# 11 maxims for social media use

**You are viewed as a product.** Corporations run the social media: business activity profits from data that companies sell to advertisers. The objective is to get people spend as much time on social media platforms as possible, and social media services have been designed keeping this in mind.

**Algorithms allocate services.** They determine the type of contents that a social media user is shown. Nobody gets to see the full spectrum of a given service but rather just a bespoke part of it. The type of contents that users focus on and react to, gets to be distributed to a higher number of people that the type of stuff that gets no reactions. This favours contents that touch upon emotions which in turn is reflected in the discussion chamber atmosphere.

**Once published, it is there forever.** Published material is practically impossible to remove from its online existence for sure. Therefore, think twice before posting anything online. If in doubt whether or not to publish something, it is advisable to refrain from doing so.

**All activity leaves a trail.** All actions that you take on social media leave a trail. This is not just about what you post or comment online but also about whom you follow, what you like or dislike, and of which groups you are part. Just a mere log on or presence on social media services produces the type of data that may expose details about you and your activities.

**Social media are a public platform.** Even when you mean to publish something for a defined audience only, the contents may still spread to reach an extensive audience. The privacy settings in social media services never prevent leaking the posted material further. To be on the safe side, publish only material that you would be willing to share with anybody or shout out loud in a public place.

**Social media are an energy drainer and hook you up.** Social media services are structured so that they entice people to overspend their time browsing through contents that are never ending. Mobile device messages always remind their recipient that there are more services and more contents available. An individual user can be suddenly bombarded with messages or other type of attention. This takes its toll. It pays off to understand this hook-up mechanism and to figure out ways for managing the overflow.

**Responsible social media presence requires being critical about the contents available.** The reliability of information that spreads on social media is subject to no scrutiny before its publication. Some of social media users operate as bullies or spread disinformation on purpose. Therefore, take online material with criticism also when it conforms with your own preconception, views and opinions.

**Social media presence entails risks.** The type of information published on social media has been successfully utilised for intelligence purposes. By relying on this information, intelligence operators have been able to expose activity or information that should have been kept under the radar. However, it is unrealistic to expect that people stop their social media consumption even when in exceptional conditions. Thus, it makes sense to learn to recognise and manage the risks involved.

**Your social media account affects the public image of the Finnish Defence Forces.** On your own personal social media account, you may mention that you work or serve in the Finnish Defence Forces. And, even when you refrain from pointing this out, it may often be deducted based on your activity. The public behavior of people who serve in the FDF contributes to the public image of the FDF. You are able to affect what this image looks like.

**You get to choose how you use your own social media accounts.** Sustaining personal social media accounts is not a service task. You get to decide as to which social media services you register for, or whether to opt out altogether.

**Social media are not something detached from this reality.** Everybody remains responsible for their own actions and effects thereof both online and in real life. The legislation in force governs all behavior, and so does the code for appropriate and polite behavior. Inappropriate activity on social media may result in consequences also in real life, including criminal liability procedures.