

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Seattle
January 25 – 29, 2013

Topic: YALSA Blogs Policy Update

Background: In August 2012, a commenter to the YALSAblog contacted the Blog Manager to ask that her comment be removed. In reviewing this request it was determined that the current YALSA policy related to comments needed to be updated in several ways. The current YALSAblog comments policy lacked language specifically prohibiting defamatory comments, hate speech, political speech, and/or anti-Trust speech. The policy was also written before the creation of a YALSAblog Advisory Board, whose members may also be responsible for comment moderation. Additionally, the current policy did not offer the blog manager or the advisory board members guidance in communicating with readers who wish to alter or remove their own comments. In September the YALSA Board, via its email listserv, discussed the policy update and voted to approve it. Including the item as a part of this meeting simply ensures it will be entered into the official record of the association.

Action Required: Consent

Proposal: Revise the current YALSAblog comments policy, to be updated on the About pages of the YALSAblog and The Hub, and distributed to all current bloggers and blog advisory board members.

Rationale:

- The current YALSAblog comments policy has not been revisited since 2008.
- The blog's comments policy should be brought in line with YALSA's guidelines for other communications, specifically the Discussion List Policies and Procedures.
- Readers who contact individual authors or the blog manager seeking to remove published comments should be directed to a formal, written policy rather than established blog practice.
- The current comments policy does not specify that publishing reader comments does not signify that YALSA or the YALSAblog endorse the opinions or links therein.
- YALSA, as an association that promotes free speech, believes that redacting or deleting comments (other than those that are specifically prohibited) is not in the interest of freedom of expression.

Proposed Action:

The Board vote to adopt the revised blog comment policy, to be published on the YALSAblog and The Hub, and distributed to all bloggers.

Revised guidelines (additions or changes are in *bold & italicized*):

Comments are open to all but may be moderated by the Blog Manager *and/or Blog Advisory Board*. Commentary, opinion, and reaction to posts are welcome. Comments should be relevant to the specific post they are attached to. *Comments that are largely advertisements or that constitute* flaming, personal attacks, off-topic comments, *defamatory comments, hate speech, political speech and/or anti-Trust speech* are not permitted. YALSA reserves the right not to post *or to delete* any comment *in violation of this policy*.

The YALSAblog does not remove or edit reader comments unless said comments violate the policies outlined above. Readers who wish to clarify, change or expand upon their own original comments may submit additional comments. The YALSAblog does not endorse links or opinions contained in reader comments.

Additional Resources:

- YALSAblog About Page (last revised June 2008; October 2009 revisions only updated the blog manager information) <http://yalsa.ala.org/blog/about/>
- The Hub About Page (approved by YALSA's Board of Directors June 2010) <http://www.yalsa.ala.org/thehub/about/>
- Discussion List Policies and Procedures <http://www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsahandbook/elistpolicies>