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The Vermont
Journalism Trust

Employee handbook

May 2012

Approved by the Board of Directors on May 17, 2012.

THE VERMONT JOURNALISM TRUST
Employee handbook
Acknowledgement and Receipt Form

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Vermont Journalism Trust employee handbook. I further acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read this information, to ask questions of the Executive Director if I do not understand any of the information in the handbook, and to abide by and observe all the rules, policies, and procedures explained herein, including any future changes or additions. I further understand and agree to the following:

1. Rapidly changing conditions in the journalism field may necessitate changes in this handbook that can happen at the discretion of the Board of Directors (except the Employment At Will policy in this handbook), but that I will be notified in writing of any such changes.
2. The handbook is not a binding contract.
3. The handbook may be changed, modified, amended, suspended, interpreted, cancelled, or terminated, in whole or in part, at any time, with or without notice, at the discretion of the Executive Director, subject only to approval by the Board of Directors. However, under normal circumstances the Board of Directors will notify employees about their intent to revise and update the policies and practices and will provide the opportunity for employee comment. The Board of Directors also welcomes comments from the staff regarding employment policies and practices as long as these comments have been given to the Executive Director first.
4. Vermont Journalism Trust does not recognize verbal or implied contracts for employment. Only the Executive Director acting with the Board of Directors has the authority to enter into any agreement of employment for specific durations.
5. The contents of the handbook do not constitute an expressed or implied contract of employment. By signing the Acknowledgement and Receipt form, I agree my employment will continue only so long as it is mutually agreeable to myself and to the Vermont Journalism Trust.
6. I understand the nondiscrimination and harassment policies contained in the handbook and will abide by them.

Employee signature

Date

Employee name (print or type)

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

EMPLOYEE NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PERSON TO CONTACT IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

WORK PHONE: _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____

The Vermont Journalism Trust Mission Statement

The Vermont Journalism Trust is a non-profit organization whose sole mission is to stimulate and commission substantive news content from established journalists. It will use its resources to support high-integrity, regional journalism for distribution through existing multimedia news channels. Vermonters need sound and regular news coverage to make good civic policy decisions. VJT will be an advocate for government policies that promote transparency, access to public records, respect for privacy and fact-based information. It does not promote or support any political ideology.

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BASIC FACTS ABOUT WORKING FOR THE VERMONT JOURNALISM TRUST

Employment At Will

It is the goal of the Vermont Journalism Trust to provide a positive work environment. The Vermont Journalism Trust is also cognizant that employees and management for a variety of reasons sometimes initiate personnel changes. In this regard, it is understood that employment will continue only for so long as it is mutually agreeable to the employee and to The Vermont Journalism Trust. That is, employment is “at-will” and may be ended for any reason or no reason by the employee or The Vermont Journalism Trust at any time with or without notice.

DISCLAIMER: NO SECTION OF THIS HANDBOOK IS MEANT TO BE CONSTRUED, OR SHOULD BE CONSTRUED, AS ESTABLISHING ANYTHING OTHER THAN AN EMPLOYMENT-AT-WILL RELATIONSHIP. THIS DISCLAIMER TAKES PRECEDENCE OVER ALL OTHER STATEMENTS IN THIS HANDBOOK.

Employees will be given a written notification of employment containing information about terms of the job, including the title, annual salary or hourly rate, starting date, full time/part-time status, standard weekly work schedule, and exempt or non-exempt status under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Any employee who does not receive a notification should contact the Executive Director.

This notification is not an employment contract; it is simply a statement of information about a position offered. Employment by The Vermont Journalism Trust is discretionary: The Vermont Journalism Trust does not guarantee that a particular job, salary, set of benefits or particular conditions of employment will continue for a specified period of time.

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Probationary period is the first 90 days of employment, and means either the employer or employee can end the employment relationship without prejudice and for no express reason. Employees become entitled to receive The Vermont Journalism Trust’s standard benefits at the 91st day of employment.

