

## **YALSA's Revised Social Media Policy FAQ**

YALSA's Board of Directors voted to make a change to the Social Media policy that, beginning Feb. 1, 2015, prohibits award committee members from publicly reviewing, writing, blogging, etc. about titles that are eligible for the particular committee on which they're serving. An FAQ is provided below to address common questions.

### ***What committees are impacted by this change?***

Only YALSA's six award committees are impacted by this policy change: Alex, Edwards, Morris, Nonfiction, Odyssey and Printz.

### ***Why has this policy changed?***

YALSA members have served with the highest level of honesty and integrity on award committees. This change works to ensure there can be no question as to the integrity of the awards and the committee members, and holds the process above reproach or suspicion.

This change also prevents outside third parties, who may not know award committee members or their professional qualifications, from raising questions of ethics or impartiality of the award committee's decision.

### ***What does this mean for reviewers?***

Members serving on an award committee may not publish reviews of titles that are eligible for their particular committee's award during their term of service in professional journals (print and/or electronic) or other professional and personal outlets. This is because committee affiliation is public information, and any published reviews attributed to specific award committee members may undermine the confidentiality of discussions, or the impartiality of an award committee member. Any outstanding reviews should be completed, submitted, and published before the committee's term of service begins.

### ***Does this mean I may not blog or tweet?***

You are welcome to blog or tweet so long as you maintain a wall of separation between your work as a reviewer and your work as an award committee member. However, award committee members must not discuss books on social media that are eligible for their award in any way that could lead to a conflict or lack of confidentiality in regards to their committee. This includes posting personal reviews in spaces such as Goodreads, blogs, or other public platforms. Mentioning the existence of a book is fine. Discussing its merits, especially as pertains to the award criteria is not. Once your term is complete, award committee members may not discuss the status of books as having been or not

been under consideration, suggested, and/or nominated for the award or anything else discussed during the closed committee meetings.

***How does this policy impact my job as an educator or library worker?***

This policy does not place restrictions on award committee members in terms of readers' advisory, collection development or any other responsibilities directly related to their front-line work serving teens through schools or libraries in their communities.

***How can I obtain a variety of critical opinions about books under consideration throughout the year without violating confidentiality guidelines?***

Award committee members are welcome to speak with others regarding eligible books, to benefit from conversations that provide diverse perspectives on titles. During verbal, in-person discussions, such as "mock" award discussions, award committee members are encouraged to:

- Share public information about the award process and the terms & criteria of the awards, as this information publicly available in the committee information at [www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists](http://www.ala.org/yalsa/booklists), and provide education and publicity regarding YALSA's award lists.
- Remember that your comments, especially negative comments, will be remembered more readily than positive comments, so be sure to practice active listening and ask open-ended questions when participating in any discussion.
- Be careful to not publicly dismiss a book.
- Outline, or frame, the discussion carefully. This helps avoid comparing eligible titles against each other.
- Be careful to identify your personal opinion and clarify that you are not speaking on behalf of the committee or as a committee member. Using "I" instead of "we" can help avoid misidentification.