THE GOVLOOP GUIDE

THE SOCIAL MEDIA EXPERIMENT IN GOVERNMENT:
Elements of Excellence

WELCOME CONTENTS

ABOUT GOVLOOP

LOCATION

GovLoop is headquartered in Washington D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to connect and improve government.

GOVLOOP

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GovLoop's mission is to connect government to improve government. We aim to inspire public sector professionals by acting as the knowledge network for government. The GovLoop community has over 65,000 members working to foster collaboration, solve problems and share resources across government.

The GovLoop community has been widely recognized across multiple sectors. GovLoop members come from across the public sector. Our membership includes federal, state, and local public servants, industry experts and professionals grounded in academic research. Today, GovLoop is the leading site for addressing public sector issues.

GovLoop works with top industry partners to provide resources and tools to the government community. GovLoop has developed a variety of guides, infographics, online training and educational events, all to help public sector professionals become more efficient Civil Servants.

GovLoop's report, The Social Media Experiment in Government: Elements of Excellence is sponsored by GovDelivery.

If you have questions on this report, please feel free to reach out to Andrew Krzmarzick, GovLoop Director of Community Engagement at andrew@govloop.com.

INTRODUCTION

"THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR IS NOT JUST A FAD. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ACROSS THE GLOBE AND AT ALL LEVELS ARE LEARNING TO ADAPT THESE NEW PRINCIPLES AND TECHNOLOGIES INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE MISSIONS AND GOALS."

That's how Syracuse Professor Ines Mergel and Wake County, North Carolina, Chief Information Officer (CIO) Bill Greeves summarize the state of social media in government in their book entitled, "Social Media in the Public Sector Field Guide." They go on to explain why social media has become so important to the core functions of many government organizations:

"If agencies are interested in maintaining a flow of information with constituents and providing usable services, they must take the time to understand what social media are and learn about the relevant tools and how they are be-ing applied in government today. At that point agencies can make an informed decision about how and when and why they will choose to use or not to use social media to meet their organizational goals."

Notice that the word "communication" is not used in their summation of social media's influence within government. Instead, the authors talk about adapting social media into the mission for usable services and informed decision-making -- all tied to organizational goals. There's nothing wrong with communications, of course, but truly sustainable social media

efforts will be increasingly and inextricably linked to the core functions of government.

The Fels Institute for Government reinforces this theme in its 2012 report entitled, "The Rise of Social Government" and coins the term "social media as a service," which they describe in this way (bold added for emphasis):

*"The overwhelming majority of city governments interviewed for this report are experimenting with the **integration of social media tools in core government operations** such as service delivery, emergency management and economic development. This dynamic trend, termed by this report as 'social media as a service,' can be defined as the **transition of government services from traditional models of government operations to social media, on-demand, based models.***

'Social media as a service' is a term based on the popular concept of 'software as a service' – which mapped the transition of the software delivery model from physical delivery to on-demand, web-based delivery. The concept "social media as a service" similarly seeks to define an observed new shift of utilizing social media to transform government operations into web-based and on-demand models.

The trend of 'social media as a service' tracks **the transition of social media from a siloed communications and marketing tool to a dynamic organizational tool.** *It encapsulates the concept that social media is now being harnessed within government to* **not only connect and share with constituents but also to help perform core services better, faster and in a way that incorporates the web-based and real-time functionality of social media.**

The Fels report dedicates an entire section to sharing examples of "social media as a service" -- instances where social media has been applied to core functions, such as economic development, political engagement / policy feedback, emergency management and internal operations.

This guide builds upon both the "Social Media in the Public Sector Field Guide" and the Fels report by uncovering additional case studies and presenting bright spots of social media experimentation in government. Specifically, this guide is broken up into the following three sections:

1. IMPORTANCE

Are government agencies viewing social media as a priority or a peripheral activity? In this section, we will reveal some of the results of a Gov-

Loop survey that garnered the insights of more than100 federal, state and local government professionals.

2. IMPACT

When social media is prioritized, what is its demonstrable value? We highlight eight case studies of social media applied in mission-related scenarios, covering functional areas such as budgeting, community planning, emergency management and health services.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

How can you replicate these successful social media experiments in your agency? Based

on what we learned in the first two sections, we provide a template for you to set up your own social media experiments – along with monitoring and reporting tools to demonstrate value in your agency.

Our hope is that this guide is highly practical and provides a resource to share with key stakeholders, helping you to make the case for embedding social media into the core functions of your agency - not only as a communications and marketing vehicle, but also as a means to clear mission achievement.

"SOCIAL MEDIA IS NOW BEING HARNESSED WITHIN GOVERNMENT TO NOT ONLY CONNECT AND SHARE WITH CONSTITUENTS BUT ALSO TO HELP PERFORM CORE SERVICES BETTER, FASTER AND IN A WAY THAT INCORPORATES THE WEB-BASED AND REAL-TIME FUNCTIONALITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA."

*"The Rise of Social Government",
The Fels Institute for Government*

IMPORTANCE
State of Social Media in Government

In February 2013, GovLoop launched a web-based survey, eliciting feedback from community members regarding the current impact of social media in the public sector. The survey contained 10 questions and received more than 100 responses. Participants represented all levels of government, with 38% of respondents being federal government, 23% working in state government and 30% serving in local government (19% city and 10% county).
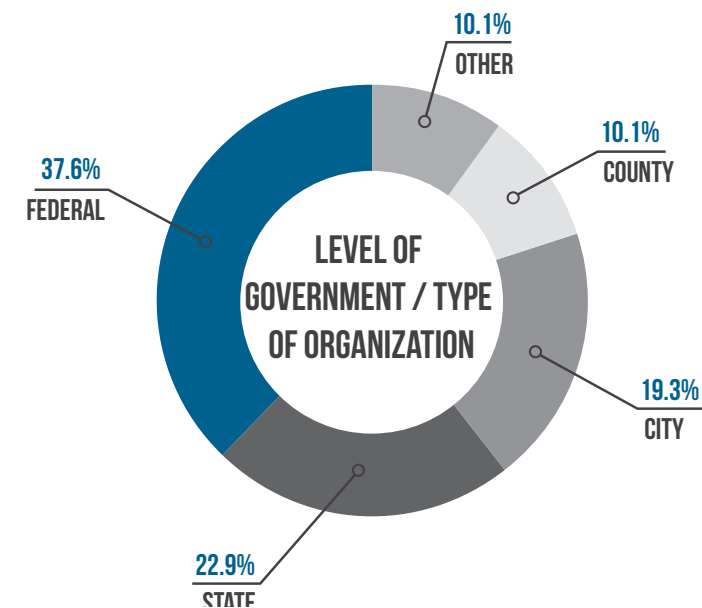
It's probably no surprise that respondents named **Facebook** (**88%**) and **Twitter** (**82%**) as the top two social media tools used by their organizations. Agencies also reported using **YouTube** (**61%**), **blogs** (**45%**) and **LinkedIn** (**42%**). Less-used tools included **Google+** (**18%**) and **Wordpress** (**17%**).

Overall, the survey addressed two main questions regarding social media deployment in government:

- ❧ **What are the primary objectives and demonstrable outcomes of social media use in government?**

- ❧ **How are agencies tracking social media and what tools do they use?**

We wanted to learn about the ways in which social media has led to clear, mission-related outcomes in government, like cost savings, time savings, broader reach to key stakeholders and more valuable input for decision-making - and how agencies know if they are achieving core objectives. Below we explore each question in turn.

LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT / TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

- 10.1% OTHER
- 10.1% COUNTY
- 19.3% CITY
- 22.9% STATE
- 37.6% FEDERAL

WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

85.1% Distribute information
21.1% Receive feedback
30.7% Have conversations
14.9% Inform policy
8.8% Drive innovation
16.7% Other

HAS SOCIAL MEDIA LED TO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING DEMONSTRABLE MISSION IMPACTS IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

11% Cost savings
12.1% Time savings
85.7% Broader reach
29.7% Policy improvement
52.8% Efficient information exchange
26.4% Efficient service delivery

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Far and away, survey respondents indicated that the most significant objective for government organizations when it comes to social media is "more effective distribution of information to citizens and communities, whether for awareness, education or emergency response" as 85% selected this option from among several alternatives (please see the chart above). In contrast, just 31% of respondents chose "engaging in a back-and-forth exchange / conversation with the public on mission-related activities" as their primary objective. This clearly indicates that -- for most agencies -- social media is still largely considered a "push" communications tool,

at least when compared to opportunities for engagement and feedback that can impact policy and programs.

Almost nine of out ten respondents (86%) indicated that social media has led to a broader overall reach to constituents and 53% achieved greater efficiency in receiving and delivering information. To a much lesser degree (30%), agencies are receiving feedback on policies, projects or special services that lead to agency improvement or efficiency in delivering services (26%).

While we wanted to see more examples of cost and time savings, for those who did respond to that question, we learned the following insights:

❧ *"Social media is not a cost saver or necessarily a time saver if you are creating custom content and truly engaging the public. You may have cost adjustments, but not savings."*

❧ *"With budget restrictions, advertising dollars have been cut and social media gives us an outlet for our information that is "free"."*

❧ *"We are able to do more with less money through engagement, outreach and relational campaigns with our visitors and taxpayers. Also,*
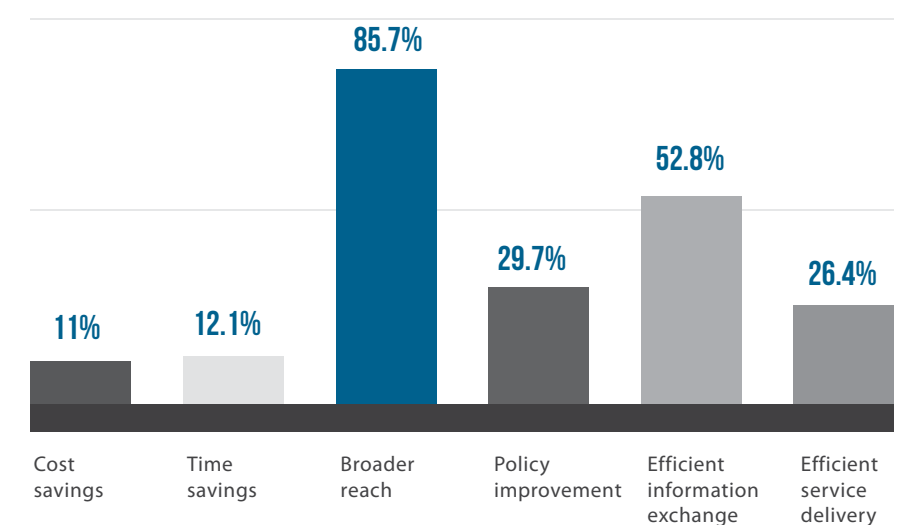
the addition of PAID seasonal college interns (and as needed Volunteers) have provided a significant decrease in staffing costs and promoted an environment of internal Volunteerism for full-time/part-time Staff to do more for the mission without getting paid."

