

Technology Procedural Recommendations



Archdiocese of Baltimore

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on behalf of the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry
of the Archdiocese of Baltimore



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE

DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION MINISTRIES
DIVISION OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

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May the Peace of Christ be with you.

In our Catholic Educational Ministries within schools, religious education programs, and youth, young adult and campus ministries, we bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to those with whom we serve. In the past years, however, the potential venues for communication have broadened beyond the classroom and bulletin board.

Today, people *Twitter* and blog, they e-mail, use Skype, Blackberries and I-phones, and choose Facebook friends. The fundamental desire that people have to communicate has not changed, but the many possible venues for that communication has expanded exponentially with advancements in technology.

As the “virtual world” continues to serve as a venue for communication, we must take efforts to assure ourselves as well as those we serve that we understand the boundaries of appropriate relationships.

Pope Benedict in his recent encyclical *Caritas in Veritate/ Charity in Truth* (#69), reminds us that “technology is never merely technology. It reveals man and his aspirations towards development, it expresses the inner tension that impels him gradually to overcome material limitations. Technology, in this sense, is a response to God's command to till and to keep the land that he has entrusted to humanity, and it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment, a covenant that should mirror God's creative love.”

The church should not hesitate to engage the modern digital technologies which can be vehicles for communicating. It is our sacred duty, however, to ensure that our communication mirrors God's creative love. These *Technology Procedural Recommendations* serve a gentle reminder towards that end.

We encourage all those professionally engaged in ministry with young people to review these recommendations. Further, they should be made available to the many generous volunteers that are a grace within our schools, religious education programs, and youth ministry efforts.

Towards that end, we seek the intercession of St. Isidore of Seville who is the proposed patron saint of the internet. Isidore was born into a Spanish family in 560 AD, and after

growing up and joining the priesthood, began to compile the twenty-volume *Etymologies*. This was an encyclopedic account of human knowledge, the *Wikipedia* of his time.

May we all use the internet to further grow in knowledge and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Saint Isidore, pray for us.

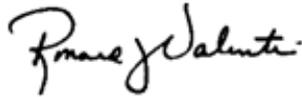
Sincerely,



Most Rev. Denis J. Madden
Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore
Neumann Vicariate



Most Rev. Mitchell T. Rozanski
Auxiliary Bishop of Baltimore
Seton Vicariate



Dr. Ronald J. Valenti
Executive Director
Department of Catholic Educational Ministries

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Technology Prayer



Opening Prayer

Almighty and eternal God, who created us in your image and call us to seek after all that is good, true and beautiful, and to grow in love and relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. We ask that through the intercession of Saint Isidore and Saint Claire, during our journeys through technology, you will direct our hands and eyes to what is pleasing to you. May we treat with charity and patience all those whom we encounter. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

First Reading

A Reading from the Book of Genesis (11:1,4-9) (NAB)

The whole world spoke the same language, using the same words. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky, and so make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered all over the earth." Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men had built. Then the Lord said: "If now, while they are one people, all speaking the same language, they have started to do this, nothing will later stop them from doing whatever they presume to do. Let us then go down and there confuse their language, so that one will not understand what another says." Thus the Lord scattered them from there all over the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the speech of all the world. It was from that place that he scattered them all over the earth.

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Reflection

The first reading tells us the story of the Tower of Babel. In it, we are told that human beings began to believe that they could create great things apart from God. They began to plan, build and make decisions without recognizing the role of God. Our relationship with God is not meant to be something we "do" for an hour or so a week. Instead we are called to see that our identity, the relationships we have, and the decisions we make in our day to day lives all need to be rooted in God's love for us. In light of the removal of God from their creation, people were scattered, they struggled to communicate, they didn't understand each other, and their efforts to build didn't work.

Reflection Questions

Like the Tower of Babel, in what ways have I seen people separate their relationship with God from their use of technology to communicate? How have I seen people fail to act as a disciple while online, texting, calling or e-mailing others? How does that effect other people?



St. Isidore of Seville

Second Reading

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles 2:1 – 8 (NAB)

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem.

At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language?"

The Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Reflection

In our reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we hear about Pentecost. We are told that after receiving the Holy Spirit, the disciples were able to communicate and have persons from varying cultures and with different languages understand them. As they went forth to do the work of God, the apostles were able to bring people together, communicate with everyone and proclaim the message of Jesus Christ without any barriers.



St. Claire of Assisi

Reflection Question

What are some practical ways that I can make sure that the way I use technology is rooted in my relationship with God? Similar to disciples after Pentecost, what are some guidelines for what to write and say that will bring people together and reflect God's love?

