

Code of Conduct

At Gada we see freedom of speech as the right to communicate ideas. With this right comes the responsibility to choose your words carefully and respect the rights and sensitivity of others. We all share a responsibility to create and maintain a friendly and welcoming environment and a positive atmosphere, and to promote constructive discussion. For this reason, we ask that you read this Code of Conduct, adhere to it and make sure other people do so too.

Remember: written words are heavier than spoken ones, hence we expect you to take extra care when engaging with other users on Gada. When in doubt, be nice.

The Draft Code of Conduct applies to all communication on Gada including: forum posts, article comments and private messages. Failure to respect these rules will trigger an appropriate reaction (warning and banning). For comments, suggestions, feedback or clarifications please contact us.

Grave breaches

1. The following behaviours are considered grave breaches of this code of conduct and will lead to an appropriate moderation action (i.e. post removal, warning, or temporary/permanent ban):

1(a). **Advertising** - No commercial advertisement is allowed on Gada. We only permit links to third-party sites when they are relevant to ongoing discussion. Any users posting URLs of sites excessively or in a way which could be construed as advertising will trigger a moderation action. If you want to advertise events or activities that have a clear social (or environmental) focus, please contact us.

1(b). **Aggressive/belittling/insulting posts** - While you are of course welcome to disagree with other members, we will not tolerate posts which insult, belittle, bait or otherwise antagonise forum members. This includes posts which disrespectfully label others posters as 'fanboys', 'haters' or similar. Minor breaches will warrant a warning, repeated warnings and major breaches may lead to temporary or permanent banning from the community.

1(c). **Copyrighted material** - All material posted from copyrighted material **MUST** contain a link to the original work. If a source is not available online, is not free to the public (Lexis/Nexis, books, academic papers, etc), or requires registration to be accessed, then a comprehensive citation will suffice. Keep in mind that your position may be weakened if the original source is not easily accessible.

1(d). **Harassment** - Harassing a poster will not be tolerated. This includes, repeated posts directed to another user, private contact through facebook or other social media, attempts to hack into their personal e-mail, personal website or account etc. Harassment will lead to a permanent ban.

1(e). **Hate messages** - Hate messages are strictly prohibited and will lead, in the most serious of cases, to immediate and permanent banning of the user. Hate messages are defined as a comment directed to a distinct social group using one of the following:

- A) The support for or a call for violence.
- B) The suggestion of removal of essential civil liberties.
- C) Claims of severe dehumanization.
- D) Claims of illegal behavior across the entire group.

A distinct social group is a group of people identified (or self-identified) according to social class, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, political views, disability, nationality or any other grouping.

1(f). Multiple and Proxy Accounts - Multiple accounts of the same user are forbidden. Proxy accounts (specifically utilizing a third party to post) will not be tolerated. Further, sharing of an account/password with other members and non-members alike is prohibited. If you are having issues with your account, please contact us by using this form before creating another. Registering an account after having been banned (temporarily or permanently) is not permitted and will result in all linked accounts being terminated.

1(g). Personal attacks – Any personal message against another user, including those constructed as a commentary on another user's behaviour or opinion, will be immediately deleted and may lead to a moderation action as defined in clause 1.

1(h). Pornography / Nudity / Graphic Images - Instances of clear and purposeful sexual or lewd nudity, or sexual acts, should not be posted or linked to anywhere on the site. Instances of extreme images, such as severe violence or grave injury, should not be posted anywhere on the site, and can only be linked to when directly relevant to a currently discussed story and a clear warning of the contents violent nature is given. Posting or linking to either of these types of images could result in suspension or ban.

1(j). Privacy - Posting personal details such as email addresses, full names, places of employment, and phone numbers (etc.) for any purpose will not be tolerated. This is a breach of privacy will trigger immediate deletion of the post and a ban.

1(k). Profanity - Swearing at people or groups is not permitted. Conversational language such as "This is terrible news, it makes me feel like shit!" is not ideal but will be accepted. Posts such as "You're a w*nker!" or "Shut the f*ck up" are not accepted and will trigger a moderation action.

1(i). Spamming - What constitutes spamming can be, but is not limited to, "A message (typically an advertisement) sent indiscriminately to a wide set of discussion lists [forums] or newsgroups." [Google] Also, any message or series of messages promoting a product, site or service made by a member who does not demonstrate the intention and willingness to participate in the normal discourse of the DPMB can be considered spamming. Spamming and/or spam bots will not be tolerated and can result in immediate banning of the spammer.

1(l). Trolling - Trolling is a diversionary tactic of those who "deliberately exploit tendencies of human nature or of an online community to upset people" or those "who post inflammatory, extraneous, or off-topic messages" to disrupt normal on-topic discussions. [Wikipedia]. Ignorance, bias, and genuine dissent are not trolling, though at times they may appear similar due to the disingenuous nature of some trolls. Trolling is not allowed and will trigger a moderation action.

1(m). Violence and illegality – Any posts that may be seen as directly encouraging and/or organising and/or facilitating the committing of violent or illegal acts of any way or form are prohibited and will trigger moderation actions; when relevant, such posts will be reported to the police or other relevant authorities. **Gada is not a private messaging platform:** any view expressed is to be considered public.

