

W308 –Opportunities and Challenges

- **Opportunities**—to use the internet and other technologies to better carry the message.
- **Challenges**—to understand how the traditions apply in this electronic world.

Some things to think about from your
Area 57 (Oklahoma State) Technologies Committee

Purpose is to get you thinking about the possibilities

And considering the traditions

Opportunities

Some things to think about:

- **Are my group, and I, making full use of aaoklahoma.org and other A.A. sites?**
 - Huge store of reference information on sobriety, steps, traditions, the AA Group, Sponsorship...
 - Are group events listed on the calendar?
 - Is my group's meeting schedule accurately listed in the online meeting database.
 - Online forms: Bridge the Gap Cards, DOC Application forms, Group Change forms.

- **Are my group and I making use of email and texting?**
 - Are emails included on the group phone list?
 - Use email or texting to send out notes or reminders to group members?

 - Area Newsletter and friendly, informative emails can be sent directly to any or all members of your group, not just the GSR. Just send your name, group, and email address to secretary@aaoklahoma.org to be added to the list.

- **Aware of the new electronic formats for AA Conference Approved and Grapevine literature?**
 - Now available in Kindle Nook and iPhone.
 - Big Book
 - Twelve and Twelve
 - Daily Reflections
 - Living Sober
 - Came To Believe

 - The Grapevine Magazine online subscriptions and in Audio (mp3) format.

 - How will your group react with someone reads from an iPhone Big Book at your meetings? When a newcomer chooses an electronic Big Book rather than a paper one?

- **Could a newcomer or out-of-town visitor find AA in your town using the internet?**
 - A new generation will look for AA on the internet, not in the phone book.
 - For Oklahoma City and Tulsa, an internet search turns up AA and meeting information readily.
 - For other cities, it would often be difficult. What about yours?

- Have you considered a website for your group, or for the groups in your community?
 - Simple information about AA in your town, to help someone find AA & meetings.
 - Can be created at little or no cost, and with no technical expertise.
 - Your Technologies Committee can help.
 - Use GSO guidelines and examples of other group sites.

Other sources and ways of carrying the message:

- **Accessibility, Long Distance meetings, Yahoo AA History Group, The e-AA Group**

Technology offers many ways of carrying the message and participating in an AA community

- The Washington area uses tablets to carry the message to nursing homes
- The e-AA group is growing via the aa-intergroup.org association with AA
- The AA Central Office in San Francisco has a committee called Intercounty Access Committee that has wonderful document geared toward technology resources available to AA members.

Opportunities (continued)

- **Do you know someone who could benefit from Online AA meetings?**
 - Useful for those who cannot make face to face meetings, or to pick up extra meetings any time of day or night.
 - A chance to sit in meetings with members from all around the U.S. and the world.
 - Over 100 listed at www.aa.intergroup.org.
 - Not a substitute for face to face meetings.
- **Other ideas:**
 - With Skype, your next speaker meeting could have a speaker in Japan, or Europe or anywhere else in the world! Think of the possibilities.
 - Free or low cost teleconferencing is now available. Think about where that might be useful.
 - What about social media like Facebook for carrying the message? Very limited possibilities. See challenges section below.
- **And what other ideas come to your mind?**
 - Discussion

Challenges

The Challenges in using technology to carry the message center on understanding how the traditions apply, particularly anonymity and non-affiliation.

Of special concern are the anonymity implications in our use of social media such as Facebook.

This is not to give rules to guide our technology use. This is to understand the principals involved so we can be aware of the implications and make our own judgment calls.

Principles on Anonymity

In any question of Anonymity, first distinguish

- *Anonymity at the Public Level (Tradition 11)*
 - Press, Radio, Films, TV
 - World Wide Web
 - Including social networking (Facebook etc.)
- *Personal Anonymity (Anonymity of the individual)*
 - All other situations and questions
 - Email , Texting, IM (and ftp, telnet,)

At the Public Level

- Tradition 11
“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need *always* maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.”
 - In general this means that if I am to identify myself as an AA member at the public level, I do not use my full name or face.
 - World Wide Web, including Facebook etc., is considered Public Level
 - So I do not identify myself or anyone else as an AA member on www, FB, Social Networking

At the Personal Level

- From “Understanding Anonymity”
“At the personal level, anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard often of special importance to newcomers.”
- In general this means:
 - **I** can choose whether or not to reveal my AA membership as I see fit.
 - **You** need to respect (and not assume) my choices in each situation.
 - And correspondingly, **I** need always respect (and not assume) your anonymity choices in each situation.
- Email, Texting (SMS, MMS), IM etc.: Personal Anonymity must be protected.
 - You can reveal your AA membership or not, as you decide.
 - But, be mindful of not revealing someone else’s AA membership, for example in a CC list.

Anonymity Online?

- With social networking technology, we have all become media publishers.
- We will need to be aware of the anonymity considerations
- We will need to make judgment calls based on our understanding of the principles involved.
 - When is our social networking posting at the public level, and when does personal anonymity apply.
 - How to apply the principles of anonymity in each post.
 - When to protect our own anonymity at the public level and personal levels.
 - To always be alert to protect the anonymity of others.

Some questions for discussion:

For each situation, is personal or public anonymity involved? What principles apply? How might it be handled differently?

1. The Into Action Group is celebrating their 10th anniversary. The flyer says for more information please contact John Doe @ 405-555-King.
2. Anne just posted a wall post on Jim's Facebook page "Happy Birthday 5 years Sober
3. "Stephanie is speaking at the How it Works Group, Let's say they are recording her AA talk and this group has a web page that routinely posts there speaker's talks on their web page. What are some ways that the group could help preserve Stephanie's Anonymity?
4. Michelle's Facebook Says "Just Checked In at the Unanimity Alano Club"
5. John a member has posted "I am Soberlicious "on his Facebook page.