

# University of New England Information Technology Directorate

## UNE Web Forum and Blog Operating Procedure

### References:

Revision No: 1.0  
Approved By: Director, ITD  
Date Approved: 25th August 2006  
Author: Tim Cross  
Access Level: Public  
Last Reviewed: 25th August 2006

### Related Policies or Documents:

- Use of UNE Computing & Communications Facilities
- UNE Copyright Policy
- UNE Copyright & Take Down Notice Procedure
- UNE Computer Security Policy
- UNE Code of Conduct (Staff)
- UNE Rules of Conduct (Students)

## 1 Introduction

The University recognises that web based Forums and Blogs can provide an additional medium for communications and acknowledges that such media can provide a valuable alternative to other communication media, such as mail lists and normal web pages. Furthermore, web forums provide a convenient way to establish interactive community based communication which can help to foster cooperation, collaboration and discussion within the UNE community without exposing the University to the liabilities associated with other technologies, such as mail lists.

This document outlines the general operating procedures and principles associated with forum and blog services provided by the University. These procedures do not operate in isolation, but in conjunction with other UNE policies, procedures and guidelines (see "Related Policies or Documents" above).

## 2 Definitions

### 2.1 University Community

Staff, students and approved affiliates of the University of New England.

### 2.2 Account Holder

A member of the UNE community who has registered for access to UNE ICT systems.

### **2.3 Web Forum**

A web forum is a world wide web based application which allows users to post messages and read messages posted by other users.

### **2.4 Web Blog**

A web blog is an on-line journal application which allows the user to maintain a daily on-line log or diary. Blogs usually also support additional features, such as an RSS feed and access to items by date.

### **2.5 RSS Feeds**

RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. An RSS feed provides details concerning new items added to a web page or web blog. Users can access an RSS feed through the use of an RSS reader or abrogator. The RSS reader will notify the user of new items added to the web page or blog. This notification usually includes a subject and brief description.

## **3. Principles**

The University acknowledges that web forums and blogs provide a convenient, timely and environmentally aware means of distributing information and in the case of forums, provides a convenient platform for interaction and collaborative discussion.

The University's forum and blog infrastructure is a finite resource which has increasing demands placed on it. Therefore, priority will be given to the core University activities of teaching, learning, research and administration.

The University will place constraints on the use of forums and blogs to protect its legal position with respect to telecommunications, copyright, anti-discrimination and contractual law, to ensure the protection of privacy, comply with record keeping requirements and other University policies and state or federal legislation.

The University reserves the right to remove content from web forums or blogs which it feels represents a security threat to the UNE network or contravenes University rules, policy or procedures or is thought to be illegal.

## **4. Objectives**

This operating procedure outlines the conditions of use of the UNE's web forum and blog service. This service is provided to the UNE community in order to support its teaching, learning, research and administrative activities.

## **5. Scope**

This operating procedure applies to all members of the University community.

## **6. Guidelines**

6.1 This operating procedure will be implemented under the direction of the Director of ITD.

6.2 The operating procedure will be made publicly available and communicated to the University community.

6.3 This operating procedure is to be read in conjunction with the related policies and documents listed above, any other relevant University policy documents and relevant State and Federal legislation.

6.4. Changes to this operating procedure must be made in accordance with ITD's "Submission & Approvals Process for New & Amended Policy".

## **7. Web Forums**

Any officially recognised group of the UNE community can apply for a web forum. Applications need to be made to the Director, Information Technology Directorate or their nominee. Applications should include a description of what the forum will be used for, who will be eligible to post to the forum, who will be allowed to access the forum and the person who will be responsible for administering and monitoring the forum. All applications must be submitted in writing.

## **8. Web Blogs**

All academic staff are able to take advantage of the web blog service for the purposes of teaching and research. Staff need to apply in writing to the Director, Information Technology Directorate, or their nominee. Applications should include a brief description of what the blog will be used for and contact details for the applicant.

## **9. Legal Responsibilities**

Users of web forums and blogs must be aware that they are subject to the laws applying to other communications, including copyright, breach of confidence, privacy, defamation, harassment, anti-discrimination legislation, the creation of contractual obligation and criminal law.

## **10. Conditions of Use**

### **10.1 Status**

Neither web forums or blogs are seen as official communication channels for the University. However, because of their association with the University, all content posted to a forum or included in a blog must comply with University rules, policies, procedures and guidelines as well as any state or federal legislation. In particular, staff are required to comply with the University's code of conduct. Likewise, students are required to comply with the University's rules of conduct for students.

## **10.2 Forum and Blog Guidelines**

Two forums are administered by ITD, the UNE Discussion forum and the UNE For-Sale forum.

All users should read and follow the guidelines published on the ITD web site for these forums.

See <http://www.une.edu.au/itd/>.

## **10.3 Poster Identity**

Users of UNE's web forum service shall not post or attempt to post an message under a false

identity, whether actual or fictional.

## **10.4 Illegal Content**

Users of UNE's web forum and blog service must comply with EEO guideline and must not post libellous, defamatory, offensive, sexist, racist or obscene messages to a forum or blog.

# **11. Copyright and Take Down Notices**

Content posted to web forums and blogs must comply with UNE's copyright policy. The Information Technology directorate's procedures for handling take down notices and questions concerning copyright ownership of web content will also apply to web forums and blogs. The University reserves the right to remove any content, without notice, which has been associated with a take down notice or request to remove material which has questionable copyright status, until the status of the material in question can be established.

See the UNE Copyright policy at <http://www.une.edu.au/copyright/>

## **12. Penalties**

Penalties for failure to comply with the conditions of use are outlined in the Rules for the Use of UNE Computers and Communications Facilities.