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

The Vermont Journalism Trust is an equal employment opportunity employer. Employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, ancestry, religion, gender, gender identity, sex, age, marital or civil union status, national origin, sexual orientation, place of birth, citizenship, military or veteran status, HIV status, genetic information, disability required by 21 V.S.A. § 495.

TERMS RELATING TO EMPLOYEE STATUS

Full-time/ Part-time Status:

Regular Full-time: Standard work schedule of 40 hours per week

Regular Part-time: Standard work schedule of at least 20 but less than 40 hours per week.

The Fair Labor Standard Act and Vermont wage and hour laws govern certain aspects of how employees are paid. Under these laws, certain employees who are not exempt from the FLSA's wage and hour requirements are entitled to one and a half times the employee's regular rate of pay for any time worked over 40 hours in any workweek. Questions about exempt or non-exempt status should be referred to the Executive Director.

WORK SCHEDULE

The Vermont Journalism Trust is officially open for business from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Work schedules and lunch periods may vary depending on the work to be accomplished. Exempt employees are expected to allocate time in whatever manner is necessary to complete their responsibilities. Exempt employees should adhere as much as possible to normal working hours but are not expected to work on a strict hourly basis. Exempt employees are expected to work within the standard workweek plus additional incidental hours as needed.

Since phone coverage is important to any organization, all employees will be expected to provide back-up telephone reception during business hours.

HARASSMENT

The Vermont Journalism Trust is firmly committed to prohibiting discrimination against individuals because of race, color, ancestry, religion, gender, gender identity, sex, age, marital or civil union status, national origin, sexual orientation, place of birth, citizenship, military or veteran status, HIV status, genetic information, disability or any other legally protected status as defined and required by state and/or federal laws. Employees are entitled to a workplace free of discrimination, including harassment based on any of the above factors. The

Board of Directors of The Vermont Journalism Trust will not tolerate such conduct at the workplace.

Any employee, who believes they have been the victim of harassment, should immediately contact the Executive Director. If an incident involves the Executive Director, The Vermont Journalism Trust Board Chair should be notified.

Retaliation against an employee for reporting harassment or for cooperating in an investigation of a complaint is unlawful. It shall be a violation of this policy for any employee who learns of the investigation or complaint to take any retaliatory action which affects the working environment of any person involved in the complaint or investigation. Should an employee witness harassment, they should also contact the Executive Director as soon as possible following the incident

Forms of harassment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Verbal harassment; for example: suggestive comments, insulting comments, derogatory comments, epithets, innuendoes, sounds, jokes, teasing or slurs based on any of the above categories, and sexual propositions or threats;

Visual harassment; for example: displaying sexually suggestive pictures, letters, objects, drawings, cartoons, or posters;

Physical harassment; for example: touching or grabbing any part of an employee's body after that person has indicated, or it is known, that such physical contact was unwelcome;

Sexual harassment; for example: any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which:

- has been made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment, or
- is used as a basis for employment decisions such as promotions and benefits affecting such individual, or
- substantially interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

When The Vermont Journalism Trust receives a complaint of harassment, or otherwise has reason to believe that harassment is occurring, it will take all necessary steps to ensure that the matter is promptly investigated and addressed. The employer is committed, and required by law, to take action if it learns of an incident that involves harassment, even if the aggrieved employee does not formally file a complaint. Any employee who has been found to have harassed another employee will be subject to disciplinary action, ranging from a verbal warning up to and including termination.

Any employee who is not satisfied with The Vermont Journalism Trust's action or is otherwise interested may file a complaint in writing or by calling any of the following state or federal agencies:

Vermont Attorney General's Office

Civil Rights Unit

109 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05602

802-828-3171

Complaints should be filed within

300 days of adverse action.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

1 Congress Street

Boston, MA 02114

617-565-3200

Complaints must be filed within

300 days of the adverse action.

Vermont Human Rights Commission

13 State Street

Montpelier, VT 05633

802-828-2480

Complaints must be filed within

300 days of the adverse action.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Safety on the job and at the workplace is important to any organization. The well-being of all employees is very important to The Vermont Journalism Trust and to the success of its operations. Please keep the following guidelines in mind at all times.

