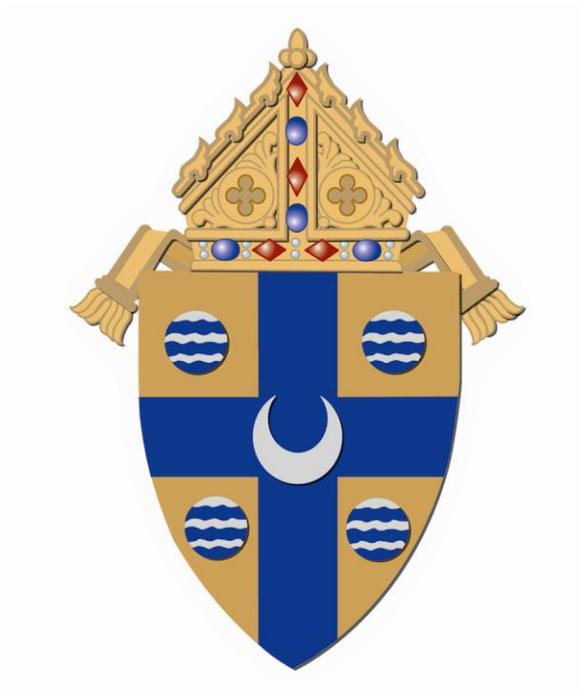


Social Media Policy
Diocese of Springfield in Illinois



July 2012

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About this Document

This diocesan policy provides guidance to personnel on their use of social media. The goal of this policy is to empower personnel in the use of technology and social media and to give clarity, guidance and best practices in the use of these resources in ministry. This policy is designed to supplement and not replace the policies set forth in the Employee Handbook and the Information Technology policy for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and all three documents should be read in conjunction.

The use of technology and social media is not simply an issue that affects youth. While technology and social media engagement may vary by generation, our competence in technology and social media will only enhance our ministerial endeavors.

Parts of this policy are adapted from documents of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, the Diocese of Dallas, the Diocese of Memphis and the Diocese of St. Petersburg.

We are grateful to these entities for their permission to use their documents.

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Section I – Policy Statement

- 1.1. The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and its Affiliates recognize that social media is one of the fastest growing forms of communications in the United States. Echoing Pope Benedict XVI's message for the 44th World Day of Communication, it is our goal for employees, clerics and volunteers to use social media as a powerful tool for evangelization and "facilitate forms of collaboration and greater communion in ways that were unthinkable in the past."¹

The Internet provides various ways for individuals to interact and has changed the way we communicate and share information. The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois views the Internet as an important educational and evangelizing tool to promote school and ministerial programs. The diocese encourages administrators, pastors and principals to support Internet use and to give employees, clerics and volunteers the necessary training and tools to interact safely and responsibly online. However, those using the Internet should bear in mind that certain comments and information may have a harmful effect on the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, its reputation and its employees.

In light of this possibility, and at the urging of the Department of Communications of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, employees, clerics and volunteers are required to adhere to the following policy regarding the use of personal and ministry websites including social networks and blogs.

Section II – Policy Application

- 2.1. This policy applies to all priests and deacons incardinated in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, other priests and deacons who have the faculties of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, seminarians of the diocese, members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life (religious) and lay persons who are employed full-time or part-time in the parishes, schools, agencies and other institutions of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and all volunteers associated with the diocese.

Section III – Definitions

- 3.1. *Blog* (a contraction of the term "web log") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, news on events or subjects, (e.g. church teaching, theology, morals, etc.). May contain other material such as graphics or videos.

¹ Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the 44th World Communications Day. May 16, 2010.

- 3.2. *Micro-blog* is a form of multimedia blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micromedia such as photos or audio clips and publish them, either to be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group which can be chosen by the user. These messages can be submitted by a variety of means, including text messaging, instant messaging, email, digital audio or the web. The content of a micro-blog differs from a traditional blog in that it is typically smaller in actual size and aggregate file size. A single entry could consist of a single sentence or fragment or an image or a brief, 10-second video.
* Example: Twitter – A form of micro-blogging; entries are limited to 140 characters.
- 3.3. *Social Media* (also called Social Technology) is a term used to describe the type of words, sounds and pictures shared via the Internet and based on conversation and interaction between people online.²
- 3.4. *Social Network* is a 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, Google+, 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.
- 3.5. *Social Networking* is a term which describes platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, etc. in which one identifies/maps real-world relationships onto on-line relationships and then uses those relationships to network. Social networking is a subset of social media.
- 3.6. *Official Page* is a page on a social media platform that is created with the approval of the pastor, school administrator, appropriate supervisor or designee; is used in the course of work or ministry related activities; and represents an office, ministry, parish, school or other diocesan entity. Public Figure pages created to represent an individual employee or volunteer in a work or ministry related capacity also meet this description and must fulfill all related requirements.
- 3.7. *Personal Page* is an account with any social media platform or site which you would use to communicate with family and friends on a casual basis. It would contain such items as personal photos, home videos, updates about the regular comings and goings of your daily life, etc.
- 3.8. *Professional Page* is an account with any social media platform or site which you use to communicate only to those individuals with whom you have a professional

