



Religious Law and Consultation Newsletter

Upcoming Programs:	<h2>Social Media, Religious Life and the Law</h2>
Social Media, Religious and the Law August 21, 2012	<p>What could these topics possibly have in common? Whether you're well on your way with social media or just exploring this new frontier, chances are you have questions. This newsletter introduces the tools and concepts and identifies the main legal and ethical issues as well as the dangers and opportunities associated with social media.</p>
New Member Issues November 20, 2012	<h3>Introduction</h3> <p>Social media offer not just new tools, but a radically new way to communicate. Media analyst Marshall McLuhan offered the observation: the Medium is the Message. By this, he meant that the way we communicate, the forum and the tools have an inherent message and also shape any message they transmit. For this reason, it is important to understand these new media and their potential as well as their challenges.</p>
Covenant Project Workshop Series I – Sept 2012 Series II – Nov 2012 On-Ground STL Sept 8	<p>Social media allow users to construct a profile, share that profile with others and communicate with a list of others in the same system. They are designed to change the way people communicate over the internet. Broadcast media and news outlets communicate one-to-many, or email communicates one-to-one or to a small group. Social media are designed to communicate one-to-group, where everyone in the group can be both a communicator and a receiver of information and ideas.</p>
Advanced Taxation of Religious February 19, 2013	<h3>Growth</h3> <p>These media have grown exponentially over the past ten years to the point where social media are the primary communication tool and source of news for many students and young professionals. Facebook has over 900 million users, more than the total population of every country except India and China, and if its growth continues, it should surpass them in the next few years. Social media were a factor in the Arab Spring, and in current political campaigns in the US.</p>
Emerging & Transforming Religious Life May 21, 2013	<p>Each social media site is constructed a little differently and serves a different purpose. Facebook is the largest site. It allows users to set up a profile and to post messages. Security settings allow users to keep some information private, and share other information with everyone or with various circles of friends. It also facilitates sharing of photos, videos, documents, websites and events.</p>
Tuesdays at 2pm ET	<h3>Legal Issues</h3> <p>Social Media have raised many areas of legal concern:</p>
Contact: Amy Hereford, CSJ Attorney Canonist CSJ Ministries 6400 Minnesota Ave. St. Louis, MO 63111 Phone: 314-467-8038 Fax: 815-550-1329 amyhereford@gmail.com	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment - Use of social media by employers is a potential mine field since the sites contain valuable information, but also contain information that could lead to employment discrimination suits. Use by employees also

raises questions of appropriate use of computers and the amount of time that might be wasted on social media sites.

- **Meetings and Governance** - The media provide excellent means of disseminating information, but also raise questions of security of information and equal access depending on equipment and ease of use.
- **Defamation** - Social media provide a forum where organizations no longer have control of their message, this can give rise to potential defamation claims by and against social media users.
- **Member Use** - The use of social media by members of the institute is often a benefit, however, it is not without its risks to security and privacy. In addition members professional ethics may require certain limits on their use of social media.
- **Copyright** - Copyright is always a concern where social media are concerned - the ease with which text and images can be reposted may easily give rise to copyright claims.
- **Tax Exempt Entity** - Certain actions are required or prohibited for tax exempt organizations and these apply to use of exempt assets. Care must be taken to ensure policies ensure compliance with these requirements.
- **Special Concerns** - Education and Healthcare institutions have special requirements with regard to ensuring the privacy and security of students, patients and their information.
- **Criminal Behavior** - Finally, social media have been used by the criminally inclined for identity theft, stalking and various types of fraudulent activities. Reasonable precaution should be exercised over information related to personal identity to ensure that this information does not fall into the wrong hands.

Policy responses run the gamut from: don't use social media, to unrestrained use. The more responsible choices would be to establish policies for various groups, and to educate members to responsible use of the media.

For more on these issues, [August's webcast](#) will explore this new meeting place of law, life and culture, raise legal issues and propose policy statements. It will explore usage, best practices, challenges and tips and discuss policy development. <http://www.ahereford.org/registration>

There is still time to register for:

- [Online Symposium on Consecrated Life](#) - session three: July 8, 2012 - Gail Worcelo - Sisters on the Cosmological Frontier. <http://www.ahereford.org/symposium>
- [Covenant Project](#) - comprehensive service for aging institutes. Phase One Workshops this fall. <http://www.ahereford.org/covenant>

I am always happy to work with you or your community, or to present materials on various topics as you face the challenges of an uncertain and changing future.

Sincerely,
Amy Hereford

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