Social Media Policy

Recommendations for the Mississippi Municipal League

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Mission Statement of the John C. Stennis Institute of Government

Elected to the United States Senate in 1947 with the promise to "plow a straight furrow to the end of the row," John C. Stennis recognized the need for an organization to assist governments with a wide range of issues and to better equip citizens to participate in the political process. In 1976, Senator Stennis set the mission parameters and ushered in the development of a policy research and assistance institute which was to bear his name as an acknowledgment of his service to the people of Mississippi. Created as a service and research arm of Mississippi State University, the John C. Stennis Institute of Government was established on February 9, 1976. Announcing its formation during a two-day Forum on Politics honoring U.S. Senators John Stennis and Margaret Chase Smith, MSU President William L. Giles outlined the Institute's mission and goals. According to Giles, the Institute would seek to integrate research, service, and teaching activities to improve government in the state, as well as promote the training of students who seek careers in public service.

Thirty years later, the Stennis Institute of Government has remained true to that initial charge. By providing meaningful, applied research to both local and state units of Mississippi government, the Institute brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to bear on real-world issues. Through its executive development programs, training opportunities, and technical assistance programs, the Institute provides support for today's policy-makers from the courthouse to the classroom. And, by playing an active role in the development of tomorrow's governmental leaders, the Institute is working to ensure that Mississippi's future remains strong.

Special Contribution

At the time of this study, the authors were enrolled in their final course to satisfy the requirements for the Master of Public Policy and Administration Program (MPPA) at Mississippi State University. With special direction from Dr. Marty Wiseman and Keisha Perry of the Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development and Dr. P. Edward French, Coordinator of Graduate Studies in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration (PSPA) at Mississippi State University, the authors were tasked with examining the social media policies landscape as it concerns municipalities. The PSPA is home to a large accredited professional program offering the Master of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) with around 75 students in addition to a smaller general MA program and a Ph.D. program in public policy and administration.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

If maintained in an appropriate manner, the use of social media can greatly enhance a city’s ability to get information out to the public in a fast and efficient manner. Many municipalities across the country are currently utilizing social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to promote their cities. However, only a handful has actual policies to regulate the use of social media. The thought of developing social media policies may frighten or intimidate some government entities from developing and implementing policies, particularly under constrained budgets. However, technology can be a powerful and transformative tool if utilized correctly without increasing the budget.

Social media policies are designed to allow government to directly communicate with its citizenry. Moreover, direct interaction with the public increases accountability and transparency. As such, communication with the public also must be monitored to ensure accuracy. For municipalities in Mississippi, drafting and implementing a social media policy would further enhance public officials’/employees’ opportunities to relay information through media that reaches the public quickly. Further, officials benefit from drafting a social media policy because it serves as a guide or resource on what may or may not be appropriate use of social media. Recent scandals both at the state or local level as well as at the national level were played out because of questionable use of social media.

For Mississippi to have success in newly instructed media, extensive research must be done on policies that other cities and states have adopted. New approaches to relaying both formal and informal communication have forged a new status quo; one that is quite different from the telegraph days of old. At times, governmental entities may be somewhat behind the rapidly changing curve; thus, it may be difficult to access the benefits such change may provide. For public organizations, it is of particular importance that officials and organizations remain flexible. Remaining flexible allows municipalities to incorporate many of these technological changes, as social media provide unlimited opportunities to educate a populous.

The digital form of government in Mississippi can broaden horizons for both rural and urban areas, and can allow them to improve governance and connection with its citizens. Past experiences should help us determine the appropriate techniques that should be used to establish a stable form of media policy that has positive outcomes for a representative democracy.

Overview and Methods

Information and data were collected for this study through social media contacts with 40 municipalities throughout the United States. A search was conducted using municipalities’ Facebook pages. On these pages, we followed the link to the municipalities’ official web pages, which then, led to an email address to contact a city employee.
Each city was contacted via email and asked to provide information or a copy of a policy that governed their use of social media.

In selecting what municipalities to contact, we first looked to cities that were similar to Starkville, MS. We chose Starkville because it is an average sized Mississippi city that has an active Facebook presence or use. We also chose Starkville because of its connection with a major university. We believe that modern technology tools and techniques associated with university cities/towns would directly relate to the respective city’s use of social media. In searching for towns similar to Starkville, we opted to contact all university towns in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) located outside of Mississippi. Of the 10 SEC cities contacted, only 4 responded. Of these, only 2 had social media policies, and these were only draft policies.

In efforts to find completed policies, we expanded our range outside of the SEC. We attempted to find municipalities no larger than the largest municipalities in Mississippi. From these search results, we looked for the largest municipalities under the auspices that the largest cities would have progressive policies on the use of social media. By expanding the search, we contacted larger cities, such as Houston, TX; Memphis, TN; and New York, NY in hopes of finding an active policy.

Of this methodological approach, we contacted 40 cities. Of these, 26 did not respond, 4 responded that they used social media but did not have a policy on its use, 7 responded that they had draft policies that were being refined, and 3 responded with copies of active policies (See Appendix A). These policies have been reviewed and useful sections were drawn on to produce a suggested policy for use in Mississippi. In particular, we drew heavily upon the policies of Temple, TX and Houston, TX.

Recommendations for Social Media Policy

1. PURPOSE:

   City of XXXXX departments may use social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to reach a broader audience to share information about the City and its programs and services. The City recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in furthering the goals of the City and the missions of its departments.

   Social Media Platforms, when used by the City of XXXX, or its employees, must meet one of the following purposes:

   To provide XXXXX residents, business and visitors with information about city events, activities and other important issues; or

   To inform people from outside the XXXXX community about the many
positive qualities of XXXX.

2. OBJECTIVES:

To maintain the integrity of the City’s presence in social media and to ensure that social media is used appropriately and within City guidelines and policies;

To streamline and improve the delivery of public information;

To allow the public to provide feedback to their government; and

To create open lines of communication and promote dialogue between the City and the general public.

3. DEFINITIONS:

Social Media: Internet-based technology communications tools with foci on immediacy, interactivity, user participation, and information sharing such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

City Social Media Sites: Those pages, sections or posting locations in social media websites established or maintained by an employee of the City authorized to do so as part of the employee’s position and that are used to communicate with the public on City business.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

City employees whose official duties include creating or posting information to a City social media site are responsible for ensuring that such information is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, relevant, and on topic with the City’s mission. Care must be taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct. Mistakes must be corrected quickly.

5. COMMENT POSTING RULES

Comments from the public are allowed and encouraged on the City’s social media sites and shall be monitored daily to ensure the comments meet the following criteria:

- Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious, offensive, threatening, profane or insulting language;
• References to the personality of individuals or personal attacks will not be permitted;

• Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted, except for events, services and/or activities directly sponsored or promoted by the City, or those defined as Partners of the City;

• Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion;

• Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information;

• Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment;

• Comments containing links to other websites or pages must be relevant to the topic. Inappropriate links in posts will result in the post being removed from public view;

• Comments may not promote the passage or defeat of a political measure or the election of any candidate for office, or, conversely, the defeat of a candidate for office; and

• Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not violate any law, confidentiality or copyright.

Comments may not be edited. Any post that violates the above rules should be documented for records retention and then deleted from public view. The comment maker should then be notified that he or she has violated the policy, specifying any and all regulations that were violated.

6. APPROPRIATE EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

Employees assigned to maintain City social media sites shall adhere to the principles articulated in this policy.

All City employees should understand the perception of their City association in online social networks. If an employee identifies himself/herself as a City employee or has a public facing position for which their City association is known to the general public, they must ensure that their profile and related content is consistent with how they wish to present themselves as a City professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with their position, and conforming to existing standards in the City policies.
Any employee posting on a publicly accessible site is expected to maintain a positive online image that is consistent with the City’s goals and objectives. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for internet postings that are inconsistent with the interest of the City or demonstrate disloyalty to the goals and objects of the City.

7. OWNERSHIP

All social media communications messages, images, podcasts, and videos that are composed, sent, or received with the City network are the property of the City and subject to Open Records Act.

8. PRIVACY AND SECURITY

The City has the right to monitor employee’s social media use on city equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users do not and should have no expectation of privacy.

Violations of this policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. All social media resources are subject to all state and federal laws and rules which may apply to such. In addition, violations of this policy or misuse of the Social Media Policy which are of a criminal nature may be referred for criminal prosecution.

Analysis

In drawing from the draft and active policies, we focused on what we determined to be essential foundational components of each policy. We drew upon these foundation points and attempted to compile a template that would allow municipalities to build a more detailed policy based on their individual needs. The result is an eight-point template policy. This section more closely examine the suggested policy. These recommendations are mere suggestions we consider to be most important. Thus, these policies can be expanded or limited as necessary and are not to be adopted without consultation with counsel.

