Social Media Guidelines for REALTOR®
Association Staff Members

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October 2009
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Background: NAR’s Social Media Strategy

NAR in 2008 proactively decided to engage with its members on the leading edge of social media, exploring new ways to interact with these members through blogs, Twitter, and Facebook and gathering insight and best practices on how some of the nation’s most digitally progressive REALTORS were using social media to expand their businesses. NAR’s aggressive, considered approach to social media has the following strategic objectives:

• **Turn monologue into dialogue with our members.**
  Social media affords NAR the opportunity to evolve how it communicates with its members, moving from mostly monologue to a more interactive and engaging dialogue. Social media is a tool NAR has chosen to leverage to actively listen to and learn more about its members, in an effort to create policies, products, and services that better meet members’ needs.

• **Reach more members with our information – when and where it’s relevant to them.**
  The RealEstate.Net, as the collective of real estate professionals involved in social media are called, is teeming daily with conversations about the real estate business, market data, and the workings of NAR. The national association has much value to add to these conversations, and by being an active listener and participant on the RealEstate.Net, NAR can share its research, market data, or business tips when and where it’s most relevant to our members. We can be that provider of the “just in time” information, dropping into discussions on major industry blogs, Twitter, or Facebook when information available from NAR can help provide insight, clarity, or a needed resource.

• **Join and influence existing conversations about NAR and about issues REALTORS® care about.**
  When NAR began to regularly tune in to social media spaces, it became clear that relevant conversations were happening all around the blogosphere that could greatly benefit from NAR’s information and perspective. So NAR began to share this information via its own blogs, comments on others’ blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and the like. By embracing social media early in its development, NAR was able to learn from the early adopters in its membership and experiment with them, so that today, NAR can help lead its members and other associations in best practices in social media.

• **Build deeper relationships with members and others.**
  According to the 2009 NAR Member Profile, 35 percent of members use one or more social networking sites on a regular basis, and an additional 14 percent plan to do so in the future.
REALTORS® post to blogs; comment on others’ blogs; connect with colleagues, customers and clients through social networking sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn; and tag news articles and Web pages on social bookmarking sites including Digg and del.icio.us. And they want to be able to interact with NAR in the digital arena, as well. “Digital natives” (a term the Pew Research Center uses to describe people who have grown up in a wired world) get involved in organizations by participating in social media communities. More than anything, these highly networked members want to feel “heard” by NAR on issues of importance to them, even when their communication method of choice is a blog.

Now, in 2009, NAR’s committees have embraced this notion and are exploring ways to incorporate social media into our member input process. The top social media channels and tools that REALTORS use – and, therefore, the top ones that associations use – are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and video/photo/media sharing.

*Special thanks to Amy Chorew and Ginger Wilcox of the Social Media Marketing Institute and the Social Media Business Council for their invaluable assistance in creating these guidelines.*
Introduction: What to say and not to say, and how
Any association staff member or elected leader engaging in online, electronic dialogue as a delegate of the organization is required to comply with the following guidelines. Please also follow these guidelines for personal participation in social media channels when you or others you are engaged with are talking about NAR. Since social networks are accessible by anyone from anywhere, your personal posts and comments are easy for people to find – and use in ways detrimental to you and NAR – if they want to.

1. Global Guidelines
These general best practices apply to association staff members’ participation in most social media platforms.

1.1. Personal doesn’t mean private
• Personal expression: When you participate in social media, you are likely to find your personal and professional lives becoming more integrated online. While it’s perfectly fine to express your personal beliefs, be aware that your participation in social media raises awareness of your profile among the association’s membership. Please refer to NAR’s HR policy on social media participation for more details – see Section 6.

• Be clear: When speaking about issues relating to the association (real estate, property rights, interest rate tax deductions, etc.) it’s important to specifically state that any personal opinions you express may not be the same as those of your employer.

• Be transparent: Even when stating your own personal opinion, reveal that you work for a REALTOR® association before commenting on real estate issues.

• Consider writing a personal opinion disclaimer: If you use social media channels to express ONLY personal opinions, you could place a disclaimer in the bio of your social network profiles. An example: “I’m the xxxxx for the National Association of REALTORS, and these are my personal opinions.” Refer to the Disclosure Best Practices Checklists, Section 8, for more.

• Don’t say or do anything online you wouldn’t do face to face.

