Communications Charter

Australian Computer Society

01 November 2013

ACS Communications Charter

1.   Introduction

Consistent with the ACS brand, the Management Committee (MC) of the Australian Computer Society (ACS) has established this Communications Charter (the Charter) to develop organisational communications and media protocols and processes.

This Charter represents the ACS adopting best practice approaches for communications to ensure the organisation operates with one voice. Co-ordination of communications protocols and processes is necessary for the ACS to have consistent messaging internally, across the diverse audiences of the organisation, and externally among all ACS stakeholders.

2.   Objective

The Charter's objective is to:

- Establish media protocols and communication processes for publicly available messaging content;
- Establish spokespeople;
- Outline roles and responsibilities of spokespeople.

3.   Media theme direction

3.1   Media theme direction

The direction of overarching national ACS media themes and topics is determined by the ACS President in consultation with the ACS CEO.

3.2   The Office of the Chief Executive is responsible for:

- Managing inbound/outbound media contact and coordinating responses with appropriate ACS internal experts directly, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the response;
- Building relationships on behalf of the ACS with journalists and improving the quality of engagement between journalists and ACS spokespeople;
- Providing media training and interview coaching ahead of major interviews where required;
- Supporting consistency of those internal communications and member communications which could reasonably be expected to appear in the public domain, including communications, from branches, special interest groups and boards to membership.

4.   Message development

4.1   Message development process

- The ACS President as supported by the Office of the ACS CEO will develop the ACS's overarching national media themes for media commentary recognising that due to the nature of the media landscape, corporate official messages are continually refined;
- The Charter recognises that not all media enquiries or opportunities can be anticipated with ready-made messaging but that all media responses and statements by the ACS should be aligned to an endorsed set of policy positions with endorsed policy positions approved by the ACS President.
- In developing media themes, the ACS CEO will seek input from branches and boards on official message development via the regular operational meetings with Branch Managers and such other

management forums that are appropriate – for example a Branch Chairs Standing Committee meetings.

4.2   ACS message approvals

All ACS official media messages will be approved by either the:
- ACS President;
- ACS CEO;
- The Head of Policy and External Affairs;
- Branch Chairs where the media message is localised.

4.3   Authority of delegate

- The President or CEO will authorise delegate(s) to speak with media, and provide ACS comment on behalf of the ACS if required;
- ACS volunteers and staff can also request to be spokespeople
- Only authorised delegates are permitted to communicate with the media in representing the ACS, including official ACS social media channels.

5.   Spokespeople

5.1   Official ACS spokespeople

The only representatives who should speak to media on behalf of the ACS are, in order of priority, the:

- ACS President
- ACS CEO
- The ACS Head of Policy and External Affairs
- The ACS Media/Communications Manager
- ACS Branch Chairs on localised issues

5.2   Role and responsibility of spokesperson

- An ACS spokesperson is tasked to speak on behalf of the organisation to the media in line with a media plan or schedule approved by the President.

5.3   Media training of spokespeople

- All official ACS spokespeople must have participated in media training as arranged by the ACS CEO. This may occur as required, for example ahead of a media opportunity, or as requested.

6.   Approvals of Communications content

6.1   Approval of communications content can be made only by the:

- ACS President
- ACS CEO
- ACS Head of Policy and External Affairs
- ACS Branch Chairs

Communications content is defined by this Charter as:

- Media responses, statements, answers, releases, official messages and comments
- Social media content on official ACS social media platforms posted officially as ACS
- National member communications including marketing material

- ACS surveys to ACS members
- ACS marketing and branding material, including speeches at events of national significance
- Official correspondence to ACS stakeholders of national significance including policy statements and outputs
- ACS employee communications.
- To support the Charter, an annual list of events of national significance and stakeholders of national significance is maintained by the ACS CEO and distributed to Branches and internal ACS stakeholders at least quarterly for ongoing refinement.

7.   Branch generated member communications

- Branch communications to members do not require pre-approval, however, the responsibility for ensuring consistency of branch communications across the ACS is with the CEO or their delegate;
- Branch communications to members should refrain from making statements that could impact on ACS national policy discussions or programs, unless approved beforehand from the ACS CEO or ACS President. Great care should be taken in communicating with members and stakeholders to display professionalism, relevance and respect in support and alignment to the ACS values.

8.   Media enquiries and Contact

- All media enquiries are to be directed to the Head of Policy and External Affairs or the office of the CEO.
- Excluding the ACS President, ACS employees and volunteers (including Branch Executive members, Board members, Management Committee members, Congressional Representatives and Special Interest Group members) should politely and promptly refer any media inquiry to the Head of Policy and External Affairs or the office of the CEO.
- Recognising that some ACS members are also journalists, ACS membership services should seek to limit (avoid) interaction with members who are detailed in the ACS membership database as journalists.

9.   Media and communications monitoring

- The CEO is responsible for active communications monitoring
- Given the national reach of the ACS it is appreciated that that ACS branches monitor their local media via online alerts and other cost effective means. It is not expected that branches pay subscriptions to local or state media but this is at the discretion of the Branch Manager or Branch Chair
- Reporting of media enquiries, responses and activity is the responsibility of the ACS CEO as may be requested by MC in the course of normal MC reporting.

11.   Social Media

11.1   Management of ACS social media sites

- Official ACS social media sites are managed by the office of the Chief Executive or their delegate
- All requests for official ACS social media input or activity must be provided to the CEO or their delegate for approval.
- The ACS office of the CEO does not approve or filter social media input by members and volunteers but reserves the ability to remove messages from official ACS social media sites that may conflict with ACS values or that are deemed defamatory. In all cases where a message is subject to concern, the original poster will be contacted first to discuss the message and be first given the opportunity to remove it.

- The ACS Social Media strategy supports all ACS members and encourages them contribute to social media discussions and communities but in all cases ACS members should make clear that their contributions are as an ACS member or as an individual and members should not attempt to provide "official" ACS responses.
- Members should also note that when posting in social media they have a responsibility to act in accordance with the ACS values and code of ethics.