

Social media activism

A GUIDE TO ONLINE CHANGE-MAKING



AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



Amnesty International Australia | Social media activism

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Social media is a powerful tool for social change. It's never been easier for good ideas to catch on and spark a movement.

Jessie Mawson, Online Communities Coordinator, Amnesty International Australia

Amnesty International Australia is part of a global movement of 4.6 million people fighting for human rights.

Our activists raise awareness, organise, and take action via social media to expand our movement's reach and build our power to create change.

Whether you're a seasoned Twitter addict or a fresh-faced digital newbie, let this guide serve as your GPS as you navigate the wonderful, wacky social web.

We're here to help you get active as part of a united collective and get the most from your online activism adventures!

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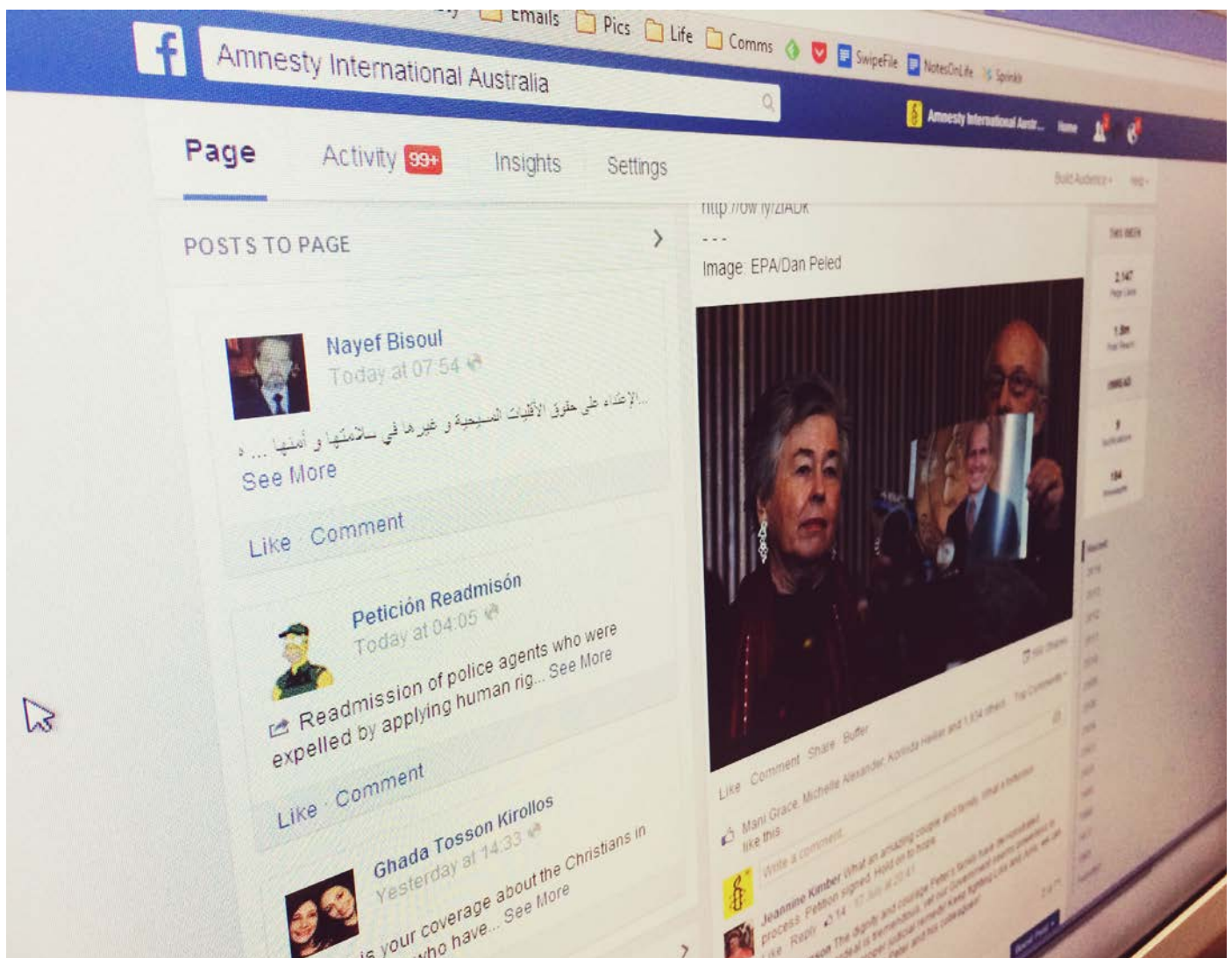
TERMS OF USE

LICENSING THE AMNESTY NAME

Any activist or group is welcome to share Amnesty content on the social web.