- Report all accidents (to employees or visitors) to the Executive Director immediately after they occur.
- Use proper body mechanics to lift, move, reach for, push, or pull items. Lift within your limits. Obtain assistance when an object is too heavy or awkward to move alone. Use mechanical aids when appropriate.
- Acquaint yourself with the location of fire extinguishers and exits.
- Use a safety belt whenever traveling in a vehicle you are using on Vermont Journalism Trust business. Do not speed or take chances while driving.

Safety in the workplace will be part of an ongoing discussion. All employees should feel free to bring up topics and suggestions at any time.

Workers Compensation Insurance: The Vermont Journalism Trust carries workers compensation insurance for all employees in accordance with state law. It is important that any injury, however slight, incurred while on the job be reported immediately to the Executive_Director. Appropriate forms must be completed promptly. Otherwise, an employee's workers compensation benefits pertaining to the injury could be jeopardized.

Industrial Injury or Illness: A leave of absence for a work-related disability will normally be extended to the employee for the duration of the disability, barring some compelling business need. This leave will only be granted if the employee has followed the procedures described in the Workers Compensation section of this handbook.

BENEFITS PROGRAMS

ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS

Employee benefits accrue from the date of hire, except when otherwise indicated. Contract employees and part-time employees regularly scheduled are not eligible for benefits.

Regular full-time employees (those working 40 hours per week) are eligible for benefits offered by The Vermont Journalism Trust as amended from time to time by the Board of Directors. The Vermont Journalism Trust provides:

HEALTH INSURANCE

The Vermont Journalism Trust currently offers a health insurance plan. All full-time employees hired by the Vermont Journalism Trust are eligible to be covered as individuals on the current health insurance policy. All full-time employees will pay 25% of their health insurance policy premiums with the Vermont Journalism Trust paying the other 75% for the employee. Employees only become eligible for health care insurance at the end of their probationary period, their 91st day of employment, and, should plan to use COBRA provisions from their prior employer for the intervening time.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

The Vermont Journalism Trust is a covered employer under the State of Vermont Unemployment Compensation Law. To draw unemployment compensation

benefits, employees must meet eligibility requirements imposed by state law and serve any applicable disqualification periods.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

Federal Social Security and Medicare programs cover Vermont Journalism Trust employees. Retirement, survivor, disability, and health care benefits provided under these programs are funded by taxes imposed in equal amounts on the employer and the employee and are calculated as a percent of gross direct cash compensation.

Payments to the Social Security and Medicare systems are withheld from all paychecks. Employer's matching contributions are made for all employees and The Vermont Journalism Trust's worker's compensation and unemployment insurance programs cover all employees.

TIME OFF

VACATION AND SICK LEAVE

Vacation leave: full-time employees accumulate 1.54 hours of annual leave per pay period (10 days per year). An employee may accumulate no more than 120 hour of annual leave. An employee may use annual leave for vacations, rest and relaxation, and personal business or emergencies.

Sick leave: full-time employees accumulate 0.77 hours of sick leave per pay period (5 days per year). There is no limit on the number of sick leave hours an employee may accumulate. An employee may use sick leave for personal medical needs, care of immediate family members, bereavement and similar purposes.

Part-time employees, contract employees, freelance writers, interns, volunteers and similar individuals are not eligible for vacation and sick leave.

Vacation leave and sick leave may be advanced at the discretion of the Executive Director.

HOLIDAYS

The Vermont Journalism Trust observes and officially closes the offices on the following days:

New Year's Day

President's Day

Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Christmas Day

Employees may choose to work on holidays but must receive advance approval from the Executive Director. Full-time employees will receive their normal pay for these holidays.

Part-time employees, contract employees, freelance writers, interns, volunteers and similar individuals are not eligible for the benefit of pay for these holidays.

