

Now you have a lot of User Generated Content: Tracking and Using It?

1. Sample User Generated Content Policies (from Sierra Club)

2. Policies for e-democracy's Minneapolis Issues list. (<http://www.e-democracy.org/>)

Other material will be available at the session.

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1. Sierra Club

The Sierra Club's user generated content policies are part of our website Terms and Conditions

<http://www.sierraclub.org/website/terms/>

The text below is the part of the terms and conditions that focus on user generated content and community (as of November 2007).

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Your User Submissions to this Site

You may submit information, text, photographs, graphics, videos, or other material (collectively, "User Submissions") to this site.

Sierra Club does not endorse any User Submission or any opinion, recommendation, or advice expressed therein, and the Sierra Club expressly disclaims any and all liability in connection with User Submissions.

Users should be aware that your User Submissions are public, not private communications. When you voluntarily disclose personal information through your User Submissions, that information can be collected and used by others and may result in unsolicited messages from other people.

You agree that your User Submissions will comply with our Community Guidelines, below.

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By submitting User Submissions to this site, you represent and warrant that the User Submissions is your original work, that the User Submission does not violate any agreement between you and a third party, and that the User Submission shall not infringe

upon or violate any law, agreement or other rights of any kind, of any third party, without limitation, rights affecting copyright, patent, trademark, unfair competition, contract, defamation, privacy or publicity. You agree that you will, at your own expense, defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Sierra Club and its affiliated and related entities, licensees, successors and assigns, employees, officers and directors, representatives, contractors and agents from all claims, losses, damages and expenses of any kind (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees and disbursements) arising out of or in connection with a breach or alleged breach by you of your obligations or warranties herein.

Sierra Club may refuse or remove any User Submission that, in its sole judgment, violates these Terms & Conditions. Sierra Club has the right, but not the obligation, to monitor this site for inappropriate content. You are solely responsible for any User Submission you post on this site.

Community Guidelines

We welcome and respect your opinions, even if we don't agree with them. We ask that you welcome and respect our opinions and those of other visitors to this site. Communicate with common courtesy and collegial respect; disagree without being disagreeable. We also welcome your creativity, but don't be vulgar. The DON'TS below are intended to keep this site a safe, informative, and constructive community for all those who visit it. Please understand and comply with them in this spirit.

You agree not to submit, upload or post any User Submission to this site which (1) libels, defames, invades privacy, or is obscene, pornographic, abusive, or threatening; (2) infringes any intellectual property or other right of any person or entity, including but not limited to, violating anyone's copyrights or trademarks; (3) falsifies or deletes author attributions, legal notices or other proprietary designations; (4) violates any law or regulation; (5) advocates illegal activity; (6) contains viruses, corrupted files, or other materials that may cause damage to another's computer, (7) advertises or otherwise solicits funds or sales of goods or services, (8) is false, deceptive, or misleading; or (9) impersonates any person or entity including, but not limited to, a Sierra Club employee or leader, or falsely states or otherwise misrepresents your affiliation with a person or entity.

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2. e-democracy's Minneapolis Issues list email posting policies:

Full Rules

1. Sign Posts - All forum posts must be signed at the bottom of every message by the author with their real first and last name, and city and/or neighborhood. Posting with a pseudonym, anonymously or the use/theft of another person's identity is strictly forbidden and has special penalties described under [Warnings #7](#).

2. Limits on Posting - Participants must follow any posting frequency limits (often 2 per day per person) when established in a forum charter. Participants must not post messages about topics that are specifically not allowed in a forum's charter.

3. Keep Topics within Forum Purpose - Requests by the Forum Manager to bring discussions within the scope of the forum must be followed or warnings may be issued. Limit posts to topics within the geographic area or issues related a forum's scope.

4. Be Civil - No insults, name calling or inflamed speech. Personal one-on-one arguments, disagreements or personality conflicts are not appropriate on the public discussion forum. The Forum Manager shall provide guidance to participants on what is appropriate and what is not allowed. Attempts at humor or sarcasm should be labeled ... ;-), :-), etc.