❧ *"While total time spent responding to citizen requests has gone up, we have more interaction and can reach more people with each answer, as opposed to answering each phone call/letter/email individually."*

In light of that context, the most powerful indicators of

social media success continue to be the specific accounts of how agencies are finding mission-related value with social media. Here are some of the specific ways agencies are achieving that kind of impact:

13 OBVIOUS OUTCOMES FROM SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN GOVERNMENT

1. GENERATE REVENUE TO AUGMENT TIGHT BUDGETS

When it comes to tourism and hospitality, which is the economic engine for many states, social media has enabled one team to more effectively serve as "the direct line of commu-

nication as customer support and feedback." They are also using it to promote their "revenue generators" and to listen "to what the public wants, not what we want to do." One state cited the following wins from social media:

❧ Provided more accessible information, guides, maps, and nearly a 24/7 outlet of communication for visitors

❧ Advised visitors and promoted "for sale" and "to purchase" items and services that meet the wants or needs of the taxpayers - without adding a financial burden (aka without more taxpayer dollars) to further our mission

- Lowered our appropriations from $2.2m in 2004/2005 to $700k in 2010/2011 (and further lowering over the past few years) to maintain AND surpass visitors' expectations AND offer more opportunities with less taxpayer support.

The respondent noted that "This is not creative accounting - it is simple: cut waste, lower expenses, increase partnerships, offer more experiences, increase revenues, re-evaluate goals and revenue generators, focus on self-sustainability, repeat -- all with the taxpayer in mind and our mission intact."

Now that's concrete impact!

2. ELICIT BUDGET INPUT FROM COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

In 2012, one city "established a 'Virtual Town Hall' utilizing Facebook as the communication channel." They "shared with residents' information about the upcoming budget session and asked for feedback that we could share with City Council members. The campaign generated over 3,000 unique views and resulted in 450 new Facebook fans in a period of two months." Compared to the budget hearings of years prior, typically only a handful of people would show up – 4 or 5 out of a community of nearly 50,000. The Virtual Town Hall was established to

make information available to people whose busy schedules otherwise conflicted with regular city council meeting times. By sharing information through Facebook and involving citizens in the process, it helped to establish credibility and support for council decision-making.

Based on survey responses collected at the conclusion of the Virtual Town Hall, citizens agreed that the campaign made the budgeting process more open and transparent to them. They felt involved in the decision-making process. At the time that the Virtual Town Hall was conducted, the City was confronted with the reality of having to increase tax rates $0.85/per thousand in the general fund levy as well as increased to water and sewer rates. Thanks to the transparency generated by the Virtual Town Hall, citizens were well informed and there was very little pushback when rates were raised.

3. DRIVE FOLLOWERS TO A SPECIFIC WEBSITE FOR EMAIL SIGN-UPS

One survey respondent indicated that they use Twitter "to drive users back to our site to specific areas." Their tactical approach to building and sustaining a relationship with site visitors is to "encourage them to sign up for emails alerts areas that interest them." Once

the visitor opts in to receive emails, they are essentially giving the agency permission to continue a longer-term conversation with them.

4. INCREASE EVENT REGISTRATION

One Parks and Recreation Department reported seeing "a direct correlation between posts about programs and registration deadlines, and actual registrations." Another agency "found Facebook advertising to be very effective in promoting our special events." That same agency tweets its "programs and events 10 days out and have also found increased attendance. Surveying is showing that these methods are successful." Ultimately, Facebook and Twitter are not the final destination; they are conduits to in-person engagement and citizen participation.

## 5. REACH UNDERSERVED AUDIENCES DURING KEY INITIATIVES

One agency cited a specific deployment of social media "during our 2012 Bond Referendum education effort. It helped get the word out to sections of the town who may not have otherwise paid attention." Similarly, another respondent indicated that Facebook was allowing them to see "deeper reach into underserved demographics" and attract citizens to share their feedback in ways that they never did prior to social media.

6. GET ACCURATE INFORMATION OUT MORE QUICKLY DURING EMERGENCIES

"I work in a communications office," said a survey respondent, "and our use of Twitter to get quick information to the press and other stakeholders about emergencies, events and other issues has been most effective for us." In addition, a state level agency indicated that, "Twitter has been a great tool during emergency incidents or inclement weather. We tweet road closures, power outages, fires, and gain the most followers during those times."

7. RESPOND TO QUESTIONS ONE TO MANY VS. ONE TO ONE

One of the benefits of social media is the efficiency of one to many communication - with an opportunity for direct, ongoing public dialogue on common questions and concerns. One agency said, "Our technical blog has received a lot of great feedback - it gives us the room to answer specific user questions." Moreover, having a blog "gives us a way of talking directly to people and getting the word out about our initiatives." Facebook enables a similar level of engagement: "It lets us interact with people -- including people who are skeptical of our progress. When we answer those questions/comments we are giving those answers to thousands of
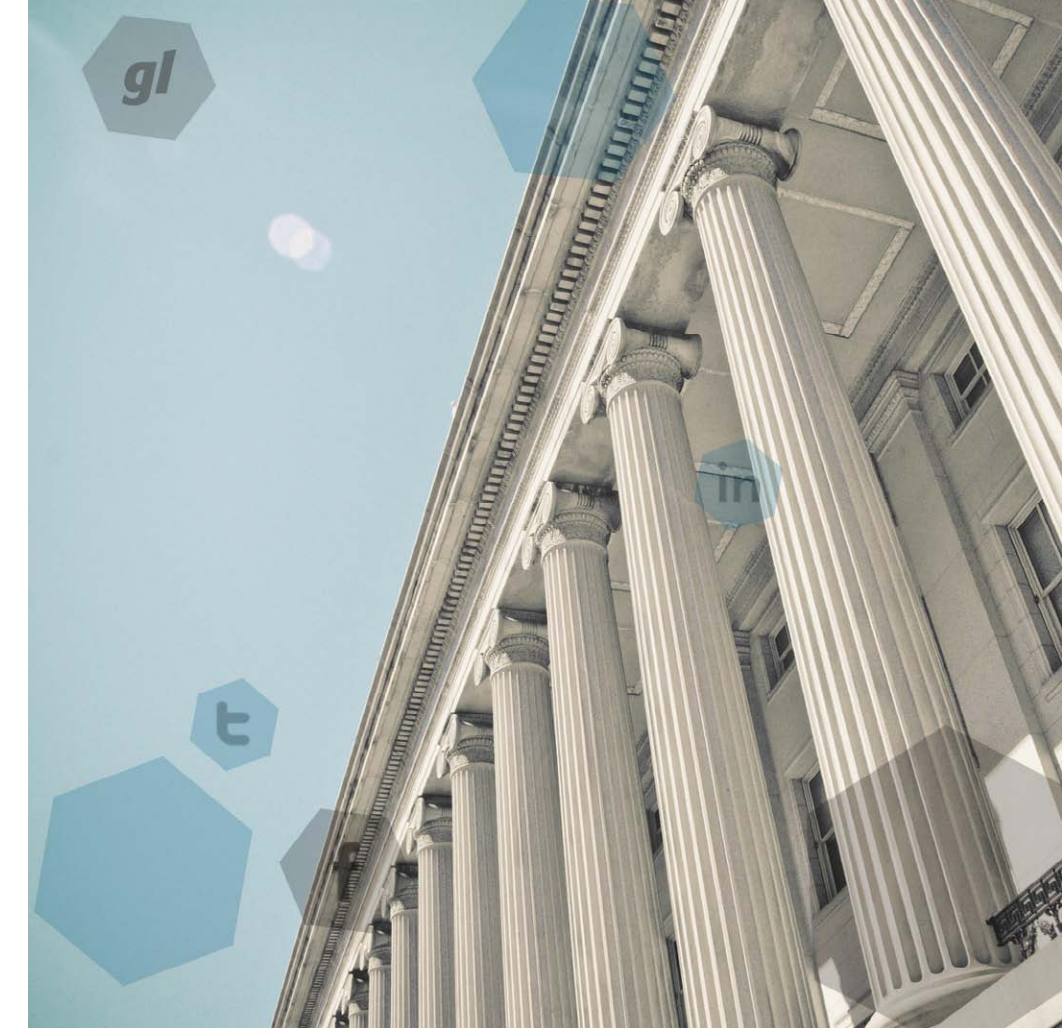
other people who might also have the same concerns."

8. ENGAGE WITH KEY BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS

What if businesses could be better connected to government? That's what one state-level department of administration discovered: "Twitter has been a great way to connect with our target market in the business sector. Twitter has made it easier to collaborate with partners and share opportunities in real-time. Our division still uses other channels of communication, but social media allows the public another means to communicate with us."

9. RECEIVE VALUABLE DATA FROM CITIZENS IN REAL-TIME

Our skies are safer because of social media, according to one regulatory agency: "Twitter allows our stakeholders to report aviation safety issues, which result in investigations and providing more information to everyone to help mitigate future risks. It allows us to publicly educate." Moreover, the City of Philadelphia used Twitter during Hurricane Sandy to spread awareness, news and information on the storm. According to a recent blog on GovLoop, "Philly311 was the 33rd most downloaded app (out of millions!) in the entire iTunes app store, empowering

over 7,000 residents in total with the ability to respond to Hurricane Sandy and report damage immediately. Just one week after the storm, the city received over 743 service requests" that enabled it to respond more quickly to troubled residents.

