Social Media Guidance and Strategy

CIAT

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, social media serves as an integral communication tool in both personal and professional spheres. As a powerful means of engaging with diverse audiences, communities, and networks, CIAT recognises the importance of harnessing social media to enhance the profile of the discipline, the profession and the Institute; strengthen its professional networks; and uphold its reputation as the leading global qualifying body in Architectural Technology.

There are a variety of social media platforms available, notably Instagram, LinkedIn, and X alongside YouTube, TikTok, blogs, forums and chat rooms. The subject matter or discussion topic will vary as will some of the views and responses published. However, there is a basic underlying principle to remember, be aware of and to adopt. Everything that is posted via these mediums is out in the public domain for all to see. Even though you may think that you can delete it at a later stage, or if it is part of a closed forum, your posting will remain out there in some shape or form as it can be copied or repopulated to another site.

It is important to remember that the same rules of professional behaviour continue in terms of language and adherence to the Institute's Code of Conduct, in particular Clause 1: Professional Conduct (please see page 7). Your online presence can affect CIAT as your words, images, posts and comments can reflect or be attributed to CIAT.

This document outlines CIAT's Social Media Guidance, providing a framework to guide the Institute's social media activities across various platforms, as well as other stakeholders involved in representing CIAT online, including members, affiliates and staff.

Through this guidance, the Institute reaffirms its commitment to utilising social media as a key component of its communication and engagement efforts, ensuring that the message of the Architectural Technology discipline, profession, membership, and any link to CIAT is presented both accurately and professionally.

This guidance will evolve alongside the digital landscape, enabling CIAT to remain responsive to emerging trends and opportunities.

What follows are guidelines for:

- **those referring to holding a position/undertaking a role for CIAT**
- **all members and affiliates**
- **Regional and Centre Committees and aspiration Groups**

Definitions of key terms

Audience

Your followers and the people you hope to reach

Clickthrough rate

A metric used to represent the number of times a visitor clickthrough divided by the total number of impressions a piece of content receives

Engagement rate

A metric used to describe the amount of interaction – likes, shares, comments – a piece of content receives

Feed

Contains all the content uploaded by the accounts someone follows on social media. The term is Instagram-specific but other platforms have their version, like Timeline on X and For You Page on TikTok

Follower

A person who subscribes to your account in order to receive your updates

Handle

Describes someone's @username, e.g. @ciatechnologist

Hashtag

A tag used on social networks as a way to annotate a message, usually preceded by a '#' e.g. #ATAwards

Impressions

Refers to a way in which to keep track of every time a post is "fetched" and counted

Like

An action made by a user as a quick way to show approval

Platform

A social media network, such as LinkedIn or YouTube

Reach

The number of people who can see the content you share on social media, whether they follow you or not

Reel

An Instagram video

Reply

An action that allows a user to respond to a post

Repost

When a user decides to re-share your content, allowing them to quickly resend the message with attribution to the original sharer's name

Story

Prevalent on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok and is a string of videos or images that last for 24 hours

Subscriber(s)

Someone who "follows" a profile on YouTube

Tag

A functionality commonly used on Instagram and Facebook that allows users to create a link back to the profile of the person shown in the picture or targeted in the update

Thread

A series of comments or discussion posts on a post

Trending

The most talked about topics and hashtags on a network which commonly appear on X or similar and serve as clickable links for users to join the conversation or browse the related content

The Institute's official presences

The Institute's social media channels are overseen by the Creative & Communications Department and managed and maintained by the Web & Digital Executive.

The Institute is apolitical.

*The Institute owns the accounts and content created specifically for the account. Content created by other users is their property unless permission is granted and credit should be given.

LinkedIn

The Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists

LinkedIn is a professional-oriented social networking site. It is mainly used for professional networking.

The Institute's presence

CIAT has a LinkedIn page. Postings will include alerts about new information and updates, news releases, networking opportunities such as CPD events and conferences, sharing posts of interest and generating an Architectural Technology network and community.

Instagram

@ciatechnologist

Instagram is a photo and video sharing network that enables users to take pictures/videos and share them either publicly or privately.

The Institute's presence

CIAT is on Instagram as an organisation. Postings will be graphic based to share information, updates, news releases and contribute to generating an Architectural Technology network and community. It predominantly shares photos of Institute activity, members' and affiliates' work to promote both itself and the profession at large.
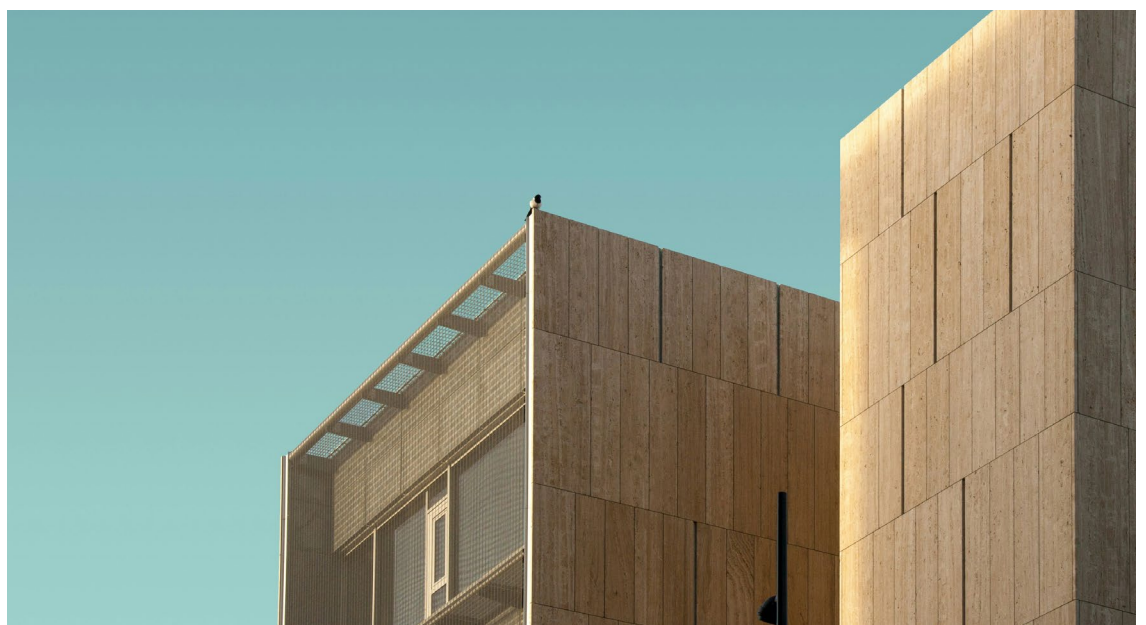
YouTube
CIATechnologist