² *Social Media*. Wikipedia

relationship. Information chosen for inclusion on this account is relevant to your professional audience or related to your ministry.

3.9. Administrative Authority (A.A.) is the person with the authority to authorize employees and volunteers to establish social media accounts on behalf of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its Affiliates. The following list further defines the Administrative Authority:

3.9.1. The Vicar-General/Moderator of the Curia for the diocesan curia

3.9.2. The Pastor, Administrator, Priest Moderator or Parish Life Coordinator for parishes and schools.

3.9.3. The Executive Director for Catholic Charities

The Bishop of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois may act, as need arises, as the Administrative Authority for the curia or any parish, parish school, diocesan sponsored school, commission, council, committee, task force, board, advisory board, agency or institution sponsored by the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois

3.10. Employee is any person who is employed by the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or an Affiliate. An employee may be a cleric or a lay person who may also be a member of a religious institute.

3.11. *Cleric* is a bishop, an ordained priest or an ordained deacon who is incardinated in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, as well as a religious priest or deacon, or a priest or deacon granted faculties in the diocese, who is engaged in a ministry under the control or auspices of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or an Affiliate.

3.12. *Adult* is an individual who is 18 years of age or older.

3.13. *Child* is a person under 18 years of age.

3.14. *Volunteer* is an adult who works without financial or material gain on behalf of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its Affiliates who is not an employee or a cleric (for example, an intern, catechist, Scout leader, coach, student teacher or others in similar capacities).

Section IV – Creation and Approval of Social Media Activities

4.1. Under the authority of the diocesan Bishop the A.A. who exercises pastoral care of the community committed to him or her will work with the Director of Information Technology, or his or her designee, to create and maintain a positive social media presence. Approval must be granted by the A.A. for a parish group, public or

private, to own or maintain a web presence which associates itself with a parish or one of its entities.

- 4.2. In the diocesan curia, the A.A. must give consent for a department to develop and maintain a social media presence. Upon approval, the department will work with the Director of Information Technology, or his or her designee, to create the social media presence.
- 4.3. In parish schools, the A.A. must give consent for a group to develop and maintain a social media presence.
- 4.4. Additional Catholic associations or organizations established in the diocese with permission of the diocesan Bishop, but not directly administered by the diocesan Bishop, may use social media. The social media content of such groups will be periodically monitored by the diocesan information technology office and the diocesan Bishop reserves the right to restrict social media of such groups if this policy is violated.
- 4.5. Any use of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois' logo and its entities for branding or titling pages, blogs or other similar elements of social media must be approved in writing by the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois prior to use. Requests for consent are to be made to the Director of Communications in the case of diocesan associations; the A.A. in the case of the parish; and the Principal in the case of schools. Any usage at the time of adoption of the particular policy is not grandfathered and is required to be authorized.

Section V –Oversight of Social Media Activities

- 5.1. Once social media has been approved for an organization, the person who practices oversight shall periodically review social media under his or her purview and will respond to inquiries or complaints within a reasonable amount of time. The competent authority to practice oversight of social media activity is as follows:
 - 5.1.1. Websites which reside on Diocesan owned hardware must be registered with the Director of Information Technology. In all cases, the A.A., and their designees, are encouraged to utilize support of the diocesan information technology office for initial creation of a web presence.
 - 5.1.2. Within a parish, the A.A., or his or her designee, will oversee any media presence of parish associations and groups, public or private.
 - 5.1.3. In parish schools, after receiving the A.A.'s approval, the school principal, or his or her designee, may oversee the school's media presence.