10. ENABLE SENIOR LEADERS TO KEEP GEOGRAPHICALLY-DISPERSED STAFF INFORMED

"With the issues of the continuing resolution and sequestration, plus the difficulty in getting the word out to over 11,000 personnel, many of whom have no computer access or no computer authorization at work and some in remote sites including Japan, Guam, and San Diego, the Commanding officer has been using Facebook to communicate the information he has as he receives it. This has been very effective in reducing the angst over lack of information."

11. LEVERAGE THE TIME AND TALENT OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Rather than spending money to hire a photographer, one municipality opened a Flickr page and found that it "has been a great source of free, high quality photos for us -- when you join our group you agree to let us use your pictures in city marketing." While small savings, the cost of replacing professional photography with citizen-powered

picture taking is a victory both in terms of budgets and in the building up of hometown pride.

12. AVERT A PUBLIC RELATIONS DISASTER

One agency indicated that they "had particularly great results on Twitter, both with monitoring and reputation management and with our reach." They recounted a story from early 2012 when they "averted a potential public relations nightmare by monitoring and discovering negative sentiment towards the FAA." The agency was able to respond quickly to "negative tweets [that] ruffled feathers of bird lovers and conservationists' nation-wide. But, because we were listening, we were already preventing a crisis before it began." In fact, they were able to escalate the issue to an administrator, get the situation resolved and then "saw a rapid decline in negative comments and an influx of positive ones."

13. IMPROVE PROJECT PLANNING AND RECORD KEEPING

One survey respondent discovered that "Blogs are fantastic for planning projects, in that you can create an ongoing dialogue about the process and then have a record of decisions made when the process is complete." An even better example is found in the text box on the following page.

HOW DO AGENCIES TRACK SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT?

In addition to learning about real agency impact stories, we also wanted to find out how agencies track and report on social media metrics. We connected the survey to the "Social Media Metrics for Federal Agencies" resources that were released in February 2013 by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). With these metrics, GSA's stated intent is to provide "a framework for agencies to measure the value and impact of social media in addressing agency mission and program goals" and "to move beyond obscure results of social media activities towards more sophisticated and more accurate assessments, leading to better informed decision-making." In one question, we specifically adapted their metrics - breadth, depth, direct engagement, loyalty, customer experience, campaigns and strategic outcomes - to learn the degree to which agencies have already been measuring this kind of impact in their social media initiatives.

At a rate of almost 2 to 1, the majority of organizations do not track social media return on investment (ROI) with 46% of respondents reporting that they lack a formal process for reviewing and reporting on social media ROI. The main reason that they did not track social media ROI, agencies told

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A CONTRACTING AND REAL-TIME PROJECT TRACKING TOOL

In a recent discussion forum on GovLoop, we asked, "Have any government social media activities led to really obvious results?" Specifically, we asked for examples of "a strategic social media campaign that aimed at hitting a clear metric" or "achieved cost savings" and situations where there were "increased access to services" or "decreased time to answer" by citizens. Below is one example that was shared in that forum:

> One of the best examples I have in my own experience was using Twitter in 2008 to post daily construction updates for one of our sewer projects @golfview2008. I know it made a significant difference because the project impacted resident access to a long cul de sac, so it was hugely disruptive.
>
> Normally on these types of projects we would field many regular calls from residents with questions about garbage and mail pickup, school bus pickup, access, schedule, etc. I don't remember getting one call for this - we gave out one letter at the start of the project and referred people to the Twitter account. It was such a simple use of social media, and I sometimes think people are looking for some big, flashy use of social media with earth-shattering results. But the things that make a huge difference for what we do, at least in cities, are not usually the complex, sexy implementations. It's things like the simple posting each day of what is going on for a sewer project that saves residents the time of having to call, particularly at inconvenient times, and staff the time of answering questions over the phone.
>
> A side benefit of that project is the time it saved on determining and agreeing to quantities with the contractor - another task that can be very time-consuming and frustrating. Because we posted each day what was installed, the contractor could keep up with what we had measured on a daily basis. He also told me at the end of the project how easy it was to confirm the quantities - he just went to the Twitter account and pulled the information from there. Going back today I can see how this archived documentation of construction could help cities and residents in the future to get dates for specific tasks that were completed.
>
> - Pam Broviak, City Engineer / Assistant Director of Public Works, City of Geneva, IL

Pam presents a perfect example as her comment demonstrates a number of clear results that her city was able to achieve using social media:

- Blended traditional (letter) and new media (Twitter) communications
- Increased effectiveness in sharing key information with citizens
- Reduced burden on city staff due to lower call volumes
- Improved project management with contractors
- Demonstrated real-time, government transparency by publicly posting task completion

We also appreciate the simplicity of the deployment and the potential for replication on a variety of projects.
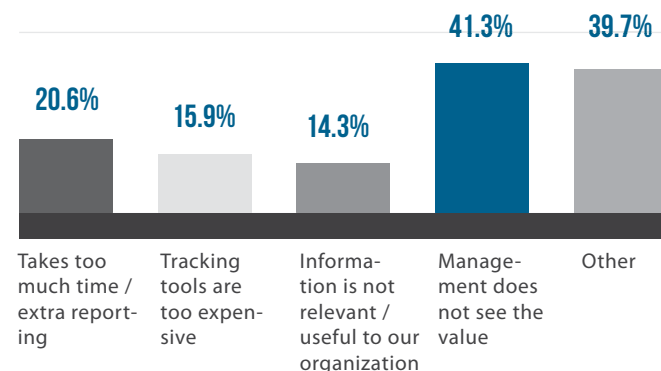
govloop

INTERACT:

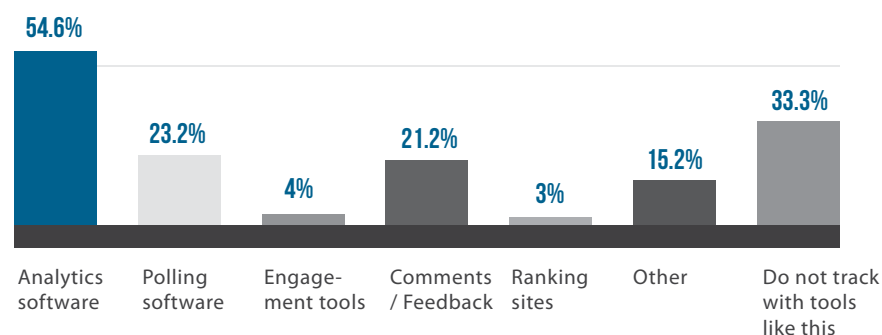If you wish to share similar examples from your organization, please visit the forum now:

http://www.govloop.com/forum/topics/have-any-government-social-media-activities-led-to-really-obvious

IF YOUR ORGANIZATION DOES NOT TRACK SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS OR IMPACT, WHY NOT?

Bar chart:
- Takes too much time / extra reporting: 20.6%
- Tracking tools are too expensive: 15.9%
- Information is not relevant / useful to our organization: 14.3%
- Management does not see the value: 41.3%
- Other: 39.7%

WHAT TOOLS DO YOU USE TO MEASURE RESULTS? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

Bar chart:
- Analytics software: 54.6%
- Polling software: 23.2%
- Engagement tools: 4%
- Comments / Feedback: 21.2%
- Ranking sites: 3%
- Other: 15.2%
- Do not track with tools like this: 33.3%

us, was that management did not see the value (41%). Many survey participants essentially said, "we'd like to track, but we still need to learn how to do it effectively." As a result, it's not that agencies do not want to track the impact of social media - they are reporting that they see the value and would prefer to invest in both the

tools and training - but do not have agency support to do so.

The good news is that 25% of agencies are tracking social media ROI and another 24% indicate that such tracking is "In Development." That combined percentage of 49% indicates a promising trend towards the majority of agencies us-

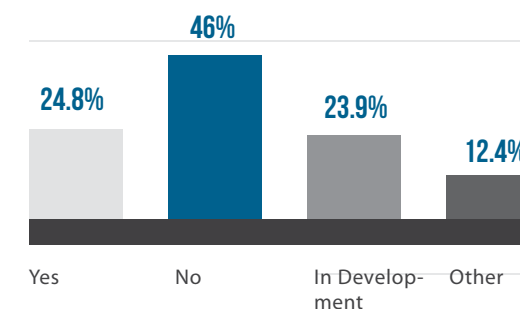ing some kind of social media monitoring to ascertain ROI.

Among agencies that do engage in some kind of social media tracking, most (79%) are still concerned with "Breadth - an increase in online community size / growth (i.e. number of fans, followers, likes, shares, etc.)" The second most-used metric was Depth (64%) - which signifies that an individual has followed a link from a social media site to access information on another agency website or targeted landing page (i.e. email sign-ups). The third highest type of tracking cited by respondents was Direct Engagement (57%), or the back and forth exchange of comments and conversation.

In terms of the tools used by agencies, analytics software (55%) was the most commonly cited tool for tracking. Some agencies reported using polling software (23%) or message content analyzers (21%). Congruent with the fact that half of agencies are not tracking social media, one in three government organizations said they did not track with these kinds of tools at all.
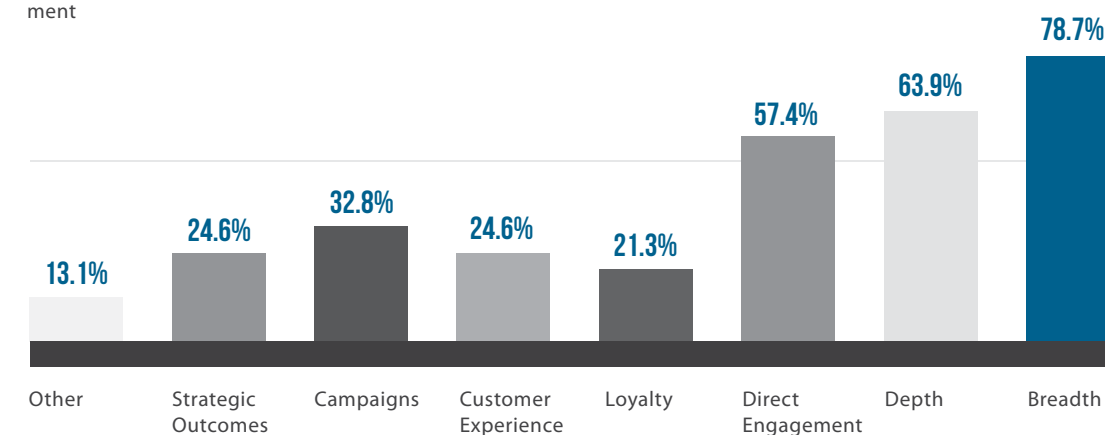
SURVEY SUMMARY

If we had stated a hypothesis at the outset of this survey, we would have declared "social media is largely a communications tool, but there are serious pockets of impact on the mission that are being monitored

DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION HAVE A FORMAL PROCESS FOR TRACKING SOCIAL MEDIA ROI SPECIFICALLY?