Closing Prayer

Loving God,

We are thankful for your love. In all we say, all we do, and who we are may we remember that we are witnesses of your love in the world. May the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen us to make positive decisions and communicate your love. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

St. Mary, Patroness of the Archdiocese of Baltimore . . . **Pray for Us**

St. Clare of Assisi, Patron Saint of Television and Telephones . . . **Pray for Us**

Saint Isidore of Seville, Proposed Patron Saint of Internet Users, Patron Saint of Computers, and Computer Users . . . **Pray for Us**



Section One – Introduction

The enclosed guidelines and recommendations are designed to aid ministers and church/school personnel in determining appropriate boundaries in regards to their use of technology within their professional ministerial relationships.

In Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, the Holy Father reminds us that

Even when we work through satellites or through remote electronic impulses, our actions always remain human, an expression of our responsible freedom. Technology is highly attractive because it draws us out of our physical limitations and broadens our horizon. *But human freedom is authentic only when it responds to the fascination of technology with decisions that are the fruit of moral responsibility.* Hence the pressing need for formation in an ethically responsible use of technology. Moving beyond the fascination that technology exerts, we must reappropriate the true meaning of freedom, which is not an intoxication with total autonomy, but a response to the call of being, beginning with our own personal being.¹(70)

Freedom is not defined by a limitless capacity to choose and utilize technological vehicles without integrity. True freedom, instead, allows us to define ourselves, our very existence, in affiliation with Jesus Christ and His mission. "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35)² It is in the context of our true freedom, that these guidelines and recommendations remind us of the responsibility we bear in our interactions with one another.

Those who minister and work in pastoral settings with young people (ex. Youth Ministers, Catechetical Leaders, Pastors and Parish Life Directors teachers, school staff and catechists) have long understood that our efforts are to be relational. In *Renewing the Vision*, it is expressed that "Effective ministry with adolescents (has always been) built on relationships. The central place of the Emmaus story in *A Vision of Youth Ministry* demonstrated the primacy of relationships and of discovering God within those relationships."³ No matter how intense a virtual relationship becomes, it will never adequately fulfill the human need for a healthy intimate interpersonal relationship.

¹ Charity in Truth, *Caritas in Veritate*. Benedict XVI, June 29, 2009.

² Ibid.

³ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing the Vision* USCCB Publishing, 1997.



Section Two – Theological Basis

We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:25 (NAB) ⁴

The highest ideal and supreme example of communication is found in God who became man and brother to us. At liturgy, we pray that we might “come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity.”⁵ That Jesus Christ came to earth in bodily form to repair the fractured relationship between God and man powerfully exemplifies the importance and significance of real relationships. Jesus walked among us. He listened. He spoke. He told stories and shared meals. He cried at the loss of a friend. He healed others with forgiveness, a touch, and/or a vocal command. Jesus Christ is the fullest experience of God being in relationship with us. We who desire to communicate God’s love for others and the invitation to be disciples of Jesus must recognize the value of real relationships in our various ministries.

*Communio et Progressio*⁶, published in 1971, highlighted a quote from Pope Pius XII's 1957 encyclical letter *Miranda Prorsus*, the Pastoral Instruction on the Means of Social Communication. It reads that "The Church sees these media as 'gifts of God' which, in accordance with His providential design, unite men in brotherhood and so help them to cooperate with His plan for their salvation" (2)

As the Church understands it, and Pope John Paul II articulated, the history of human communication is analogous to a long journey, bringing humanity "from the pride-driven project of Babel and the collapse into confusion and mutual incomprehension to which it gave rise, to Pentecost and the gift of tongues: a restoration of communication, centered on Jesus, through the action of the Holy Spirit."⁷ In the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, “communication among men found its highest ideal and supreme example in God who had become man and brother.”⁸ (*Communio et Progressio*, 10).

We know the Eucharist as the real presence of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. The truth that “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1: 14)⁹ is the heart of Roman Catholic incarnational theology. Our truest relationships involve an intimacy where we “dwell among” others. Because of this, our relationships involve, not a transitory acquaintanceship, but the fullest of

⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, New American Bible, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC December 2002

⁵ Roman Missal, Liturgy of the Eucharist

⁶ *Communio et Progressio*, On the Means of Social Communication written by Order of the Second Vatican Council, May 23, 1971

⁷ John Paul II, *Message for the 34th World Communications Day*, June 4, 2000

⁸ *Communio et Progressio*, n. 10)

⁹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, New American Bible, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC December 2002



commitment to one another. Pope Benedict XVI said in his 2009 Message for World Communications Day:

It would be sad if our desire to sustain and develop *on-line* friendships were to be at the cost of our availability to engage with our families, our neighbours and those we meet in the daily reality of our places of work, education and recreation.¹⁰

Technology has, in part, helped to distort our understanding of intimacy. In “virtual reality,” there can be a false perception of closeness, but it is not true intimacy. In our faith, we understand the truest intimacy to occur when we are in communion with one another. The earliest Christians understood the role of communion, intimacy, and relationship building as imperative to discipleship. In the Book of Acts (2:42-47), community is articulated as

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their property and possessions and divide them among all according to each one's need. Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes. They ate their meals with exultation and sincerity of heart, praising God and enjoying favor with all the people. And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” (NAB)¹¹

As we fully enter into this new millennium, the vehicles serving ministry and relationships are rapidly changing. Advances in technology have increased the opportunities for the church to communicate her message. As church, we have a wider variety of means to communicate within our faith community. Technology should not become an expedient and convenient means to evade the complicated, critical and often messy work of building human relationships.