- 5.1.4. The overseer for diocesan associations, public and private, will be either an employee or volunteer appointed by leadership within said organization.
- 5.1.5. The Director of Information Technology reserves the right to advise parish and organizational leaders on correcting problems with sites and, furthermore, reserves the right to suspend sites, after consultation with diocesan leadership, which does not reflect basic Catholic or decency standards.
- 5.2. All social media forums associated with the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois must be registered with the Director of Information Technology, or their designee, and the following information must be provided:
 - 5.2.1. The name of the person who created the site
 - 5.2.2. The name of the person assigned to monitor the site
 - 5.2.3. Contact information for the site monitor – including phone number and email
 - 5.2.4. Date when the site will be or was established
 - 5.2.5. The purpose of the site

Section VI – Conduct for Social Media Activities

- 6.1 Only groups with specifically granted permission shall post links or blogs on parish or parish school websites.
- 6.2 Employees, clerics and volunteers of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and its Affiliates will comply with all aspects of the *Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act* (<http://www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppa1.htm>) and the *Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Church Personnel* and the *Policy on Working with Minors* of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois (<http://www.dio.org/safeenvironment/diocesan-policies.html>). While photographs of children under the age of 18 may be used on web sites and in social media, care should be taken to avoid connecting pictures with names, locations or other personal identifiable information. In addition, parents and guardians should be given the opportunity to opt-out of having pictures of their children used in this fashion. The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and its Affiliates will review alleged violations of the *Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act* or the *Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Church Personnel* and the *Policy on Working with Minors* of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, on a case-by-case basis. In the event that a provision of this Social Media Policy cannot be reconciled with the *Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Church Personnel* and the *Policy on Working*

with Minors of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, the provisions of the *Policy on Sexual Abuse of Minors by Church Personnel* and the *Policy on Working with Minors* of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois will take precedence.

- 6.3 Password-protected areas on both ministry and personal websites may involve the use of a username/password or other such means to access all or portions of the site. In the event that a cleric, employee or volunteer, subject to approval of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its Affiliates, gives a child access to a website that is not otherwise openly accessible to the public, that same access must also be provided to the child's parent/guardian, if the parent/guardian so desires.
- 6.4 In the event an employee or cleric identifies himself/herself as, or is manifestly understood to be, an employee or cleric of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its Affiliates on a personal blog (or other website with a similar purpose), to help reduce the potential for confusion, the employee is required to put the following notice in a reasonably prominent place on the website

“The views expressed on this website are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of my employer.”

Even with this notice, any information that causes or has the potential to cause embarrassment to the Diocese of Springfield or its Affiliates should be avoided.

- 6.5 No one may unlawfully harm the good reputation which a person enjoys or violate the right of every person to protect his or her privacy. (Canon 220) If a person feels his or her good reputation is being harmed then the A.A. or Administrator must take action and perform a primary investigation into the matter. If it is found a person was aggrieved then appropriate action is to be taken which may include a request of removing the social media.
- 6.6 Church personnel are prohibited from disclosing via the Internet information that is understood to be held in confidence by the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its affiliates.

Employees, clerics and volunteers are prohibited from disclosing via the Internet any information that is proprietary to the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its affiliates, except by explicit permission of the appropriate agency.

- 6.7 The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois and its Affiliates will not tolerate employees, clerics or volunteers or other authorized users posting obscene, harassing, offensive, derogatory, defamatory or otherwise potentially scandalous comments, links and/or images including sexually explicit or other material deemed inappropriate, which could discredit or cause embarrassment to the Diocese of

Springfield in Illinois or its Affiliates, employees, vendors, partners, agencies, schools and others.

- 6.8 No association, private or public (as defined in canon law), is to assume the name Catholic without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority in accord with Canon 300. The competent ecclesiastical authority to grant consent is determined by Canon 312.
- 6.9 The content of the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois or its Affiliates social media is to be strictly in keeping with the teachings of the Catholic Church. If content is contrary to the teachings of the magisterium, the Diocese will ask that the information be removed. If the registered person refuses to remove the content, an appropriate action will be taken which may include shutting down the social media outlet. All persons and groups subject to this policy consent to the authority of the Diocese to shut down offending sites and will cooperate in the process.
- 6.10 All applicable criminal and civil laws will be followed.

Section VII – Best Practices for Social Media Activities

- 7.1. When using social media in ministry to young people, keep in mind that they have the right to a safe environment in their home, school and parish. They are also entitled to a safe environment in their digital interactions with the church through social media. They must be taught and be expected to report violations of their electronic safe environment just as they are of their physical environment.

Similarly young people need to be instructed in their responsibility as participants in the conversation of social media within the church. Just as young people are corrected when they violate the norms and expectations of a school or any community (including the possibility of disciplinary measures), so must they also be corrected for misuse of the social media resources of the parish, school or the diocese.

