

Social Media Policy



Avail Social Media Policy

This policy states Avail's desire when partners or associates make use of the following:

- Social networking websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Friends Reunited, and MySpace
- Microblogging broadcasting, of which the best known facility is Twitter
- Regular online blogs (web logs, or online diaries)
- Video-sharing websites such as YouTube.

Avail values the communication opportunities that social media, blogs and video-sharing sites present. New technology offers many opportunities for us to share news, updates and prayer requests. Our policy affirms the use of social media, but also seeks to protect the reputation of the mission and those we represent. The lines between public and private lives are often blurred in online social networks, and once you are identifiable as associated with Avail you could be seen as something of a representative of the mission and others within the grouping. This may not be helpful, and we urge that all care is taken to avoid possible misunderstanding.

Guidelines to help in respect of attitude, content and responsibility with children

Good things can be used for ill, and so what follows is a guide with advice on how to keep the good, good! Remember that any entry made is a record for life, so it is advisable to stay within your sphere of expertise. When something appears to be a sensitive subject and could be a rumour it is better not to get involved.

Attitude

Adopting a warm, positive and open tone is a good beginning, remembering there is a distinct difference between personal and business information. At all times respect your online community by being careful in your choice of language, by avoiding objectionable and inflammatory content and by abiding by their desires regarding confidentiality. The essence of a community is that it exists so that you can support others and they, in turn, can support you. Transparency plays a major part in building a community. Your community should not be an environment where competition or borderline behaviour is encouraged or emphasized.

Content

Avail recognises that many who are in fellowship with us will have an online life, and that life partly involves the work the Lord has called us into. Bearing this in mind we do trust that any contribution that reflects our ethos is true and can be substantiated in our policy documents. More importantly it should be consistent with a Christlike testimony. The respect of copyrights and correct and fair use of them are important, and if they are not adhered to, it could lead to legal problems and bring the good name of the mission into disrepute. Certainly Avail does not wish to have any content of what it produces used without permission being granted.

The following is a list of subjects we advise you to avoid, even if using a disclaimer: politics, denominational differences, religious and ethnic slurs, personal insults, false accusations and criticisms of fellow workers.

Children

This is the most delicate of subjects. UK law is strong and the media are very keen to expose anything that hints at child abuse. Our advice is to be extra vigilant when posting comments or photographs to which names are attached. If you are tempted or requested to do so, ensure permission is given by parents or responsible guardians. Be absolutely clear in requesting what it could entail for them, including the possibility that a friend of yours could pass on the information that only you have been given permission to show. It should be considered as unwise to have minors as 'contacts'.

Avail's stance and warnings

Social networking which relates in any way to our activities should be used in such a way that adds value to Avail as a community. Do not identify our staff, volunteers or contacts beyond what is in the public domain such as our website, blogs, Facebook or Twitter. This is not only to protect our witness and reputation, but also to prevent cyberstalking, which is using the internet to stalk, threaten, steal from or damage an individual or an organisation. Its worst use is to attract minors for vile purposes. Avail's logos etc. should not be used by anyone unless approved in writing by a trustee.