National Council and Golden Empire Council Website Policy.

The National Council provides the standards as terms to represent the Council's official website.

National Guidelines

Local councils are the primary means of delivering the Scouting program and are the main point of contact between the organization and our volunteers. Much of this takes the form of publishing or advertising. Councils are free to develop their own applications of Internet and Web technology, as long as they observe the rules and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, as required by their charters. The *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, No. 57-492,* and the *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America, No. 57-491,* are primary resources for these policies and procedures. Other guidelines, such as this document, are issued by the National Council to provide more specific and detailed guidance.

Representation

While the National Council provides guidelines by which it will acknowledge local councils' sites and refer others to them, each of these sites is the product and possession of the local council, and as such is representative only of the council that maintains it.

National Council Policy

While local councils may establish their own policies concerning their use of the Internet, the term *official council Web site* used in this document refers to any local council Web site the National Council determines to have followed the numbered requirements below. **The National Council will not acknowledge or provide links to any council site that does not meet these requirements.** This policy may be altered or amended to provide updated information, and councils will be notified when that happens.

National Requirements

1. Council Web sites must be hosted off-site at a hosting facility and may not be connected in any way to the local council's internal network.
2. The council must have direct control over the content of its official Web site by a council employee.
3. The content of the council site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement.
4. The council site cannot contain links to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement.
5. The council site cannot contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
6. The council site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
7. The council site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
8. Council sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.
9. Council sites must consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information or images of any individual.

The information that follows supports these guidelines by providing more specific information on practices and procedures that may be implemented for producing and maintaining a site that successfully meets the guidelines.

Golden Empire Council- Standards and Guidelines for Internet Publishing and Maintaining the Council Web Site

National Perspective on Site Ownership

The council's membership and the general public regard a council's official Web site as an authorized publication of that council. Because the council will be held accountable for the content of its site, the site will be wholly owned and controlled by the council.
Specifically, the council or a professional council employee (rather than a volunteer) will have legal ownership of the domain name and site content, and the server space will either be owned by the council or secured with a written service contract between the council and the Internet service provider (ISP) that hosts the site. This contract will clearly indicate the council owns its own Web site content.

Domain name

If a proprietary domain name is registered, the "registrant" on file with the InterNIC (`http://www.internic.net`) will be the council. At the very least, the "administrative contact" designated during domain registration will be an employee of the council.

Content

The content of the site will be owned by the council rather than any individual, and that is most easily shown by having a copyright statement on the site. Of course the council may reproduce (with permission) material from other sources, but the site itself must be owned by the council. The copyright statement can be a simple "© 2006 Xyz Council, Boy Scouts of America" at the bottom of the Web page.

National Policy on Site Administration

The administrative components of a Web site, namely its ownership and the procedures by which the content decisions are made and implemented, are not necessarily evident visually in the Web site itself. These matters will be considered carefully, however, as they have the potential to create profound problems in the administration of the council's site.

National Policy on Site Hosting

Local councils must make their own arrangements for Web site hosting—this service is not presently provided by the National Council.
Though it is commonplace and quite acceptable under most circumstances for local councils to host their sites in donated Web space, it is advisable to have a written service agreement that guarantees the council complete control over the content of its site. Such clauses are common in commercial hosting arrangements, and are essential to maintaining reliable control over the council's Web presence.
It's worth noting that there are a number of services that offer "free" Web site hosting, but require sites they host to display banners and/or contain links to other member sites, whether within a page or in a separate window that pops open when the site is visited. These services will be avoided entirely.

Location of Hosting Server

Local councils **MUST NOT** host their Web site on their local network. Such an arrangement could allow hackers to enter the Web site and in turn have access to records on the council network or its computer desktops. Web sites must be run externally via a hosting service.
The goal here is to have any reference to the council's physical Internet connection removed from the publicly available Internet DNS servers (the Internet's version of a city directory); thereby removing one of the methods a hacker uses to exploit his or her victims. This is best compared to a person who obtains a post office box to receive their mail rather than having it delivered directly to their home. They still get their mail, but the sender does not have an easy way to obtain the recipient's physical address and therefore, cannot break into the recipient's home. This method will allow councils to remain more stealthy on the Internet and is one of the layers in a "defense in depth" (DID) approach to Internet security.

