



10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH
Tel. 020 7969 5203; Fax. 020 7969 5401; e-mail bips@thebritishacademy.ac.uk

Social media & digital content policy of the British Institute of Persian Studies

The British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) is the UK's foremost learned society dedicated to increasing public knowledge and supporting scholarship on Iran and the wider Persianate world, including South and Central Asia. The Persianate world includes territories historically associated with Persian and Iranian culture and language, these areas are, but not limited to Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Transcaucasia, Iraq, the Persian Gulf littoral and South Asia. BIPS is invested in supporting a range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, and subjects include Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, Classics, Cultural Studies, History, Language, Linguistics, Politics, Religious Studies, and Sociology.

BIPS is a UK charity and company limited by guarantee, with a self-governing membership organisation, whose members are elected on a three-yearly basis to serve on BIPS Governing Council as trustees of the charity and directors of the company. BIPS is one of the British International Research Institutes (BIRI) – a group of research institutes with overseas centres in Europe, Southwest Asia, North and East Africa. The BIRI are financially supported by and headquartered in the British Academy.

BIPS was founded in the UK in 1961 and in Iran in 1963, however the Institute in Tehran remains closed to the public. In the UK, BIPS plays a key role in sustaining the academic vitality and increasing the visibility of the field, by campaigning for greater provision for its study in higher education. BIPS' activities include the biannual awarding of research and travel grants and an extensive programme of workshops, events, lectures, as well as recitals in the UK. BIPS has published its journal, *IRAN*, every year since 1963. It also publishes the *Studies in the History and Culture of the Persianate World Series* in conjunction with Bloomsbury/I.B. Tauris and the *Archaeological Monograph Series* with Oxbow Books.

BIPS is a non-political organisation and does not engage in expression of political views about any country or religion. Accordingly, in all its online interactions and activities, including but not limited to social media posting, emails, or activity on any other digital platform where BIPS is or will be active, BIPS will not tolerate any discrimination or abusive behaviour targeting the Institute's staff, its members or its wider audience as well as the Institute's reputation.

BIPS recognises the wider implications, the benefits and the risks of operating in a digital environment and it is committed to implement and enforce the policies outlined at the points below in order to ensure that while its institutional aims are fulfilled, this is achieved in a fair manner and respecting the diversity of opinions, beliefs, lifestyles, genders and races of its staff, members, and wider audience.

Digital presence

As of 15th November 2024, BIPS is present on the following digital platforms: [Facebook](#), [X \(former Twitter\)](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#). BIPS also manages its institutional website: www.bips.ac.uk.

BIPS's presence on all the abovementioned platforms has the purpose of showcasing the Institute's activities, communicating these to its members and wider audiences, and generally ensuring that the



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Institute fulfils its objectives of promoting its reputation and services and encouraging the exchange and sharing of relevant knowledge and understanding.

Digital governance

In order to make its processes efficient, BIPS appoints a Trustee with expertise in working within a digital environment (normally this person will be the BIPS Outreach Director) to work together with the BIPS Outreach and Administrative Coordinator in order to deliver policy-abiding digital contents and to monitor the activities on BIPS social media platforms.

The Outreach and Administrative Coordinator, who is appointed based on their skills and knowledge to use social media appropriately, regularly monitors BIPS' social media platforms and brings to the attention of the Outreach Director contents that might not be in line with the BIPS policies and/or might occasion reputational damage, be inconsistent with BIPS' purpose or not in its best interests, breach UK law or involve data breaches. The Outreach Director decides what response needs to be taken, as per points 4 (d, e). As appropriate, the Outreach Director brings the incident to the attention of the BIPS Management Committee and, in appropriate circumstances, it can be escalated to the BIPS Council.

While the duty of monitoring both BIPS and third-party social media content falls mainly on the Outreach and Administrative Coordinator and the Outreach Director, all BIPS Trustees can and must bring to the attention of these individuals instances that are potentially problematic for further assessment. Under no circumstances, do individual Trustees comment or express views on BIPS's behalf on the Institute's social media platforms; any responses from the Institute are decided by the Outreach Director in consultation with the Management Committee or BIPS Council on a case-by-case basis. Trustees engaging with non-BIPS social media platforms do not identify themselves as speaking for or on behalf of BIPS.

New trustees are briefed on digital opportunities and risks for BIPS and its social media policies. All trustees are apprised of developments in any of these.

BIPS trustees are committed to reviewing and adapting BIPS governance processes to reflect decision making in the digital age.

Risk management

BIPS is aware that its online presence, in particular on social media, while being beneficial to the aims of the Institute, exposes it to the risk of reputational damage, inconsistencies in communication or malicious actions.



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To limit these risks, BIPS nominates an Administrator who posts on social media on behalf of the Institute and in agreement with its policies. BIPS limits the right to post on its online platforms to its Administrator.

Commenting from the audience in response to posts published by the Administrator on behalf of the Institute is allowed but comments are monitored on a regular basis and countermeasures are taken as at point 4 to ensure that every individual interacting with the Institute on its public profiles abides by the Institute's policies.

Responses

BIPS will undertake the following actions to limit the risks linked to its online presence and to deal with behaviours not conforming to its policies:

- a. BIPS will publish its social media & digital content policy on its website and on all its social media platforms. Where a document cannot be uploaded, such as in the case of YouTube, BIPS will make sure that a link to the Policies page on its website is available.
- b. BIPS will monitor its social media platforms on a regular basis and will act against any behaviour not in line with its policies according with the Institute's internal structure and procedures as described at point 2.
- c. BIPS will generally not engage in any conversation that is outside its policies, but it reserves the right to release official statements as it sees fit.
- d. BIPS reserves the right to delete any comment or other digital content shared on its platforms violating the Institute's policies and principles.
- e. BIPS reserves the right to block any user of its social media platforms who does not abide by the Institute's policies.
- f. BIPS will report any serious incident to the Commission or make reports to the police or other regulators as appropriate.