Our goal, as Church, is to spread the love of Jesus Christ through evangelization and catechesis using all creative venues presented to us. In this way, we become a more complete image of the Body of Christ,

“striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit. . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Ephesians 4: 3-6 (NAB)¹²

¹⁰ Pope Benedict XVI for the 43rd World Day of Communications *“New Technologies, New Relationships. Promoting a Culture of Respect, Dialogue and Friendship.”* May 24, 2009

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, New American Bible, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC December 2002



Section 3 Pervasive Reality of Technology and Youth

In a 2009 study by the *Pew Internet and American Life*¹³ project, it has been reported:

- 93% of teens 12-17 go online
- 89% of online teens go online from home, and most of them go online from home most often
- 77% of teen go online at school
- 71% go online from friends or relatives house
- 60% go online from a library
- 66% of households with teens go online via broadband, 22% via dial up, and 10% do not have access at home.
- 63% of online teens go online daily

Teenage daily communication occurs in the following ways:

- 51% of teens (with cell phones) talk on their cell phones
- 42% of teens (who use SNS) send messages through social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook
- 38% of teens send text messages to each other
- 32% of teens talk to friends on a landline phone
- 29% spend time with friends in person doing social activities outside of school
- 26% send instant messages
- 16% send email

The *Pew Internet and American Life* report goes on to share that:

- 77% of teens 12-17 own a game console
- 74% of teens 12-17 own an iPod or Mp3 player
- 71% of teens 12-17 own a cell phone
- 60% have a desktop or laptop computer
- 55% have a portable gaming device like a DS or a PSP

Another *Pew Internet and American Life* Report on “Parents, Teens and Technology”¹⁴ indicates the reach technology has upon families:

- 89% of online teens say the internet and other devices in their lives like cell phones, iPods, and digital cameras make their lives easier, while 71% of their parents say these technologies make their lives easier.
- Two-thirds of desktop-owning parents (64%) have children who also own desktop computers and 60% of parents who own cell phones have children who own them as well.

¹³ “Teens and Social Media” Pew Internet & American Life Project, April 2009

¹⁴ “Parents, Teens and Technology” Pew Internet & American Life Project, October 24, 2007



- Parents are now less likely to say that the internet has been a good thing for their children. While well over half of all parents of online teens (59%) say that the internet has been a good thing for their children, that number has decreased a statistically significant amount from 67% in 2004. However, there has not been a corresponding change in the percent of parents who think the internet has been a bad thing for their children. Instead, more parents are becoming ambivalent about whether their children have been positively affected by the internet. In 2006, 30% of parents of online teens said that they did not think that the internet had an effect on their children one way or the other compared to 25% of parents in 2004.

Those who minister in pastoral settings must recognize the importance of the role of the parents when dealing with all technological forms of communication with their young people. We must recognize that young people are this technologically equip with the permission of their parents. It is essential that parents equip themselves regarding their young people's use of technology. Parishes and schools should do everything possible to inform, support and encourage parental engagement with young people in regards to technology. As always, we seek a partnership with parents in the faith formation of their young people.

Many have advocated blocking and filtering. Education is, however, the answer. The Internet and social networks are not going away. As adults who care for our young people, we bear a responsibility, in collaboration with their parents, to help young people develop the tools they need to interact safely and responsibly online.

In 2002, (then-) Archbishop John Foley, on behalf of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, wrote *Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media* which states that:

The chief collaborators with parents in the moral formation of young people must be educators. Schools and other educational programs should support and inculcate the social and ethical values that promote the unity and health of families and of society itself. Of particular value are programs in media education to develop in young people a critical attitude and properly formed skills of discernment in using television, radio and other media, so that they might know how to resist manipulation and how to avoid merely passive listening and viewing habits. It is also important that schools emphasize the need for respect for the human person, the value of family life and the importance of personal moral integrity (25). . . . a merely censorious attitude on the part of the Church toward the media is neither sufficient nor appropriate. (30).¹⁵

¹⁵ *Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media*, Pontifical Council for Social Communications. *Vatican City, May 7, 1989*



Some of the skills that today's young people should have to best interact on the Internet are: 1) identify what is appropriate and inappropriate communication within a public forum, 2) distinguish that not everything on the internet is automatically truth. They should be able to check for multiple, independent, credible sources, and 3) discern what can be a potential threat to the security of themselves and/or their family and the potential steps necessary to take to ensure safety.

As the Internet continues to evolve, schools, religious education and youth ministry programs must keep pace with the latest tools and threats to develop policies that strike a balance between safety and effective utilization of the gifts of the medium. With this balance, the ability to train, to share new ministry techniques, to communicate with one another via internet will continue to be a blessing to our churches and schools.