1.2. Participating in social media on the association’s behalf
• Know the association’s positions: When speaking for the association on industry-related topics, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the association’s position. If you are unfamiliar with that topic, it is up to you to find a more qualified person to speak, or to state that this is not within your area of expertise.
• Behave as a member of the REALTOR® Party: In order to serve members’ interests, the association works with elected officials from both major political parties who support issues important to REALTORS. When representing the association, consider refraining from expressing your own political views about individual politicians and instead remember that the REALTOR Party comes first.

• Declare your Internet presence to NAR: When you comment on the association’s behalf in social media channels, please notify your manager and Todd Carpenter in a timely fashion, and include an inventory of accounts or blogs where you comment. Refer to the Disclosure Best Practices Checklists, Section 8.

• Posting pictures of members and staff: Before publishing a picture of a member, association employee, or anyone with a professional relationship with the association, ask for permission from the person who was photographed. This is especially important for pictures taken in social settings. Also, think twice before posting photos of members and staff in social settings; don’t post photos showing people drinking or in exotic locales because it may send an unintended and unwanted message to viewers.

1.3. Respecting copyright

• Copyright: Use caution when publishing text, pictures, video, or other content that was not created by the association. Unless specifically licensed otherwise, all created content is protected by copyright. If you want to use copyrighted material, you must obtain written permission from the original author of this content.

• Creative Commons: In most cases, content created under a Creative Commons license is still protected from commercial use. Association staff members shouldn’t republish Creative Commons content unless that content is specifically licensed for commercial use.

• Linking vs. republishing: Whenever possible, link to content elsewhere on the Web instead of republishing it.

• Copyright Tips and Resources

Sample blog copyright notice
By posting content to this blog, you warrant and represent that you either own or otherwise control all of the rights to that content, including, without limitation, all the
rights necessary for you to provide, post, upload, input, or submit the content, or that your use of the content is a protected fair use. You agree that you will not knowingly and with intent to defraud provide material and misleading false information. You represent and warrant also that the content you supply does not violate these Terms, and that you will indemnify and hold the association harmless for any and all claims resulting from content you supply.

Any and all works of authorship copyrightable by you and posted to an association blog (“Content”) are submitted under the terms of an Attribution-ShareAlike Creative Commons Public License. Under this license, you permit anyone to copy, distribute, display and perform your content, royalty-free, on the condition that they credit your authorship each time they do so. You also permit others to distribute derivative works of your content, but only if they do so under the same Attribution-ShareAlike license that governs your original content.

The Attribution-ShareAlike Creative Commons license permits RSS aggregators to copy, distribute, and display all content on this blog. All content on association blogs are syndicated for RSS aggregation.

2. Blog Guidelines

2.1. Creating a new blog

• Before a new blog can launch at NAR, it must be approved by the REALTOR.org team. They will share information about development timelines, platform guidelines, etc. The team will also want to know the following things before approving your request to create a new blog, so it will be helpful if you consider them in advance of your request.

• Why don’t the existing NAR blogs accommodate the new blog’s goals?
  o Is a new blog the best place to share these message?
  o What is the theme of the blog?
  o Who is the audience?
  o What are the topics?
  o Is there enough material for the long term? A blog requires 3-5 posts per week, or 150-250 unique posts per year.

• Do you have a committed team? You will need at least three contributors to create unique content, each with a commitment to write at least once per week. You will also need staff to moderate and respond to comments.

• Can your writers produce effective blog content? The REALTOR.org team will ask that writers for the new blog create test content to evaluate if that contributor is qualified to communicate for the association in this medium.
• Do you have a “blog-watcher”? A manager from your department should assign someone to monitor the account, moderate discussion, and act as a point of contact.

• REALTOR.org may set minimum standards for the number of new posts generated and for the amount of traffic generated, to either establish or continue a blog.

2.2 NAR’s blog comments policy
The association encourages meaningful exchange on its blogs on issues involving REALTORS® and real estate. We publish all comments unless they:
• contain language that we consider offensive or inappropriate
• are not relevant to the post they are responding to
• are purely commercial endorsements, including spam
• infringe the trademarks or copyrights of NAR or any third parties

By submitting your comment to any blog published by NAR, you are allowing NAR the right to use and/or display your comment at its discretion.

Comments to NAR blogs must be approved by the blog’s owner before being posted, to ensure that they comply with the above guidelines. We post approved comments within two business days. If you include links in your comment, please include the full URL. And please limit your comment to 1,000 characters. We regret that we cannot respond personally to each comment.

