

Social Media & Scouting

Taken Directly from: <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx>

Although using social media is not a Scouting activity, their use to connect with others interested in Scouting can be a very positive experience. But the creation and maintenance of these channels requires forethought, care, and responsibility. For that reason, the Boy Scouts of America has developed the following guidelines to help you navigate the use of social media channels. These guidelines are a complement to the BSA's existing Youth Protection policies and training.

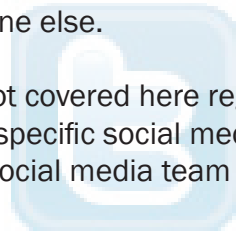
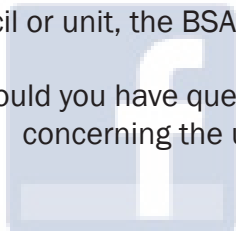
Key Considerations for Social Media

Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing the joys and triumphs of Scouting, but it should be managed properly to help ensure that it remains beneficial. Below are some basic considerations for using social media in a Scouting capacity. See the complete Boy Scouts of America Social Media Guidelines at <http://www.scouting.org/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx> for full details.

Use forethought, care, and responsibility when creating and maintaining social media channels where people share information and media about Scouting.

- Adhere to the terms of service and existing guidelines outlined by each individual social media channel such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
- Abide by the guidelines outlined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, as well as BSA Youth Protection policies when participating in social media activities. That includes following recommended Scouting Safely guidelines (including the use of proper safety equipment) when displaying photos and/or videos of Scouts and leaders on a social media channel.
- Follow the spirit of two-deep leadership and keep social media channels and all communication on or through them public. Designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and channel management/monitoring information.
- Use the guidelines set forth on the BSA National Council Facebook Info Tab in its digital contract at <https://www.facebook.com/BoyScoutsofAmerica>.
- Before creating a Facebook page, consider whether designated administrators will be able to monitor that page and post content consistently to help ensure that only appropriate content is posted. Do not give out Scouts' personal information (e.g., last name, phone number, home address) on social media channels.
- Never post questionable content or respond to someone else's content in a way that could reflect poorly on yourself or the BSA.
- Be timely in updating social media channels and responding to information requests on social media channels.
- Understand that the public may view your social media activities, and members of the public may engage in an online dialogue with you as a result.
- Do not do anything on a social media channel that reflects poorly on you, other individuals in your council or unit, the BSA, or anyone else.

Should you have questions not covered here regarding any of the guidelines and/or recommendations or concerning the use of a specific social media channel, please contact the BSA National Council social media team at social.media@scouting.org



KEY SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE

There are many social media channels available to users, and new channels are being introduced frequently. As such, it would be impossible to provide information on all of them. We will focus on three of the most popular and most applicable to Scouting. Those channels are Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Facebook

When considering whether or not Facebook might be a good option for your council or unit, it is important to remember that Facebook requires all users to be at least 13 years of age. Before creating a Facebook page, you should educate yourself about what Facebook is and how it is used, and familiarize yourself with its terms of service. This will help you navigate carefully in your development of a fan page.

When creating a Facebook page, you should make it a public fan page. In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the use of the messaging capabilities of Facebook.

Perhaps the biggest strength of Facebook is also its biggest weakness: Facebook fan pages are open to the public, which means any information shared on that fan page can be viewed by essentially anyone. As such, you should make sure that any information shared on that page by you or by your fans is information that is appropriate to share with the public. This is especially true regarding the level of detail you provide regarding Scouts and their activities. For the Info Tab of your Facebook page, you should use the guidelines set forth on the BSA National Council Facebook Info Tab in its Digital Contract, found here: <http://www.facebook.com/BoyScoutsofAmerica#!/BoyScoutsofAmerica?sk=info>

Once you have created a Facebook fan page, invited people to “like” your page and started gathering “fans,” it is important for you to post good and appropriate content and monitor the content that is posted to your wall. Unfortunately, not all the content posted to the wall by your fans may be appropriate. All content posted by you or by fans on the Facebook wall should conform to the precepts of the Scout Oath and Law. Content that does not meet that standard should be removed immediately.