Section 4 - Ethical Pastoral Care Considerations in regards to Technology

Ethics is about making moral decisions with integrity and honor. The ethical behavior which we expect of church leaders in the “real” world must also guide us in regards to the “virtual” technological world. Those who minister and work in pastoral settings should be especially vigilant regarding healthy boundaries with everyone, but in a very special way with young people. The Archdiocese of Baltimore, recognizing a need for formation regarding an ethically responsible use of technology, sets forth the following principles regarding healthy boundaries:

- Parents are the primary educators in faith and the first heralds of the faith in regards to their children. It is the role of the youth minister to serve as a partner with the parent and to be transparent in all communications with a young person. One who ministers with young people should avoid the role of a ‘surrogate parent’ with a young person. A parent should never have cause to be concerned about a church professional or volunteer subjugating the primacy of the role of the parent. We need to be willing to share the content of any pastoral consultations with the parent(s) of the young people with which we interact.
- To protect both the adult and the young person, communicating with young people with excessive and/or improper frequency, at inappropriate hours, or in private no matter the vehicle utilized is not healthy behavior.
- Those who minister and work in pastoral settings with young people must take great care to consistently represent the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church when using electronic media. A Catholic minister must never distribute or intentionally access abusive, harassing, libelous, obscene, offensive, profane, pornographic, threatening, sexually explicit, or illegal material. As a representative of the Church, those who minister to young people should be diligent in avoiding situations which might be the source of scandal for themselves or others. To professionally maintain the greater trust of the community, all communications must be a tool of evangelization.
- There is a difference between being “friendly” and being “friends” with children and youth. Healthy boundaries between adults and young people must be maintained. Young people are not the peer of an adult serving within a church or school capacity. Do not allow children/ youth to become overly friendly or familiar with you. They shouldn’t be calling you by a personal or familiar nickname. It is inappropriate for adults to include them within an adult social circle.
- Those who serve youth should not be accessible to the young people they serve on a constant on-call basis. Church and school professionals and volunteers should give strongly consider not offering or publishing their home or cell phone numbers or home address except to other adults. Such a move, while intended to give the sense of pastoral availability, might not be best for maintaining the professional boundaries of the minister or the ministry. Such an effort should only be done with the permission and knowledge of one’s supervisor.



- It is uncomfortable and inappropriate when there seems to be a “special” relationship between an adult and a young person who seems to be a “favorite.” The appearance of “special” relationships will always undermine one’s effectiveness in addressing the whole community. As ministers, we are called to objectively assess how others might perceive or misconstrue your behavior and the behavior of the adults with which you minister.
- The internet can be a dangerous place for young people as online predators, cyberbullies, and identity thieves seek to harm the young church. Adult ministers model and inform what healthy relationships between adults and young people should be in their every interaction and decision. As a result of the healthy boundaries their adult ministers have modeled, when young people are faced with adults who attempt inappropriate behavior via an electronic medium, they will be able to more quickly recognize that this behavior is divergent and report it to their parent and other trusted adult.
- For those who minister to young people, it is highly discouraged to “patrol” the Internet for the young people to whom you minister. While a young person should have no expectation that statements made on-line are private, it is the parent’s role to monitor their child’s behavior, and those who minister to young people on behalf of the church never should usurp the role of the parent. Adults seeking out a young person’s personal sites for details of his/her life is as much an improper violation of that young person’s privacy as picking up and reading a retreat journal left out during a confirmation retreat. Intentionally monitoring and probing where young people have shared their intimate thoughts not only violates their privacy but also may call into question the boundaries of the minister who is investigating.

All expectations regarding Child Protection reporting procedures for the Archdiocese of Baltimore must be complied with at all times regardless of the medium by which the information reaches the adult minister. All questions regarding this should be directed to the Office of Child and Youth Protection for the Archdiocese of Baltimore (410-547-5348).

Should a minister to young people become aware of disturbing pastoral information, they are responsible to follow up with all expediency regardless of the medium through which they acquired this information. Parents should be informed immediately regarding information acquired. It is expected that adults who minister with young people will appropriately involve parents and/or legal authorities in situations where there is a serious pastoral care concern. All questions regarding this can be directed to the Coordinator of Pastoral Care for the Archdiocese of Baltimore at (410-547-5369).



Section 5 Web Pages

A parish or school that establishes a web site as a source of communication and information should first make a commitment to this vehicle of communication. Web pages, especially the index or main page(s) must be continually updated. Nothing more distracts from the usefulness of a web site than static or out-of-date information.

As with any ministry effort, there should be an intentional plan and set of goals regarding the project of establishing a web presence. This should be clearly communicated to the pastoral staff, volunteers, and young people. This will be essential when it comes to making “editorial” choices regarding what is important and/or essential for posting on the site itself.

