

Glossary of Social Media Terms

Expert knowledge means success

Contents

- 1. Introduction
- 1. Social Media Terms Glossary
- 9. Further Information

Note: This publication has not been updated since it was last published. Some of the hyperlinks may have changed and may need updating. In addition, some of the information in this publication may be out of date.

Introduction

In this publication, we provide an explanation of terms used in connection with social media.

The glossary is intended to help you to understand the “jargon” which is used in connection with social networking websites and related media.

Social Media Terms Glossary

- **Address, web page**
The specific location of one single Web page on the Internet. A Web page address is a unique combination of letters, numbers, and symbols that identifies one single HTML file within a larger Web site.
- **Address, web site**
The specific location of a Web site on the Internet. A Web site address is a unique combination of letters, numbers, and symbols that identifies a collection of HTML files that are collectively referred to as a Web site. For example, if you wanted to see the Web site for Concentric Network, you would type the following into your browser:
`http://www.concentric.net.`
- **Adsense**
Google’s pay-per-click, context-relevant program available to blog and web publishers as a way to create revenue.
- **Adwords**
The advertiser program that populates the Adsense program. The advertiser pays Google on a per click basis.
- **Aggregation**
Aggregation is the process of gathering and re-mixing content from blogs and other websites, typically via RSS feeds, for example by republishing all the news related to a particular keyword. The results may be displayed in an aggregator website like Bloglines or Google Reader, or directly on your desktop. See Newsreader.
- **Akismet**
A comment spam filter popular with WordPress blogs.
- **Alert**
Search engines allow you to specify words, phrases or tags that you want checked periodically. Where a search produces a result, an ‘alert’ is created and the results of those searches are returned to you, usually by e-mail. You may also be able to read the searches by RSS feed. This form of search allows you to check whether you, your organisation, your blog or blog item has been mentioned elsewhere, and so to respond if you wish.
- **Anonoblog**
A blog authored by a person or persons who wish to remain anonymous.
- **App**
Popularised in the general lexicon by the iPhone, an app is simply an application that performs a specific function on your computer or handheld device. Apps run the gamut from Web browsers and games to specialized programs like digital recorders, online chat or music players.
- **Application Programming Interface (API)**
A functional interface that enables data to be requested and exchanged.
- **Archive**
Content from a blog or online discussion that has been closed but saved for later reference. On blogs, they are typically archived by week or month. You may still be able to comment on archived items.
- **AstroTurfing**
The disguising of an orchestrated campaign as spontaneous interest in a product, service, or idea. The writer of a positive post or comment is often motivated by a fee or gift.
- **Asynchronous**
Asynchronous communications are communications that can be sent at any time without synchronous communication with a receiving device. Examples of asynchronous communication are e-mail lists, bulletin boards and forums.
- **Atom**
A popular feed format used for syndicating content, similar to RSS.
- **Audioboo**
AudioBoo is a website and iPhone OS application designed to allow users to post and share sound files on the AudioBoo website.
- **Authentication**
A function to check the authenticity of a user, for example using tools such as OpenID and passwords to log in.
- **Authenticity**
Authenticity is the sense that a user is “real”. **Blogs enable people to publish** content, and engage in conversations, that show their interests and values, and so help them develop an authentic online presence.
- **Avatar**
A graphical representation of an individual that replaces a photo of an

author of the content on a blog or other social media. It may or may not be an authentic representation.

- **Back channel**
A private communication sent by the facilitator or between individuals during public conferencing.
- **Badge**
An image, often squared and displayed on a blog or other social media which indicates participation in an event, contest, or social movement.
- **Bebo**
A popular social networking website.
- **Blog (or Bloggs)** - Originally short for "weblog", a blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger". Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog.
- **Blogosphere**
Blogosphere is a collective term encompassing all blogs and their interconnections.
- **Blogroll**
A list of recommended sites that appears in the sidebar of a blog. These sites are typically sites that are either on similar topics, sites that the blogger reads regularly, or sites that belong to the blogger's friends or colleagues.
- **Boo**
A digital recording posted on AudioBoo.
- **Bookmark**
A saved link to a web page kept with a list of other saved links. Also called Favourites in Internet Explorer as they're usually your favourite web pages.
- **Bookmarking**
The saving of a website address or content, either in your browser, or on a social bookmarking site. If you add tags, other users can share your research too so the social bookmarking site becomes a public library.
- **Browser**
The local application you use to connect to an Internet server, typically to view websites. It interprets and displays HTML encoded documents in graphic format. Browsers have become the central tool for using social media as more and more tools previously used on desktops are becoming free online.
BT Tradespace
A Profile/market building network.
- **Bulletin Board System (BBS)**
A computerised meeting system. BBS users can have discussions, make announcements, and upload or download files. There are thousands of BBSs around the world; many of them rely on a direct modem-to-modem