2.3. How to blog well
Be interesting.
Write blog posts in a human voice, and write about things you have first-hand knowledge of. Don’t sound unprofessional, but there is no need to adopt the sometimes formal tone of a news release or article. Blog posts express observations, share experiences, and point readers to interesting information. One goal of a blog post is to start a conversation with readers, so feel free to invite comments, ask questions, etc.

Be wise.
Whether you’re posting personally or professionally, don’t write anything in a blog post or comment that you would not feel comfortable being published with your name and the association’s in the New York Times.
• Check your posts or comments for spelling and accuracy.
• Do not defame the association, your colleagues, or industry organizations or peers by publishing statements that are harmful and/or untrue.

Do not post content that is mean-spirited, illegal, fraudulent, obscene, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, or otherwise injurious or objectionable.
Follow the NAR code of conduct.
Be sure your blog posts and comments conform with the code of conduct stated in NAR’s employee handbook. See Section 9 for NAR’s HR social media policy.

Be concise.
Aim to write posts of about one paragraph (approximately 50–100 words) in length. If you have more to say in a particular entry, you can link to a separate page, known as “the jump.” In general, a blog entry should be no more than five paragraphs long.

Identify yourself and who you speak for.
- When posting on a real estate industry blog, identify yourself and your relationship with the association.
- If you post a personal opinion on a real estate industry blog, please state that the opinions expressed in the post are your own and may not necessarily reflect NAR’s views—whether or not your opinion is consistent with the association’s position on that issue.

Write clear headlines.
Write each headline so that it makes sense out of context; many people will see only the headline of your post in a reader through syndication and will need to click through to read the full post.

Link intelligently.
Links are a wonderful way to add interactive elements to blog posts or comments. Because links draw readers, they can increase the visibility of the blog to search engines (Google, Yahoo, etc.)

- If you add links, credit the original author(s) of the material.
- When creating links, choose the right destination and use clear language.
  - Link language: Provide a description of where the user will go.
    Example:
    Good: Smith’s article in the Wall Street Journal explains the hazards of mixing ammonia and bleach.
    Bad: Click here to read about mixing ammonia and bleach.
  - Link destination: Point readers to the exact page or section of the site that provides the information you refer to in your post.
    Example:
    Good: Read HUD’s Guide to Reverse Mortgages to learn more about these federally insured private loans. (link to http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/sfh/hecm/rmtopten.cfm)
Bad: Find information about reverse mortgages at HUD. (link to http://www.hud.gov)

- Access: Do not link to content that readers cannot access without paying a subscription fee, and think twice before linking to content that the user must register to access. If you do link to password-protected content, tell readers what to expect if they click on the link.

**Consider adding depth with multimedia.**
Blogs are great places to include videos, images, or other non-text content. If you need help creating or posting multimedia content, please work with the REALTOR.org team.

**Be present.**
Joining a conversation isn’t something to pop in and out of. If you’re making the commitment to participate, be ready to stay in there.

**Make sure social media participation does not interfere with your other job responsibilities.**
If participating in social media is not related to or part of your work as an association employee, be sure to get approval from your manager to spend time reading and participating in social media during normal business hours. *Please refer to NAR’s HR policy on social media participation for more details – see Section 6.*

### 3 Facebook

**3.1 Facts about Facebook**
- 100 million users log on to Facebook at least once each day
- A January 2009 [Compete.com](http://www.compete.com) study has ranked Facebook as the most used social network by worldwide monthly active users
- Most popular social network used by REALTORS.

**3.2 Why do our members use Facebook?**
It’s estimated that more than half of all Facebook users visit the site at least twice a day. For associations, this represents an excellent opportunity to be top of mind with its members. However, it’s also important to realize that our members aren’t visiting Facebook with the prime intention of seeing what’s new with the association. It’s far more likely that our members are using social networks for various purposes, in this type of priority order:

- Grow their sphere of influence on a personal and professional level.
- Maintain or grow their relationships with family members and friends.
- Connect with old friends or classmates.
- Share their knowledge, expertise, and life stories with their friends.
• Find like-minded people with similar interest, causes, or motivations.

Doing online business on Facebook is similar to doing face-to-face business at a church, the Elks Club, or at a little league game. It’s important to remember that it’s not the primary reason people visit the site. To best leverage the top-of-mind access to its membership that Facebook can deliver, a light touch is recommended. For instance, exercise prudence in using Facebook’s messaging tools as a mass email platform.