YouTube is website that allows users to upload, view, and share videos for free.

The Institute's presence
CIAT has its own YouTube channel. Videos will include promotional films about the Institute, discipline and profession, CPD recordings and AT Awards events.

TikTok
@ciatechnologist

TikTok allows users to create and share short videos that are 15 to 60 seconds long and embellish them with music, filters, and effects.

The Institute's presence
CIAT has a TikTok account.

Bluesky
@ciatechnologist.bsky.social

Bluesky allows users to share short posts of up to 300 characters, along with images, and videos.

**The Institute's presence**
CIAT has a Bluesky account.

X
@ciatechnologist

X is an online social networking service that enables its users to share and read text-based updates of up to 280 characters. Users can favourite and repost the posts of other users, as well as engage in conversations using @ mentions, replies and hashtags.

The Institute's presence

CIAT is @CIATechnologist. Posts inform followers about new information and updates, news releases, sharing information and generating an Architectural Technology network and community. The Institute will post when there is something of interest to share with followers or repost content of interest. For the AT Awards and other important external events, X is used to post updates in real-time throughout the event.
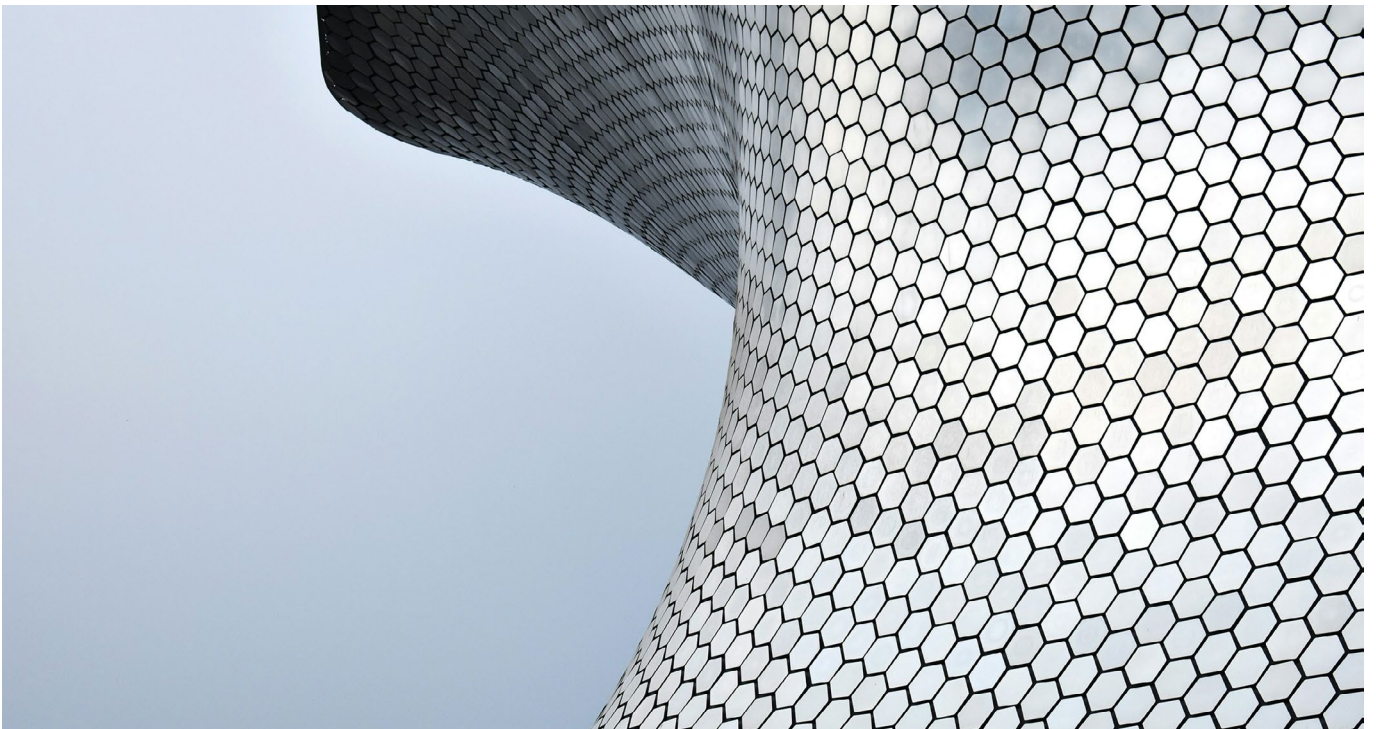
Guidelines for members and affiliates
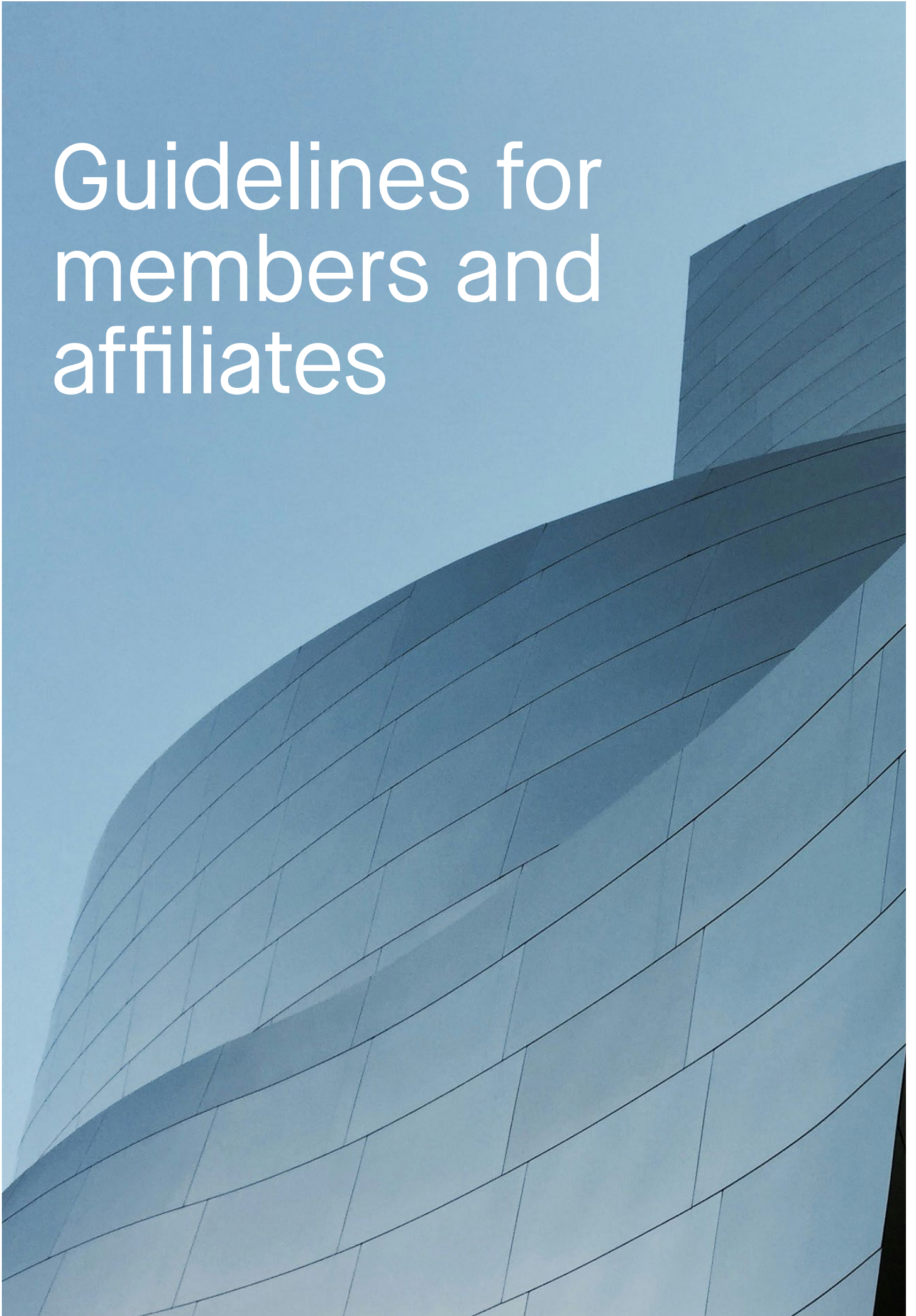
Whether you are a member or affiliate referring to holding a position/ undertaking a role for CIAT in any capacity or just there as an individual, you must have respect for both CIAT and other users.

