Social media policy for volunteers

Introduction

The RPS uses social media to encourage the appreciation of photography and many Groups, Regions, and Chapters use social media to assist with their own work and management. We recognise the importance and the value of social media as a communication tool in achieving our aims and facilitating great conversations about photography.

Defining social media

Social media is any tool or service that enables conversations over the internet. Social media applies not only to traditional big names, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but also applies to other platforms that include user conversations including digital platforms such as YouTube, Flickr, blogs online forums and wikis.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out expectations for volunteers when using social media in connection with RPS. It should be remembered that social media is never private. Also, that we are part of a community of like-minded people with a shared passion, who deserve respect and support from one another.

This policy is important and is supported by our Code of Conduct for Members.

Our approach to social media is that we trust the community that we seek to engage with. If one of our audience posts illegal, offensive or defamatory material, we will seek to take action.

Policy

The RPS recognises that it is practical for volunteers and members to use a wide variety of social media platforms for the purposes of communicating effectively and we don't want to hinder this. However, we can't monitor these, so if you set up a group (for example on Facebook), then you will have to take responsibility for the activity within that group. The RPS is happy for its approved logo to be used on one group and/or page for each Chapter, Region, or Group (and regional sub-group) upon the understanding that the owner of the group will:

• register the group with the Volunteering Manager, along with access details
• ensure that the RPS is presented in a positive, professional manner
• make sure users of the group follow the principles of conduct outlined below
• moderate that group

Please note that the RPS must reserve the right to withdraw its association with a group and the right to use any of our logos or other materials.

In setting up a group or account under the name of the RPS that account has to be considered RPS property. This means that if you leave your role or the RPS you won't be able to assert any

ownership of the contacts and connections you have gained through the account and you will need to pass ownership and control to another Member.

Principles of behaviour in social media

We have five social media principles that underpin expectations of all users of social media:

Be nice, have fun, and connect | Protect information | Follow the law, follow the code of conduct | Be responsible | Use common sense

We advise that you post these principles, however briefly, in a prominent place where users will see them.

1. Be nice, have fun, and connect

Social media is a place to have conversations about photography and build connections on behalf of the RPS. The connections made on social media will be much more rewarding if you remember to have conversations rather than push agendas. Users should avoid communications that might be offensive or misconstrued in a way that could damage our reputation, even indirectly. Users should remember that what is written might be available to be read by the public, RPS colleagues, volunteers, employers and social acquaintances for a long time.

2. Protect information

Social media encourages sharing of information. Users may have access to confidential or sensitive information about the organisation, its staff, members or volunteers that shouldn't be made public. Confidential or any personally identifiable information should not be shared.

3. Follow the law, follow the code of conduct

Social media enables incredibly fast communication and messages can go viral in seconds. This makes it difficult to fix an inaccurate message once shared. The best thing to do is double check all content first, both for accuracy and to make sure it fits with the RPS Code of Conduct, and any restrictions that may apply based on local law and the platform in use.

4. Be responsible

If you see something being shared related to RPS on a social media platform that shouldn't be happening, then please tell the Volunteering Manager. And always remember that anything posted in social media can go viral. Legal conclusions, intellectual property belonging to others, and defamatory or offensive language should always be avoided. Everything posted online can be traced back to the poster.

Avoid posting comments about sensitive RPS related topics. Even if it is clear that views do not represent those of the RPS, comments could still damage our reputation.

5. Use common sense

Social media use requires common sense. A good rule of thumb is if you would feel comfortable saying what you are posting to a wide audience of people, it is safe to post.

Taking action if you feel the principles have been breached

You may have a concern that activity on social media breaches the principles, hurts others, or undermines the purpose of the group or the work of the RPS. If you feel this is the case, the following may help

What you can do

- If you feel the tone or language of a conversation is getting out of hand be careful about engaging further, as this can often make things worse.
- If you are a group owner, you must take action by either reminding others of the purpose of the group, the principles of behaviour, or the RPS Code of Conduct for Members, or moderating further.
- If you are still concerned, you may raise the issue with the RPS office via the Volunteering Manager.

What the RPS will do

If the RPS is notified of an issue we will first contact the Regional Organiser or Group Chair and ask that they try to address the matter. If the matter is serious or continues to be a problem the RPS may:

- Delete a post immediately.
- Withdraw its consent to use the RPS name or logos and ask the social media group to be closed.
- Take action under the Code of Conduct, which can result in the withdrawal of Membership for an individual as provided for in our By-Laws and Rules.