Public Lab

open source tools for environmental investigation

Public Lab

55 Cromwell Street, 1C

Providence, RI 02907

Code of Conduct

We are coming together with an intent to care for ourselves and one another. For this to work for everybody, individual decisions will not be allowed to run counter to the welfare of other people. We—visitors, community members, community moderators, staff, organizers, sponsors, and all others—hold ourselves accountable to the same values regardless of position or experience. This community aspires to be a respectful place both during online and in-person interactions so that all people are able to fully participate with their dignity intact. This document is a piece of the culture we're creating.

This code of conduct applies to all spaces managed by the Public Lab community and non-profit, both online and in person. It provides a clear set of practical guidelines for events led by organizers and community members, multi-day events such as Barnraisings, and online venues such as the website, comment threads on software platforms, chatrooms, our mailing lists, the issue tracker, and any other forums created by Public Lab which the community uses for communication. For interactions with additional groups, see our Partnership Guidelines at publiclab.org/partners.

We come from all kinds of backgrounds

Our community is best when we fully invite and include participants from a wide range of backgrounds. We specifically design spaces to be welcoming and accessible to newcomers and folks from underrepresented groups. Public Lab is dedicated to providing a harassment-free, safe, and inclusive experience for everyone, regardless of personal and professional background, gender, gender identity and expression, style of clothing, sexual orientation, dis-/ability, physical appearance, body size, race, class, age, or religion. Public Lab resists and rejects: racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia, body shaming, religion shaming, "geekier-than-thou" shaming, education bias, the shaming of people nursing children, and the dismissal or bullying of children or adults.

We do not tolerate harassment or shaming

While we operate under the assumption that all people involved with Public Lab subscribe to the basic understanding laid out above, we take these issues very seriously and think they should, in general, be taken seriously. Therefore, individuals who violate this Code both in and outside of Public Lab spaces may affect their ability to participate in Public Lab ranging from temporarily being placed into online moderation to, as a last resort, expulsion from the community. If you have any questions about our commitment to this framework and/or if you are unsure about aspects of it, email conduct@publiclab.org and we will do our best to provide clarification.

How It Works

Sometimes things go wrong. When a situation is uncomfortable, hurtful, exclusionary, or upsetting, there is a problem that should be addressed. This code of conduct is an effort to maintain a safe space for everyone, and to talk about what might happen if that space is compromised. There are additional guidelines below for community behavior on how we expect people to interact with one another.

Two helpful groups:

Conduct Committee (ConductCom): If at any time you experience something that you are not comfortable with, you may contact the Conduct Committee.

For the [event name] in Month YYYY, in person Conduct Committee members are:
- [Firstname Lastname]
- [Firstname Lastname]
- [Firstname Lastname]
- [Firstname Lastname]

If you would like to have a confidential conversation, meet with ConductCom in person or send email to conduct@publiclab.org. A minimum of two committee members will confer and respond as swiftly as possible. If you would prefer to speak privately with a representative of the nonprofit, please contact the executive director Shannon Dosemagen directly either in person or by email: shannon@publiclab.org.

To submit a report anonymously for review by ConductCom, go online via phone or computer to our anonymous "contact" app, located at https://goo.gl/forms/Ma6lEkZ0TuE7D9FZ2. This contact app will be monitored daily at 8am CST during in-person events like Barnraisings and weekly at all other times. During multi-day in-person events hosted by the Public Lab non-profit, there will also be a physical suggestion box available. This box will be monitored throughout the event and can also be used to let us know if you need us to check on an anonymous online submission sooner.

NOTE: ConductCom is not open to self-appointment. The committee lead is responsible for posting job roles and interviewing to fill roles, with attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion. At time of writing, the lead is Liz Barry.

Moderators Group: The moderators group is responsible for addressing immediate moderation issues that arise during online violations of the code over email lists and Public Lab community websites, as well as approving first-time posts and generally handling spam. Instructions on how to become a moderator, and, if you've been placed in moderation how to begin the process of getting out of moderation can be found at: https://publiclab.org/moderation.

