

## **Ad hoc committee on AIS information policy**

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The committee search information policy for nonprofit organizations. The research included model social media policy for volunteers and employees. This research formed the basis for the recommended policy and guidelines listed below. The committee also attempted to hold online meetings. We were not able to convene the entire committee, due to scheduling issues. However, several members did use Google + and Skype to meet.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Nolin, Chair

## **AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY INFORMATION POLICY**

IRISES, the AIS Bulletin, used to be the only official source for AIS information. Then many years later the AIS website was added to facilitate the ability to receive and communicate information. Given that information is being disseminated worldwide through the Internet at a much faster speed and people expect this communication faster too, we would like to propose that all current AIS Social Media venues (The AIS Encyclopedia, Facebook, Twitter, and World of Irises – the Blog of The American Iris Society) also become official sources of AIS information.

After approval by the AIS President the AIS social media sites may post information for the public prior to its posting on the AIS website or IRISES (the AIS Bulletin) when such information has been finalized for distribution by AIS or is emergent news of which the public should be made aware.

### **AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY Social Media Guidelines**

These guidelines address the publication of and commentary on social media by employees and volunteers of the AMERICAN IRIS SOCIETY ("AIS"). For the purpose of these guidelines, social media means any facility for online publication and commentary, including without limitation blogs, wiki's, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

These guidelines apply to all uses of social media, including personal, by AIS employees and volunteers who hold positions on the Board of Directors, standing committees or ad hoc committees with AIS. These individuals are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with these guidelines to the extent they identify themselves as an AIS employee or volunteers (other than as an incidental mention of membership on topics unrelated to the AIS).

Publication and commentary on social media carries similar obligations to any other kind of publication or commentary.

#### **Protect your own privacy**

Privacy settings on social media platforms should be set to allow anyone to see profile information similar to what would be on the AIS website. Other privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set

to limit access. Be mindful of posting information that you would not want the public to see.

## **Be Honest**

Do not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. We believe in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify that you are affiliated with the AIS. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, point it out; but also be smart about protecting yourself and your privacy. What you publish will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

## **Respect copyright laws**

It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including AIS copyrights. You should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's work, and always attribute such work to the original author/source. It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it.

## **Respect your audience, AIS, and your fellow members.**

The public in general, and AIS's members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the AIS website. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration of privacy and of topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion. Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of the AIS.

## **Be tactful on controversial Issues**

If you see misrepresentations made about the AIS in the media, you may point that out. Always do so with respect and with the facts. If you speak about others, make sure what you say is factual and that it does not disparage that party. Avoid arguments. Brawls may earn traffic, but nobody wins in the end. Don't try to settle scores or goad competitors or others into inflammatory debates. Make sure what you are saying is factually correct.

## **Be the first to respond to your own mistakes**

If you make an error, be up front about your mistake and correct it quickly. If you choose to modify an earlier post, make it clear that you have done so. If someone accuses you

of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

### **Social Media Tips**

The following tips are not mandatory, but will contribute to successful use of social media.

The best way to be interesting, stay out of trouble, and have fun is to write about what you know. There is a good chance of being embarrassed by a real expert, or of being boring if you write about topics you are not knowledgeable about.

Quality matters. Use a spell-checker. If you're not design-oriented, ask someone who is whether your blog looks decent, and take their advice on how to improve it.

The speed of being able to publish your thoughts is both a great feature and a great downfall of social media. The time to edit or reflect must be self-imposed. If in doubt over a post, or if something does not feel right, either let it sit and look at it again before publishing it, or ask someone else to look at it first.