



# Online Social Media Protocol

This document outlines correct etiquette for online participation at the Town of Kwinana. This policy is the sole reference for online social media involvement. Questions and comments to be directed to the Marketing and Communications Department.

Last updated: July 21, 2010



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## 1. Purpose of this document

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Town of Kwinana departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The Town encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the Town and the communications of its departments, where appropriate.

The Town of Kwinana has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the Town on social media sites. This document establishes guidelines for the use of social media and has been developed to inform employees of their online responsibilities and to assist them in participating online in a respectful, relevant way that protects the Town of Kwinana's reputation.

## 2. What is social media and why do we need these guidelines?

Examples of online social media include, but are not limited to:

- Blogs
- MySpace
- LinkedIn
- Forums
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Wikis
- Youtube

These guidelines will ensure that we head into social media with the most productive and positive intentions.

## 3. Benefits of social media to the Town of Kwinana

- Develop stronger relationships with residents
- New medium for customer service
- Reach new audiences
- Promote employee relations
- Promote organisation activities
- Encourage and enhance feedback (through re-direction to website)
- Promote the Town as a modern vibrant city

## 4. Do these guidelines apply to me?

This policy applies to authorised staff members listed as a confirmed contributor.

A confirmed contributor has been approved to engage online, with corporate goals in mind, on behalf of the Town of Kwinana.

Members of staff who wish to contribute to social media on behalf of the Town of Kwinana for corporate purposes must first consult the Marketing and Communications manager and be added to the list of confirmed contributors. **See appendix 1 for the current list.**

The policy also applies to all staff members' personal use of social media where they refer to themselves as an employee of the Town of Kwinana. In this instance the staff member is not required to seek approval, but they must abide by the policy guidelines as outlined in section 8, page 8, guidelines for personal use.

## 5. Important Information

### 5.1 What will we use it for?

The Town of Kwinana will use social media tools for two general purposes:

- As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
- As marketing/promotional channels which increase the Town's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

**The Town of Kwinana will enter into online social communications on a one way basis only.** No person, including those approved to make online contributions will be permitted to respond directly or indirectly to a person's or organisations comments.

Wherever possible, content posted to Town of Kwinana social media sites should contain links directing users back to the Town's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the Town of Kwinana.

### 5.2 How do I set it up and how do I use it all?

A person from the Marketing and Communications department will set up your social media tools and run a training session to outline the correct use of them.

Only persons from the Marketing and Communications department may create new accounts, this is to ensure consistency and correct settings are applied.

If at any time you wish to create a new account or use a new tool you must send a request to the Marketing and Communications department.

Training sessions will be run regularly and at your convenience, to be approved as an online contributor you must attend at least one of these sessions.

### 5.3 What should my contributions look like?

An example of an acceptable contribution is:

*"Come along to the Youth NAIDOC celebrations next Tuesday, we've got storytelling and music workshops running from 5pm. For further details check out [www.kwinana.wa.gov.au](http://www.kwinana.wa.gov.au)"*



**Acceptable**

This is acceptable because it is a statement in the form of an update; it does not encourage a response and it directs readers to our website.

An example of an unacceptable contribution is:

*"Who's coming along to the NAIDOC celebrations next week? Is everyone looking forward to it?"*



**Not Acceptable**

This is unacceptable because it is asking a question which is encouraging a response, it also omits crucial details such as dates and fails to direct readers to our website when it is a relevant source of information on the topic.

## 5.4 What if external people want to comment?

Where possible, the social media application/website should be set up so the user may approve comments prior to publication. This ensures offensive and/or damaging comments are never seen publicly. In some cases, fully disabling external comments may be necessary.

### **Under no circumstances are you to allow external comments to be automatically published.**

To decide if a comment is suitable for publication to the Internet make sure it meets the following criteria:

- The comment is of a positive or constructive nature
- A direct response is not required

An example of an acceptable comment which may be published is:

*"I really like the way Kwinana run their events but additional parking spots would be nice"*



**Publishable**

This comment would be acceptable to publish as it provides constructive criticism without requiring a response.

An unacceptable comment which wouldn't be publishable would be:

*"Why don't you guys offer more parking spots? This is ridiculous!"*



**Not Publishable**

## 5.5 Informing readers of our Policies (Online Disclaimer)

It is a requirement that all online contributors regularly (about once a month) do an update which outlines our policy in an easy way.

An example of this is:

*"Don't forget, the Town of Kwinana's online policy does not allow us to respond to your [Facebook] comments directly, if you would like to provide feedback or have a question to ask please contact us by clicking here"*

This will re-direct the reader to our contact details on our website.