But if you'd like to go a step further and administer a social media account that uses the Amnesty name and brand, **you need to do three things:**

- 1** Ensure that your local Community Organiser has administration rights to your account/s (this might mean 'adding' them as an admin, a la Facebook, or providing them with login details).
- 2** To the best of your ability, follow the advice laid out in this guide.
- 3** Be sure to reach out if you need help or guidance. You can speak to your fellow activists on the [Activist Portal](#), contact your local Community Organiser or email activism@amnesty.org.au



ACCOUNT NAMING CONVENTIONS

Amnesty now boasts more than 4.6 million supporters globally.

Great news, eh? But it means there are an awful lot of ‘Amnesty’ accounts floating around out there. This can be a tad confusing for our supporters.

That’s why we’ve devised a (loose) system for naming different Amnesty social media accounts.

It isn’t an exact science, but it’s pretty straightforward. Use your best judgement and give us a yell if you’re not sure.

(The examples below are for Facebook and Twitter – but if you have a different type of Amnesty social media account, it makes sense to use a similar naming convention).

	Facebook name	Twitter handle
	More descriptive is better. Should always be prefaced with ‘Amnesty International’	<16 characters. Shorter is better. Letters, numbers, underscores only.
Section		
Amnesty International Australia	Amnesty International Australia	@AmnestyOz
Amnesty International Australia, Victoria	Amnesty International Australia (Victoria branch)	@AmnestyVic
Amnesty International Australia, Qld/ NthNSW	Amnesty International Australia (Qld/NthNSW branch)	@AmnestyQNSW
Thematic		
Amnesty International LGBTI network, Australia	Amnesty International LGBTI network (Australia)	@AI_LGBTI_Oz
Amnesty International women’s rights network, Australia	Amnesty International women’s rights network (Australia)	@AI_Women_Oz
Geographical		
Parramatta	Amnesty International action group (Parramatta)	@AI_Parra
Coffs Coast	Amnesty International action group (Coffs Coast)	@AI_Coffs
Universities/Schools		
University of Melbourne	Amnesty International action group (Melbourne Uni)	@AI_UniMelb
Kooweerup Secondary College	Amnesty International action group (Kooweerup Secondary College)	@AI_KwrpSec
Geographical and thematic		
Amnesty International legal network, NSW	Amnesty International legal network (NSW)	@AI_Legal_NSW
Amnesty International LGBTI network, SA/ NT	Amnesty International LGBTI network (SA/NT)	@AI_LGBTI_SANT
Other		
Amnesty International action group, Tas Mums and Bubs	Amnesty International action group (Tas Mums & Bubs)	@AI_TasMums
Amnesty International action group (WA online)	Amnesty International action group (WA online)	@AI_WAOnline

DESCRIPTION AND DISCLAIMER TEMPLATES

It's important to add a description and disclaimer to your social media account so your followers are clear about who you are and for whom you speak.

Feel free to base your description and disclaimer on the examples below.

Twitter

Bio

<160 characters. Choose the information that's most important to you.

We're an awesome team of volunteers tweeting for the Amnesty International UNSW action group. Email convenor@amnesty.org.au to get involved. Retweet ≠ endorsement.

Facebook

Short description

The first three lines in this section will display on your page.

We're part of a global movement fighting for justice, equality and freedom. Join us at amnesty.org.au

Long description

This won't be visible on your page until someone clicks to view.

Welcome to our Amnesty International action group Facebook page.

We're a group of activists from the NSW Central Coast passionate about championing human rights as part of Amnesty International – a movement of 4.6 million people globally.

This page is a place for Amnesty supporters to participate in meaningful discussions about human rights. Email convenor@amnesty.org.au to get involved

General information

This is a great place to post your **Facebook comments policy**.

We encourage lively debate and a variety of opinions – but we expect you to express yourself in a respectful, constructive way.

