Social Media To Go

A Compilation of Best Practices, Policies and How-To Guides

Created by: Rosanna Cruz, MPA UGA Graduate Student
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Introduction

What are Social Media?

Social Media are the future of communication as we know it. As the vast array of internet-based tools continues to expand, there are increasing social avenues to reach more diverse and widespread populations. From status updates on Facebook to tweets on Twitter, these new forms of media make communication easier and yet more complex than ever before. Information can travel across the globe in mere seconds making the transfer of text, photos and videos more fluid to an increasingly interconnected web of people.

Why are Social Media Important?

The age of information sharing is here and it is here to stay for the foreseeable future. According to Pete Snyder, CEO and Founder of New Media Strategies, “The world is in constant conversation; if you are not active in that conversation with your clients and in your industry, you are going to be left behind.”

Drawbacks

While impressive and infinitely useful, social media can however, present a daunting task in keeping up with the latest online trends and conversations. Many people can attest to frustration over the seemingly constant changes to their Facebook profiles just when they were starting to feel comfortable with the layout. Missing a day of Twitter tweets feels like catching up on an entire week of conversation between two of your closest and chattiest friends. And that is not even including new videos on YouTube or new pins on Pinterest, which can all seemingly combine into one overwhelming mass of information.

Opportunity on the Horizon

So how do you handle it all? Should an organization jump into social media and immerse itself in every online community available or should it forego social networking all together? The answer lies somewhere between both of these extremes.

There are risks associated with a poorly maintained social network presence, but with the right tools and appropriate management, organizations can effectively access the wealth of resources social media offer. Organizations should approach social media not with trepidation, but with the knowledge that these platforms are specifically designed to help you harness the power of interested publics.

The following pamphlet serves as an introductory guide to social media and how it can be used in the professional/business arena.

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Definitions of Social Media

**Merriam-Webster**

“Forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos).”

**Social Media Defined**

“Social Media are the future of communication, a countless array of Internet based tools and platforms that increase and enhance the sharing of information. These new forms of media make the transfer of text, photos, audio, video, and information in general increasingly fluid among Internet users. Social Media have relevance not only for regular Internet users, but business as well.”

**ProPR**

“Social media are online communications in which we shift instantly and easily between the role of audience and creator – without needing to know how to code. We do this by using social software that incorporates functions like publishing, sharing, friending, commenting, linking and tagging.”

**Dictionary.com**

“Web sites and other online means of communication that are used by large groups of people to share information and to develop social and professional contacts.”

**Lisa Buyer, The Buyer Group**

“Today’s most transparent, engaging and interactive form of public relations. It combines the true grit of real time content with the beauty of authentic peer-to-peer communication.”

**Gini Dietrich, Arment Dietrich, Inc.**

“A shift in how we get our information. It used to be that we would wait for the paper boy to throw our news on the doorstep (or into the flowers) and we’d read the paper, front to back, with our morning coffee before going to work. Now we get information, 24/7 and on the fly, from anywhere. In the more traditional senses, online, on our phones, and through the social platforms. Social media allows us to network, to find people with like interests, and to meet people who can become friends or customers. It flattens out the world and gives us access to people we never would have been able to meet otherwise.”
Who Should Use Them?

You know Social Media are important and you know that many people and organizations use them, but should you? What are the risks and benefits of using Social Media? The following are a series of preliminary questions to pose to your organization before you dive into social networking.

1. **Do you have basic software infrastructure?**
   Computers help marketing and communications staff to more effectively connect with their target audiences. Investing in quality software can help increase efficiency and enable staff to utilize the newest Social Media tools to better communicate your company’s message.

2. **Is your target audience using Social Media?**
   You are trying to connect with specific people for specific reasons so it is important to ask them how they like to receive information. It will be a waste of time and resources to create a Social Media presence if your target audience cannot view your content because they do not use the same platforms. Find out which networks are most salient in your community and focus your efforts on those platforms. If the majority of your audience is not using any form of Social Media, you may consider a limited social networking presence, but focus most of your resources on more traditional forms of communication for maximum message resonance.

3. **Can you make a consistent time commitment?**
   Social Media is not stagnant and requires a dedicated effort to continuously working with your content. Social networking can offer an organization many benefits, but only if that organization is willing and able to review and update its content on a regular basis. A low-quality Social Media effort will only reflect poorly on your organization. Checking your accounts can take as little as 15 minutes a day, which gets easier as you gradually become accustomed to your social networks’ features over time. Ensure that your staff has adequate time to become comfortable with social networking tools, even if you will have a limited Social Media scope.

4. **Do you want absolute control over your organization’s content?**
   Organizations can craft policies that specify appropriate content your staffers can share and give fairly strong editorial control over your own messages, but you cannot always control where your messages will appear and in what context people will view them. There are ways to offset the risks social networking can pose, but your content may be associated with things outside of your control. Be willing to think of innovative ways to handle a negative circumstance by having policies in place that will help your staffers to respond appropriately if a crisis arises.
Social Media Platforms

Here are some of the most popular and most frequently used social networking platforms. This list is by no means exhaustive as there are hundreds of outlets for social media. More information about each network can be found at their respective home pages.

The Big Three

**Facebook**

Description: Facebook is a social network that connects users with friends and family through posting of interactive content. Users can upload and share status updates, photos, links and videos with their ‘friends.’

How Many?: 900 million active users

**Twitter**

Description: Twitter is an information network that delivers real-time updates of the latest stories, opinions, news and ideas in 140-character format. Organizations can quickly ‘tweet’ information and build relationships with their followers.

How Many?: 340 million tweets per day

**YouTube**

Description: YouTube is a social network in which users create, post, share and view originally created videos. Videos can be posted for both personal and professional use.

How Many?: 48 hours of video uploaded every minute

## Other Social Media Platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How Many?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td>LinkedIn is a professional network where users connect with colleagues and contacts to share information, knowledge and professional and personal opportunities with other people.</td>
<td>120 million members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flickr</td>
<td>Flickr is a photo management and sharing application that allows users to post, organize and share their photos and videos. Flickr uses a collaborative organization process to make viewing and searching for digital content easier.</td>
<td>70 million photographers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinterest</td>
<td>Pinterest is a virtual pin board where users organize and share content that they have seen and collected on the Internet. Create your own pin board and browse other boards to find new recipes, ideas for crafts and memes.</td>
<td>3rd most popular social media venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foursquare</td>
<td>Foursquare is a location-based tool that allows users to share where they are and find out what restaurants and shops are nearby. Users can also research local deals.</td>
<td>20 million members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Other Social Media Platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>How Many?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>Google+ is a social network similar to Facebook that connects users with people they know. Members can, however, categorize their friends into circles so that when they post/share something, they can specify who will see it.</td>
<td>170 million users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>Instagram is a social platform that allows users to update people on their lives through pictures. Photos can be snapped from a mobile phone, edited and then uploaded to other social networks.</td>
<td>40 million users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WordPress</td>
<td>WordPress is a personal publishing system, which can be used as a blog service or online journal. Blog spaces can be free or purchased for more customization and user flexibility.</td>
<td>74 million WordPress sites</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Social Media Platforms

Social Media have many outlets each with their own unique way of sharing information. Is there a right way to interact with other people and organizations through social networks? Is there a wrong way? There are many resources available to an organization that wishes to use Social Media, but is there one best approach for each network?

Listed below are resources for individuals and businesses as they immerse themselves in a culture of social networking. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have released their social media guidelines and best practices, which are a fantastic and very detailed resource to draw upon as you begin wading into social media. There are also countless other resources available that detail successful social media practices that may be helpful to your organization.

Social Media Starting Points

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  - CDC’s Guide to Writing for Social Media
  - The Health Communicator’s Social Media Toolkit (Excerpt Included)

- Constant Contact
  - Some Practical Social Media Advice for Beginners

Best Practices Examples

- ASNE (American Society of News Editors):
  - 10 Best Practices for Social Media (Excerpt Included)

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
  - Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices
    - Facebook (Included)
    - CDC Twitter Profiles (Included)
    - YouTube and Other Online Video

- Facebook
  - Best Practices for Pages Admins

- Socialmediatoday
  - Social Media Best Practices: 12 Tips for Making the Best of Facebook, Twitter, Google + or Any Other Social Site

- Twitter for Small Business
  - Twitter Best Practices
Other Social Media Platforms

- University of Oregon
  o Social Media Checklist

Online Tutorials and Information

- AARP
  o Technology How-To Guides
    ▪ How-To Use Facebook
    ▪ How-To Use Twitter
    ▪ How-To Social Networking

- Mashable.com
  o Guidebooks
    ▪ The Facebook Guidebook
    ▪ The Twitter Guidebook

- Quickstarter
  o How Can Video Help My Business?
  o Introduction to Blogging
  o Overview of foursquare
Excerpt from:

The Health Communicator's
Social Media Toolkit

By the Office of the Associate Director for Communication
For the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Getting Your Feet Wet With Social Media

There are a variety of social media tools that can be utilized as part of an integrated health communications program. Tools range from easily downloadable products, such as buttons and badges, that can be implemented with minimal resources, to engagement tools that foster two-way communication and ongoing interaction, such as social network sites. Generally, as you progress from dissemination to engagement, more resources are needed for set-up and maintenance and the potential exists for greater participation, learning and sharing. We recommend giving careful consideration to the amount of resources and expertise required before deciding on the tools you may want to use. It is often beneficial to start with social media projects that may be considered low risk or use fewer resources at the outset, and then adopt more engaging tools that may require additional resources, expertise and leadership support. The table below documents specific social media tools, showing the continuum from dissemination to engagement, as well as the resources generally needed to implement health communications activities in many popular channels. The Social Media Tools section of this toolkit provides an overview of the tools and how they may help you meet your health communication objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Time/Staff</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buttons/Badges</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content Syndication</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS Feeds</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image Sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast Posting</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Video Sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widgets1, 2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eCards3</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-blogs</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast Creation</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Video Production</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Technologies/Texting</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual Worlds</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Indicates the posting of a widget, not production.
2 Although the majority of widgets feature embedded content, some may contain an interactive component such as a quiz or a calculator.
3 Indicates the sending of an eCard, not production.
CDC’s Top Lessons Learned from Using Social Media

During the last four years, the CDC social media team has learned a number of lessons we want to share with you. We hope these lessons will help you in developing, implementing and evaluating strong social media practices in your organization.

1. **Make Strategic Choices and Understand the Level of Effort**
   
   Be strategic and follow demographic and user data to make choices based on audience, communications objectives and key messages. Be sure to assess the level of effort needed to maintain these channels such as time and commitment. Often, the resources needed to start and maintain social media projects are different than traditional communication efforts.

2. **Go Where the People Are**
   
   Social media can help reach people where they are—millions of people use social media and spend a lot of time in these spaces learning, sharing and interacting. The popularity of key social media sites can be assessed by reviewing user statistics and demographics. Additionally, there are several niche social networking sites that target specific groups, like moms, physicians, or racial and ethnic groups; or sites that focus on a particular topic like travel or health.

3. **Adopt Low-Risk Tools First**
   
   If you are starting out and finding resistance to using social media among your communication team or stakeholders, it may be helpful to first adopt low-risk solutions and later build on your successes. Products such as podcasts, videos and widgets are easily downloadable, and can be accessed from partner sites and posted on your website.

4. **Make Sure Messages Are Science-based**
   
   As with any effective health communication, messages developed for dissemination through social media channels should be accurate, consistent and science-based.

5. **Create Portable Content**
   
   Develop portable content—such as mobile applications, widgets and online videos—that can easily extend reach beyond your website to provide credible, timely, and accurate content for partners and others who want to help spread your health messages.

6. **Facilitate Viral Information Sharing**
   
   Make it easy for people to share your messages and become health advocates. This can be accomplished
by using social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube that encourage sharing among users, or you can use tools with sharing features, such as widgets or eCards.

7. **Encourage Participation**

   Social media allows for the tailoring of messages to help express empathy and acknowledge concern, promote action and listen to what people are saying about health-related topics in your community. Two-way conversations can foster meaningful communication with your audience that can help to facilitate relationships, sharing and interaction.

8. **Leverage Networks**

   Social media allows people to easily establish and access networks on a regular basis. For example, Facebook reports the average Facebook user has 130 friends, or a network of 130 people with whom they can easily share information. The average user creates 90 pieces of content each month (Facebook 2011). By strategically leveraging these established networks, you can facilitate information sharing, and in turn, expand the reach of your health message.

9. **Provide Multiple Formats**

   Providing messages in multiple formats increases accessibility, reinforces messages and gives people different ways to interact with your content based on their level of engagement and access to media.

10. **Consider Mobile Technologies**

    More than ninety percent of adults in America subscribe to mobile services. Mobile technology is personal, portable and affordable. It allows the sharing of health information through text messaging, mobile websites and mobile applications.

11. **Set Realistic Goals**

    Social media can raise awareness, increase a user’s knowledge of an issue, change attitudes and prompt behavior change in dynamic, personalized and participatory ways. However, like traditional communication, social media alone may not be able to meet all of your communication goals or address all of the target audiences’ needs. Set your goals accordingly.

12. **Learn from Metrics and Evaluate Your Efforts**

    Digital communications offer many metrics that you can use to focus and improve your communications efforts. Metrics can help you to report usage, monitor trends and gauge the success of specific promotions or outreach efforts. Beyond simple metrics, social media efforts can also be evaluated by measuring the use of information, level of engagement with your content, and health impact. Monitoring trends and discussions on social media networks can also be a valuable way to better understand current interests,
knowledge levels and potential misunderstandings or myths about your health topic. Social media provides a direct feedback loop with your audience. By analyzing the feedback available through your social media tools, you can adjust your social media strategy, reshape messages, improve processes or shift tactics.

**Developing a Social Media Strategy**

A social media communication strategy is only one part of a larger communication effort, and should be integrated into your overall communication planning, activities and data collection. Therefore, over-arching communication goals should be considered when developing social media activities. The keys to effective social media outreach are identifying target audience(s), determining objective(s), knowing outlet(s) and deciding on the amount of resources (time and effort) that can be invested. However, with social media, more information can be obtained through a particular media channel to help build your strategy. For example, you can listen to conversations in real time, and identify influencers and fans. You can better understand audience needs in specific social media spaces and engage users in new ways.

Having clear communication objectives will help build your strategy. For example, you will probably need different strategies for each campaign. Because the objectives for each campaign are different, the way you exchange ideas, collaborate with partners, or encourage behavior change will also be different. Likewise, understanding your audience(s) will help you determine the channel selection and how you use specific channels. People access information in different ways, at different times, and for different reasons. Defining your audience needs using market research, metrics, and other data will be important to determining the channels you want to use. Each channel is different and has differing engagement, content, and community norms. Understanding the way people naturally use or participate in social media channels is also very helpful in determining your strategy.

**Resources:**

- Social Media Communications Strategy Worksheet on page 47
- Pew Internet and American Life Project: [http://www.pewinternet.org/](http://www.pewinternet.org/)
SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY WORKSHEET

Use this worksheet to help you strategize about your audience, and the potential social media tools and channels you may want to use for your campaign or communication activity.

1. **Target Audience**

   *Describe the person(s) you want to reach with your communication; be as specific as possible. More than one audience may be listed. Include a primary and secondary (influencers) audience if appropriate. (Examples: Mothers of children younger than two years old living in Atlanta, Pediatricians practicing in Nevada.)*

   I.  
   II.  
   III.  

2. **Determine your objective**

   *What do you want to achieve through your social media outreach and communication? This could include something you want your target audience to do as a direct result of experiencing the communication. Objectives may include (but are not limited to) the following:*

   a) Provide information
      *Highlight a campaign*
      *Encourage a health behavior*
      *Reinforce health messages*
      *Encourage interaction*
      *Obtain feedback/exchange ideas*
      *Collaborate with partners*

   (Example: Increase awareness of immunization campaign.)

   I.  
   II.  
   III.  

   b) Restate your objectives in SMART terms:

   Specific – state in concrete, detailed and well-defined terms – What exactly are we going to do for whom?

   Measurable – should be quantifiable and the source of measurement has been identified.

   Attainable/Achievable – can the objective be achieved in the proposed time frame with the resources available?

   Relevant/Realistic – is the objective directly related to the overarching communication goal from your communication plan?

   Time-bound – have deadlines been set?
(Example: By December 2012 (time-bound), there will be a 5% increase (measureable) in recognition of the immunization campaign name (specific), as measured through surveying, by moms of children under two in the Metro Atlanta area (specific).)

