Social Media Guidelines

For Employees, Volunteers and Scouts

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Boy Scouts of America Social Media Guidelines

These guidelines can be found at: http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/marketing/resources/socialmedia.aspx

Initially considered simply a way to socialize with friends, "social media" platforms such as MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are now established as major media channels. These sites let individuals build and utilize personal social networks among friends, family, and colleagues. Both for-profit and nonprofit organizations are using social media as well to build and support their brands, drive engagement, support products, increase sales, and more.

Used properly, these media can be an excellent way for Scouting councils to start a conversation with their target audiences by informing, connecting, and attracting them to Scouting.

There are no hard and fast rules in this new media landscape, aside from the abiding commitment of the BSA to protect children from inappropriate material and maintain the privacy of its membership.

Social media constitute a new form of digital communication providing interaction and dialogue around user-generated content. They go beyond merely pushing content to a reader. Organizations wishing to exploit social media must accept the fact that listening is just as important as speaking in these channels and Scouters wishing to play in this space should be prepared to do so if they are to reap any value.

With that in mind, we encourage those intending to use social media on behalf of Scouting to note the following:

- **Social media has to be monitored.** A qualified staff member or volunteer should have responsibility to monitor social media channels.
- **Integrate your communications.** You have numerous choices—print, Web, email, radio, TV, word of mouth, social media. Create a strategy to surround your target audience with your key message or messages.
- **Social media takes a thick skin.** Negative conversations are happening already, but now you have a voice in the conversation.
- **Let your audiences talk about you.** By posting content regularly, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the community.
- **Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts.** Councils should follow guidelines for responding to negative posts on social media sites. Some negative comments do not warrant a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how to respond.
- **Direct media inquiries to the appropriate person.** Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the Scout executive or a designee for an official response.
- **Be Scout-like.** When disagreeing with others' opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Ask your Scout executive or the designee for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on the BSA.
- **Build trust by being open and transparent.** Share information about your council and what the challenges and opportunities are for Scouting in your community.

BSA Social Media

On Facebook, there are several BSA pages including:
- Boy Scouts of America (official page)
- *Boys' Life*
- BSA Licensing
- National Scouting Museum
- *Scouting* Magazine
- ScoutStuff

On Twitter, there are several feeds including
- Boy Scouts of America
- *Boys' Life*
- BSA Licensing Group
- National Scouting Museum
- *Scouting* Magazine

On YouTube, you'll find:
- Boy Scouts of America YouTube Channel
- Boys' Life Magazine YouTube Channel

Crossroads of America Council Social Media Policy

Employee Guidelines

With growing use of blogs, social networking sites, wikis, forums and photo/video sharing sites, there is little separation between personal and professional lives. The following will help guide your involvement in Scouting in an open and transparent way. Given our important role with youth, we need to sensitive to youth protection, privacy and confidentiality. It is important for you to understand what is recommended, expected and requires based upon national and council guidelines.

If you choose to identify yourself with the BSA, others will assume you are speaking on behalf of the council or Scouting in general. As a result, you should be transparent, ethical and accurate, ultimately abiding by the Scout Oath and Law.
Follow the same behavioral standards as you do in your daily work since comments are public.

Here are some recommendations:

DO	DON'T
Make it clear you are expressing your personal opinions	Reveal confidential information
Disclose your role with BSA	Ignore your mistakes, correct quickly
Follow the Scout Oath and Law	Forget public sites are public and prominent
Observe copyright and fair use laws	Use Scout logos or symbols on personal social media sites
Be respectful even when disagreeing	Use BSA's name to promote a product, cause or political party
Obey the terms of service of any social media platform	
Whenever possible, link back to council, district and unit websites	

Social media and other digital communications platforms by their nature bring together people with many different viewpoints on important issues, including some critics of Scouting. It can be tempting to respond to every negative comment, but the council's policy is to respond to the negative comments only if they are
a.) inaccurate and factual information, rather than an opinion, can be provided
b.) from an unhappy volunteer/parent/Scout/donor and can be rectified by responding.

The council won't respond to sites dedicated to bashing and/or degrading the others or to comments that can be construed as rants, jokes or satire. Even if a response is appropriate, think carefully about whether the response would be more effective if delivered as a private message or email, rather than posted for public view. Inappropriate posts/comments may be deleted from council sites/pages.

Staff members are discouraged from submitting "friend" requests to youth in the program. However, if youth submit a "friend" request to a staff member, it is up to the staff member to decide the appropriate level of contact prior to responding. When and where available, you may choose to create separate private and professional profiles or create separate contact lists within one profile.

