



Sandtraps in Cyberspace? How to Avoid Social Software Policy Pitfalls

**Public Library
Association**

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What is wrong with this statement?

“We are not going to do blogs – someone might say something bad about the library.”

Public library official circa 2006 [paraphrase]



**Mary Minow, J.D., A.M.L.S. writing on LibraryLaw Blog,
April 30, 2004**

“...any public library that allows users to post to their blogs can be opening up a legal minefield. Once a library opens its doors to one user's post, it is basically opening its doors to all, or should be. If a library denies a post based on its viewpoint it will almost certainly lose a First Amendment lawsuit. If it denies a post based solely on its content, it might lose as well.”

http://blog.librarylaw.com/librarylaw/blogs_and_wikis/page/3/





Meet patrons where they are





Meet patrons where they are

400 Million

of active Facebook
users



Meet patrons where they are

50

% of Facebook users who
login on any given day



Meet patrons where they are

20 million

people become fans of
pages each day



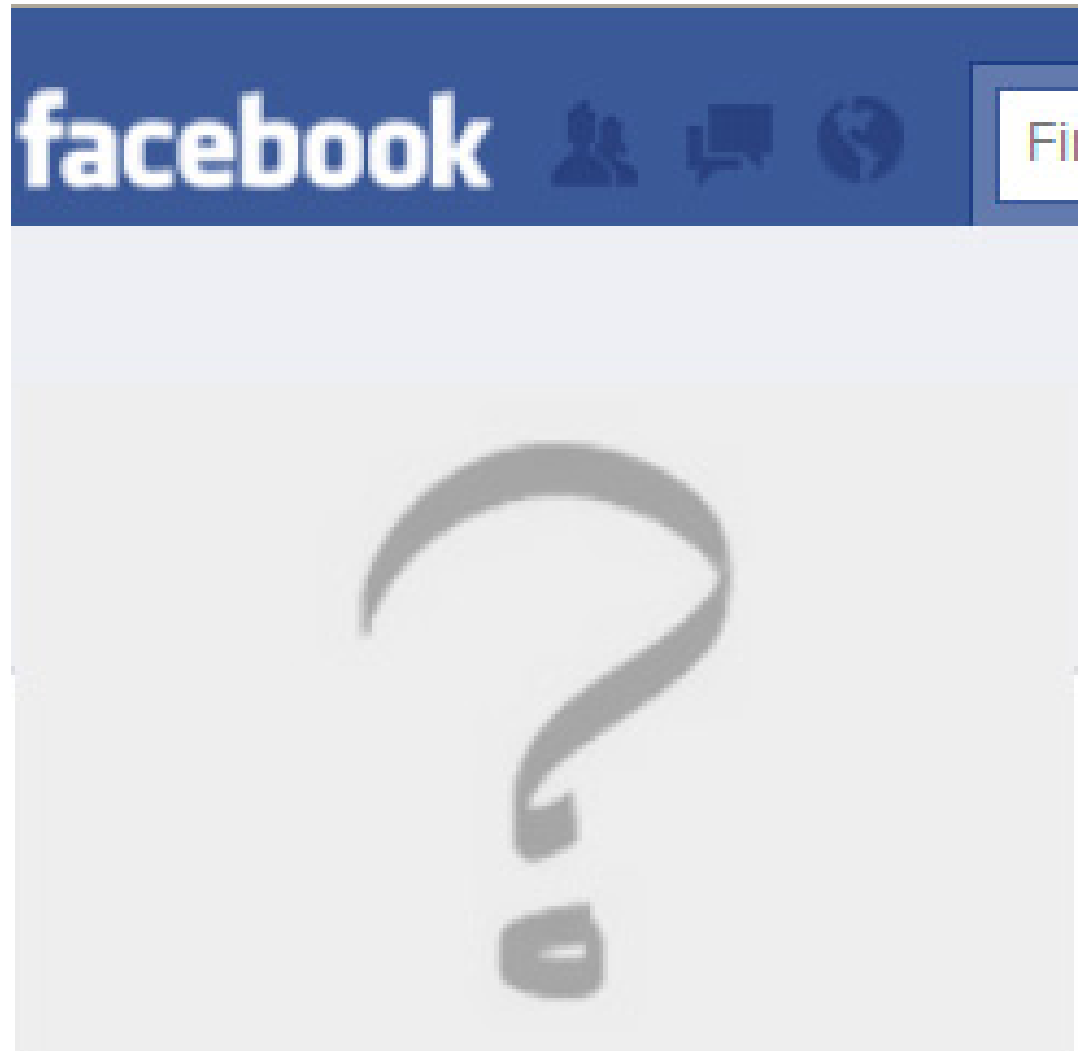
Use social software to further your mission