Bar chart:
- Yes: 24.8%
- No: 46%
- In Development: 23.9%
- Other: 12.4%

IF SO, WHAT DO YOU TRACK?

Bar chart:
- Other: 13.1%
- Strategic Outcomes: 24.6%
- Campaigns: 32.8%
- Customer Experience: 24.6%
- Loyalty: 21.3%
- Direct Engagement: 57.4%
- Depth: 63.9%
- Breadth: 78.7%

and leading to demonstrable impact." That prediction would not be far off, but the obvious fact is that social media is still seen largely as another mode of distributing information versus eliciting input for policy making and program improvement. With that backdrop in mind, the next section seeks to show those situations where agencies have experimented with social media and experienced noteworthy results.

"GONE ARE THE DAYS WHEN YOU COULD TALLY FACEBOOK "LIKES" AND TWITTER "FOLLOWERS" AS MEASURES OF SOCIAL MEDIA SUCCESS.

TODAY, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT WHO YOU KNOW, BUT WHAT YOU ARE SAYING TO THEM AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE SHARING IT WITH OTHERS."

- Excerpted from an article entitled, "Social Media and Citizen Engagement" by the Alliance for Innovation
http://transformgov.org/en/Article/102661/Social_Media_and_Citizen_Engagement

IMPACT
Stories of Mission Achievement

As the GovLoop survey revealed, social media is largely a tool deployed by communications and public affairs departments. However, the anecdotes in the previous section and the chart below reveal that other departments and government functions are finding social media to be valuable as well.

Of course, the most important impact that social media can have on our nation is enabling more citizens to obtain better information and increased opportunities for involvement in their government. While many communications and public affairs departments are doing a great job of incorporating social media into their educational campaigns and outreach activities, we wanted to explore the ways in which social media is being applied to these other functions in government. This section highlights eight examples where social media is having a transformative effect on core functional areas:

1   BUDGETS / FINANCE
2   COMMUNITY PLANNING
3   CRIME REDUCTION
4   EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

5   ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP
6   HEALTH CARE
7   INTERNAL OPERATIONS
8   PARKS AND RECREATION

WHAT FUNCTIONAL AREA IN YOUR ORGANIZATION USES SOCIAL MEDIA?

FUNCTION	%
Communications / Public Affairs	80.7%
Emergency Management / Fire / Police	34.9%
Parks and Recreation	25.7%
Community Planning	22.9%
Public Works	22.9%
Health and/or Human Services	21.1%
Economic Development	19.3%
Environmental Protection / Services	19.3%
Transportation	17.4%
Budgeting / Finance	11.0%
Acquisition / Contracting	8.3%
Property Management	3.7%
Other	16.5%

For each one, we identified a problem, how social media was part of the solution, and shared lessons learned and outcomes to inform potential replication.

BUDGETS & FINANCE

Ben Niolet started his job as the state of North Carolina's Director of New Media in late 2010 and needed to broaden the base of communications and expand the state's communication footprint. His state was facing a $2.5 billion deficit in the budget and citizen engagement was a necessary component to making a decision on how to best overcome the budgetary shortcuts.

The state developed an interactive game-like platform that allowed residents to choose different options for closing the budget gap. The game was played over 40,000 times within the first two days that it went live and helped to create a dialogue about the budget and tough decisions that must be made to balance a budget. Niolet was clear to identify that success is not measured by the number of followers but rather by the level of interaction from the public. While the number of followers on Twitter or Facebook may look great, the greatest success comes from citizens knowing that when

they interact with the government they get a response.

His department sees social media now as an integrated means of government communication in addition to standard press releases. For Niolet, social media is becoming a standard form of outreach to the public. Niolet considers his role with the state similar to his former job as a reporter and blogger. He's in the business of content creation and that's something he sees as critical for the state to engage citizens on a more broad level while still taking advantage of cost savings and transparency.

COMMUNITY PLANNING

The City of Salem, Massachusetts, needed more public feedback and ideas into future community planning projects. The city saw that people had many different ideas for the future of their communities but no way to share them in a socially collaborative way. City officials teamed up with the North Shore Community Development Coalition, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and Emerson College to produce an online community planning game, called "What's the Point?". The game lets community members interact electronically with city officials to contribute ideas to shape the

future of their neighborhood.

"What's the Point?" invites the public to express their vision for the community's future designed by the Engagement Game Lab (engagement-gamelab.org), a research and development lab at Emerson College. To play the game, players log into the website and complete a series of timed "missions" which focus on different aspects of neighborhood life, including living, playing, doing business and getting around. Participants earn virtual coins for each challenge they complete, and can use these virtual coins to contribute real-world nonprofit organizations in the community.

"Engaging young people in the future of their neighborhood is critical to the success of the Point Neighborhood Visioning Plan. We're excited to launch Community PlanIt after young people in our community have had the opportunity to design content within the game," said Mickey Northcutt, CEO of North Shore Community Development Coalition. The project brings both long-time and newer residents together in the planning process by utilizing social media, smartphone, and tablet technologies that will reach a wide array of citizens.

What the City of Salem and their partners were able to accomplish with the social

The **City of Salem, MA** and others teamed up to produce an online community planning game, called "What's the Point?". The game lets community members interact electronically with city officials to contribute ideas to shape the future of their neighborhood.

game is a level of interaction amongst citizens that otherwise wouldn't be possible. The game is engaging, provides officials with valuable input from residents, and impacts the real-life causes that users choose to support with their virtual coins. The game creates a method for citizen engagement in a meaningful way that creates a pipeline of communications between citizens and community planners.

CRIME REDUCTION

The Virginia State Police (VSP) realized that they couldn't communicate with as wide an audience as needed to transmit vital information and solve cold cases. In early 2009 with Inauguration day fast approaching, essential information about traffic and logistics needed to be disseminated.

People who needed the information most were unlikely from the area and were unlikely to watch the local news. Due to the fact that standard communication methods through the traditional news cycles weren't feasible, the department launched a YouTube page. They filmed press conferences about the extremely complicated logistics surrounding President Obama's first inauguration and within

the first week, the department's first video was viewed thousands of times, prompting the department to take a second look at their standard social media use policy.

Soon, they realized how social media could impact their mission and began planning for a larger social media presence. A Facebook page was launched in March 2010 to coincide with a well-known anniversary of an unsolved homicide. Marking the launch of their new social media page with the anniversary of a publically known event helped the VSP generate 24,000 fans nine months after the launch and led to several new leads and attention to the unsolved homicide case. The department uses Twitter and Facebook to cross-promote different campaigns and frequently leverage the public for

information on major events and investigations.

The success for VSP and their social media rollout was unprecedented. Between the first YouTube videos and the Facebook page, they gained thousands of new followers / likes and were able to garner attention from the public. Their biggest concern, as a member of law enforcement, is that information is being skewed or slanted. They found that social media provides them with an unfiltered outlet for instantaneous news that does not have to conform to a standard news cycle. The community uses the social media outlets for receiving accurate information when they need it, but also to reach out and thank VSP and individual officers for good work. VSP's use of social media has allowed for cost savings in

marketing, increased reach, and a type of engagement and interaction that wasn't possible before.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

When an emergency occurs, having proper communication channels is essential for first responders to engage with crisis managers. In the event of a crisis, situations such as power outages and flooding traditional means of communication become challenging. Emergency responders need new ways to reach people and find out what services are needed. Three great examples come from Johnson County, KS, Moorhead, MN, and New York City, which have used social media in innovative ways
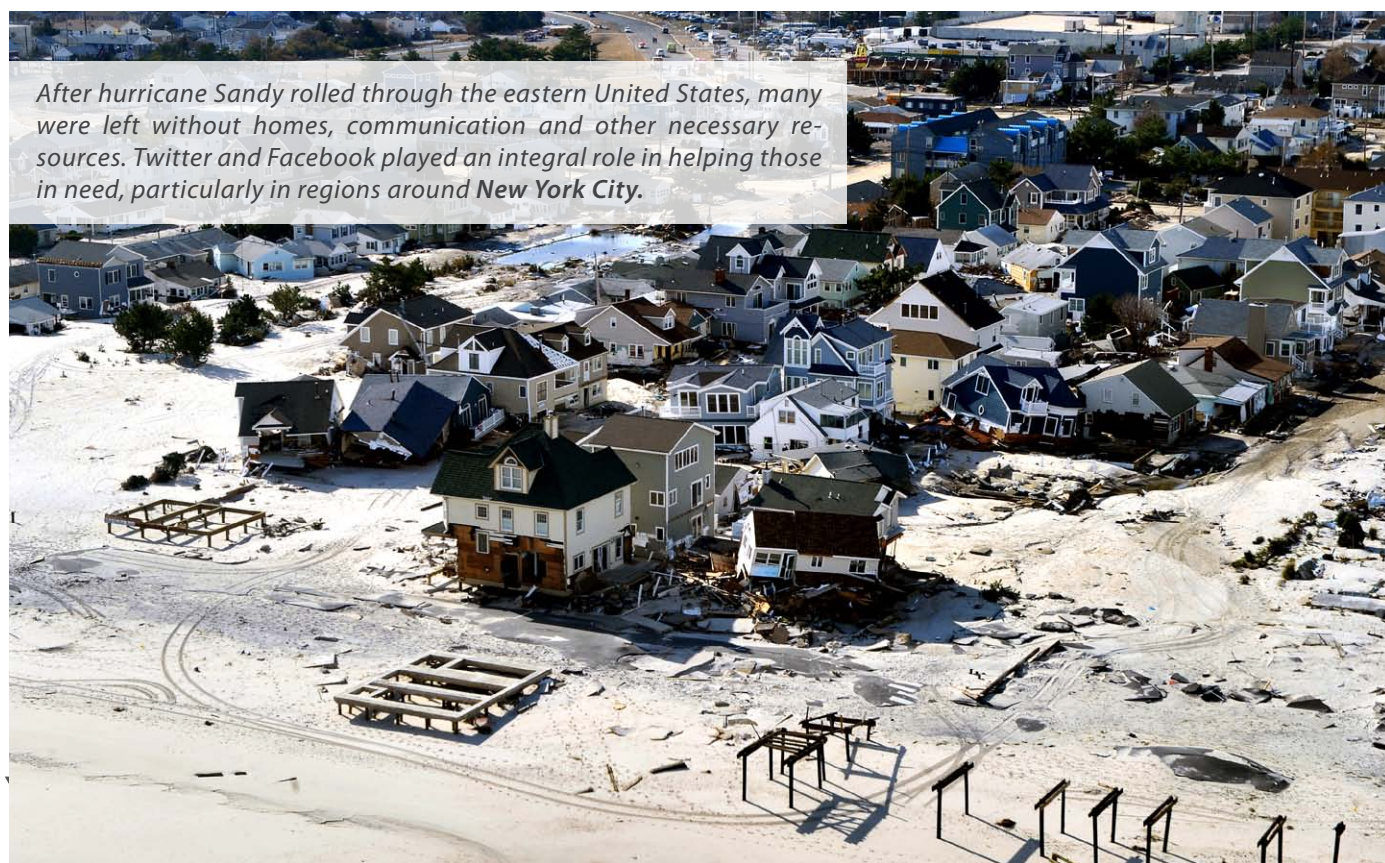
to leverage emergency response.

