

# Charities Review Council

## Guidelines for Social Media Participation

The Charities Review Council's mission is to mobilize informed donors and accountable nonprofits for the greater good. As we continually seek to improve our work to pursue this mission, we are embracing social media as an increasingly important avenue of communication. We have begun comprehensive internal conversations, as necessary precursors to social media strategy development. In order for the guidelines we discuss to be effective, our organizational culture must become agile enough to allow for greater responsiveness with our constituents and accommodate experimentation. We seek to foster an atmosphere of open communication and teamwork among Council staff, board, volunteers and stakeholders, one that values diversity of thought and culture.

Blogging and other social media applications have become increasingly important arenas for the kind of engagement and communicating we encourage. Online social media enables individuals and organizations to communicate their insights, express their opinions, share information and resources, and spread awareness of the value they can bring to others. Each tool and medium has proper and improper uses.

The same principles and guidelines that apply to Council staff and volunteer activities in general, apply to our online activities, both at and outside of work. This includes all forms of online publishing and discussion, including blogs, wikis, file-sharing, user-generated video and audio, social networks and other social networking applications.

### General Council Guidelines and Policies

**Respect our audience.** As an organization that values diversity, we will not use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the Council's office. Also, we will not talk down to our readers, and will strive to communicate clearly.

**Be thoughtful about how we present ourselves in online social networks.** The lines between personal and professional lives are blurred in online social networks. If we choose to identify ourselves as Council staff or volunteers within a social network (e.g. Facebook), we are then connected to our colleagues and Council stakeholders. In keeping with our organizational values, we will be mindful that our words and actions do reflect on the Council. We will be intentional about who is designated to post via our social networks, making sure that our authors understand us, our audience, and our issues. Full blog posts will be reviewed by at least one other staff person.

**Use a disclaimer when needed.** Be clear when writing about our own views and opinions related to the Council's work versus presenting ourselves as a spokesperson for the Council. Use a disclaimer such as: "I work at the Charities Review Council; however this is my personal opinion." or something to that effect. Of course, this would only apply to writings that mention Council-related topics.

**Be accurate and factual.** Here and in other areas of public discussion, make sure that what we are saying is factually correct, and do not make inflammatory statements or attempt to engage in an aggressive or defensive way.

**Use common sense and common courtesy.** For example, it's best to ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal. Make sure our efforts to be transparent don't violate the Council's privacy, confidentiality, and legal guidelines. If anyone is ever unsure about a post, seek secondary review.

**Do not comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties the Council may be in litigation with.**

**We are learning as we go.** We will regularly check-in about what is working well and how we can improve the effectiveness of our social media strategy. We will communicate promptly any questions or concerns related to our social media use.