The Vermont Journalism Trust closes its offices from December 24th through January 1st. Employees may choose to work during that time period with the approval of the Executive Director.

JURY DUTY

An employee who is appointed to jury duty must immediately inform the Executive Director. The employee will be paid the difference between the employee's regular wage and the fee received for jury service. On any day that the employee is released from jury service on or before 2:00 p.m., the employee is required to report for work.

Eligible regular part-time employees will be compensated on a pro-rata basis.

Paid leave to appear in court as a witness may be provided, subject to the approval of the Executive Director.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Military Leave: Military leave will be granted as required by law.

Maternity/Paternity/Family Leave: The employee may take four weeks unpaid new parent leave. This leave time must be taken within 6 months of the delivery or within a year from the date of initial placement for adoption of a child 16 years of age or younger.

Employees on maternity/paternity/family leave will be returned to the same or similar position with the same benefits they enjoyed prior to the leave. Benefits will continue to accrue during maternity/paternity/family leave. An employee must give reasonable written notice of intent to take family or parental leave, including anticipated starting and ending dates.

Short-term Family Leave: In accordance with Vermont Law, the Vermont Journalism Trust gives employees who have worked an average of 30 hours a week for a year up to 4 hours in any 30-day period (but not more than 24 hours in

any 12-month period) of unpaid leave to participate in preschool or school activities directly related to the academic advancement of the employee's child, stepchild, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee: to attend or to accompany the employee's child, step child, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee or the employee's parent, spouse, partner, or parent-in-law to routine medical or dental appointments; to services related to their care and well-being; to respond to a medical emergency involving the employee's child, step child, foster child, or ward who lives with the employee or the employee's parent, spouse, partner, or parent-in-law.

For short-term family leave, an employee must give notice as early as possible, at least seven days before the leave is to be taken unless waiting seven days could have a significant impact on the employee's family member.

Paid or Unpaid Leaves: Requests for paid or unpaid leaves of absence, including vacation time, will be considered and evaluated on an individual basis. Approval or denial of such request will be entirely at the discretion of The Vermont Journalism Trust and may only be taken with the written approval of the Executive Director. In determining the feasibility of granting such requests, factors such as the purpose of the requested leave, the availability of alternative coverage for the employee's job responsibilities during the requested leave, the employee's previous absences, length of employment, prior work record and performance, and similar considerations will be reviewed. All such requests must be presented to the Executive Director.

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

INTERNET USAGE

The Vermont Journalism Trust provides access to computers, the Internet, electronic mail, voicemail and other related technology. Employees must use this technology appropriately, and for business purposes only. The Vermont Journalism Trust reserves the right to access and review all electronic files, Internet usage and histories, messages and/or other data, accessed with a Vermont Journalism Trust computer or through The Vermont Journalism Trust's systems, which are all considered the property of The Vermont Journalism Trust. Employees should not have any expectations of privacy with respect to such electronic files, messages or other data.

STAFF MEETINGS

When a staff meeting is scheduled, it is required that all employees attend and on time.

VERMONT JOURNALISM TRUST PROPERTY

The use of Vermont Journalism Trust letterheads, telephone directories, mailing lists, archive materials, and all other such property is restricted to Vermont Journalism Trust work-related projects. No employee may use, disclose or permit the contents of any such materials to be used for any other purpose without written consent of the Executive Director.

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION

Employees agree that all intellectual property, photographs, articles, booklets, study guides, images, original works (which may include compilations), and other proprietary information created as part of the course and scope of employment and/or while representing The Vermont Journalism Trust are and shall remain the sole property of The Vermont Journalism Trust, and that The Vermont Journalism Trust may use any such information for any purpose without obligation to any employee. The employee hereby agrees the employee's use of the information is allowed during employment and for advancement of The Vermont Journalism Trust only and employees have no right, title and/or interest in and to the information. Nothing contained herein shall be construed as granting or implying any transfer of rights or granting of licenses to any employee with regard to any such information, or any patents or other intellectual property protecting or relating to the information.

