Church Website, Social Media, and Mobile Resources Guideline

for Church Departments, Areas and Entities

First Edition

Approval 6/20

Preface

As the Internet becomes a primary method of communication there is an increased opportunity to reach a wider audience through websites, social media and mobile resources. Church websites, social media and mobile resources enable viewers to be more aware of content, to share content with friends and family, and to connect with the Church and its leaders in an opportunistic way. Often times, there are unsolicited benefits to incorporating emerging Internet technologies. For instance, use of social media improves search result rankings, making it easier for individuals to find the information they are searching for on Church owned and operated websites.

Adapting to the principles presented in this guideline will help facilitate effective and consistent use of Church owned and operated websites and social media resources. This guideline is not intended to respond to every possible scenario; rather, it is intended to define appropriate uses for website, social media and mobile use once approval has been extended. With emergence in technology, this guideline begins to address employee (or individuals who have done work for the Church) use of websites, social media and mobile resources.

Because there are many names for Internet technologies which are used to deliver messages to visitors, this guideline will use the term Internet resources throughout. Internet resources refer to Church websites, social media and mobile applications. Social media resources include: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, LinkedIn, wikis, blogs, among other emerging technologies. Note: this guideline is limited to external and/or publicly accessible websites and social media resources.

Entities and Agencies

Websites, social media and mobile resources maintained by Church entities, agencies, or otherwise are responsible to comply with legal requirements under the direction of their respective boards and administrative leaders in consultation with Church intellectual property and information security and policies. Entities, as referenced in this guideline, are not intended to address considerations associated with educational institutions such as Brigham Young University.

Areas, Temples and Missions

Authorized Church websites now include Area websites. Area websites provide a way to share approved information of local interest. These websites and other social media resources are under the direction of the Area Presidency. The Area should regularly review the listing of web related resources with the Intellectual Property Division of the Correlation Department.

Temples and missions are not authorized to create publicly accessible websites, social media resources, mobile applications, or initiate any other presence on the Internet (Handbook 2: Administering the Church, 21.1.22). However, websites and social media resources for new temples and visitors' centers for the purpose of informing neighborhoods and developing good relations with local communities are developed at Church headquarters under established guideline and executive council governance. In preparation for a day when temples and missions might create websites, social media accounts or mobile applications, exploratory efforts may transpire with executive council, board or equivalent approval.

Purpose for the Internet

The Church Internet Committee has indicated that the Lord's Purpose for the Internet is to hasten the work of helping individuals and families understand and live the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, gather into the Kingdom of God and receive the ordinances of exaltation, and follow the example of the Savior in serving and strengthening one another. *(See Church Internet Committee Report, 28 February 2008)*

Church Internet Committee

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Governance

All Church websites, social media and mobile resources are to be approved by the advising executive council, area presidency, board or equivalent. Once approved, departments, areas, and councils submit the *Church Website, Social Media and Mobile Resource Request Form* to the Intellectual Property Division of the Correlation Department. The Church Internet Committee in conjunction with the Intellectual Property Division will then perform regular and periodic review of all requests to affirm authorized use.

The Correlation, Information and Communication Services and Media Services (to create rich-media content as needed) Departments will coordinate with the requesting organization's Internet Communications Manager (commonly referred to as the Product Manager) to create the website, social media or mobile resource.

To provide adequate, broad protection from disruption or defamation, the Information and Communication Services (ICS) Department will help ensure appropriate administration of permissions, monitoring, notifications, search, security, analytics and other helpful functions are appropriately enabled. The website, social media, or mobile resource should be tested before it is released to determine whether it will perform correctly. Controls should also be built into the system so that only those who are authorized and granted permission can access Church information. ICS, working in consultation with the Correlation Department, will track ownership of websites, social media accounts and mobile websites or applications.

All publicly-accessible content is to be reviewed and approved by the Correlation Department. It is important to respond to visitor comments in a timely manner. In response, the process for appropriately monitoring and screening comments is to be reviewed and approved by the Correlation Department.

Privacy

Approved Church websites and social media resources must comply with legal requirements and the Church's intellectual property and privacy policies. Privacy issues should be reviewed by the Church Privacy Officer in coordination with Local or Area Legal Counsel.

Prohibited Practices related to Privacy

The following limitations are applicable to employee (or individuals who have done or do work for Church departments, Areas, entities, missionaries, etc.) use of personal websites, social media and mobile resources:

1. Never disclose confidences. The duty of confidentiality extends to current and past work assignments and all information subject to nondisclosure agreements. Consult your supervisor before publishing information when confidentiality may be an issue.
2. Do not identify or post pictures of vendors, customers, employees, other interested parties, office equipment, or surroundings without approval from the responsible data steward or the person to whom the information or image pertains.

3. Never copy or post copyrighted or trademarked materials or images without the owner's permission. This includes intellectual property of vendors, customers, Employer, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

4. Do not use Employer's time or systems for fundraising; for partisan political purposes; to endorse, support, oppose, or otherwise comment on the election or candidacy of any candidate for public office; or to advocate for the enactment or defeat of any legislation, unless it is directly and clearly within the scope of your job duties and assignment (See Handbook of Instructions).