connection over a phone line, using a single computer.

- **Burying**
Voting a story down on a social news website.
- **Canvas**
The screen area that an application can use to serve content and features within a social network.
- **Categories**
Categories specify how to organise content - for example, they can be a set of keywords that you can use but not add to when posting on a site. They form part of a taxonomy.
- **Champions**
Enthusiasts who are willing and confident to initiate conversations by posting messages, responding, and helping others.
- **Chat**
A method of communication over the Internet in which information is being relayed in real time like a conversation, only words are being typed, not spoken.
- **Click through rate**
Percentage of users who click on a viewed advertisement. This is a good indication of the effectiveness of a web ad.
- **Cluster**
Groupings of content with similar tags.
- **Collaboration**
Collaboration occurs where social networkers communicate with each other across boundaries of organisation, time and space, often sharing and building information. The tools to achieve this include e-mail, blogs, web-based workspaces with messaging, file storage, calendars and other tools.
- **Collective Intelligence**
Collective intelligence is a shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration and competition of many individuals and appears in consensus decision making in bacteria, animals, humans and computer networks.
- **Comments**
Most blogs facilitate readers adding comments to posts and may also provide a feed for comments so users can keep current with conversations without having to revisit the site to check whether anything has been added.
- **Communities**
Online communities are groups of people communicating mainly through the Internet often using e-mail lists or forums, where content is centralised. Communities may also emerge from conversations around or between bloggers. List or forum-based

communities can be difficult to join up with blog-based communities because of the different ways they operate technically.

- **Community building**
Community building is the process of recruiting participants, helping them to find shared interests and goals, use the technology, and develop useful conversations.
- **Conference**
An online 'meeting' for consultation or exchange of information or discussion. An online conference takes place in a forum.
- **Content Management System (CMS)**
A system used to manage the content of a website or intranet. Typically, a CMS facilitates amendment and addition of information and content to a website using a set of templates without the need for specialist knowledge of HTML or other web-authoring software. They are used to create static web pages, document stores, blog, wikis, and other tools.
- **Content**
Content includes text, graphics, video and any other meaningful material on the Internet.
- **Context ads**
Adverts placed directly inside or next to relevant content or features.
- **Conversation**
Conversation is the exchange of information through blogging, commenting, contributing to forums or some other use of social media.
- **Cookie**
A collection of information, usually including a username and the current date and time, stored on the local computer of a person using the World Wide Web, used chiefly by web sites to identify users who have previously registered or visited the site.
- **Copyright**
Sharing through social media is enhanced by attaching a Creative Commons license specifying, for example, that content may be re-used with attribution, provided that a similar license is then attached by the new author. The Creative Commons site at www.creativecommons.org offers different licenses. One frequently used is Attribution-ShareAlike, whereby you can alter and re-use the content provided you then add the same license.
- **Crowdsourcing**
Harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of those outside an organisation who are prepared to volunteer their time contributing content and solving problems.
- **Cyberspace**
Cyberspace has been widely used as a general term for the Internet or World Wide Web. More recently blogosphere has emerged as a term for interconnected blogs.
- **Dashboard**
The administration area on blog software that allows a user to post, check traffic, upload files, manage comments, etc.
- **Delicious (del.icio.us)**
A social bookmarking site and a property of Yahoo! which allows users to quickly store, organize (by tags) and share favourite web pages. Users can also subscribe to RSS feeds of other users and share a page specifically with another user.
- **Democracy**
Social networking and media are potentially attractive to those who want to revive representative democracy, and those who promote participative approaches, or both. Social media offers politicians and their constituents another communication channel. It also offers a wide range of methods for people to discuss, deliberate and take action.
- **Digg**
A social news website where users can discover, share and recommend content from anywhere on the web.
- **Digging**
Voting a story up on a social news website.
- **Digital storytelling**
A digital story is a non-fiction narrative, composed on a computer, often for publishing online or publishing to a DVD. This can be done with any combination of images, video, music and text.
- **Domain Name - The specific address of a computer on the Internet - (see Web Page Address).** A domain name is a combination of the top- and second-level domains. This combination uniquely identifies one computer on the Internet.
- **Dooxed**
Getting fired for contributing content (usually defamatory) in a blog post or web site. From the popular site, Dooxed (by an author who apparently once vented about her company - and got fired because of what was written).
- **Download**
To copy a file from a computer (server) on the Internet to your personal computer.
- **Dynamic Content**
This is content that is constantly changing. Videos and animations are examples of dynamic content.

