

Corporate Blogging Policies and Guidelines

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Sun Microsystems

Many of us at Sun are doing work that could change the world. We need to do a better job of telling the world. As of now, you are encouraged to tell the world about your work, without asking permission first (but please do read and follow the advice in this note). Blogging is a good way to do this. [Update: This document has an official home on the Sun Website.]

Advice · By speaking directly to the world, without benefit of management approval, we are accepting higher risks in the interest of higher rewards. We don't want to micro-manage, but here is some advice.

It's a Two-Way Street · The real goal isn't to get everyone at Sun blogging, it's to become part of the industry conversation. So, whether or not you're going to write, and especially if you are, look around and do some reading, so you learn where the conversation is and what people are saying.

If you start writing, remember the Web is all about links; when you see something interesting and relevant, link to it; you'll be doing your readers a service, and you'll also generate links back to you; a win-win.

Don't Tell Secrets · Common sense at work here; it's perfectly OK to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not OK to publish the recipe for one of our secret sauces. There's an official policy on protecting Sun's proprietary and confidential information, but there are still going to be judgment calls.

If the judgment call is tough—on secrets or one of the other issues discussed here—it's never a bad idea to get management sign-off before you publish.

Be Interesting · Writing is hard work. There's no point doing it if people don't read it. Fortunately, if you're writing about a product that a lot of people are using, or are waiting for, and you know what you're talking about, you're probably going to be interesting. And because of the magic of hyperlinking and the Web, if you're interesting, you're going to be popular, at least among the people who understand your specialty.

Another way to be interesting is to expose your personality; almost all of the successful bloggers write about themselves, about families or movies or books or games; or they post pictures. People like to know what kind of a person is writing what they're reading. Once again, balance is called for; a blog is a public place and you should try to avoid embarrassing your readers or the company.

Write What You Know · The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. If you have a deep understanding of some chunk of Solaris or a hot JSR, it's hard to get into too much trouble, or be boring, talking about the issues and challenges around that.

On the other hand, a Solaris architect who publishes rants on marketing strategy, or whether Java should be open-sourced, has a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring.

Financial Rules · There are all sorts of laws about what we can and can't say, business-wise. Talking about revenue, future product ship dates, roadmaps, or our share price is apt to get you, or the company, or both, into legal trouble.

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.

You don't have to be a great or even a good writer to succeed at this, but you do have to make an effort to be clear, complete, and concise. Of course, "complete" and "concise" are to some degree in conflict; that's just the way life is. There are very few first drafts that can't be shortened, and usually improved in the process.

Think About Consequences · The worst thing that can happen is that a Sun sales pro is in a meeting with a hot prospect, and someone on the customer's side pulls out a print-out of your blog and says "This person at Sun says that product sucks."

In general, "XXX sucks" is not only risky but unsubtle. Saying "Netbeans needs to have an easier learning curve for the first-time user" is fine; saying "Visual Development Environments for Java suck" is just amateurish.

Once again, it's all about judgment: using your weblog to trash or embarrass the company, our customers, or your co-workers, is not only dangerous but stupid.

Disclaimers · Many bloggers put a disclaimer on their front page saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice, but don't count it to avoid trouble; it may not have much legal effect.

Tools · We're starting to develop tools to make it easy for anyone to start publishing, but if you feel the urge, don't wait for us; there are lots of decent blogging tools and hosts out there.



BBC Staff Blog Guidelines

BBC GUIDELINES ON EMPLOYEES WEBLOGS AND WEBSITES

These Guidelines apply to personal blogs and all other personal webcontent (e.g. personal podcasts). Official BBC content which uses blogging formats must be signed off by the relevant divisional interactive head.

Principles

Blogging is a form of public conversation on the internet, in which BBC people may wish to take part.

When a blogger clearly identifies themselves as a BBC person and/or discusses their work, the BBC expects them to behave well when blogging, and in ways that are consistent with the BBC's Editorial Values and policies.

Many bloggers, particularly in technical areas, use their personal blogs to discuss their BBC work in ways that benefit the BBC, and add to the "industry conversation". These guidelines are not intended to restrict this, as long as confidential information is not revealed.

Blogs or websites which do not identify the blogger as a BBC employee, do not discuss the BBC and are purely about personal matters would normally fall outside these guidelines.

These guidelines complement the BBC's Conflict of Interest guidelines.

Editorial Policy can give advice on these Guidelines.

Guidelines For Bloggers

If you already have a personal blog or website which indicates in any way that you work at the BBC you should tell your manager.

If you want to start blogging, and your blog/website will say that you work for the BBC you should tell your manager.

If your blog makes it clear that you work for the BBC, it should include a simple and visible disclaimer such as "these are my personal views and not those of the BBC".

Unless there are specific concerns about the nature of your job, you are free to talk about BBC programmes and content on your blog. Consult your manager if in any doubt.

Don't reveal confidential information. This might include aspects of BBC policy or details of internal BBC discussions. Again, consult your manager if you are unclear about what might be confidential.

You should not use your blogs to attack or abuse colleagues. You should respect the privacy and the feelings of others. Remember that if you break the law on your blog (for example by posting something defamatory), you will be personally responsible.

If you think something on your blog or website gives rise to concerns about a conflict of interest and in particular concerns about impartiality or confidentiality this must be discussed with your manager.

If someone offers to pay you for blogging this could constitute a conflict of interest and you must consult your manager.

If someone from the media or press contacts you about posts on your blog that relate to the BBC you should talk to your manager before responding. The relevant BBC press office must be consulted.

You are allowed to update your personal blog from a BBC computer at work, under the BBC's Acceptable Use Policy.

Guidelines For Managers

Under these guidelines managers in each area will decide what is appropriate. They should not adopt an unnecessarily restrictive approach. Managers should ensure that any special instructions on blogging are reasonable and explained clearly to staff.

