

Step #20: Protect Users and Members Privacy

In general, the “Terms of Use” and “Privacy Policy” statements are presented clearly and conspicuously, usually by a link at the bottom of the home page and About Us page, at a minimum, or a link at the bottom of each page. When users access this page, they learn what information you may collect from them, such as email addresses, let them choose how that information is used, how you will protect their personal information, and how you may use it if they give you permission. Always include a way for users to opt out of sharing any personal information but still have access to your site’s information. Listed below are the basic components of “Terms of Use” and “Privacy Policy” statements as well as links to examples of these from local United Methodist church websites and other non-profit organizations.

Terms of Use

The purpose of a “Terms of Use” statement for your website is to display clearly and concisely what your expectations are of the user. In general, these terms of use include:

- An agreement between the user and the website’s agent (local church)
- Recognition of changes to the “Terms of Use”
- Links to Third Party Sites
- Unlawful or Prohibited Use
- Use of Communication Services
- Liability Disclaimer
- Termination and/or Access Restriction
- Copyright and Trademark Notices

Visit these websites to view actual “Terms of Use” statements displayed on local United Methodist church websites and other non-profit organizations.

- [College Avenue United Methodist Church, Muncie IN](#)
- [Saint James United Methodist Church, Alpharetta GA](#) (PDF 96 KB)
- [West Des Moines United Methodist Church, Des Moines IA](#)

Privacy Policy

The purpose of the Privacy Policy is to state clearly and concisely how the website’s agent (local church) will protect any personal information collected from users of the website. The basic components of this statement are:

- Collection of Personal Information
- Use of Personal Information

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- Use of Cookies
- Security of Personal Information
- Change to the Privacy Policy Statement
- Contact Information

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- [Saint James United Methodist Church, Alpharetta GA](#) (PDF 96 KB)
- [Saint Mark United Methodist Church, Atlanta GA](#)
- [West Des Moines United Methodist Church, Des Moines IA](#)

NOTE: We recommend that you seek legal advice when crafting your own “Terms of Use” and “Privacy Policy” statements to be sure they are legally sound and that you understand your liability and responsibility.

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Protecting Children's Privacy

With regard to children, you must obtain parental permission before collecting any data from children. This includes:

- Providing parents with notice of your information practices
- Obtaining verifiable parental consent before collecting a child's personal information with limited exceptions
- Giving parents a choice of whether their child's information will be disclosed to third parties
- Providing parents access to their child's personal information and allowing them to review it and/or have it deleted
- Giving parents the opportunity to prevent further use or collection of information
- Not requiring a child to provide more information than is reasonably necessary to participate in an activity
- Maintaining the confidentiality, security, and integrity of information collected from children

To review the complete Federal guidelines, link to the [Children's Online Privacy Protection Act \(COPPA\)](#).

While this may seem like a lot to consider, it is essential to preserving the safety of children who use the Internet, and it is in direct compliance with our Church's commitment to providing Safe Sanctuaries for Children and Youth, which extends into cyberspace when your church becomes a part of the World Wide Web. Visit the General Board of Discipleship website for more information on [Safe Sanctuaries](#).

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Solutions to Eliminating Email Spiders (SPAM)

Email Spiders or SPAM search websites to detect email addresses by looking for the “@” symbol. To avoid having your email addresses pirated, take one or more of the following steps.

1. Encode the email address using obscuring text. For example, use this HTML text for info@firstumc.org

```
<ahref="&#109;&#97;&#105;&#108;&#116;&#111;:&#105;&#110;&#102;&#111;&#64;&#102;&#105;&#114;&#115;&#116;&#117;&#109;&#99;&#46;&#111;&#114;&#103;">&#105;&#110;&#102;&#111;&#64;&#102;&#105;&#114;&#115;&#116;&#117;&#109;&#99;&#46;&#111;&#114;&#103;</a>
```

Simply highlight the “info@firstumc.org” that appears in your HTML code and replace it with the lines of obscured text above. In the browser, it will appear as a regular email address hyperlink; but because it is obscured, it cannot be pirated by email spider programs.

To encode other email addresses, use one of the two “Obscuring Text” online programs listed below to convert text to encoded HTML.

2. Add a subject line, such as “Website Email,” to each email link by providing the additional HTML code as follows:

```
<ahref="&#109;&#97;&#105;&#108;&#116;&#111;:&#105;&#110;&#102;&#111;&#64;&#102;&#105;&#114;&#115;&#116;&#117;&#109;&#99;&#46;&#111;&#114;&#103;?subject=&#87;&#101;&#98;&#115;&#105;&#116;&#101;&#32;&#69;&#109;&#97;&#105;&#108;" title=""></a>
```

By adding a subject line, which automatically pastes into any email coming from your website email hyperlink, you will immediately be able to identify the source of these emails versus SPAM or email spiders. Note: “Website Email” can be changed to any identifier you choose; however, while spaces between words is acceptable, do not include any other symbols, dashes, etc. Use only alphanumeric symbols (letters and/or numbers).

