



Best Practices for USPC Online Activity

Most of today’s youth have never known a time without internet. More than 70% of these youth use the internet and social networking sites daily. Having your Club, Center, or Region online can be beneficial for gaining and retaining membership, as well as quickly updating current events, meetings, group communication, and celebrating successes of members. The following are some best practice recommendations from the United States Pony Clubs, Inc.



Social Media Guidelines



(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, Blogs, etc.) There is an ever growing variety of social media platforms to allow your Club to connect with your current and new members. Here are a few guidelines to help you navigate your way in a safe and effective manner.



Do’s	Don’ts
Be engaging and stay positive.	Don’t be negative.
Stay active and up to date on posts.	Don’t plagiarize or assume photo credit.
Be consistent in your messages.	Don’t post personal information.
Share content from USPC social media sites.	Don’t share content from unreliable sources.
Do engage parents in creating a plan for posting member names, photos and achievements.	Don’t react to unsolicited and inflammatory comments, instead remember this your page and you can and should delete unwanted posts.
Remember that you can’t unsay something once it is posted online.	Don’t post political, controversial or inappropriate content.
Have fun and be mindful of what you post. Use a variety photos, videos and share useful content.	Don’t forget that tone and intention can be misread, so be kind.
Use multiple platforms to send one message to reach a larger audience.	Don’t use location tracking when posting. (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram)
Appoint a DC, CA or RS as your administrator(s). Have your youth members help you.	Don’t leave your online activity in the hands of youth members.
Create a plan that works for your Club, Center or Region.	Don’t alienate members or potential members.
Do be careful and watch for Cyberbullying.	Don’t allow inflammatory remarks to build.



Choosing the right social media for your Club, Center or Region



There are many ways to reach your members through social media. It is not a one size fits all package, so review the quick pros and cons to decide what works best for you.



Facebook  Pro's	Facebook  Con's
Primary use: social networking. Ability to post multiple images, videos and share content at one time.	Location tracking on posts, so be sure and turn off location notifications when appropriate to protect younger members.
USPC uses and has a Facebook Page, can Like and share UPSC posts.	Pop-up ads, you can't control ad content that comes up, it is based on user's browser history.
Can control some privacy settings.	Members can tag themselves and their friends.
Ability to designate administrators for your page or group.	Each type of page or group offers different privacy vs. public settings for followers.
Can track page use and number of people reached.	Beware of promoting to an ineffective crowd.
The Pony Club Facebook page can be found at: https://www.facebook.com/USPonyClubs/	



Twitter  Pro's	Twitter  Con's
Primary use: short and quick updates. Good for event promotion as the target is quick and instant information	Limited characters count per tweet. (140 character per post)
Ability to track and analyze your account.	Less private.
USPC uses and has a Twitter account, you can follow USPC.	Hashtags can be retweeted by anyone, so your tweet may take on a life of its own.
Great for following and updating your local community.	Largely adult followers or older demographics.
The Pony Club Twitter can be found at: https://twitter.com/USPonyClub	

Instagram  Pro's	Instagram  Con's
Primary use: photo sharing	No easy way to track account activity.
Good privacy settings when used.	Location tracking on posts, be sure and turn off location notifications when appropriate.
USPC uses and has an Instagram account, you can follow USPC.	Many adults find it less newsworthy.
Great for communicating with younger members who may not have access to other platforms.	Younger demographic use.
The Pony Club Instagram can be found at: https://www.instagram.com/unitedstatesponyclubs/	

Pinterest  Pro's	Pinterest  Con's
Primary use: internet bookmarking, idea inspiration and shopping trends.	Not ideal for event promotion.
Large audience base.	More fun than ground breaking information.
USPC uses and has a Pinterest account, you can follow USPC.	
Follow Pony Club at: https://www.pinterest.com/USPonyClub/	

Snapchat  Pro's	Snapchat  Con's
Primary use: captures quick moments like behind the scenes.	Temporary posts, for youth can create a false sense of the image “disappearing”
Young user base.	
Follow Pony Club on Snapchat at USPonyclubs	

YouTube  Pro's	YouTube  Con's
Primary use: video hosting and sharing site.	Can't control the ads or what videos recommendations show up, that is controlled by YouTube.
Easy way to share videos with members.	Limited customization.
Large viewership.	Streaming quality can vary.
Subscribe to Pony Club on Youtube at: https://www.youtube.com/user/TheUSPonyClubs	

Blogs or Forums  Pro's	Blogs or Forums  Con's
Primary use: a person's experiences and stories in a blog format. Forum allows a group to have an on-going online chat about a topic.	Anyone can comment if comment setting is not disabled.
Great to share personal stories with a large audience.	Not great for quick or short topics.
Read the Pony Club blog at: http://blog.ponyclub.org/	

Website Tips

With websites, the first impression is the most important. Here are a few tips to help you maintain a user-friendly page.

- The Club/Center/Region website template offered through USPC are a simple, clean design to make your site easier to navigate.
- These sites are mobile-friendly, not the same as “mobile-ready”, so your visitors can view the page on their phones.
- Make sure the administrator is a DC, CA, or RS or if they are not, that they still have admin capabilities. Be sure to update those capabilities with your leadership updates.

- Keep it up to date as much as possible. The new sites will pull from the USPC database cutting your update time in half.
- Make it easy to contact you; it's a great way to attract new members. Members only become members if they can get in touch with leaders.
- Ensure proper photo credit and permission for all photos used. Check with your member families to see how they want to be captioned. (ex. Anna S. or A. Smith or Anna Smith)
- Include links to useful organizations and other pertinent information.
- Visit the USPC website for verbiage and messaging and help keep your club aligned with the UPSC brand identity.
- Pony Club volunteer leaders may visit the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® site for useful information, resources, and materials on Internet safety. Tips and teaching materials addressed include the basics of internet safety, Cyber Bullying, exposure to inappropriate material, online predators, and revealing too much personal information.