5. No Attacks or Threats - Personal attacks or public threats against the safety or security of participants are not allowed. The Forum Manager may issue warnings or remove participants based on their public posts to a forum legally owned by E-Democracy.Org. If you receive private communication from another participant that causes you serious concern, you may communicate that to the Forum Manager, but no action should be taken by the Forum Manager or E-Democracy.org to intervene in private disputes among individuals. If you feel you have privately received an **illegal** threat via e-mail you should contact the appropriate legal authorities. E-Democracy.Org and its Chapters are not responsible for any private behavior. However, if it is determined that a pattern of abusive behavior is having a chilling effect on other's participation in the public forum, the Forum Manager may issue a warning and/or removal upon advising the local Chapter Steering Committee.

6. Private Stays Private - Forwarding private messages to the online forum is **not** allowed without the express permission of the original author. This includes private replies to public posts and other private or personal communication including e-mail communication with public officials who may or may not be forum members. Public officials and Forum Managers have equal participation rights and responsibilities in our forums - everyone is a citizen first.

7. Avoid False Rumors, You are Liable - Rumors of a personal nature are not allowed. Your posts must be accurate based on your full knowledge and never intentionally false. Unverified "grapevine" information of a public nature must be within a forum's issue-based scope to be appropriate. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a given topic, check privately with the Forum Manager before posting. Otherwise, the Forum Manager might take disciplinary action if your post is deemed to be off-topic. Further, via the forum itself, you must correct your previous expressions of fact or "known" information that you find later to be false or substantially incorrect. Exceptions include your assertions already publicly corrected or clarified by others in forum discussions. Corrections must be made within any daily posting limit or via the Forum Manager if urgent. You, and you alone are liable for the content of your own messages. E-Democracy.Org is not responsible or liable for the content posted to any technically unmoderated forum or moderated

announcement service.

8. Right to Post and Reply - E-Democracy.Org through its right of free assembly and expression have further established equal rights among all registered forum members to participate. You may only lose those E-Democracy.Org established rights based on your actions, particularly rule violations. Only those who are registered forum members may post directly. Any person or organization that is publicly mentioned in a forum post has a right to reply, unless that person has been suspended for rule violations. In order to post a reply, the individual (or an individual representing the organization) must become a registered member of the forum.

9. Items Not Allowed in Forums, Exceptions - Commercial advertising, virus warnings from members, and chain letters are prohibited from all forums. In e-mail based forums, posts must be plain text with no file attachments. Comments or complaints about forum management or complaints about member rule violations must not be posted to the main forum. Instead, direct such messages privately to the Forum Manager. Discussion of these rules or forum management may be taken public via our Participant Assembly in our Townhall: <http://e-democracy.org/townhall>

Public event promotions and links to commercial, media, or non-profit online content related to the scope of the forum are appropriate. Participant "signatures" providing links to the work or projects of an individual are acceptable, but the display of specific products for sale are not allowed. E-Democracy.Org and its committees and chapters may acknowledge sponsors, donors, and their fundraising events in messages or on the web site.

10. Public Content and Use -

By posting an original message, the message author agrees to allow E-Democracy.Org to distribute the message via the Internet and to include it in a publicly accessible online archive in perpetuity. While original message authors retain their personal copyright, they grant others the right to publicly quote portions of their message in any medium. Further the full text of messages may be forward via e-mail to others as long as the author's name and the forum's name and web address is cited or linked. A discussion forum posting may only be removed from the public archives under a court order or under a case-by-case decision made by a Chapter or the Board.

With copyrighted material like newspaper articles, you may post quotations from articles or web sites with the source URL. "Fair use" of excerpts (not the full text) is encouraged well as the distribution of extended text from government produced content.

Warnings and Suspension from E-Democracy.Org Forums

In our citizen-based forums, participants themselves keep the forums relevant and on track. There is no government, political group, corporation, or single individual controlling our self-governance system.

You may lose your right to participate based on your behavior in a forum. You may also regain your rights.