Managers should bear in mind concerns about impartiality, confidentiality, conflicts of interest or commercial sensitivity. In some cases individuals may be dealing with matters which are so sensitive that rules may have to be set on what they can and cannot talk about on their personal blog.

Those involved in editorial or production areas must take particular care to ensure that they do not undermine the integrity or impartiality of the BBC or its output on their blogs. For example those involved in factual areas should not advocate a particular position on high profile controversial subjects relevant to their areas.

Managers can consult the BBC's Conflicts of Interest Guidelines and the BBC's Acceptable Use Policy For Internet and Email.

News and Current Affairs

Impartiality is a particular concern for those working in news and current affairs. Nothing should appear on their personal blogs which undermines the integrity or impartiality of the BBC. For example, news and current affairs people should not:

- advocate support for a particular political party
- express views for or against any policy which is a matter of current party political debate
- advocate any particular position on an issue of current public controversy or debate

If news and current affairs people are in doubt they should refer immediately to their line manager.

If news and current affairs people are asked to blog for commercial gain this could constitute a conflict of interest. Managers should consult the Off Air Activities Guidance Note for News and Current Affairs Presenters and Editorial Staff in BBC News, BBC Nations and Regions and BBC Global News.



IBM Social Computing Guidelines

In the spring of 2005, IBMers used a wiki to create a set of guidelines for all IBMers who wanted to blog. These guidelines aimed to provide helpful, practical advice—and also to protect both IBM bloggers and IBM itself, as the company sought to embrace the blogosphere. Since then, many new forms of social media have emerged. So we turned to IBMers again to re-examine our guidelines and determine what needed to be modified. The effort has broadened the scope of the existing guidelines to include all forms of social computing.

Below are the current and official "IBM Social Computing Guidelines," which continue to evolve as new technologies and social networking tools become available.

Introduction

Responsible engagement in innovation and dialogue

Whether or not an IBMer chooses to create or participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. However, emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way IBMers work and engage with each other, clients and partners.

IBM is increasingly exploring how online discourse through social computing can empower IBMers as global professionals, innovators and citizens. These individual interactions represent a new model: not mass communications, but masses of communicators.

Therefore, it is very much in IBM's interest—and, we believe, in each IBMer's own—to be aware of and participate in this sphere of information, interaction and idea exchange:

To learn: As an innovation-based company, we believe in the importance of open exchange and learning—between IBM and its clients, and among the many constituents of our emerging business and societal ecosystem. The rapidly growing phenomenon of user-generated web content—blogging, social web-applications and networking—are emerging important arenas for that kind of engagement and learning.

To contribute: IBM—as a business, as an innovator and as a corporate citizen—makes important contributions to the world, to the future of business and technology, and to public dialogue on a broad range of societal issues. As our business activities increasingly focus on the provision of transformational insight and high-value innovation - whether to business clients or those in the public, educational or health sectors—it becomes increasingly important for IBM and IBMers to share with the world the exciting things we're learning and doing, and to learn from others.

In 1997, IBM recommended that its employees get out onto the Internet—at a time when many companies were seeking to restrict their employees' Internet access. In 2005, the company made a strategic decision to embrace the blogosphere and to encourage IBMers to participate. We continue to advocate IBMers' responsible involvement today in this rapidly growing space of relationship, learning and collaboration.

IBM Social Computing Guidelines: Executive Summary

1. Know and follow IBM's Business Conduct Guidelines.
2. BMers are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, wikis or any other form of user-generated media. Be mindful that what you publish will be public for a long time—protect your privacy.
3. Identify yourself—name and, when relevant, role at IBM—when you discuss IBM or IBM-related matters. And write in the first person. You must make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of IBM.
4. If you publish content to any website outside of IBM and it has something to do with work you do or subjects associated with IBM, use a disclaimer such as this: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent IBM's positions, strategies or opinions."
5. Respect copyright, fair use and financial disclosure laws.
6. Don't provide IBM's or another's confidential or other proprietary information. Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to IBM.
7. Don't cite or reference clients, partners or suppliers without their approval. When you do make a reference, where possible link back to the source.
8. Respect your audience. Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in IBM's workplace. You should also show proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory—such as politics and religion.
9. Find out who else is blogging or publishing on the topic, and cite them.
10. Be aware of your association with IBM in online social networks. If you identify yourself as an IBMer, ensure your profile and related content is consistent with how you wish to present yourself with colleagues and clients.
11. Don't pick fights, be the first to correct your own mistakes, and don't alter previous posts without indicating that you have done so.
12. Try to add value. Provide worthwhile information and perspective. IBM's brand is best represented by its people and what you publish may reflect on IBM's brand.

IBM Social Computing Guidelines: Detailed Discussion

The IBM Business Conduct Guidelines and laws provide the foundation for IBM's policies and guidelines for blogs and social computing.

The same principles and guidelines that apply to IBMers' activities in general, as found in the IBM Business Conduct Guidelines, apply to IBMers' activities online. This includes forms of online publishing and discussion, including blogs, wikis, file-sharing, user-generated video and audio, virtual worlds* and social networks.

As outlined in the Business Conduct Guidelines, IBM fully respects the legal rights of our employees in all countries in which we operate. In general, what you do on your own time is your affair. However, activities in or outside of work that affect your IBM job performance, the performance of others, or IBM's business interests are a proper focus for company policy.

IBM supports open dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

IBM regards blogs and other forms of online discourse as primarily a form of communication and relationship among individuals. When the company wishes to communicate publicly as a company—whether to the marketplace or to the general public—it has well established means to do so. Only those officially designated by IBM have the authorization to speak on behalf of the company.