Any new council or district sites should first be cleared by the director, administrative services and the marketing/public relations coordinator. Unit sites do not need such clearance, but awareness of the sites allows for the sharing of best practices and information.

Crossroads of America Council Social Media

Facebook http://www.facebook.com/pages/Crossroads-of-America-Council/300626803714?v=wall

Twitter: @ BSACrossroads

YouTube: http://www.youtube.com/user/CrossroadsCouncil

Flickr: http://www.flickr.com/photos/cacscouting/

Pinterest: http://pinterest.com/crossroadsbsa/

Crossroads of America Council District Social Media Guidelines

The purpose of district social media is to share updates and news about the council and the district. Districts are encouraged to set up social media profiles to allow fans and followers to like, share and comment on posts as well as share their own Scouting news. However, all posts must adhere to the Scout Oath and Law. Any comments or posts deemed not "Scout-like" are subject to removal by the page's administrators.

District pages and content are considered intellectual property of the council. Login information must be submitted to the Public Relations Coordinator in the case of a crisis. District Executives must also have access to the social media pages even in the instance that a volunteer is managing the page.

Crossroads of America Council Unit Social Media Guidelines

In addition to websites, unit social media sites, pages, logins or handles created by individuals at the unit level of Scouting are essentially personal, and therefore beyond the National Council's and Crossroads of America Council's control or liability. We do offer advisory guidelines to those who create Scouting-related social media sites or post information or comments on other media sites. These guidelines are established to help avoid several common mistakes.

Protection of personal information pertaining to our youth members and volunteers should be our greatest concern. This organization has used COPPA, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, as its standard in this area. You can read the details on compliance at http://www.coppa.org/comply.htm.

Copyright infringement is the second concern about individual unit sites. Sadly, photos, music and video are commonly reused on social media sites without permission. Plagiarism is also common. Such practices violate the ethics of Scouting. They are also violations of law, and could expose the account holders to legal action.

Unit social media sites, pages and posts should:

1. Have content appropriate to the Scouting movement.
2. Not house any sites that contain material inappropriate to the Scouting movement.
3. Not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements unless they are automatically added by the site host (such as ads on Facebook).
4. Not engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
5. Not replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
6. Abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.

7. Consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual (e.g. use of photo consent forms).
8. Not engage in fund-raising except as directly approved by, and under the supervision of, the local council.
9. Share activities with the council so they can be shared with others and aggregate all social media activities.

Suggestions on How to Use Social Media

As a new media channel, social media can be used in many ways, from recruiting new Scouts, keeping parents informed or supporting fund-raising campaigns. The following are just a few suggestions for using social media as part of a unit's overall communication strategy. As you work with these channels, you will develop more ways to integrate social media into your communications.

- **Make social media part of your overall communications efforts.** Along with newsletters and email, utilize social networks to build community and support among the parents in your unit.
- **Use social media to tell your story.** Scouts going to camp? Fundraising kickoff? Positive results from a community drive? Major gifts? Tell your story to the people who care about Scouting most and let them share it with others.
- **Give your positive PR extended life.** When your unit is featured in the local paper, you can also put a link on your social media page and share it with your friends and supporters.
- **Use social media sites to generate traffic for your website.** Alumni? Events? Fundraising? Updates? Post them on your social media site with links back to your Website for more information.

Social Media Handbook for Local Scouting Units (packs, troops, crews)

Introduction

This handbook is meant for all units who are interested in how social media can help improve communication with Scout volunteers, families and potential new Scouts. While a unit or district communication chair can play an important role in determining strategy and execution, it is up to the unit leader (i.e. Cubmaster, Scoutmaster) to determine the level of social media involvement.

The goal of this document is to familiarize you with the national social media philosophy, invite you to find, join and participate in our council's social media presence and guide you in creating your own unit's social media presence. **Participation in social media is not required.**

You'll find steps to adopting a social media strategy, best practices from your fellow Scout units as well as from outside experts and an explanation of various social media tools.

Using social media may be considered cool by some, but it's not for everyone. It requires an audience who follows social media and a time commitment.

Learn the Culture of Social Media

When creating a social media strategy for your unit, we recommend following these steps in sequential order when you're first creating your plan. After that, use this handbook and these steps as reference when you adapt, expand and sharpen your strategy.

