



## **The Internet and Don't Ask, Don't Tell** **What LGBT Service Members Need to Know about Being Online**

### **The internet is NOT private!**

Any information posted online regarding sexual orientation, sexual acts, partners or other behavior in violation of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" or the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) can be used to discharge a service member.

Profiles on Myspace, Friendster, Gay.com, Facebook, Match.com, Tangowire and any other site where others can view your personal information can also be used to "out" you to the military.

### **The Do's and Don'ts of Online Profiles and Chat Rooms**

The safest course of action for service members while online is not to make any statements regarding your sexual orientation. However, if you choose to identify your sexual orientation in your online profile or in a chat room, here are some basic rules to help you decrease your chances of facing investigation and discharge:

- **DO** use a pseudonym or screen name to avoid disclosing your identity;
- **DO** make your webpage private or restrict access to it;
- **DO NOT** choose an e-mail handle or screen name that has any sexual connotations or lesbian or gay overtones;
- **DO NOT** mention the fact that you are in the military in your personal profile, in chat rooms or other online forums;
- **DO NOT** show photographs – especially not in uniform – or descriptions of tattoos or other identifying information;
- **DO NOT** tell friends in the military that you have an online profile;
- **DO NOT** submit your profile to be a "featured member;"
- **DO NOT** use online video-chat features;
- **DO NOT** use a military e-mail address for your profile, and
- **DO NOT** use a military computer to access online personal ads or similar websites.

Any service member who has questions about the risks with internet communication should contact SLDN by either calling (202.328.3244, ext. 100) or emailing ([legal@sldn.org](mailto:legal@sldn.org)) to schedule an appointment with one of our legal staff.