However, IBM believes in dialogue among IBMers and with our partners, clients, members of the many communities in which we participate and the general public. Such dialogue is inherent in our business model of innovation, and in our commitment to the development of open standards. We believe that IBMers can both derive and provide important benefits from exchanges of perspective.

One of IBMers' core values is "trust and personal responsibility in all relationships." As a company, IBM trusts—and expects—IBMers to exercise personal responsibility whenever they participate in social media. This includes not violating the trust of those with whom they are engaging. IBMers should not use these media for covert marketing or public relations. If and when members of IBM's Communications, Marketing, Sales or other functions engaged in advocacy for the company have the authorization to participate in social media, they should identify themselves as such.

What does an IBMer's personal responsibility mean in online social media activities? Online social media enables individuals to share their insights, express their opinions and share information within the context of a globally distributed conversation. Each tool and medium has proper and improper uses. While IBM encourages all of its employees to join a global conversation, it is important for IBMers who choose to do so to understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss IBM-related topics, whether at work or on their own time.

Know the IBM Business Conduct Guidelines. If you have any confusion about whether you ought to publish something online, chances are the BCGs will resolve it. Pay particular attention to what the BCGs have to say about proprietary information, about avoiding misrepresentation and about competing in the field. If, after checking the BCG's, you are still unclear as to the propriety of a post, it is best to refrain and seek the advice of management.

Be who you are. Some bloggers work anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. IBM discourages that in blogs, wikis or other forms of online participation that relate to IBM, our business or issues with which the company is engaged. We believe in transparency and honesty. If you are blogging about your work for IBM, we encourage you to use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you work for IBM. Nothing gains you more notice in the online social media environment than honesty—or dishonesty. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. But also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be judicious in disclosing personal details.

Be thoughtful about how you present yourself in online social networks. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in online social networks. By virtue of identifying yourself as an IBMer within a social network, you are now connected to your colleagues, managers and even IBM's clients. You should ensure that content associated with you is consistent with your work at IBM. If you have joined IBM recently, be sure to update your social profiles to reflect IBM's guidelines.

Speak in the first person. Use your own voice; bring your own personality to the forefront; say what is on your mind.

Use a disclaimer. Whether you publish to a blog or some other form of social media, make it clear that what you say there is representative of your views and opinions and not necessarily the views and opinions of IBM. At a minimum in your own blog, you should include the following standard disclaimer: "The postings on this site are my own and don't necessarily represent IBM's positions, strategies or opinions."

Managers and executives take note: This standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt IBM managers and executives from a special responsibility when blogging. By virtue of their position, they must consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing IBM positions. And a manager should assume that his or her team will read what is written. A public blog is not the place to communicate IBM policies to IBM employees.

Respect copyright and fair use laws. For IBM's protection and well as your own, it is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use of copyrighted material owned by others, including IBM's own copyrights and brands. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work. And it is good general blogging practice to link to others' work. Keep in mind that laws will be different depending on where you live and work.

Protecting confidential and proprietary information. Social computing blurs many of the traditional boundaries between internal and external communications. Be thoughtful about what you publish—particularly on external platforms. You must make sure you do not disclose or use IBM confidential or proprietary information or that of any other person or company in any online social computing platform. For example, ask permission before posting someone's picture in a social network or publishing in a blog a conversation that was meant to be private.

IBM's business performance. You must not comment on confidential IBM financial information such as IBM's future business performance, business plans, or prospects anywhere in world. This includes statements about an upcoming quarter or future periods or information about alliances, and applies to anyone including conversations with Wall Street analysts, press or other third parties (including friends). IBM policy is not to comment on rumors in any way. You should merely say, "no comment" to rumors. Do not deny or affirm them—or suggest either denial or affirmation in subtle ways.

Protect IBM's clients, business partners and suppliers. Clients, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Externally, never identify a client, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a client engagement. Internal social computing platforms permit suppliers and business partners to participate so be sensitive to who will see your content. If a client hasn't given explicit permission for their name to be used, think carefully about the content you're going to publish on any internal social media and get the appropriate permission where necessary.

It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a client (e.g., Client 123) so long as the information provided does not make it easy for someone to identify the client or violate any non-disclosure or intellectual property agreements that may be in place with the client. Furthermore, your blog or online social network is not the place to

conduct confidential business with a client.

Respect your audience and your coworkers. Remember that IBM is a global organization whose employees and clients reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, 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. For example, if your blog is hosted on an IBM-owned property, avoid these topics and focus on subjects that are business-related. If your blog is self-hosted, use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of IBM. Further, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds, social networks, or other tools hosted outside of IBM's protected Intranet environment should not be used for internal communications among fellow employees. It is fine for IBMers to disagree, but please don't use your external blog or other online social media to air your differences in an inappropriate manner.

Add value. IBM's brand is best represented by its people and everything you publish reflects upon it. Blogs and social networks that are hosted on IBM-owned domains should be used in a way that adds value to IBM's business. If it helps you, your coworkers, our clients or our partners to do their jobs and solve problems; if it helps to improve knowledge or skills; if it contributes directly or indirectly to the improvement of IBM's products, processes and policies; if it builds a sense of community; or if it helps to promote IBM's Values, then it is adding value. Though not directly business-related, background information you choose to share about yourself, such as information about your family or personal interests, may be useful in helping establish a relationship between you and your readers, but it is entirely your choice whether to share this information.

Don't pick fights. When you see misrepresentations made about IBM by media, analysts or by other bloggers, you may certainly use your blog—or join someone else's—to point that out. Always do so with respect, stick to the facts and identify your appropriate affiliation to IBM. Also, if you speak about a competitor, you must make sure that what you say is factual and that it does not disparage the competitor. Avoid unnecessary or unproductive arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Here and in other areas of public discussion, make sure that what you are saying is factually correct.

Be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. In a blog, if you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so.

