

IAAO Communications Practices

Chris Bennett

Members of IAAO have access to many communications and networking-related benefits, including *Fair & Equitable* (F&E), *Journal of Property Tax Assessment & Administration*, the Web site, AssessorNET discussion group, and broadcast E-news about IAAO events and opportunities. They also have access to informal communication channels using social media platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn. Each communication medium has a specific purpose that helps members to communicate in ways that are best suited to different learning, networking, and information needs:

- AssessorNET allows participants to get answers to questions quickly and informally.
- IAAO E-news and the Web site are invaluable resources to learn about almost every aspect of IAAO and the resources that it offers. E-news sends timely information in limited doses to members that wish to receive it. The Web site provides more extensive information that is always available when members choose to access it.
- *Journal of Property Tax Assessment & Administration* provides high-quality, peer-reviewed content from qualified academics and practitioners around the world. As a reference tool it keeps its value for many years and becomes a welcome addition to personal libraries.
- *Fair & Equitable* is one of the best ways for members to access thought-provoking articles on current topics of interest and also current news at local and international levels.
- Social media tools, such as Facebook and LinkedIn provide a presence and identity for IAAO on public social media sites. Online communities are becoming increasingly popular as people find innovative ways to use them. They are yet another way for IAAO members to interact and communicate in a way that is comfortable for them.

IAAO communication tools are popular because they reflect the varied needs and interests of its members. They are distinct and separate from IAAO organizational documents that define official policies and practices.

Communications Practices and *Fair & Equitable*

IAAO encourages the open and transparent exchange of ideas through its publications. The primary purpose of F&E is to inform readers of ideas, opinions, developments, and key issues in assessment administration and related disciplines. It is a primary forum for current topics of interest that are changing, new, or controversial. It is where members can speak out, express new ideas, or offer better alternatives and solutions. The magazine is a place where all sides of a story may be read so that members can make informed independent judgments and develop their own opinions.

As you read through F&E, you may notice a disclaimer at the beginning of each article and on the Table of Contents page:

The statements made or opinions expressed by authors in Fair & Equitable do not necessarily represent a policy position of the International Association of Assessing Officers.

This disclaimer is important because it notifies readers that each article is the author's opinion and it is subject to discussion and disagreement by readers. While many readers may agree with the content of a well-reasoned article, it does not mean that the article has any bearing on IAAO or its policies and practices. IAAO makes every reasonable effort to verify basic facts in articles that it publishes but the final responsibility for the content and opinions resides with the author. IAAO is proud of the expertise of its members and author/contributors. F&E is one way to share that expertise. Each author is free to present ideas that members can share, comment on, and assimilate into daily practice as they see fit.

Letters to the Editor

IAAO encourages F&E readers to submit letters to the editor offering fair comment on articles that have been published. This approach provides an informal, open, peer review of ideas and concepts in a forum that stimulates further discussion and sharing of information. This method of peer review and comment for F&E is relatively casual in contrast to the journal, where peer review is a confidential double-blind process, which is completed prior to publication. Articles in the journal tend to be more fully developed and academically robust. Letters to the editor are also accepted in the journal, but they are not used as part of the peer review process.

Copyright

In general, when an article is submitted to IAAO for publication in F&E, nonexclusive rights to publish it belong to IAAO. This approach is beneficial to authors as IAAO does not retain exclusive rights and the author retains the right to use the content for his or her own purposes as long as it does not contradict the goals and mission of IAAO. This allows IAAO to provide reprint permissions to local chapters, industry newsletters, and other publication outlets that can disseminate the information beyond the general association membership. This helps authors to gain public recognition as experts in the industry. IAAO does not provide reprint permissions to groups that wish to use articles for commercial gain or as a proprietary knowledgebase or other resource to their clients. Journal authors are required to sign a letter of agreement and copyright assignment prior to publication to ensure that IAAO can distribute its articles through online catalog services. F&E authors are generally not required to sign a copyright assignment form unless specific permissions issues are being considered.

It is important to request permission before reprinting articles that have been published by IAAO. This protects the authors, IAAO, and the requesting party from unintentional

copyright violation by clarifying the terms of republication. IAAO adheres to fairly liberal reprint practices that are intended to provide maximum recognition to authors and to IAAO as the original publisher.

Occasionally there is additional language in an article disclaimer having to do with acknowledging previously printed materials and/or additional author or publisher rights issues. In some instances, an author, previous publisher, or other rights-holder prefers to limit rights to their article. If this is the case, then IAAO will still consider publishing the article, but will require the author to provide a reprint-permission letter. Reprints are identified with a disclaimer that fully acknowledges the original publication or presentation.

Official IAAO Documents

IAAO creates and maintains official documents such as its constitution, bylaws, and procedural rules. These documents represent official policy statements of the organization that determine how the organization is governed.

In addition, IAAO publishes official policy documents in the form of technical standards. They are developed by the

Technical Standards Committee, and subsequently exposed to IAAO members for a minimum of thirty days prior to review and approval by the Executive Board. Standards documents are identified as official by the following disclaimer:

International Association of Assessing Officers

The assessment standards set forth herein represent a consensus in the assessing profession and have been adopted by the Executive Board of the International Association of Assessing Officers. The objective of these standards is to provide a systematic means by which concerned assessing officers can improve and standardize the operation of their offices. The standards presented here are advisory in nature and the use of or compliance with such standards is purely voluntary. If any portion of these standards is found to be in conflict with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) or state laws, USPAP and state laws shall govern.

Occasionally, IAAO will also publish white papers on various topics of interest to its members. These may be written by various committees and/or individuals that are operating under the auspices and

direction of the Executive Board. These papers go through a stringent process of committee review and development and Executive Board approval to ensure that they are of the highest quality and reflect a reasonable consensus of thought from IAAO members and leadership. All official documents are published in accordance with the IAAO Constitution, Bylaws, and Procedural Rules.

Summary

What does all of this mean to the average IAAO member? IAAO communications practices allow it to share articles, presentations, discussion threads, and other information of value to members and at the same time keep them separate from official policies and practices that are necessary and required to run a non-profit organization. It is important for readers to be able to distinguish between authoritative documents and expressions of opinion. Both are important to a thriving and productive professional organization. ■

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Do you have an appraisal or assessment topic that would be of interest to IAAO members? Share your ideas with other members and get published. Visit www.iaao.org, go to the Publications menu, and download the author guidelines today. Send articles to: bennett@iaao.org. Please include Call for Articles in the subject line and provide contact information.

In 1988, the GPS Revolution was spurred by the "Manpack GPS Receiver," the pinnacle of geospatial style and technology.



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