Your comment may be removed if:

- It is racist, sexist, homophobic, abusive or otherwise discriminatory or defamatory.
- It is threatening, encourages violence or incites hatred.
- It involves swearing, name-calling, personal attacks or other anti-social behaviour.
- It includes video or images that our community may find distressing (graphic violence, for example).
- Its main purpose is to sell a product.
- It is wildly off-topic or spam (like the same comment posted repeatedly).
- It is in a language other than English (we can't vouch for the suitability of these posts, so when in doubt we delete them).

Repeated failure to stick to these rules may see you blocked from our page without warning.

We understand that social media is a 24/7 medium, but our moderation capabilities are not! We may not see every dodgy post right away, so we trust our community to ignore inappropriate comments (or report them to Facebook by clicking the x in the top right-hand corner).

When inappropriate comments are deleted, so are all replies to that comment – so don't bother arguing with rude people.

Please feel free to reach out with comments, concerns or feedback about this page. Send us a direct message and we'll do our best to respond in a helpful, timely manner.

Specific or detailed enquiries (particularly regarding Amnesty membership) are best directed to our friendly supporter relations team > <http://www.amnesty.org.au/about/contact>

GETTING STARTED

WHAT KIND OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT IS BEST FOR YOU?

Facebook is the biggest social media channel by a large margin. So it's definitely the best choice for Amnesty action groups in terms of bang-for-buck.

We recommend setting up a **Facebook group** (with privacy settings set to 'closed') or a **Facebook page**.



A Facebook group

- Designed for clubs or communities, and works a bit like a group email list. This ['group basics' guide](#) walks you through the set-up process.
- To connect, people (individual Facebook profiles, not pages) have to request to 'join' the group as members, and you have to accept them.
- Any member can post content to the group, and all members can view. Members are notified whenever someone posts something new to the group.
- Groups are a great forum for discussion and debate, promoting events to group members, and sharing information (like actions, meeting minutes, campaign material, etc).



A Facebook page

- Designed for businesses or organisations (or celebrities) and works a bit like a mini website. This ['getting started' guide](#) will walk you through the set-up process.
- Pages are completely public, so anyone (with a Facebook profile or page) can 'like' your page to connect
- Only admins can post content to the page (although it's possible to have multiple admins) and all page-likers can view – although your posts won't show up in the newsfeeds of all your page-likers (it depends on [Edgerank](#)).
- Pages are great for promoting your group's activities and events to the wider world, and for networking with like-minded groups and people.



A Twitter account

- Designed for anyone and everyone – but can take some getting used to if you're not already Twitter-savvy. Check out this ['getting started' guide](#) for newbies.
- Twitter is completely public, so anyone see your content and/or 'follow' you.
- Only the account admin can post content. Some Twitter clients (like [Hootsuite](#)) allow you to have multiple admins.
- Twitter is great for networking with like-minded groups and people, engaging with politicians and decision-makers, and keeping up-to-date on the latest human rights news.

There are lots of other social media channels out there, like [Google+](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [YouTube](#)

If your Amnesty action group wants to set up an account on one of these channels, go for it! But understand that there will be some work involved and have a strategy for what you want to achieve.

For a second opinion, get in touch with Amnesty's web team at web@amnesty.org.au

ESTABLISHING AND ENFORCING A COMMENTS POLICY

Decide on a comments policy that sets out how you expect your followers to interact (you can use the example on [page 6](#)).

If you see a comment that contravenes the policy, [delete it](#). If you find yourself dealing with a repeat-offender, [ban them](#).

SOURCING IMAGES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

It's really important not to steal stuff from 'the internet' and pass it off as your own. If you're using someone else's words or image, credit them. (Even better, link to them or 'mention' them on Twitter)

If you're looking for images that are free and safe to use, try the sources below:

[Google Advanced Image Search \(Free to use or share licence only\)](#)

Search all the picture on the interwebz by license type. (In the 'usage rights' field, ensure you choose 'free to use or share').

[Flickr \(Creative Commons licence only\)](#)

Learn about the various creative commons licences and search Flickr images by license type.

[BBC World Service Flickr Account](#)

A particularly good Flickr account for images of current affairs and politicians. (All images here have a Creative Commons licence).

