned to a supportive role, which may include providing feedback when needed, brainstorming ideas for social media campaigns, and reviewing draft posts.

Privacy and Security of RAs

TMP Research Assistants are under no obligation to share personal details about themselves on the TML or TMP websites or to the TMP's social media channels.

Should an RA choose to introduce themself or have a public presence on the TMP social media platforms, they should refrain from sharing personal details beyond general biographical information included in their bio and the topics discussed in the group TMP interviews.

Accessibility

Image Descriptions

While often conflated, image descriptions are informative descriptions of important visual details posted alongside the image, while alt-text are a type of image description

included in the site's code and picked up by screen readers. These techniques make visual information available to Blind and low vision people.

On the TMP, we use identical image descriptions and alt-text. These should be included in the image captions and in the platform's alt-text feature (if it has one). Follow the below guidelines for writing these image descriptions. For more information, you can read the full Image Accessibility policy on our website, including sources and examples.

Adding image descriptions and alt-text to social media

- Add alt text.

  - **On Instagram,** edit the post by clicking the three dots in the top right-hand corner, then on the bottom right side of the image click "add alt text" and save the post.

  - **On Facebook,** click the three lines on the top right of the photo and click "edit alt text."

  - **On Twitter,** ensure that "compose image descriptions" is enabled in the account settings (Settings and Privacy > General > Accessibility"). Images in composed tweets will now have an option on it in the bottom right to add alt text.

- Include image description in the caption of the image.

  - If the descriptions exceed the character count for the post, write "Image description continued in comments" and add it as a pinned comment on the post.

Here is an example of a post with alt text:

"5 hands of varying skin tones and manicures atop one another. Overlaid in white font 'Inspiring Student Leaders Making a Difference in Their Communities'"

Captions

- Use subtitles and/or transcriptions for videos when possible (Instagram now has automatic subtitle options).

- Be mindful that some auto captioning does not caption accurately so we should generate our own captions when possible.

Content Warnings

- Trigger warnings should be in all caps or abbreviated as TW or CW for content warning.
- Include links to support hotlines when available for the specific content or trigger warning.

Hashtags

- When using hashtags, use camel case (first letter of each word is capitalised but there is no space between words). This means our hashtags should look like #TransgenderMediaLab rather than #TRANSGENDERMEDIALAB or #transgendermedialab.

Readability

- [Use high contrast between text and background colours](#) on Instagram posts, infographics, posters, Linktree, etc. (e.g. black text over white background).

- Check your post for colour contrast accessibility using a tool such as [WebAIM's Color Contrast Checker](#) or [WCAG Contrast Checker](#)

- Check your post for colourblindness accessibility using a tool such as the [Coblis Color Blindness Simulator](#) or the [Colorblindness Palette Creator](#)

- Don't use colour to convey meaning. Colour can have different meanings culturally as well as for those who have trouble seeing colour or interpreting colour. If using colour include headers for what the colour is supposed to represent.

- [Avoid using small text](#) on Instagram stories, infographics, and posters.

Screen Reader Etiquette

- Consider text-to-speech readers if using emojis and gifs.

- Use emojis sparingly because a screen reader saying "red heart" 10 times can be tiresome.

- Use adequate font size and regular fonts. When a special font is used, the screen reader names the font, then the letter for each letter. Regular fonts are just read without naming the font.

- Avoid special characters.

- Hashtags and @ symbols should be used at the end of a tweet or post because it interrupts screen reader and can make the flow of the sentence hard to follow.

Days to Acknowledge

There are more symbolic days than we have capacity to recognize, so, as a group, we have decided on which ones to prioritise. We have not included Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) because it has a tendency to make trans+ women of colour visible in their suffering and death rather than their joy and life and to use these deaths to fundraise for white middle-class trans+ causes. It also flattens the violence experienced by sex workers and women of colour to a single axis of oppression (transness).[1]

We want to focus on highlighting trans+ life, grief, joy, and resistance through artmaking. We honour loss by highlighting community-focused organisations while centering the ways that trans+ people use media to exercise agency and build community. We want to use our social media pages to honour trans+ artists' struggles for visibility and to highlight ways for our followers to materially support trans+ artists.

One immediate resource is the @translifeline, which can be accessed by calling 877-330-6366 in Canada or 877-565-8860 in the US.

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[1] To learn more about these critiques, see Snorton, C. Riley, and Jin Haritaworn. "Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death and the Trans of Color Afterlife." In *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*, edited by Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura, 66–76. New York: Routledge, 2013; Lamble, Sarah. "Retelling Racialized Violence, Remaking White Innocence: The Politics of Interlocking Oppressions in Transgender Day of Remembrance." *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* 5, no. 1 (March 2008): 24–42.

Keeping capacity in mind, we will aim to acknowledge the following days on the TMP social media channels.

Day/Month	Event	Associated Hashtag
February	Black History Month	#BlackHistoryMonth
March 31	International Day of Trans Visibility	#TransDayOfVisibility
June	Indigenous History Month	#IndigenousHistoryMonth
October 26	Intersex Awareness Day	#IntersexAwarenessDay
December 3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	#IDPWD, #DisabilityJustice

Amending the Social Media Policy

If a team member wishes to amend the social media policy, they should:

- Present a written proposal at a team meeting where the proposal will be reviewed, discussed, and decided upon.

Once the policy has been amended:

- Update the date on the document and the current version, e.g. v2.4

- At the top of the document, list which sections have been changed and briefly explain why.

- Save the amended document to the shared Google drive.

- Post the new version to the TMP website.

After the new version is posted publicly:

- Notify TMP followers by sharing the changes in a post to our social media channels with an explanation of why we have made these changes, e.g. "We received important feedback on our social media policy and have made the following changes: _____. These changes are more in line with the TMP's values and will _____."