If a user posts highly offensive content, the content should be removed immediately, and you may need to block or ban the user who posted it. Such an action should not be used liberally but only when content is truly objectionable. This type of careful monitoring requires vigilance. Before creating a Facebook page, you should consider whether you or someone else who will administer the page will be able to monitor that page and post content consistently to help ensure that only appropriate content is posted. Pages with inconsistent and infrequent updates can cause your fans to become disinterested, and your page can become a target for spammers or other predatory parties who recognize that you appear not to be actively involved on your page.

As with any online site, it is highly important that you do not give out personal information about Scouts or Scouters to anyone on Facebook. Every effort should be made to help ensure that your fans and those Scouts and Scouters that use the Facebook page are protected. Keeping Scouts safe and keeping their private information safe should be the primary concern in any endeavor involving them—whether that’s keeping them safe on a camping trip or keeping them safe on the unit Facebook fan page.

Twitter

Because of its 140-character-per-post limit and relative lack of multimedia capabilities, Twitter is designed for quick, simple updates and also can be used like instant messaging or email to have conversations with one or more people in a mostly public forum.

Twitter can be a great place to share quick observations, provide updates about programs, share training deadlines, link to other websites with event details, share great Scouting stories, and have an informal conversation with followers. In general, Twitter has a more personal voice, meaning posts on Twitter are expected to be relatively informal and friendly. It is also important to remember that Twitter is a public forum and is viewable by virtually anyone. That means content placed on Twitter should be acceptable to your specific intended audience of followers as well as a wider audience.

Some direct-messaging capabilities exist with Twitter; however, adults should not use these direct-messaging capabilities when dealing with Scouts. All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the messaging capabilities of Twitter. Before starting a Twitter account for your council or unit, familiarize yourself with Twitter’s terms of service and adhere to those guidelines.

When creating a Twitter account for your unit or council, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

Twitter cont’d.

In addition, all content posted on your Twitter account should be in line with the Scout Oath and Law. That includes never “tweeting” (posting) content that is un-Scout-like or responding to a tweet in an un-Scout-like manner to anyone interacting with you through your Twitter account.

Twitter should be updated regularly and watched closely so responses can be provided to people requesting information or trying to start a conversation.

YouTube

YouTube is primarily a video-hosting and -viewing platform. It lets you upload videos to a channel you manage. Once on your YouTube channel, each video has an individual URL and can be viewed on YouTube or shared as a link or embedded (by you, your fans, and members of the public) via other social media outlets and on websites. Before starting a YouTube channel for your council or unit, familiarize yourself with the site’s terms of service and adhere to those guidelines.

When creating a YouTube channel, your channel must be public. There should be no private groups. In addition, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management/monitoring information. This conforms to the two-deep leadership policies of the BSA. At least one of these page administrators should be a BSA employee, a local council employee, or registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

Like the other social media channels, the public at large has access to your videos and may view and comment on them unless you set viewing restrictions in your settings. If you enable comments, you should monitor those comments regularly to be sure they are appropriate. YouTube also has messaging features (similar to email). All Youth Protection policies that govern the use of email are applicable to the messaging capabilities of YouTube.

Having a YouTube channel is a great way to share videos of events, how-to videos, awards ceremony videos, and other videos that would be good to share with members of the group as well as the public.

An important consideration for YouTube or any similar site that features videos and/or images of Scouts is that all videos/images should adhere to recommended Youth Protection policies and should protect the privacy of individual Scouts. Additionally, all videos should show Scouts and leaders following designated appropriate guidelines and wearing proper attire for whatever activity is being undertaken in the video. All safety and Youth Protection policies must be followed for any Scouting activities, including those being captured on video.