[Creative Commons](#)

Allows you to search a bunch of online sources (including Flickr, Fotopedia, Google Images, Open Clip Art Library and Pixabay) for images filed under a creative commons licence.

[Stock.xchnge](#)

You'll need to create a log-in for this site. It's good for generic stock images, although pics tend to be a bit Euro-centric.

[Pixabay](#)

Like Stock.xchnge, you'll need to create a log-in for this site. It's good for both generic stock images and vector files.

[United Nations Image Gallery](#)

Good for pics of polities and world leaders. You'll need to create a log-in to get access to the images, but non-commercial usage is normally free.

[ADAM](#)

Amnesty International has a comprehensive online image database that activists should feel free to access. Ask your local Community Organiser for the regional log-in details.

Wherever you find images, be sure to double-check the licensing agreement.

Some agreements require you to credit the image in a certain way, others may not allow you to modify the image. Some agreements prohibit 'commercial use' which rules them out for fundraising purposes (like promoting appeals, etc).

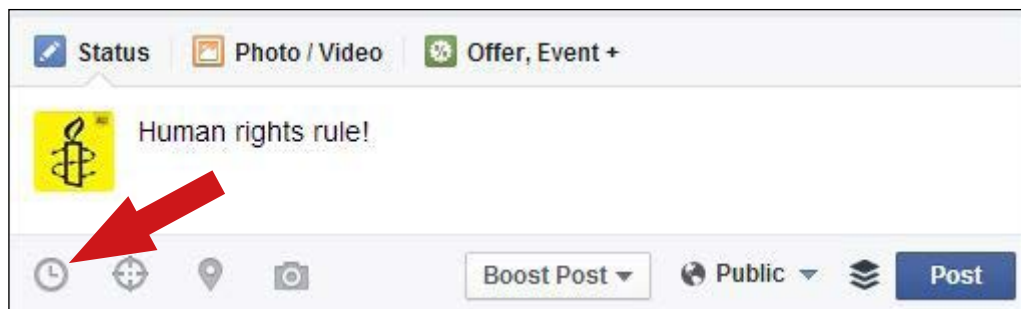
SOCIAL MEDIA TOP TIPS

Top three Facebook tips

- 1** Each Facebook page is different – so **experiment to find out what your followers respond to in terms of frequency**. For starters, aim to post between 5-10 times a week (no more than three times a day).
- 2** **Keep it short and sweet**. Facebook doesn't have a character limit – but that's no excuse to write a novel! Posts with less than 250 characters get 60 per cent more engagement.
- 3** Post at times when your followers are most likely to be online. If you have a Facebook Page, you can work this out by clicking **Insights > Posts > When your Fans are Online**. Use the clock symbol below the status update box to 'schedule' posts for a later time/date.



Find out when your followers are online.



Schedule posts for a later time/date

Top three Twitter tips

- 1** **Get familiar with Twitter lingo** – abbreviations that Twitter users have developed to deal with the 140 character limit. [This blog post covers the basics](#), and the [official Twitter glossary](#) goes into detail. (Note: This can be confusing if you're a Twitter newbie. The best way to get your head around it is to just dive in – start using Twitter regularly and learn from others.)
- 2** **Twitter is based on the idea of a 24-hour, never-ending news cycle**. It's okay to tweet often and it's okay to post the same content more than once (but give it a different 'spin' each time, if you can).
- 3** Immediacy is the name of the Twitter game. It's an on-the-go medium, so **download the app to your phone and you'll be ready to tweet anytime, anywhere**. Aim to give your followers the inside scoop. Show them 'behind the scenes' and let them be first to know.

BEING SOCIAL

"FACEBOOK IS A PARTY, NOT A CLASSROOM"

... says Sara Critchfield, Editorial Director at Upworthy

Engage

Social media is a two-way street.

Posting something then not bothering to read or reply to comments is like walking into a party, ranting at a bunch of guests, then grabbing your stuff and leaving. It's kinda rude.

Engagement is the key. So don't just post content. Ask questions, reply to comments, get involved in conversations, and share interesting stuff.

Focus on the one-to-one

Social media-land can be noisy. There's so many people! How can you possibly shout loud enough to be heard over all the LOLCats?

Well, relax. The truth is that social media success starts at the micro level. If you develop a great one-to-one communication style and engage with people, your account will soon build a loud collective 'voice'.