3.3 How members use Facebook’s timeline
The most common method for sharing information is to post content to a group, fan page, or profile wall. Wall posts are syndicated into every following member’s timeline. When a member logs into facebook, the most recent wall posts from the groups, fan pages, and friends they follow are displayed in reverse chronological order. Because of this, content that is even a few hours old will be pushed off the front page of this timeline by more current content. Posting information a member will find valuable multiple times a day is key to attracting their attention. Multiple posts that are spread throughout the day have the best chance of keeping your organization in front of its members without making them feel as though they are being spammed.

3.4 What type of content can be published on Facebook?
• Pictures of members and association functions.
• Upcoming events including social events, education, and online events like webinars.
• News, or links to news that members may find value in.
• Updates about the association itself.

3.5 Profiles, Pages, and Groups
Facebook offers three types of presences. Each is best for meeting specific goals.

Profiles
Profiles are intended for individual people. As explained by Facebook:

*It’s important to understand the difference between your personal account and your Facebook Page. Your personal account is the regular user account that you log into when you sign in to Facebook, and this is the account you use to manage your Facebook Page. Your personal account profile is separate from your Facebook Page. When you edit your personal account profile or add content to it, these changes will not be reflected on your Facebook Page. Likewise, when you edit your Facebook Page, these changes will not be reflected in your personal account or your personal account profile.*
Any member of the association who will administrate or contribute to a Facebook group or page needs to set up their own personal account, or use the one they already have. You can adjust your privacy settings if you do not want to share your personal page with members.

**Pages (formerly known as “fan pages”)**
Associations are encouraged to create a Facebook page to share information and interact with their members. Pages are optimized to represent the association, instead of a personal user profile. Like profiles, pages can be enhanced with applications that help the association communicate with and engage their members.

Only the official representative of an organization is permitted to create a Facebook page. Authorized staff members with personal accounts can create and manage a Facebook page for the association. With a page, the administrator of the page remains anonymous to the members who become fans.

Anyone can become a fan of a page. This means that both members and nonmembers will have access to the content on the page itself.

**Groups**
Facebook groups are designed to give more power to the members of the group. Unlike pages, groups can be private or completely unlisted. An administrator can choose to offer access to the group by invitation only. The administrator can also send all-member messages to the group, but so can every other member.

### How to choose whether to set up a Facebook group or page

Pages are generally better for the association to publicly broadcast information to its members. Basically, anything that might reside on the association’s website is best suited to be delivered in a page. Groups are better for creating smaller discussions among a few members. For instance, a group charged with organizing an annual holiday party, or any sort of committee work group would best benefit by communicating through a group.

#### 3.6 Facebook as a marketing and communication tool

**Communication first, marketing second.**
Always remember that Facebook is opt-in, meaning that any member who becomes a fan of your page or joins your group subscribes to these presences voluntarily. Because of this, marketing messages published on Facebook must hold some additional value, or represent only a fraction of all of the messages published by the association. Think of Facebook as a communication tool first, and a marketing tool second.

**Subject ideas for publication on Facebook**
• Events: Any conference, training, luncheon, or related event hosted by the association can take advantage of the events feature in Facebook.

• News: News from the association or links to news that affect members can easily be posted to a page wall.

• Pictures: Pictures of members attending past events are a great way to leverage Facebook’s photo tools.

• Causes: If the association sponsors a cause, or a charity, Facebook’s Cause tools will help broadcast these efforts.

4 LinkedIn

• Deferring to the REALTORS group: NAR has already established a primary LinkedIn Group. Before creating a new group, establish why the new group’s needs are not being served by the existing group.

• Managing membership (open vs. members-only): Members-only groups allow for more control over who has access to the discussion boards in the group. However, the group’s assigned manager will be responsible for managing member approvals.

• Moderating discussions: At least one person who contributes to this new group should be required to moderate comments made by the readers.

4.1 Groups 101

From LinkedIn.com:
LinkedIn Groups is your destination to find and join communities of professionals based on common interest, experience, affiliation, and goals. Stay in touch with organizations, schools, and companies that you are and were a part of, network with professionals with similar interests and goals, and collaborate in a professional community online.

Groups are an opportunity for associations to build an online destination for members to network together.

4.2 Groups and Subgroups

Use a Group to build a central destination on LinkedIn for all of the association’s members. NAR’s official LinkedIn group is National Assn of REALTORS: http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&gid=90005&trk=anet_ug_grppro

If you want to engage a subset of NAR members on LinkedIn, or engage all members on a specific topic, it’s best to start a subgroup rather than form an entirely new LinkedIn group. NAR’s LinkedIn group already has 11,000+ members (as of October 2009) who have been vetted as active members of the association, and subgroups also add more value by raising awareness about
additional options to existing group members. If you would like to start a LinkedIn subgroup, contact Hilary Marsh.

