

Social Computing Guidelines

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide practical advice to guide and protect Members of The American Legion, The American Legion, and others in the social computing space available on The American Legion website and on other online communications networks. The guidelines are as follows:

1. Know and abide by The American Legion's principles when participating on social computing networks.
2. Understand that you are personally responsible for any content you publish, regardless of whether or not you believe your publication is "anonymous." You should also understand that once published, content is immediately public and perhaps permanently available to others.
3. Do not misidentify yourself or your relationship with The American Legion.. Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of The American Legion or any other entity that has not authorized you to do so.
4. Respect all relevant laws, including copyright and defamation laws.
 1. Copyright infringement is a serious matter and can be very costly. The general law of copyright gives copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce, distribute, creative derivative works, and publicly perform and display their works. There are exceptions to this general rule, but these exceptions are often misunderstood. As a good rule of thumb, you should not necessarily assume that you may use content created by others simply because:
 1. you believe the content is in the public domain;
 2. the original content is publicly available elsewhere;
 3. your use is for the purpose of criticism, commentary, education;
 4. the content is newsworthy; or
 5. others are using the content without apparent consequence.
 2. To protect from allegations of copyright infringement, consider seeking written permission from copyright owners to use their content. Also, consider linking to original content rather than copying the content as linking generally does not implicate the exclusive rights of copyright owners.
 3. Defamation is generally any false communication that harms a person's reputation; decreases the respect, regard, or confidence in which a person is held; or induces disparaging, hostile, or disagreeable opinions or feelings against a person. Defaming others is against the law and can have serious consequences.
5. Respect the privacy of others. Divulging private information of others can be a criminal offense.

6. Respect others. Do not publish content that is defamatory, obscene, pornographic, abusive, offensive, profane, or otherwise violates the rights of others.
7. Demonstrate proper consideration regarding topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, such as politics and religion.
8. Do not plagiarize or mislead others as to the source of content. As a general rule, you should never quote more than short excerpts of someone else's content and you should always cite the author. When possible, provide a link to original content.

(Source: The American Legion, <https://www.legion.org/socialguidelines>)