It is your responsibility to ensure your activity online does not reflect negatively on the Institute or on you. Those with a social media account linked to their Institute involvement, must be apolitical, non-religious and not endorse and/or promote a product.

Main rules for use
You are asked not to post:
- abusive or derogatory comments.
- insensitive, inappropriate or upsetting comments, content or links.
- allegations or defamatory or insulting comments about any named individual or organisation.
- rude, threatening or aggressive posts.
- spam.
- anything which infringes or encourages infringement of the law, including the intellectual property or privacy rights of others; and
- anything which infringes the intellectual property or privacy rights of others.

Most social media networks and online communities have their own rules and guidelines, but you must also adhere to the Institute's *Code of Conduct*, namely Clause A1 and B1:

Clause A1/B1: Professional Conduct
The member or affiliate shall at all times:

1a) act with integrity so as to uphold the standing and reputation of the Institute;
1b) act faithfully and honourably in their professional responsibilities;
1c) rely only on merit or fair competition to secure commissions and appointments;
1d) not seek directly or indirectly to injure the professional reputation of another;
1e) not knowingly misrepresent the views of the Institute;
1f) not knowingly misrepresent their professional qualification;
1g) describe themselves factually and/or in good faith

Every member and affiliate is entitled to their view and many forms of forums are great for debate and open discussion but you must remember that as a member or affiliate of CIAT, the *Code of Conduct* applies at all times.

Any advice that you give in any discussion or form via social media can have professional liabilities and consequences. Therefore, you should ensure that what you give as advice is covered appropriately with a written clause/declaration or the necessary insurance cover.

For those communicating with clients, and prospective clients, these can have legal and liability implications, and it is public. Ensure that any business dealings undertaken using social media remain professional and are not openly public conversations.

As per Clause A5/B5 of the *Code of Conduct*:

Clause A5/B5: Offering and/or Providing Services Directly to a Client
5b) Chartered Members and affiliates acting as principals of a practice shall:
i. before commencing work on any commission, ensure that their terms of engagement have been given in writing to the client

A disclaimer (for example 'All views, posts, and opinions shared are my own and do not necessarily represent CIAT's position, policies, strategies or opinions') may help prevent your posts being directly related to CIAT although the obligations under Clause A1/B1 of the *Code of Conduct* will take precedence, if your comments can be linked to you as a member or affiliate of CIAT.

