

_____ (add org name here and throughout)
Internet Public Discourse Policy; Guidelines for Social
Networking

SECTION _____ PART _____

Approved by board on this date: _____

**The Internet Public Discourse policy applies to _____ headquarters
and to Affiliates.**

_____ encourages staff and volunteers to be champions on behalf of the organization by spreading the word about _____ work in providing life-changing solutions that help all people with disabilities have equal opportunities to live, learn, work and play.

The rapidly growing phenomenon of social networking, blogging and other forms of online electronic publishing are emerging as unprecedented opportunities for outreach, information-sharing and advocacy

_____ encourages staff members and volunteers to also use the Internet to blog and talk about our organization, our services and your work. Our goals are:

(State _____'s mission statement here:

...and a brief list of goals relevant to the act of Social Networking on behalf of your organization here:)

Whether or not a(n) _____ staff member or volunteer chooses to create or participate in a blog or online community on their own time is his or her own decision. However, it is in _____' interest that staff and volunteers understand the responsibilities in discussing _____ in the public square known as the World Wide Web.

Guidelines for _____ Social Networking

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For Social Network contributors under the age of 18 participation e-commerce and adult websites is strictly prohibited.

Social Networking Parent Consent Form returned with signature on the date of _____.

1. **Be Responsible.** Blogs, Podcasting, wikis, photo-sharing and other forms of online dialogue (unless posted by authorized _____ personnel) are individual interactions, not corporate communications. _____ staff and volunteers are personally responsible for their posts.

2. **Be Smart.** A blog or community post is visible to the entire world. Remember that what you write will be public for a long time – be respectful to the company, employees, clients, corporate sponsors and competitors, and protect your privacy.

3. **Identify Yourself.** Authenticity and transparency are driving factors of the blogosphere. List your name and when relevant, role at _____, when you blog about _____-related topics.

4. **Include a Disclaimer.** If you blog or post to an online forum in an unofficial capacity, make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of _____. If your post has to do with your work or subjects associated with _____, use a disclaimer such as this: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t represent _____’ positions, strategies or opinions.” This is a good practice but does not exempt you from being held accountable for what you write.

5. **Respect Privacy of Others.** Don’t publish or cite personal details and photographs about _____ clients, employees, volunteers, corporate partners or vendors without their permission. Any disclosure of confidential information will be subject to the same _____ personnel policies that apply to wrongful dissemination of information via email, conversations and written correspondence.

6. **Write What You Know.** You have a unique perspective on our organization based on your talents, skills and current responsibilities. Share your knowledge, your passions and your personality in your posts by writing about what you know. If you’re interesting and authentic, you’ll attract readers who understand your specialty and interests. Don’t spread gossip, hearsay or assumptions.

7. **Site Sources & Provide Links.** Find out who else is Social Networking about the same topic and cite them with a link or make a post on their blog. Links are what determine a blog’s popularity rating on blog search engines like Technorati. It’s also a way of connecting to the bigger conversation and reaching out to new audiences. Be sure to also link to easterseals.com

8. **Be Respectful.** It’s okay to disagree with others but cutting down or insulting readers, employees, bosses or corporate sponsors and vendors is not. Respect your audience and

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don't use obscenities, personal insults, ethnic slurs or other disparaging language to express yourself.

9. **Work Matters.** Ensure that your Social Networking doesn't interfere with your work commitments. Discuss with your manager if you are uncertain about the appropriateness of publishing during business hours.

10. **Don't Tell Secrets.** The nature of your job may provide you with access to confidential information regarding _____, _____ beneficiaries, or fellow employees. Respect and maintain the confidentiality that has been entrusted to you. Don't divulge or discuss proprietary information, internal documents, personal details about other people or other confidential material.