Network

In the beginning, a good way to build your audience is to promote your page to friends via your personal accounts, and ask them to share.

Beyond that, you'll need to start networking.

Reach out to other like-minded groups. Invite local politicians/celebrities/businesses to follow you. Share someone's content and ask if they'll return the favour. Comment on someone's page and build up a relationship with their followers.

Keep it real

People who win at social media have one thing in common: they sound like real human beings.

The single golden rule is to **be genuine**.

You don't need to pretend to be an expert – just focus on being authentic and approachable, and speak the way you would with a friend.



Flickr/ Nomadic Lass

WHAT TO POST

Stuck for something to post? It happens.

As a general rule, it's best not to post anything if you can't find something you think your supporters will find genuinely interesting.

But if you're looking for some inspiration...

Localise national Amnesty messages

An obvious place to start is to share posts from main Amnesty Australia accounts.

This is fine, but keep in mind that many of your followers will also follow these main accounts, so seeing content repeated could get annoying.

The best thing to do is to share these posts with a local/group-specific angle. Perhaps the post relates to an upcoming event? Or a campaign that will soon be a focus for your group? If so, make the connection.

Promote your group's meetings and events

Facebook in particular is a great place to [post and promote your action group's events](#). If you've created an event listing on the Amnesty International website, remember to include the link on your Facebook event page, and vice-versa. This will attract new followers.

Social media is a perfect way to show people how great your events are! So think about ['live-tweeting'](#) an event, or taking photos to create a Facebook album.

Share non-Amnesty stuff

Posting content only from the Amnesty website gets pretty boring after a while. So mix things up! Take advantage of the news cycle and jump on external opportunities.

If you read an interesting news article or a great blog, watch a good movie trailer, or have a giggle at an online comic, ask yourself 'would my Amnesty followers be interested in this?'

If the answer is yes, post it!

Ask your followers to take action

A great way to engage your supporters is to give them something to do, whether it's sign one of Amnesty's [online petitions](#), [make a donation to Amnesty](#), like or share your post, or sign up to attend one of your events.

Post fun stuff

Inspirational quotes, funny comics, awe-inspiring images. It's all good.

 Amnesty International Australia - SA/NT Branch shared The Welcome Centre's photo.
June 17

Check out what The Welcome Centre and ARTillery South Australia got up to this afternoon ...brilliant work everyone!

Our afternoon's work - and the finished product!



 Amnesty Curtin University
December 7, 2013

Currently recruiting committee members for 2014!

Are you passionate about human rights issues? Do you want to participate on campus and take on a leadership role? Positions available as President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary.

E-mail amnesty.curtin@gmail.com to express your interest today.

 Amnesty International - Pitt St Action Group shared a link.
May 7

Get out of the winter cold with this screening of Love Marriage Kabul at Sydney Film Festival <http://www.sff.org.au/films-container/love-marriage-in-kabul/>



Sydney Film Festival 2014
www.sff.org.au

Check out the film program, Festival Hub and events here.

 Amnesty International Townsville shared a link.
May 14

Understanding asylum seeker policies :
This cutting cartoon from First Dog on the Moon says it all
http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cartoon/2014/may/12/first-dog-border-force?CMP=ema_632



First Dog on the Moon on ... the power of Border Force – cartoon
www.theguardian.com

An elite team of highly trained marsupials will make sure Australian borders remain safe – First Dog on the Moon explains how

GOING VIRAL

WHY THINGS CATCH ON

‘Going viral’ isn’t really something you can plan.

But here are some things to consider if you want your supporters to engage with your content and share it with their friends.

Social currency

People care about how they look to others. They want to seem smart, compassionate, cool and in-the-know. People want to share things that make them look good, rather than bad.

Triggers

People talk about things that are top-of-mind. Using subtle reminders to help them think about your issue will make them more likely to share.

Emotion

When we care, we share. High arousal emotions – like excitement, anger, and awe – fire people up. This activation drives them to share.

Public

Built to show, built to grow. People often imitate others. But you can’t imitate what you can’t observe. Making behavior more public enables social influence.

Practical value

News you can use. People share things to help others, whether it is advice on saving time, saving money, or making them healthier.