National Policy on Domain Registration

Councils are encouraged to register their own domain names for their Web sites, as this level of ownership is customary among organizations similar in size and prestige to a BSA council. A registered domain name includes a top-level (`org`, `com`, `net`, etc.) preceded by a second-level domain name. The registered domain name is the familiar combination of these (`thecouncil.org`, `mybusiness.com`). Council domain names should be registered in the "`org`" top-level domain (for non-commercial organizations) as opposed to "`com`" (commercial enterprise) or "`net`" (computer network) top-level domains.
A council may, at its own discretion, issue third-level splits on their domain (`camp.thecouncil.org`, `district3.thecouncil.org`) to its own districts and/or facilities, or establish them for its own use, but will be cautioned that the council may be held accountable for the content of any site housed on a third-level split as if it were part of the council's own Web site, even though the content may not

be hosted at the same location. Councils that do this are urged to monitor the content of such splits closely.

National Policy on Control of Server Access

While it is common practice for volunteers to develop files and programs for the council Web site, a professional employee of the council will control the content of the Web site by maintaining *sole* access (FTP, telnet, etc.) to the files on the Web server as well as to any programmatic interface that provides the ability to add or edit content on the Web site and its ancillary services.

Golden Empire Council's Web server administrator will maintain sole admin access. Our site allows for content editors and district webmasters to be assigned to pages. Those assigned access will report to their District Executive for content questions and to their District Webmaster for support.

National Policy on Control of Content

It seems to be common practice, and seems reasonable, for a council's Web site to be governed by a committee including both volunteer and professional Scouters, and that this committee defines the goals of the Web site and determines the content and resources that will be published in pursuit of those goals.
All materials destined for the council Web site will be reviewed and approved by the council professional staff before they are published. The Council's Scout Executive will have the authority to edit or remove content that is presented to the public as part of the council's site.

National Policy on District and Unit Web Sites

Guidelines for district and unit sites, and the decision as to whether districts and/or units may maintain officially representative sites at all, are completely at the discretion of the council. If these sites are permitted, and especially if the council site provides links to them, the council will provide guidelines for these sites and to recognize and link *only* to those sites that meet the council's guidelines.
District Sites. The degree of a district's identity to membership and to the public should be the primary factor in deciding whether it would be useful to have separate sites for each district. It is recommended that the council support its districts on the council Web site, accommodating unique information for the districts (such as calendars, contact information, etc.) in district pages or sections.
The best solution is for the council to provide districts "directory-level" Web sites (`http://www.council.org/district`), so that districts may have a self-contained module of information that suits the needs and goals of the district, but enables the council to control the information published by its districts just as closely as any other information on the council site.

Unit Sites. It is not recommended that councils acknowledge "official" sites for units. There are currently tens of thousands of unit Web sites on the Internet, and it would be difficult for a council to allocate sufficient resources to monitor all the various sites developed by units in its area. Furthermore, since most units lack adequate resources to develop respectable and safe Web sites, a vast majority of unit sites are wrought with safety and liability issues that could become problems for the council were the sites endorsed as officially representative.
While it is permissible, by the guidelines, to provide links to sites that provide content that is appropriate to the Scouting movement, it is especially important to clarify (perhaps through an explicit disclaimer) when linking to Scouting-oriented sites that **units as well as youth and adult members do not represent or serve as agents of the Boy Scouts of America when disseminating information over the Internet.**
The safest course of action would be for the council to remain completely uninvolved in and, inasmuch as possible, unaware of any Internet publication produced by any group or individual not authorized to serve as a representative of the council or the Boy Scouts of America in the online medium.

Golden Empire Council District and Unit Policy

The Council provides all Districts with web space within the content management system used on the official council site. Districts may not host their own sites, register their own domain names or use non-official mail lists or groups. Districts, Committees, and activity groups must use the council website as means to contact their volunteers. Units may host as they choose, however they are encouraged not to use "free" hosting services as we will not link to these types of services. The council will be offering units a content managed solution as part of our main council site. This improvement is scheduled for 2007. All Council hosted sites must follow all policy and guidelines in this publication.

Interactivity

In these guidelines, *interactivity* means direct communication via the Web site among a council's personnel, its membership, and the public.

National Council Perspective

The National Council has chosen *not* to provide contact information on its Web site because usually it is more appropriate for people to contact their local council rather than the National Council. Exceptions are made very rarely, on individual pages where under normal circumstances the content makes it appropriate for individuals to contact the National Council directly.
Conversely, local councils communicate directly and bilaterally with program participants, volunteers, and the general public through other media, and it would be just as appropriate for the council to extend this practice to the

Internet. The lack of interactivity on the National Council site should not be construed to imply a policy that applies to councils.

