



**Ballou Alumni Association (BAA), Inc. • 3228 Pope Street, SE • Washington, DC  
20020**

## **Social Media Guidelines**

These guidelines govern the publication of and commentary on social media by directors, committee members, volunteers and staff of the Ballou Alumni Association, Inc. (BAA). For the purposes 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. These guidelines are in addition to and complement any existing or future guidelines regarding the use of technology, computers, email and the internet.

BAA directors, committee members, volunteers and staff are free to publish or comment via social media in accordance with these guidelines. Board of directors, committee members, volunteers and staff are subject to these guidelines to the extent they identify themselves as BAA directors, committee members, volunteers and staff (other than as an incidental mention of place of employment in a personal blog on topics unrelated to BAA).

Notwithstanding the previous section, these guidelines apply to all uses of social media, including personal, by BAA directors, committee members, volunteers and staff as their position with BAA would be well known within the community.

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

All uses of social media must follow the same ethical standards that BAA directors, committee members, volunteers and staff must otherwise follow.

### **Don't Tell Secrets**

Do not publish confidential information Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our software, details of current projects, future product ship dates, financial information, research, and trade secrets. We must respect the wishes of our corporate members regarding the confidentiality of current projects. We must also be mindful of the competitiveness of our industry.

### **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 BAA 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 BAA. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue. 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 BAA's own copyrights and brands. 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, BAA, and your coworkers**

The public in general, and BAA's directors, committee members, volunteers and staff, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with the BAA 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 BAA.

### **Protect BAA members, business partners and suppliers**

Members, partners or suppliers should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a member, partner or supplier by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a member engagement. It is acceptable to discuss general details about kinds of projects and to use non-identifying pseudonyms for a member (e.g., Member 123) so long as the information provided does not violate any non-disclosure agreements that may be in place with the member or make it easy for someone to identify the member. Your blog is not the place to "conduct business" with a member.

### **Controversial Issues**

If you see misrepresentations made about BAA 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, own 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. Remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

### **Think About Consequences**

For example, consider what might happen if a BAA director, committee member, volunteer or staff is in a meeting with a member and someone on the member's side pulls out a print-out of your blog that states "This person at BAA says that BAA's marketing sucks."

Saying "BAA needs to have more aggressive marketing " is fine; saying "BAA marketing sucks" is risky. unsubtle and amateurish.

Once again, it's all about judgment: Using your blog to trash or embarrass BAA, its members, or supporters is dangerous and ill-advised.

### **Disclaimers**

Many social media users include a prominent disclaimer saying who they work for, but that they're not speaking officially. This is good practice and is encouraged, but don't count on it to avoid trouble - it may not have much legal effect.

The Communications & Social Media Committee can provide you with applicable disclaimer language and assist with determining where and how to use that.

### **Don't forget your day job.**

Make sure that blogging does not interfere with your job or commitments to members.

### **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.

### **Enforcement**

Guideline violations will be subject to disciplinary action. (See Social Media Policy.)