Glossary of Social Media Terms

- **Ecademy**
A business oriented networking site.
- **Ecto**
A stand-alone publishing application, allowing users to compose posts offline.
- **Edublog**
An educational blog site.
- **Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)**
The leading civil liberties group defending internet users' rights in the digital world.
- **E-mail (or Email) Address** - The specific location of a person's electronic mailbox on the Internet. An e-mail address typically consists of a variation of the person's name followed by the @ symbol followed by the domain name of the service on which the electronic mailbox is stored (example user@bizezia.com). E-mail addresses are usually all lowercase letters.
- **E-mail lists**
E-mail lists, or groups, are important social networking tools that allow a message from an individual or a central postbox to be sent to any number of subscribers to the group and for those subscribers to respond.
- **Engagement Ad**
A display advert that includes interactivity specific to a particular social network. **For example:** "Your friend Jane became a fan of British Gymnastics. **Become a fan.**"
- **Entry**
An individual post or article published on a blog. It may include pictures or embedded videos and links URLs for online sources used.
- **Eye rest**
Using images, bold text, bullet points, lists, hyperlinks etc to give a reader a rest from reading text.
- **Facebook**
A popular social networking website.
- **Facebook Places**
A location-specific application service. It is aimed at smartphone users, and is designed with several goals in mind, the primary one being to allow people to share their current location to their social network, as well as see which of their friends are in their vicinity. See also Foursquare, Yelp and Gowalla.
- **Face-to-face (f2f)**
People meeting offline.
- **Facilitator**
Someone who helps people in an online group or forum manage their conversations. They may help agree a set of rules, draw out topics for discussion, gently keep people on topic, and summarise.
- **Favorites**
Another term for bookmarks used by web browsers. A saved link to a favourite web page.
- **Feed reader**
A content aggregator subscribed to by the user, so that specific content or search results arrives in their "reader". Among the popular (and free) tools are GreatNews, Feed Demon and Google Reader.
- **Feed**
Feeds are the means by which you can read, view or listen to items from blogs and other RSS-enabled sites without visiting the site, by subscribing and using an aggregator or newsreader. Feeds contain the content of an item and any associated tags without the design or structure of a web page.
- **FeedBurner**
A Google tool that allows web sites, blogs and podcasts to convert feed content into other formats for readers to subscribe to (including e-mail).
- **Findability**
Being locatable and navigable presence on and across the web and social networking.
- **Flickr**
A free image and video hosting website. In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository.
- **Folksonomy**
Collective indexing by use of tags, labels or keywords by the consumers of the content. The tagging system of Flickr or Delicious are examples of this social indexing.
- **Forums**
Discussion areas on websites, where people can post messages or comment on existing messages. Forum discussions often differ from blogs in that they happen in one place, and so can be managed and facilitated in ways that blog conversations can't because these are happening in many different places controlled by their authors.
- **Foursquare**
Another location-specific application. It is a web and mobile application that allows registered users to connect with friends and update their location. Points are awarded for "checking in" at venues. See also Gowalla, Facebook Places and Yelp.
- **Friends**
Contacts on social networking sites whose profile you link to in your profile.
- **Ghost Twitterer**
Very similar to ghost writing, ghost twitterer is someone sending out tweets in the name of someone else. It is often alleged that celebs use ghost twittering to continuously send out tweets to their followers.