The first section, “Purpose” is the authorizing point of the policy and is what allows the city to use social media. It sets up two basic purposes that any social media use must meet in order to be allowed for city use. The second section, “Objective” defines the reasons why the city is adopting a social media policy and provides the city with legitimacy in establishing a presence in social media. Thirdly, “Definitions” simply describe what social media are and what official city social media sites are. These definitions provide the basis for ownership in a later point. Next, “Responsibilities” set forth the basic guidelines for any official who is assigned to maintain the city’s social media site(s). It sets forth the basic rules they must follow in being responsible for maintaining the city’s web pages and sites.
“Comment Posting Rules” is a section that provides regulation to anyone who wishes to post or make comments on the city’s site. This section sets up an open forum for a civil exchange of information. Particular attention should be paid to Section Five, Part H, which covers comments of a political nature. Because this is an official government site, it cannot contain any political comments or information or in any way appear to take any “side.”

Municipalities should take caution in using social media to promote any type of political measure. For example, a community recently used Facebook to promote a new city building that would be constructed with funding from a bond that was being put to a referendum vote. The city posted information on what they believed were the good points of the bond issue. However, the Facebook page was set up in a manner that did not allow the public to post any comments. By preventing public posts on this Facebook page, many citizens stated that they felt their opinions were being suppressed and that the city did not welcome their input.

Section Six establishes appropriate employee use of social media both while officially representing the city and while posting as a private citizen. It is important that city employees realize that even when communicating in their private capacities, they can often be misconstrued as providing an official stance on the topic of conversation.

Section Seven establishes city ownership of any social media sites that it creates along with all content posted to the site and establishes that all posted content is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. Finally, Section Eight authorizes the city and its officials to monitor all use of the city’s social media and any use of social media on city equipment.

This template should be used as a foundation for each city to build upon in creating its own policy specific to its unique needs. This template, and any policy built upon it, should be reviewed by the city’s administration and legal counsel for accuracy and legality.

Municipalities should also consider the ability of citizens to access the Internet when establishing a social media site. Many Mississippians do not have or may have limited access to the Internet and therefore cannot access social media. Cities should consider a duplicate method for disseminating information posted via the social media platform.

The following examples provide governments and public officials with example uses for social media and governance:
Concluding Remarks

The future of social media in government is only limited by citizen connectivity, computer and technological literacy of citizens, and the creativity of government officials. The lack of reliable and affordable high-speed internet access in rural Mississippi currently limits the number of citizens who can be reached or reach public officials via social media. However, as wireless technology evolves and pricing of this technology drops more and more citizens will become connected.

Secondly, there are still generations of people who may not have limited knowledge of computers or the Internet. Because of this, there is a tremendous digital divide where citizens are not able to access the Internet due to knowledge gaps or low comfort level with said technology.

Finally, the use of social media is only limited by the imagination of those who use it. Currently, many people see it only as a means of keeping up with old friends, ad-
vertising a product, or disseminating government information. Creative minds will rise and find new uses for social media. For example, according to http://www.whitehouse.gov/open/innovations/spacebook, NASA has recently introduced its own interagency social media website called “Spacebook”. This use of social media within NASA helps to foster relationships with its employees. It allows scientists and engineers to connect and share ideas on each other’s projects thus bringing new and innovative ideas to the table.

The use of social media will continue to grow and evolve. It will be up to the municipalities to decide on how best to utilize the technology. Social media can strongly increase the government’s opportunities to adapt and respond. Social media is a great and positive benefit, which in time could definitely improve each form of government.
Bibliography


### Cities Contacted for Social Media Policy

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Legend:
- Green = Has Policy
- Yellow = In process
- Red = No Policy
- No Color = No Response

Number of Responses:
- 3 Has Policy
- 7 In process
- 4 No Policy
- 26 No Response
Appendix B
(Policy Examples)
City of Auburn, AL/Fairfax County

City of Auburn – Electronic Media Protocol

This document shall serve as a guide to follow when communicating news and information to the media and public via the web and social media.

Social Media

The City of Auburn currently maintains a presence on three social media sites:

facebook.com/CityofAuburnAL  |  www.twitter.com/CityofAuburnAL  |  www.youtube.com/CityofAuburnAL

The purpose of these sites is to take advantage of current trends in internet usage to disseminate the City's message and to encourage traffic back to the City's website. The City of Auburn website at http://www.auburnalabama.org is the primary and official outlet for information from the City of Auburn online.

The City of Auburn will maintain one Facebook page, one Twitter feed and one YouTube Channel to distribute information from all departments. These pages will be maintained and updated by the Public Affairs Division in the Office of the City Manager. General parameters for the usage of these sites will be set by the Public Affairs Division in concert with the Information Technology Department.

In general, social media should be used to direct traffic back to information presented on the City of Auburn website, with the following parameters:

- YouTube or Livestream videos should be embedded on an appropriate City of Auburn web page, with published links to videos typically pointing to the City's website instead of to the video on YouTube.
- Pictures posted on Facebook should reflect content available on the City of Auburn's web site.
- To avoid inappropriate content and tone, debate, and liability issues, follower posting and commenting will be disabled to the greatest extent allowed by individual social media sites.
- Responses to follower comments should be made through the official City of Auburn social media accounts.
- Other requested uses of social media tools will be evaluated individually.

New Sites

No new web sites or social media "sites" (including what social media sites may call sites, pages, groups, organizations, etc.) in any way representing the City of Auburn or a component thereof should be created by City of Auburn Departments or employees without the permission of the Assistant City Manager/Chief Information Officer, the Director of Public Affairs and the City Manager.

Information for events, campaigns or special topics should be presented on the City of Auburn website instead of an independent website. Even when working in concert with other organizations, no new sites or web addresses (URLs) should be created without first consulting with the Information Technology Department and without approval as listed above.

Current known exceptions:

http://auburncityfest.com  |  http://travelwithcareauburn.com

June 29, 2011
FAIRFAX COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT POLICY
(Adopted June 17, 2011)

Every day people discuss, debate and engage Fairfax County Government in many online conversations. We recognize the vital importance of participating in these online conversations and are committed to ensuring that we participate in social media in meaningful ways.

This policy addresses three areas:
I. Official county social media sites maintained by county employees
II. Employee access at work to monitor social media
III. Employee participation at work or home for personal or business purposes

Record of Updates
This policy and guidance will evolve as new technologies and social media sites change. Refer to this record of updates section for the latest changes.

Any addendums to this policy must be reviewed by the E-Government Steering Committee before implementation.

I.) Official County Social Media Sites

County use of social media is intended to broaden the reach of communication and engagement with the community and stakeholders, while utilizing new platforms that offer methods of communicating beyond the traditional source of official information located at fairfaxcounty.gov.

Official social media tools should be used to:
- Deliver public information, customer service and E-Government to county residents
- Advance countywide goals such as creating a culture of engagement
- Communicate directly to the public without a filter, especially during emergencies
- Increase government transparency and efficiency

A.) Existing Sites
The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) maintains the countywide social media sites on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and SlideShare.

Additional county Facebook and Twitter accounts feature departments and topics. Departments are encouraged to contribute content to existing county social media sites in lieu of their own presence. If a communications plan includes social media, first consider using existing county social media accounts with existing fan bases. View a list of lead social media publishers for contact information.

B.) Requesting Sites
New social media sites on Facebook and Twitter may be requested through this four-step process. If approved, OPA will create pages with proper settings, look and feel to ensure consistency; transfer administrative rights to the agency; and retain an administrative role. Departments may not create their own social media sites.
Appendix B  
(Policy Examples)  
City of Auburn, AL/Fairfax County

C.) Publishing

1. Publishers
   At least one public information officer (PIO) will serve as the lead staff person for official county social media sites. Mandatory duties include serving as the lead contact for an account, developing the engagement framework for posting information and responding to comments, adhering to policies and ensuring the social media site is regularly updated. Department staff may manage day-to-day operations of a social media site, but in close consultation with the site’s lead PIO.

   Only county staff will serve as publishers; publishers will attend mandatory training sessions. Volunteers, interns, contractors and board/authority/commission members are not eligible to administer official accounts. View a list of lead social media publishers.

2. OPA’s Role
   The Office of Public Affairs will monitor content on all official social media sites to ensure a consistent countywide message and for adherence to this policy. The Office of Public Affairs reserves the right to:
   - Request social media sites publish the same message about a topic
   - Coordinate and/or publish information to any social media site during an emergency
   - Direct agencies to modify social media content based on best practices and industry norms

3. Posting Guidelines
   Social media content is fleeting because updates compete for attention in personal social media news streams. Official county social media sites need to be clear, precise and follow industry best practices for posting updates.