While recognizing that all proprietary information created by employees while representing The Vermont Journalism Trust is the sole property of The Vermont Journalism Trust, properly framed requests to reprint or redistribute it by current or former employees of The Vermont Journalism Trust could be authorized by the Executive Director, provided that full acknowledgement of The Vermont Journalism Trust is given.

EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

Staff will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket travel expenses incurred while conducting Vermont Journalism Trust business and for mileage at the rate of 30 cents per mile when using their own vehicles on Vermont Journalism Trust's business, providing that the Executive Director has authorized such expense with a week's notice in advance. A receipt and mileage log must accompany all expenses presented for reimbursement.

Staff may be reimbursed for other "out of pocket" expenses incurred while conducting Vermont Journalism Trust business, provided that the Executive Director has authorized such expense in advance and a detailed receipt for such expense is presented for reimbursement.

VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

An employee who decides to resign should submit a written resignation to The Vermont Journalism Trust's Executive Director at least thirty (30) days in advance.

At the time of voluntary termination, a full time employee is entitled to compensation for accrued and unused combined time off, up to a maximum of 30 days, and accrued salary.

The Executive Director will conduct an exit interview with the employee. During the interview, issues of interest to Vermont Journalism Trust will be discussed. If the termination is involuntary, the exit interview will be optional to the Executive Director.

RESOLUTION OF EMPLOYEE PROBLEMS

When employees have problems or complaints related to any aspect of their employment at The Vermont Journalism Trust, they are encouraged to discuss them with the Executive Director. In the event that an employee feels that a Board Policy has been violated and there has been no resolution from the process outlined above, that employee should make their concern known to The Vermont Journalism Trust's Board Chair.

Employees are also free to contact the Executive Director at any time to informally discuss a problem and seek guidance on how best to resolve it.

All facts related to an alleged non-compliant activity (including the identities of the complainants, the person(s) alleged to have violated any policy or procedure, and any witnesses) will be kept confidential from anyone who does not have a legitimate reason to know about them, subject to the need to investigate and take appropriate remedial measures. The Vermont Journalism Trust will not discriminate in any way against any employee making an allegation of non-compliant activity unless it is determined that any such allegation was filed in bad faith or to harass an employee or employees of The Vermont Journalism Trust.

JOB REVIEW

Job reviews should take place at the end of the 90-day probation period and at least once each year at approximately the time of the employee's date-of-hire anniversary. The job review will be between the employee and the Executive Director. The review will be based on the employee's performance of the first 90 days and every year thereafter. The results of this review will not be in the form of compensation.

The job review of the Executive Director will be between the Executive Director, members of the Nominating and Governance Committee, and the Board Chair.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Vermont Journalism Trust employees who consider engaging in activities outside The Vermont Journalism Trust which may result in a conflict of interest, must inform the Executive Director of the possible conflict and obtain a written waiver from the Executive Director prior to engaging in such activities. The Executive Director shall similarly inform the Board of his/her own intentions to engage in outside activities.

A conflict of interest arises when an employee engages in any activity that may result in a conflict between an employee's self-interest and the interest of The Vermont Journalism Trust. Potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:

- Serving on the Board of Directors of an agency, organization, government body or corporation that submits a proposal or otherwise does business with The Vermont Journalism Trust
- Writing or assisting in the writing of funding proposals, applications or grants to The Vermont Journalism Trust
- Working for, investing in, or purchasing a business competitive to The Vermont Journalism Trust
- Committing The Vermont Journalism Trust to give its financial or other support to any outside activity or organization without proper approval

While recognizing the importance of avoiding conflicts of interest, The Vermont Journalism Trust also understands that because of the organization's position in the community, and in the field, participation in some activities and service on some boards may enhance and advance the work of the Journalism Trust. This type of community service should also be discussed with the Executive Director prior to the employee's acceptance of the position. Each request will be considered on an individual basis. Where applicable, a conflict of interest will be disclosed on the VTDigger.org web site.

