

**YALSA Board of Directors Meeting
ALA Midwinter Meeting, Dallas
January 20 – 24, 2012**

Topic: Draft Committee Social Media Policy

Background: At the Board’s August Meeting via conference call, the group determined that it was desirable to create a social media policy for award and selection committees and directed the President to appoint a taskforce to work on this project. The chair of the taskforce, Jamie Watson, has provided a first draft of a policy below for the board’s consideration.

Action Required: Discussion

This policy governs the publication of and commentary via social media by YALSA committee chairs and members when they are speaking as such. For the purposes of this policy, social media means any tool for online publication and commentary, including, but not limited to blogs, wikis, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, and YouTube.

Committee member posts on social media can help YALSA expand its reach and increase its impact by: helping to raise awareness about the mission and work of the committee, building a sense of community among the association, helping to improve the knowledge or skills of librarians and library workers, providing a virtual means to engage the association, and more.

Social media is an effective communication tool but sometimes it can be challenging for committee members to reconcile their public and private social media activities in terms of their role as a YALSA committee member. Social media is designed for self-expression and encourages conversations. This policy provides a framework for committee members to engage in these activities effectively and ethically.

Statement of Policy

While serving as a YALSA committee chair or member, individuals are both granted permission to and are encouraged to use social media as a conduit for informing the young adult library community about projects and initiatives of the association and work of the committee. This needs to occur in a professional and ethical manner.

YALSA committee members must also comply with relevant ALA policies, including those that relate to ALA elections and campaigning. ALA policy states “appointed committee chairs, or members of committees may endorse candidates, and may use ALA electronic discussion lists to express their support for individual candidate or candidates for ALA offices, as long as they do not use their official titles or create an impression that they are speaking on behalf of an ALA committee or unit of ALA.” Candidates can list endorsers by name, but not by ALA title or office. Executive Board members shall not

endorse any candidate in any ALA election.”

In order to protect the 501c3 status of ALA/YALSA, there are topics that association members are not permitted to write about in any format, including social media. Speaking as an ALA/YALSA member, individuals cannot endorse or oppose a product or company or call for a boycott of a product or company. In addition, individuals speaking as an ALA/YALSA member may not endorse or oppose any federal, state or local candidate running for political office.

The YALSA name may not be used in social media identities, logon ID's and user names without prior approval from the President and Executive Director.

Following the Policy

It is best to err on the side of caution. If a Committee member is unsure whether or not something is appropriate to post on social media, he or she should contact their Committee Chair before making the post live. If a Committee member, for whatever reason, takes an action that is in conflict with this policy, he or she will be contacted to resolve the situation and may be asked to withdraw, correct, or revise postings.

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Logistics

- In order to help distinguish when you're speaking as an individual and when you're speaking as a YALSA Committee member, you may want to consider setting up two accounts for each of the social media tools on which you post. One account would be used for your role as a YALSA Committee member and the other account would be used for your personal postings. This may not be necessary if your work as a YALSA committee member does not require or permit communication about the committee's tasks (e.g., award committee members shouldn't be sharing the winners before they're announced.)
- YALSA believes in transparency and honesty. Use your real name, be clear who you are, and identify what capacity you serve in YALSA and do not post anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names.
- Use tags when posting YALSA content (e.g. #yalsa or @yalsa) to help ensure your message reaches its targeted audience.
- Post frequently and respond to comments and replies from others quickly and accurately.
- Know and respect your audience, including YALSA and its members
- Be smart and protect your privacy by taking simple steps such as avoiding posting personal details, like phone numbers; reading web sites' privacy policies, making use of privacy settings on social media sites, etc.
- Avoid social media arguments and debates and alert the President and Executive Director if you see a misrepresentation made about YALSA in social media. If you yourself are accused by anyone of posting something improperly, inform the

President and Executive Director of the situation promptly in order to determine best next steps and to quickly resolve the situation.

Content

- Regardless of what account you use for posting as a committee member, be sure to limit your committee-related posts to sharing information about the work of the committee, news and announcements from the committee, etc. if applicable. The committee chair will do much of the communication for the group, but committee members are often called on to write articles, blogs and twitter posts.
- Personal opinions about other committee members, specific committee decisions, etc. are not appropriate. If you have concerns you should share them with the committee chairperson.
- Before posting, ask yourself if the post will improve knowledge or skills of YALSA members, if it contributes directly or indirectly to the improvement of YALSA, if it builds a sense of community or it helps to promote YALSA's mission.
- Write about what you know (if needed, verify any facts, dates, etc. before posting anything.)
- The following are some examples of the kinds of posts a committee member might share via social media:
 - Announcements: "The final list of titles for YALSA's 2012 Amazing Audiobooks list have been announced!"
 - New and ongoing projects: "Did you know that it's not too late to turn in a committee volunteer form to serve on YALSA's 2014 selection committees? Learn more at..."
 - Marketing: "Congratulations to Angela Carstenson on the new book she edited for YALSA, 'Outstanding Books for the College Bound.' Learn more at..."
 - PR: "Can't wait to get to ALA's Midwinter Meeting to find out who will win this year's Printz Award from YALSA!"
- What you publish will be around for a long time so consider the content carefully. Strive to make sure it is accurate and professional.
- It is good general practice to link to others' work rather than reproduce it. Adhere to the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others, including YALSA's own trademarks, copyrights and brands.
- Always ask for permission from the President and Executive Director before identifying a member, partner, or sponsor and never discuss confidential details of any individual's or organization's engagement in YALSA.
- Use your best judgment and be sure to make it clear that any views expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of YALSA.
- Bring out your own personality and say what's on your mind (in a respectful and professional tone).

GUIDELINES FOR AN AWARD COMMITTEE MEMBER

Members of Awards committees (Michael L. Printz, Margaret Edwards, Alex, etc.) must be very aware of how their tenure on this committee may affect their social media interactions during the year.

- 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 within their committee. Mentioning the existence of a book is fine. Discussing its merits or insinuating its eligibility for an award is not.
- Be transparent. If you are unsure of how your social media presence reflects on the committee, contact your committee chair before you post or Tweet.
- Public relations for the award are nearly always appropriate (i.e. – generating excitement for the announcement date,.)

GUIDELINES FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- A role of a committee chair is to be the spokesperson for the committee. Therefore a committee chair can ask that committee members limit their social networking discussions about committee business and allow the chair to be the “one voice” of the committee. This is something to make clear to all of your committee members at the start of the committee’s term.
- Committee chairs should act as conduits between committee members and their YALSA board liaison and staff liaison if questions arise about social networking activities of committee members.

Additional Resources

- The YALSA Board Social Media Policy:
www.ala.org/yalsa/aboutyalsa/yalsahandbook/boardsocialmedia