Memorandum

To: Priest and General Mail recipients

From: Bud Bunce
            Director of Communications

Re: Policies and Best Practices for using the Internet and Social Media - revised

Date: February 16, 2012

In late November of 2011, the **Policies and Best Practices for using the Internet and Social Media** were distributed throughout the Archdiocese of Portland. As various ministry groups read the Policies and Best Practices, we received feedback that sought clarification, changes and / or additions. The committee working on these Policies and Best Practices listened and gave due consideration to the concerns we received. Attached are the Policies and Best Practices as revised after this process. The Archbishop and his Cabinet have reviewed and approved this revision.

The changes are as follows:
- Revised date
- Revised page numbers, as the section on e-mail and texting / instant messaging have been separated
- General Policies now include (paragraph 4) "Using social media such as e-mail, texting, instant messaging, etc., to contact minors should be confined to professional purposes."
- Websites – deleted the words "or accessible"
- Social Networking Sites – deleted the words "or accessible"
- E-mail – removed references to text messages and instant messages
- Texting / Instant Messaging – inserted policy "Text and instant messaging on behalf of the Archdiocese, a parish or a school must be consistent with the teaching and values of the Catholic Church."
- Texting / Instant Messaging - Deleted Best Practice "When communicating Archdiocesan, parish or school business, personnel should use an organization's account, not a personal or home account." Explanation: Most personnel have only one cell phone, usually not employer provided. These phones have one texting / instant messaging plan.

Please discard the November 2011 version of the Policies and Best Practices

Thank you

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
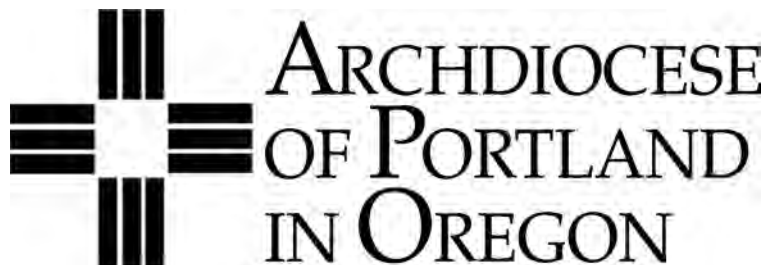# Policies and Best Practices
for using the
Internet and Social Media

"In the final analysis, the truth of Christ is the full and authentic response to that human desire for relationship, communion and meaning which is reflected in the immense popularity of social networks. Believers who bear witness to their most profound convictions greatly help prevent the web from becoming an instrument which depersonalizes people, attempts to manipulate them emotionally or allows those who are powerful to monopolize the opinions of others. On the contrary, believers encourage everyone to keep alive the eternal human questions which testify to our desire for transcendence and our longing for authentic forms of life, truly worthy of being lived. It is precisely this uniquely human spiritual yearning which inspires our quest for truth and for communion and which impels us to communicate with integrity and honesty."

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI FOR THE 45th WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY "**Truth, Proclamation and Authenticity of Life in the Digital Age**"

Revised February 2012

Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
Policies and Best Practices
for using the
Internet and Social Media

Introduction

Digital communications have become integral to the work of the Church. The resources of the internet such as e-mail, websites, social networking sites, etc., are now widely used in parishes and schools to communicate with parishioners, parents and students.   Technology now combines digital phone service and the internet.

The Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon encourages use of today's technology and digital resources. The purpose of the policies and guidelines presented here are to ensure safe and effective ways of using these resources in the work of the Church.

In this document "policies" are procedures that must be followed by personnel of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon (Archdiocese), affiliated parishes, parish schools and Archdiocesan high schools using social media. "Best practices" are recommended procedures or methods that help ensure effective and safe use of social media.

Definitions of terms are found at the end of the document.

We are grateful to the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry for permission to use parts of *Recommended Technology Guidelines for Pastoral Work with Young People*, which was developed in consultation with the USCCB Secretariat for Child and Youth Protection and the Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth. 2010

Contents

General Policies

The following policies apply to all use of the internet and social media by personnel of the Archdiocese, affiliated parishes, parish schools and Archdiocesan high schools.

Archdiocesan, parish and school websites are for purposes of evangelization, education and information related to the Catholic Church, and must be consistent with the teachings and values of the Catholic Church.