We know from a decade of experience, that volunteer-based forum facilitation and management is essential. We make difficult decisions and reign in rule violators in order to protect the public mission of our forums and E-Democracy.Org's non-profit obligations. We encourage those with different ideas about how online discussions should be structured and managed to start and announce such forums via our networks. We are just one voluntary model.

If at any point you feel these rules as written or historically applied do not serve the stated mission or goals of E-Democracy.Org, you have the right to petition the Board for specific changes.

Warnings

1. Manager Warnings - Official warnings are sent to the infringing member when a Forum Manager determines that a rule has been broken. The Forum Manager may at their discretion send informal advisories to encourage rule compliance. They may also at their discretion issue and record official warnings. The Forum Manager is not required to monitor every post.

2. Member Complaints - Forum members may send informal complaints privately to the potentially infringing participants to encourage citizen-to-citizen accountability. Any forum member may also file an official complaint about a specific post directly with the Forum Manager. They may not post their complaint publicly to the forum - this fundamentally distracts a forum from its purpose. The Forum Manager will respond to complaints in a uniform fashion and maintain records of all official warnings given.

3. Warnings Active - Official warnings last for one year. They must be recorded by the Forum Manager and kept in case of an appeal.

4. Special Moderation - A Forum Manager may moderate the posts of specific members upon notification to that member for up to two months while dealing with rule compliance issues. This may be renewed upon notification.

5. Managers as Citizens - Forum Managers retain the right to participate in the forum under same rules as other participants. They may express their opinions but may not allow their political views to influence specific forum management decisions. Complaints about potential rule violations by Forum Managers must be sent directly to the local E-Democracy Chapter or the E-Democracy.Org Board.

Note: If forum management responsibilities are split among a team, a member of that team shall be designated to issue warnings and receive complaints on a regular or clearly identified rotating basis.

Suspension

6. Suspension Process - The warning process starts with probation and results in removal periods that grow in length based on repeat offenses. Warnings are specific to each forum. Due to variations in forum purposes and management styles, similar conduct may not result in the same sanction. The initial warning process and suspension level is private in order to avoid public member embarrassment - a penalty greater than that deserved.

While under suspension, a member may not post nor ask others to forward their comments to the forum. While they may read the postings from the web, they may not forward or comment on those posts in other E-Democracy.Org forums on which they maintain full posting rights.

A. First Warning - The first official warning is recorded. The member is **not** suspended. Each warning expires after one full year. The member should consider themselves on probation.

B. Second Warning - The second official warning results in immediate suspension from that specific forum for two weeks. Another two week suspension may be granted should the initial first warning expire before their third rule violation.

The first two warnings may not be appealed at this time. They may only be appealed on their merits if a third warning is given within one year of the first warning.

D. Third Warning - A third warning within a year of the first two warnings results in an immediate suspension for six months from the specific forum.

Notification of the suspension of this member must be sent to the local E-Democracy Chapter and the E-Democracy.Org Board. After any member appeals are heard, at that member's request, the Forum Manager will post a basic notice to the public forum that that member has been suspended for six months. The Forum Manager shall remind forum participants that public discussion of suspensions violate the rules and shall offer a link to the appropriate web forum that allows discussion of E-Democracy rules and administration: <http://e-democracy.org/townhall>

Upon returning, the member may receive a fourth warning if the first warning is still active or within two months which ever is longer. Another third warning suspension will be granted after two months assuming that only their first active warning has expired.

E. Fourth Warning - A fourth official warning results in full removal from **all** E-Democracy.Org forums for five years. After any appeals are processed, an announcement about the removal of this member will be publicly posted to the forums to which that member belongs and sent to all E-Democracy Chapters and the

Board. The removed member has the option to provide an up to 300 word public statement that will be linked in the rules section of the E-Democracy web site. This will be linked to an optional 300 word statement from the Forum Manager about the causes for removal.