4.3 Managing membership (open vs. member-only)
Member-only groups allow for more control over who has access to the discussion boards in the group. However, the group’s assigned manager will be responsible for managing member approvals.

Open groups allow anyone to join. This is less work for the group administrator, but can lead to more moderation duties in the discussions because anyone can post content.

4.4 Moderating discussions
At least one person who contributes to a group should be required to moderate comments made by the readers. New groups will only be created if the group’s contributors permit comments from the association’s readers and a commitment to keep a dialog with these readers is established.

Seek out active members of the group to act as moderators of the LinkedIn group. Consider asking committee members to help.

4.5 Assigning a manager
• When establishing a new LinkedIn Group, at least one point person and their immediate supervisor needs to take responsibility administering the account. This includes storage of the password and account information, determining a content strategy, and monitoring group discussions.
• An ascension and contingency plan needs to be created for times when the primary administrator is out of the office, or leaves the association.

4.6 Design the group logo to fit LinkedIn’s small standard logo size
Design a logo for the group that’s readable at LinkedIn’s formatted sizes, 100x50 and 60x30.

5 Twitter
Social networking, 140 characters at a time.

From Wikipedia.com

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author’s profile page and delivered to the author’s subscribers, who are known as followers. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website or external applications.
Twitter’s forced brevity is the key to its success. Its 140-character limit on each communication forces users to keep announcements and conversations short and simple.

5.1 Follow and be followed. Twitter is opt-in.

• Communication on Twitter is not necessarily reciprocal. When one member of Twitter finds value in another member’s posts, they choose to subscribe to that member by following them. That member may choose to follow them back, or may not. Each member’s Twitter page links to a list of the members they follow, and of those that follow that member.
• If your intention is to use a Twitter account as a channel purely to broadcast information, then don’t follow back. If you plan to use the channel for two-way communication, then make it a point to follow those you hope to communicate with.

5.2 @s, Ds, #s, Favorites, and RTs

• When you wish to reference another Twitter user in a post or publicly address a post to them, use the @ symbol followed by their Twitter name in a public post. That user will be notified that they have been tagged.
• To send a private message to another Twitter user, type a D, then one space, then the user’s name. Note: You can only send these direct messages to users who follow you.
• Attach the # symbol to a topic to create a “hash tag.” Hash tags are used to reference a certain event, news item, or can even be for fun. You can search on Twitter for all posts using the same hashtag.
• Favorites are a way to bookmark posts you want to reference later. Click on the star-shaped icon next to a post to mark it as a favorite. Click the favorites link to view your favorites.
• RTs are retweets – reposting another Twitter user’s post to show that you agree or want to share their message. To do this, type RT then @username to give them credit for it. If space permits, you can add a comment or hashtag.

5.3 Twitter is a river of information

• Most Twitter users only look at the conversations happening in the last few minutes.
• Most followers will only see posts made by the association if they happen to tune into Twitter at about the same time as the association posts.
• Be prepared to post several times a day in order to reach a significant portion of your followers.

5.4 Starting a new Twitter account

Determine if an existing account is better suited to leverage.
• Every new Twitter account must gain an audience (followers) from the ground up.
• Each new account will require multiple postings per day to effectively reach a significant portion of its followers.
• In most cases, it will be advantageous to add additional content to an existing Twitter account with an established audience.
• Only consider opening a new Twitter account when the content will not integrate into an established channel.
• If you start a new NAR-related Twitter account, please inform Todd Carpenter about it.

Automated, handwritten, or both?
• A new Twitter channel may simply resyndicate other works created by the association. Any content created on a platform that generates an RSS feed can drive a Twitter account. If this is your desired configuration, be sure to frame the bio of this page to explain the channel’s purpose.
• Handwritten accounts will require an ongoing commitment to both post and listen to the conversations happening in the accounts network of followers.
• RSS feeds can be integrated into a handwritten account to automate a portion of the created content.

Choosing a name
• Keep your name as short as possible. Since Twitter posts are limited to 140 characters, shorter account names allow other members to include more text when sending an @, D, or RT to you.
• Make your name easy to spell and remember, since users often communicate on Twitter using simple SMS mobile texting.