In Johnson County, Kansas, city officials used Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, and podcasts to launch "The 5,000 Prepared Citizens". The ambitious campaign strove to have 1 percent of the population pledging to be prepared for emergencies and disasters. Fans of the city's Facebook page learned about Flood Awareness Week, how to prepare their business for emergencies, and how they can participate in countywide emergency preparation events. The Facebook page so served as a platform to link informational articles from the Red Cross and even Sesame Street to promote outside educational interests for emergency planning.

In a similar example, flooding in the City of Moorhead, Minnesota, caused officials to incorporate Facebook and Twitter into their flood emergency plan. The city created a webpage dedicated to flood information where residents could receive flood status, watch videos of press conferences, and receive emergency contact information. Residents also have the opportunity to sign up for Facebook and Twitter updates where they can receive real time flood updates and information, immediately as it happens, something that a website cannot provide. Traditionally, people would need
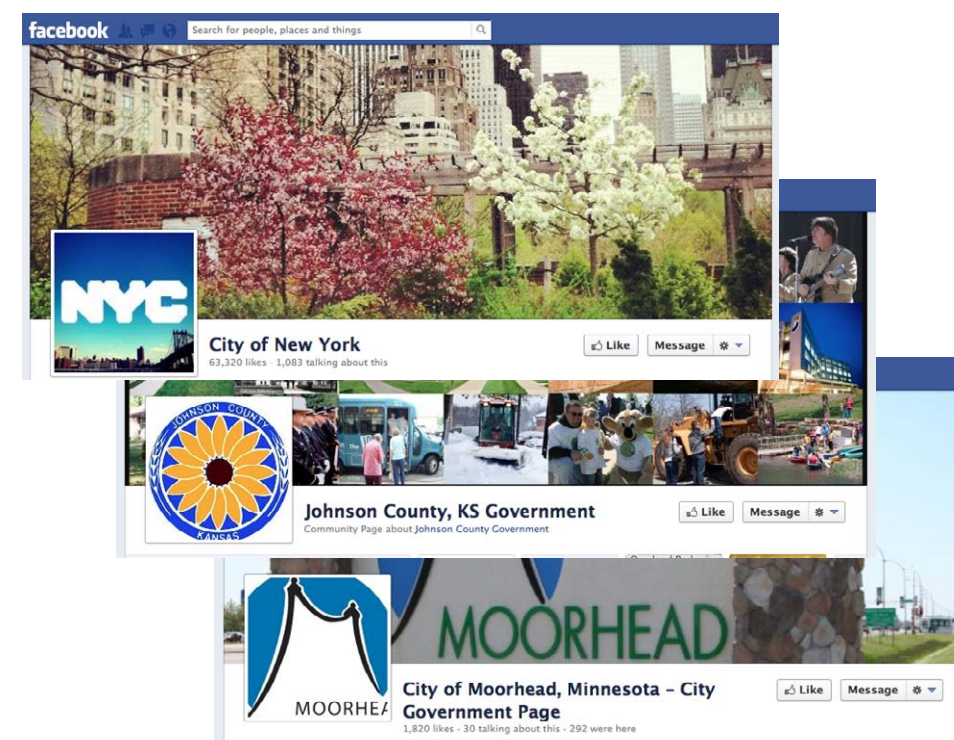
to visit a webpage for specific information, now everything they need is provided right in their Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Consider the impact that Hurricane Sandy had on the northeast. After the storm had passed there was still a "black hole" of communications due to citizens not having the normal ways of gathering information. Volunteers used printed fliers and bullhorns to spread messages but that still was not enough. New York City Fire Department's Social Media Manager Emily Rahimi monitored the Twitter account and kept citizens abreast of news and responded to those who requested help. Twitter was not originally intended to be used for communication during disasters but Rahimi says that it

has given them a new look at how Twitter will be used in the future. Facebook also played a large role in donations management. Locations where donations were being accepted started using social media to make lists of items that were needed, making their donations much more impactful to the needs of the community.

The success of social media in emergency management is readily seen from these examples. In an emergency, quick, accurate information is what citizens need in a life or death situation and getting information to them in a medium where many will see it is why these communities took to social media. Increased engagement and broader communication can save lives in an emergency and can also help

*After hurricane Sandy rolled through the eastern United States, many were left without homes, communication and other necessary resources. Twitter and Facebook played an integral role in helping those in need, particularly in regions around **New York City.***

Texas highways had some of the nation's highest levels of litter in the late 1980s when the Texas Highway Commission launched a public (non-social) media campaign entitled "Don't Mess With Texas."

educate people in the event of future emergencies.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Texas highways had some of the nation's highest levels of litter in the late 1980s when the Texas Highway Commission launched a public (non-social) media campaign entitled "Don't Mess With Texas." Now, 25 years later with the program still going strong and lauded, the state is using social media to continue moving forward and spreading their message of environmental stewardship of Texas highways.

Administrators utilize Facebook and Twitter to co-promote what is happening with the "Don't Mess With Texas" campaign. They run contests on their Facebook page awarding sports tickets for answering trivia questions and spreading social media stories, sharing video ads with big Texas celebrities, and promoting initiatives that individual communities are taking in regards to clean up and Adopt-A-Highway programs. The Texas Department of Transportation also runs a scholarship program for high school seniors that receives much attention on their social media sites and attracts residents to interact with them.

Since starting a Facebook page they have gained over 15,000 "likes" and ran numerous promotions and giveaways. Their newly revamped Twitter profile is cross-promoting advertisements, free stuff, and scholarship opportunities. The program administrators have managed to take a very popular anti-littering campaign and broaden their communication base by engaging citizens in the social medium where they are most susceptible to receive information at a fraction of the traditional cost.

HEALTH CARE

The need for centralized information about the flu, locations for clinics, and general education prompted the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to design and manage a socially connected site, Flu.gov. The interactive site, which includes everything flu related, provides valuable information ranging from symptoms and treatments to pandemic awareness.

There is a mapping widget that acts as a Flu Vaccine Finder so people can find the nearest flu clinic to them. This widget can be shared on other social media sites and blogs in English or Spanish by others that advances the reach of information and invites people to become engaged in the discussion. The site also boasts an integrated Twitter feed from the account @FluGov which promotes You-Tube videos about preventing the spread of the virus, specialized information for pregnant women and the elderly, and general news and updates from the HHS.

While measuring the efficacy of such a site and program is difficult, the necessity of Flu.gov is very apparent. The usefulness of the vaccine finder and specialized information about caring for pregnant women or the elderly with flu is needed by people in a medium they can access quickly. When dealing with health issues, education is often the best way to curb downsides. Whether the information is on one site, Flu.gov, or connected through HHS' other social media platforms, healthcare can be enhanced through social media.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS

When the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) needed new ideas to improve the agency, the administrators knew that the employees who were on the front lines of the organization had the answer and wanted to have them provide insight for internal improvements. Servicing over 450 different airports and having employees at headquarters proved an obstacle that could best be overcome by social media.

IdeaFactory, an open innovation platform, was the answer to their challenges. The website is collaborative and transparent, and allows TSA employees to develop, promote, and improve programs, processes, and technologies by sharing them with the entire TSA community - without filter. Think of it as an employee suggestion box of the 21st century. Once an idea is posed, it is available to everyone within the organization where comments are made and a dialogue begins. The two-way communication with agency leadership, TSA program offices, and employees makes it extremely popular. When an idea or improvement is implemented into the TSA procedures the employee whose idea it was gets publically recognized, receives a nice certificate from the administrator, and a unique TSA challenge coin.

Megan Kenny, the Acting Program Manager for the Office of Training and Workforce at the TSA, discussed the IdeaFactory during an interview on GovLoop's DorobekINSIDER. She mentioned that in 5 ½ years of operation, IdeaFactory has been the starting point for over 120 different ideas and has been visited by over 25,000 employees. What the TSA leadership really likes about the IdeaFactory is that they essentially get an unfiltered database of opinions and experiences of employees and what they go through day to day. The program takes four full time staff members going through ideas and processing them in the system. They try not to filter out any of the dialogue (< 2%) because it is important for conversation to emerge around an idea and see how that it is working.

By implementing an open innovation platform for employees, TSA officials have boosted morale of employees, received meaningful input from the workforce, and established a reliable way to share information. Ultimately, the platform works to achieve a mission critical objective of TSA, providing a more secure travel experience for the public due to engaged and empowered employees.

