

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, San Antonio  
January 20-25, 2006**

**Topic:** Procedures for YALSA Blogs

**Background:** YALSA will launch its first blog at Midwinter. In order to ensure the success of such blogs, it is necessary for the Board to think about the purpose and goals behind blogging. It would also be beneficial to put into place general guidelines and/or policies to ensure that the blogs will meet the needs of the association. The Communications Ad-hoc Committee developed recommendations in regard to YALSA and blogging. Additionally, policies were borrowed from LITA for possible adaptation and use for YALSA.

**Action Required:** Exploration

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**Report from the Communications Ad-hoc Committee:**

**Reasons to Blog**

1. To put a human face on YALSA – YALSA has passionate advocates for teens, who are good communicators. These are born bloggers, and if we don't let them put their gifts to use, we're under-utilizing them and they may turn elsewhere. Not to mention, these advocates can take away the impersonal side of a big association.
2. Member (and non-member) feedback – Because blogs are a two-way street, YALSA bloggers can quickly gauge the reaction and interest of the membership at-large regarding its efforts and products.
3. Increase involvement (ownership) in the organization – Because blogging provides the opportunity to be “heard” it can increase member satisfaction. It would also allow for greater participation by virtual members who are not able to attend conferences.
4. Increase name recognition (branding) – As part of an overall marketing program, blogging can increase recognition of the YALSA name and products.
5. Let's not get left behind! – PLA is blogging; LITA is blogging; various state library associations (CA, WI, and soon NJ) to name a few) are blogging. We are a division of ALA serving born bloggers – let's talk to them using their language and media.
6. Blogging is not redundant with any other service/communication YALSA employs – Blogs provide the benefit of instant publishing (not possible with newsletters or journals like *YALS*), as well as an important recognition that while many people are members of YALSA's listservs, not all are.

## Who Should Blog?

1. Committees/groups that have a regular message to tell/share. Selection and award committees, for example, are not appropriate for blogging. Their work is not conversational (with the general membership) in nature/tone, nor are they likely to have the time to manage a blog.
2. Planners/promoters of a special event – pre-conference, President’s Program, SUS training, etc.

## Getting YALSA Set Up For Blogging

1. Select a Blog site, preferably one with little to no advertising and the ability to add the YALSA logo. TypePad was suggested because of its abilities and cost.
2. Develop a set of templates or directions on how to get the site set up so that the committee members could use them to get things going. This may be something that the Website Advisory Committee could be responsible for managing. An RSS feed for each blog should also be activated.
3. Make any necessary changes to the YALSA website to link to and/or promote the blog.

## Getting Committees Set Up for Blogging

1. Submit a request to the YALSA office/Board for permission to develop a blog. The task force believes that it should take no longer than two weeks to approve the blog.
2. The request should be accepted if the mission of the committee, etc., and the blog’s proposed purpose follow the broad guidelines outlined above under “Who Should Blog.”
3. Assign the management of the blog to the committee chair (who may delegate to another committee member). Ultimate responsibility will rest with the committee chair however. New posts should occur **at least once per week**.
4. Continually advertise the blog. Send monthly/weekly notices to YALSA membership lists, PUBYAC, etc. Links to YALSA blogs should be added to all official YALSA correspondence, through RSS feeds for each blog, through press releases (and hopefully, press coverage).

## **Proposed YALSA Blog Policy:**

(adapted from LITA blog policies statement)

### **Mission:**

The mission of the YALSA Blog is to provide a fast, focused, and flexible format for publishing information about time sensitive issues such as news in the YA field, programs, conferences, initiatives, resources, and activities of use to YALSA members and the YA librarianship community.

### **Goals and Plans:**

A volunteer community of bloggers will be recruited from the YALSA membership to report on YALSA and ALA programs, and news of interest to the young adult librarian community.

### **Policies and Procedures:**

**1. Blog manager(s):** A volunteer manager or co-managers, much like an editor for our print journals, to be responsible for overall blog administration. The manager(s) would be YALSA members.

**2. Bloggers:** Bloggers must be members or staff of YALSA. The blog may have ongoing regular bloggers, as well as occasional guest bloggers for specific conferences or events. Bloggers would be recruited by the Blog Manager(s) based on a person's: 1) expertise in the topic to be blogged, 2) writing ability and 3) technical abilities.

**3. Blog Content:** The Blog Manager(s) with direction from YALSA's Board of Directors and input from the Editorial Advisory Board will determine specific topics appropriate for blogging. Committee chairs and YALSA members may also submit topic ideas to the Blog Manager(s) for their consideration.

**4. Acceptable Use:** The blog is a YALSA-sponsored tool for use within YALSA and for outreach beyond YALSA. Lively opinion and commentary are welcome in blog posts. Bloggers are strongly encouraged to check facts, cite sources, present balanced views, acknowledge and correct errors, and check spelling and grammar before making a post live.

Links to related posts are encouraged, but bloggers should post original content rather than merely reposting entire items from other blogs, lists, newsletters, etc.

**5. Comments:** Comments are open to all but may be moderated by the blog steering committee. Commentary, opinion, and reaction to posts are welcome. Comments should be relevant to the specific post they are attached to. Spam, flaming, personal attacks, and off-topic comments are not permitted. YALSA reserves the right not to post any comment deemed inappropriate.

The YALSA Blog Manager(s) will work with the O & B Committee to establish procedures for managing and moderating comments.

**6. Pages:** Frequently requested information, informational pages, etc. will be placed on blog pages as static info, rather than occasional blog posts.

**7. Blogroll/links:** Links to ALA, YALSA and other ALA-affiliated websites and blogs will be provided. Other links to notable websites or blogs may be added to Links or Blogroll sections if the consensus is that they would be useful to readers.

**8. Copyright:** Content on this blog would be governed by a Creative Commons license.

**Blog Writing Tips** (adapted from the LITAblog guidelines):

--Compose in a text editor first, then spell-check and view your work carefully before posting on the blog site.

--If blogging about a specific event (such as a program at a conference), use the name of the specific event as the title of your post. Lead with your most important observation. Conclude with your second most important observation. The first and last sentences are the most noticeable in any writing, but particularly for online writing. The first ten words of your post should grab the reader and establish the topic for that post. For interest and color, try to share some sense of the place/mood/participants of the event with our readers.

--Keep the tone professional so that readers are aware that you are knowledgeable about the topic and can be relied upon for useful and accurate information.

--Use an active voice as well as good punctuation and grammar. Write with specifics. If you use facts, check them with a reliable source. If you quote someone, try to verify the quote, either with the speaker or with another reliable source.

--Try to avoid library jargon and/or acronyms that a wide audience may not be familiar with. If you use acronyms, please spell it out the first time you use it so readers will know what it stands for.

--For readability, keep paragraphs short. 75 words or less is a good rule of thumb. Keep sentences short for the same reason. Avoid convoluted constructions and try not to lead sentences with lengthy dependent clauses.

--If someone else has already blogged about a topic, add your comments as a reply to the original posting.

--If you're bringing a digital camera to a news event or conference, please consider sharing a photo on the blog. Just be sure it is relevant to your topic and/or helps illustrate a point. Normally you can upload images with the extension jpg, gif, png as long as they are no larger than 2048 KB.

--Consider providing a link to another web site (especially a YALSA one) that is relevant to the topic you're blogging. Be careful to use the correct URL.

--Finally: relax, have fun! Write in your own voice.