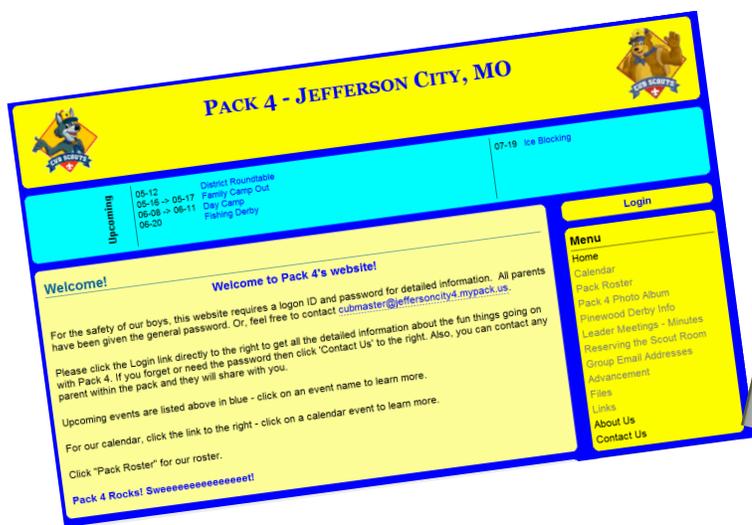


Unit Website Guidelines



We've long recognized that websites 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 on 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 details 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 violations 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. Any independent sales, solicitation, OR collection of donations is prohibited by our bylaws and charter agreements.

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

Social Media Guidelines



Initially considered simply a way to socialize with friends, “social media” platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and YouTube are now established as major media channels. With numerous other social media apps and sites popping up daily like Vines, Snap Chat, and Google+. These sites let individuals build and utilize personal social networks among friends, family, and colleagues. Both for-profit and nonprofit organizations are using social media as well to build and support their brands, drive engagement, support products, increase sales, and more. Used properly, these media can be an excellent way for Scouting councils to start a conversation with their target audiences by informing, connecting, and attracting them to Scouting.

There are no hard and fast rules in this new media landscape, aside from the abiding commitment of the BSA to protect children from inappropriate material and maintain the privacy of its membership. Social media constitute a new form of digital communication providing interaction and

dialogue around user-generated content. They go beyond merely pushing content to a reader. Organizations wishing to exploit social media must accept the fact that listening is just as important as speaking in these channels, and Scouters wishing to play in this space should be prepared to do so if they are to reap any value.

With that in mind, we encourage those intending to use social media on behalf of Scouting to note the following:

- Social media has to be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have responsibility to monitor social media channels.
- Integrate your communications. You have numerous choices—print, Web, e-mail, radio, TV, word of mouth, social media. Create a strategy to surround your target audience with your key message or messages.
- Social media takes a thick skin. Negative conversations are happening already, but now you have a voice in the conversation. Don’t delete negative comments.
- Let your audiences talk about you. By posting content regularly, you can tell your story and encourage conversations in the community.
- Build trust by being open and transparent. Share information about your council and what the challenges and opportunities are for Scouting in your community.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts. Councils should follow guidelines for responding to negative posts on social media sites. Some negative comments do not warrant a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how to respond.
- Direct media inquiries to the appropriate person. Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the Scout executive or a designee for an official response.
- Be Scout-like. When disagreeing with others’ opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it’s becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Ask your Scout executive or the designee for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on the BSA.

Suggestions on How to Use Social Media

As a new media channel, social media can be used in many ways, from recruiting volunteers and starting units to supporting fund-raising campaigns. The following are just a few suggestions for using social media as part of a council’s overall communication strategy. As you work with these channels, you will develop more ways to integrate social media into your communications.

- ⇒ Make social media part of your overall marketing efforts. Along with traditional media, utilize social networks to build community and support within specific target audiences. Example: Keep your network informed about progress in fund-raising campaigns, recruiting efforts, etc.
- ⇒ Use social media to tell your story. New improvements at a camp? New campaign? Fund-raising kickoff? Positive results from an effort? Major gifts? Share this information through social media. Tell your story to the people who care about Scouting most and let them share it with others.
- ⇒ Give your positive PR extended life. Don’t just put those news clippings in a binder or post the link to a news story on a Web page. Post it on your social media page and share it with your friends and supporters.
- ⇒ Use social media sites to generate traffic for your Web site. Alumni? Events? Fund-raising? Updates? Post them on your social media site with links back to your Web site for more information.