   Three tenets county social media publishers must follow regarding the types of content to share:
   - Relevant: Information that helps residents and pertains to their daily lives
   - Timely: Information about deadlines, upcoming events, news or related to current events
   - Actionable: Information to register, attend, go or do

4. What Not to Post:
   - Information about items in litigation or about claims that could be brought against the county.
   - Nonpublic information of any kind; always check with your PIO if unsure.
   - Personnel, sensitive or confidential information of any kind.
   - Medical information that violates a person’s Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) protections.

Any concerns about content should be directed to agency PIOs or the Office of Public Affairs. Legal requirements and county guidelines towards the protection of confidential, sensitive, and internal use information still apply.
Appendix B  
(Policy Examples)  
City of Auburn, AL/Fairfax County

D.) Links
As an extension of the county's communications platform, social media sites should include links that direct users back to the county's website for more information, forms, documents or online services as necessary. Agencies may use a link shortener to meet the requirements of character-limited platforms and to track the number of hits to a link. Instructions to establish these accounts will be provided during training.

External links to media articles or other relevant content are permitted on official county social media sites to encourage conversation and to share information, but external links on the county's official website, fairfaxcounty.gov, are governed by a separate policy.

E.) Comments
Comments from the public are welcome on social media sites but comments must be monitored daily during working hours to ensure they meet certain criteria. County-created social media forums must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of Fairfax County rather than creating a "public forum." County publishers may only remove postings based on the guidelines below, not because a comment disagrees with county policy. All sections of social media sites that allow comments must include either a link to the following comments policy published on the public website or the complete text published on the social media site:

The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in Fairfax County, including its many residents, businesses and visitors. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.

Once posted, the county reserves the right to delete these kinds of submissions:
1. Vulgar language
2. Personal attacks of any kind
3. Comments or content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, genetics, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or intellectual disability or sexual orientation
4. Spam or links to other sites
5. Clearly off topic
6. Advocate illegal activity
7. Promote particular services, products, or political organizations
8. Infringe on copyrights or trademarks
9. Personally identifiable medical information
10. Information that may compromise the safety, security or proceedings of public systems or any criminal or civil investigations.

Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Fairfax County government or its officers and employees. If you have any questions concerning this social media platform, please contact the [Agency Name] at [agency e-mail]@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Publishers may choose to reply to comments to engage residents in the same way we reply to phone and email inquiries, but business decorum must prevail and factual responses -- not opinions -- must be shared. Agency staff monitoring for and replying to comments must coordinate responses with other agencies, if appropriate, so the best response can be provided.
Appendix B
(Policy Examples)
City of Auburn, AL/Fairfax County

Content submitted on Fairfax County Government social media sites for posting that is deemed unsuitable because it is not related to the current subject matter or is considered inappropriate content should be retained pursuant to the applicable records retention schedule. A description detailing why content was removed or deemed not suitable should be maintained.

F.) Emergencies
During emergencies, all social media content and postings must be coordinated with the Office of Public Affairs as part of its Emergency Support Function 15 protocols. Depending on the incident, publishers may be directed to point to the countywide social media sites OPA maintains that will serve as the main source of information. Certain department social media pages also may be designated as primary social media sources for the incident. OPA reserves the right to publish content directly to any official county social media site during an emergency. OPA will notify publishers in advance when possible, but if time is of the essence, OPA has access to all accounts and information may be published. If department staff is unavailable to maintain its social media content during an emergency and OPA deems it absolutely critical to update a certain account, then information will be published.

G.) Photo/Video Release Form
Please refer to the photo/video release information in the forthcoming Communications Toolkit.

H.) Embedding Icons and Content
Social media icons and content players such as YouTube videos or Flickr galleries may be embedded on county web pages. OPA will provide the appropriate code that meets accessibility requirements. Social media content from select partners such as the state or federal government may be embedded. OPA reserves the right to use agency social media content on countywide web pages, social media sites and other platforms.

I.) Facebook
View a full directory of official county Facebook pages. The mandatory pre-launch workshop covers many Facebook page features, including, but not limited to:

1. Understanding Publisher and Personal Roles
OPA will grant administrative rights to page publishers. All publishers must use their own personal Facebook profiles to access official county sites (the public will not know publisher identities). It is a violation of Facebook’s terms of service to create additional personal profiles or to create a generic personal profile.

2. Coordinating County Pages
OPA will add new official county Facebook pages to the Favorites sections of all official county accounts. If one county page receives a question about another county business area that has a Facebook page, then the other agency must be notified and answer the question on Facebook. For example, if a Connector bus question appears on the Police page, then Police should ask the Connector lead publisher to provide an answer directly on the Police page; if a department is not using social media, then answers may be provided by the original page or the Fairfax County Government account, but the answers must be coordinated with the department in question.

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3. Commenting as a Page
Commenting on other Fairfax County, local, state or federal government Facebook pages is permitted, but you must speak only about your business area and refrain from misrepresenting county positions. Contribute factual comments on business, nonprofit, media, partner and other Facebook pages as appropriate. Commenting as an official county Facebook page is similar to serving as an official spokesperson for the county. Publishers must comment as the official county page, not as themselves personally.

4. Wall Settings
When OPA creates a new page, all site features that allow the public to post their own topics, pictures or videos will be disabled. County Facebook pages are not “open forums” or a place for people to share comments about any topic they choose.

5. Comments
Please see section F for details about deleting comments on county social media sites. Additionally, if a Facebook publisher plans to delete a comment, a screenshot of the topic and the offending comment must be saved for documentation purposes. Facebook also provides the ability for any page fan to mark any comment as spam. Page publishers must monitor pages not only for spam comments, but also for comments that should not be marked as spam if they do not violate the comments policy. If you need assistance, contact OPA.

6. Updating from Mobile Devices
If publishers use personal devices such as an iPhone or Droid with Facebook apps, official county social media sites can be managed from these devices. However, be aware the app does not provide the full set of page management features found on Facebook’s desktop browser version. If a publisher loses a personal phone and someone accesses the Facebook app, then an official county resource is at risk. If you are publisher and use a smartphone, then you must protect county information and always use a passcode on your personal device. If a publisher loses a phone, OPA and DIT Information Security must be notified immediately and administrative rights will be temporarily removed.

7. External Links
Links to media articles are permitted to generate conversation, but vary the sources and limit the number of times external links are shared.

J) Twitter
View a full directory of official county Twitter accounts. The mandatory pre-launch workshop for Twitter publishers covers many features of Twitter accounts, including, but not limited to:

1. Design of Twitter.com Pages
All county Twitter accounts will use the same background design provided by OPA; agencies may choose their own profile picture.

2. CoTweet
Publishers will use CoTweet to manage official Twitter accounts. Each approved Twitter publisher must create their own account on CoTweet. OPA will connect CoTweet profiles with county Twitter accounts. For security purposes, passwords for Twitter.com accounts will not be provided to publishers.
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3. Retweeting
Limit retweeting to information from appropriate, credible sources such as government agencies, authorities/boards/commissions, and industry leaders.

4. Replying
Reply to anyone as needed. Ask other county Twitter accounts to provide answers as needed; otherwise coordinate responses with agencies not on Twitter. Replying through an official account is equivalent to serving as an official online spokesperson for the county.

5. Following
Follow select Twitter accounts such as all Fairfax County government agencies, other government entities, media, key partners/nonprofits and industry-specific groups. Do not follow all followers.

6. Comments
Unlike Facebook and its threaded conversations, Twitter accounts can only delete their own comments, not anyone else’s tweets. The disclaimer listed in section F of this policy does not apply to Twitter.

K. YouTube
1. Channels
OPA maintains the county’s primary YouTube channel. A few other departments such as Police and Library also have dedicated YouTube channels. Any other agency needing a YouTube video must work with OPA to publish clips to the county’s channel by contacting webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov.

2. Existing Channel 16 Video
Existing Channel 16 videos may be converted for YouTube; contact Channel 16 staff and ask for a conversion to a YouTube format. OPA will upload the video and contact the agency if more details are needed.

3. Planning Video
When planning video programming, county communicators should contact Channel 16 staff to review production options and to make video programming requests.

4. Disclaimer
All YouTube channels must contain the following disclaimer on the home page and in the description of each video:
   Please note: Fairfax County is not responsible for the content provided on “related” and “promoted” videos that are accessible from this county’s YouTube channel. All viewers should note that these related videos and comments expressed on them do not reflect the opinions and position of the Fairfax County government or its officers and employees.

5. Comments
Please see section F for more details. OPA receives notification of pending comments on YouTube and will approve responses that do not violate the criteria outlined in section F.