I.

II.

III.


3. Define Audience Communication Needs

*People access information in various ways, at different times of the day, and for different reasons. If possible, define your audience needs by using market research and other data.*

You can use the following resources:

- Pew Internet and American Life Project: http://www.pewinternet.org/

(This is a non-CDC site. This link does not imply endorsement.)

*Describe your audiences and their health information needs.*

4. Goal Integration

a) *Describe how your social media objectives support your organization’s mission and/or overall communications plan.*

b) How does it support other online or offline components – what events (either national/state/local) present communication opportunities?

5. Message Development

*Develop the key messages based on the target audience and objectives identified.*

(Example: for moms of young children to encourage late season flu vaccination, “It’s not too late to vaccinate.”)

I.

II.

III.
6. **Resources and Capacity**

   Determine who in your organization will be responsible for implementation, and determine the number of hours they can allocate for content creation and maintenance.

7. **Identify Social Media Tools**

   Determine what tools will effectively reach your target audience. Match the needs of the target audience with the tools that best support your objectives and resources. (Example: Because Facebook has a large population of young women who have children, is free, and requires minimal technical expertise, it may be a good tool for a mom-centered program while only requiring a small amount of funding for social media activities.)
   I.
   II.
   III.

8. **Define Activities**

   Based on all of the elements above, list the specific activities you will undertake to reach your communication goals and objectives. (Example: Develop and promote Facebook fan page for diabetes education program.)
   I.
   II.
   III.

9. **Identify your key partners and their roles and responsibilities**

10. **Define Success for Evaluation**

    What are your measures of success? Your measures of success may be different depending on your goals and objectives.

11. **Evaluate**

    Create an evaluation plan; see the Social Media Evaluation Plan for more information.
By James Hohmann
And the 2010-11 ASNE Ethics and Values Committee

10 Best Practices for Social Media
Helpful guidelines for news organizations

BY JAMES HOHMANN AND THE
2010-11 ASNE ETHICS AND VALUES COMMITTEE
MAY 2011
Executive summary –

Social media platforms continue to emerge as essential newsgathering tools. These mediums offer exciting opportunities for reporters to collect information and for news organizations to expand the reach of their content, but they also carry challenges and risks. Putting in place overly draconian rules discourages creativity and innovation, but allowing an uncontrolled free-for-all opens the floodgates to problems and leaves news organizations responsible for irresponsible employees.

We offer these guidelines as a framework to help editors form their own policies.

We reviewed publicly available social media policies for mainstream news organizations and several others sent to us by ASNE members. An appendix at the end of this report includes the full text of what was collected. We identified 10 best-practice themes at the heart of the best policies.

Each theme gets its own page here, with a brief explanation of why it’s included, a “teachable moment,” and excerpts from social media guidelines released by news organizations that have been leading the way.

Here are the 10 key takeaways:

1. Traditional ethics rules still apply online.
2. Assume everything you write online will become public.
3. Use social media to engage with readers, but professionally.
4. Break news on your website, not on Twitter.
5. Beware of perceptions.
6. Independently authenticate anything found on a social networking site.
7. Always identify yourself as a journalist.
8. Social networks are tools not toys.
9. Be transparent and admit when you’re wrong online.
10. Keep internal deliberations confidential.
Social Media Guidelines and Best Practices

By the Department of Health and Human Services
For the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention


Facebook

Purpose
This document is designed to provide guidance to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention employees and contractors on the process for planning and development, as well as best practices for participating and engaging, on the social networking site Facebook.

Background
Facebook is a social networking service launched in February 2004. As of March 2012, Facebook has more than 901 million active users, who generate an average of 3.2 billion Likes and Comments per day. For additional information on Facebook, visit http://newsroom.fb.com/.

The first CDC Facebook page, managed by the Office of the Associate Director for Communication Science (OADC), Division of News and Electronic Media (DNEM), Electronic Media Branch (EMB), was launched in May 2009 to share featured health and safety updates and to build an active and participatory community around the work of the agency. The agency has expanded its Facebook presence beyond the main CDC profile, and now supports multiple Facebook profiles connecting users with information on a range of CDC health and safety topics.

Communications Strategy
Facebook, as with other social media tools, is intended to be part of a larger integrated health communications strategy or campaign developed under the leadership of the Associate Director of Communication Science (ADCS) in the Health Communication Science Office (HCSO) of CDC’s National Centers, Institutes, and Offices (CIOs).

Clearance and Approval
1. **New Accounts**: As per the CDC Enterprise Social Media policy (link not available outside CDC network):
   - All new Facebook accounts must be cleared by the program’s HCSO office.
   - OADC must be notified at least 5 days prior to the launch of the profile. To notify OADC, please send an e-mail to socialmedia@cdc.gov.
   - Security approval is required from the CDC Office of the Chief Information Security Officer (OCISO). Please contact your CIO’s Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) for additional information on security requirements for participation in Facebook.
   - A Privacy Impact Assessment must also be completed and signed by CDC’s Privacy Officer.

   Additionally, programs should ensure that their media relations specialist and the News Media Branch in the Division of News and Electronic Media are aware of the new account.
2. **Postings:**

Careful consideration should always be given to the nature of Facebook posts and activities.
- All Facebook posts and activities must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by a program’s HCSO office.
- Facebook accounts are viewed as an official voice of CDC.
- Posts that are likely to draw widespread or media attention (e.g., new study shows 20% increase in disease); reflect a change in policy, recommendations, or guidelines (e.g., CDC expands coverage recommendation for ABC vaccine); or address a controversial topic may also need to be cleared through the program’s media relations specialist and the News Media Branch in the Division of News and Electronic Media.
- Posting standard health messages (e.g., exercise is good for you) should also go through a program’s communications clearance channels.

**Branding**

It is recommended that CDC Facebook pages include CDC in the page name and the CDC logo. Co-branding and the use of additional logos may also be incorporated in accordance with [CDC Brand Identity standards](link not available outside CDC network).

**Comment Policy**

An official comment policy should be developed for each Facebook page. An example CDC Facebook page comment policy is available in the application section of the CDC Facebook page [https://www.facebook.com/CDC/app_192223444203970](https://www.facebook.com/CDC/app_192223444203970).

**Records Management**

All Facebook page administrators must establish a system to collect all Facebook posts, comments, fan posts, events, and hidden posts (spam) to comply with Federal guidelines for records management and archiving.

Any comment removed for violating the CDC commenting policy must be recorded and archived prior to deleting.

**Consultation**

The Electronic Media Branch (EMB) provides consultation on the planning and development of Facebook activities and other social media tools. Please submit a [Create-IT request](link not available outside CDC network) for Social Media Consultation. Your CIO’s [Social Media Council representative](link not available outside CDC network) can also provide assistance.

**Planning Recommendations**

Before using Facebook, programs should consider the following recommendations when developing communication plans:
1. **Clearly Define the Objectives:** It is important to have clearly defined objectives before participating in Facebook. Do you want to highlight content, spark action, or encourage awareness of an issue? Clearly defined objectives will help you to determine if Facebook can help you in meeting larger communication goals.

2. **Know Your Target Audience(s):** As with any communications activity, it is important to define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages that resonate with your audience and prompt them to take action.

3. **Determine Resource Needs:** Determine if you have the appropriate staffing resources to create content and manage a Facebook page. It is important to designate a channel manager to serve as the point of contact for Facebook activities and ensure the content is posted on a regular basis.

4. **Identify the Best Platform:** Determine if you should develop a new Facebook page, have content posted on the CDC Facebook page, or use a different social media channel. See Appendix A, *Channel Decision Matrix*, for additional guidance.

**Best Practices**

Programs should consider the following best practices when developing Facebook content and activities:

1. **Keep Your Content Short and Simple:**
   - Length of posts should be 250 characters or less to allow the post to be viewed in its entirety in the news feed.
   - Length of comments should be 1,000 characters or less, and include a CDC.gov link for additional information and resources.

2. **Determine Schedule and Frequency of Facebook Posts:** It is important to set a posting schedule that defines a regular frequency for posts per week. Setting a regular schedule helps to ensure that the account is active and encourages more engaged users. Consider posting daily at a minimum.

3. **Identify the Best Web Link:** All Facebook posts should include a single URL, preferably to the CDC website or other CDC multimedia, to direct the user for more information. Campaign codes can be added to CDC.gov links in order to track metrics in Adobe Site Catalyst.

4. **Add Custom Images:** When posting CDC.gov Web links on Facebook, it is important that web pages are properly coded for enhanced display on Facebook. Please see Appendix B, *Adding Custom Images for Facebook Posts*, for additional guidance.
5. **Conduct Promotion Activities:** Ongoing promotion of your Facebook page is strongly recommended. Example promotion activities include:
   - Cross-promote on other CDC social media channels. Ask page owners of existing CDC Facebook pages and Twitter profiles with similar audiences and/or content to promote your Facebook activities.
   - Post links to your Facebook page on your website.
   - Send content-specific GovDelivery email updates.
   - Send emails to partners and grantees.

6. **Determine Approach for Engaging with Facebook Fans:** Facebook should be used to engage your target audience in two-way interaction and communication. Examples of engagement activities include:
   - Develop criteria for whom to Like and Tag on Facebook and share relevant partner content. See *Appendix C, Best Practices for Liking and Commenting as the CDC Brand*, for additional guidance.
   - Post content that is actionable, such as Facebook chats, events, quizzes, contests/challenges, questions, videos, infographics, photos, badges, widgets and interactive posts and comments on trending health topics to encourage followers to participate in conversations.
   - Ask users to do something within the post or content such as Share, Like, or Comment.
   - Highlight posts that encourage CDC priorities and information sharing by pinning, highlighting or adding as a milestone on the Timeline.
   - Post content that cross promotes other social media channels (e.g. Twitter, YouTube, Flickr)
   - Post additional information rather than remove comments that are inaccurate or not reflective of CDC science. Removal of comments that are inaccurate or opinionated, but not in violation of the comment policy, may cause a lack of trust in the site and has proven to be a practice that encourages backlash by the community.
   - Monitor your Facebook page to respond as soon as possible to fan questions, comments and other feedback.

7. **Evaluation:** Evaluation is an integral component for measuring the success of all social media activities, including Facebook.

   Regularly review Facebook Insights for page-specific metrics. You may also consider monitoring the increases in traffic to your website, as well as the mentions outside of Facebook on blogs, websites or articles.

   Adobe SiteCatalyst can be used to determine the number of click-throughs from a post with a link to a CDC.gov website. Automatically delivered metrics reports can be set-up for programs upon request. For more information, please visit the [Statistics and Metrics intranet](#).
Highlighting Content on CDC’s Main Facebook Page
The Electronic Media Branch maintains the CDC Facebook Page, and welcomes programs to use it to highlight their content. Content is posted on the existing page 2-4 times per day on a variety of health and safety topics, and is moderated daily by EMB staff in accordance with the CDC comment policy.

Requests to post on the main CDC Facebook page should be sent to socialmedia@cdc.gov one week in advance; however reasonable exceptions will be made in case of emergency. Submitted content must be cleared through a program’s established communications clearance channels. If the topic is potentially controversial, identify a subject matter expert or communication specialist to help monitor Facebook comments on the day of posting. It is also recommended you draft and clear in advance possible responses and posts to additional informational for controversial topics.

Posts should be 250 characters or less and include a single URL (e.g., CDC.gov, partner, government agency, etc.) photo, or video when possible. Metadata for CDC.gov URLs should be included so that links and images properly display within Facebook.

Creating a New CDC Facebook Page
Please submit a Create-IT request (link not available outside CDC network) to schedule a consultation with EMB or contact your Social Media Council representative (link not available outside CDC network) for assistance.

Visit http://www.facebook.com/government for additional resources about developing and managing government Facebook pages and to see what other agencies are doing. See Appendix D for additional requirements for Facebook Timeline.

1. Develop and Clear a Facebook Concept, Plan, and Content: All Facebook activities, including account set-up and content creation, must be cleared through your CIO’s established communications clearance channels.

   Security approval is also required from the CDC OCISO for new and existing Facebook accounts. Please contact your CIO’s ISSO for additional information on security requirements for participation in Facebook. A Privacy Impact Assessment must be completed and signed by CDC’s Privacy Officer.

   OADC is required to maintain a directory of all CDC social media channels and must be notified at least 5 days prior to the launch of the profile. To notify OADC, please send an e-mail to socialmedia@cdc.gov. The program’s media relations specialist and the News Media Branch in the Division of News and Electronic Media should also be made aware of the new account.
2. **Create the Facebook Page:**

Basic information required to establish a new Facebook Page:

- **Page name:** A unique page name that describes the subject matter of the account, name of the organization or contains a keyword describing the nature of the organization. It is recommended that the profile name and page URL include CDC (e.g., CDC Emergency Preparedness and Response, CDC Health Partners Outreach).

- **List of page administrators:** One to two individuals who will serve as page administrators and have the authority to post on behalf of the page (topic). It is recommended to add SocialMedia@cdc.gov as an administrator to assist in page setup and to assist in the event of an emergency.

- **Basic information content:** Location, general description and mission, as well as a list of web links (e.g., http://www.cdc.gov).

- **Disclaimer language in the About section:** “For official CDC info go to www.cdc.gov. Disclaimer: Posted comments do not necessarily represent the views of CDC.”

**Cover and Profile Images:** A logo and image that represents your organization (see Branding information: link not available outside CDC network).

It is recommended that the launch plan include a soft, internal-only launch to build your fan base to 25. Once a page has 25 fans, you can claim your custom page URL and begin a larger promotion effort (https://www.facebook.com/username/).

Facebook ads must be removed from the page prior to external launch, as negotiated under the federal Terms of Service. Please send your request for ad removal to socialmedia@cdc.gov.

3. **Evaluate and Track Facebook Metrics:** Establish a plan for monitoring and evaluating your Facebook presence. If you wish to use Adobe SiteCatalyst to track click-throughs, please visit the statistics and metrics intranet site (link not available outside CDC network) for more information.
## Appendix A: Social Media Channel Decision Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Existing Agency Channels</th>
<th>Create New Topic-based Channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Goals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Primary Goals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create awareness, inform, disseminate, promote or provide news</td>
<td>- Build a community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Generate “buzz”</td>
<td>- Engagement with audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expand reach</td>
<td>- Expansive calls to action that require ongoing engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Build a community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Engagement with audiences</td>
<td>- Social media highly integrated into your health communication plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Audience – General and Broad</strong></th>
<th><strong>Audience – Specific and Defined</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Largely consumer audience, general partners and media (with similar messages to all groups)</td>
<td>- Advocacy groups, strong community groups, or media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Target audiences already present on CDC’s main channel or other existing profiles</td>
<td>- Very active and engaged audience already using social media (or likely to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No ongoing relationship with the same audience required</td>
<td>- CDC has realistic capacity to get their audience on this profile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Content – General and Periodic</strong></th>
<th><strong>Content – Targeted and Frequent</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- General consumer and/or partner messages</td>
<td>- Highly targeted to an audience or highly specific to a complex campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Messages fit within existing CDC profiles</td>
<td>- Niche topic combined with strong audience interest, and not available through other CDC channels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Messages support short-term campaigns</td>
<td>- Frequent and engaging content posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Messages support short-term campaigns</td>
<td>- Messages support long-term campaigns and are expected to have high volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Messages support short-term campaigns</td>
<td>- Substantial conversations already occurring in social media on this topic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Engagement Need – Low to Medium</strong></th>
<th><strong>Engagement Need – Medium to High</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Engaging is primarily to increase awareness, buzz, and reach.</td>
<td>- Level of engagement not possibly on other profiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Less two-way engagements required</td>
<td>- Facilitate and moderate open dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No clearly defined communication or promotion plan to engage or build new audiences</td>
<td>- Need to regularly listen and receive information from your audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insufficient resources to consistently engage with audiences</td>
<td>- Associated with a multi-year integrated campaign with heavy social media engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insufficient resources to consistently engage with audiences</td>
<td>- Potential for strong networking already exists (partners using or considering SM to reach their own audiences, and the ability to leverage)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CDC Draft Facebook Requirements and Best Practices

Last updated May 16, 2012
Appendix B: Adding Custom Images for Facebook Posts

Facebook obtains images randomly from the page in order to show an image when posting a list. Then the images are converted to 90px x 90px which for some images, which may make the images difficult to view. A custom image(s) when posting links into the Facebook posts is a better option since the ratio and size can be customized. Create a JPEG image that is 90 pixels x 90 pixels. Facebook displays JPEG images better than other types of images but will accommodate PNGs and GIFs.

