

## Volunteering as a Publicity or Web Officer

### What is a Publicity or Web Officer?

Publicity or Web Officers create and coordinate all the publicity for Institution events and initiatives organised by local committees. This can mean maintaining relevant, up to date and engaging information on websites and social media, creating Institution-branded posters and newsletters, and sending emails to local members to advertise events. There is no minimum membership level required to be a Publicity or Web Officer.

### What does the role involve?

Officers are responsible for advertising events and ensuring that online information about the committee is up to date. This means collating the right information in enough time to advertise events and initiatives effectively to members and non-members. Each event will take approximately 1-2 hours to promote, not including committee meetings – but this depends on you.

Key methods of event promotion include

- using your committee's Near You pages on the Institution website
- using the committee's mailing list (also known as Lyris)
- Facebook or Twitter accounts
- making posters and newsletters

### What skills do I need?

You don't need to know about design or marketing, but it's important that you are **organised and have good attention to detail**. You'll need to have all the event information ready when creating an event on the Near You site or sending an email. If you include incorrect information in emails, it can confuse members and make the committee look unprofessional. It also could turn people off from reading your emails and attending events in the future.

### What tools can I use to promote our events?

**Near You** <http://nearyou.imeche.org/near-you>

Near You gives space on the Institution website for each area, region, young member panel and divisional centre. The website can be the most important way that members connect with the Institution, so it's important that the information they find there is **up to date and relevant**. There are pages about the committee and area, contacts and events. You can also upload photos and documents – this is a great way to engage members and show what your events are about.

Near You uses a content management system called Sitefinity. You need a username and password to edit the site; once you're in, there are tutorial videos to show you how to use the site.

### Local mailing lists (Lyris)

Sending emails to your local mailing list is an effective and quick way of attracting members to your events. If a member has opted into receiving notifications about events in their area, their contact details will be on your local mailing list.

Before you can use the local mailing list/Lyris system, you need a password. Once you have this, you can create an email in your usual email client and send it to Lyris. Try

to send a regular monthly round-up and then an individual reminder about a week before the event.

*In some regions, the Institution is running a trial of monthly email newsletters to members to advertise regional events. In these regions, Publicity Officers will not have access to Lyris, and instead will be notified separately of the procedure they need to follow.*

### **Volunteer email accounts**

'Official' Institution email accounts are available for each committee, for example [yorkshirepublicity@imechenetwork.org](mailto:yorkshirepublicity@imechenetwork.org). These provide a consistent point of contact for members and ensure that volunteers' personal details are not used for Institution business. You should use an Institution address when sending and responding to emails to the local mailing list.

### **Social media**

The most commonly used social networks are **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Many regions, areas and young member panels already have their own pages on these sites, as does the Institution itself, for example [www.twitter.com/imeche\\_syym](https://www.twitter.com/imeche_syym).

The most important thing to remember is that people following your updates on these sites will not be purely reading about engineering but using them for their social lives; your updates must be succinct, relevant and interesting.

Stay professional and don't retweet information that isn't relevant to engineering or your area from the committee account.

### **Templates**

Posters, programme cards and newsletters are a great way of advertising events easily. There are Institution-branded templates available for download at [www.imeche.org/brandidentity](http://www.imeche.org/brandidentity). Ask people in your committee to put them up at their workplaces or university, and send them to your local Academic and Industrial Liaison Officers (ALOs and ILOs) to promote your events more widely. Your regional committee should have a list of ALOs and ILOs that you can contact with event information.

### **Informer**

Informer is a database with information about members in your region. At least one volunteer in each region has access to Informer (usually the regional chair or secretary). You can use Informer to work out where the concentrations of members are in your region, what industries or companies are the largest etc.

### **Where can I get support?**

The **Member Engagement department** coordinates support and resources for Institution volunteers. Contact them at [regions@imeche.org](mailto:regions@imeche.org) with any queries.

The **Volunteer Resource Centre** at [www.imeche.org/vrc](http://www.imeche.org/vrc) has lots of tips, user guides and other resources on volunteering for the Institution. There are user guides available for Near You, Lyris and volunteer email accounts.

To get usernames and password for email accounts, Lyris and Sitefinity or if you're having technical issues with using Lyris, Near You or your imechenetwork.org email account, please contact **Kevin Manning, Volunteer Operations Executive**, on [k\\_manning@imeche.org](mailto:k_manning@imeche.org).