6. ADA Accessibility
To ensure ADA accessibility, work with Channel 16 on captions. Agencies also may publish a text-only script on a web page and provide the link to OPA to include in the video’s description.
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L.) Flickr
1. Channels
OPA maintains the county’s primary Flickr channel. The Library also has a dedicated Flickr account. Other departments who want to share photos on Flickr will work with OPA by contacting webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov.

2. Choosing Photos
Select photos that best represent all aspects of the event or subject without being repetitive. Ten images are generally more effective than 40.

3. Metadata
When submitting a request to upload photos, the following information is required:
- Title (caption) for each picture
- Tags for each set and photo; these help people search for images on Flickr or search engines such as Google
- Description for the full photo set, as well as any specific descriptions for individual photos

4. Comments
Please see section F for more details. OPA receives notification of comments on Flickr, monitors for activity and will coordinate responses or deletions.

5. ADA Accessibility
To ensure ADA accessibility, photos must include captions that describe the content.

M.) SlideShare
1. Channel
OPA maintains the county’s only SlideShare channel. SlideShare hosts PowerPoint slides and it also can be used to create audio casts with voiceovers on slides. Contact webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov to upload presentations.

2. Comments
Please see section F for more details. OPA receives notification of comments on SlideShare, monitors for activity and will coordinate responses or deletions.

3. ADA Accessibility
To ensure ADA accessibility, agencies must provide OPA with the original PowerPoint file (not PDFs) so the text can be published onto a text-only section of SlideShare.

N.) Promotion
Promoting official social media sites is one key to success. Include social media website addresses, widgets, icons or mentions on printed publications, county webpages, signs and other places of high visibility. Staff may choose to promote the mobile phone versions of sites, too:

Facebook: m.facebook.com/(account name here)
Twitter: m.twitter.com/(account name here).
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Q.) Ideas for Other Platforms
The E-Government Steering Committee will continuously evaluate social media technologies to promote established county goals and policies. Agencies are required to work with the committee if there is interest in pursuing new tools or new ways to use existing tools.

P.) Archives and Retention
Information and content published to official Fairfax County Government social media sites must be archived for the defined retention length in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using approved county platforms and tools.

Content submitted on Fairfax County Government social media sites for posting that is deemed unsuitable because it is not related to the current subject matter or is considered inappropriate content should be retained (for example, by using screenshots) pursuant to the records retention schedule. A description detailing why content was removed or deemed not suitable should be maintained.

Q.) Security
All publishers should refer to Information Security’s forthcoming Social Media Security Policy for more details about some of the technical and security aspects of maintaining county sites.

Credentials for official county social media sites should be managed according to the county password policy. Passwords should maintain complexity requirements and use uppercase letters, lowercase letters, numbers, and special characters. Passwords to social media sites should be changed at a minimum of every 90 days. In the event of a compromise, or suspected compromise, passwords should be changed immediately. A Fairfax County official email address should be used to establish an official social media site when possible.

Credentials to county social media sites should be protected and limited to authorized personnel.

R.) Related Policies
Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding use of county electronic resources, copyright, records retention, Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), Virginia Government Data and Dissemination Practices Act, First Amendment, federal and state privacy laws, and Fairfax County human resource regulations and information security policies.

S.) Violation of Policy
Violation of these standards may result in the removal of agency social media sites. The Deputy County Executive who oversees information resources and technology retains the authority to remove pages.
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II.) Employee Access at Work

While the county understands social media is an important way people communicate and share information about policies and programs, access to sites cannot be provided to all employees at this time. However, access for monitoring social media sites can be granted to select staff for specific business purposes.

Employees with access to monitor content from work must follow the guidelines detailed in the next section.

III.) Employee Participation

This section of the policy serves as a road map for employees to navigate social media sites with regards to county information. Fairfax County respects the legal rights of employees to express themselves on their own time and equipment. In general, what you do on your own time is your own business, but your responsibilities as a county employee do not always end when you are off the clock.

A.) Personal Responsibility and Ethics

Employees are personally responsible for the content they publish on blogs, social media networks or any other form of user-generated content in conformance with personnel regulations, Chapter 16. Ethics apply, including online. Fairfax County employees are bound by Code of Ethics and the Principle Guidance for the Code of Ethics.

B.) Official County Social Media Sites

Fairfax County uses official social media sites to communicate information as outlined in Section I of this policy. Only those employees with administrative access and training may express official county positions or speak as the county through a government social media account. Official positions shall not be conveyed through personal accounts. Additionally, only county spokespeople may share official comments on other forms of social media such as blogs or discussion forums.

C.) Speak For Yourself

If you identify yourself as a county employee on social media platforms, then you must indicate your views are not the official view of Fairfax County government. If you publish content on any website that relates to your work or subjects associated with the county, then use a disclaimer such as, “The views expressed on this site (or in this post) are my own and do not necessarily represent Fairfax County’s positions, strategies or opinions.”

What Not to Post:
- Information about items in litigation or about claims that could be brought against the county.
- Nonpublic information of any kind; always check with your PIO if unsure.
- Personnel, sensitive or confidential information of any kind.
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- Medical information that violates a person's HIPAA protections.

These items must not be posted on personal or public social media sites; employees will be held responsible for any violations. The decision about what you publish is yours and so is the responsibility.

Employees utilizing social media for personal use shall not use the Fairfax County Government seal or other official county marks nor use the county government’s name to promote or endorse any product, cause, or political candidate.

D.) Monitoring Social Media at Work  
If you have been granted access to monitor social media sites at work, then you must remain focused on the topic(s) you requested access to monitor. You must also follow Information Security’s forthcoming Social Media Security Policy. DIT monitors the usage of employees with social media access. You must participate in personal social media conversations on your own time and your own equipment per DIT policy and HR personnel regulation 50.

E.) Social Networking Implications  
Social media sites that allow you to interact with others require careful consideration about the implications of “friending,” “liking,” “following” or accepting/sending requests. There is the potential for misinterpretation of the relationship or the potential of sharing protected information. Relationships such as supervisor-subordinate and client-patient merit close consideration where a wealth of information can be discovered if access is granted. Agencies may provide additional guidance on client-patient relationships and other associations; this additional guidance must be reviewed by the E-Government Steering Committee.

F.) Violation of Policy  
Employees who do not comply with these policies are subject to disciplinary action consistent with personnel regulations. Agencies can treat acts or omissions occurring in the context of social media in the same manner as any other employee act or omission. Failure to abide by policies established for use of social media may result in the loss of any social networking privileges an employee may have. Incidents related to the use of social media technology should be reported to CPA, agency Public Information Officer, HR representative, HIPAA coordinator or other appropriate staff. The PIO or OPA should request investigations into social media policy violations, misuse, suspected compromises of official county social media sites with the Department of Information Technology Information Security Office, HR or other related departments.

G.) Additional Guidance and Tips  
The following social media tips are provided as a resource to help employees navigate personal use of social media.

1. On your own time and equipment, you may choose to share county information. Repost and share county news, events and other information through your personal social networks to family and friends. You may choose to become a fan of the various county Facebook pages or Twitter accounts. You also may visit the Fairfax County NewsWire for a comprehensive list of daily news headlines and social media sites. Linking directly to the county’s website is the
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most effective way to share complete information.

2. Even if you are not an official online spokesperson/publisher, you can help monitor social media on your own time and equipment if you choose. If you see potential issues or errors about Fairfax County on a social media site that you are not authorized to speak about, then pass them on to your supervisor, agency PIO and/or OPA.

3. If you have suggestions for improvements about Fairfax County Government, including your department, please state them constructively or go through proper internal channels to share your concerns and suggestions. If you witness illegal, fraudulent or unethical conduct by county employees, contact the appropriate authorities such as department supervisors, the Police Department or the Internal Auditor’s Office.

4. Personally identifiable information is at risk if shared on social media technology. Information that is intended for friends, family, and colleagues may become available to individuals with malicious intent.

5. Social media and internet usage should not be considered anonymous.

6. Be aware that what you post online (comments, images, videos) is in a domain no longer controlled by you, and that your shared experiences, thoughts, and comments are no longer solely accessed by you. There is no such thing as a “private” social media site. For example, while your personal Facebook privacy settings may be adjusted so only friends can view content, those same friends can forward your comments to anyone or take screenshots of your posts.

7. Monitor your friends, family, and colleagues comments on personal social media sites. Be aware that their comments and content are linked and associated with your social media accounts.

8. Keep your home computer up to date with current patches and software to minimize vulnerabilities. Social media is an evolving focal point for cybercrime.

9. Use strong passwords and different passwords for each online account. Change these passwords frequently or at any suspected compromise, or strange occurrences that could indicate a compromise.