Setting expectations in the bio
• Use your Twitter account’s bio section to explain the purpose of the account and set expectations of potential followers about how the Twitter account will be managed, what sort of content will be posted, and what kind of response a follower should expect when corresponding with this presence.
• Consider building a landing page on your website that you can link to from your Twitter bio to explain the account’s purpose in more detail.

5.5 Using a personal account for business

Be transparent.
• Let people know where you sit before you tell them where you stand. You’re free to participate in conversation regarding the business of the association, but it’s important to announce your employment and, if necessary, that you are expressing your own opinions. Here’s a sample disclosure for your bio: “I’m the [your title & company here], and these are my personal opinions.”
Setting expectations.
• Members will find your personal accounts, but don’t let that discourage you from keeping that account personal. Be consistent in how you use your personal account to set expectations for the members who choose to follow you.
• If you only speak about business on the account and use an avatar that is very professional, then members will have an expectation that you will always be professional. If they discover your account populated with casual and personal information, their expectation will be that this is your personal account where you sometimes talk about business.
• Consistency is key to setting the expectations with members who connect with you on social networks.

5.6 Building a business account
Assigning a manager
• When establishing a new Twitter account, at least one point person and their immediate supervisor needs to take responsibility administering the account. This includes storage of the password and account information, determining a content strategy, and monitoring incoming communications (@s and Ds) from followers.
• An ascension and contingency plan needs to be created for times when the primary administer is out of the office, or leaves the association.

Building a team of contributors
• Determine who will contribute tweets to the account and how.
• Will they email them to the administrator?
• Will they have full access to the account?
• Consider tools like Co-Tweet to manage contributor tweets.
• Determine a posting schedule if necessary, or a schedule for monitoring communications to the Twitter account.

Setting up alerts to listen
• Use tools to monitor key words or phrases that pertain to your account.
• Queries on search.twitter.com generate an RSS feed that can be used monitor the Twitter stream live.
• Tools like Twilert will monitor Twitter for selected terms, then email you a digest of daily results

Promoting the account
• List your Twitter presence on other association publications.
• NAR Staff should alert the REALTOR.org team to be added to http://realtor.org/socialmedia
• Alert participants to live events including webinars, seminars and conferences.
Finding and engaging with members on Twitter
- Quality content is the primary reason people will follow you on Twitter.
- Find people to follow by using Twitter search.
- Find people to follow by looking at who follows your followers.
- Don't follow if you aren't going to listen.

Some NAR Twitter accounts
- @realtors
- @asknar
- @realtormag
- @narmedia
- @NAR2009

Some NAR staff with personal Twitter accounts
- @tcar
- @hilarymarsh
- @pamela_kabati

Adding context
- Link shortening tools >bit.ly tinyurl budurl
- Pictures > ifrog, tweetpic
- Audio > blip.fm
- Location > BrightKite Foursquare Mobile Client Google maps.

5.7 How to access Twitter
While Twitter can be accessed through the web at Twitter.com, many people find it easier and more effective to manage Twitter using desktop software that allow you to access Twitter without using a web browser. These desktop software “clients” allow you to set up saved searches, organize your followers into groups, and see an automatically updated stream of content from Twitter. Clients also contain tools that make it easier to shorten links, add pictures, or integrate a location into a tweet.

Desktop clients to check out
- TweetDeck
- Twhirl
- Seesmic
- Hootsuite

Mobile clients to check out
- Tweetie - iPhone
- Twitterberry - Blackberry
- Ubertwitter - Blackberry
- Tweetdeck - iPhone
• SimplyTweet - iPhone
• Spaz - Palm Pre

6 NAR’s HR Social Media Policy

The Association respects your right to interact and communicate about non-work related matters using the Internet. In order to protect the Association from the posting of comments and information that may have a harmful effect on its reputation and/or its employees, we have developed the following policy. For the purpose of this policy, “engaging in social media” means posting or uploading content to all types of interactive electronic communications including but not limited to websites, weblogs, social networks, discussion boards, and listservs.

Limited and occasional use of Association’s systems to engage in non-work related blogging is acceptable during your personal time at work (for example, during lunch, during a break) if it does not otherwise violate the Association’s policies, is not detrimental to the Association, and does not interfere with your regular work duties. You may not use your Association-issued email address to engage in non-work related social media communication.

Since the internet is public space, you must refrain from engaging in any social media communication that may disparage or harm the image or reputation of the Association and/or any of its employees. Additionally, you may not engage in any conduct prohibited by the Association, and you assume any and all risks associated with engaging in social media.

As a blogger, you must make clear to readers that the views expressed are yours alone and that statements, opinions, and beliefs do not reflect the views of the Association.