Work for outside organizations should not be conducted during The Vermont Journalism Trust's business hours unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

Each employee, at the time of their annual, must read and sign The Vermont Journalism Trust's Conflict of Interest Policy.

PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The Vermont Journalism Trust encourages its employees to become involved with the political process, and will not discriminate against any employee because of identification with, or support of, any lawful political activity. The Vermont Journalism Trust, however, cannot become involved in partisan political activities or take stands on partisan issues. The following policies apply to partisan political activities:

- Any partisan political activity of employees must be clearly identified as being personal, and not representative of the positions taken by The Vermont Journalism Trust. An employee may not identify him or herself as a Vermont Journalism Trust representative when engaged in partisan political activity.
- Participation in partisan political activities must occur on the employee's time, and not during the time when he/she is being paid to perform Vermont Journalism Trust duties.
- Vermont Journalism Trust facilities may not be used for partisan political activities.
- No partisan political materials may be posted in The Vermont Journalism Trust offices.
- Where applicable, an employee's partisan political activity will be disclosed on the Vtdigger.org website.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

During the course of normal daily operations, employees may have access to confidential information. It includes, but is not limited to: personnel records, payroll information, financial information, business plans and strategies, policy and personnel handbooks, our computer and software systems and processes, donor backgrounds, or donor records. None of this information should be discussed, revealed, or provided to any person, employee, or non-employee, unless specifically authorized or required in the course of business. Disclosure of confidential information may lead to disciplinary action, which may include termination of employment, as well as other possible legal action. Confidential information is information that is legally confidential, which The Vermont Journalism Trust has been informed is to be treated as confidential, or which management or the Board has classified as confidential. When in doubt, all information obtained from the Vermont Journalism Trust should be considered confidential. Finally, all confidential information relative to The Vermont Journalism Trust, regardless of its form, must be returned to the organization at the time of termination of employment with the organization.

COMPENSATION

TIME SHEETS

In compliance with the federal and state wage and hour regulations, all employees are required to fill out time sheets. It is important that all employees fill out their time sheets on a daily basis and turn them in every two weeks. A time sheet is a useful and necessary tool in helping to manage our time better and in keeping track of time spent on various activities. It is a necessary tool to verify expenses for grants.

PAYDAY

Completed time sheets must be turned in by the Tuesday following the end of each pay period for the employee to receive a paycheck. Checks will be issued on Thursdays. The check will pay the employee for work completed the previous two weeks. Certain deductions from the checks will be made automatically, as required by law and/or the choice of individual employees.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A. Policy Statement

Whether or not an employee chooses to create or participate in a blog, wiki, online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own decision. However, recognize that emerging online collaboration platforms are fundamentally changing the way individuals and organizations communicate, and this policy is designed to offer practical guidance for responsible, constructive communications via social media channels for employees.

The same principles and guidelines that apply to the activities of employees in general apply to employee activities in social media channels and any other form of online publishing.

The Vermont Journalism Trust fully respects the legal rights of its employees to engage in concerted and protected activities, and any part of this policy which interferes with or “chills” the legal rights of employees will not be enforced. In general, what you do on your own time is your affair. However, activities in or outside of work that affect your job performance, the performance of others, or our business interests are a proper focus for company policy.

