

Resource Guide

MAKING STUDENT WORK PUBLIC ONLINE

When using digital media or online technologies for course assignments, there are several considerations relevant for making student work public online. Whether assigning students to create and post videos to be accessible on YouTube, posting images on Pinterest or Instagram, or utilizing social media platforms like Twitter, instructors should first weigh the potential benefits of using online technologies with the risks. Below are a few considerations that may help:

- **BE AWARE OF FERPA REGULATIONS:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), provides guidelines to help protect student privacy in academic settings. FERPA requires schools to prevent grades and other personal information reaching the public. It is first important for instructors to become aware of their [university's FERPA policy guidelines](#) and to protect student privacy by acting within the spirit of FERPA when making student work public online. Provide students with specific information that explains any privacy risks related to working in an online environment. A [2011 Faculty Focus](#) article offers a few common sense guidelines that can ensure student protection when posting to social media:
 - When students are assigned to post information to public social media platforms outside of the university Learning Management System (such as Blackboard), they should be informed that their material may be viewed by others (note that Google Docs and Google Sites are not FERPA or HIPAA compliant).
 - Students should not be required to release personal information on a public site.
 - Instructor comments and/or grades on student material should not be made public.
- **ENSURE THAT STUDENT WORK DOES NOT VIOLATE COPYRIGHT LAW:** Student work that includes copyrighted works (movie clips, images, etc.,) may be in violation of copyright law when published in a public online environment like YouTube. Be sure that student work does not include copyrighted works from other sources.
- **CONSIDER DRAFTING A RELEASE AGREEMENT:** When making student work public, provide students with detailed information describing the what, when, why and how their work will be displayed. Consider drafting a release agreement that addresses the following specific questions:
 - *What* are you posting?
 - *When* will it be posted?
 - *Where* (what platform) will the students' work be posted?

- *How* long will the students' work be posted?
- Do students have a *right of refusal* to participate? Is there an alternate aspect of the assignment that allows students to participate without using social media?
- *How* can students request to remove their work from social media?

There are several examples of release agreements available online; however, check with your department on policies regarding using student work. Not only will providing a detailed release agreement create a document that describes specific information about the scope of using a social media platform and provide specific information about how student work will be made public, but it also can provide students with a sense of agency and control over their own likeness and work.

RESOURCES

Illinois Wesleyan University, "Non-Exclusive License Agreement for Student Work" (2013). Digital Commons Collaboratory. Paper 38. <http://digitalcommons.bepress.com/collaboratory/38>

Orlando, J. (2011). FERPA and Social Media. *Faculty Focus*.

Slu.edu. (2015). *Notification of Rights Under FERPA: Saint Louis University Enrollment Management : SLU*. Retrieved 13 July 2015, from <http://www.slu.edu/office-of-the-university-registrar-home/ferpa>

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center at ctl@slu.edu.