

TITLE: Social Media Guidelines

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PURPOSE:

Social media continues to grow in popularity, and in its use as an additional, immediate and interactive communications tool. Social media started as a personal communications avenue and within the last couple of years has increasingly been utilized by businesses, corporations and government entities to communicate with their customers and constituents. Some of the more known brands of social media are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flickr and YouTube. All are full of what is known as user generated content – content that is posted by the public at-large. The UT Institute for Public Service and its agencies (the Center for Industrial Services, the County Technical Assistance Service, the Law Enforcement Innovation Center, the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and the Naifeh Center for Effective Leadership) should take advantage of these media as another way to communicate with their customers. However, to protect the reputation of the institute, its agencies and employees, some guidelines are necessary to clarify the use and role of social media by IPS and its agencies. These guidelines and tips apply to those individuals who use social media on behalf of IPS and its agencies.

PROCEDURES:

These guidelines and tips are for IPS agencies and their employees who manage social media content for those agencies. They are not meant to restrict protected speech of employees when posting to non-agency social media sites in their capacity as private citizens. Employees should maintain the same professionalism online as they do when representing IPS and its agencies in the course of their employment. Following are some guidelines and tips to consider when managing IPS or agency social media sites.

1. Maintain Confidentiality - Do not discuss or post confidential and/or proprietary information on such sites.
2. Maintain Privacy - Do not post photos or mention names of individuals on your agency's site without their consent, this includes tagging or identifying someone in a picture or item that you post.
3. Provide Valuable Information - If you begin to publish online content to social media sites, make sure it is useable information.
4. Keep a Site Updated - If you develop a blog or a profile on a social media site, remember to keep it updated once or twice a week.
5. Respect Copyrights - When posting, be mindful of the copyright and intellectual property rights of others.
6. Focus on Accuracy - Get the facts straight before posting an item. Review the content for grammatical and spelling errors.
7. Be Transparent - Make it clear that you are blogging/Tweeting/Facebooking, etc. in your role as an employee of the agency.
8. Take Responsibility for what you Post - Remember, you are responsible for the content that you post to blogs or any other interactive site. Content that is published to the Web is public and will remain online for a very long time. Also, remember that you are posting as your agency and

everything you post is viewed as coming from your agency. If you are posting something that is strictly your opinion, post a disclaimer that the comment is your opinion and does not represent the views of your agency.

9. **Accept and Monitor Comments** - A social media site without comments isn't very social. Be prepared to accept and respond to comments. To protect your site, moderate all comments before posting. Understand that not all comments will be positive, and respond to negative comments professionally and by providing any additional information that may help resolve the issue. Post a disclaimer on your site stating you reserve the right to remove inappropriate comments. Remove those comments containing vulgar language, those that attack any one group or individual and those that are obviously spam.
10. **Know Your Audience** - Be aware that a presence in social media is easily available to the public. This includes customers or potential customers, so make sure information is useful to them and does not alienate them.
11. **Link Back to Web Site** - Whenever possible, link back to your agency's Web site.
12. **Use of Agency Wordmarks** - If you create a social media site on behalf of your agency, use simple graphics that represent the agency's brand. The IPS communications team can provide guidance with the design.
13. **Spread the Word** - Market the agency's social media presence by including the particular site's logo on printed materials and as part of electronic mail signatures. Per the IPS electronic mail signature guidelines, all outside logos must be posted under the agency Web address in the signature.

CONTACT:

Susan Robertson, Communication Director
susan.robertson@tennessee.edu