Great care should be used to protect young people on a web page that is publicly accessible. Young peoples’ phone numbers or e-mail addresses should not be available. Regarding appropriate boundaries for the minister, care should also be taken to protect the non-business contact information (home address or phone, cell number, home e-mail address, etc.) of adult contacts.

Global permission should be sought before posting photos of young people. This can best be done by adding a line to an event’s permission form that grants permission to use pictures from the event in publicity efforts. When posting pictures, it is advisable not to caption them with a young person’s name unless the parent/guardian has specifically authorized you to do so. At no point should a picture be used that might be considered embarrassing or unflattering. We should always be mindful to protect the reputations of our church membership. If individuals are uncomfortable with a particular photo, it should be immediately removed from the website.

(See more related information in Section 8 entitled Blogging / Social Networking / On-Line Gaming)



Section 6 *Email and Other Text Based Communication*

E-mail and instant messaging (IM) are examples of the blessing and curse technology brings. The same boundary issues that must be respected in oral communication must be respected in written ones, particularly when e-mail, texting and IM'ing are involved.

As a professional, you should maintain separate e-mail accounts for professional and personal communication. You are strongly encouraged to avoid ever using a home or personal e-mail account. By establishing your own "professional" e-mail account, it is easier to remember to maintain professional boundaries as well.

Professional communication should be conducted regarding the matters that deal with one's professional relationship. Communicate only about matters that address the business at hand of your ministry. As possible, have adult volunteers, teachers, catechists, and parents carbon copied on all e-mails and information sent to young people from your office or position.

Young people have been known to initiate online discussions that they're too embarrassed or timid to initiate in person. Online, young people can perceive there is little consequence to what they say—there is assumed anonymity, and they sense control over the relationship as it is seemingly limited to a particular moment or opportunity outside the perceptions of real time.

Electronic communication can be misinterpreted. Communicate in person whenever possible. E-mails, text messages, blog postings or comments, and YouTube videos are all public forums from which a permanent record could be obtained. Remember, e-mails, text messages, and IM's can be logged, archived, and forwarded to other parties. Always avoid any communication that might be construed as having sexual overtones. Do not reply to any such e-mail from a child or youth; make a paper copy of such inappropriate communication and notify your supervisor immediately.



Section 7 - Phone Calls / Text Messaging

The same standards should be maintained when the communication of relationships occurs over a “private” phone call or chat via text messaging as via E-mail and IM. It is essential to establish boundaries as necessary to protect both yourself as well as your own personal time.

Adults should have constraints regarding when they attempt to be in communication with young people. Dinner time, even if a family chooses to not respect dinner time as intentional family time, should be respected. While young people might be on the phone or texting late into evening hours, those who minister with young people should pre-determine a timeframe when it is too late to take a professional call, except in the case of extreme urgency.

The phone and messaging services can be used as a vehicle of communication, invitation, and checking in. A pattern of continuous communication with a selected individual suggests a “special relationship” and “secret communication” which is highly discouraged.



Section 8 – Social Networking | Blogging | On-Line Gaming

Social Networking

A social network service utilizes software to build online social networks for communities of people who share interests and activities. Most services are primarily web based and provide various ways for users to interact, such as chat, messaging, email, video, voice chat, file sharing, blogging, discussion groups, and so on.

A variety of social networking tools are being used by millions of people on a regular basis, making it seem that social networking has become a part of everyday life. The most popular sites for this activity have been www.myspace.com and www.facebook.com.

Social networking has revolutionized the way we communicate and share information with one another. Therefore, it can also be a way to connect young people with the church and the church's activities with young people. (Please refer back to Section 5: Web Pages.)

One who ministers and works in pastoral settings with young people who has a “personal” page should neither advertise that site nor “friend” young people to their “personal” site.

Should the staff and supervisor approve of creation of a professional networking page for clarification and dispersal of information, that page must be consistently monitored and should not be the personal site of any of the adults affiliated with the ministry.

On any blog/ social network site, personal opinions and discussions are often conducted. It is essential to remember, however, even on the World Wide Web, others will recognize them as representing the values of the Catholic Church.

Blogging

Blogging is a powerful communication tool, and communication is an important issue for your parish and youth ministry program. The word “blog” is a shortening of the term Web log or Web-based log. People blog for many reasons: to vent, to share a hobby or some other passion, such as sports, or the daily minutiae of their lives. Some people blog to teach, and some of those bloggers might be youth ministers, school professionals, or other Church pastoral leaders or volunteers.

Past policies were written, by and large, for a Web where people went to find and use information. But the Web has changed: It is much more participatory, and it has become a platform for the creation and distribution of content, no longer merely a repository of it.