How to create custom images:

- Upload the image to the dev server and the link server.
- Add code to the head of the page right after the description:

```html
<meta name="medium" content="image" />
<meta property="og:image" content="http://www.cdc.gov/[IMAGE LOCATION]" />
<meta property="og:title" content="CDC - [Name of Page]" />
<meta property="og:url" content="http://www.cdc.gov/[Page URL]" />
<meta property="og:description" content="[Description]"/>
<meta property="og:type" content="website" />
<meta property="og:image:type" content="image/jpeg" />
<meta property="og:image:height" content="90" />
```

---

CDC Draft Facebook Requirements and Best Practices Last updated May 16, 2012
• Change the items that are in brackets [].
• If using a different type of image other than JPEG, then change the image type code above.
• Save and upload the page to the server.
• Once live, test the page in Facebook by adding the link. It is not necessary to click “post” in order to see if the image is working correctly.

If the image is not showing, try to re-cache/refresh the page.

• Use the Facebook Debugger to debug the URL: https://developers.facebook.com/tools/debug
• Enter the URL that needs to be tested.
• Hit Debug
• This page shows you how Facebook now sees your page
• Close down Facebook.com and reopen
• Add the URL in the status update to see the refreshed page post

If more images are required, add multiple lines of this code with the different image links.

<meta property="og:image" content="http://www.cdc.gov/[IMAGE LOCATION]" />

Do not upload images to an https folder as Facebook will not recognize the images.

Additional References:

• http://developers.facebook.com/docs/reference/plugins/like/
• https://developers.facebook.com/tools/debug
• http://ogp.me/
Appendix C: Best Practices for Liking and Commenting as the CDC Brand

Overview
This section includes best practices and recommendations for liking other Facebook pages, displaying “featured likes,” liking status updates or comments, commenting on partners’ content as ‘the CDC brand’ and ways to cross-promote partner content. Please consult with your HCSO and other key stakeholders prior to “Liking” or “Commenting” as the CDC brand to determine the clearance process.

Programs should determine, in conjunction with their CIO’s HCSO and other key stakeholders, which partners, agencies, and influencers to “Like” and engage with on Facebook. Specific sectors to consider when determining who to “like” can include other government agencies; CDC-funded public health partners, such as APHA and NACCHO; state and local health departments; and non-profit public health organizations and partners (e.g., American Cancer Society).

Definitions

Brand: All CDC-branded Facebook pages owned by the CDC and managed by employees or contractors.

Tagging: Tagging is a function within Facebook available to page administrators. Tagging refers to the action of cross-linking within a post to another CDC Facebook page or to an external partner page.

Like (of a status update or comment): The “Like” occurs when a fan clicks on the “Like button” within a post to give positive feedback or support items.

Displaying “Featured Likes” on your Agency Facebook Page
Featured Likes are a way for pages to permanently highlight or feature partner pages in the Facebook Timeline. “Liking” other featured partner organizations allows the CDC brand to promote partner content to fans of the CDC’s page for a one-time event (such as during an awareness month) or an extended period of time. This feature also encourages partners to cross-promote CDC Facebook pages and content.
Example of Facebook Featured Likes

Recommendations
It is recommended that all Facebook pages at CDC “like” other CDC Facebook pages by adding them to the list of favorite pages. It is also recommended that other CDC Facebook pages are added as “featured likes” as appropriate with respect to content.

- As the CDC brand, it is recommended to “like” public health partners who are on Facebook and encourage them to tag CDC in their posts on related topics. Public health partners can include federal agencies (e.g., AIDS.gov), and partners who are doing work with related health topics (e.g., NFL – concussions) or campaigns (e.g., ChildHealth.org). Other partners may also be highlighted as appropriate with clearance from your Health Communication Science Office (HCSO).

- It is recommended to contact approved partners and request they add your Facebook page as a “Favorite Page,” especially if the CDC brand “likes” their page.

- To manage the CDC brand’s “like” list, the administrator can manually default the top 5 featured partner organizations to show up in the Facebook timeline and rotate which partners show up during awareness months or campaign launches.

Liking Status Updates or Comments
By clicking on the “Like” button as the CDC brand, this indicates your brand page is supporting the content or message of the post (for example, CDC Heads Up or CDC Tobacco Free may “like” the features, press releases, etc. that are posted on the main CDC Facebook page on their topic areas). The recipient of the “Like” action will also be notified. Liking status updates is not restricted to CDC content, and can occur on partner pages as well.
Recommendations for Commenting on Partner Content
Commenting as a CDC branded page is a unique tool that allows programs to interact and engage in conversations with partners beyond the CDC brand page.

- Establish an internal process for when and how to comment as the CDC brand on partner pages.

- Make sure comments are cleared through the appropriate channels. Commenting as the CDC brand on an external page requires clearing both content and context (page and thread) where the post will live.

- When commenting as the CDC brand, it is possible to positively influence the conversation, establish authority and credibility, correct misinformation, educate target audiences, raise awareness for prevention efforts, support partner events, and promote the brand’s page.

- Remember any comment, whether it is on the CDC brand’s page or a partner page represents the official position of the CDC.

Ways to Cross-Promote Partner Content
Promoting partner content provides the opportunity for the CDC brand to expand the reach of its content through partner networks. It also provides the CDC brand the opportunity to collaborate with key prevention partners by highlighting their messages and activities.

“Liking” Partners
In order for a CDC-branded page to comment or post on the wall of a partner’s page, the administrator has to “Like” the partner page.
Sharing Partner Content with the Fans of the CDC Brand Pages

After “Liking” a partner’s page, the CDC Facebook page can share and feature posts from partner pages. Click the “Share” button on the partner’s post you wish to share. These posts display on the CDC brand page, as shown below:

![Partner Post Example](https://example.com/partner-post.png)

Encouraging Partner’s to Tag CDC Brand Pages

Write posts for partner pages about events, awareness activities, campaigns or resources being launched. In order to tag another Facebook page, you must “Like” the page.

![Partner Post Example](https://example.com/partner-post.png)

Notify partner organizations of outreach plans prior to launch and create messaging consistent with the partner’s page.
Final Considerations

- Does the benefit of participating in the comment thread as the CDC brand on a partner page outweigh the risk of attracting unwanted, negative traffic or interaction to the CDC brand’s wall?

- Be aware when participating on the thread to not appear to take sides with one strategic partner at the expense of possibly alienating another.

- Featuring partners may open the CDC brand up to receiving requests from other pages, not necessarily partners. Decide how the CDC brand will handle these requests prior to featuring campaign or topic specific partner pages.
Appendix D: Requirements for Facebook Timeline

**Cover Photo**
Timeline’s cover photo allows you to create a descriptive visual of the CDC brand. The cover photo image size is 851 x 315 pixels. It is recommended to refresh the image occasionally to coordinate with campaigns or other events. The cover photo cannot include contact information (i.e. website, email, mailing address), calls to action, and references to Facebook features (i.e. like, share) or arrows pointing to these features. Images must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by a program’s HCSO office.

**Profile Image**
This image represents CDC’s brand’s identity and should remain fixed. Co-branding and the use of additional logos may also be incorporated in accordance with [CDC Brand Identity standards](#) (link not available outside CDC network). The profile picture image size is 160 x 160 pixels and will sit at 23 pixels from the left and 210 pixels from the top. Images must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by a program’s HCSO office.

**About Section**
The About section provides basic and contact information for the CDC and is visible below the profile image. It includes information entered into the “Basic Information” section of the profile. This section should include at a minimum the description or mission of the CDC, the CDC disclaimer, and contact information. There is a 150 character maximum for the descriptive text.

**Milestones**
A milestone is a major event that is particularly relevant to the CDC, such as a campaign launch, historical events, reaching a certain number of fans, or other moment that is significant to CDC’s growth and development. The photo image size for milestones is 843 x 403 pixels. The first milestone should be the date the CDC organization was founded. You cannot include milestones before your organization’s founding date. Milestone images and content must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by a program’s HCSO office.

**Pin Posts**
A pin post is a post that a brand may “pin” to the top of the Timeline for 7 days at a time as a way to highlight important posts and links to increase engagement with fans. When running a campaign or event, pin a post that calls attention to the promotion.

**Star Stories**
Highlight an important post on Timeline by “starring” it. When a post is starred, it will expand to widescreen and always be visible. Milestones cannot be starred.

**Applications**
Applications, or apps, are featured below the cover photo. There are four apps featured on the top Facebook navigation. Three apps can be customized; the photos app cannot be modified. Since featured apps are always visible to users who visit your Timeline, you should choose them strategically. To see additional apps, users must expand the panel by clicking a drop-down box located in the top navigation. Up to 12 apps are available on a Facebook page.
The image size for apps is 111 x 74 pixels in size. Assign names to applications that clearly indicate the content to users. Page app width can be set to narrow (520 pixels) or wide (810 pixels).

**Direct Messages**
Timeline gives fans the ability to send private, direct messages to brand pages. Timeline does not provide the ability to direct message fans or other users. It is recommended that this feature be disabled for CDC Facebook pages unless a protocol for responding to inquiries has been established.

**Administration Panel**
The administration panel gives Facebook administrators access to page and post performance. Administrators can view notifications, page insights, direct messages and the activity log. The activity log provides a list of all posts and allows administrators to filter stories by type or by year. Within the activity log the administrator can also star, hide, or delete stories and change the date of a post so that it appears on the page Timeline with a more accurate date stamp.
**CDC Twitter Profiles**

**Purpose**
This document is designed to provide guidance to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) employees and contractors on the use of Twitter, the micro-blogging site in which CDC currently participates. CDC encourages the strategic use of Twitter to disseminate CDC health information and engage with individuals and partners.

**Background**
Twitter is a real-time information network used by millions of individuals, organizations and businesses to share information, commentary, descriptions of events, and highlight online and social media content. Launched in July 2006, Twitter enables users to send and read messages made up of 140 characters or less, called tweets. Tweets can be posted to Twitter via text message, mobile websites, audio, Twitter’s website, or a variety of other mobile and web applications. Twitter has an estimated 200 million users generating more than 200 million tweets a day, and the service handles over 1.6 billion search queries per day. See Appendix A for a list of commonly used Twitter terms.

CDC has a robust and growing Twitter presence. Currently, CDC supports more than 40 Twitter profiles connecting followers with information on a range of CDC health and safety topics.

Please refer to the CDC Enterprise Social Media Policy (link not available outside CDC network) for guidance on use of social media for work-related and personal activities, and for requirements on use of social media in an official CDC spokesperson capacity.

**Communications Strategy**
Twitter and other social media tools are intended to be used as part of a larger, integrated health communications program or project developed under the leadership of the Associate Director of Communication Science (ADCS) in the Health Communication Science Office (HCSO) of CDC’s National Centers, Institutes, and Offices (CIOs).

**Clearance and Approval**

1. **New Accounts**: As per the CDC Enterprise Social Media Usage policy:
   - All new Twitter accounts must be cleared by the program’s HCSO office.
   - The Office of the Associate Director for Communication (OADC) must be notified at least 5 days prior to the launch of the profile. To notify OADC, please send an email to socialmedia@cdc.gov.
   - Security approval is required from the CDC Office of the Chief Information Security Officer (OCISO). Please contact your CIO’s Information Systems Security Officer (ISSO) for additional information on security requirements for participation in Twitter.
   - A Privacy Impact Assessment must also be completed and signed by CDC’s Privacy Officer.
Additionally, programs should ensure that their media relations specialist and the News Media Branch in the Division of News and Electronic Media are aware of the new account.

2. **Messages:**
   Careful consideration should always be given to the nature of Twitter messages and activities.
   - All Twitter messaging and activities must be cleared through the clearance channels determined by a program’s HCSO office.
   - Twitter accounts, including those associated with an expert’s name, are viewed as an official voice of CDC.
   - Messages that are likely to draw widespread or media attention (e.g., new study shows 20% increase in disease); reflect a change in policy, recommendations, or guidelines (e.g., CDC expands coverage recommendation for ABC vaccine); or address a controversial topic may also need to be cleared through the program’s media relations specialist and the News Media Branch in the Division of News and Electronic Media.
   - Tweeting standard health messages (e.g., exercise is good for you) should also go through a program’s communications clearance channels.

**Consultation**
The Electronic Media Branch (EMB) provides consultation on the planning and development of Twitter activities and other social media tools. Please contact socialmedia@cdc.gov for assistance. Your CIO’s Social Media Council representative (link not available outside CDC network) can also provide assistance.

**Best Practices**
Before using Twitter, programs should consider the following best practices:

1. **Clearly Define Your Objectives:** It is important to have clearly defined objectives before participating in Twitter. Do you want to highlight content, spark action, or encourage awareness of an issue? Clearly defined objectives will help you to determine if Twitter can help you in meeting your larger communication goals.

2. **Know Your Target Audience(s):** As with any communications activity, it is important to define your intended target audience(s) in order to develop and communicate messages that resonate with your audience and prompt them to take action.

3. **Determine Resource Needs:** Determine if you have the appropriate staffing resources to create content and manage a Twitter profile. It is important to designate a channel manager to serve as the point of contact for Twitter activities and ensure that content is posted on a regular basis.

4. **Keep Your Content Short and Simple:** Although the maximum character limit for a tweet is 140 characters, EMB recommends using 120 characters (including URL, punctuation and
spaces) to make it easy for followers to retweet the message without having to edit it. It is appropriate to use abbreviations in a Twitter message in order to save characters. See Appendix B for tweet examples and Appendix C for a list of common Twitter abbreviations.

Shorten the URL using Websites such as http://tinyurl.com or http://is.gd. For Government URLs use http://go.usa.gov to shorten links. Visit https://go.usa.gov/ to register for an account.

5. **Determine Schedule and Frequency of Twitter Posts:** It is important to set a posting schedule that defines a frequency for posts per week. Setting a regular schedule helps to ensure that the account is active and encourages engaged followers. Consider posting weekly at a minimum.

6. **Conduct Promotion Activities:** Ongoing promotion of your Twitter profile is strongly recommended. Promotion tips include:
   - Cross-promote on other CDC social media and Web channels. For example, leverage existing CDC Twitter profiles and Facebook pages with similar audiences and/or content to promote your Twitter activities.
   - Consider Twitter advertising to increase the number of Twitter followers. It is recommended that you determine your budget, target audience, and objective before beginning a Twitter advertising initiative. Please contact socialmedia@cdc.gov for more information.

7. **Determine Approach for Engaging with Twitter Followers:** In addition to being a channel for health information dissemination, Twitter should also be used to engage your target audience in two-way interaction and communication. Examples of engagement activities include:
   - Develop criteria for whom to follow on Twitter. Identify relevant partners, influencers, and federal, state and local agencies that are involved in and interested in your specific health topic(s). See Appendix D for recommendations.
   - Share relevant partner and follower Twitter content on your Twitter profile. Develop a strategy for identifying and retweeting or replying to posts from partners and followers.
   - Consider holding Twitter events. Twitter events encourage followers to participate in conversations about your priority health topics. See Appendix E for examples of Twitter events.

8. **Evaluation:** Evaluation is an integral component of all social media activities, including Twitter. Evaluation approaches for Twitter may include reviewing metrics, identifying lessons learned, and determining whether the social media effort successfully met project goals.
Regularly monitor your Twitter account to review the number of followers, updates, retweets and mentions in Twitter. You may also consider monitoring the increases in traffic to your website, as well as the mentions outside of Twitter on blogs, websites or articles. Examples of Twitter metrics that can be collected are number of retweets a post receives; number of click-throughs from a Twitter post to a CDC.gov Web page; and number of @replies.

Adobe SiteCatalyst can be used to determine the number of click-throughs from a tweet to a CDC.gov website. Automated metrics reports can be established for programs. Please visit the statistics and metrics intranet site (link not available outside CDC network) for more information.

9. Establish a Records Management System: Set-up a system to keep track of your Twitter posts, @replies, retweets and mentions to comply with Federal guidelines for records management and archiving.

How to Create a CDC Twitter Profile
Please email socialmedia@cdc.gov if you require consultation, or contact your Social Media Council representative (link not available outside CDC network) for assistance.