Other guidelines to consider

Protect your privacy

Protecting your privacy online is essential. Be mindful of what personal information you share and exercise caution when engaging with content, as even a simple 'like' can draw attention to your personal and professional accounts. Remember that anything you publish can reach a wide audience and may remain accessible for a long time. Always consider the content and your privacy settings carefully before posting or interacting online.

Be an ambassador

We encourage members and affiliates to share posts issued by CIAT to help raise its profile. When engaging online in a personal or professional capacity, you may come across opportunities to comment on or support the Institute and its work. Where appropriate, and in alignment with the guidelines in this guidance, the Institute welcomes and encourages such actions as they help users connect with CIAT and expand its reach.

That said, it's important to carefully consider the Institute's reputation when doing so. If your personal social media account does not reflect a professional tone or is unsuitable for CIAT's audience, please refrain from using it to amplify or promote the Institute. Doing so could present risks both to you and to CIAT.

Additionally, if you encounter content related to the Institute that is controversial or could be misrepresented, please report it to the Creative & Communications Department. They will address the situation and provide an appropriate response.

Staying safe online

Social media can present challenges, and members and affiliates may occasionally encounter unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the Institute, its work, or individuals.

Members and affiliates should remain vigilant against suspicious content or links and refrain from sharing personal, confidential, or sensitive information about themselves, colleagues, other members, affiliates etc. Be alert to the presence of fake accounts claiming to represent CIAT, its Regions, Centres, aspiration Groups, Honorary Officers etc., and promptly report such accounts to the Creative & Communications Department.

Avoid logos or trademarks

Never use the Institute's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos must be requested from the Creative & Communications Department and any content created must adhere to our Corporate Style and Brand Guidelines. If permission is granted, content must be approved by the Creative & Communications Department before publishing.

Guidelines for Regional and Centre Committees and aspiration

Regional and Centre Committees are encouraged to run their own separate pages on LinkedIn. These accounts will be set up by the Creative & Communications Department. Administrative rights and passwords will then be given to the person(s) responsible for maintaining the account on behalf of the Regional/Centre Committee. The Institute may make changes to ensure a level of brand uniformity exists across the pages.

Each Region/Centre must use their CIAT logo for the page and should be entitled: CIAT <insert Region/Centre name>, e.g. CIAT Wessex.

To assist with maintaining the page/s, members must adhere to the *Code of Conduct* and *Social Media Guidance* at all times, working with the Creative & Communications Department.

aspiration has one account which represents all the Groups and the initiative as a whole on LinkedIn and Instagram. The Institute reserves the right to take over any page connected with the Institute.

As LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that offers opportunities for Regions and Centres to connect with local members and affiliates, industry professionals, and stakeholders in a professional context, it makes it an ideal platform for Committee-led engagement. LinkedIn is the only social media platform for use by Regions and Centres and all accounts on other platforms will be closed and deleted.

This approach allows us to centralise and streamline our social media presence across platforms, ensuring consistent messaging, branding and audience engagement. It also allows for continuity in posting.

By focusing on LinkedIn, Committees can effectively highlight their work while supporting the overall goals and values of the Institute.

CIAT and aspiration are the Institute's two official accounts on Instagram.
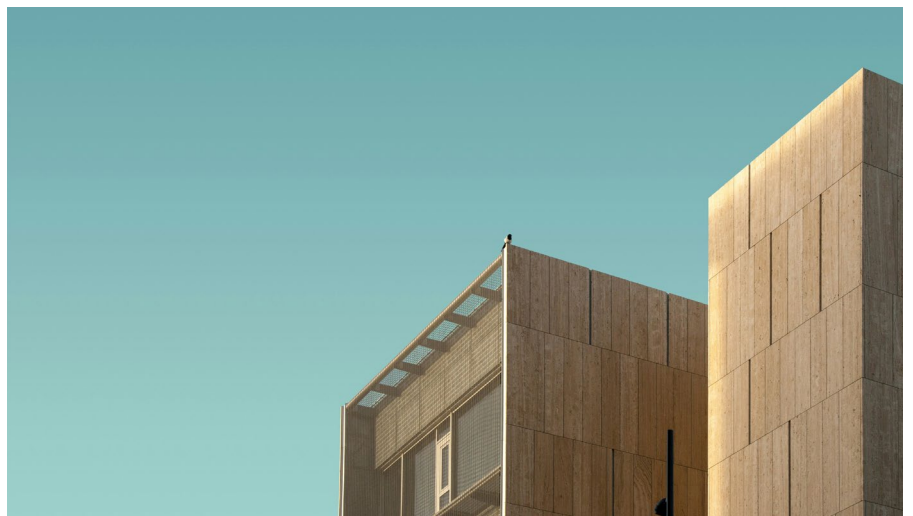
Other guidelines to consider

Roles

Committees can assign a Social Media Officer for their online presence. Others may assist with the running of the page providing they have read the guidelines set out in this document.

Be an ambassador

Regions and Centres must ensure they reflect CIAT's values in what they post and use the Institute's tone of voice. Our *Corporate Style and Brand Guidelines* set out our style that all Regions and Centres should refer to when posting content on LinkedIn. A copy can be obtained from the Creative & Communications Department.

Always pause and think before posting

When posting from CIAT-affiliated LinkedIn pages, you should respond to comments in the voice of the Institute and not allow your own personal opinions to influence responses. Committee members should not express opinions that could be divisive via these pages. This includes opinions on industrial and political issues.

If you are in doubt about CIAT's position on a particular issue, please speak to the Head of Creative & Communications.

Those posting on Regional/Centre/aspiration LinkedIn pages must do so professionally, adhering to the *Code of Conduct* and *Social Media Guidance* at all times.