- **Getting Familiar with Social Media**
  - Get Social Media savvy
- **Initiate personal social media use:**

- o Explore the tools you'd like to adopt by using them in your personal life first. It's easier to understand the culture behind tools like Facebook and Twitter when you spend some time posting your own pictures and experiences.
- **Participate in council and national BSA social media sites list above.**

Create Your Social Media Strategy

- **Study what other Scouting units are doing:**

  - o Find local blogs
  - o Find local Twitter accounts
  - o Find local Facebook accounts: pages, groups, and causes
  - o Find local YouTube accounts
  - o Find local Flickr accounts
  - o Evaluate best practices
- **Take cues from the successes and challenges of fellow Scouters**
- **Talk to one another to share information and collaborate**
- **We encourage you to share each other's content, but please properly attribute the content by disclosing its origin and linking back to the original source**

Evaluate your unit's overall goals
- **Think about what you want to achieve**
- **What are the critical needs?**
  - o These are some communications you should concentrate on providing to your local stakeholders online
    - For example, we use Facebook to invite your Scout families to unit events
    - Use Twitter to provide status updates to parents during a Camporee
    - Share pictures via Facebook or Flickr
- **What are your communications goals?**
  - o Evaluate how you currently correspond with parents, volunteers, Scouts and potential Scouts
- **What are your goals?**
  - o Evaluate how you're currently updating volunteers
  - o Evaluate how you're currently engaging with your parents
  - o Strategy and Tactics
- **Evaluating and reviewing your unit's goals, strategy and tactics will inform how you choose to use social media**

- **Create your social media goals**
  - o Write down the goals you hope to achieve by using social media
  - o Analyze whether your goals make sense and work with your unit's yearly plan or other goals

- **Create your social media strategy**
  - o Write down the reasons your social media use will complement your unit's goals.
  - o Write down the types of content you'll provide and the types of content you'll solicit from others in your unit.
- **Create tactics**
  - o Figure out how you'll execute the strategy to achieve your goals
  - o Who will be responsible?
  - o What tools will you use?
  - o How will you develop content?
  - o How will you engage with your audience?
  - o How often will you be present?
  - o What steps will you take to reach your desired outcome?

Social Media Tools:

Tool: Blogging

- **Evaluate whether blogging is right for your Scouting unit**
    - o You'll need a handful of volunteers who are **willing to share** their personal Scouting stories regularly. They don't have to be (and shouldn't be) professional writers, just good story tellers. They also need to have good judgment and willing to uphold the good name and reputation of Scouting online
    - o You'll need **enough capacity** to commit to updating your blog regularly (at least once every few days)
    - o You'll need one or more people to act as editors or keepers of the blog, making sure your contributors **update regularly** or otherwise providing content

- Explore content that works
    - o Be creative: http://www.areavoices.com/NLCBSA/?blog=84243
    - o Engage your audience – invite readers to get involved by posing questions or inviting them to share photos and personal stories
    - o Tell important stories
    - o Share your process – how your unit doing
    - o Share successes and challenges
    - o Be impactful: action oriented posts
    - o Link to interesting local news about your unit
    - o Be conversational – write like you'd talk to your neighbor
    - o Feel free to use the first person

    - o Some small units, use a blog instead of a website, This is something you might consider. It's free and easy to update with multimedia content.

Tool: Facebook Page

More than 400 million people are now on Facebook, making it a prime opportunity to offer Scouting information to your unit.

We encourage you to create a personal Facebook account before you create a presence for your unit. It's important to take this step so you understand how the platform works, how the culture works, and how you can be effective.

No matter how you choose to use Facebook for your local unit, please remember to follow the social media guidelines and remember that we are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit so your unit must not join any political or religious advocacy groups, pages, or causes.

- Background Information
    - o Pages work just like personal profiles.
        - ▪ you can make friends
        - ▪ you can update your status
        - ▪ you can upload videos, photos, and articles
        - ▪ you can create events
- Decide if a Facebook is right for your unit
    - o Are your parents and Scouts on Facebook?
        - ▪ Do a little research
        - ▪ Ask your families if they use Facebook
    - o Decide whether you have the time to update your page with valuable content?
        - ▪ If you choose to launch a Facebook page, you'll need to update it regularly
    - o Determine whether you have the capacity or desire to interact with your fans on a regular basis.
        - ▪ Not only will you need to update your status, create events, post news items, and offer other types of timely content on your page, you'll need to acknowledge and engage your fans here regularly.
        - ▪ Please assign someone to be responsible for these activities
    - o Offer local content for your unit.

- Post pictures from events (Do not list identities in the pictures, however if Boy Scouts choose to 'tag' themselves, don't remove them.)
- Update parents between meetings and newsletters
- Send reminders
- Invite parents/Scouts to events
  - Set out a clear goal that your Facebook page will help you achieve

If you can answer yes to all of the above questions, you are ready to set up a Facebook page.