Social media developed and used on behalf of the Archdiocese, a parish or school must be authorized respectively by the Archbishop, pastor or principal.

Using social media such as e-mail, texting, instant messaging, etc., to contact minors must be confined to professional purposes.

Archdiocesan, parish and school websites must follow the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops "Political Activity Guidelines for Catholic Organizations" www.usccb.org/about/general-counsel/political-activity-guidelines.cfm.

Unless exempt by Fair Use or in the public domain, use of any copyrighted material including but not limited to images, music or video, must be done with the expressed permission of the copyright holder.

Photographs or video images of minors may be included on the Archdiocesan, parish or school web page provided that: **1)** the minor's parent or legal guardian has given permission in writing; and **2)** there is no identifying information about the minor on the web page.

Websites should be reviewed by the Archdiocesan Office of Communications prior to "going live" or after major revisions. Any problems will be referred to the parish or school to correct.

An Archdiocesan, parish or school website should use great caution in placing links to advertisers or other commercial websites. This includes links to parish or school shopping sites for fund-raising purposes. An acknowledgement page of donors contributing to an Archdiocesan, parish or school event is recommended over links to advertisers or donors.

Links to other Catholic and religious websites are permitted. Such links will be reviewed for appropriateness.

Employees of the Archdiocese, an affiliated parish, parish school or Archdiocesan high school are subject to whatever additional policies and procedures their employers may have covering technology and the use of technology equipment.

Websites

<u>Policies</u>

There must be separate websites for professional and personal use. Personal websites must not be publicized to minors with whom personnel associate through their work for the Archdiocese, a parish or school.

An Archdiocesan, parish or school website that is accessible to the general public should not contain identifying and/or contact information about minors.

An Archdiocesan, parish or school website should not include personal photographs or other personal information about organization personnel.

<u>Best Practices</u>

The Archdiocese, affiliated parishes and schools should make every effort to establish a website, and commit to regularly updating its content.

A minimum of two adults should be delegated as authorized administrators of a website, and have full administrative access to the organization's site. At least one authorized administrator should be an employee of the organization.

The organization's official logo or standard image(s) should appear on the website to distinguish it as the organization's official site and not a website of a specific person.

Communication with visitors to the site should be done through the organization's official e-mail whenever possible.

Obtaining written permission from adults whose photograph will appear on a web page is a good practice.

Social Networking Sites

<u>Policies</u>

Social networking sites for professional and personal use must be separate. Personal social networking pages and information must not be publicized to minors with whom personnel associate through their work for the Archdiocese, parish or school.

Personnel utilizing social networking sites, either for professional or personal use, must be vigilant in representing themselves as personnel of the Catholic Church in all interactions that can be viewed publicly.

An Archdiocesan, parish or school social networking site should not include personal information of personnel. Personal information includes family pictures, personal social events, home phone numbers, addresses, or personal e-mail accounts, etc.

<u>Best Practices</u>

Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, etc., have been the most popular social networking sites. Users should be aware of the "terms of use" of each site **including changes and updates, age restrictions, and privacy options and controls** for each site prior to establishing a ministry presence.

A minimum of two adults should be delegated as authorized administrators of a social network site, and have full administrative access to the organization's site. At least one authorized administrator should be an employee of the organization.

Authorized administrators should be registered to have e-mail alerts of page activity sent to the official organizational e-mail address. This allows for a quicker response time to urgent requests, and helps to ensure that all postings are appropriate.

A difference exists between initiating an online "friend request" and accepting one. Requests to connect should be initiated by a minor, not the adult representative of the Archdiocese, parish or school.

When posting photographs of youth activities, minors should not be "tagged," or identified by name in the photograph. On the original social networking site, it is recommended that the "no tagging" option be set.

The parish or school logo or standard image should appear on the site to distinguish it as the organization's social networking site and not that of a specific person.

E-mail

<u>Policy</u>

Personnel communicating with minors with whom they associate through their work for the Archdiocese, parish or school, must use professional e-mail accounts not personal accounts.

<u>Best Practices</u>

Good judgment should always be used with text based communication tools.

Parents should be informed of the organization's guidelines for use of e-mail for communication purposes with minors.