Use your best judgment. Remember that there are always consequences to what you publish. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, review the suggestions above and think about why that is. If you're still unsure, and it is related to IBM business, feel free to discuss it with your manager. Ultimately, however, you have sole responsibility for what you post to your blog or publish in any form of online social media.

Don't forget your day job. You should make sure that your online activities do not interfere with your job or commitments to customers.



Edelman Online Behavior Policies

Edelman Online Behavior Policies and Procedures

The evolution of Edelman's policies with regard to online media closely mirrors the dramatic pace of change that has occurred in such a small period of time. And we will continue to evolve them over time to keep pace with new changes.

In the summer of 2005, such rules took the form of a "blogging policy" – a focus on a particular platform for online communications. More recently, the explosion of social networks such as MySpace and Facebook, as well as micro-publishing platforms such as Twitter, have inspired their own sets of rules and policies.

The inevitable result was several sets of policies across the enterprise and, most disturbingly, a tendency to cite a lack of policy regarding a particular site or type of site as an excuse for less-than-acceptable behavior.

Social media – and anything "social," as a matter of fact – strongly resists being heavily policed. That said, Edelman cannot possibly craft a new policy for every online destination where its clients are likely to seek acceptance and employees are likely to gather.

These rules below – necessarily a living document – have been constructed to reflect the evolving norms of online community behavior, especially as pertains to how corporations and the agencies acting on their behalf comport themselves online. These threads of commonality – woven through common sense and your company handbook – will help.

What you see below represents company policy. Edelman is committed to focusing online behavior through the lens of "doing the right thing", not "mitigating risk of getting caught." The former is proper motivation for engaging online communities. The latter rightly inspires ridicule and derision, is highly risky and should be avoided.

1. You are personally responsible for any of your online activity conducted with an Edelman email address, and/or which can be traced back to an Edelman domain, and/or which uses Edelman assets.

The edelman.com address attached to your name implies that you are acting on the company's behalf. When using an Edelman email address or Edelman assets to engage in any social media activity, be aware that all actions are public and employees will be held fully responsible for any and all said activities.

a. Honor the terms of your employment agreement, as well as those of any contract we have with any client.

It is inappropriate to disclose or use Edelman's or a client's confidential or proprietary information in any form of online media. Sharing this type of information, even unintentionally, can result in you,

Edelman and the client getting sued and, in some cases, may violate SEC or other regulations.

2. Proactively disclose your true identity and affiliation with Edelman and the client you may be serving.

When participating in any online community, be completely transparent and disclose your true identity and affiliation with Edelman, your clients, and professional and/or personal interest in communicating.

(Sneaky PR people Example)

http://www.techdirt.com/fotr/20030903/0222206_F.shtml

3. Respect the privacy of your colleagues and the opinions of others.

Before sharing a comment, post, picture or video about a client or colleague through any type of social media, his/her consent is not only a courtesy, it is a requirement.

4. Gain case-by-case or standing approval from your supervisor or GCRM before writing about a client, a known competitor of that client, or otherwise responding on Edelman's or a client's behalf.

If a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate, accusatory or negative comment about Edelman or Edelman's clients, do not engage in the conversation without prior approval from a supervisor.

5. Avoid personal attacks, online fights, and hostile personalities.

If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement you disagree with, you can voice your opinion, but do not escalate the conversation to a heated, personal argument. Speak reasonably, factually, and with good humor. Try to understand and credit the other person's point of view. Additionally, avoid communicating with hostile personalities in an effort to avoid personal, professional, or credibility attacks.

6. Identify any copyrighted or borrowed material with citations and links.

When publishing any online material through social media that includes another's direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always use citations and link to the original material where applicable.

(Example: SF Chronicle's plagiarism of a blogger's coverage of the BlogHer conference:

http://www.socialmedia.biz/2005/08/plagiarism_in_t.html)

7. Evaluate your contribution's accuracy and truthfulness before posting.

Before posting any online material through social media, ensure that the material is accurate, truthful, and without factual error. It is always helpful to provide hyperlinks to credible sources that could support whatever argument you make.

If you find that you've made a mistake, admit it, apologize correct it and move on.

8. Follow the rules in Edelman's Employee Handbook

The rules in Edelman's Employee Handbook also apply to employee behavior within social media and in public online spaces.

9. Build a reputation of trust among your clients, media and the public.

When you are reaching out to journalists, bloggers, clients or colleagues through social media, take every opportunity to build a reputation of trust and establish yourself as a credible and transparent public relations professional.

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

This is called astroturfing or sock-puppeting and is highly unethical. You are not to use the size and breadth of the company network to unduly influence polls, rankings, or web traffic where said traffic is a measure of success.

Examples include sending emails to the company network requesting that agency employees vote for clients in online polls. Here is how one company tried to do this, with disastrous results:

<http://news.zdnet.co.uk/software/0,1000000121,2102244,00.htm>

12. Do not "friend" anyone (as through a social network) whom you either do not actually know and/or with whom you have not previously corresponded.

13. You should ask the permission of any client, journalist, blogger or other online influencer before "friending" them as through a social network. Additionally, any Edelman employee who has client, journalist, blogger, or other online influencer contacts should ask them if they want to receive communications via the social networking site. Social Networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace should not be compromised as a way to get the attention of busy clients, journalists, bloggers or other online influencers.

14. Always be respectful to Edelman, its employees, our clients and your audience. This applies to the type of information posted as well as the manner and context in which it is presented.

15. Follow the established terms and conditions of use that have been established by the venue used for your social media activities (Web site, blog, discussion forum, etc.). You can usually find links off the home page of each site. Don't do anything that would violate those rules.

16. Obey the law. Don't post any information or conduct any online activity that may violate applicable local, state or federal laws or regulations.