1. Develop and Clear Twitter Concept, Plan, and Content: All Twitter activities, including account set-up and content creation, must be cleared through your CIO’s established communications clearance channels.

Security approval is also required from the CDC OCISO for new and existing Twitter accounts. Please contact your CIO’s ISSO for additional information on security requirements for participation in Twitter. A Privacy Impact Assessment must be completed and signed by CDC’s Privacy Officer.

OADC is required to maintain a directory of all CDC social media channels and must be notified at least 5 days prior to the launch of the profile. To notify OADC, please send an email to socialmedia@cdc.gov. The program’s media relations specialist and the News Media Branch in the Division of News and Electronic Media should also be made aware of the new account.

2. Create the Twitter Profile: Set up a Twitter account at http://twitter.com. Twitter accounts require the following information for set-up:

   - Profile name: The profile name is a unique identifier that describes the subject matter of the account, name of the organization, or contains a keyword describing the nature of the organization. Your Twitter profile should be identified as being an official CDC presence. If possible, start the name of the account with CDC (e.g. CDC_eHealth, CDCgov). The profile name should be short and concise (maximum 20 characters).
Website: A CDC.gov URL should be included on the profile page as the official source of information.

E-mail address: Identify a group or team mailbox that multiple team members can access.

Bio: The biography is a 160-character description of the profile.

Profile Image: A logo or image that represents your organization.

3. Evaluate and Track Twitter Metrics: Establish a plan for monitoring and evaluating your Twitter presence. If you wish to use Adobe SiteCatalyst to track click-throughs, please visit the statistics and metrics intranet site (link not available outside CDC network) for more information.

Appendix A: Twitter Terms

The following are common terms related to Twitter activities:

- **Direct Message or DM**: A private Twitter message sent via Twitter between people who follow each other.

- **Follow**: A way to subscribe to receive an individual’s or an organization’s Twitter updates. A user can “follow” another individual or organization by clicking the “Follow” button on the person’s or organization’s page.

- **Follower**: A Twitter user who subscribes to follow another user.

- **“#” or Hashtags**: A way to categorize tweets around a particular topic.

- **Mentions/@ Reply**: A Twitter update that contains @username anywhere in the body of the Tweet.

- **ReTweet or RT**: Sharing another user’s tweets with followers, usually by using the phrase “RT @username” or “ReTweet @username.”

- **Tweet**: An individual Twitter post.
Appendix B: Sample Tweets

Some examples of tweets that have been created by CDC programs are included below:

- Teen birth rates declined in 2009. Help improve the lives of young people with effective prevention. [http://go.usa.gov/Z9o](http://go.usa.gov/Z9o)
- In the next 2 hours, one pedestrian will die and 27 will be injured in a traffic crash. Walk safely! [http://go.usa.gov/Za6](http://go.usa.gov/Za6)
- If you’re prepared for a zombie apocalypse, you’re ready for any emergency. Latest from @CDCgov PH Matters Blog: [http://go.usa.gov/jVd](http://go.usa.gov/jVd)
- Parents can help prevent teen crashes. Learn more in this new CDC video. [http://go.usa.gov/bmi](http://go.usa.gov/bmi)
- Number of states reporting widespread flu activity increased to 25; regional flu activity reported by 16 states. [http://go.usa.gov/YNE](http://go.usa.gov/YNE)
- CDC recommends rapid flu treatment w/ antivirals for people at high risk of serious flu complications. [http://go.usa.gov/YqY](http://go.usa.gov/YqY)

Appendix C: Twitter Abbreviations

Some common abbreviations used in tweets include:

- US (for United States)
- Info (for Information)
- & (for And)
- Msg (for Message)
- IMPT (for Important)
- b/c (for Because)
- w/ or w. (for With)
- Pls (for Please)
- RT (for ReTweet)

Do not use the “@” symbol as an abbreviation. This is used to refer to other Twitter users by their user name. Additionally, do not use the “#” symbol, as this is used to refer to a hashtag.

Appendix D: How to Determine Who to Follow on Twitter
Programs should determine, in conjunction with their CIO’s HCSO and other key stakeholders, which partners, followers, and influencers to follow and retweet. Below are recommendations for specific sectors to consider when determining who to follow:

- Federal agencies and programs
- CDC funded public health partners, such as APHA, ASTHO, and NACCHO
- State and local health departments
- Non-profit public health organizations/partners (e.g. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, American Cancer Society)
- Topic-specific public health programs and campaigns (e.g. Red Pumps Project, Red Dress Campaign)
Appendix E: Types of Twitter Events

Twitter events can be an effective way to engage with Twitter followers. Types of Twitter events include:

**Live Tweeting:** Live tweeting from an event, such as a CDC conference or meeting, allows followers to virtually experience the event through Twitter. Conference highlights, speaker quotes, announcements, and other key aspects of the event can be tweeted, and where available, a predefined hashtag is included at the end of each tweet to group all tweets related to the live tweeting event.

**Twitter Chat:** A Twitter chat is a way to have a conversation and interact with followers using tweets and a predefined hashtag. CDC Twitter chats are usually arranged in advance and scheduled for a specific time, and include a formal agenda or script to guide the discussion. CDC subject matter experts or outside partners participate in the chat, and interact with CDC Twitter followers by responding to questions and comments received during the chat. Each tweet includes the predefined hashtag to group all tweets related to the Twitter chat.

**Twitterview:** CDC subject matter experts and partners have participated in Twitterviews with national media outlets. Arranged in advance, a Twitterview is a type of interview in which the interviewer and interviewee conduct the conversation through tweets. Using a predefined hashtag at the end of each Twitterview tweet allows followers to track the discussion.

**Twitter Town Hall:** Arranged in advance, a Twitter Town Hall is a forum that allows followers to submit questions via Twitter about the topic to be discussed during a live town hall event. Questions can be submitted via Twitter in advance of or during the event. Responses are delivered through tweets during the event, and can be responded to live during the discussion. Followers can monitor the discussion if a pre-defined hashtag is included with each tweet.
Excerpt from:

Social Media in School

Emergency Management

By the U.S. Department of Education
Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools

Social Media in School Emergency Management

Using New Media Technology to Improve Emergency Management Communications

Kim Stephens
Social Media Designer, Researcher and Editor
How are Schools Using Social Media?

- Notifications for school dismissals and closures
- Post status information during an emergency
- Receive status information during an emergency
- Disseminate safety information, news alerts, health alerts
- Communications during full-scale exercise
- Post-reunification protocols
Are Families Using Social Media and Hand-held Communications?

- 96% of young adults ages 18-29 own a cell phone of some kind.
- 73% of online teens (age 12-17) use social networking sites.
- Teens from lower income families are MORE likely to use online social networks (4 in 5)

Source: Pew Research Center, Oct. 2010
Policy Considerations

Policies to consider:

- Who will deliver messages: Schools, District or both?
- Who will be responsible to clear content posted on sites?
- Who will be allowed to contribute non-crisis information?
- Comment policies need to be spelled out and posted.
- Information feedback mechanisms need to be included.
1. Who will deliver messages: schools, district or both?

The roles at the school and district levels in utilizing Social Media should be clearly defined.

2. Who will be responsible to clear content posted on sites?

This is an important procedure to have in place, and should be consistent with procedures involving approval of emergency management information generally.
3. How will use of Social Media for emergency management co-exist with non-emergency use of these tools?
4. Prominently post comment policies.

- Social Media is social, you won’t like every comment.

- Specify:
  - When/what comments will be deleted.
  - What personal info will and will not be posted.
  - Behavior you expect from students and parents on your sites.
5. Determine how to *listen*.

Comments and information posted on Social Media networks, such as Twitter, could be important for several reasons:

1. Inform school/district of otherwise unknown problems.
2. Point out holes in information being provided to the public.
3. Provide situational awareness information during an unfolding event.

Ensure plans and procedures provide a feedback mechanism to ensure relevant information gets to school administrators and the incident commander.
CDC’s policy -- comments will be deleted that contain:

- Hate speech
- Profanity
- Nudity
- Defamation
- Name calling
- Spam
Plan: Decide *which* tools you will employ and *when*.

- Which tools best suit your needs?
  - Can choose a social network (Facebook), a messaging site (Twitter), broadcast texting, or all of the above.

- Whichever tools you choose, employ them **before** a crisis.

- Why?
  - Staff familiarity
  - Community familiarity
During an emergency, people will seek information wherever they can find it.

You will want to be *timely*; therefore, you will need resources to

1. Ensure Incident Command System is followed and all communications are cleared through incident commander.

2. Respond quickly to public’s questions (or they will seek info elsewhere).

3. Monitor SM to determine what others are saying about event.
Three Popular Social Media Tools and Platforms: SMS Text Messaging

1. SMS Text Messaging Service

140 character message that can be sent and received on a mobile device.

*These messages can be pre-scripted.*

**Pros:**

1. Reaches parents wherever they are.
2. On smart phones text is visible on top of other applications.
3. Can easily accommodate multiple languages.

**Cons:**

1. SMS can be delivered through a private company and could be expensive.
2. People have to sign up to receive alerts necessitating an awareness campaign.
SMS Text “How To”

Research companies (or even free services) that provide SMS Text software.

Purchase and install software and train staff on use and policies.

Implement awareness campaign for staff and parents to encourage stakeholders to sign-up.

Test system on a regular schedule.
Crisis communications can go two ways.

**Fight fire with fire:** Allow students to report cyber-bullying (or any other kind of bullying or potential violence) through text messages.

- **Students send anonymous reports.**
- **Students may be more open to sending semi-anonymous messages to schools through text messaging.**
- **Schools can send info.**

There are free systems, such as *FrontlineSMS Bullyproof* that help schools address this problem.
2. Micro-Blogging

Form of blogging that allows users to send brief (140 characters or less) to a Web site that aggregates these messages for viewing.

- Messages can be submitted through text messages, mobile websites or through the site hosting the blog.
- This is not a social network, but rather a broadcast forum.
- People are not “friends” but “followers”.

Twitter artwork by http://lazycrazy.deviantart.com/gallery/#/d2gwla8
Pros and Cons of Micro-Blogging

Pros:
1. Accounts are free and easy to use.
2. News organizations monitor these sites after a crisis.
3. Easy way to monitor and sort weather and local fire/emergency response information (or other topics of interest).

Cons:
1. There are a smaller number of subscribers to this format than others.
2. It does require trained staff/policies and procedures.
How to Use Twitter During a Crisis

Use hashtags as a way for public to track information.

Direct public/media to website if applicable. URL should be shortened.

Retweet relevant info others provide.

@ symbol is simply the address of the entity you are retweeting.
Three Popular Social Media Methods and Platforms: Social Networking

3. Social Networking Sites (such as Facebook)

- Public site where information can be posted, from Bake Sales to Crisis Communications.

- There are several social networking sites, but currently Facebook is the most popular with over 400 million users world-wide.

- A “Fan Page” can be established with more user control features and users will not need accounts to see postings.
Pros and Cons of Using Social Networks

Pros:
1. Sites are free and easy to use and customize.
2. Increasingly used by every level of government: from the State Department to local emergency management agencies.
3. Can send out mass messages with no limit to number of “fans” who can view it.

Cons:
1. Sites are public, so are comments.
2. Sites will need to be monitored.
3. Designated administrators have to have their own page.
Posting and monitoring remotely:

There are *many* applications that allow you to update all of your networks remotely, and receive text messages when your organization is mentioned.

Examples: Ping.fm, Gist, TweetPo.st, Seesmic Desktop, Smart Twitter for Pages.

Go to sites such as http://oneforty.com for reviews to determine which is best for you.
An accident has occurred. How do you monitor what people are saying?

To monitor Social Media and news you can:

1. Set up event hashtag on Twitter so others adopt its usage. 
   #busaccidentMD
   Monitor this hashtag using an app such as “Tweetdeck”.

2. Set up **Google Alerts** to send you email updates each time information is posted about:
   - bus accident
   - town name
   - school name, etc.
Use a Dashboard:

Dashboards allow you to put newspapers, blogs, weather, email, search, videos, photos, social networks, podcasts, widgets all in one page. These platforms can be public, and they can be accessed on a mobile device.

3. iGoogle

4. Addict-o-matic

5. Netvibes site
Common Mistakes

1. Content is not updated in a timely manner.

2. Content provided during the Prevention-Mitigation and Preparedness phases is not engaging and is therefore ignored.

3. Content is not integrated with other school information (a site devoted solely to emergency info might not attract users).

4. Comments on sites are not monitored by staff and go unanswered.

5. Content is not updated frequently enough to be current and useful.
What are Blogs?


The term ‘blog’ indicates an online forum for the sharing of information. Twitter is a microblogging website where users tweet short written or photo content. Tumblr is a blogging network for multimedia posts. There are countless other blogging platforms for the sharing of art, photos, music, videos and audio clips that allow people and organizations to come together around mutual interests. So, what does this mean for your organization?

Why are Blogs Useful?

Blogs can be valuable tools for organizations to use in building deeper relationships with their interested publics. Where Facebook offers a constant stream of short posts, blogging platforms offer a wider range of content to suit every follower’s interests. If your audience responds best to photos, you can join a photo blogging site to share your story through pictures. If your audience is most receptive videos you have posted, you can join a video blog.

The options for sharing your story are nearly limitless. All you need is a little creativity and the web savvy to assess how to effectively engage your public in conversation. One of the best features a blog can offer is its up to the minute access to new information. Traditional newsletters may only have been dispersed once a week or once a month. Blogs now give users the ability to share news as it is happening so your public can have the most recent information no matter the time of day.

Blog Tips:

1. **Draw the Eyes**
   In an online world with paragraphs of text everywhere you go, it is the pictures, the videos, the out of the ordinary sights that draw people’s eyes. Posts with long, text-only content are often doomed to obscurity even if that information is well written. Adding a visually engaging aspect to your posts can mean the difference between getting noticed and fading away into the stream of endless new social media information. Hook people into

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Gaining Traffic & Blogging

...your story by first adding an engaging visual component to your post. Getting people to notice you is the first step; what you do from there is up to you.

2. **Make it Interesting**
Engage your readers with compelling stories, emotion, humor and wit. You have a brand image to uphold, yes, but it is also important to show your followers that your organization is made up of people and not marketing machines. They want to make a personal connection and you can accomplish this by making the information you post relevant and important to their lives. Know your public, know what they are interested in and know how to engage their emotions. If you can make them feel something, captivate them with laughter or outrage over a social ailment, you can build a loyal base of followers who will be interested to see what you post next.

3. **Keep it Short and Sweet**
Written blogs such as WordPress and Blogger offer a little more wiggle room than short-content sharing platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. You can post more information on these networks, but weighty text may mean that no one reads the content you have published. Written blogs are meant to be longer, but there is a fine line between just the right amount of information and so much information that readers are overwhelmed before they even start. The length of your posts will differ depending on the content you are publishing, but just remember that people are busy and easily distracted. Make your posts approachable and manageable and you will have better chances of people actually paying attention to what you have written.

4. **Action!**
You post information, but do you have a goal in mind? Ultimately, you want to galvanize your followers to some action so make sure that your message is clear. Many organizations fall into the trap of posting information just to post information, which can lead to aimless posts and disinterested followers. Every piece of information you release should have some desired outcome that you are seeking. You may want your followers to share your post with their friends, donate to a worthy cause or just laugh at your joke of the day. Whatever that action is, you can spur people into interactive motion by engaging their emotions and clearly stating your own point of view or asking for theirs. Don’t be afraid to tell your public exactly what you would like them to do.
Gaining Traffic & Blogging

5. **Share, Share, Share**
   
   You have published your content and it is now available to countless minds out in the blogosphere. Now what? No matter how many followers you currently have, there are always more people who might be interested in what you have to say or would benefit from learning about your organization. Don't stop at just publishing your information on one social network. Share your posts in slightly different variations on your other social presences and get your followers to share them too. The more you share your information, the more people who are likely to view and engage with your content.²

**Web Tracking**

**Bit.ly** (www.bitly.com)

Bit.ly is a web service that allows users to save any link. These ‘bitmarks’ can then be shared via email, Facebook and Twitter to broadcast what you are interested in. Bit.ly is especially useful in **shortening long URLs** to make them easier to share with followers. Facebook and Twitter posts are most effective at engaging target audiences when they are short, concise and visually stimulating. Twitter tweets are limited to 140 characters and long links on Facebook can be overwhelming, so using bitmarks instead of full links can make your posts easier to digest and more likely to have follower engagement.