National Council Perspective on

Audience Location and Council Boundaries

Due to the world-wide reach of the Internet, a local council can interact with the members of other councils and with the public outside its geographic domain. Communication across those boundaries could create or worsen problems between councils. Councils are advised to avoid Web site content and Internet communication that might affect another council adversely, such as taking resources (sales, financial or volunteer support) from other councils or "seeding" volunteer/professional disagreements over interpretation of council policies or practices that differ.

There has never been an incident that made it necessary to establish a "non-interaction" policy for local councils. To prevent such an incident from occurring, councils are urged to make it a policy that early in any interaction they will determine the physical location of the other party and when appropriate they will refer individuals to the appropriate local council. (Note that the guideline prohibiting electronic sale of Supply Division merchandise is intended to help protect all councils' markets.)

Though a site visitor's location is not immediately evident, and technology provides no definite way to determine it, here are a few techniques to help councils determine the geographic locations of their Internet correspondents:

- Any on-line form that enables the user to communicate back to the council can ask (even require) the visitor to give their city and state.
- A password may be provided to council members to ensure resources in one or more "restricted" areas are viewed and used only by the council's own members.
- In any dialogue (such as an e-mail exchange), it may be necessary to ask.

On-Line "Conversation"

Chat, guest books, and bulletin boards are three forms of interactivity that are generally inadvisable for council Web sites because they require dedicated resources to monitor and control them sufficiently.

Chat Rooms. These are on-line forums in which users "converse" by typing messages to one another in real time. Recent advances have also made it possible to audio- or videoconference on the Internet. The first concern for councils will be youth protection issues; also "chat" makes it impossible for councils to control the text content of their sites. Because conversations take place in real time, messages are immediately posted to the site for others to view. Also, because chat participants are anonymous, often there is much less discretion exercised than in most forms of conversation.

We recommended that councils avoid "live conversation" " technology altogether. If it seems necessary for a special purpose, protective measures will be taken, such as

- a "chat" forum could be open only during certain time periods
- access to the forum could be restricted so that only those who have been given a password may participate
- an authorized moderator could stay online and eject participants who break the rules
- Software countermeasures could censor speakers on-the-fly.

Even with such measures, incidents can occur.

Guest Books. Guest book programs allow site visitors to leave a message, and are generally not a problem unless the log file (which contains all the comments visitors enter) is visible to the public. In that case, anyone can add text, graphics, and even programmatic components to the council's Web pages that will immediately be viewable to other visitors. If a guest book is used, the log file will be kept in a location that is not visible to other visitors, but which must be downloaded using administrative software (Telnet/FTP) in order to be read. The council will then review that material before posting it to a publicly accessible interface.

Bulletin Boards and News Groups. These are a form of chat in slow motion: Users post messages and others may read and respond at a later time. Bulletin boards have the same inherent risks as chat, but since conversations do not occur in real time, there is opportunity for better moderation. Users may be allowed to send their remarks to a private section of the Web site, but the remarks will not be posted to the site for others to read until the council has approved the content for publication on its site.

National Policy on Electronic Commerce

Councils are prohibited from engaging in the sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products via the Internet. This should not prevent councils from promoting their Scout shops or the merchandise they sell, but the actual purchase should take place off-line. Though electronic sales of items *other than* Supply Division merchandise or competing products has not been prohibited, it is discouraged unless the council has the resources to develop a secure e-commerce system.

Golden Empire Council Web Policy:

• Districts will have no links to sources outside of the council site.

• All pictures of people displayed on the web must have a talent release.

• Pictures must not include captions that identify children by name or affiliation.

• Contact information for any member will not be displayed once the blind e-mail system is established.

• Chat rooms, forums, bulletin boards, guest books will not be allowed or linked on any page that is displayed within the council site active or inactive.

• Webmasters must respect copyright laws and obtain permission before using content from outside sources.

• Content cannot contain anything of a commercial interest of any kind.

• Units are encouraged not to use any type of "free" internet hosting because we will not link to these types of websites.

• Phone numbers of Adult members may only be published with written permission.

• Contact info of youth members will never be displayed.

• All districts, committees, training and activity groups must use the space provided on the council web server and may not host or obtain domain names.

