



**CabinetOffice**

# Participation online

Guidance for civil servants

June 2008

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**Making  
government  
work better**

## Principles for participation online

### 1. Be credible

Be accurate, fair, thorough and transparent.

### 2. Be consistent

Encourage constructive criticism and deliberation. Be cordial, honest and professional at all times.

### 3. Be responsive

When you gain insight, share it where appropriate.

### 4. Be integrated

Wherever possible, align online participation with other offline communications.

### 5. Be a civil servant

Remember that you are an ambassador for your organisation. Wherever possible, disclose your position as a representative of your department or agency.

### How the Civil Service Code applies to online participation

The Civil Service Code applies to your participation online as a civil servant or when discussing government business. You should participate in the same way as you would with other media or public forums such as speaking at conferences.

Disclose your position as a representative of your department or agency unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as a potential threat to personal security. Never give out personal details like home address and phone numbers.

Always remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Stay within the legal framework and be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply. This means that you should not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of Government unless you are authorised to do so. This authority may already be delegated or may be explicitly granted depending on your organisation.

Also be aware that this may attract media interest in you as an individual, so proceed with care whether you are participating in an official or a personal capacity. If you have any doubts, take advice from your line manager.

The Civil Service Code can be viewed at

<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/iam/codes/cscode/index.asp>.