Stories

Information travels under the guise of idle chatter. People are more likely to share a memorable story than a list of technical facts about an issue.

Note: We’ve borrowed this bit from Jonah Berger’s book [Contagious: Why things catch on](#). If you’re interested in knowing more about this kind of stuff, give it a read!



Planking: a mercifully short-lived internet craze. Flickr/ srslyguys

INTRODUCTION TO EDGERANK

Not everything that you post on a Facebook page will show up in the newsfeeds of all your followers (note: this is different if you're using a Facebook group. In the case of groups, all members are notified when new content appears).

Edgerank is the algorithm that Facebook uses to determine what posts appear on each individual user's newsfeed.

Edgerank is complex, with hundreds of thousands of highly-personalised factors – but the main ones to consider are these:

Post

How good is this post? Are your followers engaging with it? If so, Facebook may decide to show it to more people.

Type

Did your post include an image, video, and/or link? Facebook users tend to prefer posts that do.

Recency

How long since you posted it? Your average Facebook post has a halflife of around 90 minutes – older than that and it's unlikely to be seen.

Creator

How popular are your posts, with all of your followers, generally? Facebook looks at your past performance as a creator to determine how many people should see your future posts.

Interest

How much does this particular follower like your posts, generally? If a user has a track record of engaging with your content, Facebook is likely to show them more of your posts in the future.



MODERATION AND TROUBLESHOOTING

TIPS FOR MODERATORS

Follow dinner party etiquette

Administering a social media account is like hosting a dinner party.

People don't always have to agree, but they do have to be polite. Passionate debate is fine; abuse and insults are not.

As host, it's your job to make sure all guests feel welcome, so if someone crosses the line (or is only hanging around to be a nuisance) show them the door.

Respond in a timely manner

Do your best to acknowledge people in a timely manner. This requires 'checking in' on your social media account at least once a day.

If you don't have the answer to a question, tell people you'll get back to them (and make sure you do) or send them to a better source of info. Try not to leave people hanging.

Be a human.

Not a machine that regurgitates media statements.

Don't say anything that you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing quoted in the media. But do be as honest and open as possible.

Interact with people as individuals and use language you'd use in a social setting (because **social media**).

Look for common ground.

People almost always respond badly to being told they're wrong. So, if you can, find a small piece of common ground and lead with that.

Be polite and aim to make people feel like what you're saying was their idea all along!

Know when to walk away.

Don't get into flame wars with people. You won't win, and you'll come off like a crazed fanatic.

Reply just once or twice, then leave it alone.

DODGY POSTS (WHEN TO DELETE)

Making mistakes is part of the deal when it comes to social media.

In most cases, deleting your dodgy post isn't the best way to go (once it's out there, it's out there – so deleting can just make you look more guilty).

Instead, apologise and explain. Or, stick to your guns and support your stance with evidence (is there a page on the Amnesty website you can link to?)

If you've offended people, it's usually best to just come out and say sorry (even if you don't feel like you've done anything wrong). Be warned that digging your heels in tends to make more people more angry.

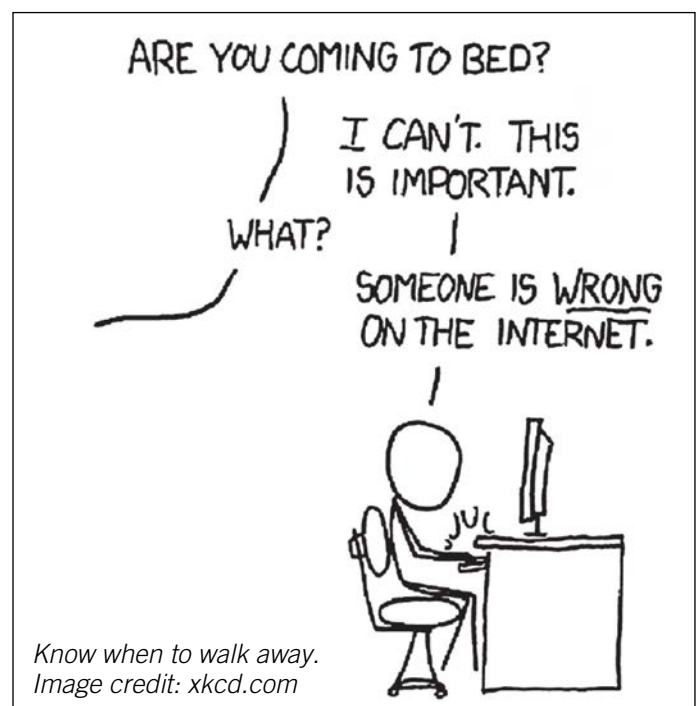
TRIGGER WARNINGS AND DIFFICULT SUBJECTS

The nature of Amnesty's work means we often need to discuss difficult and unpleasant things.