17. Don't be afraid to be yourself. Being professional doesn't mean you can't also speak in a human voice.



Thomas Nelson Publishing

Thomas Nelson Blogging Guidelines

At Thomas Nelson, we want to encourage you to blog about our company, our products, and your work. Our goal is three-fold:

- To raise the visibility of our company,
- To make a contribution to our industry, and
- To give the public a look at what goes on within a real live publishing company.

Therefore, we have established a "blog aggregator page" that is linked to the ThomasNelson.com Web site. "House Work," the name of this page, contains links to employee blogs, along with the first few sentences from the most recent entry. The page is automatically updated whenever a blogger creates a new post. This way readers can quickly scan new entries, click on those that interest them, and then read the entry on the blogger's site. This makes it convenient for people who are interested in reading employee blogs. It also helps publicize individual blogs and generates traffic for everyone.

In order to give some direction to employees who wish to blog, we have established a "Blog Oversight Committee" or "BOC." This is a group of fellow-employee bloggers who are committed to promoting blogging within our company and making sure that the Company's interests are served.

If you would like to have us link to your blog, you must submit it to the BOC. Before doing so, you should design your blog and write at least one entry. Once you have done this, send an e-mail to Gave Wicks with a link to your blog. The BOC will then review your blog and notify you whether or not it meets the criteria.

In order to participate in this program, you must abide by the following guidelines. (Please keep in mind that review by the BOC and participation in this program does not absolve you of responsibility for everything you post.)

1. Start with a blogging service. We do not host employee blogs. We think it adds more credibility if the Company does not officially sponsor them. Therefore, please use one of the many third-party blog hosting sites on the Internet. Some of these are free, such as Blogger.com, LiveJournal.com, Blog-City.com, Xanga.com, and MSN Spaces. Others charge a nominal fee. Examples include TypePad.com, SquareSpace.com, BlogIdentity.com, and Bubbler.com. If you use one of the latter, any expense is your responsibility.

2. Write as yourself. In other words, please use your real name. We don't want people writing anonymously or under a pseudonym. Your name should be prominently displayed on your blog's title or subtitle. This will add credibility with your readers and promote accountability within our company.

3. Own your content. Employee blog sites are not Company communications. Therefore, your blog entries legally belong to you. They represent your thoughts and opinions. We think it is important that you remind your readers of this fact by including the following disclaimer on your site: "The posts on this blog are provided 'as is' with no warranties and confer no rights. The opinions expressed on this site are my own and do not necessarily represent those of my employer." You assume

full responsibility and liability for all actions arising from your posts. We also encourage you to put a copyright notice on your site in your name (e.g., "© 2005, John Smith").

4. Write relevant. Write often. Whether you know it or not, you are an expert. You have a unique perspective on our company based on your talents, skills, and current responsibilities. People want to hear about that perspective. Also, in order to develop a consistent readership, you should try to write on a regular basis. For some, this will be daily; for others, it may be weekly. The important thing is consistent posting. New content is what keeps readers coming back. You may also write on company time, provided it doesn't become excessive and doesn't interfere with your job assignments and responsibilities.

5. Advertise—if you wish. While there is no requirement to run ads on your blog, you are free to do this if you wish. Some of the free blog services run ads as a way to offset their costs. If you use such a service, you won't have a choice. On the other hand, if you pay for your service, you can avoid advertising altogether or participate in a service like Google's AdSense or Amazon's Associate Program. These types of programs will pay you based on "page views," "click-throughs," or purchases made on participating Web sites. You might want to ask the BOC or fellow bloggers for suggestions. The only thing we ask is that, to the extent you have control, you run ads or recommend products that are congruent with our core values as a Company.

6. Be nice. Avoid attacking other individuals or companies. This includes fellow employees, authors, customers, vendors, competitors, or shareholders. You are welcome to disagree with the Company's leaders, provided your tone is respectful. If in doubt, we suggest that you "sleep on it" and then submit your entry to the BOC before posting it on your blog.

7. Keep secrets. Do not disclose sensitive, proprietary, confidential, or financial information about the Company, other than what is publicly available in our SEC filings and corporate press releases. This includes revenues, profits, forecasts, and other financial information related to specific authors, brands, products, product lines, customers, operating units, etc. Again, if in doubt, check with the BOC before posting this type of information.

8. Respect copyrights. For your protection, do not post any material that is copyrighted unless (a) you are the copyright owner, (b) you have written permission of the copyright owner to post the copyrighted material on your blog, or (c) you are sure that the use of any copyrighted material is permitted by the legal doctrine of "fair use." (Please note: this is your responsibility. The Company cannot provide you with legal advice regarding this.)

9. Obey the law. This goes without saying, but by way of reminder, do not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful, embarrassing to another person or entity, or violates the privacy rights of another. Also, do not post material that contains viruses, Trojan horses, worms, or any other computer code that is intended to damage, interfere with, or surreptitiously intercept or expropriate any system, data, or information.

10. Remember the Handbook. As a condition of your employment, you agreed to abide by the rules of the Thomas Nelson Company Handbook. This also applies to your blogging activities. We suggest you take time to review the section entitled, "Employee Responsibilities" (pp. 36–39).

If you do not abide by the above guidelines, we reserve the right to stop linking to your blog.



Plaxo's Communication Policy

Plaxo's Communication (Blogging) Policy

Since joining Plaxo, I've been on a team that's working to define our policy regarding employees that want to participate in public communication. We wanted to include blogging, message boards, e-mail groups and any other media by which people are able to share ideas nowadays. Here's what we came up with; have a gander at it and feel free to give feedback through the comments or e-mail me: mark@t plaxo.com.

Plaxo Public Internet Communication Policy

The following policy applies to all employees and contractors of Plaxo, and covers all publicly accessible communications via the Internet relating to Plaxo. This includes, but is not limited to: blogs, discussion forums, newsgroups, and e-mail distribution lists.