A Culture of Empathy

We begin interactions by acknowledging that we are part of a community with complementary goals. Different views are allowed to respectfully coexist in the same space. When something's happened and someone is uncomfortable, our first choice is to work through it. Endeavor to listen and appropriately adjust your behavior if someone approaches you privately with a request that you apologize or publicly requests that you stop an ongoing presentation. If someone questions your words, actions or motives, or "calls you out", hear their feedback and respond respectfully. It's okay to not understand why something is hurtful or causes discomfort, as long as you approach it respectfully, with empathy. Repeating hurtful behavior after it has been addressed is disrespectful and is not allowed. Doing so will result in removal and subsequent banning from in-person events and being placed into moderation in online spaces.

The first rule of engaging with others is consent

During in-person gatherings, consent is important to highlight because the negotiation of consent can be subtle, and it's easy to miss each other's non-verbal cues, resulting in miscommunication and/or offense. During online interactions, consent can be even harder to distinguish.

We make guesses or assessments of consent (willingness, welcome, invitation) all the time. Then we stay open to signs that the consent isn't there. Handshakes are a clear example of consent: someone offers a hand, and you take it if you want to shake it. A friendly smile might indicate consent to start a conversation. It might not. We learn that in the interaction. Sometimes we ask directly. We are open to making mistakes, and learning from them. The more we learn to be empathetic and see other people, the more we're able to talk about consent.

Before you engage with someone on any level, be sure you have their consent. If your indications aren't being heard, you can also ask for help from other folks, especially Conduct Committee members and staff of the non-profit: "They aren't taking the hint. Will you help?" Bystanders failing to stand up to reduce harm in the moment can be as bad for our community as the exchange itself, and is itself a violation of this Code of Conduct. If you witness something, it's your responsibility to say something. This is how we keep each other accountable and keep our community safe.

We are all making efforts to converge in a common space

Functioning as a community means that we **all** need to make efforts to maintain respectful communication in **all** directions. We—people of all ages and backgrounds—make efforts to clearly and succinctly express ourselves, while respecting the truth in one another's lived experiences. Specifically, **we endeavor to:**
- **Present our contributions in ways that could help others.** Stylistically, professional communication does not use all caps, multiple exclamation points, or internet acronyms (lol). People with more expertise/experience should endeavor to write about scientific and technological subjects in ways that support newcomers in gaining familiarity with and contributing to a subject area, rather than in ways that exclude newcomers and "gate-keep" knowledge.
- **Ask for help in ways that make it easier for others to assist us.** For example, writing out a series of smaller questions makes it easier for others to respond, compared to writing one big, complex question.

Guidelines for in-person community behavior

Do	Don't
+ Do Respectfully share what method works best for you, while giving others space to think differently and contribute other ideas	**x Don't** Disparage entire groups/sets of people for their beliefs or methods
+ Do Ask permission to take pictures of—and post about—others on social media (*see Media Consent, below*)	**x Don't** Upload photos, tag or mention others online without their consent
+ Do Speak your own narrative, from your own unique culture	**x Don't** Caricature the cultural expressions of groups you are not a member of
+ Do Model inclusionary expertise - if others in the group appear to be "lost", slow down; stop and ask for input	**x Don't** Present information in a way / at a level that no one else in the room can understand, with no attempt to include others in the discussion
+ Do Create events that are all-ages appropriate	**x Don't** Use language that excludes youth and their experiences as vital contributors
+ Do Give everyone a chance to talk, only interrupting if absolutely necessary—for example, to stop Code of Conduct violations or maintain timesharing	**x Don't** Repeatedly disrupt a discussion
+ Do Stop, listen and ask for clarification if someone perceives your behavior or presentation as violating the Code of Conduct	**x Don't** Ignore others' request to stop potentially harmful behavior, even if it was an accident
+ Do Cultivate a non-violent sense of humor and self-expression	**x Don't** Joke using words related to actual or insulting descriptions of people
+ Do Use words that accurately describe the situation - For example, "The wind was ridiculously strong!" instead of "The wind was crazy!"	**x Don't** Use disability and mental/emotional health terminology to describe a situation metaphorically, especially if the phrasing is meant as an insult
+ Do Only discuss someone else's lifestyle practices if they invite you to a conversation on the topic	**x Don't** Make unwelcomed comments regarding a person's lifestyle practices, such as related to food, health, parenting, relationships, and employment
+ Do Ask someone before you hug them; keep your hands/body to yourself, even when joking, unless the other person has given verbal consent	**x Don't** Initiate physical contact or simulate physical contact without consent
+ Do Disengage and find another activity if someone did not invite you and is not engaging with you	**x Don't** Violate personal space by continuing your physical presence into private spaces without consent
+ Do Exercise the right to talk about your own identity if you want to, or not if you don't want to	**x Don't** Deliberately "out" any aspect of a person's identity without their consent
+ Do Use the pronouns people have specified for themselves	**x Don't** Purposely misgender someone (ie, refusing to use their correct gender pronouns) after they have told you their correct pronouns

