Social media guidelines for account managers

Building Node presence

1. Introduction

ELIXIR Nodes are encouraged to set up one or more social media accounts to disseminate Node outputs, training courses and events. This document offers guidelines on setting up and managing Node social media accounts.

To avoid the proliferation of ELIXIR-associated accounts, an official social media account is not recommended for ELIXIR Communities, Platforms, Focus Groups or Commissioned Service activities. Instead, members are encouraged to post using personal social media, tagging @ELIXIREurope with the appropriate hashtags (see here for list of tags and hashtags). The posts can then be shared on Node and ELIXIR accounts where relevant. Social media guidelines for ELIXIR consortium members are in a separate document.

2.   Getting started

The social media landscape is one of constant change, and in choosing which platform or platforms to use, a Node should take into account their resources, expertise and which platforms their target audience use. Although different platforms have different requirements, tools such as Loomly (paid service) are available to cross-post between platforms.

This document first compares four platforms and gives some general tips, before focusing advice on the two established platforms: LinkedIn and X. The recommendations for X generally also apply to Bluesky.

2.1 Comparison of platforms

The following table is a comparison of the four platforms: LinkedIn, X, Bluesky and Mastodon. LinkedIn is a good choice if capacity to manage more than one social media platform is limited, as the posting frequency is lower than alternatives and it is widely used in academia and industry.

Platforms	Established platforms		Emerging platforms	
	LinkedIn	X	Bluesky	Mastodon
Message length	Up to 3,000 characters	Up to 280 characters, including links	Up to 300 characters	Up to 500 characters
Message frequency	Lower frequency: monthly, weekly	High frequency: daily or multiple times a day	High frequency: daily or multiple times a day	High frequency: daily or multiple times a day
Message purpose (common examples)	• Milestone updates (e.g. new collaborations, research outputs) • Updates and promotions of Node activity (e.g. news releases, events) • Activity highlights (e.g. link to a feature	• Quick updates and promotions of Node activity (e.g. news releases, events) • Campaigns to draw attention to the Node or ELIXIR (e.g. "Open Access Week") • Advertise vacancies • Live-posting during events	• Quick updates and promotions of Node activity (e.g. news releases, events) • Campaigns to draw attention to the Node or ELIXIR (e.g. "Open Access Week")	• Quick updates and promotions of Node activity (e.g. news releases, events) • Campaigns to draw attention to the Node or ELIXIR (e.g. "Open Access Week")

	story on a database, tool, research group) ● Advertise vacancies			
Audience focus	Industry leaders, research infrastructure stakeholders and funders	Bioinformaticians, staff of research institutes and universities	Other research infrastructures, bioinformaticians, staff of research institutes and universities	Bioinformaticians, staff of research institutes and universities
Ways to draw attention to frequently-used words and involve contacts [See the LinkedIn and X hashtags for ELIXIR Social media](#))	**Words:** Hashtags work as they do on X, but tend to be less frequently followed **Contacts:** Mentions of other organisations on LinkedIn (LinkedIn account name preceded by @)	**Words:** Hashtags (concepts preceded by #, e.g. #bigdata) **Contacts:** Mentions of other X users (X account names preceded by @, e.g. @ELIXIREurope)	**Words:** Hashtags (concepts preceded by #, e.g. #bigdata) **Contacts:** Mentions of other Bluesky users (Bluesky account names preceded by @)	**Words:** Hashtags (concepts preceded by #, e.g. #bigdata) **Contacts:** Mentions of other Mastodon users (Mastodon account names preceded by @)

2.2 General rules and tips

- **Make most content clickable.** Even if an image is attached, adding a link maximises a follower's interaction with the tweet or post and drives traffic over to a website.

- **Always shorten links** using free sites or browser plug-ins such as https://goo.gl/ and https://bitly.com/. X will cut off a link with an ellipsis (...) if too long. Shortening a link looks better and allows you to use more of the tweet character limit for text.

- **Inform Node members** when you have posted or tweeted content so that they can share or like it from their personal accounts. While only the Node account officially represents ELIXIR, consortium member engagements can help quickly boost views of Node content from the target audience.