- 7.2. Using social media in ministry for adults presents a different challenge than using these technologies with minors. As people engaged in ministry, it is important to remember that we need to maintain the ministerial relationship at all times; therefore, within the ministry context, this document applies to adult ministry as well as youth ministry.

As adults build friendships from among those with whom they work and minister it is natural that individuals who meet in a ministerial context may become friends. It is acceptable, once that friendship is established, to allow access to one's personal social media network. This access should not apply to everyone affected by ministry but only those considered to be friends outside of ministry.

- 7.3. When using social media as vowed and/or ordained individuals in the Roman Catholic Church, priests, deacons and religious should keep in mind that they have made a commitment to God and to His people to live their lives in particular witness to the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.³ This witness is called for in the electronic world as well as in the physical one. As the Holy Father wrote in his message for the 44th World Communications Day, the presence of the church, and in particular her priests, in social media “will not only enliven their pastoral outreach, but also will give a ‘soul’ to the fabric of communications that makes up the ‘web’,” (§5). Therefore, it is necessary for those living consecrated lives to ensure that there exists no divide between their lives or conduct in the physical world and in the virtual world.
- 7.3.1. The obligation to maintain a safe environment in social media is the same as in face-to-face communications and interactions.
- 7.3.2. Social media accounts and profiles, whether personal or professional, are one’s “pastoral outreach” and clearly identifying oneself as a vowed religious and/or member of the clergy by using one’s appropriate title (Fr., Deacon, Sr., Br., *etc.*) and including the religious community (CSC, OSB, OSF, SJ, *etc.*) in one’s displayed profile name bears witness to that outreach.
- 7.3.3. Photos, especially one’s profile photo; links; and other items included in social media are to be appropriate for one’s state as ordained ministers and/or vowed religious.
- 7.4. Professionals, ministers, employees and volunteers represent the Catholic Church whether in person or through written or voice communication. Electronic and social media interactions are no exception. The same responsibilities to create a safe environment in one’s physical space extend to all social media sites. Examples include:
- 7.4.1. Addressing behavior observed in social media according to relevant parish/school and diocesan policies and professional ethical expectations;
- 7.4.2. Ensuring that all interactions conducted through social media are appropriate and do not create scandal; bring disrepute upon your parish, school or entity; or create an unsafe environment.
- 7.5. As corporate entities, parishes, schools, diocesan offices and programs need to realize that it is inappropriate and in many cases against the usage policies of social media platforms to register an office or entity for a personal profile. Any use of social media must, therefore, first conform to policies of the social media platform.

³ cf. *Vita Consecrata*, 1 and the Letter of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI Proclaiming a Year for Priests.

When using social media parishes, schools, offices or programs are to have profiles or pages which represent the entity as an entity, not which represent the entity as an individual person (*e.g.* It is not acceptable to create a profile with first name “DIO” and last name “Communications” for the Office of Communications).

Engage frequent users of social media technology in the creation and maintenance of these sites. This may be a way for someone to take a leadership role and become more involved. Remember, though, that the page’s administrator is ultimately responsible for the content of the page, so, if additional help is required, make sure to monitor the content of your social networking sites.

- 7.6. Respect copyright and fair use guidelines. Share what others have said by linking to the source and using embedded content. Be sure to cite your source when quoting. When using a hyperlink confirm that link goes where it should and that the content appropriate.

Section VIII – Enforcement of Social Media Policy

- 8.1. Consistent with the Information Technology policy for the Diocese of Springfield, the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois reserves the right to monitor an employee’s, priests and volunteer’s personal social media.
- 8.2. Failure to comply with any of the provisions of the Social Media Policy will be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination, if an employee or cleric, or removal from position, if a volunteer.
- 8.3. The Diocese of Springfield in Illinois reserves the right to make changes to this policy at any time and at its sole discretion and interpret and administer the policy in light of changing circumstances and events. Future modifications of this policy will be made available on the Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois website at www.dio.org.

**DIOCESE OF SPRINGFIELD IN ILLINOIS
SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

PLEASE PRINT

Employee Name:

Last

First

Middle Initial

Job Title:

Pastoral Center/Parish/School

Verification Statement

I verify that I have read and understand this policy. I agree to abide by this policy and also understand that the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois may amend or change the policy at its discretion without notice.

Employee Signature

Date

RETURN SIGNED FORM TO EMPLOYER