

Social Media Policy

Addendum to Employee Handbook

Social media and blogs are important elements of journalism. They narrow the distance between journalists and the public. They encourage lively, immediate and spirited discussion. They can be vital news-gathering and news-delivery tools.

Huckle Media (the company) holds itself to the highest journalistic principles and ethics. That means its employees must keep themselves above reproach, and understand that their online and offline lives often merge.

In addition to those outlined in the employee handbook, below are policies and practices to remember as you use social media in your professional and personal life.

Using social media in reporting

- Social media networks – Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and others – provide useful reporting and promotional tools for the company’s journalists. In general, remember the same standards of fairness, accuracy and attribution that apply to print publication also applies to social media.
- Content gathered online is subject to the same attribution rules as other content. If you did not speak with a source to first get permission, you cannot use a comment the source made on Facebook or Twitter.
- Authentication is essential: Verify sourcing after collecting information online. When transmitting information online – as in re-Tweeting material from other sources – apply the same standards and level of caution you would in print publication.
- You must identify yourself online as a Huckle Media employee if you would do that in an offline situation.
- Using social media sites means that you (and the content you exchange) are subject to their terms of service. This can have legal implications, including the possibility that your interactions could be subject to a third-party subpoena. The social media network has access to and control over everything you have disclosed to or on that site. For instance, any information might be turned over to law enforcement without your consent or even your knowledge. For that reason, conduct all but the most basic conversations offline.
- Adhere to all laws related to copyright and dissemination of materials from other sites.
- Remember that social media postings live on as online archives. Correct and clarify mistakes, whether they are factual mistakes or mistakes of omission.

Using social media as a representative of Huckle Media

- Only authorized personnel may remove comments from any company Website.
- While we strongly encourage linking to your paper's site, you may not repost our copyrighted material to social networks without prior permission. For example, it is OK to link from your blog or Facebook profile to a story of yours on the paper's site, but you should not copy the full text onto a personal site or Web page.
- Employees of Huckle Media may not comment on company websites without prior permission from the editor/publisher. Editorial employees are encouraged to interact with posters to the website, but judiciously and with the guidance of their editor. See the guidelines for commenting online for direction.
- You should not write anonymously or use an avatar or username that cloaks your real identity on company websites. You are responsible for everything you say. Commenting or blogging anonymously compromises this core principle.
- Be aware of inadvertent disclosures or the perception of disclosures. For example, consider that "friending" a professional contact may publicly identify that person as one of your sources.
- Don't engage in any impolite dialogue with those who may challenge your work — no matter how rude or provocative they may seem.
- Huckle Media reserves the right to monitor comments or discussions about the company, its employees and clients and the industry, including products and competitors, posted by anyone, including employees and non-employees, on the Internet. The company may use blog-search tools and software to monitor forums such as blogs and other types of personal journals, diaries and personal and business discussion forums.

Using social media in your personal life

- Assume that everything you write is public regardless of the privacy tools you use on various social media.
- Employees may not use their positions at the paper to promote personal agendas or causes. Nor should they allow their outside activities to undermine the impartiality of coverage, in fact or appearance.
- Although the company does not seek to restrict staff members' participation in civic life or journalistic organizations, they should be aware that outside affiliations and memberships may create real or apparent ethical conflicts. When those affiliations have even the slightest potential to damage the newspaper's credibility, staff members should proceed with caution and take care to advise supervisors. This includes the selection of pages of which you decide to become a "fan."

- Employees are not authorized to speak on behalf of the company on any social medium. Employees may not publicly discuss clients, products, employees or any work-related matter, whether confidential or not, outside company-authorized communications.
- Employees are expected to protect the privacy of the company and its employees and clients and are prohibited from disclosing personal employee and non-employee information and any other proprietary and nonpublic information to which employees have access. Such information includes but is not limited to customer information, trade secrets, financial information, news content prior to publication and strategic business plans.
- Employees may not post or blog about events or persons covered or being covered by any company product unless authorized by their managing editor or editor/publisher.
- Employees cannot use posts or blogs to harass, threaten, discriminate or disparage employees (including superiors, supervisors and co-workers), or any company publication.
- If an employee chooses to identify themselves as a Huckle Media employee on a non-company owned website or Web log, the employee must make it clear to the readers that the views expressed therein are the employee's alone.
- Employees may not use their company e-mail address in their personal profiles on social networking sites, unless the site is used primarily for business purposes.
- As stated in the company employee handbook, Huckle Media's communications resources may be used only for purposes related to the business of the company. Personal posting, blogging or surfing the Web is not permitted during working hours or on company computers or other company-supplied devices unless specifically authorized by the company to do so as part of an employee's position.

In summary

Social media is a dynamic system that we expect will change over time, and so these policies may change with them. As always, we appreciate your feedback.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and have received a copy of the Social Media Policy and the Employee Handbook.

Employee Signature

Date