- **Posts from official accounts should reflect the positions of the ELIXIR Node.** For official accounts, engagements with other posts can be seen as endorsements. Don't engage with posts that ELIXIR would not endorse. If someone has mentioned a Node account in a questionable post, ignore it.

- Care should be taken to use **inclusive language** that respects and includes all identities, backgrounds and experiences.

3.   Distinguishing Node activities from Hub activities

- **Use the Node logo as the social media profile picture and use an orange or dark blue background with connection elements for the cover image. Some examples can be found in the ELIXIR Hub Google Drive here.**

- **Clarify the Node's role in its profile bio**

LinkedIn:

The LinkedIn "about us" section should be 1-2 paragraphs, and should be a condensed version of what is written on the Node page of elixir-europe.org (see section on "[Online Content Guidelines](#)"). The "about us" section should include the following:

- A brief explanation of what ELIXIR is as a whole: e.g. "ELIXIR aims to facilitate access to biological data and software for the life science community by connecting resources across Europe."

- A few sentences on how the Node fits into ELIXIR, highlighting the types of services that the Node offers within the context of its nation and internationally.

- For example:
  "ELIXIR Finland is a major national life science research infrastructure in Finland and part of Academy of Finland's Research Infrastructures Roadmap. In collaboration with international partners, ELIXIR Finland develops European life science infrastructure services. ELIXIR Finland is hosted by CSC – IT Center for Science Ltd.

  ELIXIR is a European research infrastructure which manages and safeguards the massive amounts of life science data and tools being generated by publicly-funded research. We are a network of scientific and technical experts working together to coordinate, integrate and sustain bioinformatics resources, providing access to high-quality data, tools, standards, compute and training. These open resources enable researchers to access and analyse life science data to accelerate research and its impact on society."

X or Bluesky:

"[Name of the ELIXIR Node] unites **[country]**'s leading life sciences organisations focused on **[bioinformatics, particular area of bioinformatics]** as part of @ELIXIREurope. Develops services such as **[mention services, particularly those that have X accounts]**. Based at **[e.g. mention lead institute, particularly if it has an X account]**.

For example: "ELIXIR Portugal unites the **country's** leading life sciences organisations focused on **#bioinformatics** as part of **@ELIXIREurope**. Develops services such as **@enasequence** and **@MINT_database**. Based at **@LeadInstitute**."

- **Seek out your target audience**, such as research group leads, industry leaders and other people who could benefit from the Node's services.

- **Tweet and post Node content as well as retweet, like or share Hub content** so that followers/connections are more aware of what the Node is doing specifically.

- **Use the social media lingo of ELIXIR and other life science organisations.** Refer to the ELIXIR communications useful information. To check if a hashtag you want to use has a following on X, search for the word on ritetag.com.

- Analytics shows an account's change in follower size over the past 30 days. This is helpful for measuring a Node's social media influence.

- **Follow (X) or connect (LinkedIn) with all ELIXIR-related individuals, particularly Node consortium members.** They will likely follow/connect with you in return, reflecting your network on social media. Look through ELIXIR X contacts, organised into lists here: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists

List	Members
Deposition Databases: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists/deposition-databases	Data resources that have been defined by ELIXIR at https://www.elixir-europe.org/platforms/data/elixir-deposition-databases
Core Data Resources: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists/core-data-resources	Main list of data resources defined by ELIXIR as fundamental to research in the life sciences — read more at https://www.elixir-europe.org/core-data-resources
Industry and SMEs: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists/industry-and-smes	ELIXIR contacts in industry and Small & Medium-sized Enterprises

ELIXIR institutes: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists/elixir-institutes	The individual institutes that make up ELIXIR and the data services they connect or develop
ELIXIR people: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists/elixir-people	People affiliated with ELIXIR
ELIXIR Nodes: https://X.com/ELIXIREurope/lists/elixir-nodes	The main accounts of ELIXIR Nodes

4. Managing a LinkedIn account

- **Create a Node company page (not a personal profile).** Company pages make an organisation more searchable than a profile page. They also link together employees — when someone lists a Node on their profile, the Node's logo and company page will automatically hyperlink.