Just as confidentiality and boundaries are observed in personal communications, boundaries should be adhered to when communicating via e-mail. E-mail can be logged, archived and forwarded to other parties. Personnel should avoid engaging in any postings/ communications that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted.

Clear guidelines or parameters should be established with regard to times of communication between adults and minors. While minors may be e-mailing in the late evening hours, personnel should pre-determine and communicate when it is appropriate to make a professional response, except in the case of serious urgency.

When communicating Archdiocesan, parish or school business, personnel should use an organization's e-mail account, not a personal or home account.

Communications using e-mail should be professional and for appropriate purposes. The boundaries of professional relationships should not be overstepped.

Personnel should avoid any communication which might be construed as having sexual overtones. Personnel should not reply to any such e-mail, but he/she should keep a copy of any such inappropriate communication and notify an administrator/pastor/supervisor.

E-mail should be written as though it may be read by someone other than for whom it was intended. Messages may be shared or forwarded without one's knowledge.

E-mail is not private. All such communications may be viewed by the organization at any time, and may be subject to legal action. Messages should be reviewed before they are sent to determine if they could be misinterpreted.

Texting / Instant Messaging

Policy

Text and instant messaging on behalf of the Archdiocese, a parish or a school must be consistent with the teaching and values of the Catholic Church.

Best Practices

Good judgment should always be used with text based communication tools.

Parents should be informed of the organization's guidelines for use of texting or instant messaging for communication purposes with minors.

Just as confidentiality and boundaries are observed in personal communications, boundaries should be adhered to when communicating via text and/or instant messages. Text messages and instant messages can be logged, archived and forwarded to other parties. Personnel should avoid engaging in any postings/communications that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted.

Clear guidelines or parameters should be established with regard to times of communication between adults and minors. While minors may be texting in the late evening hours, personnel should pre-determine and communicate when it is appropriate to make a professional response, except in the case of serious urgency.

Communications using texting or instant messaging should be professional and for appropriate purposes. The boundaries of professional relationships should not be overstepped.

Personnel should avoid any communication which might be construed as having sexual overtones. Personnel should not reply to any such messages but he/she should keep a copy of any such inappropriate communication and notify an administrator/pastor/supervisor.

Instant messages should be written as though they may be read by someone other than for whom they were intended. Messages may be shared or forwarded without one's knowledge.

Instant messages are not private. All such communications may be viewed by the organization at any time, and may be subject to legal action. Messages should be reviewed before they are sent to determine if they could be misinterpreted.

Blogging

<u>Policies</u>

Archdiocesan, parish and school blogging sites are for purposes of evangelization, education and information related to the Catholic Church, and must be consistent with the teaching and values of the Catholic Church.

Personal and professional blogs must be separate.

Blogs on behalf of the Archdiocese, parish or school should not be used to conduct or promote an individual's personal business and/or personal activities, and should not divulge any personal information.

<u>Best Practices</u>

Blogs may be an efficient method for disseminating fliers for upcoming activities, permission/consent forms, calendars and ministerial updates.

Other possible uses of blogs include: posting links and references for faith formation; communicating sacramental preparation information or parent resources; communicating daily Scripture passages, prayers or spiritual links/resources.

If minors are to engage in blogging as a part of an officially sanctioned organizational activity, such activity must be monitored by at least two authorized administrators.   Minors may only be identified by first name and no other identifying and/or contact information.

Online Video

<u>Policy</u>

Unless exempt by Fair Use or in the public domain, use of any copyrighted material in an archived or live video, including but not limited to images, music or video, must be done with the expressed permission of the copyright holder.

<u>Best Practices</u>

Streaming video can be used for education, communication and promotional purposes.

Care and caution should be taken with online communications.

When posting videos online, extreme care must be taken to protect the privacy of minors, and such videos should only be utilized to showcase/advertise Archdiocesan, parish or school related events and activities.

When presenting personal opinions and engaging in chats or discussions, it is essential for personnel to remember that even on the World Wide Web others may recognize them as representing the values of the Catholic Church.

Registration Technologies and Securing Private Information[1]

Capturing information on registration forms, surveys, etc. involves a higher degree of technical understanding and implementation than simple websites or blogs. Forms on web pages can use any number of technologies to record and transmit information, and the transmission of that information can be made more or less secure through the technical decisions and requirements used to develop that form. In simplest terms, no sensitive information should be transmitted through basic web interactions ("http://" in the URL). Only secure, encrypted transmissions ("https://" also known as "SSL" or "Secure Sockets Layer") should be used.

