

## Whitman Public Library Social Networking Policy

In keeping with the Whitman Public Library's mission to "be an integral part of its community by providing all residents with a wide variety of popular and educational materials, resources and services which facilitate their day-to day lives, and extend their personal and intellectual development," the Library participates in various "social software" applications whereby library staff and community members can interact through virtual (internet) communication. These resources, summarized below, allow all members of the community access to the resources of the Whitman Public Library without mandating a visit to the physical library. The Whitman Public Library regards online social software applications in the same way as its other information resources in accordance with its mission of serving Whitman's needs for informational, educational, cultural and recreational pursuits.

Social software is defined as any website or application which allows users to share information. Social software can include, but is not limited to, blogging, instant messaging, social networking sites, and wikis. Many social networking sites allow users of those sites to become a "friend", "fan" or otherwise associate their own "profiles" or virtual presences with the Library's profile on these sites. Examples of such sites are Twitter, Facebook, Myspace, YouTube, and various blogging sites like Blogger and Wordpress. As with more traditional resources, the Library does not act in place of or in the absence of a parent and is not responsible for enforcing any restrictions which a parent or guardian may place on a minor's use of this resource.

The Library does not collect, maintain or otherwise use the personal information stored on any third party site in any way other than to communicate with users on that site, unless granted permission by users for Library contact outside the site. The purpose for contact outside the site may include program promotion, volunteer opportunities, reference help, or other similar activities. Users may remove themselves at any time from the Library's "friends" or "fan" lists, or request that the Library remove them. Users should be aware that third party websites have their own privacy policies and should proceed accordingly.

Comments, posts, and messages are welcome on Whitman Public Library social networking sites. While the WPL recognizes and respects differences in opinion, all such interactions will be regularly monitored and reviewed for content and relevancy (before publishing when possible). All postings which contain any of the following will be removed and the poster barred from posting any subsequent messages to library social networking sites:

- Obscene or racist content
- Personal attacks, insults, or threatening language
- Potentially libelous statements
- Plagiarized or copy-written material
- Private, personal information published without consent
- Comments totally unrelated to the content of the forum
- Hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion
- Commercial promotions or spam
- Organized political activity
- Photos or other images that fall in any of the above categories

In addition, the Whitman Public Library reserves the right to edit or modify any postings or comments for space or content, while retaining the intent of the original post. The Library shall also be granted the right to reproduce comments, posts, and messages in other public venues. For example, a response to a YouTube book review may be quoted in a newspaper or on the library website. Identifying information, other than first name, will be removed unless prior approval is granted by the user.

The Whitman Public Library assumes no liability regarding any event or interaction that takes place by any participant in any Library-sponsored social networking service, and does not endorse or review content outside the "pages" created by Whitman Public Library staff. Participation in Whitman Public Library social networking services implies agreement with all Library policies, including its *Social Networking Policy* and *Acceptable Use of the Internet and Public Computers Policy*, and the Terms of

Service of each individual third-party service. If a user does not agree to these terms, they are not to use the services provided.

The role and utility of social networking sites will be evaluated periodically by library staff, and may be terminated at any time without notice to subscribers.

Adapted from the Newton Free (MA), Berkeley Public (CA), and Niagara Falls Public (NY) Libraries  
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