Staying safe online

Committees should remain vigilant against suspicious content or links and refrain from sharing personal, confidential, or sensitive information about themselves, colleagues, other members, affiliates etc. Be alert to the presence of fake accounts claiming to represent CIAT, other Regions, Centres, aspiration Groups, Honorary Officers etc., and promptly report such accounts to the Creative & Communications Department.

Additionally, care should be taken to ensure that any links shared from these LinkedIn pages direct users to appropriate and secure external sites.

Know our social media guardians

The Creative & Communications Department is responsible for setting up and managing CIAT's social media channels and LinkedIn pages for Regions, Centres and aspiration. The Web & Digital Executive has overall ownership of these accounts and only those authorised to do so by the Web & Digital Executive will have access to these accounts.

Never give out the passwords for these pages without express permission from the Web & Digital Executive.

Job adverts

Regions and Centres should only share job opportunities from AT Jobs. If opportunities are asked to be shared, they should be directed to AT Jobs which is open to all to advertise, and we encourage Committee members to direct employers to this service. This will allow for job opportunities to be shared with all members and affiliates via our website and *AT Weekly*.

If there is any doubt or confusion as to when or how these guidelines apply, clarification should be sought from the Creative & Communications Department.

Guidelines for members of Central Office staff

For staff, it is important to distinguish between your professional and personal presence online. While your activities may not fall under the Institute's Code of Conduct, you are still obligated to maintain professionalism and avoid any actions that could bring the Institute into disrepute, as outlined in your contract of employment and associated staff policies.

Professional social media accounts

If you are on a social media network professionally, as part of your role at CIAT, you must remember that this is not part of the Institute's official presence.

When using social media for networking, sharing information, or engaging with members and affiliates and others, it is important to remember that any comments you make are representative of the Institute. As such, they must align strictly with the Institute's policies and not reflect personal opinions.

Personal social media accounts

If you are using a personal account, it must not be utilised for Institute-related business. Be aware that any information you make public could affect how people perceive the Institute. **You must make it clear when you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of CIAT.** In this context, you are not acting in a professional capacity. However, you must refrain from posting anything about CIAT that could undermine its integrity, as doing so may result in an employment misconduct investigation and appropriate action.

Protect your personal reputation

Think about your personal reputation as well as the Institute's. Express your opinions and deal with differences of opinion respectfully. Do not insult people or treat them badly. Passionate discussions and debates are fine, but you should always be respectful of others and their opinions. Be the first to correct your own mistakes.

Use your common sense and good judgement

Be aware of your association with CIAT and ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself to the public, members, affiliates, colleagues etc.

Discuss risks and conflicts of interest

Staff who have a personal blog, social media profile or website which indicates in any way that they work at CIAT should discuss any potential risk or conflicts of interest with their line manager and the Head of Creative & Communications.

Avoid logos or trademarks

Never use the Institute's logos or trademarks unless approved to do so. Permission to use logos must be requested from the Creative & Communications Department and any content created must adhere to our Corporate Style and Brand Guidelines. If permission is granted, content must be approved by the Creative & Communications Department before publishing.

Protect your privacy

Protecting your privacy online is essential. Be mindful of what personal information you share and exercise caution when engaging with content, as even a simple 'like' can draw attention to your personal and professional accounts. Remember that anything you publish can reach a wide audience and may remain accessible for a long time. Always consider the content and your privacy settings carefully before posting or interacting online.

In their own interests, staff should be aware of the dangers of putting personal information onto social networking sites, such as addresses, home and mobile phone numbers.

Staying safe online

Social media can present challenges, and staff may occasionally encounter unpleasant or abusive comments directed at the Institute, its work or individuals. We encourage everyone using social media to familiarise themselves with CIAT's safeguarding practices for managing online abuse and to consult with the Head of Creative & Communications whenever needed.

Staff should remain vigilant against suspicious content or links and refrain from sharing personal, confidential, or sensitive information about themselves, colleagues, members, affiliates etc. Be alert to the presence of fake accounts claiming to represent CIAT, its Regions, Centres, aspiration Groups, Honorary Officers etc., and promptly report such accounts to the Creative & Communications Department. Additionally, care should be taken to ensure that any links shared from our official social media accounts direct users to appropriate and secure external sites. For further details, please refer to our data protection policy.

Help the Institute raise its profile (where appropriate)

We encourage staff to share posts issued by CIAT to help raise its profile. When engaging online in a personal or professional capacity, you may come across opportunities to comment on or support the Institute and its work. Where appropriate, and in alignment with the guidelines in this policy, the Institute welcomes and encourages such actions as they help users connect with CIAT and expand its reach.

That said, it's important to carefully consider the Institute's reputation when doing so. If your personal social media account does not reflect a professional tone or is unsuitable for CIAT's audience, please refrain from using it to amplify or promote the Institute. Doing so could present risks both to you and to CIAT.