- **Check for updates** from other organisations in the "home" feed at least once a week. Engage with their content as well as posting your own.

- **Plan out which content** from the Node X account would also be relevant to LinkedIn, where funders, bioindustries and other research infrastructures might be more active. Some tweets could also be summarised into a single LinkedIn post. Unlike X, LinkedIn posts can be less regular and longer.

- **Advertise job vacancies.** LinkedIn provides a paid service that would make Node job vacancies searchable, however, posting the link to a job application and disseminating it across other communication channels (X, Node or lead institute website, newsletters) would also get the word out.

5. Evaluating LinkedIn activity

LinkedIn analytics. A company profile comes equipped with analytics for visitors, updates (posts) and followers. The following metrics give an idea of the success of a page:

- **Visitors > Visitor demographics.** Pay close attention to the job functions and affiliated industries of visitors. Are you reaching the bioinformatics/research sector?

- **Updates > Social engagement over time.** Examine the reach of your posts.

LinkedIn analytics can only trace back to the post a year ago, so make sure to download the analytics report at least once a year.

6. Managing an X or a Bluesky account

- **Create a Node Bluesky account and set a custom domain.** It is possible to change the Bluesky handle to a custom domain. To create a custom domain, create a Bluesky account under Bluesky's social domain first and edit the Node account handle (username) to the Node's website domain in the account settings. The step-by-step tutorial can be found [here](#).

- **Use social media management tools**. The social media management tool ELIXIR Hub uses is Loom.ly, it allows the Hub to manage both X and LinkedIn platforms and also the EU projects' social media accounts. Some other options to consider are Hootsuite (https://hootsuite.com), Social Booster (https://www.social-booster.com) or Buffer (www.buffer.com). Currently, Bluesky is not available on Loom.ly, therefore, the Hub is using Buffer (free account) for Bluesky scheduling.

- **Create event hashtags.** Whenever your Node hosts an event, create a thematic hashtag so that attendees can better associate their tweets with the event. To be sure you haven't created a pre-existing hashtag, double-check it with http://ritetag.com or search for the hashtag on X.

- **Live tweeting at events (X or Bluesky)**

  - Tweet as soon as you hear something you appreciate. Live tweets are meant to be immediate. A tweet is more relevant to followers if posted during a presentation rather than after it.

  - Use the event hashtag and mention speakers. Most events will have a hashtag for attendees to include in their tweets as they share insights or promote certain messages amongst their network. Mentioning speakers in the tweets that you post during their presentations will increase the likelihood that followers and new followers see your tweets.

  - Take pictures of slides with meaningful content. Don't just take a picture of a well-known person giving a presentation; zoom in on a slide with information or a graphic that would have meaning to your social media network (e.g. explaining how a tool works, showing the value of a research infrastructure, statistics on big data challenges).

7.   Evaluating X and Bluesky activity

It is difficult to analyse X activity since there are no free analytics. The number of likes, shares and comments on the posts can still give a rough idea of the engagement of the platform. Some social media management tools provide analytics, for example Hootsuite (https://hootsuite.com) and Buffer (www.buffer.com). Loom.ly provides social media analytics, but is less comprehensive.
Key data to track include:

- **Tweets > Engagement rate.** The engagement rate is the number of engagements (clicks, retweets, replies, follows and likes) divided by the total number of impressions (the number of times users saw a tweet on X). Watching this rate gives a good idea of how much Node tweets are valued by followers over time.

- **Audiences > Your follower > Follower audience size.** Without free analytics from X, tracking follower numbers is difficult. However, most social media management tools offer basic analytics, including follower numbers. For example, Loom.ly provides the total number of followers within a given period. Regular review of follower numbers is a good way to track social media influence.

As an emerging social media platform, Bluesky doesn't provide an analytics function at the time of writing (March 2025). However, there are several free tools online to track the activities of the account and monitor engagement. A list of tools can be found [here](#).