

Iowa City Public Library
Administrative Policy: Social Media Posting Guidelines for Staff

See also:

Administrative Policies: Telecommunications, Social Media Sites Policy

Board Policies: 700 Community Relations, 701 Public Relations, 802 Confidentiality.

Definition of Social Media

For the purposes of this policy, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, content hosting sites such as Flickr and YouTube, and social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future Library policies regarding the use of technology, computers, smart phones, e-mail and the internet.

Scope

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines that govern the publication and commentary by library staff on social media sites where those postings are a part of a work assignment or relate to the Iowa City Public Library, patrons, community and business partners, or staff. The goal is to raise awareness about employee's rights and responsibilities when posting on social media sites and establish outcomes for infractions. Employees' rights to engage in concerted activity for collective bargaining and other mutual aid are protected by law, and include the use of social media.

Guidelines for Postings

Iowa City Public Library employees are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with this policy. Iowa City Public Library employees are subject to this policy to the extent they identify themselves, or that because of their position they are well known within the community, as an Iowa City Public Library employee (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to Iowa City Public Library).

Private Postings on Personal Time: This policy relates to staff members' private postings on personal time when the post mentions or suggests place of employment, Iowa City Public Library by name, patrons, community and business partners, or other confidential information the staff member has access to because of the job they perform. Staff are free to post privately on their personal time except when the posting includes confidential information the staff member acquires as a part of their employment. If the information is generally available to the public or acquired outside of their employment, staff personal postings are not restricted. When interacting on personal time and making personal comments, staff are also governed by the Administrative Telecommunications Policy and 802 Confidentiality Policy.

Work Assignment Postings: In keeping with the Library's mission to be an "innovative and responsive community center that supports lifelong learning, literacy, and access to the world of ideas" the Library participates in various social media applications whereby library staff and community members can interact through online communication. The use of social media is compatible with the Library's mission and is encouraged because it improves communication and knowledge about the Library.

When interacting on social media sites as a part of a work assignment, the following guidelines apply:

- Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.
- All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that Iowa City Public Library employees must otherwise follow.
- Anonymous posts are not allowed. Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for Iowa City Public Library.
- Follow copyright laws: You should be familiar with the basic laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including Iowa City Public Library's own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.
- Do not share confidential information. The Library confidentiality policy applies to social media. Never identify patrons by name or any other identifiable description without their permission. Do not disclose internal conversations or disclose details of projects, plans or finances that have not been finalized or made public. Never discuss confidential details of a customer interaction.
- Respect your audience, Iowa City Public Library, and your coworkers. The public in general, and Iowa City Public Library's employees and customers, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Coworkers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory such as politics and religion.
- Do not contradict other Library information sources, including the website, unless you are updating information or correcting an error.
- Protect Iowa City Public Library community and business partners. Social media is not the place to complain about a programming partner or a company the Library does business with.
- Respond carefully to controversial issues. If you see misrepresentations made about Iowa City Public Library in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party.
- Correct mistakes. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you of posting something improper, report it to your supervisor immediately and deal with it quickly. Examples include copyrighted material or defamatory comments.
- Think about consequences.
- Personal posts should not be done on work time. People pay attention and they know who made three Facebook posts or had an hour long online dialogue during what hours yesterday.
- Use a disclaimer. Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer saying that while you work for Iowa City Public Library, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the official views of Iowa City Public Library.

Profile and Privacy Settings Related to Social Media Use as a Part of a Job Assignment

Setting up Your Profile: Your profile on social media sites accessed in the capacity as a staff member must be consistent with your profile on the Iowa City Public Library website or other Iowa City Public Library publications. Profile information may be obtained from the Webmaster. Official Iowa City Public Library photographs must be used for your profile photograph. Iowa City Public Library photographs can be obtained from Business Office. New social media sites that represent the Library must be approved by the Director or their designee.

Protect your own privacy: Privacy settings on social media platforms accessed for work should be set to allow anyone to see profile information about you as it would be seen on the Iowa City Public Library website. If your name, email address or work telephone number is visible, they should be visible on social media platforms as well. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit this access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

Social Media Tips

The following will contribute to successful use of social media.

- The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.
- Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you're not design-oriented, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.
- The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.
- Think about consequences. In personal blog postings, saying "Long day at work today" is ok; however, saying, "Wow – lots of crazies at work today ... patrons forgot to take their meds!" does not accurately represent the Library nor its patrons. Another example: "Waiting on a patron with a cape is interesting!" could be rephrased as, "It's always interesting to meet someone downtown wearing a cape!"

Enforcement

Policy violations will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination for cause.

Administrative Policy: Adopted 11/15/10

Updated 11/3/16