

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS



**Archives & Records
Association**
UK & Ireland

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR VOLUNTEERS

The Archives and Records Association (ARA) uses social media in its work and recognises that those who are involved in its work may also use social media either as part of their role or in their private lives. A written policy is therefore required for all staff, volunteers and stakeholders on the acceptable use of social networking for ARA.

ARA encourages the use of Social Media to help spread the word about the ARA but requires the appropriate and responsible use of the channels. The purpose of this policy is to set out what ARA expects from our volunteers when using social media. Over four hundred members volunteer for the ARA whether by being on sections, nations, regions, groups, committees, editors or the Board. It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for ARA and that social media is never private.

This policy is solely for volunteers and aims to:

- give clear guidelines on what volunteers can say about the organisation;
- comply with relevant legislation and protect volunteers;
- help volunteer supervisors, whether they are staff or Board members manage performance effectively;
- help volunteers draw a line between their private lives and their volunteering;
- protect ARA against liability for the actions of volunteers;
- be clear about sensitive issues such as monitoring and explain how problems with inappropriate use will be addressed.

1. Policy statement

1.1 ARA recognises that the internet provides unique opportunities to participate in interactive discussions and share information on particular topics relevant to our work using a wide variety of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and wikis etc¹. **This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering with us in any role and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense. (See 2.1)**

1.2 Inappropriate use of social media can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation, and can

jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations. To minimise these risks, we expect volunteers to adhere to this policy.

2. Who is covered by the Policy?

- 2.1** This policy covers volunteers. There is a separate policy for paid staff, consultants, contractors etc.

3. Scope and purpose of the Policy

- 3.1** This policy deals with the use of all forms of social media, including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter and **all** other social networking sites, and **all** other internet postings, including blogs.
- 3.2** It applies to the use of social media both for volunteering and personal purposes, whether while volunteering or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether the social media is accessed using our IT facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to volunteers.
- 3.3** If a volunteer is found to be in breach of this policy your volunteer manager will have the right to address this. Your volunteer manager could be a member of staff or a member of the Board depending upon your role.
- 3.4** Volunteers may be required to remove internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach of this policy.
- 3.5** This policy links to all other policies therefore social media should never be used in a way that breaches any of our other policies such as equal opportunities, data protection etc.

4. Personnel responsible for implementing the Policy

- 4.1** All volunteer supervisors have a specific responsibility for operating within the boundaries of this policy, ensuring that all volunteers understand the standards of behaviour expected of them and taking action when behaviour falls below this.
- 4.2** All volunteers are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take the time to read and understand it. Any misuse of social media or questions regarding the content or application of this policy should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or appropriate Board member.

5. Guidelines for responsible use of social media

The following sections of the policy provide volunteers with common-sense guidelines and recommendations for using social media responsibly and safely.

5.1 We want you to help protect our business reputation. Volunteers must not post disparaging or defamatory statements about:

- a** the Organisation;
- b** ARA staff, our clients, volunteers or members past or present;
- c** suppliers and vendors; and
- d** other affiliates and stakeholders.

Volunteers should also avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our business reputation, even indirectly.

5.2 Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media (as part of their role or on personal sites). Remember that what you publish might be available to be read by the masses (including ARA), colleagues, volunteers, future employers and social acquaintances for a long time. Keep this in mind before you post content.

5.3 If you plan to use a photo or a quote from someone on social media, you must obtain their consent first.

5.4 ARA does not permit tagging of vulnerable adults or anyone under the age of 18.

5.5 Maintain a professional tone of voice with any social media use to reflect the ARA and in no circumstances can expletives be used.

5.6 There is no obligation for volunteers to link their personal social media to any ARA social media account.

5.7 Volunteers are not permitted to set up social media accounts for ARA groups, nations, regions or sections without prior authorisation from the CEO.

5.8 We are happy for you to disclose that you are one of our volunteers but ask that you state that your views are your own and do not represent those of ARA. For example, you could state, "all views my own."

- 5.9** You are responsible for the security settings of any social media sites you use and should ensure they are set to the appropriate level if you wish to limit who can see your information.
- 5.10** Remember that you must respect confidentiality at all times and protect confidential information. You should be mindful of Data Protection issues, if in doubt speak to the CEO or Board member responsible. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our work, details of current projects, future projects, financial information or information held on our supporters, staff or volunteers.
- 5.11** Avoid posting comments about sensitive ARA related topics, such as our performance. Even if you make it clear that your views do not represent those of our charity, your comments could still damage our reputation.
- 5.12** If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting, refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with your volunteer supervisor.
- 5.13** If you see content in social media that disparages or reflects poorly on ARA or our stakeholders, you should report it to the CEO or appropriate Board member. All volunteers are responsible for protecting our reputation.
- 5.14** If you have any issues you wish to raise with the ARA you must do this via the formal channels and NOT by Social Media.
- 5.15** The contact details of business contacts made during the course of your ARA volunteering are regarded as our confidential information, and as such you will be required to delete all such details from your personal social networking accounts, should you finish volunteering with ARA.
- 5.16** If any issues arise on social media with responses or queries that you can't answer, please escalate the query as quickly as possible to the ARA head office on +44 (0)1823 327077 for some support.
- 5.17** Contact details of volunteers are subject to data protection. Staff are not permitted to access or store information on volunteers that would breach data protection.

5.18 Using the ARA logo.

- The ARA has an easily recognisable logo which people associate with us and the work we do. It's important that we make sure the logo stays as strong as possible, and we ask you to help us make sure of this.
- Please don't use the ARA logo on Twitter profile pictures as this can be confusing for users searching for the ARA official Twitter account.
- Please don't create alternative versions or change the ARA logo in any way.
- You can, however, use the logo as an image or part of images posted on your Twitters or Facebook page if you are supporting the ARA in your activities.
- If you have any questions about when or how to use the logo, please get in touch with us by calling+44 (0)1823 327077.