

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

ZBW's guidelines for interacting on the Social Web

November 2011

Dear colleagues,

at the beginning of the 21st century libraries face a great challenge: how to master the digital shift? Within a few years, the Web 2.0 has changed the internet and the way we use it. Social interaction stands at the centre of activities and the boundaries between the private and the professional spheres are increasingly blurred.

The ZBW is part of this change and as a modern information centre we aim to lead the way in these developments. Our services are increasingly offered at the place of need – where our customers spend their time. On the Social Web people are talking about the ZBW and the services we offer; now it is time to join the discussion and to boost and increase our presence on Facebook, Twitter, Xing as well as in blogs, forums and mailing lists. This is where we learn about the needs of our customers, what our strong points are and where there is room for improvement.

The practical know-how, expert knowledge and informed opinions of all ZBW staff are indispensable in this. Many of you are already active in networks and mailing lists. You keep up with current developments and share your assessments with others. Your commitment helps to increase the visibility of the ZBW in the relevant channels and to bring our expertise to the public eye. Nobody could represent our institution better than our own staff. This is why the use of Social Media is actively supported within the ZBW.

The following guidelines are intended as a safety net in your daily use of the Social Web. The rules describe the risks and opportunities of participating in public debates and provide some guidance on how to discuss your work or ZBW matters in a personal capacity on the net.

1. Be active, not merely present

ZBW management expressly encourages employees to engage in Web 2.0 activities – also as a representative of the ZBW. Visit networks, be part of the debate and share your knowledge and opinions with others.

2. Social Media during working hours

Every member of staff may use Social Media services during working hours in order to find information or participate in a debate. But you need to take care that it does not distract you from your work and the original task. Private chats with friends or family do not fall under this description.

3. Official outside communication

When you surf the Social Web, please remember that official communication with the outside world is handled by the director's office, the press relations office, community management or authorised employees who will be openly designated after internal agreement. Whenever programme divisions or directorate staff sections plan their own Web 2.0 services, they must coordinate these activities beforehand with the director.

4. Honesty and transparency

Please be honest and transparent in your comments on ZBW matters, regardless of whether you do so in an unofficial or official capacity. Wherever possible do not comment anonymously, under pseudonym or false names. Make it clear that you are a member of the ZBW community by naming your employer and your function in your profile or the disclaimer (of your private blog). State clearly that this is your personal opinion by saying "I", not "we".

5. Respect laws and copyright

Always observe current laws (data protection, trademark laws and personality rights) and respect the copyright of others as well as of the ZBW. Also remember that as an employee of the ZBW you are under obligation of secrecy. Confidential information about the ZBW and our partner institutions must not be shared with the outside world.

6. Be respectful of others

Avoid any form of discrediting, provocation or insult. This applies not only to direct dialogue but to all participants in a discussion. Respect other people's privacy. Act the same as you would in offline conversations (such as a telephone call): be professional, constructive and tolerant.

7. Admit mistakes

Anyone can make mistakes – on the Social Web, too. Do not delete your incorrect or critical statements without explanation. Instead admit that you made a mistake and correct it as soon as possible. Otherwise you risk losing your credibility.

8. Take critical remarks seriously

Should you come across objective and justified criticism of the ZBW or one of our services on the Social Web, please forward it to the director's office or community management. We will then jointly try to solve matters. If you can help clarify matters by yourself, you are of course welcome to do so.

9. Act responsibly

If you are in doubt whether you may or should participate in a discussion on the Social Web, please remember this: once posted, content will be accessible on the internet for a very long time. If you are unsure, consult your superior or community management. You are responsible for your comments on the Web 2.0, both private and official in nature.

10. Confidential matters remain confidential

If you want to criticise procedures in the ZBW or your actual work situation, do not do it in public: the Social Web is not the right place for these issues. Talk about it with your superior or the works council. We discuss and solve these problems internally – we will find a solution.

If you have any further questions or suggestions,
feel free to contact us at any time:

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