Glossary of Social Media Terms

- **Gowalla**
Another location-specific application. Checking in with Gowalla on your smartphone enables you to “stamp” a Gowalla Passport at each place you visit. See also Foursquare, Facebook Places and Yelp.
- **Groundswell**
A social trend in which people use technologies to get the things they need from each other, rather than from traditional institutions like corporations.
- **Groups**
Groups are collections of individuals with some sense of unity through their activities, interests or values. They differ from networks, which are dispersed, and defined by nodes and connections. A group may use a blog, and an e-mail list may serve a network.
- **Hat tip (H/T)**
A hat tip is a public acknowledgment to someone (or a website) for bringing something **to the blogger’s attention**.
- **Hit**
Every request made to a server for data. In one web page, there could be several graphics embedded in it, each of which could give rise to a hit.
- **Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML)**
The language used to create most web pages, with commands that create effects like bold, underline, paragraph spacing, etc.
- **Hyperlink**
A navigational reference to another document or page on the World Wide Web. These links are usually represented by highlighted words or images.
- **Hypertext**
Computer documents that contain links embedded in text or graphics. Hypertext links display related information when you click on them.
- **Instant Messaging**
A way of chatting in real time one-to-one by typing short messages. Popular Instant Messaging programs are ICQ, MSN Messenger and Yahoo! Messenger. The tools allow you to indicate whether or not you are available for a chat, and if so can be a good alternative to e-mails for a rapid exchange.
- **Internet**
A public interconnection of various computer networks around the world. Millions of computers around the world are connected to thousands of different computer networks. These different computer networks are all connected together at network access points around the world. The Internet is the sum of all these networks connected together. Anyone can join this network and from their computer send and receive information anywhere in the world 24 hours a day.
- **Internet Service Provider (ISP)**
A company that provides its customers with access to the Internet. Some ISPs also offer a number of e-mail addresses and web space on which customers can house their own websites.
- **iStockphoto**
An online, royalty free, international provider of photos, illustrations, video, audio and Flash files
- **KickApps**
An online platform for building social networks.
- **Kwigg**
An online platform for building social networks.
- **LinkedIn**
A business oriented networking site.
- **Links**
See Hyperlinks.
- **Listening**
Listening in the blogosphere includes skimming feeds to see what topics are being discussed and setting up searches that monitor when defined keywords are mentioned.
- **Logging in**
Gaining access to a website that restricts access to content and requires registration. This usually involves typing in a username and password.
- **Lurkers**
People who read but don’t contribute or add comments to forums.
- **Mashups**
A web service or software tool that combines two or more tools to create a new service; often a web application that combines data from more than one source into a single tool.
- **Membership**
Membership involves belonging to a group. Networking can offer some of the benefits of group membership, without the need for as much central co-ordination. A rise in networking may present challenges for organisations that depend on membership for funds or to demonstrate their credibility.
- **Meme**
A media gene: a piece of passed-on cultural information.
- **Micro-blogging**
A form of blogging allowing users to compose limited text updates and publish them, as on Twitter. These messages can be submitted and received by a variety of means and devices, including text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail, mobile device, MP3 or the web.
- **Moblog** - A Blog published directly to the web from a phone or other mobile device. The word is short for mobile blogging. Moblogging refers to posting

Blog updates from a mobile device (e.g. mobile phone or pda).