PARKS & RECREATION

In the face of an economic downturn, the city of Tyler, Texas, needed to innovate so they could provide their citizens with the same level of service and knowledge about city parks at a decreased cost. The city operates over 1,000 acres of land within 25 city parks and wanted to attain a level of citizen engagement and awareness while battling cuts in the budget.

Assistant City Manager Susan Guthrie elaborated on the ways that the City of Ty-

ler raised interest in parks and recreational activities by using social media. The city filmed YouTube video tours of the parks that showed the wide variety of amenities that are offered -- from baseball league to disc golf courses to bike trails and amphitheaters. While these videos are important for citizens to realize what was offered, the city also wanted to show those who were already utilizing the parks what they may have been missing. QR codes were placed on signs throughout the parks. When someone visited the park they could scan the QR code, which would direct them to the You-

Tube video of the park they were standing in. By doing so, citizens were able to jump directly to the information they needed - a short YouTube video - and take a virtual, guided tour. In order to advertise these new services and reach the broadest base possible, they used their much-liked Facebook page and Twitter profile to act as free advertising for their efforts.

What the city found afterwards aligned exactly with their goals for implementing social media. They received a greater reach and citizens' knowledge about their city parks and rec-

reation services through views on their YouTube page, which was leveraged by using Twitter and Facebook to act as advertisements for the parks. Their utilization of social media to promote the parks and recreational services was more cost effective than the traditional means of advertising. Overall, they were able to implement a way of communication that would broaden their reach to citizens while becoming more cost effective and efficient.

MAXIMUM MISSION IMPACT: INTEGRATING EMAIL AND SOCIAL MEDIA FOR OPTIMAL OUTCOMES

GOVDELIVERY IS THE #1 PROVIDER OF TOOLS THAT MAKE IT EASY for the public sector to send mass communications through email, SMS and social media. Having worked with hundreds of government organizations to implement integrated digital communication tools, GovDelivery has a unique vantage point to see the potential for connecting and engaging with the public in more expansive and more valuable ways than ever before. That's why we interviewed GovDelivery's Product Marketing Manager Jen Kaplan to gain her perspective on the impact that social media is having on agency missions – and how it can be integrated into a more comprehensive approach to communications.

HOW ARE AGENCIES EFFECTIVELY INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA WITHIN A COMPREHENSIVE DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY?

"We are seeing a lot of efficiency come from the consolidation of communication tools. There are so many tools out there, but having the ability to post to multiple platforms from one location is critical. Facebook and Twitter are great spaces for government to engage with constituents, but email is still citizen's primary source of information. As a result, many organizations have adopted a COPE strategy: Create Once, Publish Everywhere.

The City of Baltimore is a really good example. When the Baltimore Ravens won the Super Bowl, the city had to put on a parade, which means public safety coordination and clean-up efforts. In order to reach the largest audience in Baltimore, the city sent out various press releases and parade information through email, mobile, Facebook and Twitter, all at the same time. The email press release had all of the details, but the message was modified to only include key elements for the other channels. Even though email is the largest audience, they reached the maximum number of people by hitting all channels. In addition, the city provided the ability for email subscribers or Facebook followers to share their message with their own networks, further increasing their reach and the impact of their message."

HOW DOES EFFECTIVE EMAIL INTEGRATION EXTEND SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT?

"The primary function of social media for government has been to engage the public. However, if you want to ensure your message is seen on social media, email is a necessary starting point to drive visibility. For instance, the problem with Facebook is that not everything a government organization posts will show up in their fans' news feed because of the way the algorithm works. If you post on Facebook and it gets pushed down someone's feed, an email a few hours later ensures that the person saw your message.

Likewise with Twitter, the information is streaming so quickly, if you blink, you miss it! By coupling Twitter with email, you can create a virtuous cycle. First, an agency can promote a Twitter chat by email to get people engaged on that platform, and then GovDelivery can consume an organization's tweets, sending them out in a daily email format. If someone is not on Twitter or happened to miss the live chat, this approach gives people the content they want in multiple formats.

One example is Kitsap County in the State of Washington, which uses GovDelivery's Digital Communication Management (DCM) solution to increase subscribers to email and text message notifications. They appreciate the system's integration with Facebook and other popular social media sites, such as YouTube and Twitter. By simultaneously posting to Facebook and other social networks, the County has been able to disseminate messages to citizens that may not otherwise receive information that is important to them. Kitsap County has discovered that the integration of email, text messaging and social media is even more valuable when they need to communicate urgent messages to citizens."

WHERE WOULD YOU POINT PEOPLE FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES?

"GovDelivery has a digital communications best practices guide that's organized around 3 main principles: build your audience, communicate with them in an efficient or automated way through all channels, and then make sure you are engaging them to take those online or offline actions that contribute to your mission. You can find it at http://bit.ly/GD_BestPrac-Guide.

HowTo.gov also has some baseline metrics specific to social media, along with a framework that the public sector can use to measure value and impact of social media. This is especially important when you look at how social media can impact an organization's goals or mission. Measuring against these metrics or leveraging that framework is key to helping organizations make data-driven decisions."

"THE PRIMARY FUNCTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA FOR GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC. HOWEVER, IF YOU WANT TO ENSURE YOUR MESSAGE IS SEEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA, EMAIL IS A NECESSARY STARTING POINT TO DRIVE VISIBILITY.

Which communications channel reaches 2.2 billion users worldwide?

Email.

81% of adults use the internet. **91% of those adults** send or read email. **Only 67% of those adults** use a social networking site.

Get your message read. Reach more people than you ever thought possible with **proactive, multichannel digital communications.**

Support citizen and customer engagement initiatives. **Drive real mission value** for your organization. Find out how other government organizations are already doing this.

Visit ***bit.ly/Gov-Success-Stories.***

IMPLEMENTATION
Steps to Strategic Integration

After learning the concrete reality within agencies and sharing several examples of bright spots where social media is having a serious impact on agency missions, the next step is to offer clear guidance regarding how to set up a system of monitoring and communicating impact. That's the goal of this section - to provide a framework for thinking through your organization's strategic use of social media.

1. PURPOSE

When exploring how social media fits into your organization's core functions, start by reviewing your organization's strategic plan. For instance, in a Google search on "federal agency strategic plan," one of the first results leads to the Department of Interior's (DOI) FY 2011-2016 Strategic Plan. Consider DOI's third goal:

GOAL #3: Provide Recreation and Visitor Experience: We will endeavor to encourage the appreciation and use of our lands by facilitating visitor use and recreational experiences. We will strive to provide visitors with beneficial physical, mental, and social opportunities including those that result from outdoor recreational experiences.

STRATEGY #1: Enhance the enjoyment and appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage by creating opportunities for play, enlightenment, and inspiration…In a national dialogue about America's Great Outdoors, citizens reiterated the importance of open spaces and recreation to their quality of life, health, and commitment to conservation.

The agency's supporting performance measure for this goal is "89% of visitors satisfied with the quality of their experience." The next question DOI could ask is: How can social media lead to the achievement of this goal? Here are three ideas that come to mind almost immediately (some of which the agency has implemented):

- Collect photos and videos from visitors and produce multimedia presentations that capture their experiences to increase loyalty and promote future trips - post this content on video and photo-sharing sites, or on Facebook and Twitter, running contests for most viewed or liked

- Educate the public about land use, invasive species and other conservation issues via social tools - blogs, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

- Engage in an ongoing "national dialogue" about America's Great Outdoors using social platforms, including crowdsourcing tools, to inform policy and programs

Every social media initiative should tie directly back to your agency's mission and how the tool or platform may contribute to the accomplishment of broader performance measures.

2. PEOPLE

There are two ways that an agency needs to think about people: internally and externally. Internally, an organization needs to ask what resources are available to handle social media activities. Most of the time, it's communications and public affairs staff, but there are models in which front line staff and scientists have been asked to participate in direct engagement with the public. Consider how the U.S. Geological Survey used Facebook in a unique way:

In November 2010, USGS announced a new pilot program called USGS Ambassadors. The idea behind this effort is to have a group of employees who will help, educate, and share with the public on information related to these Ambassadors' re-

THE SOCIAL MEDIA MANTRA:

"MISSION, TOOLS, METRICS, TEACH"

Almost from the advent of social media's use in the public sector, Jeffrey Levy, a leading federal web manager from the Environmental Protection Agency, has advocated that social media be grounded in the following phrase: "Mission, Tools, Metrics, Teach." Here's how Levy describes it:

"I was trying to come up with something punchy because people were regularly asking for help creating social media strategy for their agencies. I particularly wanted something that would be easy to remember and help me emphasize, esp. to managers, that it's not about being cool: it's about meeting the agency's mission."

To read his original blog post that explains each of the "Four Laws of Levy," please visit:

- *http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/social-media-strategy-in-a*

spective area of expertise. These aren't just Public Affairs people — they're a mix of scientists, outreach folks, developers, customer service staff, and more. They cover many areas of USGS science and activities, though not all areas of our work will have a direct Ambassador.

We hope this approach to using Facebook is one that will prove successful for us and useful for citizens. Gone are the days

when phone calls or emails were the only way to get help or learn more. Technologies and services like SMS, social media, social networking, smartphones, etc., are quickly becoming (if they haven't already become) the standard for communication. If government wishes to become open and engaged, then government needs to look for ways to enable communication.

Fast forward more than two years and USGS has continued the Ambassador Program. The agency has even started to include its customer service staff in the agency's approach to Twitter - especially on high volume days when there is substantial seismic activity. The question you might ask at this stage is: whom beyond the communications team can communicate effectively with

WHEN IT COMES TO STAFFING SOCIAL MEDIA, YOU HAVE MANY RESOURCES YOU CAN LEVERAGE:

STAFF
Senior Leaders
Communications Team
Staff / Experts
Interns

VOLUNTEERS
Constituents
Students
Experts
Business Leaders
Commenters

CONSULTANTS
PR Firms
Media Companies

IF YOU NEED TO TRAIN YOUR STAFF, BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THESE TWO VALUABLE RESOURCES:

- *http://www.howto.gov/social-media*
- *http://www.govloop.com/social-media*

Both HowTo.gov / Digital Gov University and GovLoop regularly host online and in-person training and produce resources like this guide, designed to help you and others in your agency to learn the ins and outs of important issues surrounding social media.

citizens and how can you deputize them to engage with citizens on social media?