10. Consider use of advanced privacy settings that social media technology offers inherently through membership. However, realize that your published social media content may be probed, transmitted, stored, and archived by external entities.

11. Review the privacy and acceptable use agreements for all social media sites that you use.

12. Actively monitor your children’s use of social media. Statistics state that children are the least educated of the consequences and implications and the inherent risks and dangers of using social media.

13. Use caution when you click links that you receive in messages from your friends on your social website. Treat links in messages on these sites as you would links in email messages. Just clicking a link can compromise your browser, computer, and your identity.

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IV.) More Information

If you have questions about this policy or would like a presentation to staff about why Fairfax County uses social media, then contact the Office of Public Affairs. You also may visit the FairfaxNET resource page about social media. Contact the Information Security Office with concerns about security.
APPENDIX F
FAIRFAX COUNTY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

PURPOSE
Fairfax County uses social media tools to provide ways to build community and officially and rapidly communicate directly with stakeholders, partners, the general public and the media as part of online communications. These tools are simply another way to deliver public information, customer service and e-government to our residents. To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, county agencies may consider using social media formats to reach a broader audience.

DEFINITIONS
Social media sites refer to a collection of online services such as, but not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, Flickr, LinkedIn and Twitter. Social media provides opportunities to engage residents through information sharing, customer service and community building.

POLICY
A. All official Fairfax County presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the County's information networks and are also governed by other related policies such as Use of County Electronic Communications Services Policy 70-04 and Information Technology Security Policy 70-05.

B. All social media requests must be submitted in the form of a business case to the Deputy County Executive for Information, who will then consult with the E-Government Steering Committee. If approved, agencies must fill out and have an agency director sign the Procedural Memorandum 70-06 Revised: Request for Waiver/Exemption Form (available at http://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/DivInfo/forms/PM70-06_Extension.pdf) and return it to the Information Security Office in the Department of Information Technology.

C. It is important to ensure the public's trust of Fairfax County's presence on social media sites because many imitation sites (both deliberate and non-deliberate) exist. Naming conventions (URLs) for social media sites must be submitted to the Office of Public Affairs in advance before establishing an account to ensure the name is sufficient for an official Fairfax County government entity and are consistent with other department names. Once finalized, all new URLs must be shared with the Information Security Office and the Office of Public Affairs. If agencies are permitted to use Twitter in the future, names will be predetermined. Visual elements of social media sites should be designed, as much as possible, to reflect the public Web site brand of fairfaxcounty.gov to ensure visual consistency and credibility. The Office of Public Affairs reserves the right to develop additional standards for naming conventions and visual consistency as social media sites evolve.

D. Agencies are responsible for establishing, publishing, and updating their pages on social media sites. Although it will be the agency's responsibility to maintain the content, the Office of Public Affairs will monitor the content on each of the agency pages to ensure 1.) a consistent countywide message is being conveyed and 2.) adherence to the Social Media Policy. The Office of Public Affairs also reserves the right to direct agencies to modify social media content based on best practices and industry norms. The Office of Public Affairs will advocate using social media to help departments reach their stated goals by assisting departments in developing appropriate uses for social media, assisting the selection of appropriate social media outlets and helping departments define a strategy for using social media.

E. Comments from the public are allowed on social media sites but those sections must be monitored daily during working hours to ensure the comments meet certain criteria. Some mediums such as Facebook allow instant commenting while others like YouTube allow for a moderated/approved process. County-created social media forums must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of Fairfax County rather than creating a "public forum." Agencies are only allowed to remove postings that do not meet the narrow focus of a County media forum. All sections of social media Web sites that allow comments must include either a link to the following comments policy published on the public Web site or the complete text published on the social media site.

The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in Fairfax County, including its many residents, businesses and visitors. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.
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Once posted, the County reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, or religious group. Further, the County also reserves the right to delete comments that are: (i) spam or include links to other sites; (ii) clearly off topic; (iii) advocate illegal activity; (iv) promote particular services, products, or political organizations; or (v) infringe on copyrights or trademarks.

Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinion and position of the Fairfax County government or its officers and employees. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the [Agency Name] at [agency e-mail]@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Agencies may choose to reply to comments so we're engaged with our residents much like we reply to phone and E-mail inquiries, but business decorum must prevail and factual responses, not opinions, must be shared. Agency staff monitoring for and replying to comments are strongly encouraged to coordinate responses with other agencies, if appropriate, so the best response can be provided. If you are replying on a social media platform, know that it is a series of conversations that constantly evolve. Be a part of them, provide constructive information that mirrors county information elsewhere and don't try to control other peoples' opinions.

F. Wherever possible, links should direct users back to the County's official Web site for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with Fairfax County.

G. All YouTube channels must contain the following disclaimer on the home page and on each video:

Please note: Fairfax County is not responsible for the content provided on related and promoted videos that are accessible from this county's YouTube channel. All viewers should note that these related videos and comments expressed on them do not reflect the opinions and position of the Fairfax County government or its officers and employees.

H. Agencies are strongly encouraged to follow the metrics of their social media sites to ensure viability and effectiveness. The Office of Public Affairs reserves the right to occasionally request metric reports.

I. Approval is not needed from the E-Government Steering Committee for podcasting and RSS feeds as Channel 18 and the Department of Information Technology, respectively, produce those social media. The Office of Public Affairs is available to consult with agencies about best practices for both options.

J. Departments that use social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state, and county laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Virginia Freedom of Information Act (VFOIA), First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by Fairfax County.

K. Login information, including User IDs and passwords, should be provided to at least one backup in the agency. Passwords must be secure.

L. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of agency pages from social media sites. The Deputy County Executive for Information retains the authority to remove pages.

M. The E-Government Steering Committee will constantly evaluate various social media technologies and the appropriateness of using these media to promote established County goals and policies.
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Social Media Access Questionnaire

The Social Media Access Questionnaire will help you and the E-government Steering Committee better understand business needs, intents and purposes for using social media. Please complete this questionnaire and then the appropriate specific social media form(s) for Facebook, Twitter and/or YouTube.

SECTION I: CONTACT INFORMATION

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: Social Media Use

1.) What's your primary business purpose for requesting social media?

2.) How does this social media fit into your overall communications plan for your agency/initiative?

3.) How do you plan to staff social media sites?

4.) What types of content and information do you plan to publish?

5.) How do you plan to engage the public in dialogue and conversation using these tools?

6.) Have you read the Social Media Policy?

☐ Yes

When finished, E-mail this form to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Then complete the appropriate form(s) for the social media platform you want to use.
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Facebook Use Form

Facebook is the predominant social media platform that encourages messages, engagement, interaction and customer service with the public. Please fill out the form below to help evaluate this potential use of Facebook.

SECTION I: Contact Information

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: Facebook Profile

Profile Name: To be predetermined in consultation with OPA to meet consistent county branding efforts, but please list your preference (i.e.: Fairfax County Government, Fairfax County Police, Fairfax County Office for Children):

Description: Use about 200 characters to describe your department or efforts. Please use the words “Official” and “Fairfax County” in the text:

Vanity URL: When you reach more than 25 Facebook fans, you are eligible for a vanity URL such as www.facebook.com/fairfaxcounty versus the longer, default version of www.facebook.com/pages/Fairfax-VA/Fairfax-County-Government/27549728910. Please provide your preference below for a vanity URL:

Image/Icon: Please attach an image to the E-mail you will send to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov with this form that will appear in the top left of your Facebook profile. This image then appears as a thumbnail picture that will serve as your unique department identifier for the public. You may choose to attach an image that is an icon only or one that has other image elements, but then you can crop the thumbnail version on Facebook. The maximum width for all Facebook profile pictures is 200 pixels wide.

SECTION III: Approved Administrators

Page administrators must have a Facebook account. Permissions are based on individual personal profiles rather than one county/department account that people are assigned to. When OPA first creates your Facebook Page before it goes live, each admin must become a “fan” or “like” the page and then OPA will make the person an administrator. Please identify who will serve as an admin (the list may, of course, change, so please notify OPA). One OPA staff member will also be an admin for all
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county Facebook accounts as support and backup. Note: ONLY county employees may be administrators; volunteers and BAC members are not eligible.

SECTION IV: Audience

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. However, since Facebook posts can be viewed beyond the original audience, it is necessary for each posting to stand alone and contain all necessary information. The profile name and biography will appeal to the target audience and people will follow based on interest in the topic.

Please describe the audience you are trying to reach:

SECTION V: Example Postings

Please provide four examples of posts you would publish. Posts are limited to 420 characters, but you should aim to use as little text as possible for effective updates. For example purposes only, use this shortened link for links you’d like to include: http://go.usa.gov/5w:

Post 1:

Post 2:

Post 3:

Post 4:

SECTION VI: Additional Questions

How will you promote your Facebook use?

