



# Swim-Natation Manitoba Social Media and Social Networking Policy and Guidelines Approved July 4, 2011

Today, social media encompasses a broad sweep of online activity, all of which is track-able and traceable. These networks include not only the blogs you write and those to which you comment, but social networks such as Facebook and MySpace; professional networks such as LinkedIn and Legal Onramp; the live-blogging tool, Twiller; and social bookmarking such as Digg and Delicious. Multi-media social networking such as YouTube, Fliker, and Picassa are also becoming effective tools to engage inform and entertain your audience. Every day, it seems, new online tools and new advances introduce new opportunities to build your virtual footprint.

As an organization, Swim-Natation Manitoba believes that social media can increase the communications between our membership and the promotion of our sport and our start athletes to a large audience. We are also aware that social media use will be used for personal purposes.

Keeping that in mind, the following outlines policy and guidelines for online behavior by directors and employees of Swim-Natation Manitoba when participating online on behalf of our organization and as a sole individual. As new tools on the Web are introduced, and new challenges emerge for all of us, this document will, and of necessity, evolve.

Below represents Swim-Natation Manitoba's policy and guidelines regarding social medial social networking.

## 1. POLICY : THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SHOULD NEVER BE DISCLOSED ON A PERSONAL SOCIAL MEDIA SITE:

1.1 **Swim-Natation Manitoba Operational Information.** If it's not already public information, it's not your job to make it so using a personal social media site.

1.2 **Any opinions or answers to questions pertaining to Swim-Natation Manitoba policies or programs.** All official inquires need to be answered through official communication platforms: Canada Post, Courier service, Swim-Natation Manitoba email.

1.3 **Intellectual property that belongs to Swim-Natation Manitoba must not be used on your personal sites.** This includes any copyrighted publications, and all logos or other images that are trademarked by Swim-Natation Manitoba. A simple rule of thumb: stick to posting your own creations.

1.4 **Confidential Information.** Do not publish, post, or release information that is considered confidential – if you are uncertain, you must contact the Executive Director of Swim-Natation Manitoba.

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## 2. GUIDELINES: POTENTIAL CONFLICTS AND RED FLAGS

Get approval for a post when:

- 2.1 **Responding to a negative post.** If a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate, accusatory or negative comment about the organization or any employee, do not engage in the conversation without prior approval of the Executive Director.
- 2.2 **Posting recommendations for colleagues.** Posting recommendations for colleagues is a tool of professional social networking sites. The recommendations and comments you post about other current and former Swim-Natation Manitoba associates can have consequences, even if you are making the recommendations personally and not on behalf of the organization. Therefore, we are requesting that you clear all potential recommendations and comments with the Executive Director for anyone who is or was ever associated with Swim-Natation Manitoba.
- 2.3 **If you are contacted directly by a journalist** regarding issues of concern to Swim-Natation Manitoba, clear or pass the query with the Executive Director before responding to any journalist. Or, refer the journalist to the Executive Director.

Other potential red flag situations:

- 2.4 **Be aware that Swim-Natation Manitoba employee-member (swimmer, coach, volunteer, etc) relationships may be created online.** This often occurs in social media whether you want it to or not. Ensure that any communications that relate to Swim-Natation Manitoba activities should not be conducted in public forum.

## 3. BUILDING YOUR VIRTUAL FOOTPRINT AND YOUR NETWORK

- 3.1 Don't use your own personal online relationships or the Swim-Natation Manitoba network to influence polls, rankings or web traffic.

## 4. PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

- 4.1 **Always express ideas and opinions in a respectful manner** – Make sure your communications are in good taste. Never denigrate or insult others.
- 4.2 **Be sensitive about linking to content.** Redirecting to another site may imply an endorsement of its content.
- 4.3 **Swim-Natation Manitoba employees and directors must respect Swim-Natation Manitoba time and property.** Work computers and time on the job are reserved for Swim-Natation Manitoba related business. Personal Social media activities must not interfere with work commitments.

