

EBD #12.07 Social Media Recommendations and Guidelines for ALA Leadership

From the moment you are certified as ALA Officer, you are a public voice of the American Library Association (ALA) and should consider yourself a spokesperson for ALA. This will likely impact how you post to your own social media channels as well as interactions you have with the ALA social media channels. Here are some guidelines for social media during your time as an ALA officer.

- ALA staff is here to support you. If you're unsure how best to respond to a comment, or you're preparing to post on a sensitive issue, ALA staff can help you think about how your statement might affect broader ALA mission, goals, or strategy.
- Please refrain from posting anything on social media that you would not be totally comfortable posting in an "official" capacity for ALA. As you know, because of ALA's non-profit status, we are legally bound to refrain from certain kinds of political statements. If you're not sure, please feel free to ask the ALA social media team for advice.
- Remember that Facebook posts, blog entries and tweets—even if you intend them to be solely personal messages to your friends or family—can be easily circulated beyond your intended audience. Even if posts are marked as private they can still be captured as a screenshot and circulated without your permission. This content, regardless of the original intention, represents you and ALA to the outside world. With social media, it is safest to assume that you are creating a permanent record of what you say every time you post.
- With this in mind, you may want to consider reviewing your past social media posts for statements or images that could be reframed in a negative light and cause harm to your public image. This is also a good time to review the privacy settings on your social media accounts (particularly Facebook) so that you know who has viewing access to your posts.
- Members of the press often use social media to find sources for stories and sometimes use social media posts in their stories. If you are contacted by the press via social media, please alert the ALA media relations team and forward request information to alamedia@ala.org.
- Monitor your channels. Often, members will see social media as a way to engage in a conversation with you, or to talk amongst themselves about ALA statements, presidential initiatives, and other hot topics. By monitoring your channels, you will be able to stay up to date on what is being said and can be prepared in case a public response to a crisis is required. Additionally, please provide a list of all your social media channels so that the ALA team can monitor your channels, as well. If you detect chatter on a topic that might escalate into a crisis for ALA, please contact the Public Awareness Office and the social media team as soon as possible.
- Like most large organizations ALA has its own experiences with internet trolls. Be aware that there are some issues and people to which ALA chooses not to respond. If you are harassed on your own channels or if you are tagged to respond to hot-button issues, please check in with the social media team or the Public Awareness Office.