B. Definitions

1. Social Media Channels - Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, social bookmarking services, user rating services and any other online collaboration, sharing or publishing platform, whether accessed through the web, a mobile device, text messaging, email or any other existing or emerging communications platform.
2. Social Media Account – A personalized presence inside a social networking channel, initiated at will by an individual. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and other social networking channels allow users to sign-up for their own social media account, which they can use to collaborate, interact and share content and status updates. When a user communicates through a social media account, their disclosures are attributed to their User Profile.
3. Social Media Disclosures - Blog posts, blog comments, status updates, text messages, posts via email, images, audio recordings, video recordings or any other information made available through a social media channel. Social media disclosures are the actual communications a user distributes through a social media channel, usually by means of their social media account.
4. External vs. Internal Social Media Channels_– External social media channels are social media services that do not reside at a domain. Internal social media channels are located at a company-owned domain, require a password to access and are only visible to employees and other approved individuals.
5. User Profile – Social Media Account holders customize their User Profile within a Social Media Channel with specific information about themselves which can be made available others users.
6. Copyrights – Copyrights protect the right of an author to control the reproduction and use of any creative expression that has been fixed in tangible form, such as literary works, graphical works, photographic works, audiovisual works, electronic works and musical works. It is illegal to reproduce and use copyrighted material through social media channels without the permission of the copyright owner.
7. Hosted Content – Text, pictures, audio, video or other information in digital form that is uploaded and resides in the social media account of the author of a social media disclosure. If you download content off of the Internet, and then upload it to your social media account, you are hosting that content. This distinction is important because it is generally illegal to host copyrighted content publicly on the Internet without first obtaining the permission of the copyright owner.

8. Embed Codes – Unique codes that are provided to entice others to share online content without requiring the sharer to host that content. By means of an embed code, it is possible to display a YouTube user's video in someone else's social media account without requiring that person to host the source video file. This distinction is important because embed codes are often used by copyright owners to encourage others to share their content via social media channels.

9. Controversial Issues – Issues that form the basis of heated debate, often identified in political campaigns as wedge issues, since they provoke a strong emotional response. Examples include political views, health care reform, gun control and abortion. Religious beliefs may also be controversial, particularly to those intolerant of beliefs different from their own.

10. Official Content – Publicly available online content created and made public by our company, verified by virtue of the fact that it is accessible through our corporate website.

11. Inbound Links – An inbound link is a hyperlink that transits from one domain to another. A hyperlink that transits from an external domain to your own domain is referred to as inbound link. Inbound links are important because they play a role in how search engines rank pages and domains in search results.

12. Link Bartering Exchanges – Trading or purchasing inbound links from other domains exclusively for the purposes of lifting your domain in search engine page results.

13. Tweets and Retweets – A tweet is a 140 character social media disclosure distributed on the Twitter micro-blogging service. Retweets are tweets from one Twitter user that are redistributed by another Twitter user. Retweets are how information propagates on Twitter.

C. Objectives

1. Establish practical, reasonable and enforceable guidelines by which employees can conduct responsible, constructive social media engagement in both official and unofficial capacities.

2. Promote a safe environment for employees to share subject matter expertise that is not proprietary and earn management's recognition for the outstanding use of social media for business.

3. Prepare Vermont Journalism Trust employees to utilize social media channels to help each other and the communities served, particularly in the event of a crisis, disaster or emergency.

4. Protect Vermont Journalism Trust employees from violating municipal, State or Federal rules, regulations or laws through social media channels.

D. Guiding Principles

1. Vermont Journalism Trust trusts and expects employees to exercise personal responsibility whenever they use social media, which includes not violating the trust of those with whom they are engaging. Employees should never use social media for covert advocacy, marketing or public relations. If and when employees use social media to communicate on behalf of The Vermont Journalism Trust, they should clearly identify themselves as employees.

2. Only those officially designated can use social media to speak on behalf of The Vermont Journalism Trust in an official capacity, though employees may use social media to speak for themselves individually or to exercise their legal rights under the National Labor Relations Act.

3. When you see misrepresentations made about or by the media, analyst, bloggers or other social media users, you may certainly use your blog, social networking account, or someone else's to point that out. But you may only do so in an official capacity if you follow the terms of this policy.

4. Different social media channels have proper and improper business uses. For example, members of social networks are expected to read, and when appropriate respond, to questions asked of them from another member of their social network. It is important for employees to understand what is recommended, expected and required when they discuss topics, whether at work or on their own time.

5. Employees are responsible for ensuring that all contractors, vendors and agencies that The Vermont Journalism Trust has a formal relationship with have received and agreed to abide by these guidelines in writing.

6. Employees are responsible for making sure that their online activities do not interfere with their ability to fulfill their job requirements or their commitments to their managers, co-workers or customers.