4.4 Only designated staff may post on the official Swim-Natation Manitoba social media sites.

## 5. YOUR IDENTITY ONLINE

Maintaining a good reputation – yours and Swim-Natation Manitoba’s

- 5.1 **You are responsible for what you post.** You are personally responsible for any of your online activity conducted on behalf of Swim-Natation Manitoba. When engaging in any social media or professional social networking activity (for example LinkedIn and Legal Onramp), all actions are public, and staff and directors will be held fully responsible for any and all said activities.
- 5.2 **Outside the workplace,** your rights to privacy and free speech protect online activity conducted on your personal social networks with your personal email address. However, what you publish on such personal online sites should never be attributed to Swim-Natation Manitoba and should not appear to be endorsed by or originated from the organization. If you choose to list your work affiliation on a social network, then you should regard all communication on that network as you would in a professional network. Online lives are ultimately linked, whether or not you choose to mention the organization in your personal online networking activity.
- 5.3 **Be transparent.** When participating in any online community, disclose your identity and affiliation with Swim-Natation Manitoba, your partners, and your professional and/or personal interest. When posting to a blog, always use your name. Never create an alias, and never be anonymous.
- 5.4 **Credit appropriately.** Identify all copyrighted or borrowed material with citations and links. When publishing any material online that includes another’s direct or paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos, or videos, always give credit to the original material or author, where applicable.
- 5.5 **Fact-check your posts.** Always evaluate your contribution’s accuracy and truthfulness. Before posting any online material, ensure that the material is accurate, truthful, and without factual error.
- 5.6 **Spell and grammar check everything.** Content never disappears entirely once it’s been posted.
- 5.7 **Correct errors promptly.** If you find that your blog entry contains an error or mistake, correct it. Since transparency is paramount, admit your mistake, apologize if necessary, correct it and move on.

## 6. LEAVING COMMENTS

- 6.1 **When posting to a blog,** refrain from posting about controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects, including politics, sex, region or any other non-business related subjects. Keep the tone of your comments respectful and informative, never condescending or “loud”. Use sentence case formant, not capital letters. Stick to this maxim whenever you are contributing to any blogs or social and professional networks.
- 6.2 **Avoid personal attacks,** online fights, and hostile communications. If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement with which you disagree, voice your opinion, but do not escalate the conversation to a

heated argument. Write reasonably, factually, and with good humor. Understand and credit the other person's point of view and avoid any communications that could result in personal, professional, or credibility attacks.

**Never disclose proprietary or confidential information.**

**If in doubt, don't!**

## 7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

7.1 Respect the privacy of your co-workers, members and partners and the opinions of others. Before sharing a comment, post, picture, or video about Swim-Natation Manitoba staff or a member of the swimming community on social media or network, his/her consent is not only a courtesy, it is a requirement.

7.2 Personal Information about our members should never be shared publicly.

## 8. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION/EMAIL BEST PRACTICES

8.1 **Respond 72 hours.** Email requesting follow-ups should be acted upon within 72 hours. If a longer delay is required for a proper response, replying with a courteous acknowledgment message indicating a response will follow shortly.

8.2 **Style of writing.** The myth that digital communications don't include a tone is false. Like any book or greeting card, perception or interpretation of tone is strongly present. Always be courteous and begin with a common friendly greeting such as (Hello John, good to hear from you) and end with a proper greeting, (Regards, thanks,). Don't write messages in CAPS AS IT IS PERCEIVED AS YOU WERE SHOUTING. Adding multiple exclamation marks will dramatize the message even more.

8.3 **Include a Disclaimer.** If sensitive information is transmitted by email and not to be transmitted to other individuals, please use the following disclaimer: "This email and any files transmitted with it are confidential and intended solely for the use of the individual or entity to who they are addressed."

8.4 **Personal vs. Business usage.** As best practice, your work email should only be used for work related activities.

## 9. *Approved July 4, 2011*