How will you evaluate success? What metrics will you use?

How often will you post updates? How often will you monitor responses/questions/comments? How quickly will you reply to questions?

SECTION VII: Facebook Workshop

If approved, then all staff listed above will be required to attend a Facebook workshop. Topics to be addressed include:

- Enabling/Disabling Facebook settings
- What to post
- What not to post
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- How to write a good post  
- Coordinating county information on Facebook Pages  
- Favoriting other Facebook Pages  
- Customer service issues  
- Uploading photos and videos  
- FBML, Facebook’s version of HTML  
- Facebook during an emergency  
- Adding applications  
- Facebook mail updates  
- Metrics  
- Link shorteners  
- Differences between personal accounts and business Pages

When finished, send this form and the required image to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov. Do not embed the image in this Word document; it needs to be sent as a separate JPG image.
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Twitter Use Form

Twitter is a microblogging platform that encourages messages, engagement, interaction and customer service with the public. Please fill out the form below to help evaluate this potential use of Twitter.

SECTION I: Contact Information

Date:
Department/Agency:
Submitted By:
Lead/Consulting PIO:

SECTION II: Twitter Profile

Profile Name: To be predetermined in consultation with OPA to meet consistent county branding efforts.

Biography: Use these 160 characters to describe your department or efforts. Please use the words “Official” and “Fairfax County” in the text:

Web Site URL: Please list your main department URL:

(These next two sections require you to attach images to the E-mail you will send to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov with this form)

Department Background Template Image: Please attach a 150x150 pixel JPG picture that will serve as your unique department identifier on the standard Fairfax County Twitter background (visit www.twitter.com/fairfaxcounty to see the standard background).

Department Twitter Icon: Please submit a 48x48 pixel icon that will appear with all tweets. This will be your main Twitter visual identity as most people see tweets amid all of their updates with other organizations and people.

SECTION III: Approved Users and CoTweet

We will be using CoTweet to manage all county Twitter accounts. Please list who needs access to tweet along with their county E-mail address:

Please have these county staff (no volunteers or BAC members) visit www.cotweet.com and establish their own account with their fairfaxcounty.gov E-mail address. They will receive notification at a later date with access to the department Twitter account.
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SECTION IV: Audience

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. However, since Twitter posts can be viewed beyond the original audience, it is necessary for each tweet to stand alone and contain all necessary information. The profile name and biography will appeal to the target audience and people will follow based on interest in the topic.

Please describe the audience you are trying to reach:

SECTION V: Example Tweets

Please provide four examples of tweets you would publish. Tweets are limited to 140 characters, but 130 characters are ideal so followers can retweet the message without edits. For example purposes only, use this shortened link for links you'd like to include: http://go.usa.gov/Sw

Tweet 1:

Tweet 2:

Tweet 3:

Tweet 4:

SECTION VI: Additional Questions

How will you promote your Twitter use?

How will you evaluate success? What metrics will you use?

How often will you tweet? How often will you monitor tweets?

SECTION VII: Twitter Workshop

If approved, then all staff listed above will be required to attend a Twitter workshop. Topics to be addressed include:

- What to tweet
- What not to tweet
- How to write a good tweet
- Retweeting county information
- Retweeting non-county information
- Hashtags
- Monitoring Twitter
- Customer service issues
- CoTweet
- Twitter during an emergency
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- @Replies

When finished, please send this form and the two JPG images to website@fairfaxcounty.gov. Do not embed the image in this Word document; it needs to be sent as a separate JPG image.
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**YouTube Use Form**

This is a form to create a separate YouTube channel. While any agency can apply for a YouTube channel, please be mindful that you need to be able to sustain the channel with frequent updates. For most agencies, this may mean relying on the county's YouTube channel for your social media video needs instead.

**SECTION I: Contact Information**

Date:  
Department/Agency:  
Submitted By:  
Lead/Consulting PIO:

**SECTION II: YouTube Profile**

Profile Name: To be predetermined in consultation with OPA to meet consistent county branding efforts, but please list your preference (i.e.: fairfaxcountypolice, fairfaxcountygov):

Description: Use about 200 characters to describe your department on YouTube. Please use the words “Official” and “Fairfax County” in the text:

**SECTION III: Approved Administrators**

Agencies must first create a generic Google account to then create a YouTube channel. Agencies will be responsible for the protection of the logins/passwords. As for who will have access to the logins and passwords, please provide a list of names:

**SECTION VI: Additional Questions**

How will you promote your YouTube channel?

How will you evaluate success? What metrics will you use?

What kinds of videos will you publish to your channel? How frequently?

**SECTION VII: YouTube Workshop**
If approved, then all staff listed above will be required to attend a YouTube workshop. Topics to be addressed include:

- Enabling/Disabling YouTube settings
- How to upload
- What to upload
- What not to upload
- Tagging
- YouTube modules
- Creating playlists
- Favoriting other videos
- Linking videos to other social media sites
- Creating custom backgrounds and channel banners
- Metrics

When finished, send this form to webcontent@fairfaxcounty.gov.
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City of Houston, TX

CITY OF HOUSTON
Executive Order

Subject: Policy on Use of Social Media

E. O. No: 1-18
Effective Date: January 4, 2011

1. PURPOSE

1.1 City of Houston departments may use social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and
YouTube to reach a broader audience. While the City’s website (www.houstontx.gov) is
the City’s primary internet presence, the City recognizes that, when used appropriately,
social media may be useful in furthering the goals of the City and the missions of its
departments.

1.2 This Executive Order provides policies, standards, and procedures for the use of social
media sites. All official City presences on social media sites or services are considered
extensions of the City’s information networks and are governed by the responsibilities set
forth in this and related policies and procedures (such as E.O. 1-48, Policy on Information
Technology Security and A.P. 8-2, Procedure on Electronic Mail Communications) and in
the City’s standards of conduct, Chapter 14, Section 14-183 of the City of Houston Code
of Ordinances. Violations of this policy shall be considered misconduct and may result in
discipline up to and including indefinite suspension/termination.

1.3 Additionally, the City recognizes that many City employees use social media tools such
as Facebook in their personal lives. Therefore, this policy provides guidelines for City
employees when they communicate on social media sites as a private citizen.

2. OBJECTIVE

2.1 To maintain the integrity of the City’s presence in social media and to ensure that social
media is used appropriately and within City guidelines and policies.

3. DEFINITIONS

City Social Media Sites – Those pages, sections or posting locations in social media websites
established or maintained by an employee of the City authorized to do so as part of the
employee’s job and that are used to communicate with the public on City business.

Social Media – Internet-based technology communications tools with a focus on immediacy,
interactivity, user participation, and information sharing. These venues include social networking
sites, forums, weblogs (blogs, vlogs, microblogs), online chat sites, and video/photo posting sites
or any other such similar output or format. Examples include Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
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Social media administrators – City employees expressly designated by their department directors to maintain oversight of their department’s social media sites. A social media administrator’s authority is limited to actions that directly reflect guidance from the social media administrator’s departmental director and the policies and procedures of the social media administrator’s department and the City.

4. SCOPE

4.1 This directive applies to all City employees, including contract employees and volunteers for the City of Houston when working with social media tools on behalf of the City and applies to the extent specified herein with regard to personal social media sites; provided, however, that this executive order does not apply to social media sites of the City’s elected officials used solely for campaign or personal purposes.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Each department director is responsible for implementing the provisions of this directive and designating a social media administrator.

5.2 Each departmental social media administrator is responsible for oversight of the department’s social media tools and shall:

5.2.1 Review all requests to establish official City departmental social media sites and recommend approval or denial to the Mayor’s Communications Office. Social media administrators shall review social media sites or tools that have already been established in their departments to ensure that they are in compliance with this policy and shall submit a request for approval of such sites in accordance with Subsection 6.4 of this executive order.

5.2.2 Ensure the department’s social media sites are regularly maintained and kept current.

5.2.3 Review information posted to the department’s social media sites to ensure the content is appropriate, professional, and consistent with the City’s policies and the purpose for which the site exists. Frequent review of sites that provide opportunity for comment or other interaction is essential.

5.2.4 Keep the department’s director informed of the department’s social networking tools and activities.

5.3 City employees whose official duties include creating or posting information to a City social media site are responsible for ensuring that such information is accurate, professionally presented, respectful, relevant, and on topic with the department’s mission. Care must be taken to ensure that grammar and spelling are correct. Mistakes must be corrected quickly.

6. GENERAL GOVERNANCE AND OVERSIGHT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

6.1 City social media sites may contain information that represents or appears to represent the City’s position on policy issues or other matters affecting City business and/or the positions of the City’s leaders. Thus, the Mayor’s Communications Office has general
oversight of all City social media sites. In disaster or emergency situations, the Mayor’s Communications Office may assume control of departmental social media to ensure that communications are managed appropriately.

