



DIOCESE OF CANTERBURY

E SAFETY GUIDELINES

Given the nature of social media and the whole realm of online interactions, this document needs to be updated more regularly than most guidelines. The version will always be displayed on the file name and the top right hand corner of the page. Parishes will be notified of any updated versions, but please check back every now and then to ensure you have the most recent version. If you have any experience of dealing with Social Media which would add to the scope of effectiveness of these guidelines, please let us know.

WEB 2.0

The internet and the online world is a paradox. It is constantly changing but increasingly fixed as an integrated part of our contemporary lifestyle. One of the fundamental shifts in the culture of internet users was the change from Consumer to Contributor. Web 2.0 identifies this shift - newspapers, radio and TV were received; the internet is now wholly interactive. Younger generations are growing up in a world where contributing to the media we all receive is a completely natural part of life; whereas older generations find the public nature of Social Media disconcerting and see it as potentially dangerous. It is against this backdrop that we need to consider how to use Social Media safely and effectively.

GRiD PLAN

GOOD — RISK — DON'T

GOOD: *What is the benefit and potential?*

RISKS: *What are the relative risks involved?*

DON'T: *What practises and habits are best avoided?*



The **GRiD** plan uses three sections to explore using the internet to support the relationships and communities that churches are seeking to build. '**GOOD**' identifies the benefits of each including some ideas that are worth considering. While '**Risks**' outlines the relative dangers involved, it is important to recognise that our intuition is often wrong in evaluating relative risk: planes *feel* more dangerous than cars but the real risk of injury is far higher on the road *than in the air*. *Risks must be reasonably evaluated and considered within the appropriate context*. Lastly, '**DON'T**' identifies that which is simply best avoided when using Social Media and other online tools.

EMAIL



GOOD

- Using email to communicate is quick, cost effective, paperless and unlimited in terms of the number of people that can be reached at once.
- Setting up a 'distribution list' is a good way to send newsletters, information and adverts to a securely held list of email addresses without the need for a database. Yahoo and Google operate free distribution lists called 'Groups' and [Mailchimp](http://www.mailchimp.com)¹ is also widely used but has limited free use.

¹ <http://www.mailchimp.com>

RISKS

- When considering using email to communicate with children and young people, consent from both the individual and their parent/guardian should be obtained. This is done most simply when an individual registers to join a group, and email consent wording can be added to the general consent that is signed on the form.
- A leader should use a specific and known account to communicate with the children and young people, the address of which should be known to the young people, children, parents and the leader's supervisor. It should be possible for the leader's supervisor to access all messages, both sent and received on this account. Under no circumstances should messages be sent or received on a separate account. Children, young people and parents should be aware that the supervisor has access to the account, which is most simply done at the time consent is given.

DON'T

- Assume too much!
- Clear and unambiguous language should be used. Nuance and tone in email can sometimes be hard to read, and ambiguity, flirtation, crude humour, ridicule or insulting language should never be used, even in jest. Be careful to avoid abbreviations that can be misinterpreted, such a 'lol' (laugh out loud or lots of love).
- Say anything in an email that you would not say face to face to the child or young person.

ONLINE PRESENCE**1. BLOGS**

*A **blog** (a portmanteau of the term **web log**) is a personal journal published online consisting of discrete entries ("posts") typically displayed in reverse chronological order so the most recent post appears first. Blogs are usually the work of a single individual, occasionally of a small group, and often are themed on a single subject. Although not a must, most good quality blogs are interactive, allowing visitors to leave comments and even message each other on the blogs and it is this interactivity that distinguishes them from other static websites.*^{[wiki](#)²}

GOOD

- Simplest and cheapest form of website
- Allows for automatically archived and categorised content, which makes blogs ideal for sharing sermons, small group notes, reports on events, immediate response to relevant news and more.
- Enabling comments on posts provides an online discussion forum for the Church Community, as well as a place to gather feedback.
- Posts can also be used to gather a library of resources or articles from around the World Wide Web.

