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## **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE**

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## Introduction

The Association of Sign Language Interpreters (ASLI) was established in the United Kingdom in 1987 as a forum for professional discussion on all issues relating to sign language interpreting and the provision of interpreting services. From the beginning our aims have been simple - to encourage good practice in sign language interpreting and to support our fellow professionals. We have sought to achieve this by:

- Providing a forum for professional discussion on all interpreting related issues
- Promoting the raising and maintenance of standards in interpreting
- Encouraging training and other initiatives
- Supplying information to interpreters and consumers
- Promoting research into areas of relevance to interpreters or interpreting services
- Advising and cooperating with others interested in sign language interpreting

## Background and Acknowledgement

An interpreter's or translator's online persona and digital presence is an increasingly important aspect of professionalism. Information posted online may quickly reach a large audience, is easily replicated via shares or screenshots, may be searchable and leaves a permanent digital trail. The implications of online indiscretions may, therefore, be amplified in comparison to face-to-face settings. Furthermore, a single professional may be viewed by the public as representative of an entire professional group, so the unique considerations of the online domain have professional implications for both individual interpreters and the sign language interpreting profession at large. The online realm brings both opportunities and challenges to the interpreting profession, and interpreters must be cognisant of professional responsibilities and potential ethical ramifications of online activity. The tenets of the NRCPD and SASLI Code of Conduct are applicable to the online domain, and these ASLI social media guidelines have been developed to foster a shared understanding of BSL/English interpreter and translator professionalism for online behaviour in alignment with the traditional values of our profession. This document is not intended to cover every social media situation that an interpreter or translator may encounter, but it does encourage them to contemplate the issues thoroughly whilst prioritising the integrity of the work. The principles in this guidance are not restricted solely to social media and may be broadly applied to many types of online communication.

ASLI would like to acknowledge the work our colleagues with the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ASLIA) Victoria have undertaken to develop social media guidelines for Auslan/English interpreters, which share a structure and

rationale with those outlined below. Online professionalism is a burgeoning area of consideration, research and developing practice, and we look forward to guiding shared understandings of professional norms in the digital domain.

## **Guidelines for Social Media Use by BSL/English Interpreters**

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and all other social media platforms) necessitates appropriate usage by signed language interpreters to uphold the public trust and perception of both individual practitioners and the profession at large. ASLI outlines the following guidelines to guide professionally responsible social media use by BSL/English interpreters and translators.
- All interpreters and translators are required to understand and abide by the NRCPD or SASLI Code of Conduct
- Interpreters and translators are encouraged to remain cognisant of their online persona and alignment with the intent and principles of the NRCPD or SASLI Code of Conduct.
- Interpreters and translators are encouraged to leverage the benefits of social media, such as building and maintaining professional relationships, seeking professional support from colleagues, accessing resources for continuing professional development, raising awareness about the availability of accessible events, and gathering information for assignment preparation, whilst maintaining traditional values of the profession.

## **For all interpreting assignments interpreters are advised to avoid the following on social media:**

- Revealing explicit or implied identifying information about an assignment without the consent of all parties such as photographs of a job location, references to a job location, client names, interpreter colleague names or any content that could infer assignment information.
- Engaging in online discussions regarding services that the interpreter or translator provided at an assignment, including the posting of comments or opinions.
- Bullying or intimidating people on social media.
- BSL/English interpretation and translation is a service whereby the practitioner facilitates the attainment of an objective between parties, making the consumers of those services and the greater objective the *raison d'être* for the interpreter's or translator's presence. Hence BSL/English interpreters and translators, as service providers, must uphold this professional ethos and refrain from intentionally drawing personal attention to themselves on social media. While clients and organisations may at times use an interpreter's or translator's image on social media, individual practitioners are encouraged not to engage in this activity independently.

**BSL/English interpreters have a professional responsibility to reflect on the following before posting anything in the online domain:**

- Be aware of one's online persona and the common overlap between personal and professional realms online.
- Be aware of privacy settings and consider whom may be able to see certain posts online.
- Consider how a post online may potentially be perceived by all who may be able to view it and the potential ethical and professional impacts of such perceptions, both for oneself professionally and the profession at large.
- Consider posting certain personal or professional content or discussions in closed groups
- Keep in mind that setting viewing restrictions on certain content may not be a fail-safe as digital media may be captured and shared
- Consider if the same thing might be shared or said as freely in a face-to-face setting and the potential consequences if the item went well beyond intended recipients.
- Consider that others may capture video or photographs of an interpreter or translator working in certain settings and post this on social media