Go from this:
http://maps.google.com/maps?f=d&saddr=New+York+Penn+Station&daddr=9th+Ave+%26+14th+St,+New+York,+NY&hl=en&geocode=&mra=ls&dirflg=r&date=11%2F12%2F08&time=4:13pm&tttype=dep&noexp=0&noal=0&sort=&sll=40.746175,-73.998395&sspn=0.014468,0.036392&ie=UTF8&z=14

To this:

One of the best features of Bit.ly is that the links you create are **permanent** (they won’t expire) and they are **specific** to you. You may want to share a link to a popular website that will interest your followers, but if you share the actual link, you have no way of knowing how many of your followers have clicked on the link specifically because you posted it. By using bitmarks, you now have a way to track how many people have clicked, saved and shared your particular link. You will also have access to **location** (country where people are clicking) and **timeline** (when people are clicking) data. To view all of this information, simply add a plus sign (+) to the end of your bitmark and enter it into your navigation bar.

For tracking:

**Alternatives with Tracking Capabilities:** Google URL Shortener (Goo.gl/) or Ow.Ly (http://ow.ly/url/shorten-url)

**Facebook Insights**

One easy way to track activity on your Facebook Page is by utilizing Facebook Insights, which gives Page owners aggregated anonymous data about people’s activities on their Page. Facebook Insights are useful to find out if, when and how people are engaging with the content you publish. This data can then be used to tailor the posts you make to the topics your followers are most interested in and the things they are most likely to click on. Though Facebook Insights are somewhat limited in the analysis they offer, they can be a worthwhile resource your organization can utilize.

Individualized Aggregated Metrics Available to You:
- **Number** of People Who Like Your Page
- How Many People Have **Seen Your Post(s)**
- **Virality** of Your Posts (Number of people who have engaged with you by clicking, commenting, sharing or liking one of your posts)
- Number of **Page Views**
- **Demographics** (gender, age, cities, countries and languages of your followers)
- Weekly **Total Reach**
- **Date Ranges** (number of people liking or unliking your page in a specific time period)
- **Frequency** (number of people who have seen content by or about you within the last seven days then separated by the number of times they saw it during that seven day period)

Privacy:
To keep users anonymous, Facebook Insights is only available to Pages with 30+ likes and will only provide demographic data once 30 people are part of a specific demographic.

**Alternatives:** All Facebook Stats (allfacebookstats.com), Socialnumbers (socialnumbers.com), GA Data Grabber (gadatagrabbertool.com)

Web Tracking

Google Analytics

For the web savvy, Google Analytics offers a wealth of information about the effectiveness of your campaigns/posts and what your followers are doing with your information. Google Analytics is one of the most powerful web analytics platforms and the best part is that it’s completely free.

Features:
- Ability to track as many websites as you own
- See which marketing initiatives have resonated most with your followers
- Get accurate website traffic trends
- See where your visitors come from, how they found you and what they do on your site
- See which content is the most effective
- Get which terms people use to find your site

Google Analytics is a powerful tool, but may require your organization to dig a little deeper into the social media world. Google gives you a step-by-step guide on how to set up tracking on your page, which should be utilized to fully understand all of the features this tool can offer you. By providing a small piece of the JavaScript code that you use on your web pages, Google Analytics can begin collecting and anonymously sending visitor activity on your site to the Analytics reports.

Controlling who sees this information:
This tracking service has strict controls, which ensure that only people with authorized access to your account can see your tracking information. For others to view your information, even Analytics representatives, they must first receive explicit permission from you.

Alternatives: Radian6 (radian6.com), Socialmention (socialmention.com) or SocialToo

City of Moultrie
Thomasville
Social Media Policy

By the City of Thomasville, Georgia

City of Thomasville. (2011). Social Media Policy. Thomasville, GA.
Purpose

To address the changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate or obtain information, the City of Thomasville’s departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City, where appropriate.

Guidelines and Procedure for Establishing a Social Media Site

The goal of social communication from the City should be to help citizens, partners, and co-workers. Social communication should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, build their businesses, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand the City better, then it is adding value.

Departments wishing to establish social media sites should contact the Marketing Department to discuss the objectives and desired outcomes for the social media site to determine if a social media site is the appropriate communications vehicle to reach the desired goal. If it is determined that Social Media is appropriate, the department should submit a written request to the Marketing Department that includes the following:

- The request for approval should clearly identify how the site will further the above stated goal. When requesting approval for the establishment of a social media site, the department should also consider the following:
  - The best and most appropriate City of Thomasville uses of social media tools generally fall into the following categories:
    - As channels for disseminating time sensitive information as quickly as possible, i.e. emergency information.
    - As marketing/promotional channels which increase the City’s ability to broadcast its messages to the widest audience possible.
  - Written approval by the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent is required prior to establishing a new City social media site.
- Requests should identify an employee who will actively manage the department’s social media site. In addition, the department shall designate an additional employee who will maintain the site in the primary employee’s absence.

Social Media Sites Generally

- All official City of Thomasville social media sites posted by City departments are considered an extension of the City’s information networks.

- The City’s websites, [www.thomasville.org](http://www.thomasville.org) and [www.thomasvillega.com](http://www.thomasvillega.com), will remain the primary and predominant Internet presences.
  - Whenever possible, content posted to the City of Thomasville social media sites should contain links directing users back to the City’s websites for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Thomasville.
• Designated departmental staff will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites the department may create. Only these authorized City employees are permitted to post to a City social media site.

• Generally all social media functions that permit external posting should be disabled or turned off. **Exceptions to this rule must be approved in writing by the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent if the department shows sufficient need for this function.**

• Content posted on social media sites must comply with applicable federal, state, and city laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Freedom of Information Act, and privacy laws.

• City of Thomasville social media sites are subject to the State of Georgia public records laws.

• Employees conducting themselves via Social Media outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Thomasville. Employees who fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to disciplinary action.

• Along with each department, the Marketing Department will monitor content on each of the City’s social media sites to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy for appropriate use, message, and branding consistent with the goals of the City of Thomasville. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of content or pages from social media outlets.

• Communications from the City to citizens should be straightforward, relevant and written in plain language. Only professional and well-reasoned content, using the same high standards applied to any publication or message the City issues, should be posted.

• Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between City departments and members of the public. City of Thomasville social media articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:
  • Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
  • Comments in support of or in opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
  • Profane language or content;
  • Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation.
  • Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  • Solicitations of commerce;
  • Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

- These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date, and identity of the poster when available.

- If the City Manager has approved the allowance of comments from the public, the City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

- The City will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.

- All new social medial tools proposed for City use will be approved by the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent.

- Administration of City of Thomasville social media sites:
  - The City’s marketing department will maintain a list of social media tools which are approved for use by City departments and staff.
  - The marketing department will maintain a list of all City of Thomasville social media sites, including login and password information.
  - The City must be able to immediately edit or remove content from social media sites.

- For each social media tool approved for use by the City the following documentation will be provided:
  - Operational and use guidelines
  - Standards and processes for managing accounts on social media sites
  - City branding standards
  - Enterprise wide design standards
  - Standards for the administration of social media sites.
Social Media Standards Specifically

The following social media tools have been approved for use by the City of Thomasville:

Facebook

Facebook Standard

Facebook is a social networking site. Businesses and governments have joined individuals in using Facebook to promote activities programs, projects, and events. This standard is designed for City departments looking to drive traffic to department Web sites at Thomasville.org and to inform people about City activities. These standards should be used in conjunction with the City’s Social Media policy. As Facebook changes, these standards may be updated as needed.

Establishing a page

When a department determines it has a business need for a Facebook account, it will submit a request to the Marketing Department. If approved by the City Manager, the Marketing Department will create the boilerplate business page for the department. Software applications are not be to be added to a city Facebook site without approval by the Marketing Department. All City-provided branding images must meet City branding standards.

Content

Type of “pages”

- The City will create pages in Facebook, not groups. Facebook pages offer distinct advantages including greater visibility, customization, and measurability.
- For ‘type’ description, choose ‘government.’

Boilerplate

- The Marketing Department will standardize and provide the Facebook page’s image, consisting of a picture and the city’s logo.
- Departments will include a description of their responsibilities and will send users first to the Wall to connect them to the freshest content. Boilerplate text regarding public disclosure and comments will be included. A boilerplate sentence should follow the department description:
  - (Insert department) is a department of the City of Thomasville. This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and (department) on the listed topics. Any comments if applicable submitted to this page and a list of fans of the site are public records subject to disclosure pursuant to the State of Georgia Open Records Act. Public disclosure requests should be directed to the City Clerk.
If comments are allowed by the City Manager, the Wall page should include a link to a Terms of Use as outline below.

Link to the City

- A link to www.thomasville.org will be included in the Info page.
- City department and project pages should be page favorites of other City Facebook pages.

Page naming

- Page name should be descriptive of the department.
- The proposed page name should be included with the Facebook page request.

Page administrators

- A successful Facebook page requires constant monitoring. The department is responsible for designating a primary and secondary administrator to monitor the Facebook page.
- The primary administrator is responsible for making sure the content is not stale.

Comments and Discussion Boards

- Comments to the Wall will generally be turned off but may be turned on a case-by-case basis with request from the department and only with approval in writing by the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent. Discussion Boards must be turned off.

Style

- City Facebook pages will be based on a template that includes consistent City branding. The Marketing Department will provide the template.
- Departments will use proper grammar, avoiding jargon and abbreviations. Facebook is more casual than most other communications tools but still represents the City at all times.

Applications

- There are thousands of Facebook software applications. Common applications can allow users to stream video and music, post photos, and view and subscribe to RSS feeds. While some may be useful to the page’s goal, they can cause clutter and security risks.
- An application should not be used unless it serves a business purpose, adds to the user experience, comes from a trusted source, and is approved by the Marketing Department.
- An application may be removed at any time if there is significant reason to think it is causing a security breach or spreading viruses.
A link to the following Terms of Use shall be posted on the department’s Facebook page:

TERMS OF USE

IMPORTANT: City of Thomasville’s Facebook pages are intended to be used for informational purposes only. If you wish to contact the City or to request City services, please contact our offices at 229-227-7001 or visit the City’s official website: www.thomasville.org.

Under Georgia law, your participation in the City’s Facebook pages is a public record. If you do not want your name released in response to a public records request, please do not participate in this page.

In addition, if the posting of comments has been approved by the City Manager, the following should be included in the Terms of Use:

Comments posted to this page will be monitored. Under the City of Thomasville’s social media policy, the City reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments including those that have obscene language or sexual content; threaten or defame any person or organization; violate the legal ownership interest of another party; support or oppose political candidates or ballot propositions; promote illegal activity; promote commercial services or products; or are not typically related to a particular posting.

Anyone posting comments contrary to this Terms of Use policy may be prohibited from future participation.
In its entirety:

City of Suwanee
Social Media Policy

By the City of Suwanee, Georgia

City of Suwanee
Social Media Policy

The social media adventure
The City of Suwanee has embarked on the adventure that is today’s social media. In an effort to build relationships; reach audiences that don’t have access to or typically utilize the City’s more traditional means of communication (e.g., newsletter); share information, as needed, on a real-time basis; and retain its reputation as a progressive community, Suwanee has begun to utilize social media outlets. We anticipate that our foray into social media will be an ongoing adventure that will require us to be flexible and open to opportunities.

Despite the fact that social media is still an emerging technology and that the way in which people use the technology will continue to morph, the City of Suwanee, through this policy, seeks to establish some basic guidelines for use of its social media outlets.

Our vision for social media usage
- While social media provide an effective forum for building relationships and for conveying small “bites” of information, they do not serve as the City’s sole or even primary means of communication with residents, businesses, and others. The City of Suwanee utilizes well-established means (e.g., public meetings, website, newsletter, e-mail blasts) to effectively share information with a variety of audiences.
- Social media forums provide an interactive means of sharing information that relates to the City of Suwanee and of engaging in ongoing conversation. They provide an easy-to-use means of engaging citizens and others.
- Social media can be especially effective in communicating information in crisis situations when timeliness of the information is crucial.
- Social media is a particularly ineffective tool for communicating about complex issues and for addressing riled emotions. The City will use more appropriate means to communicate detailed information about complex issues and to discuss concerns with citizens and others who post potentially volatile comments.
- Practical and legal considerations may sometimes constrain, prevent, or prohibit discussion of certain topics, such as court cases, through this medium.
- We recognize that not everything posted will (or should be) flattering to the City. Posts that offer thoughtful criticism of the organization (not individuals) and City initiatives are welcome and shall not be removed or altered except as provided for in this policy.

Maintenance of City-owned accounts
- The City of Suwanee will utilize one central account with desired social media networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and others). Individual departments and employees will utilize the central account to convey desired communication.
Management of social media accounts and initiatives shall lie primarily within the economic and community development department, and specifically (but not solely) with the public information officer.

A limited number of staff members, including those in economic and community development and the police department, shall have access to social media accounts and passwords and permission to post as “City of Suwanee.”

Elected officials and other staff members are not to post, without advance approval, to the City of Suwanee pages as representatives of the organization.

Other City staff members may request that authorized staff post a message from the City of Suwanee on their behalf.

Posts to City pages/accounts from employees’ personal accounts are permitted. Employees are encouraged to disclose their relationship/employment with the City. See Employee Internet & Social Media Posting Policy.

The City will strive to share information honestly and openly and to receive comments and feedback with an “open mind” in a spirit of collaboration.

The City shall not post untruthful and purposefully inaccurate information. If an inadvertent inaccuracy is posted, a correction will be published as soon as possible.

Designated City staff members may post comments/replies without advance review or permission of City management. However, if staff members have concerns or desire advance review, they may request such from the city manager, assistant to the city manager, or appropriate department head.

The City will not edit others’ posts.

At all times, employees shall use good judgment when posting. Employees shall refrain from posts that may be interpreted as offensive, obscene, demeaning, or inflammatory. Confidential information shall not be posted.

At times, employees may determine other means/tools are more appropriate ways to respond to citizen/fan posts or may determine that it is best not to respond to a post at all.

In general, individual complaints, concerns, or service requests will not be addressed via social media.

Staff members shall resist the temptation to engage in back-and-forth conversation regarding topics that are complex, controversial, heated, or otherwise sensitive. Employees will use the City of Suwanee Web Posting Response Assessment flowchart to help determine if replies are warranted.

City employees, in consultation with the city manager, will determine when an issue raised by others has reached a “critical mass” that requires a City response on the account.

When employees do choose to reply to negative or heated comments, they need to do so in a manner that reflects positively on the City.

A standard reply may be used to direct users with concerns related to sensitive or complex issues. This standard reply shall read something like: The City of Suwanee is very interested in insights, concerns expressed here. However, complex topics typically are not effectively discussed in forums such as this. Please contact EMPLOYEE NAME at
770/945-8996 if you wish to voice your concerns further or obtain additional information.

- Employees who post to City accounts (as City of Suwanee) shall strive to be sure that their posts pass the “grandma” test; that is, posts shall be of the sort that would not cause grandma disappointment, embarrassment, or to shake her finger and scold.

Guidelines and limitations for all users

- The conversation shall remain civil and respectful always.
- Inaccurate information posted by non-employees may be addressed and corrected, on a factual basis only.
- In an effort to keep the conversation open to all and to limit spam, posts from the same individual or organization shall be limited to no more than two (2) per day.
- Personal attacks, vulgar language, discriminatory or inflammatory posts by others are strongly discouraged. If a post is determined to be in violation of this policy, such posts may be removed.
- Elected officials may not post as “City of Suwanee” and are discouraged from discussing campaigns, issues, and other political matters on City accounts.
- Campaigning – on behalf of political candidates or in support or opposition to issues – is discouraged.
- Political candidates are encouraged to establish their own fan pages and social media accounts and are discouraged from using City of Suwanee accounts, pages, etc.
- Repeated violations to this policy may result in removal of access to the service.
- This Social Media Policy shall be revised as needed. Posts to the City of Suwanee’s social media accounts shall constitute acceptance of this policy.

Policy created 8/13/09
Colquitt County Board of Education
NYC Department of Education Social Media Guidelines

A. Introduction/Purpose

1. Social media technology can serve as a powerful tool to enhance education, communication, and learning. This technology can provide both educational and professional benefits, including preparing New York City Department of Education (“DOE”) students to succeed in their educational and career endeavors.

