

10 Ways to Use Facebook for DeMolay

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a blue rectangular background.

Facebook has to be the most talked about, and the most misunderstood, web service/platform right now. If you haven't gotten drawn in by the hype, it may surprise you to learn that many people have already found Facebook to be an essential addition to everything they do, including DeMolay. Why? Because the Facebook social networking experience can be precisely what you want to make of it. Think of Facebook as a professional tool, and that's what it is.

Let's look at 10 ways Facebook can benefit chapters, the State Suite, and Massachusetts DeMolay. The more connected you are to your brothers and advisors without being intrusive, the better your fraternal relationship.

1. Add friends selectively.

Contrary to popular belief, Facebook isn't about "collecting" friends. The quality of your Facebook experience will be based on the quality of the people in your network. Create a limited profile for those people that you are on the fence about whether to include. By default your limited profile contains everything in your full profile, so take the time to edit it down.

2. Don't complain about your job, advisors, or brothers, in "messages," "statuses," or "comments."

Any negative comments about your advisors or brothers (even if not specifically named) should not be posted. These comments reflect poorly on you, the organization, and the persons that you criticize. Examples of inappropriate postings may range from a comment about the competency of your advisor, to a comment about how your brothers always shows up late.

We may complain about our works to a friend or family member now and then, but doing so in a public forum where it can be easily read by others who may not be so close to you is not a wise move. Negative and derogatory comments can also lead to claims of defamation and slander.

Avoid any status updates that discuss other brothers or chapters that may implicate unprofessional conduct. You should avoid statuses like, "I'm tired of visiting those annoying kids from Old Colony," or "Dan is watching music videos online at the visitation". Statuses that imply you or others are unreliable, dishonest, deceitful, or unprofessional may jeopardize your employment status.

3. Don't misrepresent yourself or others

You should be careful that what you post about your training and education is accurate and consistent with information you have given to your employer. Your department or agency has the right to check out statements you may make from a variety of sources, including your social networking profile.

For example, if you call in sick and later that day you post a status that says "Off to the beach for the day to go surfing" and the department is made aware of it, you can expect them to investigate this further and initiate corrective action where appropriate.

Or if you claim on your job application that you have a college degree but your online profile states that you did not yet obtain a degree and are still going to school, your employer may question the accuracy of the information you supplied them.

4. Add apps selectively.

Right now, there are over 2000 apps you can add to your Facebook profile. The temptation may be to try them all. Don't. Just because you can add Love Quotes to your profile, it doesn't mean you should if you want Facebook to be a professional tool for you. Read the app description carefully and know exactly what you're getting, and what the privacy settings are before you go. It helps to see how your friends are using the app first. But never fear, worst comes to worst you can remove an app as easily as you added it.

Think of your apps in two ways...what do you want to see (that will appear on your Facebook home page) and what do I want the world to see (that will appear on your profile)? You might consider adding an app that you don't display on your profile at all, but it uses the collective wisdom and usage patterns of your network to provide you with valuable information. Or, if you visit your Facebook home page often it can help keep you organized having nothing to do with your friends' actions.

5. Edit your profile and security settings.

Give careful consideration to exactly who sees your profile and when. Don't take the default settings which tend to expose more information than you may be comfortable. Take the time to go through each link in the Privacy area and make necessary adjustments. Maybe you don't want people who are casually searching to know who your friends are or "poke" you. Maybe you don't want a public profile (accessible to people who are not on Facebook). Facebook can come back to bite you.

6. Join Groups related to DeMolay.

Many groups on Facebook are nonsense, but there are quite a few that can provide useful information and professional connections. Rather than trying to search for groups, watch the groups that your friends are joining, as often you will find them of interest for yourself. After all, they're in your contact list because you have something in common, right? You might even think about using Facebook to virtually address our causes, like the growth and development of DeMolay.

7. Look for events.

Stay interested in what our brothers are doing across the state. Most, if not all, chapters have smartened up and posted events on Facebook for their dances, Installations, and other events. Join them, and have interest in what they are doing. Other chapters undoubtedly go to other chapters events if they know that the State Officers are going to. Young members look up to us; if they see something we think is cool, then they will think it is cool too.

8. Limit time wasted on Facebook.

Facebook can suck you in easily. Remember, you have work to do. You won't help your career if you fall behind on projects because you were too busy playing Mafia Wars. If you find that you're spending too much time reading Facebook message boards or reading about your friends' favorite book selections then set limits for yourself. Facebook is a black hole. In order to get the most of Facebook, you have to be *on* the platform. Consider the Facebook toolbar for Firefox which will notify when you have a reason to go check the home page. You can also work with Facebook from your mobile phone, so think about babysitting your profile while you're waiting in line or otherwise bored and not being productive anyway.

9. Don't use social networking while engaged DeMolay activities

Access to social networking sites on your personal device should only occur in absolute down time as you would use a personal cell phone when on duty (if this is permitted by your ranking officer/advisor). It is inappropriate to post statuses or to view social networking profiles while with other brothers or chapters.

10. Respect copyright and fair use laws

For your DeMolay's protection as well as your own, it is critical that you respect laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including DeMolay's copyrights, logos or images.

You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work. And it is a good general practice to provide a "link" to the original source of your posting.