Those who minister and work in pastoral settings with young people of the Archdiocese of Baltimore may establish and publish through professional ministry-based blogs. Their purposes should be limited to:

- Promote the youth ministry program, parish and diocese as well as utilize the internet as an evangelization tool.
- Establish productive communication between the youth ministry program and home by providing ongoing information about programs, opportunities, expectations, policies and requests for support.
- Provide young people with information that will help them become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Those who minister and work in pastoral settings with young people who blog are encouraged to publish information including, but not limited to:

- Fliers for upcoming activities, permission forms, calendar, and Weekly reports on what will be taught during the upcoming week, how it will be taught and why.
- Additional links and references for information currently being presented within Catechetical programs.
- Confirmation information including: class times, checklists, sponsor resources, parent resources, etc.
- Descriptions of projects, including procedures, expectations, suggested parent involvement, assessment rubrics and links to last year's projects.
- Bible Studies and other spiritual links and prayer resources
- Achievements of parish young people and adult leaders.

One who ministers and works in pastoral settings with young people should not use their blogs to:

- Conduct or promote outside business activities.
- Defame or cause defamation of the character of any individual, organization or institution.
- Divulge any personal information about young people, or jeopardize their safety in any other way.

On- Line Gaming

Finally, those who minister and work in pastoral settings with young people should take care in their involvement with on-line gaming. While, for many, this is a recreational alternative, it is also an opportunity for social networking. They should take care of protecting their on-line game identities so that gaming can remain recreational for them. Further, those who minister with young people should take care not to be involved in late-night gaming on-line with their young people as this may certainly be usurping the intentions of a parent.



Section 9 – School Specific Policies regarding Internet Use

At a March 3, 2006 meeting for Elementary and Secondary Principals held at St. John's Parish in Westminster, MD when asked about "Myspace, blogging and inappropriate postings" "Can students with an 'anti-school' message be disciplined?" The following was recommended by presenter Kathy Hoskins in note form:

- a. If the student handbook is worded so students are on notice that behavior will subject them to discipline, they can be disciplined.
- b. Handbook should be worded so as to apply to out-of-school conduct that violates school rules.
- c. Handbook should be worded so as to address behavior regardless of whether it is verbal, physical, written, graphic or electronic.
- d. Distinguish violation of school rules from "anti-school messages."



Section 10 - Resources

Internet Safety for Parents and Families

National Center for Missing & Exploited Children Home Page

<http://www.missingkids.com/>

NetSmartz by National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

<http://www.netsmartz.org/>

GetNetWise: What are the Risks for Children Online? by Internet Education Foundation

<http://kids.getnetwise.org/safetyguide/danger/>

Overview of various Internet risks

Parenting Online Series by WiredKids - Internet positives and negatives, plus tips for avoiding problems

<http://wiredkids.org/parents/parentingonline/index.html>

<http://wiredkids.org/resources/documents/pdf/parentingonline.pdf> (Printable version)

<http://www.wiredkids.org/parents/parentingonline/parentingonline-ES-v1.pdf> (Spanish version)

SafeKids.Com

<http://www.safekids.com/>

SafeTeens.com

<http://www.safeteens.com/>

Cyberbullying

Presentation and Research for Cyberbullying overview

<http://www.pewinternet.org/Presentations/2009/18-Cyberbullying-What-the-research-is-telling-us.aspx>

Cyberbullying.org

<http://www.cyberbullying.org/>

Cyberbullies by National Crime Prevention Council - Tips for avoiding and handling cyberbullies

<http://www.mcgruff.org/Advice/cyberbullies.php>

Cyberbullying handouts [untitled] by Bullying.org

http://www.cyberbullying.org/pdf/Cyberbullying_Information.pdf

STOP cyberbullying by WiredKids <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/index2.html>

The above are hyperlinks to web sites operated by parties other than the Archdiocese of Baltimore. These hyperlinks are provided for your reference only. The archdiocese of Baltimore does not control such web sites and is not responsible for their contents. The inclusion of hyperlinks to other web sites does not imply any endorsement of the material on these web sites or any association with their operators.



Appendix 1 – COPPA

In accordance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998, one should not knowingly request or solicit personally identifiable information from anyone under the age of 13 without prior verifiable parental consent.

It is the assessment of the Archdiocese of Baltimore that no information should be submitted to, or posted at a web site by guests under 18 years of age without the consent of their parent or guardian.

Best Practice for The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA")¹⁶

COPPA applies to the online collection of personal information, such as name, home address, email address, telephone number or any other information that would allow someone to identify or contact a child.. A web site operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent and what responsibilities the operator has to protect children's privacy and safety online. The operator must post a link to a notice of its information practices on the home page of the web site *and* at each area where personal information is collected from children. The link must be clearly and prominently displayed.

Before collecting, using or disclosing personal information from a child, the operator must obtain verifiable consent from the child's parent. Verifiable consent means the operator must make reasonable efforts to ensure that before personal information is collected from the child, a parent of the child receives notice of the operator's information practices and consents to those practices.

The better practice, in order to avoid the logistical difficulties in complying with COPPA is to not collect any personal information from children.

