RESNA – Social Media Guidelines

Adopted: Date, 2012

**Preamble**

These are the official guidelines for social media use on behalf of RESNA. If you are a RESNA volunteer (board, committee, and general) or employee creating or contributing to any kind of social media both on and off [www.resna.org](http://www.resna.org), these guidelines are for you. We expect all who participate in social media on behalf of RESNA to understand and follow these guidelines, and to be aware that they will continually evolve as social media evolves. Please check back periodically to make sure you’re up to date.

**Purpose of Social Media**

RESNA uses social media as a communications tool to reach specific audiences in support of strategic goals. Those goals are:

* To share and provide information that assists professionals working in the field to better serve their clients and improve the health and well being of people with disabilities
* To promote the field of assistive technology and encourage career and professional development for those entering the field
* To influence discussion of policy and other issues important to advancing the field of assistive technology
* To market RESNA’s conference, certification programs, professional education opportunities and other RESNA offerings
* To encourage people to join RESNA as members
* To engage stakeholders to become more involved as volunteers on RESNA’s various committees

**Purpose of the Social Media Guidelines**

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide volunteers and employees with a “roadmap” for engaging in communities as champions to talk about RESNA, share information about programs and services, increase learning, support and collaboration, and share expertise.

We want volunteers and employees to feel comfortable representing RESNA, and to be able to act independently and do what they think is best. At the same time, we want to protect volunteers and employees from making mistakes that could affect RESNA’s reputation as well as their own and/or have legal ramifications.

These guidelines are divided into two sections:

* When you want to create a social media channel (such as a Facebook page) for your RESNA committee, group, or project
* When you are using your own social media channels to represent or promote RESNA

**Main guideline points for creating a social media channel on behalf of RESNA**

Are you a committee or board member, or engaged in a RESNA project and want to set up a social media channel to use on behalf of RESNA (such as a Facebook page)? Alternatively, do you have a fantastic idea for a new social media presence? This section is for you.

1. Spend some time getting to know RESNA’s own social media channels. Sign up for RESNA’s Twitter feed, join the RESNA LinkedIn Group, like us on Facebook, join Google Plus, etc.
2. Think through whether RESNA’s own social media channels could help you do what you want to do without having to set up something new. You can test this out by participating as a volunteer on RESNA’s established channels. For example, we need volunteers to respond to comments and questions on LinkedIn. Other volunteer opportunities crop up every day. Contact the RESNA communications staff person to discuss.
3. Remember, setting up a social media channel takes commitment and constant care. Will you be able to devote a minimum of 2-3 hours a week to it? Will you be able to respond within 24 hours to someone who has posted a comment? Will other members of your committee or project be able to help? We ask that you commit to at least one year to cultivating the channel yourself before seeking to turn it over to someone else or shutting it down.
4. Contact the RESNA communications staff person to discuss what you would like to do **before** you do it. The staff person will help you develop a plan and a strategy to achieve your goals. This plan will then be on file at the RESNA office and reported to the Board of Directors, to be shared with anyone who has a question or wonders about what you are doing.
5. Get permission from the communications staff person to use the RESNA logo and any other RESNA images or content, and keep the staff person informed about your efforts.
6. Make sure that a RESNA staff person (such as the communications staff person) is also signed up as an administrator, and knows all passwords and how to access the social media channel if necessary.
7. If you find you can no longer handle the work involved, contact the RESNA office immediately and let us know. Simply dropping the ball is not acceptable.
8. Any violation of these guidelines may result in RESNA asking you to stop representing the organization.

**Main guideline points for your own social media use and mentioning RESNA**

These guidelines should also be followed if you have set up a social media channel on behalf of RESNA.

1. Social media blurs the lines between private and public, personal and professional. Remember that by identifying yourself as a representative of RESNA, you are creating perceptions about the organization and your expertise. Be sure that all content associated with you is consistent with what you and the organization can offer. For example, don’t promise that RESNA can support an event without checking first with the RESNA office.
2. Understand and use privacy settings. Keep the items you share with your close friends separate from your “work” friends.
3. You are responsible for the content you post, so be yourself. Never impersonate someone else. Care about what you write and be accurate. Do not spread rumors.
4. State when it is your personal opinion and not RESNA’s. For example, RESNA does not provide product reviews or endorse any service. If you do, and you identify yourself as a RESNA member (such as in your on-line profile) then always disclose that you are speaking on behalf of yourself, and not RESNA, and always disclose if you’ve received something in exchange for a review of a product or service. (Disclaimer example: “This is a personal post. The opinions expressed here represent my own and not RESNA’s.”)
5. Write what you know. Stick to your area of expertise.
6. Respect proprietary information and content, confidentiality, brand, trademark, copyright and fair use. Know the laws and don’t break them.
7. Don’t spam and send unwanted information to people you don’t know. You can link to RESNA’s website and other communication platforms but do so only in response to a specific query.
8. Give credit where credit is due. Always cite when quoting someone else, and never use copyrighted material without permission. This includes images and logos as well as written content.
9. Go ahead and share links and content. A link is not an endorsement, so share it if you feel it is worthwhile. This includes information on other conferences, journals, and associations.
10. Monitor and reply to comments in a timely manner and add value to the conversation.
11. Be clear but don’t get defensive. Don’t lose your cool, and do not engage in personal attacks. Avoid communicating with hostile personalities.
12. Respect your audience and do not use obscene language, slang, personal insults, or ethnic slurs to express yourself.
13. Remember everything on-line lives forever. If you can’t show it to your mother, don’t post it.
14. Read more than you write. Ask questions. Link to others and seek to build relationships. Constant self-promotion will backfire.
15. Admit when you’ve made a mistake and apologize. Mistakes happen. Most of the time, you can move on, but if not, contact RESNA and let us know.

**Conclusion**

Please note that these guidelines do not constitute legal advice. It is not RESNA’s responsibility to provide volunteers or employees with training or information on copyright, trademark infringement, confidentiality, fair use, or any other particular law or regulation.

We trust that volunteers and employees will get to know these guidelines and follow them. If, for any reason, an incident occurs that violates this policy, we expect you to bring it the RESNA’s office attention immediately, so that we can work together towards a resolution.

We appreciate what volunteers and employees do to promote RESNA and our mutual values, and we want you to feel you can engage in on-line social networks on behalf of RESNA in a positive and beneficial way. If, for any reason, you do not find these guidelines helpful, or you would like to propose others, please let us know.