Additional guidelines for online community behavior

Online modes involve large numbers of people interacting without the helpful presence of gestural, expression, and tonal cues regarding consent. Because of this, respectful and self-aware online conduct is both especially important and difficult. Our community has evolved specific guidelines for online interactions. If someone violates these guidelines, someone from the Moderators group will place them into moderation by changing that person's posting permission on the relevant list, on the website, or both. Our triple notification standard means that immediately following that action, a point person from the Moderators group will 1) email the person directly with a brief explanation of what was violated, 2) send a summary email to the rest of the moderators group, 3) if it happened on a public list (vs a website), notify the list that one of our members has been placed into moderation with a brief explanation of what is not tolerated.

If you wish to begin the process of getting out of moderation, respond to the email sent to you from moderators@publiclab.org. The Moderators group has the option to involve ConductCom.

Do	Don't
+ Do Stay on topic to make long threads easier to follow	**x Don't** Send spurious one-line responses that effectively "spam" hundreds of people and lower the overall content quality of a conversation. (Exception: expressions of appreciation and encouragement!)
+ Do Start a new thread to help others follow along. Important if your response starts to significantly diverge from the original topic	**x Don't** Respond with off-topic information making it hard for the large group of readers to follow along
+ Do Write short and literal subject lines to help the readers of the list manage the volume of communication	**x Don't** Use easily misinterpreted humor and euphemisms in subject lines
+ Do Mind your tone. We are not having this conversation in person, so it is all the more important to maintain a tone of respect	**x Don't** Write in aggressive tone, dismissive, disrespectful tone, mocking tone, off-color tone. Note: writing in all caps is regarded as shouting
+ Do Be kind and supportive. Enthusiasm is welcome! Offer ways forward	**x Don't** Cast dispagement and doubt; block paths forward without opening new ones

Anonymity on publiclab.org

https://publiclab.org/wiki/anonymity#PublicLab.org

There are actions you can take to keep your identity private during each of the following moments:

When browsing the Public Lab website:

NOTE: All content on publiclab.org—posts, comments, edits, & likes—is publicly accessible, no account is needed for you to browse. To avoid other tracking of your activities on the internet:

- Use a public, or shared computer, such as a library computer.
- Use Incognito mode to ensure that your browsing history is cleared when you close your browser windows.

When signing up for a publiclab.org account:

NOTE: If you create an account at publiclab.org/signup in order to interact by liking, commenting, posting, editing, the username you choose will be the only default publicly viewable content about you.

- Choose a username that does not relate in any way to your true identity—for example, choose two colors and a number: purpleBlue23
- Use an anonymously created email address (such as one that, as in (1), does not reveal your identity: orangeRed456(a)gmail.com. This may mean creating a new account.

When filling out your Profile page, or not! :

NOTE: Creating an account at PublicLab.org automatically generates a publicly viewable profile page for the chosen username (like https://publiclab.org/profile/warren). You can fill this page out, but to maintain anonymity:

- Do not share identifying information on your profile page, such as your name (even first name), location, current or former school names, or background/career
- Be careful not to expose identifying information through your profile picture—either don't use one, or use a picture you downloaded online, like a cartoon or an animal picture. Note that photos of your face, even if you don't add any names, can sometimes be used to identify you by searching for similar photos on the internet that do list your name. So be careful!

