

SUBJECT: Initial Guidance for the Use of Social Media

The intent of this initial guidance for the use of social media is to provide acceptable standards of conduct to the soldiers and airmen of the Utah National Guard. There are an innumerable numbers of social media tools and applications available and providing specific guidance for each tool or application would be impossibility. Additionally, it is intended to empower each soldier and airmen with the responsibility to assist the Utah National Guard by correcting false, misleading, or sensitive information that may appear on social media sites.

This guidance is an amalgamation of information published in *Citizen Airman* (Oct 2009) and Intel's *Social Media Guidelines* (Nov 2009).

1. **NO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.** Do not post classified or sensitive information (for example, troop movement, force size, weapons details, etc.). If in doubt, talk to your supervisor or security manager.

If it gives you pause, pause. If you're about to publish something that makes you even the slightest bit uncomfortable, don't shrug it off and hit 'send.' Take a minute to review these guidelines and try to figure out what's bothering you, then fix it. If you're still unsure, you might want to discuss it with your supervisor or JAG representative. Ultimately, what you publish is yours—as is the responsibility. So be sure.

2. **REPLACE ERROR WITH FACT, NOT ARGUMENT.** When you see misrepresentations made about the Utah National Guard in social media, you may certainly use your blog, theirs or someone else's to point out the error. Always do so with respect and with the facts. When you speak to someone with an adversarial position, make sure that what you say is factual and is not disparaging. Avoid arguments.

Be judicious. Make sure your efforts to be transparent don't violate guidance found in policies, regulations or directives. Ask permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the Utah National Guard. All statements must be true and not misleading and all claims must be substantiated and approved. Also be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and Utah National Guard confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully.

3. **ADMIT MISTAKES.** 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 (such as by using the strike-through function).

Be transparent. Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are blogging about your work in the Utah National Guard, use your real name, identify that you work for the Utah National Guard, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. Transparency is about your identity and relationship to the Utah National Guard. You still need to keep confidentiality around proprietary information and content.

4. **USE YOUR BEST JUDGEMENT THINK OPSEC.** Remember there are always consequences to what you write. If you're still unsure, and the post is about the Utah National Guard (Army or Air Force), discuss your proposed post with your supervisor. Ultimately, however, you have sole responsibility for what you choose to post to your blog.

Perception is reality. In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Just by identifying yourself as a member of the Utah National Guard, you are creating perceptions about your expertise and about the Utah National Guard by our shareholders, customers, and the general public—and perceptions about you by your colleagues and managers. Do us all proud. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with your work and with the Utah National Guard's values and professional standards.

5. **AVOID THE OFFENSIVE.** Do not post any defamatory, libelous, vulgar, obscene, abusive, profane, threatening, racially and ethnically hateful, or otherwise offensive or illegal information or material.

It's a conversation. Talk to your readers like you would talk to real people in professional situations. In other words, avoid overly pedantic or "composed" language. Don't be afraid to bring in your own personality and say what's on your mind. Consider content that's open-ended and invites response. Encourage comments. You can also broaden the conversation by citing others who are blogging about the same topic and allowing your content to be shared or syndicated.

Be a Leader. There can be a fine line between healthy debate and incendiary reaction. Do not denigrate our competitors or the Utah National Guard. Nor do you need to respond to every criticism or barb. Try to frame what you write to invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Some topics—like politics or religion—slide more easily into sensitive territory. So be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, you can't really get them back. And once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it's hard to stop.

6. **AVOID COPYRIGHT.** Do not post any information or other material protected by copyright without the permission of the copyright owner. Also, consider using a Creative Commons license to protect your own work (see www.creative-commons.org for details).

7. **TRADEMARKS—DON'T BREACH.** Do not use any words, logos or other marks that would infringe upon the trademark, service mark, certification mark or other intellectual property rights of the owners of such marks without the permission of such owners.

8. **DON'T VIOLATE PRIVACY.** Do not post any information that would infringe upon the proprietary, privacy or personal rights of others.

9. **AVOID ENDORSEMENTS.** Do not use the Utah National Guard name to endorse or promote products, opinions or causes.

10. **NO IMPERSONATIONS.** Do not forge or otherwise manipulate identifiers in your post in an attempt to disguise, impersonate or otherwise misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any other person or entity.

11. **USE DISCLAIMERS.** Identify to readers of a personal social media site or post that the views you express are yours alone and that they do not necessarily reflect the views of the Utah National Guard. Use a disclaimer such as: “The postings on this site are my own and don’t necessarily represent the Utah National Guard position, strategy or opinion.”

12. **STAY IN YOUR LANE.** Discussing issues related to your Air Force AFSC or Army MOS or personal experience is acceptable but do not discuss areas of expertise for which you have no background or knowledge.

Write what you know. Make sure you write and post about your areas of expertise, especially as related to the Utah National Guard and our mission. If you are writing about a topic that the Utah National Guard is involved with but you are not the Utah National Guard expert on the topic, you should make this clear to your readers. And write in the first person. If you publish to a website outside the Utah National Guard, please use a disclaimer. Also, please respect brand, trademark, copyright, fair use, trade secrets, confidentiality, and financial disclosure laws. If you have any questions about these, see your Utah National Guard legal representative. Remember, you may be personally responsible for your content.

13. **LINK.** You may provide a link from your site to the Utah National Guard web site. (Information taken from New Media and the Air Force brochure)

Your Responsibility. What you write is ultimately your responsibility. Participation in social computing is not a right but an opportunity, so please treat it seriously and with respect. Please also follow the terms and conditions for any third-party sites.

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COL Cluff
J6