



## Hearst Networks: Social Media Guidelines for Contributors

### Purpose

Social media networks can be great places for people to share opinions and engage with other people. However, there are some precautions you may need to take in order to make your time online safe and secure.

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### Guidance for Social Media Use

#### Privacy Settings

- ✓ Avoid social media platforms around the time of a programme broadcast if you want to eliminate exposure to online comments.
  - ✓ Clean your past posts to ensure they don't invite criticism unrelated to the programme.
  - ✓ Ensure posts can only be viewed by friends or trusted individuals:
    - Set "Friends" or "Only Me" for posts and tagged information.
  - ✓ Be cautious about direct messages (DMs):
    - Remember that private messages may be shared publicly or screenshot without your consent.
    - Limit who can send DMs by adjusting your platform settings.
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#### Before Posting

- ✓ Always ask yourself:
    - Who will see this post?
    - Am I sharing private or sensitive information?
    - Will I regret posting this later?
  - ✓ Avoid sharing personal locations, contact information, or passwords.
  - ✓ If unsure, consult your contact at the Production Company for advice.
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#### Handling Trolls and Criticism

- ✓ **Think Twice Before Responding:**
  - Avoid emotional responses to criticism or hurtful comments.
  - Consider anything you post as permanent—once shared, it's on record forever.
- ✓ **Communicate Carefully:**
  - Post only what you'd say face-to-face to a stranger.
  - Avoid escalating arguments or engaging in negative back-and-forths.
- ✓ **Play by the Rules:**
  - Familiarize yourself with community guidelines of each platform:
    - [Facebook Rules](#)

- [Twitter Rules](#)
- [Instagram Rules](#)
- [Snapchat Rules](#)

✓ Report violations via the reporting procedures on the platform instead of engaging in public confrontation.

✓ **Use Blocking Tools:**

- Block individuals who spam or harass you. Learn how to block:
  - [Facebook Blocking](#)
  - [Twitter Blocking](#)
  - [Instagram Blocking](#)
  - [Snapchat Blocking](#)

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### Post-Broadcast Discussions

- ✓ Engage responsibly in conversations about your programme.
- ✓ Avoid saying anything that could harm your reputation or someone else's.
- ✓ Focus on positive interactions rather than negative comments.

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### Steps to Take if You Encounter Abuse:

- ✓ Capture evidence:
  - Screenshot abusive content with usernames, time, date, and URLs.
  - Save the files to your mobile or computer for reference.
- ✓ Do NOT engage with the abuser:
  - Ignoring rather than blocking keeps evidence accessible.
- ✓ Report the abuse via the network's procedures.
- ✓ Contact your Production Company for advice and support, where necessary.
- ✓ Report any threats to the police if you feel endangered.

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### Need More Help?

- ✓ Access the platform's help section or search community guidelines for support:
  - Facebook: [Help Section](#)
  - Twitter: [Help Section](#)
  - Instagram: [Help Section](#)
  - Snapchat: [Help Section](#)
- ✓ Reach out to your Production Company for additional guidance.

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### Final Notes

- Everyone has different tolerance levels for online criticism—respond only if it feels necessary.
- Prioritize your mental health—limit exposure to negative comments.
- Always remember your Production Company is available for support and advice.