32

% of adults are blog readers



**If you
don't...
someone
will**







Risks & considerations

- First Amendment violations
- Public records retention
- ©, defamation
- Personnel policies
- Site Terms and Conditions



First Amendment

- The Public
 - Forum
 - Time, place, manner restrictions
- Employees
- Directors who blog



Be clear: patrons

Purpose statement

Social software policy

Comment guidelines



Be clear: staff

Personnel policies

Moderating policy or flowchart

Social software policy

IT use policies



Lessons learned

Be afraid; be very afraid!

Decided we MUST moderate





Lessons learned

We only let people comment for a specified period of time (SPAM prevention)

Changing from Roller to WordPress



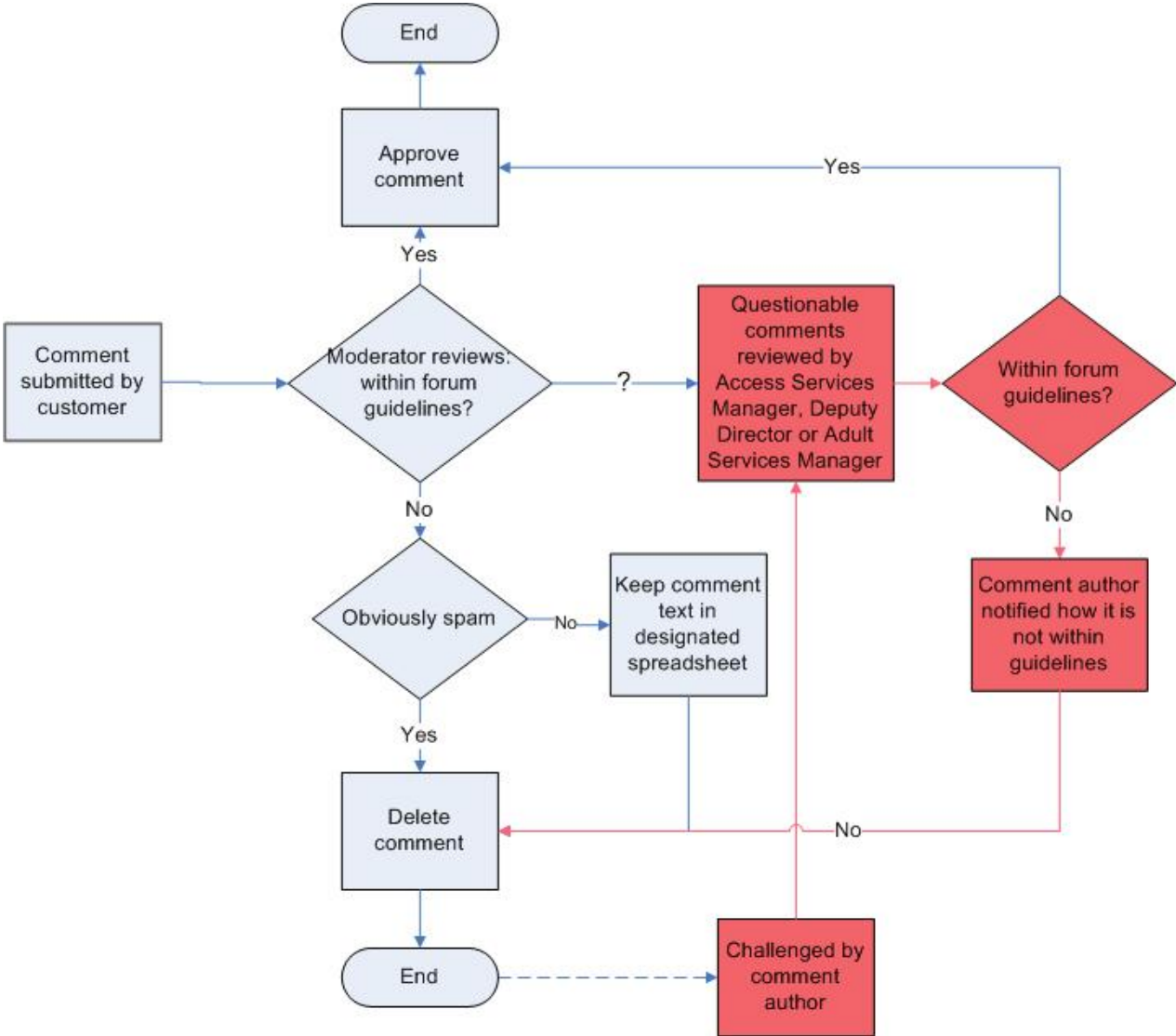
Comment moderation

Use the purpose statement to determine whether a comment is on-topic

Staff can only remove comments for very specific reasons: off-topic or unlawful

In case of a challenge, keep rejected posts that are obviously not SPAM

Comment moderation flowchart





Managing complexity

Blogging

Facebook

Twitter

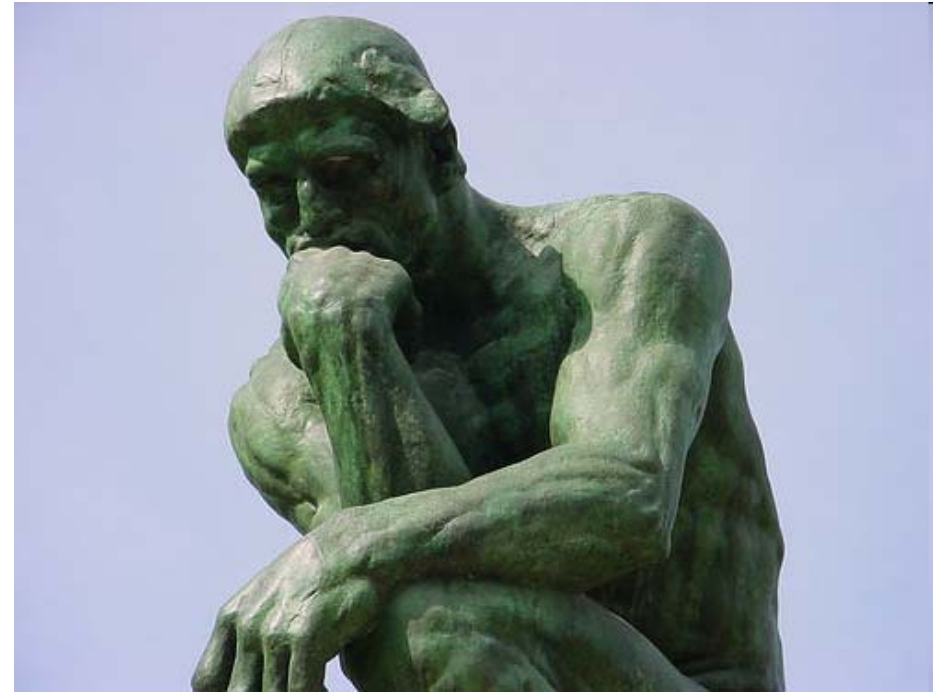
What's next?



Rethinking...

Change comment
time period

To moderate or
not to moderate?



Find us later

www.multcolib.org/products/mcclpresents.html

<http://bit.ly/9mJ7dL>