RISKS

- Anything posted on a blog is immediately within the public domain – there is no way to un-say something. Care should always be taken: if you wouldn't say it to a crowded room, don't say it on a blog post.
- Enabling comments on posts is generally open to anyone. There is a risk of abusive or offensive language being used by those not known to your or your community. Such comments are easily removed by the blog's author. To avoid this risk, comments can be disabled (which removes the advantage of discussion) OR comments can be made subject to

² <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog>

approval by the blog author. In this case the author or administrator of the blog will be notified that a comment is awaiting approval. The risk of abusive comments is most likely outweighed by the advantage of an open forum, especially if inappropriate comments are quickly removed.

DON'T

- Use inappropriate, offensive or illegal content. Including pictures, video, text and audio.
- Plagiarise. Most bloggers are happy to have their content reposted on another blog, but they do expect to be credited and for readers to be able to click through to the original site. A link-back is easily inserted into the post referencing where the content has been copied from. If you don't know already then please ask the author's permission first!
- Forget that blogs are in the public domain.

2. PHOTO-SHARING



Photo-sharing sites such as Flickr/Snapfish/Twitpic/Photobucket/yfrog offer an opportunity to store, sort, search and share photographs online. Whilst some Photo-sharing sites are themselves a form of Social Media, when integrated with other Social Media forums users are able to upload a picture to illustrate their experiences.

GOOD

- Photos of events or group activities are accessible to the whole community
- Taking pictures in the moment can greatly increase the effectiveness of sharing stories or advertising events.

RISKS

- As with all online content, care must always be taken to ensure that consent is obtained before making any photographs public.
Please Note: The Diocesan Policy and Guidelines for photographs applies in all contexts!
- An image (or text) taken out of context may give a very misleading impression. Be mindful of what impression an image will give to someone seeing it out of context.

DON'T

- Take offensive, inappropriate or illegal images.
- Assume that something you think is funny will be considered so by everyone else.

3. VIDEO-SHARING

Video-sharing sites, such as YouTube, similar to Photo-sharing, offer users the ability to upload, view and share videos. They display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips, and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos.

GOOD

- Film and video is an art-form that may engage a wide section of a church community. Consider how you might use YouTube to broadcast short video messages from a group or about a subject.
- Recording talks, sermons or drama makes them accessible to the whole church community, including those who are not always physically present.
- Similarly, VoxPops (short edited interviews with a large number of people) can be an excellent record of an event, or can be excellent discussion starters.
- Video is incredibly effective in advertising events or regular groups.

RISKS

- As with photos, it is vital to remember the need for consent.
- Video (and audio) is relatively easy to edit and there is a risk of being misquoted or a comment to be used out of context.

DON'T

- Upload any video featuring someone without their consent.
- Upload any portion of video that is subject to copyright.
- Forget that the internet is in the public domain!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media is a form of communication across web-based software and mobile technologies. It is typical of a form of media usage known as 'Web 2.0' which is characterised by the ability of each user to contribute to the media. Traditional forms of media are simply received by a user – newspapers, television, radio etc. – Social Media in contrast offers the user the opportunity to also be a part of the production of media that is in turn received by others. Social Media is essentially conversation. The biggest criticism of Social Media is the matter of security and data protection - it is important to remember that the User is in control. All Social Media platforms are very careful to ensure that the user has full control of the security settings of their profile (including comments, picture, personal information etc.) There will always be a default security setting but as with all computer and internet usage it is the user's responsibility to customise their settings.