5. Do not publish material that is obscene, profane, defamatory, libelous, threatening, hateful, harassing, or abusive to another person or entity.

6. Internet resources must not request information from individuals under the age of 13.

7. Carefully consider the implications of the details shared. For example, providing reporting structure or descriptions of sensitive job functions on LinkedIn may put individuals and / or the Church at risk.

   Employees or equivalent should not disclose work experiences, opinions, or otherwise in the name of the Church without approval. Discretion should be used when sharing code samples, designs, proposals, etc. on blogs or other public social media resources.

Official and Unofficial Use

Authorized Church web resources are identified by the official Church logo or in some other specific way, such as a statement indicating that the site is "owned and operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

The Correlation Department will assist with specific terminology of disclaimers on a case-by-case basis. Serious consideration should be given to using the full name of the Church verses the term Mormon.

Websites, social media and mobile resources should not state that they are *official* resources of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Church websites, social media and mobile resources do not present the *official* position of the Church on doctrine, policies, programs and other matters. The term "official," is typically reserved for referring to a person holding an office or having official duties (i.e: the President of the Church is an LDS Church Official). *Note: Newsroom is the only exception to this policy.*

Other Considerations

Under the Church Internet Committee's review, executive councils may approve Church individual organization websites or social media accounts to be authorized for Church use while remaining unofficial. For example, Seminaries and Institutes may request that individual institutes communicate local activities and classes through Facebook.

While individual institute information may not be official, a disclaimer stating that the institute page is unofficial might deter visitors. Thus, the Correlation Department's Intellectual Property Division has proposed the following disclaimer be added to the terms of use of an authorized yet unofficial individual Department, Area, Entity, or other Church Facebook page:

> This page is sponsored and maintained by the [Ogden Institute (department, Area, entity, institution, or otherwise)] of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and is intended to provide helpful

information about [Institute classes, activities, and programs (description)]. This page is not intended as an official statement of any views or policies of the Church. For further information about the Church, please visit [www.ldsces.org (URL)].

Making use of Multiple Internet Channels

There are many ways and means for using multiple Internet channels simultaneously. In addition to standard Internet websites, social media and mobile technologies permit the Church to reach broader and more dispersed audiences. The following outlets should be considered with respect to your intended audience(s). Governance for these outlets follows the process previously outlined in this document.

Mobile Considerations

The ever increasing availability of mobile devices provides the opportunity to publish Church information and resources to a more dispersed audience. Because many of our users are primarily accessing the Internet through mobile devices, the Church employs solutions that are designed specifically for the Mobile audiences.

Church departments, Areas, and entities should give attention to mobile offerings during the conceptual stage of the planning processes. This is not to say that every solution should be accessible through mobile devices, but that early consideration should be given, where appropriate.
There are two mobile offerings that should be considered. They are detailed below.

Mobile Websites (e.g. Mobile Internet or Mobile Web)

Definition: Mobile Websites are specifically designed for use on mobile devices, are browser-based, and thus leverage standard browser technologies (HTML, CSS and JavaScript).

Mobile websites can be accessed at home, the office, on the road, or wherever an Internet connection is available. Although mobile websites are designed for use on a mobile device, they can also be accessed through a personal computer. Because mobile websites run in the browser, the user does not need to download and install applications on their device.

The distributed nature of mobile websites means that mobile websites cannot be found in application stores, where many users search for applications. Mobile websites can provide broad coverage at a lower unit cost, as a result of being platform independent.

Mobile Applications (e.g. Native Apps)

Definition: Native Mobile Applications are applications created for mobile devices that perform a specific task, and run on the operating system of the device for which they were written (e.g. iPhone IOS, Google Android, Windows Mobile Phone 7, etc.).

Native mobile applications can be accessed at home, the office, or on the road, without an Internet connection. Native mobile applications are typically created with a specific device in mind, and must be installed over the Internet on that particular device. The decision to develop a native application should be guided by the following criteria.

1. The ability for the application to work without an Internet connection (e.g. using the scriptures when you are offline).

2. Tight integration with device-specific features (e.g. GPS, camera, messaging services, accelerometer, etc.)

3. Advanced use of gestures features (pinch, swipe, etc.), and extensive use of high-definition graphics and media.

The Information and Communication Services Department has established, and keeps current with, best practices for selecting, creating, and delivering mobile websites and applications. The ICS Department has also developed detailed techniques to assist requesting organizations in making decisions regarding development of mobile websites or mobile applications.

Social Media Considerations

Once approval from the requesting organization has been obtained and Correlation has been made aware, the Information and Communication Services (ICS) Department will aid initial setup of the administration account to ensure appropriate permissions, monitoring, notifications, search, security, analytics and other helpful functions are appropriately enabled. With the specialist's awareness, ICS may provide tools which will make comment moderation less burdensome.

Further technical considerations may exist among social media tools as they emerge. The following practices should be applied.

YouTube

YouTube is a leading social media platform that a Church department or entity may consider using for approved purposes, depending on business need and target audience. Mormon Channel, a channel on YouTube, or other existing channels should be used to share video messages with a

large, existing audience. New channels on YouTube may be created with executive council approval.

