



Maine State Government
Executive Branch

Social Media for State Business Policy

I. Statement

Subject to appropriate safeguards, State Agencies may use *Social Media* to communicate with citizens and other stakeholders. This Policy is about using *Social Media* for State business.

II. Purpose

This Policy details the proper use of *Social Media* for State Agencies to communicate with citizens and other stakeholders.

III. Applicability

This policy applies to all *Social Media* participation for business purposes by all Executive Branch agencies.

IV. Responsibilities

A. Agency Head: Once an Agency has decided to use *Social Media*, the Agency Head will

1. Designate a *Social Media Officer*
2. Inform the Governor's Director of Communications anytime a *Social Media Officer* is initially designated or subsequently changed.

B. *Social Media Officer*:

1. Authorize specific Agency staff to post, update, and monitor the Agency's *Social Media* presence;
2. Monitor externally-submitted comments before posting them publicly; and
3. Indicate when the *Social Media* site/app is owned and/or hosted by a third-party that has its own privacy policy and terms of service.

V. Directives

A. Each Agency Head shall designate an individual to fill the *Social Media Officer* role

within their Agency. The *Social Media Officer* will oversee all Agency *Social Media* and shall authorize *Social Media* usage consistent with this Policy and the Agency Head's direction. Agency employees shall consult with their *Social Media Officer* prior to engaging in *Social Media*.

- B. Each Agency Head shall determine who fills the *Social Media Officer* role within their Agency, based on their specific *Social Media* needs. There is no requirement that an entire position be dedicated to this role. For example, an Agency with a smaller *Social Media* presence may decide to assign the *Social Media Officer* role to the Agency *Communications Officer* and/or the Agency *Web Coordinator*.
- C. At the discretion of the Agency Head, legal counsel should be sought prior to the Agency engaging in *Social Media*.
- D. Business use of *Social Media* is limited exclusively to that which is explicitly sanctioned by the Agency Head and the *Social Media Officer*.
- E. Each Agency user must read and accept the terms of use of the particular *Social Media* site/app, and comply with them.
- F. All *Social Media* contents are also subject to the:
 - State's [Records Retention Law](#)¹
 - [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)²
 - [Maine's Freedom of Access Act](#)³

All posted material is public record. The Agency must institute a process to save and retain all postings, outgoing and incoming according to the State's Records Retention Law. This requirement applies regardless of the form of the record (digital text, photos, audio, video, etc.). Agencies *shall not* rely upon the *Social Media* provider's in-house policies for this purpose.

- G. In addition to the above-listed laws, statutes, etc., the *Social Media* content must also be in compliance with all other applicable State and Agency policies, including but not limited to, harassment, discrimination, confidentiality, ethics, workplace violence, applicable codes of conduct, handling of confidential information, etc.
- H. For any Business Use of *Social Media*, the Agency must ensure that:
 - a. Any *Social Media* account used by the Agency is established in the name of the Agency.
 - b. Any information posted is authorized by *Social Media Officer*.
 - c. Only employees authorized by the *Social Media Officer* post information on Agency sites
 - d. No personal opinion is posted under Agency accounts.

¹ <http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/state/index.html>

² <http://section508.gov>

³ <http://www.maine.gov/foaa/>

- e. Any scandalous, libelous, defamatory, or pornographic material, if posted, is removed as soon as discovered.
 - f. The *Social Media Officer* (or their designee) monitors the *Social Media* site/app to ensure compliance with this Policy, and all other applicable State and Agency policies.
- I. Agencies must create and publish a *Terms of Comment* which describes how the Agency will manage user contributions to the extent allowed by the *Social Media* site/application. The *Terms of Comment* shall detail the review criteria for acceptable comments, such as on-topic, non-duplicative, not obscene or offensive etc.
- J. There cannot be any expectation of personal privacy in the use of *Social Media* for Agency business. *Social Media* providers usually collect personal information, and downstream, disseminate and monetize such personal information in a myriad of ways. Agency users of *Social Media* for State business must be cognizant of this, and further note that such dissemination and monetization cannot be controlled by the Agency, or the State.
- K. State harassment and discrimination policies, confidentiality policies, ethics rules, code of conduct, and workplace violence policies are applicable to all business use of *Social Media*.
- L. Agencies linking from a State web page to a non-State *Social Media* site/app must indicate to users that the latter site/app is *not* an official Maine State government site, and that a third party's site/app policies apply.
- M. *Social Media* participants must abide by laws of copyright and fair use. Entire articles or publications should not be reprinted without prior written permission from the author/owner. No more than a short excerpt should be quoted of copyrighted work, and, wherever possible, a link to the original should be provided. A citation link should be provided when referencing a law, regulation, policy, or another website.
- N. *Social Media* providers may insert advertisements into Agency pages. State laws prohibit Agencies from endorsing products or vendors. In addition, the dot-gov registration program guidelines (applicable for sites hosted within the Maine.gov and other dot-gov domains) generally prohibit ad campaigns and endorsements. Thus, the Agency must limit its association with advertising by (1) Amending the Terms of Service of the *Social Media* provider, if possible; or (2) Explicitly and prominently noting in the Agency page that the advertisements inserted by the *Social Media* provider do NOT constitute endorsements by the Agency.

VI. Definitions

- A. **Communications Officer:** The individual who oversees internal and external communication and public relations for their Agency/Office. This typically includes issuing press releases, responding to media inquiries, etc.
- B. **Social Media:** Set of technologies for enabling a community of participants to productively collaborate. It includes: blogs, wikis, microblogs such as Twitter™;

networking sites/tools, such as Facebook™ and LinkedIn™; video sharing sites/tools, such as YouTube™; and bookmarking sites/tools such as Del.icio.us™.

- C. Social Media Officer: The Agency individual who oversees all Agency social media participation. This individual is responsible for authorizing employees to post on State sites, and for the content of such postings.
- D. Web Coordinator: The Agency individual who maintains the Agency's website management plan. A website management plan identifies roles and responsibilities, site monitoring, evaluation, content maintenance, oversight, user feedback, and other aspects of an Agency's website.

VII. References

VIII. Document Information

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