

# Social Media Do's & Don'ts

Social networking sites and other social media offer broadcasters new ways to communicate with their listeners. Used cautiously, these media can benefit broadcasters while preserving the integrity of their audience estimates.

The following guidelines will help radio broadcasters avoid Rating Bias and Rating Distortion when using social media. We encourage all broadcasters to familiarize themselves and their staffs with the "Social Media Do's & Don'ts."

## Protecting the Integrity of Audience Estimates

Adherence to the Social Media Do's & Don'ts will:

- Help preserve respondent anonymity
- Help stations avoid Rating Distortion (prompting false information from respondents) and Rating Bias (prompting differential participation by a particular station's listeners)

Guidelines and examples are available on [arbitron.com](http://arbitron.com).

## The Importance of Anonymity

- Arbitron treats respondents' identities as confidential.
- Respondents are instructed not to discuss their participation with strangers.
- Respondents who disclose their participation become ineligible.

## Arbitron Monitors Social Media

- Arbitron monitors social media sites daily:
  - For respondent disclosures
  - For contact between respondents and stations
- Personalities' sites are monitored if the sites are public, e.g., personality uses on-air name, the site promotes a station or a show.
- Arbitron investigates every respondent disclosure it encounters.

**Questions?** Contact Dave Willinski, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, at [dave.willinski@arbitron.com](mailto:dave.willinski@arbitron.com) or (410) 312-8396.

## Do

- Notify Arbitron if a respondent reaches out to the station via social media (or any other means).
- Remind station staff that social media comments are subject to same guidelines as on-air comments.
- Contact Arbitron for a confidential pre-review if unsure about comments you wish to post.
- Contact Arbitron if your staff sees posted comments directed to an Arbitron respondent.
- Contact Arbitron if the station learns the identity of an Arbitron respondent (by any means).
- Review the following materials at [arbitron.com](http://arbitron.com).
  - Rating Bias & Rating Distortion handbooks for PPM and Diary
  - Panel & Diary Security "Do's & Don'ts"

## Don't

- Don't attempt to learn the identity of Arbitron respondents. The station may be delisted, even if the attempt doesn't succeed.
- Don't address comments to panelists or diarykeepers.
- Don't discuss ratings (even ratings success) on social networking sites. Doing so may prompt respondents to disclose their participation.
- Don't post comments encouraging listeners to participate as panelists or diarykeepers.
- Don't offer anything of value to self-identified panelists or diarykeepers.