In addition, though secure transmissions ("https://") can happen through any web server, most modern browsers will display strongly worded warnings when the identity of the web server cannot be verified (particularly through third party verification services like VeriSign or GeoTrust). Therefore, registration processes that will capture sensitive data usually involve the additional expense of securing a third-party secure certificate.

- No sensitive personal information—particularly financial information (credit card numbers, checking account numbers) and secure identifiers (*e.g.*, social security numbers) should ever be transmitted through email, web pages that convert form information into email, or web forms using regular hypertext transmission ("http://" pages).
- No sensitive personal information should be transmitted over SSL ("https://") unless the user can receive assurance that the communication with the server can be verified through third party services (VeriSign, etc.)
- If the explanation of these technologies and the recommendations accompanying them are beyond the technical competence of the webmaster or staff person [authorized administrator] responsible for registration forms, that should be taken as a sign that the parish or organization should *not* be creating such forms. Those leaders should contact a technology/web solution provider for assistance.

Best Practices
- Leave the creation and management of secure web forms to a qualified web solution provider unless you understand the demands of secure transmissions and can assure that your website can accommodate such security.
- If possible, handle all financial transactions "in real time;" that is, on a commerce website that can process credit card transactions online, thus assuring that no financial data needs to be communicated to the parish/organization.
- Even if a form will not include financial information, all security protocols described above are to be followed if other sensitive personal data is transmitted (such as social security numbers, passwords, unlisted phone numbers, etc.).
- Acquire a third party secure certificate (for example, VeriSign, GeoTrust, etc.) for any web server that will handle SSL ("https://") transmissions.

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1   This section is taken directly from *Recommended Technology Guidelines for Pastoral Work with Young People*, Developed by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, 2010.

Definitions

Authorized administrator: an individual delegated by the Archbishop, Pastor or Principal as the manager of the organizations network operations and/or an internet application such as a website, social networking site, blog site, etc.

Best practices: recommended procedures or methods that help ensure effective and safe use of social media.

Blog: a blog (a contraction of the term "web log") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order. "Blog" can also be used as a verb, meaning to maintain or add content to a blog.
Examples: There are many types of blogs on sites throughout the Internet. They are common for celebrities, writers, journalists, etc. WordPress is one of the more popular tools used to create blogs.[2]

Minor: a person who is under 18 years of age.

Online friend request: an intentional action of establishing an association with another person through an online social network. Generally, one person submits a "friend request" to another via the online service. The person receiving the "friend request" may accept, reject, or ignore the request. Once "friended," the two people can adjust their privacy settings to control how much information the other is allowed to access.

Organization: the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon, a parish, parish school, or an Archdiocesan high school.

Personal: not related to an individual's work or other activities on behalf of the Archdiocese, a parish, parish school or Archdiocesan high school.

Personnel: all seminarians, clerics, members of religious orders, lay employees and volunteers working on behalf of the Archdiocese, an affiliated parish, parish school or Archdiocesan high school.

Policies: procedures that must be followed by personnel of the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon (Archdiocese), affiliated parishes, parish schools and Archdiocesan high schools using social media.

Professional: related to an individual's work or activities on behalf of the Archdiocese, a parish, parish school or Archdiocesan high school.

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2   *Social Media Guidelines*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010.

Social network: a Web 2.0 site that is entirely driven by content of its members. Individuals are allowed flexibility in privacy settings, in posting text, photos, video, links and other information, and in level of interaction with other members.
Examples: Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace. Twitter, YouTube and Flickr are often also included in lists of social networking sites, although sometimes YouTube and Flickr are designated as multimedia sharing sites, while Twitter is currently more often designated as a micro-blogging application.[3]

Tagging is an online social media action done with photos uploaded to the network site. A particular person in a specific photograph is "tagged" by either themselves or another person so that whenever that photo appears on the online social network, that person's name will appear whenever a mouse pointer hovers over their image in the photo. This function can be turned off or limited and any person who is tagged in a photo can "remove" the tag.

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3   *Social Media Guidelines*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2010.