Currently, there are three approved reasons why departments may request their own YouTube channel. First, if the department has a "brand" independent of the Church (e.g. FamilySearch, Mormon Tabernacle Choir). Second, if the department has a significant non-member audience or focus. Third, if the department has a very specific tactical or strategic topic. Such issues may include, but are not limited to, contractual advertising requirements with YouTube, or Search Engine Optimization support.

The Correlation and Media Services Departments will work with the requesting organizations to create and approve content for YouTube channels. ICS should be informed of the new channel so that security and management issues can be accommodated. Media Services Department provides rich-media solutions for website and social media resources.

Facebook

Facebook is one among several social media platforms that a Church department or entity may consider using for approved purposes. Unlike most Facebook pages, official Church Facebook pages will block all advertising on official Church sites. Any exception to this blocking will be reviewed specifically by the Church Internet Committee. Posting to official walls must be disabled; users will instead be able to comment on posts originating from authorized administrators.

Twitter

Twitter is one among several social media platforms that a Church

department or entity may consider using for approved purposes. The following criteria provide direction regarding the approval and management of official Church Twitter accounts.

Under the direction of the executive council, area presidency or equivalent, the originating department will be responsible to prepare the Twitter feed. The Twitter feed is reviewed by the Intellectual Property Division of the Correlation Department. Once Correlation Department has approved, the feed may be posted by the originating department's Twitter Specialist. More time-sensitive adaptive processes may be reviewed and approved by the Correlation Department under the direction of the Executive Council.

While Church twitter feeds may not require use of the Church logo, a common description should be used. An example of the common description follows:

> The [General Conference (originating department, area, entity or otherwise)] [feed (social media resource type)] operated by of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons). [URL]

Blogs

Church operated blogs should be password protected to provide access only for your intended audience. Even with private password-protected blogs, great care should be taken to avoid violations of privacy laws. A link to the appropriate Church website should also be provided; doing so will increase user confidence that the post is authorized by the Church.

Guiding Principles for Church Website, Social Media and Mobile Use

Priority should be given to receiving and sharing the prophetic word and gospel

 a. Focus on providing access to and the sharing of gospel messages while limiting areas that might detract from this focus.

 b. Develop messages that can be easily shared (most Church provided content may be shared through existing social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.).

 c. Focus resources to develop more compelling and relevant content for readers.

 d. Give sufficient priority to establishing social networks or connections with the young adults.

Support the sharing of meaningful conversation

 e. Encourage members to share messages that are personal, authentic, inspirational, respectful and joyful.

 f. Highlight successful examples and experiences on Church websites to provide instruction on how this is done.

Communicate with common Church identity and simple messages

 g. The user experience should be as standard as possible while still respecting the audiences and activities being addressed.

 h. All Church Internet activities are appropriately governed by the executive council and Correlation Department. Guideline and/or the Area Legal Counsel for further information regarding authorized use of Church Internet resources.

i. Since information on the Internet is generally accessible to all, target messages to those seeking the truth and other interested parties with material that can be understood by all audiences.

Maintain the dignity of the Church and its leaders

j. Constrain conversations on authorized websites that would marginalize or trivialize the Church, its leaders, or temples. Specifically, ensure that the Church, its leaders, and temples are always presented in a dignified and respectful manner.
    For example: from time to time on Church websites, personal views of website users are shared that may not reflect the official position of the Church. Departments and entities should carefully plan a response to these concerns.

k. Use broadcast communication tools (i.e.: texting or "tweeting") to communicate meaningful information, not minutiae.

Recognize the office

l. Develop social media and other websites for the Church, not for individual leaders.

m. Balance and rotate messages among Church leaders. Give priority to the First Presidency and Twelve (similar to the approach among Church magazines).

n. Avoid creating "Internet sensations" (i.e.: avoid focusing on how many hits, followers, friends, etc.).

Focus on Church strengths – don't replicate what should be done by others

 o. Focus only on what we are uniquely commissioned to do as departments and entities, not what we are technically able to do.

 p. Capitalize on resources already available (i.e.: used appropriately, social media websites may provide an inexpensive way to share Church messages and information with others).

Optimized search results

 q. When seeking information, most users start with search engines (i.e.: Google, Yahoo, social media, etc.) rather than going to institutional websites. Our message needs to be more prominently accessible on search websites. *ICS can provide assistance in this area with respect to Search Engine Optimization.*

 r. Where appropriate focus on engaging and bringing our audience back to Church operated websites through the use of social media.

Support, not bypass, local leaders

 s. Respect the priesthood lines of authority by not engaging in "two-way communication" with members directly (i.e.: texting between general auxiliary presidencies and members).

Selectively develop tools and resources that will simplify and support the efforts of local leaders (i.e.: communication and scheduling tools, access to information, etc.)

Additional Resources

Intellectual Property Division of the Correlation Department (Berne Broadbent)

Information Security Division (Michael Carter)

Handbook 2: Administering the Church, 21.1.22

Church Website, Social Media and Mobile Resource Request Form