



62 Patrick Way
Half Moon Bay
California, 94019
tel: 650-712-4487
fax: 650-712-7260

National Association of Bar Executives
Policy Issues Around Self-Forming Member Communities
February 8, 2006
11:30 – 12:30
Program

1. What are self-forming member communities?

- Listservers
- Blogs
- Web sites
- Pod casts
- Rump groups

The characteristics of self-forming member communities are that they are formed by members with or without association involvement and that participation is self-selecting. Associations need to decide whether to enable the formation of these groups or discourage them. Both decisions are fraught with some danger to the association.

Lincoln Mead, Utah State Bar Association will conduct a tour of various tools for self-forming communities.

2. Control

Associations need to adopt policies about the amount of control they will exert around communities formed in the name of the association. The presenters will give personal examples of attempts by associations to have a high level of control of communities, and of attempts to enable the formation of those communities.

3. Legal Issues and Civility

Association communities raise the potential for legal issues such as violations of antitrust law, copyright law, and libel and slander. What rules should be established to protect the association? How should they be enforced? What are the implications of moderating, or not moderating the communities?

4. Privacy

There are competing values inherent in the idea of self-forming communities? How will word of them spread? Will members' privacy rights be respected in a way that still allows those members who are interested to self-select into the communities without becoming a spam problem for those who do not.