When engaging in social media, be vigilant to ensure that you do not disclose any information that is confidential or proprietary to the Association or to any third party that has disclosed information to us. This includes the use of Association trademarks or material.

The Association reserves the right to monitor social media channels and platforms. Employees who engage in social media, whether for personal or work related reasons, and whether or not they are using Association systems, should not expect their comments to be private.

7 REALTOR.org Terms of Use
(excerpts relating to social media)

6. The Site contains a combination of content that NAR creates, its partners create, and
that its users create. All materials published on the Site including but not limited to text, images, video, graphics and multimedia files ("Content") are protected by all applicable copyright and trademark laws and owned by NAR or the party credited as the provider of the Content. All rights in the Content are expressly reserved by the applicable copyright and trademark owner.

a. Reprinting Content from the Site shall be subject to the Reprint Policy.

b. You may not sublicense, transfer or otherwise make any Content available to any third party for commercial purposes or financial gain or use the Content in any other media or in any other location other than as permitted in this section. You may not upload Content that contains advertising or promotion for a particular real estate listing or for real estate services, including brokerage, lending, title insurance, property or casualty insurance, property management, building developing or consulting.

c. All Content provided by any party other than NAR must identify the party who provided that Content.

d. By posting material to the Site, you warrant and represent that you either own or otherwise control all of the rights to that material, including without limitation, all the rights necessary for you to provide, post, upload, input, or submit the material, or that your use of the material is a fair use. You agree that you will not knowingly and with intent to defraud provide material and misleading false information. You represent and warrant also that the material you supply does not violate these Terms, and that you will indemnify and hold NAR, its subsidiaries, affiliates, officers, employees, and agents, harmless for any and all claims resulting from material you supply.

e. By posting material to the Site, you grant NAR, its subsidiaries, affiliates, partners and third party licensees a nonexclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, worldwide, sub licensable, royalty-free license to use, store, display, publish, transmit, transfer, distribute, reproduce, aggregate your material with other content, create derivative works of and publicly perform that content for any purpose on and through each of the services provided by the Site. This license shall apply to the distribution and the storage of your content in any form, medium, or technology now known or later developed.

f. NAR blogs are syndicated for RSS aggregation. You have permission to subscribe to the blog content via an RSS reader or e-mail, and you also have permission to post the RSS feed to a REALTOR® association or other real estate-related Web site.

13. NAR encourages meaningful exchange on the Site on issues involving REALTORS® and real estate. Unless otherwise provided for regarding a specific section of the Site, user Content is reviewed by an NAR representative and approved Content will be posted within approximately two business days. NAR aims to publish all user-submitted Content unless it:
• Contains language that NAR, in its sole discretion, considers offensive or inappropriate;
• Is not relevant to the post that is being responded to;
• Is a commercial endorsement, including spam; or
• Infringes the trademarks or copyrights of NAR or any third parties.

a. NAR disclaims responsibility and liability for the content and opinions expressed by others on the Site including, but not limited to, content or opinions regarding any products or service mentioned on the Site.

b. If you upload Content to the Site, you agree to indemnify and hold NAR harmless from any and all liability, damages or expenses whatsoever due, directly or indirectly, to any cause of action arising out of the Content posted by you.

c. You agree to use the Site only for lawful purposes and not to upload any unlawful Content or in any other way use the Site so as to violate any local, state, or national law.

d. NAR reserves the right but not the obligation to refuse, move, or remove any material submitted to the Site for any reason and to restrict, suspend, or terminate your access to all or any part of the Site.
(i) You agree not to post any defamatory, libelous, threatening, vulgar, sexual explicit, abusive, profane, rude, obscene, or anonymous Content.
(ii) You agree not to take any action which would disrupt or interfere with the normal use of the Site by other authorized users.
(iii) You agree not to post any advertising, promotional or other type of solicitation to other authorized users of the Site except in those areas of REALTOR.org where such postings may be specifically authorized.
(iv) You agree not to impersonate any other person in any registration or Content you upload to the Site.
(v) Individual sections of the Site may have additional rules and regulations specific to the subject matter being covered in that section. These rules and regulations will be posted on the section’s homepage. You agree to abide by the rules and regulations of individual sections on the Site.

8 Disclosure Best Practices Checklists
Created by the Social Media Business Council: www.socialmedia.org/disclosure.
Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License.