Policy Regarding Use of Children's Information

1. When the Archdiocese and/or her parishes and schools collect personal information from children (name, home/e-mail address, phone number), through the Internet, we will:
 - (a) Post the privacy policy on the home page.
 - (b) Not require a child to disclose more information than is reasonably necessary to participate in an activity
 - (c) Get verifiable parental consent to collect personal information
 - (d) Get new consent when information practices materially change
 - (e) Allow parents to review personal information collected from their children
 - (f) Allow parents to revoke consent, and delete information collected from their children at the parent's request
 - (g) Post a privacy policy that complies with COPPA including:

¹⁶ Best Practice for The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act ("COPPA")



- (i) name and contact information of the operator of the site
- (ii) the kinds of personal information collected whether and to whom the operator discloses the children's personal information

2. Archdiocesan parishes, schools, and/or other organizations will not post or distribute personally identifiable information of children under 18 years (photo, name, address, phone number, e-mail address) without prior written parental permission.



Appendix 2 – Archdiocesan Policies regarding Internet Use – Code of Conduct

Computer Use & Internet Policy

Overview

The Internet is a worldwide telecommunications network of networks that links millions of users and computers. Government, corporate, commercial and educational entities are linked, permitting Internet users to easily access and share vast stores of information.

The Internet is an important resource for the Archdiocese to provide improved communication services to parishes and schools. The Archdiocese will creatively use the Internet to improve services and contribute broadly to the mission of the Church. The connection to the Internet and related technology services provided by the Archdiocese of Baltimore exist to facilitate the official work of the Archdiocese.

These services are provided for employees and authorized persons affiliated with the Archdiocese (users) for the efficient exchange of information and the completion of assigned responsibilities consistent with the mission of the Archdiocese. The use of these services by users must be consistent with this Policy (including all security and confidentiality provisions set forth herein).

Policy

This policy is intended to identify the principles of Acceptable Use and Unacceptable Use of the Internet Facilities; define Archdiocesan rights; address Enforcement and Violations provisions; and set forth the Employee Internet Access Disclosure Statement that employees granted access privileges will be required to acknowledge and sign.

Principles of Acceptable Use

Archdiocese of Baltimore Internet Users are required:

- To respect the privacy of other Users; for example, Users shall not intentionally seek information on, obtain copies of, or modify files or data maintained by other Users, unless explicit permission to do so has been obtained;
- To respect copyright and license agreements for software, digital artwork, and other forms of electronic data;
- To protect data from unauthorized use or disclosure as required by state and federal laws and Archdiocesan regulations;
- To respect the integrity of computing systems: for example, Users shall not use or develop programs that harass other Users or infiltrate a computer or computing system and/or damage or alter the software components of a computer or computing system;
- To limit personal use of the Internet Facilities and equipment to that which is incidental to the User's official assignments and job responsibilities;
- To safeguard their accounts and passwords. Accounts and passwords are normally assigned to single Users and are not to be shared with any other person without



authorization. Users are expected to report any observations of attempted security violations.

Unacceptable Use

It is not acceptable to use Archdiocese of Baltimore Internet facilities for activities unrelated to the mission of the Archdiocese, including:

- For activities unrelated to official assignments and/or job responsibilities, except incidental personal use in compliance with this Policy;
- For any illegal purpose;
- To transmit threatening, obscene or harassing materials or correspondence;
- For unauthorized distribution of Archdiocese of Baltimore data and information;
- To interfere with or disrupt network Users, services or equipment;
- For private purposes, whether for-profit or non-profit, such as marketing or business transactions unrelated to Archdiocesan duties;
- For any activity related to political causes;
- To advocate religious beliefs or practices contrary to Roman Catholic teaching;
- For private advertising of products or services;
- For any activity meant to foster personal gain;
- Revealing or publicizing proprietary or confidential information;
- Representing opinions as those of the Archdiocese of Baltimore;
- Uploading or downloading commercial software in violation of its copyright;
- Downloading any software or electronic files without reasonable virus protection measures in place;
- Intentionally interfering with the normal operation of any Archdiocesan Internet gateway.

Archdiocese of Baltimore Rights

Pursuant to the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986 (18 USC 2510 et seq), notice is hereby given that there are NO faculties provided by this system for sending or receiving private or confidential electronic communications. System administrators have access to all mail and User access requests, and will monitor messages as necessary to assure efficient performance and appropriate use. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

- The Archdiocese reserves the right to log network use and monitor file server space utilization by Users and assumes no responsibility or liability for files deleted due to violation of file server space allotments.
- The Archdiocese reserves the right to remove a User account from the network.
- The Archdiocese will not be responsible for any damages. This includes the loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, or service interruptions caused by negligence, errors or omissions. Use of any information obtained is at the User's risk. The Archdiocese makes no warranties, either express or implied, with regard to software obtained from the Internet.
- The Archdiocese reserves the right to change its policies and rules at any time.



