Personal Blog Best Practices

We've developed this document to help equip staff team members who maintain personal blogs and/or post on other people's blogs. These recommendations provide a roadmap for constructive, respectful and productive dialogue between bloggers and their audience (whoever that may be), These are not "rules" and can't be broken. There is no hidden meaning or agenda. We consider these to be "best practices guidelines" that are in the spirit of our culture and the best interest of the organisation, whether you blog or not. We encourage you to follow these guidelines, but it is not mandatory to do so. It's your choice. We really mean that.

Be Respectful. Be thoughtful and accurate in your posts, respectful of how others may be affected. Even if your site is published under your name, is entirely personal and does not mention [ORGANISATION NAME] or your employment, readers will inevitably connect your personal life to your professional life. It's a good idea to include a disclaimer on your home page that states your opinions are personal. And, just to avoid any surprises, think about giving your manager a courtesy head's up about your blog's existence.

Engage in Private Feedback. Not everyone who is reading your blog will feel comfortable approaching you if they are concerned their feedback will become public. In order to maintain an open dialogue everyone can comfortably engage in, welcome "off-blog" feedback from colleagues who would like to respond privately, make suggestions, or report errors without having their comments appear on your blog. Bloggers want to know what you think. If you have an opinion, correction or criticism regarding a blog post, reach out for the blogger directly. Whether privately or on their blog, let the blogger know your thoughts.

Legal Stuff. When you choose to go public with your opinions on your blog, you are legally responsible for your commentary. Individual bloggers can be held personally liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene (not swear words, but rather the legal definition of "obscene"), proprietary or libelous. In essence, you blog (or comment on other people's blogs) at your own risk. Outside parties actually can pursue legal action against you for postings. It's probably not a high risk in our line of work, but we thought you'd like to know.

Use Common Sense. Take care not to disclose any confidential or proprietary information.

Press Inquiries. Blog postings may generate media coverage. If a member of the media contacts you about a church related blog posting, we've got trained back-up available to help you in the communications department.