OVERVIEW

This company depends upon not only the strong formal competencies of its workers (programming abilities, writing skills, etc.), but their "soft skills" as well. Specifically, the fabric of this company is sustained by a sense of camaraderie and trust.

While we encourage open communication both internally and externally in all forms, we expect and insist that such communication does not substantively demean our environment. This means that constructive criticism — both privately and publicly — is welcome, but harsh or continuous disparagement is frowned upon.

Externally communicating about aspects of the company that are part of your non-disclosure agreement (partnership deals, earnings, upcoming unannounced features, etc.) is ALWAYS forbidden, however, and grounds for immediate termination and legal action.

In a nutshell, be prudent. Ask yourself: "Would this public expression regarding Plaxo impair my ability to work with my colleagues on a friendly basis? Would it give a leg up to our competition? Would it make our current or upcoming partners uncomfortable?" If you could answer yes to any of those questions, please avoid this communication.

Additionally, you should first express with your management and co-workers any Plaxo concerns you may have. Voicing concerns about Plaxo publicly without first communicating such concerns to your management and co-workers is counterproductive and inadvisable.

SPECIFIC POLICIES

1. Your public communications concerning Plaxo must not violate any guidelines set forth in your employee handbook, whether or not you specifically mention your employee or contractor status.
2. You may participate in Plaxo-related public communications on company time. However, if doing so interferes with any of your work duties and/or responsibilities, Plaxo reserves the right to disallow such participation.

3. You must include the following disclaimer on published public communications if you identify yourself as a Plaxo employee or if you regularly or substantively discuss Plaxo publicly: "The opinions expressed here are the personal opinions of [your name]. Content published here is not read or approved by Plaxo before it is posted and does not necessarily represent the views and opinions of Plaxo."
4. You may not communicate any material that violates the privacy or publicity rights of another.
5. You may not attack personally fellow employees, authors, customers, vendors, or shareholders. You may respectfully disagree with company actions, policies, or management.
6. You may not disclose any sensitive, proprietary, confidential, or financial information about the company. This includes revenues, profits, forecasts, and other financial information, any information related to specific authors, brands, products, product lines, customers, operating units, etc. You may not disclose any information about any specific customer. Further detail is provided in the "Security and Confidentiality" section of your employee handbook.
7. You may not post any material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to another person or any other person or entity. This includes, but is not limited to, comments regarding Plaxo, Plaxo employees, Plaxo's partners and Plaxo's competitors.

Failure to follow these policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Only a written document signed by the President of Plaxo can approve an exception of any of the above policies.

Additionally, here are some guidelines you may wish to follow for your own protection. This is not a comprehensive list and Plaxo will not indemnify you from legal action if you follow these guidelines.

1. If you think you will get in trouble directly or indirectly because of any communication you are about to make, please discuss it with your manager first.
2. Remember that you are not anonymous. Even if you write anonymously or under a pseudonym, your identity can still be revealed. You should communicate as if you are doing so under your own name. Indeed, it is recommended that you do communicate using your real name.
3. You will probably be read or heard by people who know you. Post as if everyone you know reads or hears every word.
4. You are personally legally responsible for any content you publish. Be aware of applicable laws regarding publishing your content or regarding the content itself before you post. This includes adhering to applicable copyright laws.

Corporate Blogging Policy

In general, the company views personal websites and weblogs positively, and it respects the right of employees to use them as a medium of self-expression. If you choose to identify yourself as a Feedster employee or to discuss matters related to our technology or business on your website or weblog, please bear in mind that, although you and we view your website or weblog as a personal project and a medium of personal expression, some readers may nonetheless view you as a de facto spokesperson for the company. In light of this possibility, we ask that you observe the following guidelines:

1. Please make it clear to your readers that the views you express are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of Feedster. To help reduce the potential for confusion, we would appreciate it if you put the following notice – or something similar – in a reasonably prominent place on your site (e.g., at the bottom of your “about me” page):

The views expressed on this website/weblog are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.

Many bloggers put a disclaimer on their front page saying who they work for, but that they’re not speaking officially. This is good practice, but may not have much legal effect. It’s not necessary to post this notice on every page, but please use reasonable efforts to draw attention to it – if at all possible, from the home page of your site.

2. Be careful to avoid disclosing any information that is confidential or proprietary to the company or to any third party that has disclosed information to us. For good measure, consult the company’s confidentiality policy for guidance about what constitutes confidential information.

3. Please remember that your employment documents give the company certain rights with respect to concepts and developments you produce that are related to our business. To avoid conflicts or discrepancies, please consult your manager if you have questions about the appropriateness of publishing such concepts or developments related to the company’s business on your site.

4. Since your site or blog is a public space, we hope you will be as respectful to the company, our employees, our customers, our partners and affiliates, and others (including our competitors) as the company itself endeavors to be.

5. You may provide a link from your site to the corporate website. However you will require permission to use company trademarks or reproduce company material on your site.

6. Finally, please be aware that the company may request that you temporarily confine your website or weblog commentary to topics unrelated to the company (or, in rare cases, that you temporarily suspend your website or weblog activity altogether) if it believes this is necessary or advisable to ensure compliance with securities regulations or other laws.

If you have any questions about these guidelines or any matter related to your site that these guidelines do not address, please direct them to me.



Cisco's Internet Posting Policies

Cisco's Internet Postings Policy

With the rise of new media and next generation communications tools, the way in which Cisco employees can communicate internally and externally continues to evolve. While this creates new opportunities for communication and collaboration, it also creates new responsibilities for Cisco employees.

