



Social Media Policy & Guidelines

This policy governs the publication of and commentary on social media by volunteers, employees and Members of the Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc. (NTAG). For the purposes of this policy, 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. This policy is in addition to and complements any existing or future policies regarding the use of technology, computers, e-mail and the internet.

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 the Association must otherwise follow.

Don't Tell Secrets: It's perfectly acceptable to talk about your work and have a dialog with the community, but it's not okay to publish confidential information. Confidential information includes things such as unpublished details about our financial information, upcoming projects, membership, research, and contentious issues.

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 NTAG 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. Nothing gains you notice in social media more than honesty - or dishonesty. Do not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. 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 the NTAG'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, NTAG, and your colleagues: The public in general, and the NTAG volunteers and members, reflect a diverse set of customs, values and points of view. Don't say anything contradictory or in conflict with our 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 the NTAG.

Protect our customers, business partners and suppliers: Members and partners should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a member and partner by name without permission and never discuss confidential details of a project or issue. Your blog is not the place to "conduct business" with a member of NTAG or of the public. Do not use your blog to trash or embarrass the NTAG, our members or the Town of Newmarket.

Controversial Issues: If you see misrepresentations made about the NTAG 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. **If a member sees or experiences a post or response on Social Media that involves the NTAG, that they do not respond, but contact socialmedia@ntag.ca so that the board can respond appropriately.**

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. If someone accuses you of posting something improper (such as their copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action.

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. Wherever practical, you must use a disclaimer that states while you volunteer for the NTAG, anything you publish is your personal opinion, and not necessarily the opinions of the NTAG. Only the Board of Directors have the authority to speak on behalf of the NTAG.

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.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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: Policy violations will be subject to the termination of membership in the Newmarket Taxpayers Advocacy Group Inc.