• All districts, committees, training and activity groups may not use e-mail lists or groups outside of Council e-mail lists hosted on the Council server. If they do then the council will not recognize these outside groups as officially representative. As well these members should also note that all district names and names with "GEC", "Golden Empire", when used as names for unofficial contact groups is a violation of council policy and copyright laws and violators will be subject to legal action.

Golden Empire Council- Standards and Guidelines for Internet Publishing
and Maintaining Local Council Web Sites

National Council Perspective on Privacy and Youth Protection

The Internet is perceived as a threat by some individuals, and they are vehemently opposed to having their images or personal information available to others. This perception is not unjustifiable, as demonstrated by periodic media coverage of predators who exploit the Internet to select, locate, and contact their victims.

Collecting Personal Information

Council webmasters are urged to be discreet when collecting personal information via their Web sites. Privacy is a delicate issue on the Internet, and many people are reluctant to use sites or interfaces that require them to provide personal information such as their name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, etc. We recommend that councils avoid using the Internet to gather this information about users unless it is necessary to accomplish the user's goals. For example, you would have to request a telephone number and contact name from an organization that wishes to be contacted about starting a unit, but it should not be necessary that they provide this information merely in order to read information about starting a unit.

It is especially important to treat contact information carefully: contact information should be used only for the purpose for which it was provided. It is unethical and in some cases illegal to use this data for any solicitation or communication outside the context in which it was provided. The issue is particularly serious regarding contact information for children under 13.

Federal Trade Commission Guidelines regarding personal information

The Federal Trade Commission recommends that charities and companies that collect personal information from online visitors use the following set of four standards—known as "fair information practices"—in creating privacy policies to post on their Web sites:

1. **Notification.** Visitors to the Web site should be notified as to what personal information is being gathered, how that information is used by

the organization, and with what third parties, if any, the organization will share it.

2. **Choice.** Visitors should be provided with a means by which to contact the organization or take other actions to ensure that their personal information is not shared, if they so choose.

3. **Security.** Users of the site should be notified of the means by which the organization protects personal information, including protection from any misuse, alteration, or access by unauthorized users. Organizations will strive to ensure that the same level of privacy protection is extended by any third parties with whom they share individuals' personal information.

4. **Access.** Web site users will have reasonable access to any personal information about themselves that the organization holds, as well as a means of correcting or amending the information if it is inaccurate

Children's Online Privacy Protection Act

While the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) applies to commercial web sites, and provides sound guidance for any Web site that is intended for use by children under 13. Therefore, if your Web site collects any personally identifiable information from or about children, you should review and consider complying with this legislation. The full text of COPPA can be found online at `http://www.ftc.gov/ogc/coppa1.htm`. Information on how to comply with the act is available at the FTC's "Kidz Privacy" Web site at `http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/buspubs/coppa.htm`.

Council Policy on Providing Personal Information

Regarding e-mail specifically, there remains the potential for a flood of correspondence to overwhelm the council staff if e-mail addresses are published on the Web site. The presence of e-mail addresses on a majority of council sites would seem to suggest that this potential has not become an actual problem, but it has consumed an enormous amount of bandwidth and processing time on local networks and e-mail servers trying to deal with the amounts of spam generated by having these addresses published. For this reason the council will be implementing a blind e-mail system and removing contact e-mail addresses from the web entirely. All initial e-mail contacts with staff and volunteers will be made through this blind system when implemented. Scheduled release for this system is 2007.

Contact information will only be published for a reason—specifically, whether there is a valid need for the members and/or the public to speak directly with a given individual because of that person's role in the organization or an event. The council's policy will address these three groups separately, for these reasons:

Youth Participants and Parents

Contact information for youth participants will <mark>never</mark> be provided on the Internet. If the council wishes to maintain contact information for youth participants, these lists will be kept entirely off-line.

Concerning e-mail addresses in particular, members should be aware that there are computer programs that crawl the Internet compiling lists of e-mail addresses that appear on Web pages. These lists are often sold to e-mail marketers who regularly send unsolicited advertisements, primarily for pornography and pyramid schemes. It is recommended that councils that wish to provide e-mail contact information utilize techniques to prevent or minimize this unfortunate side effect (such as "escaping" characters or using CGI scripts that maintain the actual addresses in a safe location).