Checklist 1: Disclosure of Identity
Focus: Best practices for how employees and agencies acting as official corporate representatives disclose their identity to bloggers and on blogs.
When communicating with blogs or bloggers on behalf of my company or on topics related to the business of my company, I will:

- Disclose who I am, who I work for, and any other relevant affiliations from the very first encounter.
- Disclose any business/client relationship if I am communicating on behalf of a third party.
- Provide a means of communicating with me.
- Comply with all laws and regulations regarding disclosure of identity.
- We will inform employees, agencies, and advocates that we have a formal relationship of these disclosure policies and take action quickly to correct problems where possible.

Pseudonyms:

- (Option A) Never use a false or obscured identity or pseudonym.
- (Option B) If aliases or role accounts are used for employee privacy, security, or other business reasons, these identities will clearly indicate the organization I represent and provide means for two-way communications with that alias.

- “We Didn’t Know”: Clearly disclose our involvement on all blogs produced by the company or our agencies.

Checklist 2: Personal/Unofficial Blogging and Outreach

Focus: Best practices for employees and employers related to personal blogs and personal social media participation that talk about company-related issues. These are intended to supplement existing employee policies.

For personal blogs or social media interactions:

- If employees write anything related to the business of their employer on personal pages, posts, and comments, they will clearly identify their business affiliation.
- The manner of disclosure can be flexible as long as it is clear to the average reader, directly connected to the relevant post, or provides a means of communicating further (Example disclosure methods could include: usernames that include the company name, link to bio or about me page, or statement in the post itself “I work for __<company>___ and this is my personal opinion.”)
- Employees will specifically clarify which posts/comments are their own opinions vs. official corporate statements.
- Writing which does not mention work-related topics does not need to mention the employment relationship.
- If employees blog anonymously they should not discuss matters related to the business of their employer. If employer-related topics are mentioned, they should disclose their affiliation with the company.
Checklist 3: Blogger Relations
Focus: Best practices for how businesses interact with external blogs and bloggers.

When communicating with blogs or bloggers on behalf of my company, I will:
- Disclose who I am, who I work for and any other relevant affiliations from the very first encounter.
- Proactively ask bloggers to be transparent about their relationship and communications with me.
- Always be truthful.
- Never ask someone else to deceive bloggers for me.
- Never ask bloggers to write a fake endorsement or something they do not believe.
- Never use off-topic comment for self-promotional intent.
- Never take action contrary to the specific boundaries, terms and conditions, and community guidelines set by each blog.
- Not use services or technologies for mass-posting comments.
- Use extreme care when communicating with minors or blogs intended to be read by minors.
- Comply with all laws and regulations regarding disclosure of identity.
- Make it clear to our employees and agencies that these rules apply to them.

Checklist 4: Compensation and Incentives
Focus: Best practices when providing incentives to bloggers.

When providing bloggers with any form of compensation such as rewards, incentives, promotional items, gifts, samples, or review items, I will be completely transparent by:
- Setting formal policies on using incentives with bloggers for our staff and agencies.
  - Review products can be returned at their own discretion.
  - Review products must be returned or paid for at fair market value.
  - Items of nominal value (low cost product samples or consumables) may be kept.
  - Review products should be returned, paid for, or retained by the blogger based on standards for the specific industry. (Examples: restaurant reviewers pay for the meal, tech reviewers return the product, hotels provide complimentary stays.)
  - Communicating these policies clearly to the blogger in advance, and asking that they do the same in any post that may result.
  - Encouraging bloggers to disclose the source of any compensation directly in any post they write about us.
  - If you choose to use paid posts or reviews, you must insure that it is clearly disclosed in the specific post that it is an advertisement.
☐ Not manipulating advertising, link-trading, or affiliate programs to impact blogger income or traffic.
☐ Understanding that if I send bloggers products for review, they are not obligated to comment on them at all, and they are free to write a positive, negative, or neutral comment.

Checklist 5: Agency and Contractor Disclosure
Focus: Best practices for vendors, agencies, and subcontractors that act on behalf of a company.

When using external agencies or personnel to communicate on our behalf, I will:
☐ Require my agency to disclose its relationship with my company when it conducts blogger relations.
☐ Require my agency to be truthful and never knowingly deceive bloggers.
☐ Publicly acknowledge when my agency and/or related parties act contrary to these policies, and quickly take corrective action where possible.
☐ Require agencies and agency personnel to meet or exceed our internal disclosure requirements.
☐ Require agencies to enforce these requirements on their subcontractors.
☐ Always discuss and secure formal agreement on these practices before entering into a business relationship with an agency involved in social media.