

Library Social Networking and Online Accounts

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The Library recognizes the popularity and advantages of social networking websites and other online accounts in conducting its business. The Library uses these tools in providing services and programs to its patrons. The ease of acquiring and using such tools, however, can be deceptive when the realities of the responsibility are considered. The Library supports the use of these tools in its operation while providing reasonable cautions for them.

This policy solely defines the Library's social networking presence. For additional explanation of the employee's responsibilities in terms of the use of personal social networking accounts and other online accounts for work-related purposes, please refer the Personnel Policies.

The rapidly changing environment of the internet, the increasing engagement of Library staff in online environments, and the nature of the Library's own use of internet-based tools dictates a broad interpretation and enforcement of this policy. In some circumstances, employees may be given permission to use a particular tool and then find that new or additional capabilities might become useful that exceed the original purpose. The Library encourages its staff to bring questions about personal or work-related online activity that may fall within this policy to a supervisor.

Definitions

"Social networking" includes (but is not limited to) blogging, wikis, instant messaging, online gaming, listservs, sites designed for personal comment (such as news editorial sites), and sites designed for sharing personal information (such as Facebook). For the Library's purposes, social networking includes any online activity which could be perceived as representing the Library as an institution regardless of whether the activity is part of a Library program, training event, or service.

"Online accounts" includes the use of online sites for the purpose of storage or exchange of work-related files (such as a sharing/storage site for digital photos) regardless of whether the use of the site was intended for public distribution.

Online accounts include any personal accounts maintained by the employee that are used to store or access work-related information.

“Representation” of the Library includes an employee’s use of the Library’s name or a position/title with the Library as an indication that the Library’s approval and authority rests with the statements made. (The Library encourages employees to use a generic statement of place of occupation, i.e. “public Library”, rather than using a specific designation of employment in order to avoid confusion on the issue of representation.)

Open Records

All of the Library’s online accounts are subject to the Open Records Act. Any information stored on a social networking account of any kind may be requested under the Open Records Act. Open Records Requests will be sent to the Library Director. It is the responsibility of the staff member charged with maintaining the account to track and archive information that might be considered eligible for Open Records Request. Such information will be kept a minimum of two years, subject to the limitations of the online provider. The Library will not seek to archive information on a social networking account using its own equipment. In some cases, a person making an Open Records Request may have to seek information directly from the online provider.

Statement of responsibility

The Library takes no responsibility for comments or data that may be uploaded by a member of the public to a social networking site or online account that is maintained by the Library. The accessibility and vulnerability of this medium is, in many ways, beyond the control of the Library. Reasonable measures will be taken by Library staff to monitor an online presence that is maintained by the Library.

The Library assumes no responsibility for continuing an online presence once established. All services and promotions of the Library are subject to the Director’s approval. Any online presence may be removed (without notice to subscribers) by decision of the Director.

An online presence may become unsupported by the Library, but the Library may be unable to remove the online account. In such cases, the Library assumes no responsibility for the account and will make every reasonable effort to have it

removed. If the Library is unable to remove the account, every attempt will be made to indicate that the account is no longer maintained by the Library's staff.

Access by the public

In most cases, the Library will allow (within the restrictions imposed by the online provider) open access to its social networking presences. In some cases, participation might be limited in order to fulfill the purposes of a specific program (such as a writing group maintaining an internal online document to which only registered participants have access).

The Library will not act in the place of a parent or caregiver for a juvenile in relation to social networking. The decision on whether to allow a child to participate in online social networking lies solely with the parent. The Library will not deny access to a juvenile. Responsibility for preventing or limiting access lies solely with the parent or caregiver.

Users of any social networking presence or online account maintained by the Library agree to hold the Library, its staff, and its Board harmless against all liabilities, judgments, damages, and costs (including attorney's fees) incurred from such use.

Limited public forum

The Library recognizes its online presence as an extension of its physical facility and considers such online presence to be a limited public forum. As such, the Library may remove statements made by users or staff members which are felt to violate that environment or that would also be inappropriate in its physical facilities. These include (but are not limited to):

- Obscene content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements
- Plagiarized material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments unrelated to the content of the forum
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
- Commercial promotions or spam

Requests for removal of statements from an online presence will be considered by the Director.

Account names, usernames, and passwords

When a new/additional online presence is considered, the account name must be approved by the Communications Manager before an account is created. Usernames and passwords must be shared with the Communications Manager immediately when the account is created. Any email address that is used for receiving messages from an online account must be within the Library's domain. Access to any information received through the account or maintained on the account must be available to the Communications Manager at all times.

Library location, name and logo

The Library's name and logo should be prominently displayed whenever possible when establishing an online presence. "Kentucky" should be used as a designation of location wherever possible.

Payment for accounts

In some cases, the Library may choose to pay for subscription to an online provider in order to have access to features that are deemed necessary. All payment for online access will be approved by the Director.

End User Agreements

Staff members who initiate or maintain an online account on behalf of the Library must familiarize themselves with and periodically review any End User Agreements that are provided by the social networking site's host organization. Staff members may not make any agreements with an online provider which would infringe upon the privacy of the Library's patrons, violate other policies, or obligate the Library in any way (including financially) beyond terms that are approved by the Director.