Additionally, if you encounter content related to the Institute that is controversial or could be misrepresented, please report it to the Creative & Communications Department. They will address the situation and provide an appropriate response.
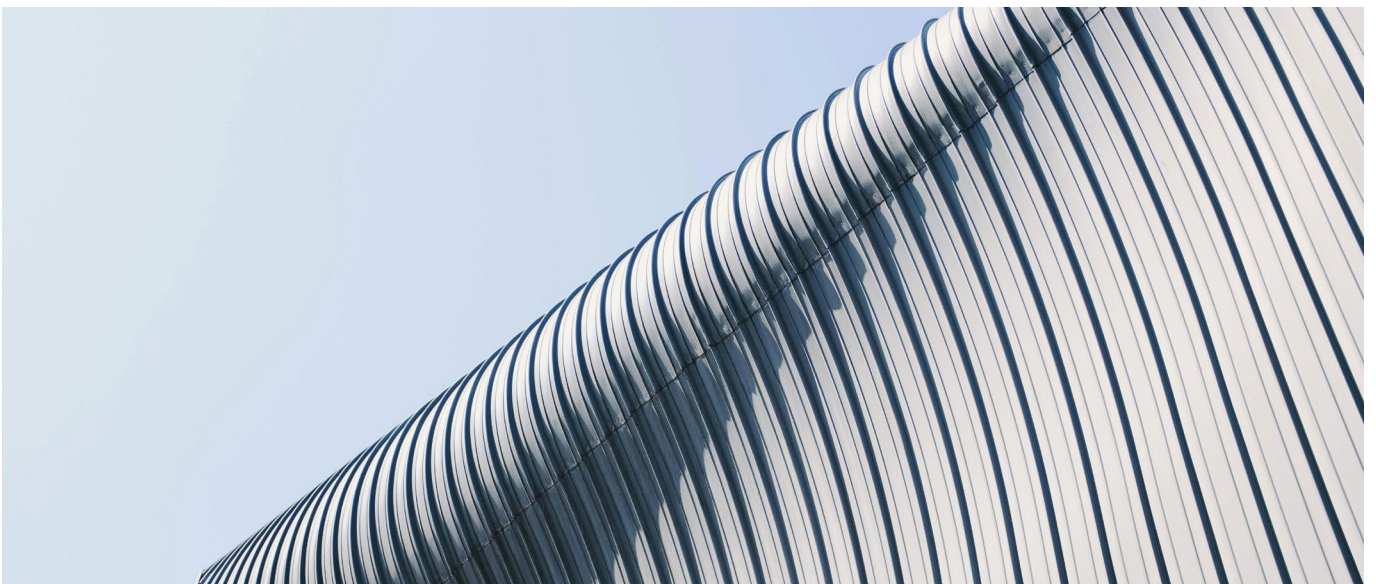
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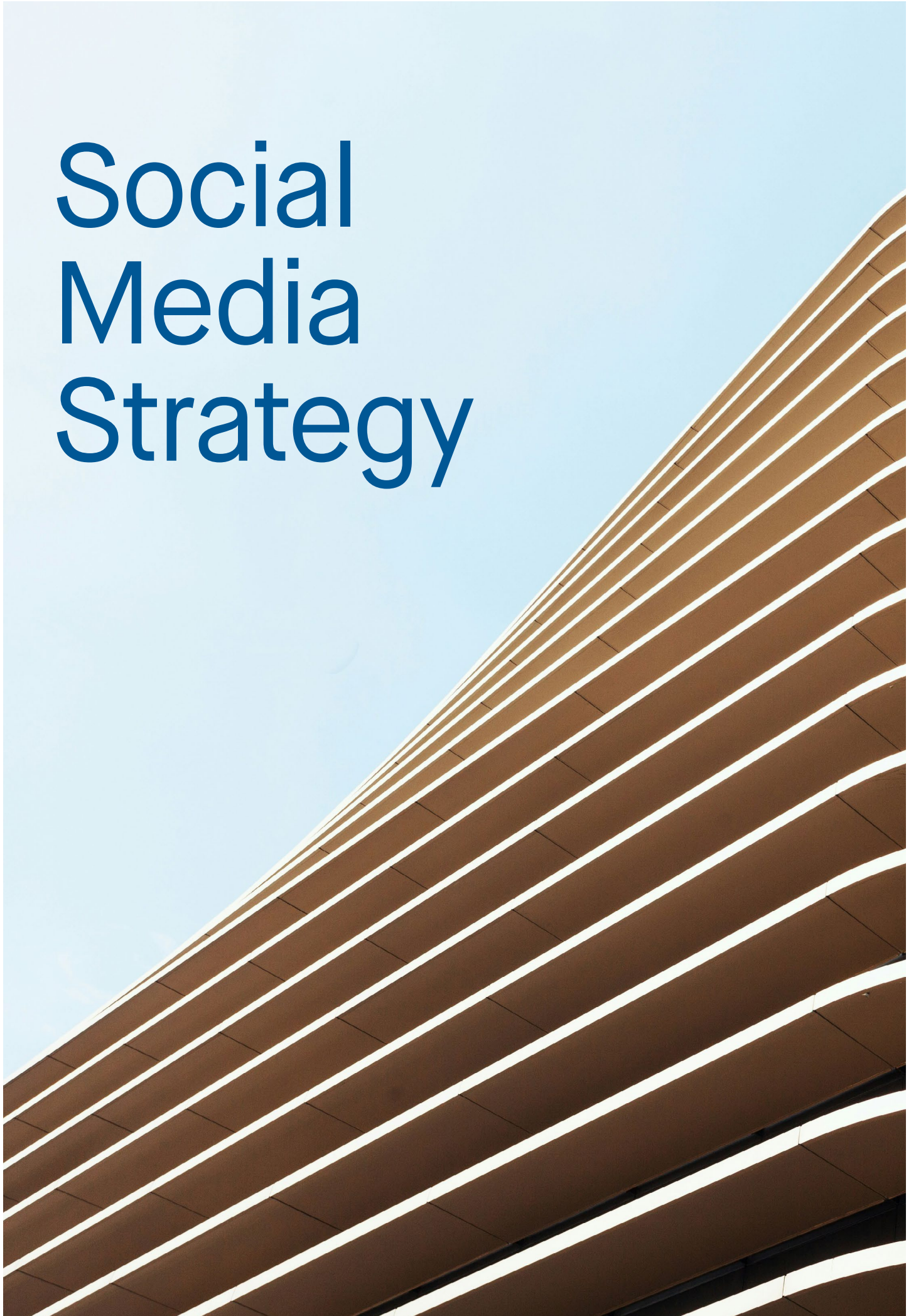
Introduction

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This document outlines CIAT's Social Media Strategy, providing a framework to guide the Institute's social media activities across various platforms.