Adult Volunteers

Contact information for adult volunteers will be treated with caution, as it is likely this information will be personal in nature (home addresses, residential telephone numbers, and private e-mail accounts). If this information is made available on the Web site, it would be preferable to provide it in a password-protected area of the Web site to which the general public has no access.

Exceptions may be made for those volunteers whom it would be necessary for third parties to contact in order to obtain information about joining, starting, or supporting individual units.

It is required that this information be published only after obtaining written authorization, and that these individuals will know that they can (and how to) request the prompt removal of their information at any time.

Council Employees

If a third-party exploits information such as individual telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to harass or threaten employees, this could result in legal action being taken against the council. For that reason, it is recommended that the council provide only its main telephone number and generic e-mail addresses ("`webmaster@council.org`", "`info@council.org`", "`contact@council.org`", etc.) on its Web site.

Personal contact information—home telephone numbers, addresses, and private e-mail accounts—for council employees will be treated with the same discretion as that of adult volunteers.

Council Policy on Photographs and Names

A webmaster should obtain permission before publishing any photographs on the Internet except those taken by or of council employees.
Because some states have privacy laws that could be implicated if a child's photograph is published on the Internet without his parents' permission, ownership of the image alone does not carry with it the right to publish it.
Therefore, the council will obtain permission from any person who is the subject of a photograph before displaying their image or likeness on the Internet.
When using photographs of members, especially youth, it is also important to consider their safety and privacy when choosing captions or ancillary text.

Golden Empire Council- Standards and Guidelines for Internet Publishing and Maintaining Local Council Web Sites

Web Site Content

The content of council Web site will generally fall into two categories: marketing material presented to generate and direct public interest in joining or supporting programs, and service material presented for existing members. Both are valid and useful applications of Internet technology.

Non-Exclusivity

Though the Internet is a popular medium, and though its popularity continues to increase at an astounding rate, it's important to remember that it is not yet a universal medium. While the council's Web presence may support traditional channels of distributing information, it should not replace them, and should be treated as a secondary (rather than preferred or exclusive) channel of communication with members and volunteers.

Content Sources

It is important to know the original source of all web site content and to be sure the council has permission to use it. The only content the council owns outright are the text, photos, illustrations, design, and programming developed by the council's employees in the course of their jobs. Permission must be given by the owner for using all other material.

National Policy on National Council Publications

Local councils may reproduce the content of any BSA "bin resources" publication they feel is appropriate for their sites' audiences. However, councils may *not* replicate any part of any publication currently for sale through the Supply Division. The difference between "bin" and "supply" items may seem unclear for those items the council purchases but then redistributes without charge to its members. Item numbers provide a reliable method of differentiation: bin items have five-digit numbers separated with a hyphen (00-000) whereas Supply Division items have four or five digits (the first is typically a 3 or 4) that are not separated by a hyphen (0000 or 00000). (The item number is generally printed on the back cover or at the bottom of the contents page.)

Specific exceptions to this rule have been made so that *approved council Web sites* can link to certain Supply Division forms (medical forms, tour permits, certain applications, etc.) that are posted on a hidden location on the National Council site. Likewise, the *Guide to Safe Scouting,* a Supply Division item, has been approved for council Web site links. Such exceptions are rare, and generally focus on service to members through the local council.

Content of *Boys' Life* and *Scouting* magazines should never be reproduced on council Web sites without first obtaining permission from the Magazine Division. Many articles and images are included in the magazines under limited license and copying them could violate copyright law. Councils may employ "frames" technology to include either magazine's pages from the National Council site into the council site, but should never copy any magazine files or text excerpts or images without explicit permission.

National Policy on Third-Party Material

If a council wishes to include any content (whether text, photographs, illustrations, design, or programming), that is not developed by council employees or by third parties under the terms of a contract or agreement with the council, it is important to obtain written permission from the owner of that material. Even if the material is owned by a volunteer or donor and is provided with the understanding it will be used in the council's site, written permission remains important.

In its simplest form, this written permission can be provided in a letter that explicitly states that the owner will permit the council (or the Boy Scouts of America) to use the material. It is also common to indicate the duration (dates) for which the permission is granted, the medium (media) in which the reproduction may occur, and any restrictions that may apply.