6.2 Each departmental social media site must be approved by the department’s social media administrator. Requests to establish departmental social media sites must contain an explanation of the business necessity for establishing such a site and will be submitted to the department’s social media administrator who will review and recommend approval or denial of the request to the Mayor’s Communications Office. Requests shall be made in the format found in Appendix A. A department may have more than one social media site upon a showing that multiple sites will accomplish the City’s goals in the use of social media.

6.3 For social media sites and tools in existence at the time this executive order is promulgated, departmental social media administrators shall submit a request for approval for each of their department’s social media sites and tools to the Mayor’s Communications Office. Such requests must be submitted within 90 days of the date this Executive Order is promulgated unless an extension is approved in writing by the Mayor’s Communications Office.

6.4 Persons responsible for setting up or maintaining City social media sites shall provide each administrator’s access, login, and password information to the following: their departmental social media administrator, their departmental ITD personnel, the IT Department’s Infrastructure Services Security Administrator, and the Mayor’s Communications Office. Any changes in administrator access, login or password information must be reported immediately to all such personnel.

6.4.1 Social media administrators and City employees authorized as part of their official duties to post information, make comments, and send messages to the public on their department’s Facebook page shall set up a Facebook account to facilitate transparency in communications.

6.4.2 Such Facebook account shall:

6.4.2.1 Contain the administrator’s or employee’s name.
6.4.2.2 Be created using the administrator or employee’s City email address.
6.4.2.3 Be set up so that the page does not allow “wall posts” or “friend” the administrator or employee.
6.4.2.4 Be used solely for City business in connection with their department’s Facebook page, and shall not allow comments or “friending” the administrator or employee.
6.4.2.5 Comply with section 7.0 of this directive.

7. DESIGN AND CONTENT OF CITY SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

7.1 Design elements (logos, background, images) should be appropriate to the subject matter and consistent with the City’s design guidelines found at www.houstontx.gov/homepage.html.

7.2 Social media sites must contain a link to both the City website (www.houstontx.gov), and the City departmental websites. Each City and departmental website shall contain a clear statement of the purpose and subject matter of social media sites.
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7.3 Departments will use proper grammar and where possible, avoid jargon. Social media tools are often more casual than most communication tools but all City social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, shall represent the City appropriately and professionally.

7.4 The following statement shall be included on each departmental website following the City department or program description of the purpose of the social media site or tool:

7.4.1 [Insert name of department or program] is a department [or program] of the City of Houston, www.houstontx.gov. This site is intended to serve as a mechanism for communication between the public and [department/program] on the listed topics. Following or “friending” persons or organizations is not an endorsement by the City and is only intended as a means of communication. All content of this site and all comments submitted to this page and its list of fans are public and are subject to disclosure pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act. Public information requests must be directed to the [department’s] public information officer.

7.4.2 Departments may use a departmental logo in their social media tools. Where appropriate for a particular site, social media pages will include the City’s logo. Page names should be descriptive of the department/division. City departments will create “pages” in Facebook, rather than “groups.” For “type” description, “government” will be used.

7.4.3 Departmental Twitter account biographies will read “[City of Houston, Department name]” and contain a link to the department’s website. Where possible, departmental user names should begin with Houston or HOU (HoustonPolice, HOUFW, for example). The department’s website shall contain the following statement: “When the City ‘follows’ or ‘friends’ a third party Twitter account, it is only for the purpose of facilitating communications and does not imply City endorsement of any such account.”

7.4.4 All content-sharing activities, such as video-sharing, shall be in good taste, appropriate, and consistent with the City’s policies.

7.5 Comments from the public are allowed on the City’s social media sites and shall be monitored daily to ensure the comments meet certain criteria; the City’s social media sites must be structured narrowly to focus discussions on a particular interest of the City rather than creating a “public forum.” Social media web sites that allow comments must contain the following text on the social media site or must include a link to the location on the departmental website containing the following text:

7.5.1 “Comments. The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in the City of Houston, Texas. We encourage you to submit comments, but please note that this is not a public forum.

7.5.2 Comments posted to this page will be monitored. The City reserves the right to delete comments that: contain false information, obscene language or sexual content, threaten or defame any person or organization, support or oppose political candidates, political organizations or ballot propositions, promote illegal activity, commercial services or products, infringe on copyrights or trademarks or are not topicaly related to the particular posting.”
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7.6 Information that is proprietary, subject to the attorney-client privilege or state or federal privacy laws, and information not subject to disclosure under the Texas Public Information Act shall not be posted on any City social media site. Each department’s social media administrator shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this rule.

8. SECURITY AND PRIVACY

8.1 Applications (such as streaming video, music, photos, subscriptions to RSS feeds) that may be useful to a City social media site’s mission can cause clutter and security risks. An application should only be used to serve a City purpose and add to the user experience, and only if it comes from a trusted source and has gone through the approval process outlined in Section 6 of this Executive Order. An application may be removed at any time if it causes a security breach or contains a virus.

8.2 Social media sites are hosted by third parties and are governed by such parties’ privacy policies. Additionally, the City’s social media sites are governed by the City’s privacy policy, www.houstontx.gov/privacy.html.

9. RECORDS RETENTION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

9.1 Records Retention. Pursuant to Section 441.156 of the Texas Government Code, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission promulgates records retention schedules for records of local governments. Each City department has a schedule and policy for retention of its records. The retention period for a record depends on the content of that record, regardless of the medium in which it is maintained. Departments maintaining a City social media site or using social media tools shall preserve records on a City server for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Further, departments will destroy, transfer, or otherwise dispose of records in accordance with records disposition schedules.

9.2 Open Records. City of Houston social media sites are subject to the Texas Public Information Act (TPIA), found in Ch. 552, Texas Government Code. Content in City social media, including a list of subscribers and posted communications, is public record. The department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public information requests for information on social media. Content shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. Difficulty in accessing the information does not excuse compliance with the TPIA. Users of City social media sites shall be notified that public information requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public information officer.

10. APPROPRIATE EMPLOYEE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

10.1 Employees assigned to maintain City social media sites shall adhere to the principles articulated in this policy. Employees shall not work on departmental social media sites during off-duty hours unless specifically pre-approved to do so in writing on a day-to-day basis by the employee’s supervisor. All such time worked outside the employee’s normal work scheduled shall be reported and included in the employee’s 40-hour work week. Any work in excess of 40 hours will be paid overtime as required by law and City policy.

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10.2 Consistent with the City's policies on use of the City's telephone and email systems, incidental and occasional personal use of social media is permitted during work hours provided it is very limited in duration and does not have a detrimental effect on employee productivity.

10.3 City resources, work time, social media tools, and a City employee's official position shall not be used for personal profit or business interests or to participate in political activity. For example, a building inspector may not use the City's logo (or its likeness), email, or work time to promote a side business as a plumber.

10.4 Personal or business venture social media account names shall not be tied to the City. For example, CityofHoustonCup would not be an appropriate personal account name.

10.5 If commenting on City business, employees should use a disclaimer which establishes that their comments represent their own opinions and do not represent those of the City of Houston.

10.6 Employees may not attribute personal statements or opinions to the City when engaging in private blogging or postings on social media sites.

10.7 Employees, City contract employees, and City volunteers shall not use their City email account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking site.

10.8 City employees, contract employees for the City, and City volunteers shall not post images, files, or text depicting City property, equipment, or personnel in any manner that would adversely affect the reputation of the City or a City department.

10.9 The following guidelines apply to personal communications using various forms of social media:

10.9.1 Use common sense when using social media sites. Remember that what you write is public, may be public for a long time, and may spread to large audiences. Refrain from posting information that you would not want your supervisor or other employees to read or that you would be embarrassed to see in the newspaper or on television.

10.9.2 The City expects its employees to be truthful, courteous, and respectful toward supervisors, co-workers, citizens, customers, and other persons associated with the City. Employees shall not engage in name-calling or personal attacks or other such demeaning behavior.

11. USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY CITY BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

11.1 Boards or commissions that wish to initiate the use of official social media sites should do so by formal action of the board or commission and must follow requirements for approval and governance outlined in this policy.

11.2 Under the Texas Open Meetings Act, individual members of a board or commission covered by such Act are prohibited from participating in postings or discussion threads on social media sites created and maintained by the board or commission of which they are a member.

