

Geological Society of America
Communications & Marketing Policy Statement
Social media at the Annual Meeting
August 2009

- Blogging, twittering, and discussing science online from the GSA Annual Meeting does not violate our conference policies. Current restrictions on photos and recording devices in tech session rooms and the absence of Wi-Fi in technical sessions are (and have been) in place to curtail activities that could be distracting to speakers during their presentations. GSA does not, however, attempt to manage online discussions of science occurring at and around the annual meeting. Abstracts are already published online in advance of the meeting, and we expect that public discussion/debate will follow.
- GSA press releases are selected and written to highlight work that may be of interest to the general public, the local community, or the science press, but in no way are intended to be the only content suitable for discussion from the meeting. Note: Permission to generate publicity via press release is always obtained from the author(s).
- Our posted policy states that “media credentials entitle journalists and public information officers (PIOs) from geoscience-related organizations to access all scientific sessions and the exhibition area, as well as the Newsroom and events specifically for media representatives.” In other words, members of the media have access to GSA’s assistance in facilitating their reporting, not GSA’s “permission” to report/discuss subjects or not.
- GSA asks that members of the media discuss research of interest with the authors before publishing stories on their work. This is a professional courtesy and a means to help ensure that authors’ works are accurately represented and cited. If a blogger receives complimentary media registration to “report” on the meeting, then GSA would expect adherence to this same professional ethical standard. If, however, bloggers are attending the meeting at their own expense, expressing their own opinions, observations, and reactions, and not representing themselves as professional journalists, then it follows that GSA does not/cannot require that dialogue among meeting participants.
- No presenters at the meeting may attend for free under the guise of being a member of the media. If a blogger wants to seek media credentials, he/she should preregister for the meeting, according to the instructions on the media registration page of the meeting Web site. All complimentary media registrations are approved on a case-by-case basis, and bloggers should verify that they are not attending as a presenter, clearly state their affiliation with an online outlet (if any) and include links to their relevant blog posts.