

# Web Policies and Guidelines

(25 minute session)

**Official OA Web Site Guidelines** – can be found at <http://www.oa-bsa.org/resources/wsguide.htm>

As the proliferation of chapter, lodge, section, and region Order of the Arrow Internet web sites continues, the National OA Committee felt it was appropriate to set forth some policy guidelines for OA web sites. There are many people who are unsure of what is or is not appropriate, and what guidance is available to them.

These guidelines were adapted from the guidelines that the BSA electronic publishing division has established for council web sites, as laid out in a October 23, 1998 memo from the Electronic Publishing Division Director (see <http://www.bsa.scouting.org/site/standards/>).

The following guidelines were approved at the May 1999 National OA Committee meeting.

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**An official Order of the Arrow web site should follow these guidelines:**

**1. The appropriate OA leadership must have direct control over the content of its official web site (i.e. the Key 3 at each level of the organization).**

- Approval of Key 3 is important! This insures that information is accurate and should guarantee that appropriate guidelines are being followed.

**2. The content of the OA site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement and the Order of the Arrow. Safeguarded information such as ceremony details must be properly protected.**

- Pages should be edited by an adult adviser for content and appropriateness.

- Safeguarded material should be password protected if posted on the web so that "restricted" areas are viewed and used only by the appropriate OA members.

**3. The OA site shall not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements, except those for the organization providing the site service if it is provided for free or at a discount.**

- OA sites should not be used to promote or endorse any commercial items.
- Don't use "free" Web site hosting that require sites they host to display banners and/or contain links to other member sites, whether within a page or in a separate window that pops open when the site is visited.
- It is OK to put in a link to the company that is hosting the site if the service is provided free or at a reduced rate – such as: The space for this site is donated by “Link to Company” or “Company Logo.”

**4. The OA site shall not engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise, merchandise commissioned by the National Order of the Arrow Committee, or competing products.**

- OA sites should provide information to members and the public, not be used for sale of BSA or OA merchandise.

**5. The OA site shall not contain any links directly to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement.**

- Be **careful** when adding links to other sites.
- Avoid linking to sites that may not be appropriate or that don't follow BSA guidelines.
- Links to National BSA site, National OA site, Council sites and other “official sites” are fine, but avoid linking to sites that may contain information that is not accurate and up-to-date.

**6. The OA site shall not replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.**

- Don't post publications or parts of publications that are currently sold through the Supply Division. These are copyrighted materials and cannot be used on OA web pages.
- It is OK to post forms etc. that are not sold and/or copyrighted materials.

**7. The OA site must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property.**

- **Do not** use other people's materials without permission. It is not permissible to just copy text, illustrations, photos or any other material from another web site to use on an OA site.
- It is usually fairly easy to obtain the right to republish materials (photos, illustrations or multimedia) from original sources. Send a letter to the owner of the material requesting permission. The letter should contain a specific description of the material (a print-out or copy of the material if appropriate), the specific purpose or purposes for which it will be used and when or how you plan to use the material. Do not use anything until you obtain written permission to do so. Also, if the owner sets any conditions or limitations, you must abide by them (for instance, permission may be granted for a limited time or only upon notification each time the material is used).

**8. The OA site must consider the safety and privacy of their participants by obtaining necessary permissions to release information about or identifying images of any specific individual.**

- Contact information (address, phone number or e-mail address) for youth members should **never** be provided on the Internet.
- Contact information for adults should only be provided with their express permission. Even then it may not be a good idea to include e-mail addresses since there are computer programs that search the Internet compiling lists of e-mail addresses that appear on Web pages. These lists are often sold to e-mail marketers who regularly send unsolicited advertisements. It is recommended that e-mail contact information utilize techniques to prevent or minimize this unfortunate side effect (such as "escaping" characters or using CGI scripts that maintain the actual addresses in a safe location).

- Do not use photos that identify individuals, especially minors. If you do use photos that identify people, obtain their permission. It is best to obtain written permission to use such photos.
- If names of youth are used on an OA web site they should include first names only with no other references (city, chapter etc.).
- Avoid collecting any information from youth over the Internet. If any such information is collected make sure to conform to the FTC's Children's Online Privacy and Protection Act (COPPA) which can be found at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/kidzprivacy/>.

**9. The OA site should include an email contact address for reaching the person managing the site, so visitors can report any problems or concerns.**

- This allows visitors to the site to report broken links, ask questions or get more information.
- Again it may be best to use techniques that hide the actual e-mail address of the Webmaster.

**Summary – briefly go review the guidelines focus on oversight and control, security and privacy. Answer any questions or follow-up discussion.**

Revised 5/22/02