



SBS WEBSITE USER-GENERATED CONTENT GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

SBS creates opportunities for its audiences and communities of interest to gather around language and culture to share their stories, opinions and experience of Australia's multicultural society by hosting user-generated content (UGC) on its website. SBS encourages UGC which reflects a diversity of experiences, beliefs, cultures and languages.

SBS provides its online services, and interacts with users of its online services, in accordance with the [SBS Charter](#) and its Purpose, Vision and Values ([SBS Corporate Plan 2010-2013](#)).

Purpose	To inspire all Australians to explore and appreciate our multicultural world and contribute to an inclusive society.
Visions	To make a vital difference through our distinctive role in Australia's cultural and media landscape.
Values	Commitment to audience. Embracing diversity. Curiosity and creativity. Collaboration and openness. Professionalism and responsiveness. Honesty, respect and fairness.

1.1 Scope

These guidelines apply to:

- UGC hosted on the SBS website; and
- UGC on SBS branded properties on third party social media websites (such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter) to the extent that SBS has control over it (under the third party website's terms and conditions).

These guidelines are in addition to, and must be read in conjunction with the SBS Website Network Terms of Use ([SBS Website Terms of Use](#)) and the [SBS Privacy Statement](#).



1.2. UGC

UGC, for the purposes of these guidelines, is content – text, audio, images (animation, photographs, videos) – which is produced by members of the public and submitted to SBS for publication on its website.

UGC includes content such as:

- comments submitted to blogs, discussion forums, message boards and live chats produced or hosted by SBS on its website;
- user-created groups, message boards, blogs, profiles and events listings hosted by SBS on its website.

2. Management

SBS will assign an online content moderator to manage each website on which UGC is hosted. The online content moderator will be responsible for ensuring that the UGC is managed and moderated according to the principles set out in these guidelines.

3. Communities on the SBS website

SBS hosts in-language virtual community centres (VCCs) on its website. The VCCs provide opportunities for SBS language audiences and stakeholders to more deeply engage with SBS content, to contribute to their sense of belonging and social inclusion and provide opportunities for interaction by:

- aggregating all SBS content broadcast in their language, or content relevant to the community, to access, share and discuss;
- providing extra online content targeted to the needs of the community;
- providing a destination rich with online community tools for online users to share their views and stories, and create their own communities of interest.

Additional VCC standards (see 5) apply to UGC on the VCCs.

4. General Standards

4.1 Terms of use

All contributions to the SBS website by members of the public are subject to the [SBS Website Terms of Use](#). SBS will ensure that the SBS Website Terms of Use are available and easily accessible on the SBS website.

4.2 UGC must be clearly indicated

SBS will clearly distinguish UGC from content that is produced, commissioned or acquired by SBS.

4.3 Moderation

UGC will be moderated by appropriately trained staff (moderators) in accordance with these guidelines. The level of moderation for a site must be cleared by the relevant SBS manager.

(a) Pre-moderation

UGC is not published on pre-moderated sites until a moderator has checked it and determined that it is suitable for publication.

Pre-moderation will be required for sites which contain discussions of:

- current Australian court proceedings, to avoid contempt of court;
- news stories and other content about 'protected persons' to ensure they are not identified in breach of various state laws. A 'protected person' includes children/juveniles involved in court proceedings, people who have been adopted, people under guardianship orders, victims of sexual assault, and people involved in family court matters;
- news stories and other content which SBS Legal has identified as having a defamation risk.

Pre-moderation may be required for: sites dealing with sensitive areas such as personal health, religion, emergencies and current issues of controversy including international conflict; sites which appeal to children and young people; live chats with talent; events listings; UGC audio-visual content including user profiles.

(b) Post-moderation

UGC on post-moderated sites is checked after its publication. Post-moderation allows UGC to be published immediately and is suitable for sites which invite comment and discussion around topical and active issues where the UGC is unlikely to be controversial, defamatory or offensive.

(c) Reactive moderation

UGC on reactive-moderated sites is not necessarily read by the moderator. Instead the moderator responds to alerts about inappropriate content by users of the site. Reactive moderation is suitable for less sensitive sites dealing with topics which are not divisive and which have a low risk of attracting inflammatory UGC or increasing SBS's legal risk.

Sites which are subject to reactive moderation will have an easily accessible alert function so that visitors can notify the moderator about inappropriate content. Procedures will be established to ensure that the moderator responds to such user alerts in an appropriate and timely manner.

4.4 Escalation strategies including editing or removing UGC

All UGC is published at SBS's discretion. Moderators may edit or remove UGC which does not comply with these guidelines, the [SBS Website Terms of Use](#) and any relevant house rules.

Moderators may also take further action in order to deal with more serious or systematic breaches of its Terms of Use. This could include temporarily removing a contributor, suspending UGC on a site, or altering the site's moderation level.



Serious incidents involving illegal activities such as defamation or racial vilification will be treated as urgent and immediately referred to SBS Legal for appropriate action.

Incidents which may compromise an individual's safety or involve children and young people will be treated as urgent and will be immediately referred to SBS Legal.

Incidents which may in any other way damage SBS's integrity will be treated as urgent and will be upwardly referred to the relevant Division Director.

Moderators will receive appropriate training and guidelines to assist in this process.