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3. Use JavaScript to protect your email addresses. The JavaScript for info@firstumc.org would be:

```
<p>You can contact our Church Office here:  
<script language="javascript"> <!--  
user = "info";  
site = "firstumc.org";  
document.write('<a href="mailto:' + user + '@' + site + '">');  
document.write(user + '@' + site + '</a>');  
//-->  
</script>
```

Note: The phrase on line one, "You can contact our Church Office here:" can be changed to any appropriate message, such as "Contact Us:", as "Contact Us:", etc.

4. Cloak the email address altogether by:
 - a. Embedding the hyperlink into a "Contact Us" instead of listing the actual email address. For example, instead of "Send an email to: info@firstumc.org" simply attach the hyperlink to the words "Contact Us."
 - b. Representing the email address as a graphic. While this is the only 100% safeguard against email spiders (SPAM), it requires that the user actually type your email address into his/her email program. The graphic is not a hyperlink; however, it could be by using the same steps as letter "a" above.

Basic Information and Prevention:

- [Codeode](#)
- Net Mechanic, "[Hide from Spiders](#)" and "[More Useless MAILTO Links](#)"
- [Online Tutorials](#)
- [SPAM Links](#)
- [Federal Trade Commission](#)

Obscuring Text:

- [About.com](#)
- [Enigma](#)

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Sample Media Release Form #1

I, _____, do hereby give (insert name of church), its assigns, licensees, and legal representatives the irrevocable right to use my picture, portrait or photograph in all forms media and in all manner, for the advertising, trade or in any other lawful purpose for the exclusive benefit of (insert name of church).

I hereby forever waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product, including but not limited to, written copy and/or image in print or in electronic form, including posting on the church's website, which may be created in connection therewith.

I am eighteen (18) years of age or older. I understand that (insert name of church) cannot control the unauthorized use by persons other than (insert name of church) of my image once such image is published. Any claim I may have concerning unauthorized publication of my image must be pursued by me against the unauthorized user. (Insert name of church) disclaims any responsibility for such unauthorized use of my published image. I have had sufficient time to review and seek explanation of the provisions contained above. I have carefully read and understand this Release and Waiver, and I agree to be bound by it. I voluntarily and irrevocably give my consent and agree to this Release and Waiver.

Executed this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Printed Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Signature _____

Witness _____

Note: If named person is under the age of 18, his/her parent or legal guardian must sign the following

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Consent Form (continued on next page).

Sample Addendum to Media Release Form #1

Parental Consent for Minors (under age 18)

I, _____, am the parent or legal guardian of the person listed above. I have read and understand the provisions of this document. I consent to this person participating as described above, and I fully enter into and agree to the above Release and Waiver and forever waive any rights therefrom.

Printed Name: _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Signature _____

Witness _____

NOTE: We recommend that you seek legal advice when crafting your own release forms to be sure they are legally sound and that you understand your liability and responsibility.

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Sample Media Release Form #2

I, _____, grant permission to (insert church name) and its subordinates, to use my name and/or photographs for use in (insert church name) publications such as recruiting brochures, newsletters, and magazines, and to use my name/and or photographs on display boards, and to use my name and/or photographs in electronic versions of the same publications or on the (insert church name) website or other electronic forms or media.

I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve the finished photographs or printed or electronic matter that may be used in conjunction with them now or in the future, whether that use is known to me or unknown, and I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising from or related to the use of the photograph.

I hereby agree to release, defend, and hold harmless (insert church name) and subordinates, including any firm publishing and/or distributing the finished product in whole or in part, whether on paper or via electronic media, from and against any claims, damages or liability arising from or related to the use of the photographs, including but not limited to any misuse, distortion, blurring, alteration, optical illusion or use in composite form, either intentionally or otherwise, that may occur or be produced in taking, processing, reduction or production of the finished product, its publication or distribution.

Please check one of the following:

____ I am 18 years of age or older and I am competent to contract in my own name. I have read this release before signing below, and I fully understand the contents, meaning, and impact of this release. I understand that I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release by submitting those questions in writing prior to signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

____ I am the parent or legal guardian of the above named child. I have read this release before signing below, and I fully understand the contents, meaning and impact of this release. I understand that I am free to address any specific questions regarding this release by submitting those questions in writing prior to signing, and I agree that my failure to do so will be interpreted as a free and knowledgeable acceptance of the terms of this release.

continued on the next page

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Executed this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

Signature of self *(if 18 years of age or older)* _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian *(if named is under 18 years of age)* _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____ Email _____

Witness _____

NOTE: We recommend that you seek legal advice when crafting your own release forms to be sure they are legally sound and that you understand your liability and responsibility.