Externally, the key is identifying the appropriate constituents. As evidenced throughout this report, there are multiple stakeholders that might become engaged with your organization through social media. A blanket approach to connecting with these diverse stakeholders rarely yields optimal results. Be as granular as possible when thinking about your external outreach.

Returning to the Department of Interior's strategic plan, they likely need to consider the differing demographics of visitors at the respective National Parks. With 400 places and 275 million visitors each year, the National Park Service has a massive audience that is primed for engagement. With a bit of forethought, the opportunity for a sustained relationship with these stakeholders before, during and after their visit is immense. This oppor-

tunity for engagement is likely true for every organization that is willing to spend some time segmenting the core constituents that can be reached most effectively through social media.

One of the values of social media is that you can identify individuals outside of the traditional public affairs roles to make a contribution to public information exchange in a community-based way.

3. PLAN

Again, it's worth taking another look at DOI's Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which put together a New Media Plan in February 2012. The plan identifies several clear goals for the agency:

- **GOAL 1:** Become a more transparent government agency
- **GOAL 2:** Raise awareness of the Bureau of Land Management's mission and activities

"We've gotten particularly noticeable response (likes and comments) from posts on Facebook with photos of animals. We've also seen a rise in comments since we started posting in evenings and on weekends. Our blogs are written by personnel from across our park agency, giving us a wide range of styles and voices. They go through a central editing point to keep us on message consistently, but in editing we try not to change the voice or style of the writer, and the author always sees the final copy before it is posted. Views of the blogs took a large jump in growth about one year after we started the program, and they continue to rise as time passes as people find them through search engines."

-GovLoop Survey Respondent

- **GOAL 3:** Recruit a diverse and talented workforce
- **GOAL 4:** Continue to be a leading Department of Interior agency in the use of external new media

The plan also clearly states "BLM's external new media portfolio is managed by the BLM's New Media Lead in the Office of Assistant Director for Communications." Moreover, the plan delineates that this individual "coordinates with DOI's New Media Office and provides high-level input into DOI's new media policy, develops policy for the BLM's new media program, and provides the tools and framework under which the Bureau's new media program operates."

In addition to assigning roles, the plan defines the type of new media that the organization is using, from media sharing to blogging to data and document sharing to widgets and video streaming. They also acknowledge that they are

striving to do more than push information to the public and evolving based on their direct engagement:

"The BLM communications staff will constantly evaluate interactions, comments, and views of content posted on social media sites to refine content. The BLM will post content that moves its message while encouraging members of the public to consume content and share content with others."

Finally, BLM links their social media activity back to their core mission - even citing specific numbers and dollar amounts:

In FY 2010, the activities on BLM-managed lands supported more than 550,000 jobs and

boosted the economy by more than $122 billion. Social media is an effective vehicle for communicating this broad range of responsibility and activity.

This is precisely how agencies should be thinking about social media's connection - seeing it in light of its potential economic and resource impact. How are you doing the same in your agency?

4. PRODUCE

Once an organization has a clear plan in place, the next facet of effectively leveraging social media is to create valuable content. One way to frame your thinking about content is to ask the following questions:

What content will you share? What do you already have? What can you reproduce or re-purpose from related organizations?

- ◆ Newsletters?
- ◆ Interviews?
- ◆ Publications
- ◆ Videos?
- ◆ Photos?
- ◆ Audio Content?
- ◆ Public Service Announcements?
- ◆ Customer Stories?
- ◆ Press Releases?
- ◆ Resources and Tools?
- ◆ Statistics / Data?
- ◆ Feedback Cards?

More importantly, look at that list above and ask: **what content can you elicit from your constituents**? Some of the more traditional information that you typically share can be transformed into great web content that sparks conversation or encourages dialogue and feedback.

In addition to thinking strategically about the type of content, you will also want to keep in mind some of the tactical ways in which social media performs most effectively:

- ◆ **VARIETY:** Diversify your content to keep it fresh for visitors.

- ◆ **SHORT:** Most people are reading on the run or on a phone. Brief is best.

- ◆ **IMAGES:** Photos gain the most attention. Incorporate them frequently.

- ◆ **ACTION:** Urge visitors to do something. People like to click. Make content inviting and interactive.

- ◆ **MILESTONES:** Anniversaries of events are a good time to get people talking about their memories - most people have an experience that they want to share when it comes to the historic or momentous.

- ◆ **TOPICS DU JOUR:** Similar to milestones, if you can find a way to link your activities to the headlines, you'll like-

ly inspire conversation as it pertains to your niche.

Once you know the "what", you can them move to the "how" of connecting constituents and stakeholders to your content.

5. PROMOTE / PARTICIPATE

There are likely many ways that you will begin your engagement with the public. Below are just a few:

TRADITIONAL

Advertisements
Website
Newsletters
Press Release
In-peron Events

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook
Google+
GovLoop
LinkedIn
YouTube
Pinterest
Instagram
Twitter

MOBILE

Apps
Mobile Site
Text Messaging (SMS)

The best-laid plans include some integration of these modes of communication. Perhaps you are launching a new

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA PLANS AND POLICIES

If you are looking for similar plans and policies, please see the following resources:

- ◆ *http://www.howto.gov/social-media/using-social-media-in-government*

- ◆ *http://govsocmed.pbworks.com/w/page/15060450/Web%202%200%20Governance%20Policies%20and%20Best%20Practices*

- ◆ *http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/list-of-federal-social-media-policies-amp-regulations*

- ◆ *https://data.govloop.com/dataset/Web-2-0-Governance-Policies-And-Best-Practices-Ref/b47r-pgph*

If you have other policies to add to that list, please send them to andrew@govloop.com

ARCHIVE YOUR ACTIVITY AND REGISTER YOUR RESOURCES

Most web managers know that they need to archive their content, but the guidance on social media is a bit fuzzier. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) gives the following guidance on this issue:

Agencies must decide how they will manage records created in these environments in accordance with 36 CFR 1220 and 44 U.S.C. Chaps. 31 & 33. Agency records officers, web management staff, and information technology staff, working with NARA appraisal archivists, should address the records management challenges by evaluating appropriate uses of schedules and tools.

In addition, the General Services Administration has created a Social Media Registry that "identifies social media accounts managed by the federal government, to help the public know which accounts they can trust to provide factual government information. If you work for the U.S. federal government and have a .gov or .mil email address, use this tool to register social media accounts managed by federal agencies (including accounts for elected officials, heads of agencies or Cabinet members)."

For more information on both of these resources, please visit:

- ◆ *http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/bulletins/2011/2011-02.html*

- ◆ *http://www.howto.gov/social-media/social-media-registry/register-accounts*

public information campaign on your main website and need to replicate the content across social media platforms. You will create the web content as you always do, run it through the editing process and post it. With social media, there are a couple added questions you should ask:

- How do you **break down the content** into bite size chunks?

- How do you present it in such a way that it **invites conversation**?

- How do you **make it easy for people to share** it with others?

- What will be the **primary source** where people can obtain comprehensive information and where you are mostly driving traffic?

A few other keys to successful social media engagement include:

- **Set short deadlines for calls to action**: Add a sense of urgency to your posts by including a short window of time to respond, especially if you are running a campaign or leading up to an event.

- **Foster a sense of community**: Respond to people by name and encourage them to bring others to the conversation; reward people

who return regularly by featuring their content or responses.

- **Humanize your organization**: Use the real names of agency representatives when possible; use a more colloquial tone in your posts (note: this includes plain language!).

- **Use humor, as appropriate**: Of course, we know some government content isn't appropriate for humor, but even the National Weather Service tried to keep their information sharing somewhat fun with an approaching "Frankenstorm."

Finally, you might want to consider scheduling and monitoring tools like Hootsuite, Buffer, Tweetdeck and Crowdbooster that can help you line up posts in advance - especially if you are trying to time information with an important announcement or campaign launch, or simply want to be sure that information is presented several times a day. Of course, these tools should never be a replacement for real-time interaction, so we would recommend that you monitor your social media sites (more on that below) and pick a time of day when your constituents are most active and spend time engaging in dialogue with them - that is, if you do not have the resources to do so in real-time.

GIVE CAREFUL THOUGHT AND PLANNING TO WHEN AND HOW OFTEN YOU WILL POST. FOR INSTANCE, HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE BEST DAYS, TIMES, DATES AND FREQUENCY FOR POSTING?

DAY OF WEEK
Weekdays?
Weekends?
Wednesdays?

TIME OF DAY
AM or PM?
8a or 10a?
3p or 9p?

TARGET DATES
Events?
Milestones?
Schedule?

FREQUENCY
Real-Time?
Hourly?
Daily?
Weekly?

EXAMPLE:

GOVLOOP'S SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR

IF you are strapped for resources, taking into account your optimal times for posting will yield the most efficient results. As you determine the appropriate timing, you might end up with a schedule that looks something like the chart below:

Nailing down those times can pinpoint the amount of time that staff will spend with social media - especially when handling this mode of communication is a collateral duty or when you are including other staff in the process of engagement. Having a clear schedule also makes it clear just how much time you are investing in social media and allows you to better track ROI.

WHAT:	f	twitter	in	g+	govloop	✉
WHEN:	Daily 8a, 12p, 4p and Ad Hoc Best = T, W	Daily 8a, 12p, 4p and Ad Hoc Best = M	Daily 8a, 12 and Ad Hoc Best = T, W	Daily 8a, 12p and Ad Hoc Best = NA	Daily Continuous Schedule Best = T	Daily Campaigns Best = F
WHO:	Comms Staff and SMEs	Comms Staff	Comms Staff	Comms Staff	Comms Staff and SMEs	Rotate Key Staff
WHAT:	Fun, Pics, Quotes, Posts	Core Content	Discussions, Core Content	Core Content	Discussions, Core Content	Core Content, Promos
WHY:	Brand Loyalty, Engagement, Share Content	Engagement, Share Content	Engagement, Share Content	SEO, Share Content	Engagement, Share Content	Main Driver of Traffic

6. PROGRESS

As our survey discovered, about 1 out of 4 agencies are monitoring their social media activities and tracking against clear metrics. Another 1 in 4 are in the process of implementing some kind of social media monitoring or tracking. When it comes to mapping your progress, you will want to ask:

HOW ARE WE MAPPING TO AND TRACKING AGAINST CORE AGENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES?

