

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY OF THE SCA  
Version 2013.01.26 (Approved)

1. Basic Philosophy of Social Media Policy in the SCA Context

The Internet and social media are constantly changing. A review of the current social media technologies that Society groups are using demonstrates a great deal of commitment and creativity on the part of the individuals involved. While the Society has no wish to stifle creativity or limit individual expression any more than is absolutely necessary, it is important that we institute a set of basic guidelines to enable us to maintain consistency through the SCA.

Our goal is to directly regulate only those social media pages and accounts that could be construed as an official “voice” of SCA, Inc. or its branch groups. We are not attempting to monitor or control all SCA-related content in social media. Rather, this policy covers only the subset of social media activity intended to directly represent the SCA and its activities, and it provides clear guidance for groups to determine when they are acting on behalf of the SCA and when they are operating as individuals outside an official context.

This policy must be deemed a “living document,” interpreted with an eye to allowing groups to make the fullest use they can of evolving social media while protecting the Society’s interests. Questions concerning the application of this policy should be directed to the Social Media Director.

2. Core Principles of the Social Media Policy

The Social Media Policy for the SCA can be summarized in the following core principles. Note that this summary does not represent the whole of the policy; follow the remainder of the document for how to utilize and apply the policy.

- a. Any individual or group speaking with the “official” voice of a branch or Kingdom, branch or Kingdom office (including royalty and territorial baronage), Corporate or Society office, or other SCA-recognized official group must follow this policy.
- b. Social media communications must be administered by a minimum of two of the required officers for any branch, or the relevant officer and another warranted officer for any office.
- c. Content placed on social media must not contain inappropriate, offensive, or confidential material and must respect principles of trademark and intellectual property.
- d. All participants engaged in using social media, from Society and branch officers to owners and administrators to the general audience shall display courteous behavior.
- e. Social media is not an approved method of distributing official information. However, groups may redistribute information already disseminated according to other applicable policies.

3. Applicability of the Policy

This section provides guidelines so that individuals and groups may know when their activities must comply with the policy. Because groups may choose to use any number of rapidly maturing social media platforms, the applicability of the Social Media Policy is based on the function of the account, page or presence. Throughout this document, for any given account, profile, feed, group, page, or platform that is considered under this policy, the term “social media presence” (shortened to “presence”) will be used.

- a. The Corporation is only interested in regulating any presence that purports to be a public channel of communication for one of the following: the SCA corporation; an SCA branch or Kingdom; a branch, Kingdom, or Society/Corporate Officer (including Crowns, Coronets, and Territorial Baronages); an officially recognized non-branch group within a Kingdom (such as a guild or polling order), or a major, separately-managed inter-kingdom war, hereafter known as Society entities. Insofar as a presence seeks to hold itself out as an official resource of a Society entity it must comply with this policy. Presences for households and other groups not officially recognized by Society policy are not covered by this policy.
- b. A presence that meets the criteria in “subsection a” that allows members of the public to view any or all of the content distributed through it without approval from a moderator or account holder will be covered by the policy. Examples of presences of this nature include Facebook and Google Plus pages (including those pertaining to a specific event or branch-sponsored activity) and public Twitter streams.
- c. A presence that meets the criteria in “subsection a” that does not allow the public to view any content unless the individual is subscribed or otherwise approved as a member of the relevant group will not be covered by the policy. For these presences, the relevant policies for the Webminister’s office apply.
- d. Two criteria determine if the presence is covered under this policy: Is the presence perceived as the official voice of the given Society entity? Can anyone access and consume the content of the presence from the first moment they find it with no further action taken? If your communications do not meet one of these criteria, the policies herein are not binding.
- e. Personal profiles and pages that do not purport to be the official voice of a given Society entity, such as the personal Twitter account of the holder of an office but not the office itself, when used to conduct Society-related communication must adhere to the Governing Documents’ policies for official vs. unofficial communication when applicable.

#### 4. Administering Official Social Media Presences

This section ensures that pages purporting to represent a Society entity are maintained in such a way that the SCA’s online presence is consistent, and the SCA’s interests in its good reputation and intellectual property are maintained.

While these guidelines apply only to pages covered by the policy as delineated above, any SCA-oriented page, account or presence would likely benefit from application of these principles.

Any presence that is covered by this policy is considered held on behalf of the Society entity, and any individual who seeks to undertake the management of the page or account involved does so in trust on behalf of the group.

