

Actionable Items from A.A. Guidelines — Internet (MG-18)

These actionable items are organized under their respective section headings, extracted from the uploaded Alcoholics Anonymous Internet Guidelines document (MG-18).

A.A. Traditions and the Internet

- Observe anonymity on all public websites and social media at all times.
- Avoid using full names or full-face photos when identifying as A.A. members online.
- Select website hosts that do not require advertising or links to commercial sites.
- Avoid implied affiliation or endorsement by refusing “free” hosting services with mandatory ads.
- Proceed with caution when linking to other A.A. or non-A.A. sites.
- Use exit statements when linking from A.A. sites to external pages (as on aa.org).

Guarding Anonymity Online

- Take personal responsibility for your own anonymity and that of others when posting, texting, or blogging.
- Avoid posting at the public level in ways that could identify A.A. membership.
- Refer to A.A. materials on anonymity: pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity,” service piece “Anonymity Online and Digital Media,” and the AA Grapevine (Oct. 2010) issue on anonymity.

General Social Networking Websites

- Create anonymous accounts (no full name or face) if discussing recovery online.
- Alternatively, use your name but no personal photo.
- Evaluate your posts using self-check questions (e.g., message vs. messenger, controversy avoidance).
- Do not identify others as A.A. members in photos or statements.
- Do not affiliate A.A. membership with political or controversial causes.
- Provide helpful links only to verified A.A. sites (aa.org, aagrapevine.org).
- Avoid disclosing A.A. membership on any public site unless password-protected and A.A.-only.
- Review privacy policies of social media platforms before creating A.A.-related groups.

- Avoid claiming to represent A.A., G.S.O., A.A.W.S., or the General Service Board.
- Contact G.S.O. for guidance on how Traditions apply to social media use.

A.A. Websites — Setting Up a Local Website

- Form a committee to discuss all aspects and Tradition concerns before creating a website.
- Determine a group conscience process for decision-making and communication with local groups.
- Share findings and hold an informed group conscience vote before proceeding.
- Consult technical experts when needed.
- Review G.S.O.'s FAQ on A.A. websites as a resource.

Spiritual Considerations

- Prioritize one-on-one sharing; don't let technology replace personal connection.
- Allow group conscience to decide what content is spiritually appropriate.
- Review and revise website decisions periodically — try ideas for limited periods and re-evaluate.

Website Roles and Responsibilities

- Appoint or elect a webmaster accountable to the committee.
- Define committee composition and term limits.
- Create written website guidelines, including: purpose statement, content procedures, rotation schedule, distinction between committee and maintenance roles.

Selecting a Domain Name

- Use group conscience to choose the domain.
- Avoid using trademarks such as "A.A.," "Alcoholics Anonymous," or "The Big Book."
- Use lowercase "aa" (e.g., area999aa.org) as an acceptable alternative.

Use of Copyrighted Materials

- Obtain permission from G.S.O. before posting copyrighted A.A.W.S. or Grapevine materials.
- Quote brief excerpts only and include required credit lines.
- Do not recreate materials from aa.org or aagrapevine.org — link instead.

Posting Service Minutes and Reports

- Review and edit all posted minutes to remove full names and contact info.

- Maintain two versions — one for members only, one public.
- Exclude full names/photos of Class B Trustees, A.A.W.S. directors, G.S.O. staff, and Grapevine employees.
- Seek permission before including any full name.
- Use password-protected sites for member-only documents when needed.

Personal Phone Numbers on A.A. Event Flyers

- Avoid including personal phone numbers on publicly available flyers.
- Use event-specific email addresses as safer alternatives.

“Private” Sections of A.A. Websites

- Define clearly what is private vs. public content.
- Decide who gets access and how credentials will be handled.
- Train service workers with content-editing privileges.
- Review data accuracy regularly.
- Safeguard confidential information and establish breach-prevention plans.
- Respect members’ preferences for mail correspondence instead of electronic.

Anonymity and Email

- Obtain explicit permission before using someone’s email address for A.A. purposes.
- Use BCC for multiple recipients to preserve anonymity.

Email in A.A. — Access, Addresses, and Rotation

- Encourage free email accounts for members without personal computers.
- Use position-based generic emails and transfer them during rotation.

Using Full Names in Emails to Professionals

- Use full names when writing to professionals for credibility, but include the disclaimer “(Name not for publication or broadcast).”
- Maintain professional tone and formatting in all external correspondence.

Anonymity on Personal Computers

- Choose unique, private passwords for A.A. correspondence accounts.
- Keep passwords confidential.

- Be aware that shared devices may expose address books.

The Dangers of Spam

- Do not send unsolicited bulk emails (“mail shots”).
- Research local/federal laws about spam before emailing.
- Send personalized messages or to small recipient groups instead.
- Develop alternative follow-up plans if emails are filtered to spam.
- Continue personal contact and share links to aa.org instead of mass emailing.

Speaker Talks Online

- Encourage speakers not to use full names or identify others by full name.
- Label recordings without last names, titles, or job descriptions.
- Omit identifying details if talks are recorded for public posting.
- Contact taping companies to remind them of A.A.’s anonymity policy.
- Request removal of publicly posted recordings if anonymity is violated.

Online A.A. Meetings/Groups

- Operate autonomously but respect the Twelve Traditions.
- Encourage participation in local service structures.
- Hold business meetings and collect Seventh Tradition contributions as appropriate.

Internet Streaming and Web Conferencing

- Assess members’ access and comfort with technology before implementation.
- Explore multiple participation options (video, audio, chat).
- Ensure anonymity when streaming or recording.
- Make decisions deliberately, not driven by technology speed.

Local Shared Experience Requested

- Share local experience or questions with G.S.O.
- Contact: General Service Office, P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163;
Tel: (212) 870-3400; Website: www.aa.org.