



Social Media: ethics, responsibility & the law

Let's break SM down into channels

social networks: profile based
social networks: vertical
social networks: white label

blogging & microblogging

wiki's
email
mobile

Profile-based options for organizations: pages and groups

- one for marketing, one for your customers/members
- pages are public, but you maintain editorial control
- groups can be public or private (invitation only & moderated)
- profile-based social networks have their own terms and policies regarding content
- you may post your own organization's policies on your pages or groups as you see fit

Vertical networks: youtube, flickr, slideshare, scribd, delicious

- anyone is free to post content that is not in violation of the site's policies
- while there aren't "laws" specifically governing social media, the few cases that have been contested have ruled in favor of the site
- meaning, the poster is responsible for the content posted, not the site owner unless the site owner has participated in the editorial process

White label: do-it-yourself social network like ning

- pro's and con's -- you must formulate your own policy,
- can you get people to join?

*note: most sites will issue a warning before uploading content (images, video, etc.) reiterating you must have permission to post ie. no copyright infringement.

*note: like any other form of communication, you have the right to sue for defamation if you can prove malice

Blogging/Microblogging

— clearly defined blogging policy and adherence (see fastlane.gmblogs.com/about)

The FTC has taken a hands-off approach to social media but is readying regulations regarding bloggers (pay to play) that aligns with "truth in advertising".

It only gets hairy if/when you're leaving comments or content that endorses a product or company that's paid you to do so. For example, if SEOMoz hired a social media crew to go say nice things about our tools or post a link to them in every forum on the web where SEO was discussed, they'd need to state their relationship with us each time they engaged in that fashion.

How would you feel if you bought an expensive television based on a 4.3 star rating when the majority of those comments came for people that were paid by the company to comment -- full disclosure

WIKI's: the most famous wiki: Wikipedia and their policy regarding disputes

Wikipedia has a rich set of methods to handle most abuses that commonly arise. These methods are well-tested and should be relied upon. According to Wikipedia:

- Intentional vandalism can be reported and corrected by anyone.
- Unresolved disputes between editors, whether based upon behavior, editorial approach, or validity of content, can be addressed through the talk page of an article, through requesting comments from other editors or through Wikipedia's comprehensive dispute resolution process.
- Abuse of user accounts, such as the creation of "Internet sock puppets" or solicitation of friends and other parties to enforce a non-neutral viewpoint or inappropriate consensus within a discussion, or to disrupt other Wikipedia processes in an annoying manner, are addressed through the sock puppet policy.

push marketing channels like mobile and email
now involve consensual marketing

mobile is self-regulated:

- opt-in only with confirmation, opt-out clearly stated with each message

email comes under federal jurisdiction with the CAN-SPAM compliance act

- legitimate email address
- physical mailing address
- non-misleading subject line
- opt-out
- removal of opt-outs within 10 days
- transactional or relationship email is exempt

Monitoring your brand -- clipping services (fee-based), keyword alerts through RSS aggregation: free, twitter searches, monitoring social network accounts

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