When posting content:

NOTE: When posting via publiclab.org/post or in any comment box, follow the same guidelines as for profile pages (above). To maintain anonymity:

- Do not share photos you share with recognizable locations or personal data in the background of the picture

- Do not share photos with identifying metadata; if they were taken on a smartphone, they often include GPS coordinates. (you can get around this by uploading a screenshot of the image instead of the original)
- Do not mention your own location or that of others who wish to remain anonymous

IF choosing to interact publicly …

Of course, it's your choice to share personal or identifying information if you wish, and you may decide that the power of speaking with your true name can be worth the risks—but **this is a decision only you can make, and you can't make it for others.** So be sure that if you do intentionally share personal, identifying, or otherwise private information about yourself, that you don't reveal others' information without their explicit consent.

Further information about accounts on PublicLab.org

- The email address you use to sign-up is not shown publicly; staff of the Public Lab non-profit who are also web administrators are able to see your email but are not permitted to share it with others without your explicit consent
- There is no 3rd party access to the information you gave while signing-up with on PublicLab
- If you use a 3rd party website to create an account on PublicLab.org, we only verify your email address, and do not access or store your age, birthday, gender, location, or other personally identifiable information
- There is no "age gate" on publiclab.org—we do not ask or store how old you are
- There is no direct or private messaging on publiclab.org
- Every new poster's first content submission is held in moderation until reviewed by a Moderator, if you do encounter offensive content - report it to moderators(a)publiclab.org

Privacy checklist for minors and their parents, guardians, and teachers

https://publiclab.org/public-lab-for-teachers#Consider+the+privacy+of+minors

- ❏ Do not use your real name as your username
- ❏ Do not use your first and last name together anywhere on the site
- ❏ Do not use any of your existing social media handles as your username
- ❏ Do not link back to your personal social media
- ❏ Do not share your gender; reduce/eliminate the use of gendered pronouns in your writing
- ❏ Do not share individually identifying photos of yourself on your profile page (photos of hands are OK, photos of faces are not)
- ❏ Do not share photos of your group in a research note in which individual faces are identifiable (consider adding friendly emojis or blur!)
- ❏ To protect the location privacy of minors while mapping and capturing/sharing geographic data, while posting research notes about your mapping activity or stitching images into maps in

mapknitter.org, do not share photos in which individuals are identifiable, such as those taken close to the ground while launching or catching the camera.
- ❏ Do not share your location or address on your profile page
- ❏ Do not publicly post your contact info (email, phone, etc)
- ❏ Do not share personal health information

Additional options

Teachers / Guardians / Parents may consider these additional options for how minors interact with PublicLab.org, as well as join the ongoing conversation at https://publiclab.org/q/19897 :

- Teachers / Guardians / Parents could become moderators on the site in order to more closely monitor for the unintentional disclosure of personally identifying information by their students / children while sharing their work on PublicLab.org
- Not allowing students / minors to create accounts at all
- Only allowing students / minors older than 14 years of age to create accounts
- Creating teacher / guardian / parent-managed accounts on behalf of one, some, or all students
- Creating group accounts for students/minors to share. Example: "Team Dolphin"

Media Consent

- ● ALWAYS check with parents/guardians about posting anything with minors.
- ● Never post the names of minors in conjunction with their photo.
- ● During multi-day events like Barnraisings most people will have signed media releases. Those who have not will be responsible for placing stickers on their nametags, and/or raising their hands in the moment to alert photographers to move them out of frame.
- ● For events where people have not signed blanket media release forms, the photographer is responsible for letting the room know that you are taking photos that will be posted online. Pay special attention to the presence of minors and their parents' wishes.

Addendum for all staff

Staff are bound by their Employment Handbook, and must reference it. Additionally:

- ● Direct problems that come up among community members to the Conduct Committee.
- ● When organizing events, circulate access information regarding wheelchair-accessible ADA bathrooms, non-gendered bathrooms, the presence of stairs or curb ramps in the parking lot, *et cetera*.
- ● During events that you are attending in person, solve accessibility issues by making sure attendees know where bathrooms are located and can access them by wheelchair without being obstructed by things like chairs, kites, contraptions, or cords.
Watch for people feeling left out and include them.