##### a. Account Administration

- i. All presences under the control of a given branch at any level must be under the equal administrative control of a minimum of two of the required officers for any branch, or one of the required officer and either a warranted Deputy for Social Media or branch Webminister.

- ii. For those presences representing an event, equal administrative control must be given to the individual(s) in charge of the event (autocrat, steward, mayor, etc) along with another of the required officers for the hosting branch.
- iii. For those presences representing an office, equal administrative control must be given to the holder of the office and an additional, warranted officer such as the replacement deputy for that office, or the Seneschal or Webminister for the related branch.
- iv. In any instance in which the platform of the presence does not allow for multiple administrators, the login credentials for the primary account used to access the platform must be made available to the officers in charge of administrating the presence. It is recommended that a generic account username or email be made for this purpose, such as "westershire\_webminister@gmail.com" unless doing so violates the terms of use of the platform.

b. Disclaimer of Official Status

- i. Any presence that is regulated under this policy must bear one of the following statements in any informational section of the account profile, or in some other persistent identifying area of the account or presence:
- ii. Branch Presences: This [account, page, event] is held and managed by [branch name], a branch of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. and is considered the official presence of this group here. Questions regarding its content should be directed to [branch seneschal's email] or to [socialmedia@sca.org](mailto:socialmedia@sca.org). Any discrepancies between the electronic version of any information and the printed version that is available from the originating office will be decided in favor of the printed version.
- iii. Officer Presences: This [account, page, event] is held and managed by the [officer title] of [branch] of the Society for Creative Anachronism, Inc. and is considered the official presence of this office here. Questions regarding its content should be directed to [officer's email] or to [socialmedia@sca.org](mailto:socialmedia@sca.org). Any discrepancies between the electronic version of any information and the printed version that is available from the originating office will be decided in favor of the printed version.

c. Trademarks and Intellectual Property Within the SCA

- i. Use of SCA trademarks and service marks – SCA Corporate Policy and By-Laws Section XII states the following:

SCA Trademarks – The United States Patent and Trademark Office granted the Society for Creative Anachronism trademarks on the word marks, Society for Creative Anachronism and SCA. The names (group and award/order) and armory (devices and badges) registered by Laurel to the SCA or to branches are to be considered service marks of the SCA. This recognition is to formally recognize these marks and our use of them to the purpose the US Patent and Trademark Office terms “collective marks.”

- ii. Kingdoms, principalities, regions, baronies, cantons, shires, etc. are all part of SCA, Inc. are entitled to use SCA trademarks and service marks without limit. This applies to

subsidiaries of SCA, Inc. and its affiliates through the affiliate agreements.

- iii. SCA members and nonmembers may request use of SCA trademarks and service marks. This approval must be requested and approved in written form. Such requests and approvals can be requested via US Mail or facsimile transmission to the SCA Corporate office or via an email that is sent to [president@sca.org](mailto:president@sca.org). Requests made through texting and/or social media chat or message boards do not constitute a recognized request, hence, they cannot be approved. Rationale for using US Mail, facsimile or email requests via these routes is that these routes pass through SCA controlled processes and systems.
  - iv. Use of the intellectual property owned by others and submitted for distribution through the presence must receive written approval from the owner of the intellectual property. This applies to works of art, documents and photographs. Use of photographs on a presence must use the SCA Photograph Grant of Use form and/or the Model Release Form as necessary in order to post a photograph. Since this intellectual property is not owned by SCA, Inc., the SCA cannot rule on the use of these materials.
  - v. It is important for both groups and members to remember that in using badges, arms, and other SCA insignia, there are traditions within the SCA as to who may use arms and badges and they ought to be observed even in the social media context. It is also important to remember that the Internet is not a private place, and if you are using SCA marks and insignia as part of your social media activity, you are identifying yourself as part of the organization and inviting individuals to associate all of your activity and statements with the organization. You hold our reputation in your hands. Treat it with the respect and care it deserves.
  - vi. Nothing here is meant to limit the use of individual badges or arms, which of course, belong to the individual member.
- d. Permissions for Material Previously Released Outside the SCA
- i. For material that has been publicly disseminated by the creator, including any material for which an appropriate release is openly published and those materials released into the public domain, it is not required to use SCA Release Forms in order to distribute that material through a presence covered by this policy, provided the use thereof does not infringe on the terms of use for the given platform.
  - ii. Account administrators shall follow all guidelines for use in a creative work's release, including attribution and linking, and shall be prepared to honor requests that photos be removed when appropriate in accord with the standards set by Society and Kingdom laws and policies.
- e. Content Distributed by Participants of a Presence
- i. Content that a participant voluntarily distributes through a presence, where a platform allows non-administrators to post content to that presence that is visible to all viewers by default, including photographs used as profile pictures or "avatars," are not considered an official distribution of content by the entity responsible for the presence, and the participant is considered solely responsible for said content and held to any applicable

laws or terms of use for that platform. This content may be redistributed through the same presence (i.e. retweeted, shared, highlighted, etc) without need for further permission.