Final Thoughts

It is important to remember that all social media channels are, by nature, designed to be social, that is, shared with members of the public. As such, whatever social media activities you engage in should be completed with the understanding that the public will see them and may engage in an online dialogue with you as a result. You should not do anything on a social media channel that reflects poorly on you, other individuals in your council or unit, the Boy Scouts of America, or anyone else. Before posting any content on any social media channel, you should first ask yourself if that content is in keeping with the precepts of the Scout Oath and Law.

As an additional consideration, once created, social media channels and the content on them “live forever” on the Internet, sometimes even if the accounts have been deleted. That means social media channels created today may still exist five, 10, or 15 years from now, in some cases long after those who started them are no longer involved directly with Scouting. As such, considerations should be made regarding the transitioning of administration rights and duties if and when the initial administrators end their direct involvement in Scouting.

Also, organizations wishing to use social media must accept the fact that listening is just as important as speaking in these channels, and those wishing to participate in this space should be prepared to listen if they are to reap any value.

Social media can be a powerful tool for sharing the joys and triumphs of Scouting, but if not executed properly, it can be a detriment to everything Scouting represents. As such, engage in social media activities wisely. Also realize that social media is a new and evolving form of communication that requires flexibility, patience, and commitment, but the rewards of increased connection with, and understanding of, your target audience can be great.

In your social media communications, you should be clear that it is not an official BSA social media channel but is instead your own personal channel. You can use the following template as an example: “This site is the personal [reference your specific social media channel] of [your name or organization] and is reflective only of my personal views, thoughts, and opinions. This site does not have the endorsement of the Boy Scouts of America, and it is not an official communication channel of the Boy Scouts of America.”

Should you have questions regarding any of the guidelines and/or recommendations or concerning the use of a specific social media channel not covered here, please feel free to contact the BSA National Council social media team at social.media@scouting.org for further guidance.

Materials contained in this document are available at:
<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Marketing/Resources/SocialMedia.aspx>

Unit Web site Guidelines

We've long recognized that unit sites created by individuals at the unit level of Scouting are essentially personal, and therefore beyond the National Council's control or liability. We do offer advisory guidelines to those who publish Scouting-related sites their own responsibility, and we urge local councils to take the same approach. These guidelines are established to help avoid several common mistakes.

Protection of personal information pertaining to our youth members and volunteers should be our greatest concern. This organization has used COPPA, the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, as its standard in this area. You can read the de on compliance at <http://www.coppa.org/comply.htm>. It would be a good practice to share them with unit-level publishers in your council.

A second concern about individual unit sites is **copyright infringement**. Sadly, photos, music, and video are commonly reused on the Web without permission. Plagiarism is also common. Such practices violate the ethics of Scouting. They are also viol of law, and could expose the publishers legally.

Our third concern is **commercialism**. We don't allow ads on council sites. We recognize that "free" Web services often used to create unit-level sites may contain advertising. This practice may reflect poorly on the Scouting brand, and should be avoided. A more serious concern would be sites that engage in any fund-raising activities not previously approved by their local council. Independent sales, solicitation, OR collection of donations is prohibited by our bylaws and charter agreements.

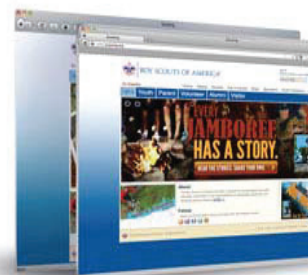
1. The content of the unit site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement.
2. The unit site cannot link to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement.
3. The unit site should not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
4. The unit site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
5. The unit site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
6. Unit sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those that pertain to the Internet.
7. Unit sites must consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permission release information about or images of any individual.
8. Unit sites cannot engage in fund-raising except as directly approved by, and under the supervision of, the local council.

Web Design

Scouts seeking information have put aside the compass and map for their search engine. Your first personal contact with Scouts and their parents more than likely won't be in person, but rather on the Web. Whether you're creating a new website or sending a tweet, every message must be appropriate and consistent with the Boy Scouts of America brand.