If you can't answer yes to all of the above questions, please join our council page and let your families know they can find Scouting information there.

- What are the rules?
  - Name your page after your unit including unit number and community name
  - Follow the Scout Oath and Law
  - Strive for accuracy
  - Ensure permission before posting photos
  - Assume anything you post is permanently available to others

Tool: Flickr

- **Background Information**
  - Flickr is a photo sharing website that allows you to post digital pictures publicly. You can tag and categorize them so they're easy to find.

- **Set up a personal account first**
  - Try a personal Flickr account first so that you understand how it works and how it can be used by your unit.
    - Decide for yourself how you'd like to present yourself publicly. For example, if you don't want photos of your children to be accessible to everyone, post them only for friends & family or not at all.
    - You are welcome to post photos you have taken for or about the Scouting to your personal photo stream, and we encourage you to add these photos to our group.
    - Your unit may also have a Flickr group. You'll want to add appropriate photos there, too.
    - Participate or start Scouting discussions in the comments of the group.

- **Is a Flickr group right for you?**
  - A group is a place where your unit can add their own photos.
  - Do many people take pictures at your events? If so, Flickr is a great way to invite these people to contribute to your unit's collection of pictures. Ask them to add their photos to your group.
  - Do you have the capacity to manage and support a Flickr group? We estimate this takes a few minutes each week.

- **What are the rules**?
  - Profile Image
    - As with all social media tools, we stress that you use an appropriate Scouting symbol or logo for your unit.
  - Account Name
    - As with all social media tools, please choose a username that clearly states who you are. For example, "Pack 300 Muncie Indiana."

Tool: YouTube

In addition to YouTube, other video sharing sites are also available, such as Vimeo.

- **Is a YouTube channel right for you?**
    - o Do you create video often?
    - o Is someone capturing your events on digital and/or flip cameras?
    - o Do you have creative ideas to tell your story?
- **What kinds of videos work on YouTube?**
    - o Keep your content fresh: a steady stream of content will keep your viewers engaged.
        - ▪ Your subscribers will be notified each time you upload a new video
        - ▪ Try developing a series of episodic videos to hook people in and then keep them coming back for more
    - o Spread your message: YouTube is built for sharing.
        - ▪ Embed your videos on your other online sites.
        - ▪ Pass your links to your supporters
    - o Be genuine: your videos don't have to be perfect.
        - ▪ Authenticity speaks volumes
        - ▪ This is your chance to have a visual conversation on the issues you care about, so be yourself
    - o Have fun and experiment with different types of content
- How to get started:
    - o Visit http://www.youtube.com/nonprofits to apply for a nonprofit channel
- What are the rules?
    - o Naming your account: Please choose a name that clearly states your unit and your community.
    - o Profile image: Please use a Scouting symbol or your unit's logo as a clearly identifying image that adheres to national brand standards.
    - o Channel customization: please adhere to the national brand standards. when choosing the look and feel for your channel.

Tool: Twitter

- What is Twitter?
    - o Twitter asks the question *What are you doing?* and millions of people answer in 140 characters or less.
- Personal Account
    - o We recommend setting up a personal Twitter account and using it for at least a month before creating one for your unit. .
    - o While you're welcome to talk about your Scouting work on your personal account in accordance with the online communications guidelines, please don't Scout "brand" your personal account unless it's part of your overall Twitter strategy. For example don't use a Twitter name such as "ScoutBob" or "ScoutMomJane" for your personal account.
- Is Twitter right for my unit?
    - o Are you ready to offer mission-based value to your local supporters?
    - o Do you have time to dedicate to spending a few minutes every few days tweeting and engaging and responding to supporters?
- What works on Twitter?
    - o Lots of stuff works. Here are a few examples of units we think are doing a bang up job of providing valuable information to people who want it:

- What are the rules?
    - o Naming your Twitter account:
        - ▪ Choose a name that clearly indicates your local unit and community (i.e. Pack130 Fishers).
        - ▪ Keep your name as short as possible. You only have 140 characters to type, so the less your name takes up, the better for retweeting.
    - o Your profile image
        - ▪ Twitter's image machine is tiny. It's difficult to adhere to brand standards on this one, but you must! If you're having trouble, please contact us and we'll help you devise an appropriate image
    - o Your Twitter design
        - ▪ You have the flexibility to design a background image for your Twitter account. Please follow national brand standards if you choose to do this.