National Policy on Materials from Other Web Sites

Reusing material found on the Internet is *especially* dangerous. It is all too common for amateur Web publishers to take copyrighted material and reproduce it on their own Web sites and say that it is "free" or "public domain." A written agreement is prudent, regardless of any explicit disclaimer on a Web site, before using any material downloaded from the Web. It is especially important to obtain permission in advance for materials used on the Internet. Unlike newsletters, which are distributed only to members, the Internet is available to the public, and it is inevitable that the owner will discover your use of their material on your Web site.

National Policy on Photographs

For photographs taken by council personnel or by photographers hired by the council, a "talent release" will be obtained for *every* person shown in the photos. Appendix A is a talent release form similar to that used by the National Council. This particular release obtains permission for the Boy Scouts of America (the National Council, any local council, district, or unit) to use the image in any medium. You may use it as is by typing it onto your council or other letterhead, or customize it to obtain rights for your council only or for only certain media if you wish. It is especially important to obtain this release, with the signature of a guardian, for youth.

While obtaining the permission of the owner (photographer) of an image or obtaining talent releases for photographs taken by the council is adequate to satisfy ownership issues, it is also prudent to obtain the permission of the subject(s) specifically to use their likeness on the Internet. See "Photographs and Names" on page "Privacy and Youth Protection" for more detailed information.

National Perspective on the National Council Web site

Linking to the National Council site from a council site is not necessary, nor is it recommended. As Scouting programs are administered by local council, the local council will be the primary source of information, in every medium, to individuals in its geographic area. If a council wishes to make resources from the National site available to its own visitors, the preferred method would be to import these resources directly into the council site or link directly to a specific resource via a new window. This will give the perception that the information is coming from the local council and will keep visitors "inside" the council site rather than sending them "up" to the National Council site via a standard hypertext link.

National Perspective on District and Unit Sites

A council's link to a district or unit site connotes that the council has authorized that district/unit site and that it is officially representative. While these links may be made, the council will ensure these sites are acceptable before providing a link and will monitor the sites periodically.

Council Policy and National Perspective on Third-Party "Scouting" Sites

No Live links to third party scouting sites and static links require a disclaimer. Example: This site list is provided to help you find information on the internet that relates to scouting. The Council does not endorse these sites and takes no responsibility regarding their content. Always refer to official Council resources and policy for official requirements.

Council Policy and National Perspective on Third-Party Commercial Sites

No Live links to third party Commercial sites and static links require a disclaimer. While many commercial sites provide valuable information of a non-commercial nature, councils will be careful when linking to these sites to avoid the impression that the council is endorsing commercial products or services. Annotation often makes the difference, as in this example: A static link to xyzboots.com (the XYZ Boot Company's home page) appears to be a commercial endorsement. If you added the sentence "The XYZ Boot Company provides excellent advice for avoiding hiking injuries," and then provided a static link directly to the page about avoiding hiking injuries, you clarify that the council endorses the information the company is providing rather than the product it is selling.

Council Policy and National Perspective on Sites with "Free" Services

Council's perspective is that free components are free for a reason, and will be avoided on our site. "Free" site components tend to be commercial. Certain sites offer services such as statistics, hit counters, guest books, animations, and the like to other Web sites. Like the bogus "awards," sites and sites offering "free" Web space or e-mail, the primary purpose of these giveaways is to advertise and plant links to the "donor" site on a wide range of Web sites in order to draw audience away from its "benefactors." Of course, there are plenty of legitimate reference Web sites as well. The best approach when you consider linking to a site is to "click through" the site while asking yourself, "Why are they offering this service? What do they want from me?" The answer should tell you whether you want to link to the site or not.

Content and Links to Avoid

National Policy on Advertisements and Banners

Councils are prohibited from endorsing commercial products or services in any medium, including the Internet. Banner advertisements for commercial products and services are thus inappropriate for council Web sites. (NOTE: any use of the Internet for fund-raising is subject to the same policies and procedures as other fund-raising activities.)
Another popular type of banner on the Internet provides site owners with free promotion on other Web sites in exchange for promoting other sites on theirs. Though not strictly a commercial endorsement, these banners remain unacceptable because they provide a highly visible link from the council site to others, and the council does not control either the graphic that is displayed or the site to which it links – one or both may be patently inappropriate.

National Policy on Web Site Awards and Certification

There are a number of Web sites that offer "awards" or "certification" for other sites. These awards/certifications often require the honoree to display an URL or provide a click-through link that promotes the grantor's site. In many cases, such "honors" are ploys to draw traffic to other sections of the grantor's site, with a commercial or political motive. These will be avoided.