There are five important elements to building an effective website:

- **Know your audience.** Websites should be structured so the visitor can find the information. Don't create the categories based upon organizational structure.
- **Clean design.** Websites should be treated no differently than any other marketing materials. Use the approved brand identity elements, colors, and online font—Arial.
- **Simple navigation.** A menu bar that contains all available pages and a link back to the homepage invites visitors to explore your website.
- **Interactive opportunities.** Digital content has an enormous advantage over printed material—interaction. Encourage visitors to share thoughts by creating interactive elements such as polls, a monitored forum board, or a blog.
- **Plan for timely and appropriate content.** Develop an editorial calendar to ensure that you are continually updating your site. This creates a "sticky" site that brings visitors back. Even short updates about past events, upcoming outings, or a regular blog entry can increase site traffic. See [Web Content Guidelines](#) for more information.



Photography and Video

An image of Scouts having fun is a powerful tool to grab attention. Use these guidelines when picking the perfect subject for your project.

Subject: The subjects, or Scouts and Scouting leaders, should represent the best of our community.

Appropriate: Scouts in action having fun, images of Scouts in their uniforms looking sharp. In general, choose those moments you never want to forget.

Diversity: Scouting welcomes all sizes, ethnicities, and faiths. Any photography or video should reflect that.

Natural Setting: Scouts are most at home when they're outdoors. Show them experiencing all that nature has to offer.

Captured Moments vs. Contrived Poses: Scouts know a phony smile when they see it. Real moments evoke real emotions.

Specifications: Specifications can vary from project to project. Shoot images in the highest possible resolution. This is a good rule of thumb whether the asset is for print or digital use.

All photos and videos should have proper, signed releases. The official BSA Talent Release form is available for download from the Marketing Toolbox, www.scouting.org/marketing.

When capturing images at a crowded event, make it known that any and all attendees may be photographed or recorded and used in BSA promotions and publications. Honor the request of anyone who asks not to be photographed or recorded.



Talent Release Form

I hereby assign and grant to the Boy Scouts of America the right and permission to use and publish the photographs/film/videotapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings made of me this date by the Boy Scouts of America, and I hereby release the Boy Scouts of America from any and all liability from such use and publication.

I hereby authorize the reproduction, sale, copyright, exhibit, broadcast, electronic storage and/or distribution of said photographs/film/videotapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings without limitation at the discretion of the Boy Scouts of America and I specifically waive any right to any compensation I may have for any of the foregoing.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Troop #: _____ Troop City: _____

Signed: _____

Guardian: _____
(if under the age of 18)

Witness: _____

Session Date: _____

Tips and Ideas for Building Media Coverage for Your Unit

1. Target your audience. Make a list of the best media outlets to help you reach the parents of Scout-age youth in your community.
2. Develop a media contact list. Always send your media releases to a specific person. Develop a list of reporters and editors who cover events like yours. Find the best contact person by reading the newspaper or paying attention to radio and television broadcasts. Make a note of the reporters who cover Scouting, youth, family or community-related issues. If you are still unsure of the appropriate contact person, call and ask.
3. Include the following information for your media list:
 - Name of assignment editor(s)
 - Name of reporter(s)
 - Phone number
 - Fax number
 - Email address
4. Develop a news release. Remember that reporters are busy people; therefore, a one-page press release about your roundup would be ideal.
5. Grab their attention. Choose a catchy, easy-to-read headline for your news release.
6. Include all the pertinent details. Be sure your release includes the who, what, where, why, when, and how of your event. Practice the inverted pyramid style by detailing the most important information at the beginning.
7. Tell them who to call. Include the name and phone number of the contact person so the reporter can follow up.
8. Proofread your release. It is important that at least two pairs of eyes look over the advisory to ensure it's accurate and free of grammatical errors.
9. Timing is everything. Your release should be distributed to local media outlets at least a week before your event. Releases for weekly publications should be sent at least two weeks early. If you are unsure of how much time your local newspaper or radio or television station will need, simply call and ask.
10. A picture is worth a thousand words. Photos are an excellent way to tell your story. Choose fun action shots that best depict Scouting in your community.
11. Always say thank you. Always send a brief thank-you note to the reporters and editors, telling them how much you enjoyed working with them.