f. Restriction on Content

- i. The SCA encourages creativity and innovation in the use of social media by its entities. However, certain activities and information are inappropriate to any presence. The following material, including but not limited to posted messages, comments, threads of discussion, or media, collectively known as “content,” shall not be permitted on any presence covered by this policy.
  1. Content that involves modern politics or political subjects, particularly any activity that may be interpreted as endorsement of a particular political party, candidate for political office, legislation or referendum.
  2. Content that broadcasts false or misleading information, including content which is intended to disparage, intimidate or negatively impact the reputation of an individual, branch, event, or other group.
  3. Content that reveals information that is considered confidential to SCA, Inc. This includes, but is not limited to, financial information, and the content of internal proceedings that are not meant for public distribution.
  4. Content that distributes material under current copyright that has not otherwise been authorized for distribution with appropriate attribution.
  5. Content that involves potentially lewd or offensive material.
  6. Content that is otherwise disallowed by existing SCA policy, including but not limited to published Society and Kingdom Seneschal, Chronicler, and Webminister policies.

5. Conduct in the Social Media Sphere

This section highlights the fact that social media interactions are largely public, and that social media is often the first place the modern media (journalists) go when looking for background on a group. Thus, all behavior and communications made through social media shall be professional and respectable.

a. Identification of Voice

Most social media presents itself as the voice of the Society entity for which the presence was created (such as the Twitter feed of the Kingdom or the Facebook Page of the Barony). Whenever an officer or administrator posts content on any presence as individual officer or administrator and not necessarily as the voice of the branch itself, such communication must be identified accordingly. This is particularly necessary when the administrator on a presence that allows for commentary by the readership to moderate the commentary, such as ending a contentious discussion or bringing the discussion back to topic. For example, you may preface the post with a statement such as "From the Kingdom Seneschal -- The Kingdom Event on Saturday has been rescheduled..." or "Moderator Message - This thread is closed."

b. Official Voice vs. Personal Opinion

Be aware that anything an officer or administrator posts on a presence may be construed as a

policy interpretation or otherwise “official” statement, guidelines for which are delineated in the officer’s relevant handbook(s). Be certain to identify when your comments or postings are coming from you personally and not the voice of the branch. Most platforms allow for distinguishing between a post by the “voice” of the page and a personal post by an administrator speaking from their personal account. In any case, identify when you are speaking personally with a statement such as “I personally, not as an officer, believe...” or “Not speaking for my office, but I think...”

c. Society and Branch Officers

Society officers shall recognize that social media is a public forum, but not a venue for official announcements or policy statements as required by Governing Documents and Officer policies. As such, all communication and interaction through social media shall:

- i. be professional and courteous at all times, in concert with the Society’s ideals of honor and chivalry;
- ii. respect the needs of discretion and confidentiality with regards to Society matters such as disciplinary measures, personal information, drafts and proposed changes to policies, and any other information that may be sensitive or not appropriate for public discussion;
- iii. not be used to announce or communicate official policy or statements that have not otherwise been announced or publicized through required official channels (publication for event status, official sanction, changes to Kingdom Law, etc)
- iv. never be used for communication intended for a private audience or limited distribution. Whether by mistake or intent, communications shared through channels that can be used for broad distribution will eventually become broadly distributed. E-mail discussion groups, Skype conference calls, chat sessions, one-to-one “wall postings,” and other limited-group communication methods shall never be considered “secure” or “confidential.”

d. Page Administrators

Owners and Administrators (“administrators”) of presences shall adhere to all guidelines set forth for Society and Branch officers, as appropriate. Additionally, administrators shall:

- i. endeavor, within the bounds of reason, to remain neutral and/or objective on issues presented and discussed through social media;
- ii. ensure that all material presented through the social media outlet/forum – announcements, photographs, video, downloads, surveys, etc. — is appropriate for the function and audience of the outlet;
- iii. judiciously remove any material deemed offensive, self-serving, (inappropriately) off-topic, discourteous, or otherwise inappropriate, or annoying to the general audience of the media outlet;
- iv. relegate necessary control to another administrator who is capable of being impartial in cases where an administrator’s objectivity may be questioned or compromised with regards to any of the above functions or duties.

e. Subscribers, members, and other participants of social media outlets in the general Society populace

All SCA participants taking part in social media interactions shall recognize that such participation is voluntary and proactive, and that participation in presences is not required in

order to receive official SCA announcements, policies, or materials (but may be an additional method of receiving and discussing those items). Accordingly, everyone taking part in an SCA presence shall:

- i. conduct themselves with courtesy, honesty, and chivalry, as would be done in any personal, face-to-face interactions;
- ii. recognize that behavior or communications deemed to be excessively insulting, belittling, exclusionary, or generally unkind may be removed/unposted at the administrator's discretion, and that repeated occurrences may result in removal from the presence by the administrators. Further information on enforcement is found below.
- iii. acknowledge that any behavior or interaction deemed deceptive, hateful, threatening, solicitous, or illegal by the administrators will be cause for immediate removal (without warning) from the social media. All participants in social media outlets have the responsibility to report such communication/behavior to the administrators. Such behavior/communication found on official SCA social media sites/outlets may be used as grounds for disciplinary action by representatives of the Society, up to and including revocation and denial of membership;
- iv. be responsible in their choice of material to post via SCA social media outlets, and be patient with others who post material on these outlets as well (which is to say that, like any gathering of Society participants, social media will always be prone to conversational diversions, tangents, and random trivial interactions, but one person's "pointless off-topic discussion" may, to another person, be "just the research material I was looking for!").

## 6. Enforcement

The Office of the Social Media Director, in conjunction with the Seneschal and Webminister of the responsible branch, shall be responsible for enforcing the Social Media Policy. As with the responsibility to follow policy concerning websites, failure to follow policies concerning presences may result in sanction or removal from office or prevention from participation in the presence as a member of the populace. Enforcement of the proper use of SCA Trademarks and Service Marks shall reside entirely within the Office of the SCA President. Removal of objectionable content from a website or the removal of the website shall be responsibility of the Office of the President.

### a. Causes

Officers responsible for administering social media accounts are subject to the sanctions outlined in the Governing Documents. Should the circumstances for removal merit further sanction, it shall be taken in accordance with the relevant governing documents, handbooks, and/or law. The causes for which the Society Seneschal may seek the removal of an administrator include, but are not limited to:

- i. Use of objectionable material
- ii. Use of copyrighted material without permission
- iii. Failure to abide by the policies in this document

### b. Restriction from Administrator Status

The Society or Kingdom Seneschal or Webminister may designate an individual as restricted from being granted administrator status on a given presence. Reasons for such restriction include:

- i. Use of the presence to promote factionalism within a Kingdom
  - ii. Proven inability to answer correspondence, either from the corporate level or from within the Kingdom
  - iii. Politicizing the position of administrator
  - iv. Failure to respect and adhere to the ideals of the Society
- c. Moderating the Participation Privileges of the Populace

The administrators of a presence may take action to discontinue the ability for an individual to participate in posting or replying to content on said presence, known as moderation, provided that individual has undertaken one or more of the actions listed above as reason for sanction. Care must be taken to create an open environment for communication within the limits of civil discourse and moderation must not be undertaken lightly. Such moderation shall not prevent an individual from viewing the content of the presence, except in cases where the platform itself does not allow view without posting privilege. Such moderation shall be given for a specific or indefinite time depending on the severity of the offense, and that moderation may be appealed per guidelines for appeal in Governing Documents.

- d. Suspension or Removal at Kingdom Request

Should a Kingdom request the removal of an administrator or participant for causes not readily apparent to the Society Seneschal, the Society Seneschal will investigate the circumstances of the request. Should the evidence show that the Kingdom's request is valid, even if the corporate office has no reason to remove the officer, the Society Seneschal may agree to the removal. The Crown has the option of suspending an administrator or moderating a participant at any time for just and stated cause, as provided in Corpora, for the duration of the current reign. In the case of a suspension of an administrator, the branch Seneschal will assign administrative duties for the remainder of the reign.