



The Canadian Public Relations Society, Inc.

CPRS Policy Statement Communications in Social Media

I. Interpretation

This policy statement is to be interpreted by members of the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS; the society) in conjunction with the society's Declaration of Principles (CPRS Regulations, Part II, section 1), the Code of Professional Standards and the society's Obligations of Membership (CPRS Regulations, Part IV, section 14).

Nothing in this policy statement should be construed as offering or providing legal advice and members should not rely upon it as the sole source of information regarding their legal obligations.

For the purposes of this policy statement, Social media can be defined as online technologies, tools and applications that are used to share information, opinions, expertise, insights and interests using text, images, audio and video in a participatory environment. This would include, but not be limited to: weblogs (blogs), wikis, podcasts, webinars, message boards and forums, social bookmarking websites, social networking websites, and content sharing websites.

II. Application to CPRS members*

This policy applies to all members of the Canadian Public Relations Society at all times, including, but not limited to: The member is acting as an individual; on behalf of an employer or client; on behalf of and/or in conjunction with CPRS and/or any of its task forces or committees; with one or more of CPRS' local member societies; in conjunction with the Public Relations Society of America or the International Association of Business Communicators; with the Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management and/or with any public relations society belonging to the Alliance.

III. Policy Statement on Communications in Social Media

Any communication by any member of the Canadian Public Relations Society in any form of social media will conform to the society's Code of Professional Standards (www.cprs.ca/AboutCPRS/e_code.htm). Members should have specific regard for the Code's expectations of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth. At all times, members should be mindful of the Code's requirements that: *Members shall not engage in professional or personal conduct that will bring discredit to themselves, the Society or the practice of*

public relations. Additionally, members should familiarize themselves with the society's Declaration of Principles and Obligations of Membership (as above).

In the event that a member's personal or professional conduct in any form of social media is alleged to be in contravention of this policy statement, the matter will be referred to CPRS for investigation into a potential breach of the Code of Professional Standards. The investigation will be conducted as outlined in the society's Regulations (Part XII).

IV. Other statutes may apply

Members should also be aware that, as in more traditional areas in the practice of public relations, legal considerations apply to communications in social media. These include, but are not limited to, federal, provincial and territorial Human Rights Codes, as well as laws applicable to defamation, copyright, protection of intellectual property and protection of personal privacy.

V. Code of standards for use of CPRS websites

This policy statement applies to any and all materials provided to the national office of the society for posting to any part of the CPRS website as of its date of receipt at an Annual General Meeting of the society; and to any materials currently on the CPRS website as of that date. It also applies to any website maintained by, or on behalf of, a member society of CPRS. It also applies to any social medium hosted, sponsored and/or maintained by, or on behalf of, the national society or any member society.

VI. Review and updating

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis (based on the date of its receipt at the 2007 Annual General Meeting of CPRS) to ensure its application is still comprehensive and appropriate.

VII. Further Reference

Members are encouraged to visit sites such as www.edelman.com/image/insights/content/BloggerSurvey_FINAL_fromprinterRVSD.pdf for further information.

* Individuals who hold a membership with local CPRS societies will be expected to conform to these standards.