Always do this with as much sensitivity as possible, while using direct and honest language.

Posts that deal with child abuse, sexual abuse or suicide should involve a trigger warning if possible.

This just means alerting your followers with something like *[Trigger warning: sexual violence]* at the beginning of your post.



MAINTAINING OUR INDEPENDENCE

WHY INDEPENDENCE?

Independence is at the centre of Amnesty's work to defend human rights.

Not accepting money from governments, political parties or religious institutions allows us to expose and criticise human rights abuses wherever they occur.

Alignment (or even perceived alignment) with any political party would undermine the significance of Amnesty's criticism – so we all have an obligation to keep our political views separate from our Amnesty work.

The non-party political line can be a tricky one to tread. When in doubt, speak to your fellow activists on the [Activist Portal](#) or contact your Community Organiser.

INDEPENDENCE DOS

Identify yourself

Let the world know you're a team of Amnesty activists! Make it clear who runs your social media account. Here's an example:

We're an awesome team of volunteers tweeting for the Amnesty International UNSW action group. Email convenor@amnesty.org.au to get involved. Retweet ≠ endorsement.

Follow the debate

Keep your followers up-to-date about the human rights issues being debated at a national level, but stay focused on the issues, rather than the political implications. If in doubt, take your lead from the national Amnesty accounts.

Network

Social media is a great tool for building relationships with people you might never meet in 'real life'. Feel free to share cause-related, non-party political posts from others if you think your followers will be interested. And remember to ask people to share your content in return!

Engage with political candidates and party representatives

It's perfectly okay to contact polities from the [House of Representatives](#) or [the Senate](#) via social media to talk about how their policies will impact on human rights, or to tag them in a relevant post. Just make sure you're polite, check your facts and, if necessary, emphasise Amnesty's political independence.

INDEPENDENCE DON'TS

Sharing party political content

It undermines our independence to share content from political parties or candidates – even if the content aligns with Amnesty's views.

Instead: Create an original post and express the information in your own words.

Sharing hearsay or speculation

Our credibility rests on the accuracy of our public comments. Refrain from sharing information unless you can point to multiple credible sources.

Instead: If you get wind of something that seems important, let your Community Organiser know. They'll be able to verify and advise on whether to share.

Endorsing (or condemning) political parties

It's okay to engage with politicians, but we can't be seen to endorse or condemn any particular politician or party. Keep discussions focused on how policies will impact on human rights, and don't attempt to influence voting behaviour.

Instead: Let the words and actions of public figures speak for themselves.

Stifling freedom of speech

Your followers are entitled to their own opinions. You **don't** need to delete party political comments that others may make on your page.

Instead: Respond by reiterating Amnesty's political independence, or simply ignore.

GLOSSARY

Sometimes, different social media channels use slightly different vocab – but the the principles are generally the same.

For the sake of ease, here's what we mean when we use various words in this guide.

Account:

Your Facebook 'page' or 'group', your Twitter 'account'... anything which requires a username and password to access.

Administrator:

Anyone with the rights to post to, edit, and moderate discussion on a particular social media account.

Comment:

Someone who writes on your Facebook wall, comments on your Facebook post, Tweets at or about you... any time someone reaches out to you on social media in a public way.

Followers:

Your Twitter 'followers', Facebook 'friends'... any Amnesty supporters engaging with you via social media.

Post:

To 'post' to your Facebook wall, 'tweet' something on Twitter... any time you put content 'out there' into social media land.

Share:

to 'share' on Facebook, 'retweet' on Twitter... any time you spread someone else's content via your social media account.

Tag:

To 'tag' on Facebook, 'to tweet using someone's Twitter 'handle' (the @ sign before their name)... any time you reach out to someone on social media in a public way.

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