Social Media Acceptable Use Policy

Definitions

"Social Media" refers to web-based communication technologies that allow multiple users to interact online in a dynamic environment. Popular examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Yammer, LinkedIn, blogs, wikis and others.

"Objectionable" refers to anything that advocates an illegal activity or could reasonably be considered obscene, threatening, hostile, indecent, harassing, or offensive. This includes, but is not limited to written, verbal, or graphic material, that would offend, harass, or threaten a reasonable person on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any classification protected by federal, state or local law.

Suggested Social Media and Social Networking Guidelines:

(For Group administrators and Members of ASHRAE Groups who set up and post on Group Social Media Forums)

Social media encompasses a broad range of online sites, services and activity. Social media includes: blogs you write and those to which you comment, as well as sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter; and others. Given the persistence of information on the web, most if not all of this is searchable, capable of being tracked as well as being traced.

Social media can support Chapters and Groups professional development efforts.

Keeping that in mind, here are some reasonable guidelines for online activity by Chapters, Groups and Members, when participating online. Hereafter all references to the origin of the posts online will be referred to as Group.

Your Groups online identity

Social media blurs the line between personal and professional lives. Furthermore, once posted to the Web, information can be traced back and found virtually forever. Since your Group's online identity is a trusted asset that you wish to build, be professional, courteous and respectful at all times. You are responsible for all of your online activity. Remember that referencing or attaching your email address to any post or communication may imply that you are acting on the Group's behalf. If you list your work affiliation on a social network site, then you should regard all communications and postings on that network as being professional in nature and governed by this and other Group policies.

Responsibility: You are responsible for what you post. When using an email address or official Computer to engage in any social media or professional social networking activity, the Group regards such actions as public, and the posting will be held fully responsible for any and all related activities.. Always be honest and respectful.

Be transparent: When participating in any professional online community, disclose your identity as well as your professional and/or personal interest. When posting to a professional blog, always use your name: never create an alias, and never be anonymous. Follow the rules in the ASHRAE Policy for Web Content.

Be truthful: Never be false and misleading in your online credentials or posts. Maintain complete accuracy in all online bios.

Obey all laws: Follow the terms and conditions of use that have been established for each social networking venue.

Creating and managing content

Content: Always be direct, informative and brief in posting about the Group's online activities.

Give credit: Give due credit to all authors, quoting and providing a citation and link where appropriate. Respect copyright on all materials. Avoid personal attacks, hostile communications and online disputes.

Be accurate: Always fact-check your posts and evaluate your contribution's accuracy and truthfulness. Before posting any online material, ensure that the material is accurate, truthful, and without factual error and that you have the rights to post that material. Correct errors **promptly**, apologizing when appropriate. Spell and grammar check everything. This is important because online content never disappears entirely once it's been posted.

Always track back: When reposting or referencing a post on one of the Group's online sites, provide a link to the original post or story.

Preserve goodwill: Do not engage in any blogging or posting that may harm or tarnish the image, reputation and/or goodwill of the Group or Society and/or any of its Members, officers and staff.
Leaving comments

Avoid controversy: When posting to any blogs or social or professional networks, refrain from posting about controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects, including politics, sex, religion or any other non-business-related subjects. Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Use sentence case format, not capital letters.

Build your Group's profile: Create a LinkedIn profile of your Group. This will increase visibility. When appropriate and where possible, provide a link to LinkedIn, or to supporting documents. This will help raise your Group's Google results.

Privacy

Be selective: There are many social networking sites. Be selective in sites you visit and avoid those that do not provide you with adequate control over privacy settings and make sure to set those privacy settings, friends and followers and confidential information. Be thoughtful about what, and where, you post.

Potential conflicts and red flags

Do not get caught in online arguments: People say things on the Internet that they would never say in person. Accordingly, avoid personal attacks, online fights and hostile communications. If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement with which you disagree, voice your opinion, but do not escalate the conversation to a heated argument. Write reasonably, factually, and with good humor.

Understand and credit the other person's point of view and avoid any communications that could result in personal, professional or credibility attacks.

Seek approval: If a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate, accusatory or negative comment about the Group or Society do not engage in the conversation. Instead e-mail the blogger regarding the supposed inaccuracy or seek supporting evidence.

Legal advice: Never offer or appear to offer legal advice online. This must be done only through the Groups regular procedures to avoid conflicts and other ethical problems.

Recommendations: Posting recommendations of a Member is a tool of professional social networking sites. The recommendations and comments you post can have consequences, even if you are making the recommendations personally and not on behalf of the Group. Therefore, establish the authenticity of any post before uploading it.

Do not promote brands or products or services: Do not promote personal skills or endorse brands, products, or services. Be sure to respect third-party copyrights. If a personal opinion must be posted, clearly state to all readers this does not represent the opinion of the Group and do not use your office email address.

Journalists: Seek and obtain permission from the Group Head / Chair / President before responding to any journalist or representative of the media.

Disclaimer: Always use or incorporate the official disclaimer as given in the ASHRAE Policy for Websites, Clause D 5, when you communicate electronically.

Building a virtual footprint and your network

Build your Groups reputation: Build a reputation of trust and transparency. The power of social media is to establish your Group as being credible, trusted and transparent. Guard your Group's reputation and your integrity at all times while on the web. Do not post or link to any materials that are defamatory, harassing or indecent.

Use appropriately: Don't use your own personal online relationships or the Group's network to influence polls, rankings or web traffic.

Friends: Be cautious with your Group's email and professional identification. In particular, do not "friend" anyone whom you either do not know and/or with whom you have not previously corresponded.

As new tools on the Web are introduced and new challenges emerge for all of us, this document will, of necessity evolve.