## 7. Full Guidelines

1. All Town of Kwinana social media sites posted must be approved by the applicable Director and the Manager Marketing and Communications.
2. The Town of Kwinana's websites (Kwinana.wa.gov.au, lyriK.com.au, recquatic.com.au) will remain the Town's primary and predominant internet presences.
3. Wherever possible, content posted to Town of Kwinana social media sites will also be available on the Town's main website.
4. Town of Kwinana social media sites are subject to WA State public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to Town business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The team maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media. Content related to Town business shall be maintained in an accessible format and so that it can be produced in response to a request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public disclosure officer.
5. Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between Town's departments and members of the public. Town of Kwinana social media site articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:
  - Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
  - Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns;
  - Profane language or content;
  - Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, colour, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
  - Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - Solicitations of commerce;
  - Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
6. The Town reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
7. One on one training will be arranged depending on users experience/knowledge and depth of contributions.
8. When the Town of Kwinana is in crisis mode only the Marketing and Communications team will be permitted to make online contributions.
9. All images used on the site must have received permission from the person/s featured. This writing must be documented and placed in TRIM.
10. Town branding standards must be used in all social media sites.

## 8. Questions and answers

### What type of contributions can I make?

Statements and updates which require no response from your audience, you should direct the reader to our website if further information will be required. See page 4 for details.

### Can I respond to comments/messages from my audience?

No, direct responses which are publicly viewable are prohibited. If approached in private please advise the stakeholder to forward their queries to your work email address or [admin@kwinana.wa.gov.au](mailto:admin@kwinana.wa.gov.au)

### Why can't I respond, what's the harm?

We do not have the resources in place to allow two way communication, online social media is an uncontrolled environment and we currently do not have the capacity to ensure a positive message is constantly being portrayed.

### But if people are commenting and asking questions, won't it look bad if I don't reply?

As outlined on page 5, you will have set up your social media tool so comments are disabled entirely or so you may approve comments before they become publicly viewable, this will ensure only comments that do not require a response are published to the Internet.

### How often should I contribute?

In order to provide a productive and continuous feed of information you are required to update your social media tool at least once every three days, you must ensure your updates are relevant and contain enough information.

If you find you are not seeing much benefit from the use of social media it is important that you inform the Marketing and Communications Department who will help evaluate why this is the case. If you are unable to provide sufficient information for regular updates it may be necessary to cease your access for the purpose of consistency and professionalism.

### What if I make a mistake in my update?

This depends on the time frame, if you notice your error straight away, delete the first comment and create a new one, if a considerable amount of time has passed, and you think people may have already viewed it incorrectly, leave it and add a new comment with correct details, apologising for the mistake.



**Have a question that isn't answered here? Contact the Marketing and Communications department.**



## 9. Guidelines for personal use

It is our preference that employees do not initiate social media discussions on work related matters. If personally approached online in regards to a work matter we ask that you immediately inform the Marketing and Communications department for advice on how to reply in a way that positively reflects the Town of Kwinana.

If you do choose to reply you must include the following disclaimer:

“The views expressed on this site are my own and don’t necessarily reflect the views of the Town of Kwinana”

In addition the following instructions must be followed:

1. Do not comment on information that is meant to be private or internal to The Town of Kwinana.
2. Ensure that all comments do not conflict with the organisations missions or positions.
3. Do not comment on areas you are not familiar with.
4. Do not discuss partners, sponsors or contractors without prior approval.



## 10. Appendix 1 – Confirmed contributors

N/A

## 11. Appendix 2

# Formal Agreement

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

### Contributor

Person to make contributions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Training Completed (date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contributor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marketing Signature

### Agreed use

Facebook       Twitter       Blog       Youtube       Myspace

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Update Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

Online Disclaimer Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

**By signing below I acknowledge the protocol outlined in this document and confirm I understand my requirements and restrictions when engaging in social media applications, particularly:**

- I will not be permitted to engage in two-way communication (responding to questions via social media)
- I will ensure that I only make comments live to the Internet if they are deemed acceptable as per this document
- I will only comment on the topic with which I have been approved
- I will regularly inform readers of our online policy, encouraging them to contact us via email/website
- I will provide a regular and constant stream of updates as agreed to above
- My updates will be in the form of a statement and WILL NOT encourage a direct response via social media
- Where possible I will forward readers to the Town of Kwinana website ([www.kwinana.wa.gov.au](http://www.kwinana.wa.gov.au))
- I will perform the required record keeping every week as outlined in section 6 of this document.
- I acknowledge that my access to social media may be retracted if:
  - a.) I do not follow these protocol correctly
  - b.) The use of social media is not proving productive

\_\_\_\_\_  
Contributor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Marketing Manager Signature