- **MySpace**
A popular social networking website.
- **Network 2012**
A Profile/market building network.
- **Networks**
Networks are structures defined by nodes and the connections between them. In social networks the nodes are people, and the connections are the relationships that they have.
- **Networking**
Networking is the process of initiating and developing relationships.
- **Newsreader**
A newsreader gathers content from blogs and similar sites using RSS feeds so you can read the content in one place, instead of having to visit different sites. Online newsreaders (like Bloglines, Pluck, or Newsgator) are web sites that let you read RSS feeds from within your web browser. Desktop newsreaders download the news to your computer, and let you read your news inside a dedicated software program.
- **Newsvine**
An open-source community news service which lets members customise the news viewed by "seeding" articles or posting for others to view and rate.
- **Ning**
An online platform for building social networks.
- **Offline**
Offline means not online, that is, not connected to the Internet or not logged in to a service.
- **Online**
Online means being connected to the Internet, and also being available for reading or producing content.
- **Open ID**
A technology for sharing identity across different web sites.
- **OpenSocial**
A technology for deploying the same application across multiple platforms.
- **Open Source Software**
Open Source Software is software for which the underlying programming code is available to the users so that they may read it, make changes to it, and build new versions of the software incorporating their changes. There are many types of Open Source Software, mainly differing in the licensing term under which (altered) copies of the source code may (or must be) redistributed.
- **Peer-to-peer (p2p)**
Direct interaction between two people in a network. In that network, each peer will be connected to other peers, opening the opportunity for further sharing and learning.
- **Permalink** - The address (URL) of an item of content, for example a Blog post, rather than the address of a web page with lots of different items.
- **Photoblog**
A type of blog that allows users to share photos.
- **Photosharing**
Sharing images on a website like Flickr. You can add tags and offer people the opportunity to comment or even re-use your photos if you add an appropriate copyright license.
- **Platform**
The framework or system within which tools work. That platform may be as broad as mobile telephony, or as narrow as a piece of software that has different modules like blogs, forums, and wikis in a suite of tools. As more and more tools operate on the web, rather than on your desktop, people refer to the Internet as the platform.
- **Plaxo**
A business oriented networking site.
- **Podcast**
A podcast is audio or video content that can be downloaded to a website, an mp3 player, a desktop computer, or many other portable media players so you can view or listen offline. Podcasts are often updated weekly or daily.
- **Post**
A post is content contributed to a blog or forum or other form of social media. To post is to contribute that content.
- **Presence**
Online Presence refers to being easy to find online. This could be because you can be easily found in a search engine or because you use tools that show you are available for contact by instant messaging, voice over IP, or other synchronous methods of communication.
- **Privacy settings**
The ability to limit social content by network or friend lists.
- **Profiles**
The information that you provide about yourself when signing up for a social networking site. As well as a picture and basic information, this may include your personal and business interests and tags to help people search for like-minded people.
- **Registration**
The process of providing a username, password and other details when seeking to access a website that has restricted access.
- **Remixing**
Taking different items of content, identified by tags and published through feeds, and combining them in

different ways. You can do this with other people's content if they add an appropriate copyright license.

- **Really Simple Syndication (RSS)**
A format for storing online information in a way that makes that information readable by lots of different kinds of software. Many blogs and web sites feature RSS feeds: a constantly updated version of the site's latest content, in a form that can be read by a newsreader or aggregator.
- **Searching**
Google is the best-known Internet search engine. Specialist search engines like Technorati concentrate on blogs. As well as searching by word or phrase you can search on tags, and so find content others have keyworded.
- **Seismic**
A video blogging web application.
- **Sharing**
Sharing is offering other people the use of your text, images, video, bookmarks or other content by adding tags, and applying copyright licenses that encourage use of content.
- **Skin**
The background for a user profile.
- **Social Graph**
The social graph is a diagram of the interconnections between people, with the people serving as nodes, and the lines between them showing the connections.
- **Social Media**
The tools and platforms people use to publish, converse and share content online, including text, images, audio and video. The tools include blogs, wikis, podcasts, message boards, forums, communities and sites to share photos and bookmarks.
- **Social networking**
Social networking sites are online sites where users can create a profile for themselves, and then socialise with others using a range of social media tools including blogs, video, images, tagging, lists of friends, forums and messaging.
Spambot
Automatic software robots that post spam on a blog.
- **Splog**
Spam Blogs, or blogs not providing their own or real content. Sploggers use automated tools to create fake blogs full of links or scraped content from other sites in order to boost search engine results.
- **Startpage**
A startpage - like Pageflakes, Netvibes or Google Personalised Home page - is web page that you can configure to pull in content from a range of web-based services including e-mail, feeds from

blogs and news services. It is a multi-purpose aggregator.