14. ATTACHMENT  
14.1 Attachment A - Application for Approval of Social Media Site/Tool

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Attachment A
Application for Approval of Social Media Site/Tool
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Appendix A – Social Media Executive Order 1-18

Social Media Site Proposal (SMSP)

Pursuant to the City’s Policy on the Use of Social Media, Executive Order No. 1-18, a SMSP must be completed for each type of social media site/activity, and must be reviewed by your department’s social media administrator before forwarding to the Mayor’s Communication’s Office for final approval or denial. While the City’s website (www.houstontx.gov) is the City’s primary internet presence, the City recognizes that, when used appropriately, social media may be useful in furthering the goals of the City and the missions of its departments.

Your Name:

Your Department/Division, and Contact Information:

Date:

SMSP Details – Provide Responses on Page 2 – SMSP Outline

1. Project name: Identify the type of social media communication (Facebook Fan Page, Twitter, etc.) and the name of page proposed.

2. Key theme/message, and how it furthers the goals of the City: What is the theme or key message you want to communicate? What is the “big idea” you want your audience to remember, and how does it further the City’s goals or mission?

3. Audience: Who are your audiences?
   - Primary
   - Secondary

4. Audience needs, concerns, interests: What are the needs, concerns or interests of your audience that you must take into account in creating this social media? These deal with what’s already on their minds, or the context for this message.

5. Desired action: For each audience group, what is the ultimate action or response that you want from them?
   - Awareness?
   - Attitude formation/reinforcement/change?
   - Action?
6. **Key facts:** What specific information is important for them to know and must be contained in your message?

7. **Social Media Administrator:** Your department director is responsible for designating a social media administrator for your department, who will oversee your social media site.

   Who from your department should serve as spokesperson or be featured in your message?

   Who will maintain your social media site?

**Social Media Site Proposal Outline – Provide Complete Responses for Each Item**

1. **Project name:**

2. **Key theme/message, and how it furthers the goals of the City:**

3. **Audience:**

4. **Audience’s needs, concerns, interests:**

5. **Desired action from audience:**

6. **Key facts:**

7. **Social Media Administrator, spokesperson, and featured person(s):**

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**To be completed by your department’s social media administrator:**

I am the _______________ Department’s Social Media Administrator. I have reviewed this Social Media Site Proposal. I recommend:

_____ Approval

_____ Denial

______________________________
Social Media Administrator/Date
City of Temple, Texas
Social Media Use Policy - Internal

Purpose
Social media and Web 2.0 refers to internet based technology communication tools that facilitate an environment for immediacy, interactivity, user participation and information sharing in multiple ways. Social media tools help citizens interact with their local government in the individual’s preferred method and time schedule. A social networking presence has become a popular tool for vibrant and transparent communication and reaches those that do not consume traditional media as frequently as other segments of the population. Social media applications may include, but are not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Nixie, MySpace, Flickr, Foursquare and blogs.

City of Temple departments may consider utilizing social media outlets to share information about the City and its programs and services. Social media outlets can reach a broader audience and further enhance communication with citizens and stakeholder organizations in support of the City’s goals and objectives.

Social Media Guidelines
Social Media Platforms, when used by the City of Temple, or its employees, must meet one of the following purposes:

1. To provide Temple residents, business and visitors with information about city events, activities and other important issues.

2. To inform people from outside the Temple community about the many positive qualities of Temple.

All City Departments are encouraged to share information with the Communications office for inclusion in the City’s social media applications.

A City Department may want to create and maintain social media applications that are separate from those maintained by the City’s Communications office. Departments are required to get approval from their Department Director and the City Communications Director before implementing specific social media applications. Departments must provide specific justification and reasons for maintaining separate social media applications. If approved, the Department Director and the City Communications Director will periodically review each application. Those that do not meet the City’s intended goals and objectives may be removed at any time. All administrators / moderators of City social media sites will be designated and approved in the approval process of such sites. The Communications Director will provide oversight of all social media platforms and will direct which social media platforms will be created and shared.
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City of Houston, TX

Comment Posting Regulation
The City intends to promote effective communication and maintain a respectful
dialogue. In that spirit, the rules for posting comments on any official City of Temple
digital media or social networking site will maintain a productive and open forum for
community discussion. Our administrators/moderators use these rules to ensure that
posted comments are constructive and suitable for all readers, while respecting a range
of opinions and points of view. Whenever possible, moderation of posts should take
place within 24 hours of posting. Posted comments or attachments must comply with
the following regulations.

- Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious,
offensive, threatening, profane or insulting language.
- References to the personality of individuals or personal attacks will not be
permitted.
- Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted, except for events,
services and/or activities directly sponsored or promoted by the City, or those
defined as Partners of the City.
- Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion.
- Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an
address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.
- Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
- Comments containing links to other websites or pages must be relevant to the
topic. Inappropriate links in posts will result in the post being removed from
public view.
- Comments may not promote the passage or defeat of a political measure or the
election of any candidate for office, or, conversely, the defeat of a candidate for
office.
- Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not violate any
law, confidentiality or copyright.

Posts may not be edited. Any post that violates the above regulations should be
documented for records retention and then deleted from public view. The comment
maker should then be notified that he or she has violated the policy, specifying any and
all regulations that were violated.

All City of Temple employees should understand the perception of their City of Temple
association in online social networks. If an employee identifies himself/herself as a City
of Temple employee or has a public facing position for which their City of Temple
association is known to the general public, they must ensure that their profile and
related content (even if it is personal and not an official nature) is consistent with how
they wish to present themselves as a City of Temple professional, appropriate with the public trust associated with their position, and conforming to existing standards that already exist in the City of Temple policies.

Employees should refrain from posting information about the City of Temple using their personal Social Media accounts. Any person identified as an employee of the City of Temple on a publicly accessible site is expected to maintain a positive online image that is consistent with the City’s goals and objectives. Employees may be subject to disciplinary action for internet postings that are inconsistent with the interest of the City of Temple or demonstrate disloyalty to the goals and objectives of the City.

Ownership
All social media communications messages, images, podcasts and videos that are composed, sent, or received within the City of Temple network are the property of the City and subject to the Open Records Act.

Privacy and Security
The City of Temple has the right to monitor employee’s social media use on city equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users do not and should have no expectation of privacy.

Violations of this policy will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. All social media resources are subject to all state and federal laws and rules which may apply to such. In addition, violations of this policy or misuse of the Social Media Policy which are of a criminal nature may be referred for criminal prosecution.
City of Temple, Texas
Social Media Use Policy - External

Purpose
In an effort to communicate with a broader audience, the City of Temple, Texas maintains various types of social media applications. By accessing these applications, you are agreeing to the terms and conditions below.

Comment Posting Regulation
The City intends to promote effective communication and maintain a respectful dialogue. In that spirit, the rules for posting comments on any office City of Temple digital media or social networking site will maintain a productive and open forum for community discussion. Our administrators / moderators use these rules to ensure that posted comments are constructive and suitable for all readers, while respecting a range of opinions and points of view. Moderation will take place during the City's normal business hours. Posted comments or attachments must comply with the following regulations:

- Comments must be civil and may not contain slanderous, libelous, malicious, offensive, threatening, profane or insulting language.
- References to the personality of individuals or personal attacks will not be permitted.
- Advertising or promotional announcements are not permitted, except for events, services and / or activities directly sponsored or promoted by the City, or those defined as Partners of the City.
- Comments must be within the scope of the topic under discussion.
- Comments cannot include personally identifiable information, such as an address, phone number, social security number or other sensitive information.
- Comments cannot represent a person other than the one posting the comment.
- Comments containing links to other web sites or pages must be relevant to the topic.
- Comments may not promote the passage or defeat of a political measure or the election of any candidate for office, or, conversely, the defeat of a candidate for office.
• Participants are responsible for what they post. Comments must not violate any law, confidentiality or copyright.

The administrator / moderator may remove any and all postings and comments at the administrator / moderator's sole discretion. Posts may not be edited. Any post that violates the above regulations should be documented for records retention and then deleted from public view. The comment maker should then be notified that he or she has violated the policy, specifying any and all regulations that were violated.

Comments by external parties on a City of Temple digital media or social networking site are not official public testimony concerning any project or program. An opinion expressed on a City of Temple digital media or social networking site is posted for discussion only and is not a substitute for a formal statement in a public hearing process. A participant who posted comments contrary to the social media policy may be prohibited from future participation. The City of Temple reserves the right to update the social media policy and terms of use. Opinions expressed by contributors on any City of Temple digital media or social networking site do not constitute the official position or policy of the City of Temple unless such position or policy has been adopted by the City Manager and / or City Council.

Ownership
All social media communications messages, images, podcasts and videos that are composed, sent, or received within the City of Temple network are the property of the City and is subject to the Open Records Act.
Reid Bostick is a 2011 graduate of the Master of Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) at Mississippi State University. Bostick is a burgeoning leader in economic development/small business development. He often volunteers and mentors individuals in his hometown of Corinth, MS.

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Editors
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