Learning for Life Content

In 1998, Learning for Life became a subsidiary of the Boy Scouts of America, and the National Council has completely separated the Learning for Life and Exploring programs from traditional Scouting programs in terms of its marketing and materials. On the Internet, the National Council maintains a separate Web site for all information about Learning for Life programs: `http://www.learning-for-life.org`.

This effort will also be supported on the council level: Information about Learning for Life and Exploring will be provided on an entirely separate Web site—or, failing that, a self-contained site within the council's Web space until a transition to a stand-alone site can be made.

There will be no mention of Learning for Life or Exploring on traditional Scouting sites, or vice versa, in terms of text content, photographs, images, etc., and the sites will not promote or link to one another after a period of transition has elapsed.

Council Policy Enforcement:

Violations of council policy will result in these steps being taken against person or parties responsible:

1. A verbal warning from their District Executive.
2. A written letter or e-mail of non-compliance of Council policy from the Council webmaster and removal of links to the violating site.
3. Access to all accounts on council resources will be disabled and they will receive a letter from the Scout Executive on how to comply in order to restore access.
4. Council will request a legal cease and desist order be sent to the responsible party by the National Council Legal.
5. National Council will be contacted to take legal action against violator.

Appendix A - Talent Release

I hereby assign and grant to the Boy Scouts of America the right and permission to use and publish the photographs/film/video tapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings made of me this date by the Boy Scouts of America, and I hereby release the Boy Scouts of America from any and all liability from such use and publication.

I hereby authorize the reproduction, sale, copyright, exhibit, broadcast, electronic storage and/or distribution of said photographs/film/video tapes/electronic representations and/or sound recordings without limitation at the discretion of the Boy Scouts of America and I specifically waive any right to any compensation I may have for any of the foregoing.

Name:	
Address:	
City, State ZIP:	
Phone number:	
Photo session date:	/ /
BSA Council/Unit Number:	/
Signed:	
Guardian:	
Witness:	

(if subject is younger than 18)

Appendix B - Copyright Permission Examples

Obtaining the right to republish material (illustrations, photographs, multimedia, text, etc.) from other original sources is usually fairly easy: Send a letter to the owner of that material requesting permission. The letter's tone may be formal or informal, but it should contain these elements:

- A specific description of the material
- A print-out or photocopy if applicable
- The specific purpose(s) for which it will be used
- When or how many times you plan to use it, if that might be an issue

If the request is not on council letterhead, it would also be important to indicate that permission is being sought for the council to use the material, rather than for the individual author of the letter to use the material.

It is important to understand that you do not have the right to use these materials until you receive a reply from the owner that grants permission. Also, if the owner sets any conditions or limitations, you must abide by them. For example: if the owner granted permission for the request in Example B below, but asked to be notified by e-mail of the URL of any unit site that also used the images, you would be required, as a condition of having the right to use the material, to send those notifications. Or permission might be granted only for a limited time, after which you could not use the material.

Finally, keep a copy of your request, along with the reply, on file just in case there is ever a dispute.

Example A. Simple Request

> I am seeking your approval for the XYZ Council of the Boy Scouts of America to use three photographs of mountains and a lake from your Web site at `http://www.website.com/bobsmith/`. I would also like to use the descriptive text that accompanies them. I've attached print-outs from the site to indicate the precise images and text to which I'm referring.
>
> I would like to use these images on the "outdoor skills" page of the XYZ Council's Web site (`http://www.xyz-bsa.org`).

Example B. Request for Multiple and Unlimited Uses

I am seeking your approval for the XYZ Council of the Boy Scouts of America to use an illustration from page 34 of *Teaching Archery* (Doe, John. Teaching Archery, XYZ Press, 2000). The illustration depicts a young man stringing a bow. I've attached a photocopy to show the image to which I'm referring.

If you can grant the council permission for unlimited use of the illustration, we would use it in several ways: (1) I'd like to place it on the "outdoor skills" page of the XYZ Council's Web site (`http://www.xyz-bsa.org`). (2) Since some of our packs and troops use images from the council site, I hope it would also be acceptable for them to use this image as well. (3) We would like permission to use the photograph in a booklet on the outdoor skills areas of our council camp. The booklet will be given free of charge to our members. We will include an acknowledgement in the form you prefer with each use of the illustration and we will be happy to pay postage costs and reproduction costs, if any, for a print-quality copy of the drawing.