7. False Identity Process and Removal - If it is determined with careful consideration by the Forum Manager or E-Democracy.Org that a participant's actual identity is in question, E-Democracy.Org will immediately suspend posting for that person on all forums until such time that a one page letter including a photocopy of a government issued ID with the full address and notarized signature (on the same page) is delivered to E-Democracy.Org. If no proof of identity is provided within two weeks, the e-mail address(es)/members accounts shall be deleted and banned from all E-Democracy.Org forums.

Any identified individual found to have violated this rule will be suspended from all participation in E-Democracy.Org forum's and activities for five years. This includes any and all e-mail accounts associated with that person whether real or falsified. If it appears that fraud, forgery, identity theft, or computer crime laws have been violated, E-Democracy.Org will notify the appropriate legal authorities in the political jurisdiction most closely associated with the forum.

The only exception to this rule is the case-by-case prior approval by the Forum Manager and E-Democracy Chapter or E-Democracy Board for the use of an alias by someone under official court protection or participation by individuals in countries where political expression is illegal and the serious threat of oppression or retribution exists. As an exception to this section, the charters for special time-limited web-based online events on sensitive topics may be designed to allow anonymous participation with Chapter or Board approval only.

8. Appeals and Due Process - Any third or fourth warning may be appealed under our due process procedure to the local E-Democracy Chapter or the E-Democracy.Org Board should a local forum management steering committee not exist. At that time, the validity of the first or second warning may also be reviewed and the total number of warnings reduced if any of the Forum Manager warnings are overturned. A forum member's suspension shall remain in effect during the review process. The review process may last no more than three weeks from confirmation that the appeal was received.

9. Technical Removal - Technical maintenance, full e-mail inboxes, or excessive bounced messages may cause a member to be temporarily or technically removed from the forum or result in a delayed distribution of their posts. In these cases, the member may rejoin the forum at any time.

10. Mission Responsibilities - It is the responsibility of the E-Democracy Board to develop and protect each forum as an organizational initiative within the non-profit mission of E-Democracy.Org. The E-Democracy Board reserves the right to remove any participant upon careful consideration and stipulate the terms and duration of that removal. Notices on such removals will be linked from the rules section the E-

Democracy.Org website.

Forum Manager Responsibilities

These notes will form a new governance document applied to Forum Managers and Chapter Steering Committees in the future. They are in effect now.

1. Forum Managers may only moderate discussion posts over a standard size/length, posts sent to multiple addresses or forums, posts with attachments, posts from new members to make sure they are not spammers, upon the notification of those being moderated, or a temporary forum-wide moderation for up to 24 hours applied to all members as required on an extremely limited basis.
2. The Forum Manager may moderate, rename, clean headers, and/or ignore **non-member** messages.
3. Special time-limited online events, chats, and announcement services may be moderated on a prior and post review basis if clearly described in that service's charter.
4. The Forum Manager is selected and accountable to the Chapter Steering Committee or the E-Democracy.Org Board if a chapter does not yet exist. A Forum Manager may be removed and the Chapter or Board shall consider and respond to specific complaints from forum participants about forum management. Suggestions on future "vote of confidence" or petition mechanisms to ensure legitimacy of the online public space are of interest to the Board.

Adopted 12 FEB 1996, Revised 1 APR 1997, Major Revision 28 JUL 1999, Extensive Updating Approved 17 DEC 2004

Recent Rules Process Notes:

False identity process clarified, penalty added 30 AUG 2003, Rules streamlined, guidance moved to another document, removal process updated 14 APR 2004, Not yet adopted - Interim for the Chicago Issues Forum. Released for public comment, June 16 - July 1, 2004. All public comments reviewed and edits made. Version for Board approval and any final public comments, 10 DEC 2004. Proposals were open for [public comment](#). Drafts [3.3](#) and [2.0](#) are available.

Where did these rules come from?

These rules are based on a decade of direct experience with volunteer-based facilitation of citizen-to-citizen online political discussion.

Imagine designing the rules of debate in the first parliament. These are our basic rules for the online citizen assembly of the 21st Century. They can always be improved, but they are pretty good.

