

Personal Social Networking and Online Accounts

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The Library strives to connect with users in multiple environments, both in person and online. The ever-changing nature of the Internet requires the Library and its employees to adopt a healthy mix of availability and caution, as some social media tools have the possibility to reach a wide array of patrons while putting our actions under a very visible (and sometime harsh) light.

This policy focuses on the use of social networking tools maintained by employees for personal reasons when engaged in work-related activities or through which the employee could be seen as representing the Library in an official capacity. The policy also includes other online accounts that may be used by an employee for work-related purposes. Representation of the Library includes an employee's use of the Library's name or his/her position with the Library as a possible indication that the Library's approval and authority rest with the statements that he or she makes.

Approval of Online Presences

The Administration or its designees must approve any and all representation of the Library on the Internet. No Library employee may set up a social networking account or any other online account of any kind that represents the Library without this approval. Failure to receive approval before securing an online account of any kind or to receive approval to in any way represent the official stance of the Library in an Internet comment, blog post, or any other social media platform will be considered a very serious offense and could result in termination of employment.

BCPL has a designated team of social media administrators who are responsible for monitoring and responding to public comments, posts and questions. Library staff and representatives are to remain neutral in library-related posts and in response to questions – offering resources for information that help people to make informed decisions. Any questions that cannot be answered by social media administrators should be referred to the PR Coordinator, or investigated further with a more detailed response to follow an initial acknowledgment of inquiry.

Approved Uses of Social Media

The Library will use social networking to:

- Announce programs.
- Post news such as special events, holiday hours, exhibits, and new item arrivals.
- Update resources.
- Remind users of important resources.
- Announce new services.

- Serve as a public relations/marketing tool.

The types of content that will not be posted include:

- Obscene or racist content.
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language.
- Potentially libelous statements.
- Private, personal information published without consent.
- Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum.
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion.
- Commercial promotions or spam.
- Postings/comments in violation of the copyright, trademark right, or other intellectual property right of any third party.

Personal Accounts

The Library assumes no responsibility for personal accounts that are maintained by its staff members. If a staff member uses a personal account to represent the Library with or without permission, the staff member may be asked to stop or give the Library the right to maintain access to the account at all times.

Exceptions

Participation on a professional and library related blog or listserv does not require approval. The Library encourages its staff members to use and participate in these venues. The views and opinions of staff members using these tools, however, should not be considered the opinion or endorsement of the Library.

Employees may also use the Library's name as a designation of place of employment on personal social media accounts. The use of the Library's name as a designation of employment should not be considered as the opinion or endorsement of the Library. The Library encourages employees to use a generic statement of place of occupation, such as "Public Library", rather than a specific designation of employment in order to avoid confusion on the issue of representation.