2. The Chancellor is committed to ensuring that all DOE stakeholders who utilize social media technology for professional purposes, including staff and students, do so in a safe and responsible manner. The DOE strives to create professional social media environments that mirror the academically supportive environments of our schools.

3. These Social Media Guidelines (“Guidelines”) provide guidance regarding recommended practices for professional social media communication between DOE employees, as well as social media communication between DOE employees and DOE students.

4. In recognition of the public and pervasive nature of social media communications, as well as the fact that in this digital era, the lines between professional and personal endeavors are sometimes blurred, these Guidelines also address recommended practices for use of personal social media by DOE staff.\(^1\)

B. Definition of Social Media

Social media is defined as any form of online publication or presence that allows interactive communication, including, but not limited to, social networks, blogs, internet websites, internet forums, and wikis. Examples of social media include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+, and Flickr.\(^2\)

1. **Professional social media** is a work-related social media activity that is either school-based (e.g., a DOE principal establishing a Facebook page for his/her school or a DOE teacher establishing a blog for his/her class), or non-school-based (e.g., a DOE office establishing a Facebook page to facilitate the office’s administration of a Chancellor’s Regulation).

2. **Personal social media** use is a non work-related social media activity (e.g., a DOE central administrative employee establishing a Facebook page or a Twitter account for his/her own personal use).

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\(^1\) These Guidelines do not address student-to-student communication via social media. The DOE’s Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities sets forth expected standards of behavior with respect to student communication. The DOE’s Discipline Code establishes the range of disciplinary options and guidance intervention that can be used when students engage in misconduct involving social media.

\(^2\) These Guidelines do not address the professional use of third-party collaboration tools for purposes other than social media. Further guidance from the DOE addressing the use of third-party collaboration tools is forthcoming.
C. **Applicability**

These Guidelines apply to DOE employees. The DOE will take steps to ensure that other DOE stakeholders, including DOE vendors, DOE volunteers, and DOE independent contractors are informed of these Guidelines.

D. **Professional Social Media Use**

1. **Maintenance of Separate Professional and Personal E-mail Accounts**

   DOE employees who decide to engage in professional social media activities should maintain separate professional and personal email addresses. As such, DOE employees should not use their personal email address for professional social media activities. The professional social media presence should utilize a professional email address and should be completely separate from any personal social media presence maintained by the DOE employee. Regular and continuous use of a personal email address for professional purposes, including social media use, will result in DOE considering the email address, and the corresponding use of that address, as a professional account.

2. **Communication with DOE Students**

   DOE employees who work with students and communicate\(^3\) with students through professional social media sites\(^4\) should follow these guidelines:

   a. Professional social media sites that are school-based should be designed to address reasonable instructional, educational or extra-curricular program matters;\(^5\)

   b. Professional social media sites that are non-school based should have a reasonable relationship to the mission and function of the DOE office creating the site;

   c. Each school year, DOE parents\(^6\) will be notified about the professional social media activities their children will be invited to participate in. We will inform parents of the purpose and nature of each professional social media account their children will access and will instruct parents to contact the school with any questions or concerns;

   d. To the extent possible, based on the social media site being used, DOE supervisors or their designees should be given administrator rights or access to the professional social media accounts established by DOE employees;

   e. DOE employees will be required to obtain their supervisor’s approval before setting up a professional social media presence;

   f. Supervisors and their designees are responsible for maintaining a list of all professional social media accounts within their particular school or office; and

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3 The term “communicates”, as used in this Guidance, refers to activity, including, but not limited to, “friending,” “following,” “commenting,” and “posting messages” using social media sites.

4 The term “site” and “sites” refer to an online social media account or usage.

5 On school-based professional social media sites that involve DOE students, DOE employees should use the sites for professional purposes. DOE employees are not to review any personal social media accounts created by their students.

6 The term parent means the student’s parent or guardian, or any person in a parental or custodial relationship to the student. This includes: birth or adoptive parent, step-parent, legally appointed guardian, and foster parent.
g. Professional DOE social media sites should include language identifying the sites as professional social media DOE sites. For example, the professional sites can identify the DOE school, department or particular grade that is utilizing the site.

3. **Guidance Regarding Professional Social Media Sites**
   a. DOE employees should treat professional social media space and communication like a classroom and/or a professional workplace. The same standards expected in DOE professional settings are expected on professional social media sites. If a particular type of behavior is inappropriate in the classroom or a professional workplace, then that behavior is also inappropriate on the professional social media site;
   b. DOE employees should exercise caution, sound judgment, and common sense when using professional social media sites;
   c. DOE employees should use privacy settings to control access to their professional social media sites to ensure that professional social media communications only reach the employees’ intended audience. However, DOE employees should be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees have an individualized responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilized;
   d. Professional social media communication should be in compliance with existing Chancellor’s Regulations, DOE policies and applicable laws, including, but not limited to, prohibitions on the disclosure of confidential information and prohibitions on the use of harassing, obscene, discriminatory, defamatory or threatening language;
   e. No personally identifiable student information may be posted by DOE employees on professional social media sites, including student photographs, without the consent of the students’ parents; and
   f. DOE students who participate in professional social media sites may not be permitted to post photographs featuring other students.

4. **Monitoring of Professional Social Media Sites**
   a. Employees using professional social media have no expectation of privacy with regard to their use of such media. The DOE will regularly monitor professional social media sites to protect the school community;
   b. DOE supervisors, or their designees, such as webmasters, are responsible for monitoring their employees’ professional social media sites. The monitoring responsibilities include reviewing the professional social media sites on a regular basis. If supervisors discover
questionable communications or behavior on professional social media sites, the supervisors are required to contact the appropriate authorities for assistance. If DOE employees decide to create a professional social media site and they are notified of questionable communications or behavior on their site, they are required to contact the appropriate authorities as well as their supervisor for assistance.7

c. DOE supervisors reserve the right to remove, disable, and provide feedback regarding professional social media sites that do not adhere to the law or Chancellor’s Regulations or do not reasonably align with these Guidelines;

d. To assist in monitoring, as a recommended practice to the extent possible, the default setting for comments on professional social media sites should be turned off. If the default setting for comments is turned on, the comments on the site must be monitored on a daily basis;

e. When establishing professional social media sites, supervisors and employees should consider the intended audience for the site and consider the level of privacy assigned to the site, specifically, whether the site should be a private network (for example, it is limited to a particular class or particular grade within a school) or a public network (for example, anyone within the school or a larger group within the DOE community can participate). It is a recommended practice for professional social media sites to be private networks, unless there is a specific educational need for the site to be a public network; and

f. DOE supervisors should maintain a detailed log of all reported non-compliant communications as well as any violations that are otherwise brought to the supervisor’s attention.

5. Press Inquiries

Any press inquiries received via professional social media sites should be referred to the DOE Office of Communications and Media Relations (http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/mediarelations/default.htm).

E. Personal Social Media Use

1. Communication with DOE Students

In order to maintain a professional and appropriate relationship with students, DOE employees should not communicate8 with students who are currently enrolled in DOE schools on personal social media sites. This provision is subject to the following exceptions: (a) communication with relatives and (b) if an emergency situation requires such communication, in which case the DOE employee should notify his/her supervisor of the contact as soon as possible.

7 Existing DOE reporting requirements must be followed. Depending on the circumstances, the appropriate authorities may include, but are not limited to: the Network or Cluster Leader, Borough Safety Directors, the Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigations, the Office of Special Investigations, the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Office of the General Counsel, the Senior Field Counsel, the New York City Administration for Children’s Services, and the New York City Police Department.

8 Examples of such communications include, but are not limited to, “friending,” “following,” “commenting,” and posting messages.
2. **Guidance Regarding Personal Social Media Sites**

DOE employees should exercise caution and common sense when using personal social media sites:

a. As a recommended practice, DOE employees are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites. However, be aware that there are limitations to privacy settings. Private communication published on the internet can easily become public. Furthermore, social media sites can change their current default privacy settings and other functions. As a result, employees have an individualized responsibility to understand the rules of the social media site being utilized;

b. DOE employees should not “tag” photos of other DOE employees, DOE volunteers, DOE contractors or DOE vendors without the prior permission of the individuals being tagged;

c. Personal social media use, including off-hours use, has the potential to result in disruption at school and/or the workplace, and can be in violation of DOE policies, Chancellor’s Regulations, and law;

d. The posting or disclosure of personally identifiable student information or confidential information via personal social media sites, in violation of Chancellor’s Regulations, is prohibited; and

e. DOE employees should not use the DOE’s logo in any postings and should not link to the DOE’s website or post DOE material on any personal social media sites without the permission of the DOE Office of Communications and Media Relations.

F. **Applicability of DOE Policies and Other Laws**


2. These Guidelines are not designed to serve as a code of conduct for social media use. However, all existing DOE policies, regulations and laws that cover employee conduct may be applicable in the social media environment. These include, but are not limited to, Chancellor’s Regulations, the Conflicts of Interest Law, and Section 3020-a of the Education Law.

3. DOE employees who are mandated reporters[^9] are required to abide by the same reporting responsibilities in a social media context.

[^9]: Various Chancellor’s Regulations impose reporting requirements on DOE employees for issues such as child abuse, child maltreatment, school-related incidents and crimes, corporal punishment, verbal abuse, unlawful discrimination or harassment by DOE employees, student-to-student sexual harassment, and student-to-student bias-based harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying. For example, see Chancellor’s Regulations A-412, A-420, A-421, A-750, A-830, A-831, and A-832. Please note that all previous reporting requirements continue to be in force and will apply to behavior occurring within a social media context.
G. **Additional Inquiries**

This document is meant to provide general guidance and does not cover every potential social media situation. Should any questions arise, please consult the Frequently Asked Questions segment or contact your DOE Senior Field Counsel. As these Guidelines address rapidly changing technology, the DOE will regularly revisit these Guidelines and will update them as needed.

H. **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**OVERVIEW**

1. Why is the DOE issuing guidance regarding social media?
   - Social media technology offers many educational benefits. The DOE is issuing this guidance to provide recommended practices for employees to take advantage of this technology in a manner that encourages professionalism, responsibility, safety and awareness.
   - In addition, these Guidelines provide recommended best practices for employees who use social media for personal communications.

**GETTING STARTED**

2. What if DOE employees are already using social media for either professional or personal purposes?
   - Professional social media use: DOE employees currently using social media for professional purposes should examine whether their use aligns with the Social Media Guidelines and these FAQs. Any use not consistent with these documents should be altered or amended within a reasonable period of time. We will answer any questions or address any concerns during training and feedback sessions. If employees have linked their social media site to a personal email address, they should transition the site to a professional email address.
   - Personal social media use: DOE employees who use social media for personal purposes should take steps to remove current DOE students, subject to the exceptions listed in the Guidelines, from those sites. Additionally, employees should review all of the Social Media Guidelines and FAQs to ensure familiarity with the recommended practices.

3. What are some common types of social media?
   - **Blogs** - Short for ‘web-logs’, these are sites that can function as ongoing journals with multiple entries. Typically, entries are categorized with ‘tags’ for easy searching. Most blogs allow for reader comments. Examples: Blogger, Wordpress, TypePad.
   - **Micro-Blogs** - These blogs allow for shorter content posts, typically with a limited set of typed characters allowed. Micro-blogs can be used for status updates and to quickly communicate information to ‘friends’ or ‘followers.’ Examples: Twitter, Tumblr.
   - **Networking** - These sites allow people to connect with each other around common interests, pursuits and other categories. Examples: Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Ning.
• **Photo/Video** - These sites allow people to share videos, images, slideshows and other media. Often these sites allow viewers to comment and share posted content. Examples: *YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr.*

4. What should DOE employees who want to develop professional social media for their classroom, school, or office do?

   • Employees should review the Social Media Guidelines and FAQs periodically to ensure that they are familiar with their contents and are aware of any updates.

   • Employees should research and familiarize themselves with the social media site they intend to utilize. For example, if the proposed professional social media use involves students, employees are required to review the social media site’s regulations and determine whether children under a certain age are allowed to use the site. In addition, employees should, for example, understand the default privacy and viewing settings for the social media site. Where possible, we recommend that DOE employees establish group pages, rather than individual profiles, for educational purposes.

**MONITORING**

5. Who monitors professional social media sites and how frequently are they monitored?

   • Professional social media sites will be reviewed and monitored by supervisors or their designees, such as a webmaster, on a regular basis. The specific level of review required for each professional social media site will depend on the particular characteristics of the social media site. Sites that are interactive, for example, those that allow comments and posting, will need to be monitored more closely. Other factors that will impact the frequency include the level of privacy assigned to the site, specifically, whether the site is a private network (for example, limited to a particular class) or a public network (open to anyone within the school or a larger group within the DOE community). Employees who decide to establish professional social media sites can engage in a voluntary review of their specific site on a regular basis.

**STUDENT COMMUNICATION**

6. Do these Guidelines apply to DOE students?

   • These Guidelines do not address student-to-student communication via social media. The DOE’s Bill of Student Rights and Responsibilities sets forth expected standards of behavior with respect to student communication. The DOE’s Discipline Code establishes the range of disciplinary options and guidance interventions that can be used when students
engage in misconduct involving social media.

7. How should DOE employees respond to “friend” requests by current DOE students on their personal social media sites and accounts?

- If DOE employees receive a request from a current DOE student to connect or communicate through a personal social media site, they should refuse the request. The following language is one suggested response: “Please do not be offended if I do not accept or respond to your request. As a DOE employee, the agency’s Social Media Guidelines do not permit interactions with current DOE students on personal social media sites. If you do want to connect, please contact me through the school (or class) page at ____ [insert link].”

PERSONAL USE

8. May DOE employees using social media for personal use communicate with DOE colleagues?

- These Guidelines do not address communication between employees on personal social media sites. DOE employees who use personal social media are encouraged to use appropriate privacy settings to control access to their personal social media sites.

9. Why is it a recommended practice to have separate professional and personal social media sites and email addresses?

- The reason for this distinction is to ensure separation between personal and professional spheres of online communication for DOE employees. In this context, this separation is intended to clarify that professional social media and personal social media are different. Professional social media is work-related and may involve employee-to-student communication. Personal social media is not work-related, and subject to certain exceptions noted in the Guidelines, does not involve employee-to-student communication.

FEEDBACK

10. May DOE parents, students and employees provide feedback on these Guidelines?

- Yes. The DOE welcomes feedback regarding these Guidelines and the FAQs. Because technology changes rapidly, the DOE plans to review and update its guidance as necessary. If you have any feedback or suggestions, please forward them to SocialMedia@schools.nyc.gov.

PARENTS

11. Will DOE parents be notified regarding their children’s social media use for school-related activities?

- Yes. DOE schools will notify parents if their child is invited to participate in professional social media activities and we will provide information describing the professional social media sites that will be available to their child. Parents who have questions or concerns about their children's use of social media for school purposes should contact the school for more information.
REPORTING

12. What should DOE supervisors and their designees, who are responsible for monitoring professional social media, do when they discover or receive a report of inappropriate activity?

- A DOE supervisor who discovers or receives a report of inappropriate or questionable content posted on a professional social media site should contact the appropriate authorities for assistance, in accordance with existing DOE reporting requirements. Depending on the circumstances, the appropriate authorities may include, but are not limited to: the Network or Cluster Leader, Borough Safety Directors, the Office of the Special Commissioner of Investigations, the Office of Special Investigations, the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Office of the General Counsel, the Senior Field Counsel, the New York City Administration for Children’s Services, and the New York City Police Department.

- In addition, if other members of a school community find inappropriate material on a professional social media site, they are encouraged to report it to a DOE supervisor.

13. How can DOE employees and supervisors determine what constitutes confidential information or personally identifiable student information that should not be posted or disclosed?

- If DOE employees and supervisors have any questions about what constitutes confidential information or personally identifiable student information, they should contact their Senior Field Counsel, the DOE’s Office of Legal Services at (212) 374-6888 or asklegal@schools.nyc.gov.
Colquitt Regional Medical Center
Sutter Health and Affiliates

Social Media Policy

By Sutter Health and Affiliates

POLICY

It is the policy of Sutter Health and each of its Affiliates (hereafter “Sutter Health” or “Sutter Health’s network of care”) to ensure procedures are in place to:

1. Minimize the business, legal and personal risks that may arise from an individual’s use of social media, both during work time and non-work time;
2. Protect the privacy and safety of our employees and patients;
3. Prevent legal risks that may arise from taking adverse action against employees or potential employees due to use of social media; and
4. Outline an employee’s obligation to avoid conduct that may violate local, state or federal law or other Sutter Health policies or that may trigger claims of discrimination, harassment, retaliation or any other unfair employment practices against Sutter Health.