General Rules of Thumb for News Releases

- Always type a news release. Releases should be double-spaced and typed on one side only of 8.5-inch by 11-inch paper with 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides.
- Brevity is the key. Try to limit releases to one or two pages. A news release should not exceed 500 words. A straightforward and concise writing style is the objective. Use short, clearly written paragraphs.
- Never split a paragraph at the end of a page.
- Type “—more—” at the bottom of a page when the release is more than one page in length.
- If a release is more than one page in length, put an abbreviated headline and page number at the top of each page following page one.
- **Type “###” to signify the end of the release.**
- Clarity, accuracy, grammar, and neatness are vital. Verify all names, addresses, and facts before distributing the release.
- Avoid the use of clichés, jargon, or fancy phrases.
- Don't use flowing tributes, flowery descriptions, or glowing adjectives when writing your news release. The news release should be more informative than subjective. Be impartial and objective; try to write the release as the reporter might.
- Use first and last names on first reference. Use last names only on subsequent references. Include titles and descriptions, such as district chairman, or a person's hometown or age. Provide full names of groups with appropriate descriptions.

If an editor must choose between two otherwise equal releases, he or she is more likely to pick the release that has an accompanying photograph. If including a photograph with your release, make sure it will capture the interest of the reader. Every photograph should include a complete and correct caption that identifies each person and the action in the photograph. Your photograph file should include the following information on each photograph: source, date taken, copyright information, and releases signed by people in the picture.

Put the local news angles at the beginning of a release if the story covers an area beyond the community's borders or newspaper's circulation area.

Include a good quote from Scouts, volunteers, or local distinguished individuals early in the story.

Add boilerplate material. This is general information about the Boy Scouts of America that help people understand the importance and relevancy of Scouting. For example, “Scouting has had more than 100 million members since its inception in 1910.”

Delivery of the News Release

Work the local angle. Look for a local angle, or hook, in every story and make sure the appropriate news bureau knows about it.

Think photos. The perfect photograph to support your story requires planning and attention to detail. When pitching an event, be sure to pitch to the photo desk as well as the reporter.

Media Release Example

Northwest Georgia Council
Coosa District

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

To: Assignment Editors/News Directors

Contact: (Name)
(Title)
(Cub/Troop/Crew)
(Phone)
(Email)
(Web Address)

Northwest Georgia Council, Boys Scouts of America, Rome/Floyd Patron Lunch Honors Two 'Distinguished Citizens,' Friday, March 27

On Friday, March 27, 2015 the Northwest GA Council will be honoring two Floyd County residents as 'Distinguished Citizens' at the Rome/Floyd Patron's Lunch, held 12 PM at the Coosa Country Club. Mr. John Bennett and Mr. Wright Bagby, Jr will be honored and recognized for their many contributions to Scouting in Northwest Georgia.

Kelly Meacham , District Director for the Coosa District of the Northwest Georgia Council states that the recognition as a Distinguished Citizen is not just for those who support Scouting, "This an annual event in which we honor those individuals who are dedicated to serving their communities. Mr. Bennett and Mr. Bagby certainly have displayed that in their service to Rome and Floyd County."

The event will also feature a Special Guest Speaker, Mr. Jim Butterworth, Director of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security.

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PICTURED (l to r): Northwest Georgia Council's Scout Executive, Lamar Perry with Mr. Jim Butterworth, guest speaker at the Boy Scouts of America's Patron Luncheon held March 25, 2015.

More Release Examples Available At:

Boy Scouts Celebrate (No. of Years) Anniversary: <http://www.scouting.org/FILESTORE/marketing/pdf/press1.pdf>
Cub Scouts Participate in End-of-Summer Camping Activities: <http://www.scouting.org/FILESTORE/marketing/pdf/press2.pdf>
Area Scouts Participate in Annual Scutorama Event: <http://www.scouting.org/FILESTORE/marketing/pdf/press3.pdf>