Through this strategy, the Institute reaffirms its commitment to utilising social media as a key component of its communication and engagement efforts, ensuring that the message of the Architectural Technology discipline, the profession, the membership, and any link to CIAT is presented both accurately and professionally.

This strategy will evolve alongside the digital landscape, enabling CIAT to remain responsive to emerging trends and opportunities.

This document should be read in tandem with the Social Media Policy.

Objectives

The key objectives of this social media strategy are aligned to the Institute's aims in its Strategic Plan 2025 They are to:

- increase awareness and raise the profile of Architectural Technology as a discipline and profession, the Institute, and its membership.
- communicate content to a global audience and promote initiatives, events and services.
- support and drive outcomes such as membership growth and engagement, and advocacy efforts.
- foster engagement and meaningful interactions with industry stakeholders, educational establishments, government bodies, other like-minded membership organisations and the wider public.
- strengthen relationships with stakeholders, including members and affiliates, supporters, and partners.
- enhance transparency and trust through consistent communication.
- drive users to its website.

Target audiences

To tailor its messaging effectively, the following target audiences have been identified:

Primary audiences
- CIAT members and affiliates
- Wider industry professionals in the built environment sector
- Educational establishments
- Current supporters, partners and sponsors

Secondary audiences
- Potential members and affiliates
- Government bodies and departments
- Potential supporters, partners

Potential clients
- The wider public

Platforms

The Institute will focus on the following social media platforms based on their suitability for reaching its target audiences:

LinkedIn: For professional networking, industry and Institute updates, sharing Institute and industry-wide opportunities, promoting campaigns and achievements.

X: For real-time updates at events, advocacy, amplifying promotional campaigns and engaging in relevant conversations.

Instagram: For visually compelling content through graphics, photos and short videos that highlight the innovative design discipline of Architectural Technology.

YouTube: For sharing educational, promotional and inspirational long-form video content.

TikTok: To engage younger audiences such as students and school leavers with creative, informal and impactful short videos.

Bluesky: For real-time updates at events, advocacy, amplifying promotional campaigns and engaging in relevant conversations.

Key messages

The Institute's messaging will be consistent across all platforms and reflect the following themes:

Mission and vision: Promoting and advocating for Architectural Technology and inspiring Architectural Technology professionals.

Advocacy and awareness: Raising the profile of Chartered Architectural Technologists, highlighting critical challenges within the built environment and promoting key issues aligned with the Institute's Strategic Plan. This includes sharing user generated content from members, affiliates and other stakeholders.

Calls to action: Encouraging audiences to attend relevant events, professional development opportunities, responding to consultations, becoming involved with CIAT etc.

Impact stories: Showcasing real-life examples of CIAT's and members' and affiliates' work, success stories, accomplishments etc.

Educational content: Sharing valuable resources such as CPD, guidance and thought leadership in the sector.

Content

Content formats

Visual
Photos, infographics, and short videos for visual appeal

Text
Short, engaging updates and insightful captions

Real-time updates
Live updates and stories from events such as the AT Awards and conferences, Q&A sessions etc.

Educational
Sharing articles, webinar recordings, case studies and reports for in-depth information

Video
Webinars, promotional films primarily for YouTube and Instagram

Content calendar

A content calendar is an essential tool for organising a social media strategy. It ensures consistency, aligns with the Institute's strategic aims and values, campaigns and key dates, and helps to plan, produce and publish content efficiently. The Institute uses Hootsuite to organise its content calendar.

Components of the calendar

Alignment with the Institute's goals
The calendar will reflect the Institute's priorities, including:
· Promotional campaigns and initiatives
· Key events
· Milestones

Frequency of posting
Frequency will vary depending on the platform and based on audience behaviour and engagement trends:

· **LinkedIn:** 3-5 posts weekly, emphasising professional development, thought leadership content, professional opportunities etc.
· **X:** 2-4 posts weekly
· I**nstagram:** 2-4 posts weekly, focusing on high-quality visuals and engagement
· **YouTube:** 2-3 video uploads per month

Tone and style
· Professional, yet approachable and inclusive
· Aligned with the Corporate Style and Brand guidelines to ensure consistency across all platforms

Engagement and management

CIAT will actively engage with followers and subscribers by responding to comments, messages and answering questions in a prompt and professional manner.

When dealing with negative or abusive comments, the Institute will follow its employees' wellbeing and escalation policies to handle inappropriate comments professionally.

The Institute will monitor conversations and trends to identify opportunities for engagement, using tools such as Hootsuite to observe mentions, trends and feedback.

Evaluation and metrics

To measure the effectiveness of the Institute's social media activity, CIAT will track the following metrics:

- **Reach:** This includes follower growth, impressions and post reach
- **Engagement:** This includes likes, comments, shares, click-through rates, and audience interactions
- **Conversion:** This includes website traffic and event registrations driven by social media
- **Sentiment:** This includes audience feedback and perception of the Institute's brand on social media networks

Regular social media reports will analyse these metrics to identify trends, successes and areas for improvement.

Roles and responsibilities

The Institute's social media channels are overseen by the Creative & Communications Department and managed and maintained by the Web & Digital Executive.

The Web & Digital Executive will:

- Develop and schedule content
- Monitor platforms for activity and risks
- Analyse performance metrics

Risk management

A risk management plan is essential to protect CIAT's reputation, ensure the Institute's online platforms are secure, and guarantee the safety of Central Office staff and other stakeholders.

Brand protection

All content must align with the Institute's Corporate Style and Brand guidelines, which includes correct usage of logos, fonts, and colours, and consistent tone, style, and language across all posts.

Crisis communication

Maintain a clear plan to address issues such as misinformation, negative publicity, or complaints.

Account security

Use strong, unique passwords, use two-factor authentication, and monitor for suspicious activity.