This Internet Postings Policy applies to employees who use the following:

- Multi-media and social networking websites such as MySpace, Facebook, Yahoo! Groups and YouTube
- Blogs (Both Cisco Blogs and Blogs external to Cisco)
- Wikis such as Wikipedia and any other site where text can be posted
- All of these activities are referred to as "Internet postings" in this Policy

Please be aware that violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Common sense is the best guide if you decide to post information in any way relating to Cisco. If you are unsure about any particular posting, please contact the Cisco "internet postings" email alias for guidance. For instance, if you are writing about Cisco business where you have responsibility, you may wish to make sure your manager is comfortable with your taking that action.

Your Internet postings should not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the company or to any third party that has disclosed information to Cisco.

If you comment on any aspect of the company's business or any policy issue in which the company is involved and in which you have responsibility, you must clearly identify yourself as a Cisco employee in your postings or blog site(s) and include a disclaimer that the views are your own and not those of Cisco. In addition, Cisco employees should not circulate postings they know are written by other Cisco employees without informing the recipient that the author of the posting is a Cisco employee.

Your Internet posting should reflect your personal point of view, not necessarily the point of view of Cisco. Because you are legally responsible for your postings, you may be subject to liability if your posts are found defamatory, harassing, or in violation of any other applicable law. You may also be liable if you make postings which include confidential or copyrighted information (music, videos, text, etc.) belonging to third parties. All of the above mentioned postings are prohibited under this policy.

When posting your point of view, you should neither claim nor imply you are speaking on Cisco's behalf, unless you are authorized in writing by your manager to do so.

If you identify yourself as a Cisco employee on any Internet posting, refer to the work done by Cisco or provide a link on a Cisco website, you are required to include the following disclaimer in a reasonably prominent place: "the views expressed on this post are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of Cisco."

Your Internet postings should not include Cisco's logos or trademarks, and should respect copyright, privacy, fair use, financial disclosure, and other applicable laws.

Cisco Blogs (located on <http://blogs.cisco.com>) are blogs requiring corporate approval in which employees may blog about Cisco and our industry. Only Cisco Blogs may include the company's logo. Cisco Blogs may also include links back to Cisco web destinations. All Cisco Blogs must include a legal disclaimer stating that all posts by the author, guest author and visitors reflect personal thoughts and opinions which are not necessarily those of the company.

Cisco may request that you avoid certain subjects or withdraw certain posts from a Cisco Blog if it believes that doing so will help ensure compliance with applicable laws, including securities regulations.

Cisco reserves the right to remove any posted comment on Cisco Blog site(s) that is not appropriate for the topic discussed or uses inappropriate language. Cisco also reserves the right to post particular communications on a Cisco Blog.

If a member of the news media or blogger contacts you about an Internet posting that concerns the business of Cisco, please refer that person to Cisco public relations, see: <http://tools.cisco.com/newsroom/contactSearch/jsp/prSearch.jsp>

Your Internet postings should not violate any other applicable policy of Cisco, including those set forth in the Employee Resource Guide and the Code of Business Conduct.

You agree that Cisco shall not be liable, under any circumstances, for any errors, omissions, loss or damages claimed or incurred due to any of your Internet postings.

Cisco reserves the right to suspend, modify, or withdraw this Internet Postings Policy, and you are responsible for regularly reviewing the terms of this Internet Postings Policy.



Dell Online Communication Policy

Dell recognizes that online communication tools such as weblogs (“blogs”) and other online channels (chat rooms, etc.) increasingly serve as channels for direct interaction with customers, the media and other Dell stakeholders. The company’s commitment to being direct supports open communications by employees and other Dell representatives, providing such communications are transparent, ethical and accurate.

All online communication by Dell employees or company representatives on behalf of Dell is subject to Dell’s Code of Conduct and applicable Electronic Dialogue policies, laws and regulations. Dell’s Code of Conduct sets forth a standard of personal responsibility for employees both inside and in some cases, outside the workplace. Dell’s Online Communication Policy adopts the same standard. Dell also recommends that its suppliers to adopt the standards outlined below.

Any Dell employee or representative engaging in online, electronic dialogue as a delegate of the company is required to meet a standard that mandates:

1. **Transparency of Origin.** Dell requires that employees and other company representatives disclose their employment or association with Dell (e.g., Richard@Dell) in all communications with customers, the media or other Dell stakeholders when speaking on behalf of Dell. Dell requires that employees, suppliers and other company representatives provide contact information on request.
2. **Accurate Information.** Dell employees and other company representatives may not knowingly communicate information that is untrue or deceptive. Communications should be based on current, accurate, complete and relevant data. Dell will take all reasonable steps to assure the validity of information communicated via any channel but it is the employee's or other company representative's responsibility to assure accuracy in the first instance. Anecdotes and opinions will be identified as such.
3. **Ethical Conduct.** Dell employees and other company representatives will not conduct activities that are illegal or contrary to Dell’s Corporate Code of Conduct, Privacy Policy and related policies.
4. **Protection of Confidential and Proprietary Information.** Dell employees and other company representatives must maintain the confidentiality of information considered Dell company confidential, including company data, customer data, partner and/or supplier data, personal employee data, and any information not generally available to the public.
5. Dell employees or company representatives who fail to comply with this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment from Dell. In addition, depending on the nature of the policy violation or the online channel content, participants may also be subject to civil and/or criminal penalties.

Additionally, Dell subscribes to the Code of Ethics established by the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA). The WOMMA Code of Ethics is available at <http://www.womma.org/ethicscode.htm>. Dell’s adherence to the WOMMA code means:

1. Consumer protection and respect are paramount to Dell employees, suppliers and other company representatives.
2. Dell demands honesty of relationship and opinion and identity.
3. Dell respects the rules of the venue.
4. Dell manages relationships with minors responsibly.
5. Dell promotes honest downstream communications.
6. Dell protects consumer privacy and requires specific permission to disclose consumer information to any outside organization for its use in marketing.