4.5 Diversity of views and perspectives

Freedom of speech is an important component of a vibrant democracy. SBS wants to encourage public conversations and provide an opportunity for members of Australia's diverse communities to communicate and share their points of view and reactions to issues that are relevant to them.

While SBS encourages robust debate and discussion, all users should treat each other with tolerance, courtesy and respect. SBS does not require UGC to be impartial. UGC reflects the opinions of its creators, which may affect the balance of opinions contained in UGC. SBS does not endorse the opinions contained in UGC. See [SBS Website Terms of Use](#) (4.2–4.3).

Not all viewpoints will be shared by all users, and some may be offensive. SBS does not necessarily remove all offensive content. However, SBS may elect not to publish comments which exceed a level of offensiveness which SBS considers is not acceptable even in a robust debate. Factors which may be taken into account in exercising a discretion to remove a comment include:

1. **TONE:** Highly abusive or offensive language written in an aggressive tone may not be acceptable.
2. **CONTEXT:** Comments which are gratuitous, off-topic, unsolicited, or not related to a program forum may not be acceptable. For example, it is expected that a forum related to a program which deals with the topic of religion may attract comments about religious groups. However, an offensive comment about the religion of a sports player on a sports forum may be gratuitous.
3. **TARGETED:** Comments maliciously targeting identified individuals may be less acceptable than general comments in relation to a group. For example, posts slurring and naming an individual.
4. **SENSITIVE CIRCUMSTANCES:** Comments made in relation to a particularly sensitive or vulnerable group or community, including in the context of current events, may not be acceptable.
5. **FACTUAL FOUNDATION:** If an offensive comment is factually incorrect, and this lack of factual foundation creates or exacerbates prejudice or harm, then the comment may not be acceptable.

4.6 Political and controversial content

During election periods for Australian jurisdictions or during periods when a particular controversial issue is active, additional rules may apply to sites which publish UGC. These rules may include: providing a special site for discussion of the issue; pre-moderation; asking candidates or contributors with a vested interest to declare themselves. House rules on relevant sites during these periods will clearly state SBS's expectations.

4.7 Commercial references

UGC must not unduly promote commercial brands, products or events either by direct reference or through other means such as links ([SBS Website Terms of Use 4.6\(g\)](#)).

4.8 Fundraising activities and events

UGC must not directly solicit for donations ([SBS Website Terms of Use 4.6\(h\)](#)).

Where provision is made for information about events to be posted, information about events aimed at raising funds for a particular community, cause or charity may be posted (for example school fetes, benefit concerts for charities).

4.9 Accuracy and corrections

SBS is not responsible for the accuracy of UGC. However where errors of fact in UGC are brought to its attention SBS will take reasonable steps to edit, remove or clarify the error.

4.10 Children and young people

Children's contributions should be supervised by an adult ([SBS Website Terms of Use 4.10](#)). SBS will take extra care when providing online services that are likely to appeal to children and young people (under the age of 18) to reduce their risk of exposure to inappropriate content or contact. This may involve pre-moderating the site, posting warnings and providing links to appropriate external resources on cybersafety.

4.11 Warnings

SBS will label sites which are likely to involve challenging or distressing UGC with appropriate warnings so that users are given the opportunity to make up their own minds as to whether the material is suitable for them.

4.13 Queries, comments and complaints

SBS will provide a link for visitors to its website to submit comments and complaints to SBS which will be forwarded to the relevant online content manager. Reports about serious incidents will be dealt with under SBS's escalation strategies (see 4.4 above).

Complaints will be dealt with by the relevant online content manager. The SBS Ombudsman does not deal with complaints about UGC (the SBS Ombudsman deals with complaints which claim that SBS has breached its [Codes of Practice](#) as set out in Code 8 of the Codes of Practice)



5. VCC Standards

As well as the general standards (see 4) the following standards apply to the VCCs.

5.1 Registration

Each contributor will be required to register as a VCC member.

Contributors who are registered on a third party site (for example, Facebook or Twitter) will be able to access the VCCs using their third party account and will be registered as a VCC member.

Information on SBS's registration policy is set out in the [SBS Website Terms of Use](#) (5).

5.2 User profiles

To enable interaction, VCC members will be required to create a public user profile which will allow other users to follow their activity.

5.3 Terms of Use

Contributors to the VCC will be required to acknowledge that they have read and agree to the [SBS Website Terms of Use](#) when they register or when they access the VCC using a third party account.

5.4 House rules

SBS will provide house rules for each VCC which will set the tone for the site and provide an environment within which communities can interact and develop in keeping with SBS's values, the purpose of the VCCs and SBS's legal obligations.

5.5 Moderation

VCC moderators will be proficient in English and the language of the relevant VCC.

SBS will encourage self-moderation on the VCCs for content which would otherwise be eligible for post- or reactive-moderation. Self-moderation will be utilised when SBS considers that a stable and cooperative community responsible for the content (for example a special interest group) has developed. Where this occurs trusted users will assist SBS in moderating the site (trusted user network moderators).

SBS will provide trusted user network moderators with legal and editorial guidelines before they are given a role in moderating. Trusted user network moderators will also be required to sign a document which confirms they understand their role and responsibilities.

5.6 Events

Events submitted for listing on the VCC are considered to be UGC and must comply with these guidelines. Events postings will be pre-moderated.