Safeguarding

Enforce CIAT Social Media Policy to address abusive or inappropriate behaviour on platforms and proactively moderate comments and discussions on our platforms to maintain a safe and respectful environment.

Budget and resources

Resources will be allocated in the Creative & Communications Departmental budget to include:

- Content creation tools such as the Adobe Creative Suite.
- Social media management platforms for scheduling and analytics e.g. Hootsuite.
- Staff training on best practices and platform updates.
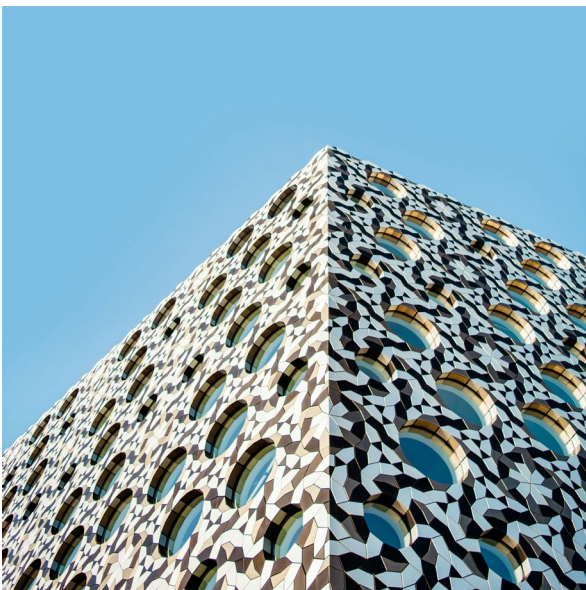
Conclusion

This social media strategy ensures that CIAT engages its audiences effectively, supports its strategic plan, and strengthens its online presence. By maintaining a consistent, professional, and impactful approach, the Institute can leverage social media as a powerful tool to advance its mission of developing, promoting and advocating for Architectural Technology, and inspire Architectural Technology professionals.
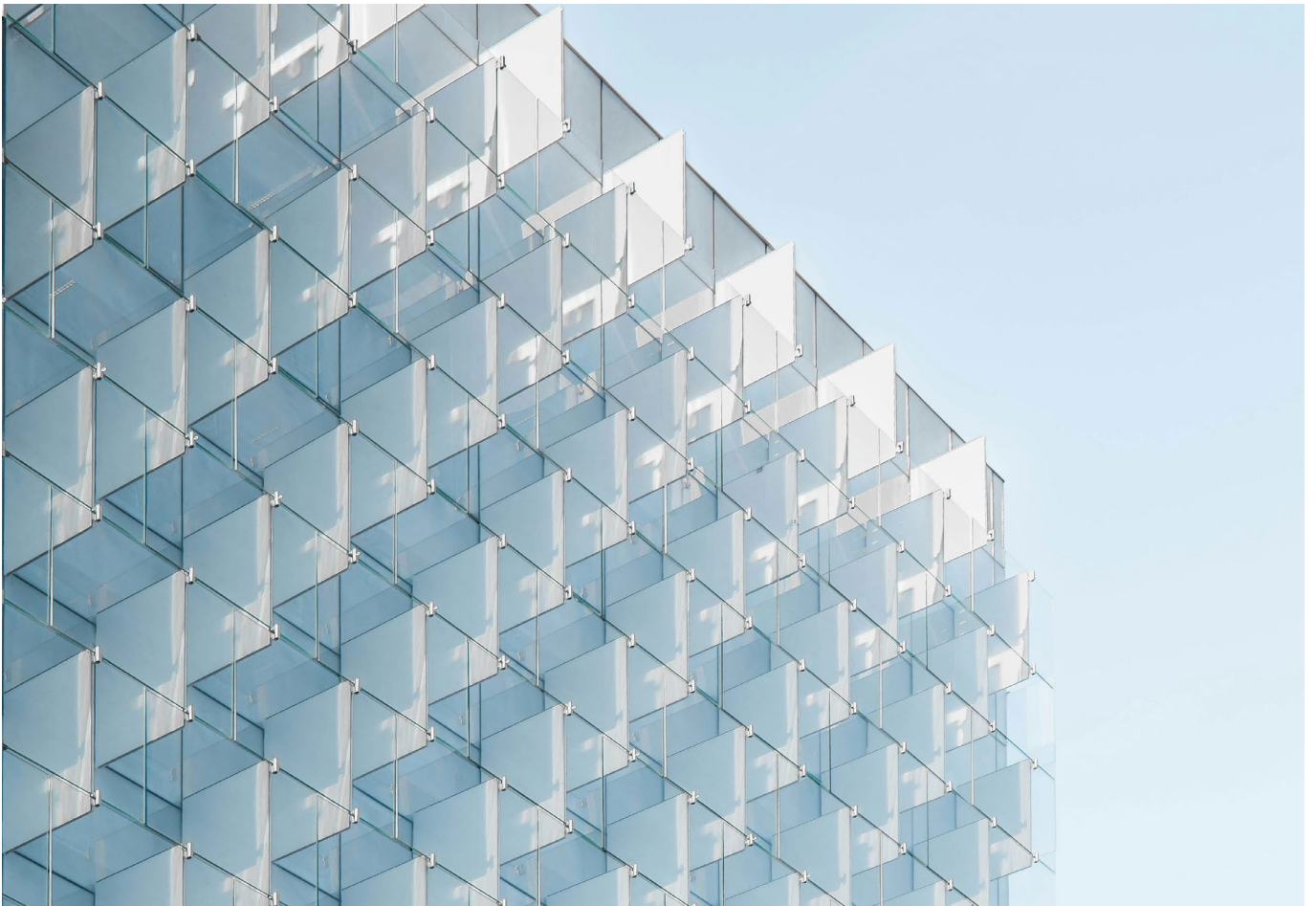
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