1. FACEBOOK

Founded in 2004, Facebook's mission is to make the world more open and connected. People use Facebook to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them. [fb newsroom](http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22)³ Users must register before using the site, after which they may create a personal profile, add other users as [friends](#)⁴, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups, or 'Like' organisation's Facebook Pages. [wiki](#)⁵

GOOD

- Facebook is an excellent way to develop the community of a church or group. It provides a more constant source of connection for those on the edge of the community, or those who struggle to be physically as present as they may prefer.
- Facebook has two mechanisms to help organisations connect and interact with users: a 'Facebook Group' or a 'Facebook Page'. With a Facebook Group, a community of people and friends to promote, share and discuss relevant topics is created. A Facebook Page can be used to advertise a youth group, workplace or organisation and can be used to send bulk messages to its followers. Groups, Pages and Events (below) are created by a Facebook user who automatically becomes the 'Admin'. They then have control of the settings of the group, page or event. The 'creator' is able to assign 'Admin' status to other members of the group, page or event and designate how much control they each then have.
- Events can also be created in Facebook, which allow users to advertise events. Anyone invited will become members of the event and can RSVP, share photos before or after the event, comment and engage in discussions.
- Sharing photos, links, videos and engaging in forum discussions can all add another element to how churches and youth groups develop discipleship outside of the Sunday Service.

³ <http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22>

⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friending>

⁵ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>

- Facebook allows a unique opportunity to build relationships with young people's parents as parental consent should be sought for interactions with young people. It could also include an invitation for the parent to be a member of the Group or to 'Like' the Page.

Risks

- Given its global size, Facebook attracts a great deal of media attention. It is important to remember that it is only sustainable as long as its reputation is maintained. As a company it is in their own best interest to ensure that their security and safeguarding systems are above reproach. However, control lies ultimately with the user. All those using Facebook need to be encouraged to customise their security settings. [i.e. the extent of personal information shared and with whom],
- Leaders should be assigned 'Admin status' on all Groups and Pages and monitor comments, the wall, images and the behaviour of members of the Group or Page. Leaders should feel free to challenge, educate or intervene as necessary. If a Facebook Group or Page is set up in the name of the church or youth group, it is essential that a leader becomes a member of it and oversees the content and activity.
- Facebook Protocols need to be agreed within any Youth Ministry Team (including leaders and workers, whether employed or voluntary).
- Similarly, Young People need to be openly encouraged to be conscious of their activity on Facebook; including the information and photos that may be shared and when it is appropriate for members of the Facebook Page/Group to communicate with each other.
- There is a risk in any adult being 'friends' with a young person on Facebook. This is often the most effective way of communicating with young people. If this is agreed to be the case in a local context it is important that some strict boundaries are agreed with any adults who interact with young people. These may include:
 - Parental consent
 - Curfew for interactions (e.g. 11pm).
 - Accountability from a member of the church leadership – someone who is given complete access to the leader's Facebook account to eliminate secretive activity.
 - The realisation that allowing young people to be 'friends' give them access to all of the leader's Facebook actions.

DON'T

- Set up a separate Facebook profile. Whilst encouraged in some sectors, this practise is in fact in direct contradiction to Facebook's Terms & Conditions. Any one person is only allowed to manage one Facebook account. See above for notes on creating a Facebook Page or Facebook Group.
- Delete any messages sent to a young person in case of future allegations.
- Say anything on Facebook that you wouldn't say in public or want repeated.
- Encourage anyone under the age of thirteen (13 years old) to register on Facebook. The safeguarding policy and practice should include agreed protocols such as minimum age of users, which should be set at or above the minimum required by Facebook terms and conditions.

2. TWITTER



At the heart of Twitter are small bursts of information called [Tweets](#)⁶. Each Tweet is 140 characters long, but don't let the small size fool you—you can discover a lot in a little space. You can see photos, videos and conversations directly in Tweets to get the whole story at a glance, and all in one place. [twitter.com](#)⁷ Twitter is the most public of all Social Media communications. Whilst it is possible to send a Direct Message [DM] to another Twitter user, all general Tweets are public. This openness is Twitter's greatest advantage as long as all users remember it.

GOOD

- Twitter users tend to be students and young professionals, whereas Facebook has a far broader mix across all age groups.
- Unlike Facebook, multiple accounts per user are allowed. As such many people have both a corporate and personal Twitter account.
- Hashtags (#tags) are very useful in filtering comments and interactions and provide a mechanism for conversations on Twitter.
- Integration between Twitter, Facebook and Blogs means that Social Media is a very powerful mechanism for churches and youth groups.