Sutter Health believes that participation in online communities is a valuable means of sharing and communicating. This policy is not intended to restrict the flow of useful and appropriate information.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this policy are to:

1. Outline the requirements for participation in social media, including Sutter Health-hosted social media and non-Sutter-Health hosted social media in which an individual’s affiliation with the Sutter Health’s network of care is known, identified, or presumed;
2. Provide managers and others in a position to make employment-related decisions with guidance on appropriate use of information that may have originated from social media sources; and
3. Mitigate legal and employee relations risks to Sutter Health that may be associated with the use of social media (in areas such as hiring, Equal Employment Opportunity issues, etc.)

GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Scope: This policy applies to all employees, physicians accessing Sutter Health’s Hosted Media Sites, volunteers, non-employee assistants/students, vendors, contract personnel and other associates of Sutter Health’s network of care to the extent such non-employed individuals are contractually or otherwise obligated to follow Sutter Health policies (“Individuals”). It applies to the use of social media during work and non-work time, when the person’s affiliation with the Sutter Health network of care is identified, known or presumed. It does not apply to content that is otherwise unrelated to Sutter Health.
B. No-Retaliation: There will be no retaliation against individuals who raise good faith concerns about actual or potential violations of this policy.

C. Definitions:

1. Social Networking: Generally includes all types of postings and/or interaction on the internet, including, but not limited to, social networking sites, (such as Facebook©, MySpace© or LinkedIn©), blogs and other online journals and diaries, discussion boards and chat rooms, microblogs such as Twitter©, 3rd party rating sites such as Yelp©, smartphone applications, multimedia host sites (such as YouTube© or Flickr©) and similar media. Social networking activities may also include the permission or refusal of posts by others where an individual can control the content of postings.

2. Blog: Short for “Web log” a site that allows an individual or group of individuals to share a running log of events and personal insights with online audiences; may include video formats (vlogs).

3. Sutter Health Confidential Information: All information contained in any document designated as “Confidential Information,” “Proprietary Information,” “Trade Secrets,” or other similar marking; and all information, whether or not such information is reduced to writing or is so marked, concerning Sutter Health strategies, new products, business plans, prices, and other similar information where: (1) Sutter Health has taken reasonable measures to keep such information secret and (2) the information is not public knowledge.

4. Protected Health Information: Any individually identifiable information regarding a patient of the Sutter Health network that is collected, received, created, transmitted, or maintained in connection with an individual’s status as a patient, including information about a member’s/patient’s physical or mental health; the receipt of health care or payment for that care; patient premium records, enrollment and disenrollment information; name, address, Social Security number, account number; information from or about transactions; driver’s license number; financial or credit account numbers; phone numbers; ISP and internet domain addresses; and other personal identifiers or similar information.

5. Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites: Any internet or intranet site sanctioned and/or endorsed by or branded as part of the Sutter Health network of care. Public, external internet examples include but are not limited to, the following: sutterhealth.org, mylifestages.org, facebook.com/SutterHealth, twitter.com/SutterHealth, youtube.com/SutterHealth, etc. Internal intranet examples include but are not limited to the following: all SharePoint sites on MySutter intranet, portal and collaboration sites, My Sites, community sites, discussion boards, wikis and other intranet websites.

6. Non-Hosted Media: Any internet site not sanctioned and/or endorsed by or branded as part of the Sutter Health network of care; may include personal social networking sites (please see definition #1 above).

7. Wiki: Allows users to create, edit and link web pages easily; often used to create collaborative, community-driven websites (called “Wikis”) and to populate community websites.

PROCEDURES

I. EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

A. Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites: (Internet or intranet sites sanctioned and/or endorsed by Sutter Health):

1. Individuals are invited to visit and interact with Sutter Health’s Hosted Media Sites – including external websites and blogs, MySutter intranet sites/discussion boards, and branded Facebook and Twitter accounts – in connection with their employment and for personal use, as appropriate.
Employees must demonstrate good judgment when using social media or other online resources and ensure usage does not inhibit productivity standards and/or job performance.

2. We encourage Individuals to participate in the Sutter Health network’s social media activities – become a “fan” of Sutter Health network Facebook pages, follow news on Twitter, share YouTube videos with friends and family, comment on health blogs written by medical experts on MyLifeStages.org and more.

a. Individuals accessing Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites are subject to the general requirements set forth in this section (A) as well as the requirements in section (B) [Non-Hosted Sites].

b. When using Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites:

i. Individuals should identify themselves by name and position when discussing the network or related matters. Anonymous postings generally are discouraged and are not in line with our network policy of honesty and transparency.

ii. Individuals must abide by Sutter Health’s equal employment, harassment and other applicable policies, all of which apply to social media communication with equal force as other forms of verbal or written communications.

iii. Individuals may not post any material that could interfere with work functions, including but not limited to material that is obscene, defamatory, profane, libelous, threatening, discriminatory, harassing, retaliatory, abusive, or hateful.

iv. All postings must abide by applicable copyright laws and Individuals must ensure that they have permission to use or reproduce any copyrighted text, photos, graphics, video or other material owned by others.

v. The Sutter Health network reserves the right to monitor, prohibit, restrict, block, suspend, terminate, delete or discontinue an Individual’s access to any Sutter Health-Hosted Media Site, at any time, without notice and for any reason and in its sole discretion. The network may remove, delete, block, filter or restrict by any other means any materials in its sole discretion.

vi. By posting any content on any Sutter Health-Hosted Media Site, Individuals grant to the Sutter Health network the irrevocable right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display such content and the right to create derivative works from your content, edit or modify such content and use such content for any network purpose.

vii. Absent written authorization from the Sutter Health President/CEO or his/her designee, an Individual may not submit any content to a Sutter Health-Hosted Media Site that contains any product or service endorsements or any content that may be construed as political lobbying, solicitations or contributions. An Individual may not use a Sutter Health-Hosted Media Site to link to any sites for political candidates or parties or use Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites to discuss political campaigns, issues or for taking a position on any product, service, legislation, law, elected official or candidate, political party or movement.

viii. At times, Individuals may use Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites such as MyLifeStages medical blogs to ask medical questions or advice for a healthy lifestyle. Network physicians may share definitive medical advice or commentary in the same fashion, but their replies should include a disclaimer that encourages users to consult their physician for personal medical advice or treatment options that complement their health conditions and history.
B. Non-Hosted Social Media Sites and Sutter Health-Hosted Media Sites

1. The guidelines in this section apply to an Individual's personal social media activities that may give the appearance they are speaking on behalf of the Sutter Health network of care or which may create significant risk for the network.

2. Sutter Health recognizes that Individuals engage in social networking during non-work time. At times individuals may use social networking sites to express displeasure about the organization, their work experience or about their managers or co-workers. Nothing in this policy prohibits employees from discussing the terms and conditions of their employment.

3. The procedures below apply to all Individuals and are designed to reduce the likelihood that their personal social networking activities will have an adverse effect on themselves, the Sutter Health network of care, other employees, patients or the organization's mission.

   a. Individuals should limit participation in social media activities during work time unless required by their position; incidental use occurring during break times or in a manner that is consistent with other general internet use is not prohibited by this policy. Under no circumstances may an Individual access social media on mobile devices while driving for work related reasons or performing other safety sensitive work functions.

   b. Individuals must speak for themselves and not on behalf of the Sutter Health network unless authorized to do so as part of their job responsibility. If an Individual posts content online in a personal capacity and it is relevant to Sutter Health’s network of care, a disclaimer should be provided (e.g., “The postings on this site are my own and don’t necessarily represent Sutter Health’s positions, strategies or opinions.”).

   c. Under no circumstances may Individuals post fake blogs, create false positive or fake negative reviews of Sutter Health, its affiliates, policies, services and physicians or its competitors; nor may individuals impersonate someone associated with or speaking about Sutter Health’s network of care.

   d. Individuals may not use Sutter Health network logos, trademarks or proprietary graphics that would create the appearance they are speaking on behalf of Sutter Health without prior authorization from appropriate Marketing or Communications leadership.

   e. Individuals may not use or disclose any patient identifiable information of any kind, including patient images, on any social media platform or smartphone application without the express written authorization of the patient. Even if an Individual is not identified by name within the information at issue, if there is a reasonable basis to believe that the person could still be identified from that information, then its use or disclosure could constitute a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), state law, and/or Sutter Health network policies. Additionally, online activities regarding patients within the Sutter Health network of care that may compromise a patient’s personal dignity or otherwise make them question the confidentiality of the services provided by the network are prohibited.

   f. Individuals may not disclose any Confidential Information of or about Sutter Health, its vendors, suppliers, or patients.

   g. Individuals are responsible for any publicly viewable intentionally false statements that damage the company or the company’s reputation.

   h. Prior to establishing an online relationship with a vendor or patient through social networking sites, Individuals should consider potential conflict of interest issues, given the unique association between patients and health care providers as well as the requirements of the Sutter Health Conflict of Interest policy.
Individuals involved in vendor/product selection processes will be required to disclose relationships with vendors, including social media connections. See the Sutter Health Conflict of Interest policy for additional information and requirements governing vendor relationships.

i. Individuals shall not use social networking activities, including personal e-mail and mobile (text) messaging, to transmit, receive, or store information regarding Sutter Health’s network of care, its employees or patients that is illegal, discriminatory, harassing, libelous, slanderous, and/or protected under HIPAA or state law or which is considered Confidential Information.

j. Some topics present significant business risk to the organization and should not be discussed on social media—even where Individuals express their own opinions and provide a disclaimer (e.g., Information that may cause a municipal bond investor to decide to buy, sell or hold bonds related to Sutter). Non-exhaustive examples of topics that should not be discussed include:

i. Speculation about the future business performance, business plans, unannounced strategies, potential acquisitions or divestitures;
ii. Non-public information about financial performance, changes in financial performance or liquidity;
iii. Potential mergers and acquisitions; or
iv. Sensitive information involving competitors.

If an Individual is unsure of the sensitivity of a particular subject, he/she should seek advice from the reporting manager, human resources or the affiliate compliance officer before participating in the conversation.

k. Individuals shall not announce news about the Sutter Health network of care that is not already made public. Only those officially designated by the network have the authorization to speak on behalf of the company.

l. If an Individual is contacted by a blogger, online journalist or media representative about the business of the organization (news, network operations, policies, practices, strategic commitments or additional business information), he/she must notify their manager and the system, region or affiliate Communications team before responding.

m. Individuals are more likely to resolve complaints about work by speaking directly with co-workers, supervisors or other management-level personnel than by posting complaints on the internet. They may also call the Sutter Health Confidential Message Line at (800) 500-1950.

n. Nothing in this policy will be interpreted to limit or interfere with an employee’s rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

II. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

A. General Use of Information and Participation in Social Media:

1. Managers may become aware of information considered to be inappropriate or in violation of this policy from a variety of sources.

2. When information is brought to a manager’s attention and the manager believes that it may violate the terms of this policy the manager may review the information in order to determine whether Human Resources’ intervention is appropriate.

3. Managers may not access a restricted website or social networking site without authorization (e.g., insisting an employee provide a password or other access to a private site).
4. Because it is not the Sutter Health network’s intention to regulate protected off-duty conduct, managers must consult Human Resources before taking any adverse action, including, but not limited to: requesting an employee remove a posting, coaching/counseling an employee verbally or in writing regarding a posting, etc.

5. A manager or other network representative with authority to recommend hiring/firing, who enters his/her employees’ private social media page has no idea what he/she will discover. Therefore managers and other “persons of authority” are cautioned about establishing an online relationship with their employees on personal social networking sites.

6. Managers may not approve, deny or limit leaves of absence on the basis of information on an employee’s social media site without consulting with Human Resources.

7. Any evaluations, recommendations or comments a manager makes on an Individual’s job performance must follow the Sutter Health network’s official processes for providing such feedback. In social networking sites, general comments about a team or group’s performance are permissible, but individual reviews or recommendations must follow Sutter Health’s policy on references.

B. Use of Information in the Hiring Process:

1. Managers engaged in hiring are prohibited from conducting social media background checks on their own. Instead, any such checks, will be done by the designated HR/Recruitment professional following the network’s hiring policies and procedures. Use of social or professional networking sites to recruit candidates will be done in conjunction with a variety of other recruitment methods that encompass a broad range of sources.

2. A social media check of candidates for hire should be conducted only after it is determined that the individual meets minimum qualifications and is a candidate that the HR/Recruitment professional intends to move forward in the interview process. In this way, the Sutter Health network limits the risk of obtaining equal employment-opportunity related information about the candidate too early in the process.

3. All candidates must be subject to the same social media checks at the same point in the hiring process.

4. Any rejection of a candidate based on information discovered on a social networking site must be clearly documented to ensure that the decision did not violate any Sutter Health policies.

C. Management/Executive Social Media Commentary: The standard disclaimer does not by itself exempt Sutter Health network managers and executives from a special responsibility when participating in social media environments. By virtue of their position, management level employees must consider their unique role in the organization and consider whether personal thoughts they publish may be misunderstood as expressing the network’s positions. Managers may have actual or apparent authority to bind the organization and should use exceptional judgment on social media sites. Failure to do so may result in discipline.

Notwithstanding any provision of this policy that could suggest a contrary application, nothing in this policy will be interpreted to limit or interfere with an Individual’s rights to discuss the terms and conditions of their employment or other rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

Any Individual who violates this social media policy will be subject to appropriate remedial action; in the case of employees, this may include discipline, up to and including termination.
Related Policies and Guidelines

Human Resource Policies:
http://mysutter/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/HumanResourcesPolicies.aspx
- Prohibiting Harassment – 16-1125
- Equal Employment Opportunities – 16-1115
- Policy for Background Check Policy Guidelines – 16-1105

Confidentiality Policies:
http://mysutter/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/HumanResourcesPolicies.aspx
- Management Confidentiality – 16-1135
- Workforce Confidentiality and Privacy and Appropriate Use of Sutter Health and Affiliate Property – 16-1120
- Exhibit A – Workforce Confidentiality Agreement – 16-1120A

Communications and Marketing Policies:
http://mysutter/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/CommunicationMarketingPolicies.aspx
- Communications About Public Policy Issues – 12-705

Ethics and Compliance Policies:
http://mysutter/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/EthicsRiskCompliancePolicies.aspx
- Internet and Email Usage – 13-635
- Device and Media Accountability – 13-710
- Use and Disclosure of Protected Health Information for Treatment, Payment and Health Care Operations – 13-801
- Auditing and Monitoring Access to Electronic Protected Health Information – 13-803
- Non-retaliation and non-retribution – 13-530

Standards for Business Conduct:
Hospital Examples of Blogs

Boston Children’s Hospital: Health Family Fun Blog
Emory Healthcare’s Advancing Your Health Blog

Emory Healthcare’s Advancing Your Health Blog (www.advancingyourhealth.org)
In its entirety:

YMCA of Greater Rochester
Social Media Policy

By the YMCA of Greater Rochester

YMCA OF GREATER ROCHESTER SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The YMCA of Greater Rochester recognizes the value of online social media tools for connecting with members, staff, donors, and volunteers. Our web presence should project a positive image that is reflective of our overall brand and is consistent with our mission. However, in order to ensure we maintain a values-oriented, positive, professional image, and to protect the safety and privacy of our members and staff, all employees must abide by the following expectations when using social media for work or personal purposes. This policy has been established to maintain the integrity of our brand with respect to communication frequency, strategy, message and appearance. Failure to follow the above guidelines may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

This policy will not be applied or construed in a manner that violates or improperly interferes with employee rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act.

YMCA OF GREATER ROCHESTER SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Using Social Media for work purposes

• Official social media and networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Flickr, Vimeo) for the YMCA of Greater Rochester will provide relevant and current information.

• All official YMCA of Greater Rochester social media sites/pages will be monitored for content on a regular and consistent basis by the Director of Website Development & Social Media. The Director of Website Development & Social Media will be named as an Administrator of all such sites/pages

• The YMCA of Greater Rochester's Facebook fan page and Twitter account are both maintained within the Marketing & Mission Advancement Department. In addition to Association-wide updates, the site can be used to promote branch & camp-specific and program-specific events and updates.