- **Status**
A post describing of what a user is doing right now.
- **StumbleUpon**
StumbleUpon is an Internet community that allows its users to discover and rate Web pages, photos, and videos.
- **Subscribing**
Subscribing is the process of adding an RSS feed to an aggregator or newsreader. It's the online equivalent of signing up for a magazine, but usually free.
- **Tags**
A keyword or term associated and assigned to an item of content (i.e. blog post, video, photo, etc.). You can assign multiple tags to the same online resource, and different people can assign different tags to the same resource. Usually added to an item of content to enhance search engine optimization and to make content easier to organise and find. Tag-enabled web services include social bookmarking sites (like Digg), photo sharing sites (like Flickr) and blog tracking sites (like Technorati). Tags provide a useful way of organizing, retrieving and discovering information.
- **Taxonomy**
An organised way of classifying content, as in a library, for example content contributors could be offered a set of categories under which they can add content. Allowing people to add their own keywords is Folksonomy.
- **Technology steward**
Someone who can facilitate community and network development from a technical perspective.
- **Technorati**
An internet search engine for searching blogs.
- **Teleconferencing**
Holding a meeting without being in the same place, using a network connection and tools like Voice over IP, Instant Messaging, Video, and Whiteboards.
- **Threads**
Strands of conversation. On an e-mail list or web forum they will be defined by messages that use the use the same subject. On blogs they are less clearly defined but emerge through comments and trackbacks.
- **Trackback**
Some blogs provide a facility for other bloggers to leave a calling card automatically, instead of commenting. Blogger A may write on blog A about an item on blogger B's site, and through the trackback facility leave a link on B's site back to A. The collection of comments and trackbacks on a site facilitates

conversations.

- **Troll**
A user, who for whatever reason, is both obsessed by and constantly annoyed with, and deeply offended by everything you write on your blog. You may be able to stop them commenting on your blog, **but you can't ban them from commenting** on other sites and pointing back to your **blog, and you can't ban them** from posting things on their own blog that point back to your site.
- **Tweet**
Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters, displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to other users - known as followers - who have subscribed to them.
- **Twitter**
A social networking and micro-blogging service.
- **Upload**
Transfer a file or other content from your computer to a website or other media.
- **Uniform Resource Locator (URL)**
A specific address used by Web browsing software to locate and access information on the www.
- **Viadeo**
A business oriented networking site.
- **Virtual worlds**
Virtual worlds are online applications like Second Life, where you can create an avatar and socialise with other residents. Basic activity is free, but you can buy currency (using real money) in order to purchase land and trade with other residents. Second Life is being used by some voluntary organisations to run discussions, virtual events and fundraising.
- **VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol)**
VOIP allows telephone calls to be made over the Internet, typically by using a headset attached to your computer. By using headphones and a microphone you can also free your hands to use instant messaging to keep a shared note of conversations or use other virtual presence tools. The best-known VoIP tool is Skype.
- **Web 2.0**
A term often applied to a perceived ongoing transition of the World Wide Web from a collection of websites to a full-fledged computing platform serving web applications to end users. Ultimately Web 2.0 services are expected to replace desktop computing applications for many purposes.
- **Web-based tools**
The increasing range of free or low-cost tools including e-mail, calendars, word processing, and spreadsheets that can be used on the web rather than your desktop.
- **Webinar**
An online seminar.
- **Whiteboards**
An online area where you can write or sketch with a "marker" and wipe your scribbles off later.
- **Widget**
A stand-alone application that can be embedded in other applications, like a website or a desktop, or viewed on its own on a PDA.
- **Wiki**
A technology designed to allow many different people to edit a web page by providing an easily reversible audit trail of edits and changes. Wikis are frequently used to allow people to write a document together, or to share reference material that lets colleagues or even members of the public contribute content. The best example of a Wiki is the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia.
- **Windows Live Groups**
An invitation only community-driven service that allows groups to create, share and discuss content.
- **XING**
A business oriented networking site.
- **Yahoo! Groups**
A community-driven Internet communication tool that allows groups to create, share and discuss content.
- **Yelp**
The service has been designed with several goals in mind, the primary one being to allow people to share their current location to their social network, as well as see which of their friends are in their vicinity. See also Facebook Places, Foursquare and Gowalla.
- **YouTube**
A video sharing website on which users can upload and share videos.

Further Information

You may wish to read our publication 763- Social Media and other Online Networks for Business.

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

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