Records Management – guidance note

Web 2.0 and Social media

Web 2.0 is a phrase used to describe recent changes in the way the web is used. It usually refers to features such as social networking, blogs, wikis, instant messaging and video sharing. All these features rely on the increased participation and collaboration of the user and have become invaluable communications tools.

The University has embraced these innovations in order to promote its courses and services.

The following, based on the principles of the University’s Records Management Policy, outlines some key messages around the use of Web 2.0 to create University records. It concerns only organisational use of Web 2.0 applications. For guidelines on personal use of social media and blogs please consult the Code of Conduct for the use of University of London IT equipment and systems.

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Web 2.0 can contain important records

Records are the evidence of our decisions and actions at the University. Therefore the information produced on Web 2.0 can constitute important University records.

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Blogs and wikis are a platform rather than a type of record

Web 2.0 applications such as blogs, wikis and instant messenger are platforms on which records are created. An individual blog post, or a page in a wiki, could be a record. Some of these are of no importance, but some are records of decision making, guidance or communication and need to kept according to the University’s retention schedule.

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Be careful with Web 2.0 work hosted externally

Web 2.0 applications are often produced and stored within an application outside the University network (e.g. YouTube or Twitter). Be aware of the access permissions, terms and conditions of these sites and, if appropriate, store copies of what is posted in case of any changes made by the host.

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Do not post personal data to external Web 2.0 applications

If Web 2.0 content is hosted externally, avoid posting personal data to these sites, which are outside of the University’s network and not subject to our controls and protection. The University could also be in breach of the 8th principle of the Data Protection Act 1998, which states that personal data should not be transferred out of the European Economic Area.
When a web 2.0 project is over we may still need the records

If a Web 2.0 project or initiative ceases from active use, copies of the records produced on it may still be required. The appropriate retention schedule should be consulted and steps taken to preserve the required information.

Web 2.0 initiatives could hold archival value and interest

The University Archives capture records of the ‘federal activities, student facilities, and activities associated with the University’ and some Web 2.0 projects could ultimately hold archival value. The University Records Manager and the ULCC Digital Archives team should be consulted on these issues.

University of London Records management

Records

Records are the evidence of our actions and decisions as a University

Responsibility

Keeping accurate records is the responsibility of every member of staff

Risk

There are risks around records (loss, damage, unauthorised access) which need to be managed

Retention

We should keep our records only as long as they are relevant or as long as we are required to by law

Rights

The public has a right to access our records under legislation such as FOI and DPA

UoL website link: http://www.london.ac.uk/955.html
Staff intranet link: https://intranet.london.ac.uk/3632.html
Email: Records.management@london.ac.uk