Disruptive behaviour

2. Disruptive behaviour is considered a moderate breach of these rules. If repeated it will trigger a moderation action.

2(a). **Baiting** - To bait someone in a general sense is to make a comment with a purposeful intent to coerce some form of response from the individual. In some cases this device can be a useful tool of debate, eliciting responses to highlight a point or reveal an underlying truth concerning someone's argument. However, in other cases the intent of the bait is less focused on debating. "Flamebaiting" is making statements intended to cause an angry or emotional response/flare from the person. Another form of baiting is known as "derailing" or "thread-jacking". This is deliberate act of making statements with an aim of diverting the topic of a thread significantly from its main focus. These negative forms of baiting constitute a rules violation that can potentially lead to a suspension of posting privileges.

2(b). **Commenting on spelling/grammar** - We ask that users make the effort to communicate clearly and, so long as posts are understandable, there should be no problem. Please avoid correcting other people for spelling/grammar mistakes (this includes asking rhetorical questions to clarify the meaning of misspelled words).

2(c). **Communicate clearly** - All threads will be in the English language. Threads and posts which are not in English may be edited or deleted at the discretion of a Moderator. Please include translations with any posts that are not in English. Try your hardest to communicate clearly: avoid using a large amount of 'txt spk'.

2(d). **Duplicate threads** - Before creating a new Discussion you carry out a search to see if the topic has already been discussed elsewhere and direct your contribution to an existing thread. Do not purposely duplicate threads or cross-post to multiple forums.

2(e). **Excessive reposting** – Please excessively avoid quoting external sources. A limitation of two (2) medium-sized paragraphs per thread is allowed for the quoting and display of any external "same-source" material (i.e. material borrowed from the same author, the same internet article, the same web page, the same web site, or the same publication). Please do not exceed this limitation, nor attempt to bypass this limitation via consecutive/subsequent/plagiarized thread postings. Please restrain yourself.

2(f). **Flaming** - Flaming is defined as "any kind of derogatory comment no matter how witless or crude." [google] While a bit derogatory flaming is bound to happen flaming is discouraged. Flaming can also easily become insulting, which is a grave breach of this Code of Conduct.

2(g). **Libellous content** - Do not post potentially libellous or defamatory comments. You are entitled to your opinions but you do not have the right to say whatever you want on our platform. Gada shall not be held responsible for libellous or defamatory comments posted by its users. However, we want to make sure that such comments do not find space on our platform. Remember: Gada is about finding constructive solutions to problems, not moaning about things that go wrong! So be positive.

2(h). **Multiple Posts** – Please do not repost the same concept/idea multiple times, particularly not in reply to other people's comments. Posts of the same subject may be consolidated or deleted at discretion.

2(j). **Personal agenda** – Users cannot use Gada’s forum to ask advice on personal matters. For instance, posts by students seeking advice on their dissertation/coursework/essay questions will be removed with immediate effect as they don't promote any discussion.

2(k). **Inappropriate profile pictures** – We will ask you to remove offensive profile pictures; if you refuse we reserve the right to ban you until your picture is remove.

2(i). **Third-party Websites** - Be mindful of the links that you post: while we are not responsible nor liable for third-party websites, we actively discouraged the posting of website links with offensive/unhelpful/irrelevant content. Repeated breach of this rule will trigger moderation actions. Try to be relevant.

2(l). **Unconstructive, off-topic and pointless posts** - Unconstructive posts are posts that contribute nothing to a discussion. These posts will likely be downvoted by other users and will not be visible. In some cases, these posts may be removed by our moderators.

Dealing with Inappropriate Content

3(a). **Avoiding confrontation** - Please refrain from being overly emotive and using terms such as "Excuse me?!?! I've been banned for less!" - the key to effective alerting is to be clear and concise while supplying as much contextual information as possible. Abuse of the alert feature - whether for nonsensical reports or excessive use - can result in posting privileges being revoked. Further, please don't 'add fuel to the fire' by saying "I've reported you!" or "I got <forum member Z> banned".

3(b). **Downvoting posts** - Gada’s forum OpePlaza allows you to vote each post. If you think a post is destructive (but not quite bad enough to be reported), vote it down. If other people think the same, we will take notice and get in touch with the author. Seriously disruptive posts will trigger a warning, and a series of disruptive posts will be ground for dismissal.

3(c). **Reporting posts** - The forum is predominantly reactively moderated and we ask that forum members notify us of any inappropriate posts by writing us a message with name of the discussion, author of the post and time (until the ALERT button is in place). Please only report posts which break the Code of Conduct and not just posts that you disagree with. Please also tell us why you feel the post is offensive or inappropriate.

3(d). **Disciplinary Action** - Users that break any rules may be issued a Warning. Repeated violations of the rules can result in a permanent or temporary revocation of posting privileges. Temporary suspension of posting privileges might range in duration from 24 hours to 2 weeks or more. If the conduct is severely detrimental to the board, the account will be banned and posting privileges revoked permanently. This is at our sole discretion. You may submit an appeal using the "contact us" link.

Other matters

4(a). Complaints and feedback - If there are any concerns over Moderator actions, the only way to officially address them is with a private message using the Contact Us message. We will also ask for your feedback and we value your concerns and suggestions. Publicly disrespectful and/or negative comments regarding a moderator's capacity, the Moderator Team in general, or Moderator actions may not occur on any open open areas of the website.

4(b). Disclaimer - Gada and its users are not responsible from any and all use of knowledge used, received, or created on this board. This includes but is not limited to: political advice, medical advice, and legal advice. By reading and/or participating on this website, you have agreed to these terms.

This Code of Conduct draws inspiration from similar guidelines used at Debatepolitics.com, Digitalspy.co.uk and other online forums.