• Association-wide YMCA of Greater Rochester social media pages will be created and maintained by the Director of Website Development & Social Media. Selected branches will pilot branch-specific social media efforts, only after submitting request and receiving permission from Director of Website Development & Social Media.

• YMCA of Greater Rochester business can only be conducted on official YMCA of Greater Rochester-sponsored or approved social media pages with authorization from the Marketing & Mission Advancement Department.

Using Social Media for personal purposes

• Many YMCA staff maintain individual pages on social media sites to connect with their friends and family during non-work hours.

• Personal websites that identify the person as a YMCA employee must be consistent with and should not undermine the YMCA’s mission.
• Staff members shall not post content, including text, pictures, logos, and images regarding the YMCA of Greater Rochester that can be reasonably deemed as disparaging or offensive to the YMCA, its members, staff or the community.

• Staff must use common sense in disclosing any information about the YMCA of Greater Rochester (the organization, its members, volunteers, donors, etc.) and adhere to all applicable policies regarding confidentiality and proprietary information.

• Staff should recognize that they are personally responsible for the content they publish on social media sites. Additionally, staff will be disciplined for commentary, content, or images that are defamatory, pornographic, proprietary, harassing, discriminatory, libelous, or that can create a hostile work environment.

Examples of inappropriate content include:

- References / photos of alcohol or illicit substances
- Photos with revealing clothing
- Disclosure of confidential information related to past, present or future employees, volunteers, members, participants, guests, donors, or other persons conducting business with the YMCA
- Posting disparaging, discriminatory, harassing, or defamatory information about past, present or future employees, volunteers, members, participants, guests, donors, or other persons conducting business with the YMCA.

• If speaking about the YMCA of Greater Rochester externally through social media, staff must make it clear to the reader that the views expressed on social media sites are theirs alone and that they are not speaking on behalf of the YMCA of Greater Rochester.

• You may have legal liability for information you contribute over any online communication channels regarding the YMCA of Greater Rochester.

• Unless you are a branch staff member using a social media site for legitimate work purposes, accessing any social media site for personal purposes while at work is strictly prohibited. This includes accessing pages via office computer, laptop, or mobile phone.

**Friending members and volunteers**

• Sometimes, members and volunteers may ask employees to become their "friend" on social media sites. This is allowed, but employees must remember they are representing the YMCA at all times and that the Guidelines in this policy apply to these online relationships; employee should also consider creating a more limited profile for general or work-related purposes and reserve their full personal profile for friends and family only.

• It is not recommended that YMCA staff "friend" any staff, volunteer or member under the age of 18 on any social media site, except on official YMCA-sponsored or approved sites.

12/05/11 updated
Working with teens online
• Because of the nature of their jobs, several YMCA staff members work closely with teen groups and need to communicate with them and their parents online. These staff members must get permission from the Director of Website Development & Social Media before creating social media pages for their clubs (Leaders, Youth in Government, etc).

• These staff members must receive a brief training on social media safety and privacy practices before starting their group. They can communicate with group members through this group page.

Unofficial Social Media pages
• Staff are prohibited from encouraging YMCA volunteers to set up social media pages on behalf of the YMCA. If you do run across a page purporting to be a YMCA of Greater Rochester-sponsored or approved page, please let the Marketing & Mission Advancement Department know as soon as possible so that we can provide a disclaimer for them to put on their page, or ask the administrator to remove the page altogether. Likewise, if you run across unofficial employee or ex-employee pages, please alert the Marketing & Mission Advancement Department immediately.

Donor recognition and solicitations
• Recognition of donors on any social media page (whether YMCA-affiliated or personal) is strictly prohibited.

• Solicitation of donations via social media may be done only using the approved language and technology (widget) provided by the Vice President Marketing & Mission Advancement Department and requires prior authorization.

Posting photos and videos of YMCA activities online
• If you wish to share a photo or video online on an official YMCA social media site/page, please contact the Director of Website Development and Social Media to determine the best way to do this.

• All photos and videos that include members and children cannot be posted unless the member and/child has signed a photo release.

Abide by the YMCA of Greater Rochester’s Computer Systems Policy
• As a condition of your employment you were asked to review and sign the YMCA of Greater Rochester Policies and Guidelines for the Use of YMCA Computer Systems. This policy can be found in its entirety on the YMCA of Greater Rochester intranet within the Policies and Procedures tab.

Website
• To maintain consistency in content, presentation and information delivery, no website bearing the YMCA of Greater Rochester name is to be created. All YMCA of Greater Rochester-sponsored or authorized web sites are created by or in cooperation with the Marketing & Mission Advancement Department.

12/05/11 updated
The world of social media is changing rapidly. If in doubt about how this Social Media Policy applies to new social media sites, please contact the Director of Website Development and Social Media. The YMCA of Greater Rochester reserves the right to modify this policy at any time.

Print Name

Signature

Date
City of Decatur
Blog Guidelines

By City of Decatur, Georgia

City of Decatur Blog Guidelines  
Effective June 2008

Blogs are one of the City of Decatur’s communication tools and offer the opportunity to invite conversation with the community. They take time, commitment, a willingness to listen, and a thick skin capable of showing authentic attention to criticism. Topics should explain or educate and serve as a vehicle to build trust, interest, awareness, and enthusiasm.

Blog Request and Approval Process
A request to have a blog must come from a department or division within the City of Decatur and must first be submitted to the Community & Economic Development Department for review and discussion. The request should include a written proposal that answers the following questions:

1. What is the overall goal of the blog?
2. How will it enhance and not duplicate current communication efforts?
3. Who will be responsible for writing and posting the content?
4. How often will content be posted on the blog?
5. What type of content will be posted? Give examples of topics the blog would address.
6. Please write a sample blog entry and submit it with the proposal.
7. Write a two or three sentence description of the blog.

Based on discussion and review of the proposal, the Community & Economic Development Department will make a recommendation to the City Manager who has the final authority to approve a proposed blog.

Blog Design
The design/overall look of the blog must be approved by Linda Harris or a designee in the Community & Economic Development Department. Logistics related to posting the blog itself should be worked out with Catherine Lee in the Community & Economic Development Department.

Blog Content
The content of department blog postings should reflect the stated goal of the blog and should enhance but not duplicate current communication efforts. Each blog should contain relevant and informative content on specific topics related to the area/department where it originates. Topics should not be designed to intentionally raise controversial questions or issues.

Blog Postings
Blog content should be concise, clear, and relatively informal without being unprofessional. Content should be simple, focused and contain one idea per post.
Blogs must be updated consistently and routinely with a minimum of weekly postings. All postings must be submitted for approval to Linda Harris, Catherine Lee, or an appointed designee in the Community & Economic Development Department. Content may be edited/revised if necessary before final posting.

**Blog Comments**
Blog comments that result from postings must conform to the Blog Comment Policy posted on the website. Comments that conform to the Blog Comment Policy must be posted. A posted comment does not imply endorsement or agreement.

It is the responsibility of the blogger to confirm that comments conform to the Policy before posting them to the website. If there is a question or uncertainty about a comment, check with Lyn Menne, Linda Harris, or Catherine Lee in the Community & Economic Development Department. If they are not available, check with Peggy Merriss, City Manager or with a Deputy City Manager or Assistant City Manager. It is better to ask first rather than have to remove a comment after it has been posted.

**Blog Replies**
Blog replies to comments must also conform to the Blog Comment Policy posted on the website. All comments do not need a reply. Replies should explain or educate not debate.

When comments are exaggerated and untrue, other bloggers usually weigh in to set the record straight. Bloggers must have a thick skin, show authentic attention to criticism, and be willing to learn from negative comments.

**Removal of Blogs**
Blogs that do not conform to the guidelines may be removed or suspended at the discretion of the Community & Economic Development designee, an Assistant City Manager or the City Manager.

**Open Records**
All content, comments, and replies posted on the City of Decatur website are subject to compliance with Georgia Open Records laws. Information found on City of Decatur blogs is subject to being re-printed in newspapers, magazines, online or in any other media format.
Welcome!

The City of Decatur is pleased to begin posting blogs from city departments on its website. Comments, suggestions, ideas, feedback and questions are welcome and encouraged. Some blogs offer basic information and others are designed to promote dialogue. The following guidelines address what belongs in a civic forum and comment submissions will be moderated based on the following comment policy:

- Stay on topic. Comments and/or links to outside websites/sources should relate to the topic being discussed in the original post.
- Keep it clean. Comments should not contain profanity, racial slurs or any other derogatory terms.
- Personal attacks are taboo. Comments should not contain personal or defamatory remarks or attacks.
- Agree to disagree. Reasonable arguments for opposing views are encouraged. A posted comment is the opinion of the poster only. Publication of the comment does not imply endorsement or agreement by the author of the blog or the City of Decatur.
- Campaigning belongs elsewhere. This blog is not the place to endorse candidates or a particular stance on currently active ballot measures.
- This comment policy may be revised at any time.
- Comment submissions that repeatedly violate this policy may be prohibited.
- Submission of a comment constitutes acceptance of this comment policy.

If you have questions or comments about this policy, email blogpolicy@decaturga.com.
Moultrie- Colquitt Chamber of Commerce
Excerpt from:

Chamber of Commerce
Employee Personnel Handbook

By Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

THE GREATER SPRINGFIELD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Employee Personnel Handbook

The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce
1011 S. Second Street, Springfield, IL 62704
Phone 217-525-1173 • Fax 217-525-8768
www.gscc.org

Effective 6-1-2010
received from, or stored in this system are company records and property of the Chamber. The E-mail system is to be used for company purposes only. Usage of the E-mail system for personal purposes should be kept at a minimum.

Employees have no right of personal privacy in any matter stored in, created, received, or sent over the Chamber e-mail system. The Chamber, in its discretion as owner of the E-mail system, reserves and may exercise the right to monitor, access, retrieve, and delete any matter stored in, created, received, or sent over the E-mail system, for any reason and without permission of any employee. Even if employees use a password to access the E-mail system, the confidentiality of any message stored in, created, received, or sent from the Chamber E-mail system still cannot be assured. Use of passwords or other security measures does not in any way diminish the Chamber's rights to access materials on its system, or create any privacy rights of employees in the messages and files on the system. Any password used by employees must be revealed to the Chamber as E-mail files may need to be accessed by the company in an employee's absence. Employees should be aware the deletion of any E-mail messages or files will not truly eliminate the messages from the system. All E-mail messages are stored on a central back-up system in the normal course of data management.

Even though the Chamber has the right to retrieve and read any E-mail messages, those messages should still be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any E-mail messages that are not sent to them. Any exception to this policy must receive the prior approval of the President.

The Chamber's policies against sexual or other harassment apply fully to the E-mail system, and any violation of those policies is grounds for discipline up to and including discharge. Therefore, no E-mail messages should be created, sent, or received if they contain intimidating, hostile, or offensive materials concerning race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability or any other classification protected by law.

The E-mail system may not be used to solicit for religious or political causes, commercial enterprises, outside organizations, or other non-job related solicitations.

Users should routinely delete outdated or other unnecessary E-mails and computer files. These deletions will help keep the system running smoothly and effectively, as well as minimize maintenance costs.

Employees are reminded to be courteous to other users of the system and always conduct themselves in a professional manner. E-mails are sometimes misdirected or forwarded and may be viewed by persons other than the intended recipient. Users should write E-mail communications with no less care, judgment and responsibility than they would use for letters or internal memoranda written on Chamber letterhead.

Because E-mail records and computer files may be subject to discovery in litigation, Chamber employees are expected to avoid making statements in E-mail or computer files that would not reflect favorably on the employee or the Chamber if disclosed in litigation or otherwise.

**Internet Policy**

All employees are provided with access to the Internet to assist them in performing their jobs. The Internet can be a valuable source of information and research. Use of the Internet, however, must be tempered with common sense and good judgment. Although the Chamber recognizes that the Internet may have useful applications to the Chamber's business, employees should not engage in Internet use unless a specific
business purpose requires such use. “Surfing the Net” is not a legitimate business activity. Personal use of the Internet may be allowed during breaks or as authorized by an employee’s supervisor.

Employees must not deliberately perform acts that waste computer resources or unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. These acts include, but are not limited to, sending mass mailings or chain letters, spending excessive amounts of time on the Internet, playing games, engaging in on-line chat groups, printing multiple copies of documents, or otherwise creating unnecessary network traffic. Because audio, video and picture files require significant storage space, files of this or any other sort may not be downloaded unless they are business-related.

The computers and computer accounts given to employees are to assist them in performance of their jobs. Employees should not have an expectation of privacy in anything they create, store, send, or receive on the computer system. The computer system belongs to the Chamber and its primary use is for business purposes. The Chamber has the right, but not the duty, to monitor any and all of the aspects of its computer system, including, but not limited to, monitoring sites visited by employees on the Internet, monitoring chat groups and news groups, reviewing material downloaded or uploaded by users to the Internet, and reviewing e-mail sent and received by users.

The Chamber may use software to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. Such sites may be blocked from access by the Chamber network. In the event an employee encounters inappropriate or sexually explicit material while browsing the Internet, immediately disconnect from the site, regardless of whether the site was subject to company blocking software.

Files obtained from sources outside the Chamber, including disks brought from home; files downloaded from the Internet, newsgroups, bulletin boards, or other online services; files attached to e-mail; and files provided by customers or vendors may contain dangerous computer viruses that may damage the Chamber’s computer network. Employees should never download files from the Internet, accept e-mail attachments from outsiders, or use disks from non-Chamber sources without first scanning the material with Chamber-approved virus protection software. If you suspect that a virus has been introduced into the Chamber’s network, notify the Director of Operations immediately.

Violations of the E-mail Policy or Internet Policy may result in disciplinary action, including possible termination, and civil and criminal liability. Use of the Internet and E-mail via the Chamber’s computer system constitutes consent by the user to all of the terms and conditions of these policies. Employees are also required to sign the following E-mail and Internet Policy Acknowledgment Form as a condition of employment.

Social Media Policy
The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce recognizes the evolving role of social media and other web 2.0 tools in relations marketing and encourages the use of these tools to promote the organization’s brand message, to create dialogue with our members and other community stakeholders, to communicate our programs and uses and to help achieve the goals set forth in our Strategic Plan. Our Social Media Policy & Guidelines apply to all Chamber employees working on behalf of the Chamber who contribute personally or professionally to any of social media or Web 2.0 tool, including blogs, micro blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, and others.
The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce reserves the right to monitor and control, at its discretion, its brand identity online as well as offline.

The Chamber will take any corrective measure it deems necessary, up to and including termination if, at its sole discretion, it feels an employee has harmed the Chamber brand through his or her social media activities.

Employees of the Chamber or shared network users should engage in social media and other Web 2.0 tools during business hours only to conduct Chamber business.

Employees should use common sense, courtesy and good judgment when networking online, just as would be done in face-to-face communications.

Employees should not represent themselves or the Chamber in a false or misleading way. All statements must be true and not misleading; all claims must be substantiated.

Employees are legally liable for anything they write or present online, and should consider this before posting anything.

Employees should confirm the right to use something with attribution before publishing. Proper credit for work created by others should be given.

Personal social media accounts used only for personal activities should not disclose the employee’s place of employment, nor should the employee represent him or herself as a spokesperson to the organization. Since many Chamber employees are well known in the community, using maximum security and privacy controls on personal accounts is highly recommended.

**Guidelines Using Chamber-Sponsored Social Media**

Employees are not authorized to represent the Chamber online without prior written permission from the President. Once approved, employees should work with the Director of Communications to ensure consistency in messages and strategy.

Employees should be transparent and show affiliation to the Chamber when discussing the organization or an issue relating to the Chamber’s work.

Information or comments relative to your area of expertise may be provided on non-confidential issues. Topics outside an employee’s expertise should be directed to the appropriate staff member.

When posting remarks or comments, employees should be respectful, constructive and add value to the conversation. If a conversation becomes adversarial or antagonistic, the President or another appropriate staff member should be contacted for guidance. Employees should not leave a conversation abruptly in fear or anger, but should instead remain respectful and polite.

Do not make negative comments about other individuals, organizations or companies, as they may be members, future members or partners in some capacity.

As in any written form of communication, please double check spelling, grammar and punctuation.
This publication was created by Rosanna Cruz, an MPA graduate student at the University of Georgia, working with the Archway Partnership.

The Archway Partnership is a University of Georgia community engagement platform. It was created to enhance the land grant mission of teaching, research and service, while addressing self-identified community priorities in selected locations across the state.