Blog Council Disclosure Best Practices

Disclosure Best Practices Checklist 1: Disclosure of Identity

Focus: Best practices for how employees and agencies acting as official corporate representatives disclose their identity to bloggers and on blogs.

When communicating with blogs or bloggers on behalf of my company or on topics related to the business of my company, I will:

1. Disclose who I am, who I work for, and any other relevant affiliations from the very first encounter.
2. Disclose any business/client relationship if I am communicating on behalf of a third party.
3. Provide a means of communicating with me.
4. Comply with all laws and regulations regarding disclosure of identity.
5. We will inform employees, agencies, and advocates that we have a formal relationship of these disclosure policies and take action quickly to correct problems where possible.
6. Pseudonyms
 - (Option A) Never use a false or obscured identity or pseudonym.
 - (Option B) If aliases or role accounts are used for employee privacy, security, or other business reasons, these identities will clearly indicate the organization I represent and provide means for two-way communications with that alias.
7. "We Didn't Know": Clearly disclose our involvement on all blogs produced by the company or our agencies.

Disclosure Best Practices Checklist 2: Personal/Unofficial Blogging and Outreach

Focus: Best practices for employees and employers related to personal blogs and personal social media participation that talk about company-related issues. These are intended to supplement existing employee policies.

For personal blogs or social media interactions:

1. If employees write anything related to the business of their employer on personal pages, posts, and comments, they will clearly identify their business affiliation.
2. The manner of disclosure can be flexible as long as it is clear to the average reader, directly connected to the relevant post, or provides a means of communicating further (Example disclosure methods could include: usernames that include the company name, link to bio or about me page, or statement in the post itself "I work for __<company>__ and this is my personal opinion.")
3. Employees will specifically clarify which posts/comments are their own opinions vs. official corporate statements.
4. Writing which does not mention work-related topics does not need to mention the employment relationship.
5. If employees blog anonymously they should not discuss matters related to the business of their employer. If employer-related topics are mentioned, they should disclose their affiliation with the company.

Disclosure Best Practices Checklist 3: Blogger Relations

Focus: Best practices for how businesses interact with external blogs and bloggers.

When communicating with blogs or bloggers on behalf of my company, I will:

1. Disclose who I am, who I work for and any other relevant affiliations from the very first encounter.
2. Proactively ask bloggers to be transparent about their relationship and communications with me.
3. Always be truthful.
4. Never ask someone else to deceive bloggers for me.
5. Never ask bloggers to write a fake endorsement or something they do not believe.
6. Never use off-topic comment for self-promotional intent.
7. Never take action contrary to the specific boundaries, terms and conditions, and community guidelines set by each blog.
8. Not use services or technologies for mass-posting comments.
9. Use extreme care when communicating with minors or blogs intended to be read by minors.
10. Comply with all laws and regulations regarding disclosure of identity.
11. Make it clear to our employees and agencies that these rules apply to them.

Disclosure Best Practices Checklist 4: Compensation and Incentives

Focus: Best practices when providing incentives to bloggers.

When providing bloggers with any form of compensation such as rewards, incentives, promotional items, gifts, samples, or review items, I will be completely transparent by:

1. Setting formal policies on using incentives with bloggers for our staff and agencies.
 - Review products can be returned at their own discretion.
 - Review products must be returned or paid for at fair market value.
 - Items of nominal value (low cost product samples or consumables) may be kept.
 - Review products should be returned, paid for, or retained by the blogger based on standards for the specific industry. (Examples: restaurant reviewers pay for the meal, tech reviewers return the product, hotels provide complimentary stays.)
2. Communicating these policies clearly to the blogger in advance, and asking that they do the same in any post that may result.
3. Encouraging bloggers to disclose the source of any compensation directly in any post they write about us.
4. If you choose to use paid posts or reviews, you must insure that it is clearly disclosed in the specific post that it is an advertisement.
5. Not manipulating advertising, link-trading, or affiliate programs to impact blogger income or traffic.
6. Understanding that if I send bloggers products for review, they are not obligated to comment on them at all, and they are free to write a positive, negative, or neutral comment.

Disclosure Best Practices Checklist 5: Agency and Contractor Disclosure

Focus: Best practices for vendors, agencies, and subcontractors that act on behalf of a company.

When using external agencies or personnel to communicate on our behalf, I will:

1. Require my agency to disclose its relationship with my company when it conducts blogger relations.
2. Require my agency to be truthful and never knowingly deceive bloggers.
3. Publicly acknowledge when my agency and/or related parties act contrary to these policies, and quickly take corrective action where possible.
4. Require agencies and agency personnel to meet or exceed our internal disclosure requirements.
5. Require agencies to enforce these requirements on their subcontractors.
6. Always discuss and secure formal agreement on these practices before entering into a business relationship with an agency involved in social media.

Disclosure Best Practices Checklist 6: Creative Flexibility

Focus: Best practices for artistic/entertainment situations where temporarily obscuring the sponsor of a site is necessary and appropriate.

Disclosure may be delayed temporarily to allow for creative freedom if it meets all of the following criteria:

1. The blog is clearly part of a game, mystery, or other project that is intended for entertainment purposes, not to enable corporate representatives to pose as consumers. It must be apparent to the average reader that there is a business/marketing purpose to the project.
2. The sponsor will be eventually revealed within a reasonable period of time.

Example: Creating blogs to promote a movie.

- CORRECT: A pretend blog where someone writes that they may have discovered aliens in their house to promote a science fiction movie.
- CORRECT: A blog is "written" by a character if it's apparent the character is fictional.
- CORRECT: Clues in a mystery or alternate-reality game.
- INCORRECT: A fake consumer blog where the "author" writes: "I'd love to go see this movie."