- The Archdiocese makes no warranties (expressed or implied) with respect to Internet service, and it specifically assumes no responsibilities for:

The content of any advice or information received by a User through the Internet Facilities or any costs or charges incurred as a result of seeking or accepting such advice;

- Any costs, liabilities or damages caused by the way the User chooses to use the Internet Facilities;
- Any consequence of service interruptions or changes, even if these disruptions arise from circumstances under the control of the Archdiocese.

The Archdiocesan Internet Facilities are provided on an as is, as available basis.

Enforcement and Violations

This policy is intended to be illustrative of the range of acceptable and unacceptable uses of Internet Facilities and is not necessarily exhaustive. Questions about specific uses related to security issues not enumerated in this policy statement and reports of specific unacceptable uses should be directed to the User's Division Director. Other questions about appropriate use should be directed to the User's supervisor. The Archdiocese will review alleged violations of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy on a case-by-case basis. Violations of the policy will result in disciplinary actions as appropriate, up to and including dismissal.



Sample Computer Access Disclosure Statement

Employees of and other authorized persons affiliated with the Archdiocese who are given computer access privileges will be asked to review and sign the following statement before access is granted.

“I, _____, recognize and acknowledge that electronic communication channels developed and supplied by the Archdiocese of Baltimore as a condition of duties must be used according to terms and conditions set out by the Archdiocese and agreed to in writing by me. These channels include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Internet and the World Wide Web
- Computer-based online services
- Electronic mail and messaging systems
- Electronic bulletin board systems

I acknowledge that the distribution of any information through these and other channels supplied by Archdiocese of Baltimore is subject to the scrutiny and approval of the Archdiocese, and that the Archdiocese reserves the sole right to determine the suitability and confidentiality of said information. I also acknowledge that the Archdiocesan assets include many items, including but not limited to the said following information types:

- Employee information
- Employee benefits and insurance information
- Databases and the information contained therein
- Computer and network access codes and similar or related information
- Contractual and proprietary information
- Research projects and all related information connected with research efforts
- Other confidential or proprietary information that has not been made available to the general public by the Archdiocese.

I further acknowledge that all information related to the accomplishment of the mission of the Archdiocese, including the information types referenced above and other tangible and intangible assets and other information obtained by me in the course of my duties are Confidential Information and the property of the Archdiocese. Further, such Confidential Information may be subject to trademark, copyright or similar protections.

I acknowledge that any disclosure of the Confidential Information, even inadvertent disclosure, may cause irreparable harm and material damage to the Archdiocese. Both during and after my employment or affiliation with the Archdiocese, and regardless of the reason for termination of such employment or affiliation, I agree

- (a) not to use or disclose the Confidential Information, other than solely in the furtherance of Archdiocesan business or as required by law;
- (b) to take all lawful measures to prevent the unauthorized use or disclosure of the Confidential Information to any third party;



(c) to take all lawful measures to prevent unauthorized persons or entities from obtaining or using the Confidential Information; and
(d) not to take any actions that would constitute or facilitate the unauthorized use or disclosure of Confidential Information. The term “unauthorized” shall mean the following:

- In contravention of any written policies or procedures of the Archdiocese
- Otherwise inconsistent with Archdiocesan measures to protect its interests in its Confidential Information
- In contravention of any lawful instruction or directive, either written or oral, of an employee of the Archdiocese empowered to issue such instruction or directive
- In contravention of any duty existing under law or contract., I acknowledge that all of the items comprising the Confidential Information are confidential, whether or not the Archdiocese specifically labels such information as confidential or internally restricts access to such information.

I have read and agree to comply with the terms of the Computer Use and Internet Policy of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.



Appendix 3 – Template Disclaimers

Links to Third Party Sites

This web site contains some hyperlinks to web sites operated by parties other than the _____. These hyperlinks are provided for your reference only. _____ does not control such web sites and is not responsible for their contents. The inclusion of hyperlinks to other web sites does not imply any endorsement of the material on these web sites or any association with their operators.

Restriction of Liability

_____ will not be liable for any damages or injury caused by, including but not limited to, any failure of performance, error, omission, interruption, defect, delay in operation of transmission, computer virus, or line failure. _____ will not be liable for any damages or injury, including but not limited to, special or consequential damages that result from the use of, or the inability to use, the materials in this site or a site which is linked to this site, even if there is negligence on the part of _____ or an authorized representative has been advised of the possibility of such damages, or both. The above limitation or exclusion may not apply to you to the extent that applicable law may not allow the limitation or exclusion of liability for incidental or consequential damages.

Permission Form Statement related to Use of Image

Parents/guardians of participants are advised that photographs or videotape of participants may be used in publications, websites or other materials produced from time to time by the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry or the Archdiocese of Baltimore. (Participants would not be identified, however, without specific written consent.) Parents/guardians who do not wish their child(ren) to be photographed or filmed should so notify the Division in writing. Please note that the Division has no control over the use of photographs or film taken by media that may be covering the event in which your child(ren) participate(s).