RISKS

- All Twitter users need to be conscious that it is, by its very nature, a public forum. Used appropriately this has immense benefits, but it is easy to forget 'where you are'.
- One of Twitter's selling points is that a user may be 'followed' by anyone, anywhere. If this is not appropriate or desirable, the account can be hidden from public searches.

DON'T

- Say anything on Twitter that you wouldn't say live on the radio. Remember all Tweets are public.

MOBILE COMMUNICATION



Mobile devices have become handheld computers. Users can create presentations, word documents and send emails all whilst walking to work. It also enables users to connect to their chosen Social Media on the move, while retaining the standard mobile functions of text, voice and even video calls.

GOOD

- Mobile communication offers the user the ability to contact or be contacted whilst away from the office environment. Given that ministers are often on the road, between clubs, schools and meeting people, mobile phones can increase availability.

RISKS

- Being constantly available risks the work-life balance. If mobile communication (including Social Media) is used in ministry it is up to the leader to ensure appropriate boundaries. It takes self-discipline to disengage from emails, texts, Facebook and Twitter, but it is incredibly important to safeguard free-time.
- As with other forms of digital communication, a record of conversations needs to be kept.
- It is important to check the security settings of any mobile devices. The manufacturers default settings may be sufficient, but it is the users' responsibility to customise their own devices.

⁶ <http://support.twitter.com/articles/15367-how-to-post-a-twitter-update-or-tweet>

⁷ <http://www.twitter.com/about>

DON'T

- Send inappropriate texts or images.
- Allow anyone else access to the mobile device. It is important to safeguard the contact information that will be within the mobile device.
- Allow the mobile device to control your work patterns: you are allowed to turn it off!
- Use your mobile phone whilst driving!

YOUNG PEOPLE ONLINE**1. CYBER BULLYING**

Cyber Bullying is all too commonplace and can happen to a child of any age. It provides the potential for 24 hour bullying and is very distressing. Previously, young people could leave school and the bullying may stop; now with the advancement of technology, bullying follows the young people home through their mobile telephones, emails and Social Networking Sites. Beatbullying is an online website working at the forefront of cyber bullying and offers online mentoring from other young people that have been trained by Beatbullying. It is essentially a safe Social Networking Site. Free counselling is also available. www.beatbullying.org⁸

The practice of cyber-bullying is not limited to children but it is often referred to as cyberstalking or cyberharassment when perpetrated by adults.

If you have concerns about the conduct of anyone you know then please contact a member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.

The best defence for the potential anonymity offered by the internet is education. While there is a risk of interacting with someone who claims to be a different age or gender, this needs to be weighed up against the overall benefit of online communication. Any children or young people who have access to the internet need to be made aware of the relative risks and given some basic advice and oversight to keep them safe.

- Never give out personal information to online friends. This includes an instant messaging ID, email address, mobile number, school name and any pictures of you, your family and friends.
- Remember that online friends are just that and if they are not known to you in the real world, they may be lying about who they are.
- Children and young people should never meet up with a person they have met online unless they take a trusted adult with them.
- If something is published online, anyone can access it, change it or share it with others. Keep social network profiles private.
- Use webcams with caution and only with family and friends who are already known in the real world, as images can be copied, changed and shared.
- Do not post inappropriate images of yourself online which send out the wrong impression and make you vulnerable.
- Think before opening files from people you do not know in the real world. They may contain anything from a virus to an inappropriate image or film and should be deleted.
- Know how to block someone online and report them to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) if you feel uncomfortable. Save the <http://www.clickceop.net> website to your favourites so that you can report any suspicious behaviour straight away.

⁸ <http://www.beatbullying.org/>

May 2012

[version 1-1]

USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.youtube.com/ceop>

<http://www.childnet-int.org>

<http://ceop.gov.uk>

<http://thinkuknow.co.uk>

<http://ccpas.co.uk>

<http://www.beatbullying.org>

<http://www.cybermentors.org.uk>



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