In the case of the Department of Interior that we cited above, social media could contribute to their achievement of an 89% satisfaction score among their constituents. They just need to decide how they will establish that feedback loop, potentially collecting anecdotal and objective evidence - including both stories and statistics - through a social media monitoring plan.

Below are a few different metrics and meaningful data points you might collect:

QUANTITATIVE
- Opens / Clicks
- Views / Visits
- Likes / Shares / RTs
- Top Referral Sources
- Sign-Ups
- Revenue Earned
- Time or Money Saved

QUALITATIVE
- Concrete Impact
- Behavior Change
- Actions Taken
- Valuable Feedback
- Problems Uncovered / Fixed

The key is to focus on actionable information - not just on data for data's sake, but determine how the numbers roll up to the metrics that your organization has established for overall mission accomplishment. It's also important to remember that reporting is not just a passive listening tool with interesting, but serves as active documentation of constituent behavior that should lead to real-time changes in your approach. Finally, don't just track output (number of posts, tweets, etc.), but real outcomes that are the direct result of your social media activity.

AIMING HIGH: THE AIR FORCE APPROACH TO SOCIAL MEDIA

In what may be the quintessential social media guide, the U.S. Air Force explains almost every imaginable facet of social media usage by both Air Force personnel and airmen. In particular, they offered the following guidance regarding a schedule for posting social media content:

- Have a posting schedule. Consider your resources, the amount of content available and workload, but also think about your audiences. Consider peak engagement times and frequency when building your schedule. For instance, if the majority of your audience is at work or school all day, you could post during lunchtime, in the evening and on the weekend.

- Establish an editorial calendar to manage posts, plan for the future and reach goals. Some days there will be an abundance of content to share, while at other times there won't be as much. Prioritize content and be prepared to switch gears when big events or crises occur.

We would encourage you to view the full guide here:

- *http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-120327-048.pdf*

Of course, the key to a social media plan - and knowing whether you are making progress against it - is to establish and measure both long- and short-term outcomes. Some agencies are already using tools to support tracking and monitoring. Again, it's critical to have a process in place. The questions below might help you think about the best rhythm for your agency:

HOW ARE YOU MONITORING?
- Google Analytics
- Google Alerts
- Facebook Insights
- Bit.ly
- Hootsuite
- Radian 6

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU MONITORING?
- Real-Time
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

Lastly, your goal should be to seek constant improvement and achievement of efficiency in the overall process. The best way to do so is by asking that simple question:

WHERE CAN YOU IMPROVE?
- Mission Focus
- Project Scope
- More / Better Outcomes
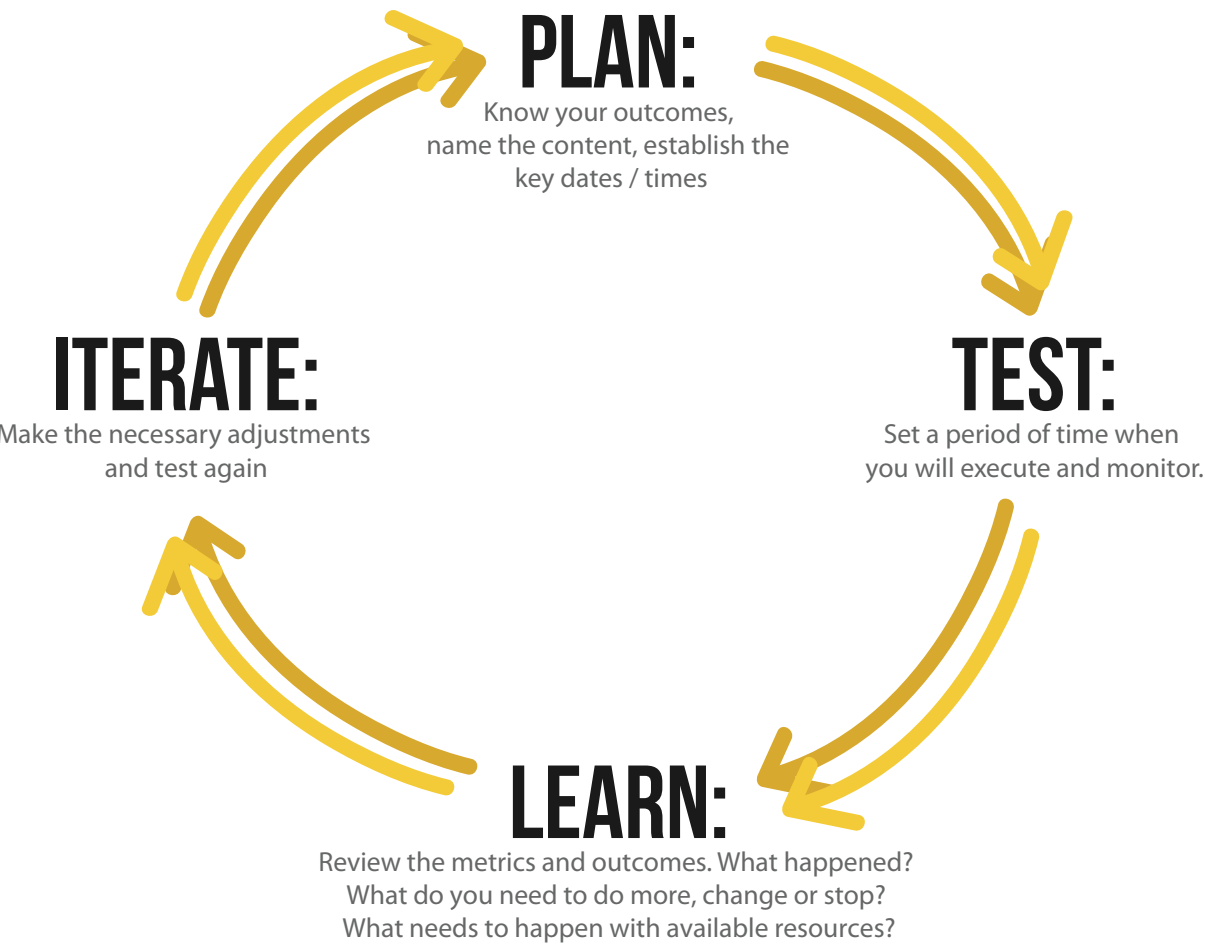- Stakeholder Engagement
- Engagement Points
- Engagement Vehicles
- Monitoring Systems

As with any experiment, the key is to examine every facet of the process and ask, "What happened?" as well as "How can we do more of what worked and less of what didn't?"

7. POLICY

The following statement, as shared by one of our survey respondents, is <u>not</u> where you want to be in your agency:

"We still use social media as a 'push out' of information and do so mostly because we think it is the 'thing to do', not because

PLAN:
Know your outcomes, name the content, establish the key dates / times

TEST:
Set a period of time when you will execute and monitor.

LEARN:
Review the metrics and outcomes. What happened? What do you need to do more, change or stop? What needs to happen with available resources?

ITERATE:
Make the necessary adjustments and test again

TERMS OF SERVICE: TOOLS YOU CAN USE

You might be wondering which of these tools are actually okay to use. After all, you are tracking official government engagement and want to be sure that you are compliant with records management, privacy and various other regulations. The General Services Administration has negotiated Terms of Service (TOS) with several vendors. These TOS agreements "are special agreements negotiated between the federal government and vendors who offer free social media tools" that "modify or remove problematic clauses in standard TOS agreements, and allow federal employees to legally use these tools."

We would encourage you to learn more at the following link:

- *http://www.howto.gov/web-content/resources/tools/terms-of-service-agreements*

we are really engaging the public in conversation. There is no social media policy and no real understanding of those doing social media what the impact could and should be. With no policy and staff responsible for social media that have little to no authority to speak on behalf of their agency or the state, the social media is used to show ribbon cuttings and announce events or repost news releases etc. We have a long way to go before we are utilizing the possible benefits of social media - fear and lack of understanding of the people in charge are the biggest factors holding back a more effective use of social media."

Again, if you are looking for an alternative approach, we can return to the Bureau of Land Management as they include an exemplary Social Media Policy in their New Media Plan that might serve as a template for your agency. You can read an excerpt of their policy to the right.

OFFICIAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AT DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI)

Excerpt from Bureau of Land Management's Social Media Policy

DOI encourages its bureaus to use social media tools to communicate their missions and messages with the public when there is a legitimate business case to do so. Bureaus are encouraged to carefully weigh their options when deciding whether to use social media. The DOI Social Media Handbook provides guidance on specific types of social media tools and services.

Before beginning any social media project, employees must first be granted approval to use social media, social networking, or other Web 2.0 services or tools to directly support or enhance activities being undertaken in an official Department of the Interior capacity. Contact persons for each Bureau and office are listed in Appendix A. Each bureau and office will maintain a catalog of all official social media presences; this catalog will be periodically reported to the DOI Office of Communications and Office of the Chief Information Officer.

The need for this approval is threefold: (1) There may already be bureau- or Department-level social media efforts that accomplish the same or similar goals. It is necessary for the bureaus and the Department to keep track of social media efforts to ensure there is no undue overlap or duplication. (2) Bureau-level coordination and participation helps ensure that information is, when appropriate, delivered to our constituents and the public in the context of unified themes or messages. (3) A social media account must be covered under a special terms of service agreement (TOS), privacy impact assessment (PIA) and possibly a system of

records notice (SORN) approved by the Department of the Interior. In order for a new social media account to be covered under a DOI TOS agreement, it must be approved by the bureau point of contact in Appendix A and reported to the Department Office of Communications.

Any social networking profiles or social media presences that have not been approved via your bureau's point of contact may be terminated.

Bureaus will periodically report on all social media presences to the DOI Office of Communications and Office of the Chief Information Officer. DOI will keep a running list of all official presences on third-party social media Web sites so the public may know which communications channels are DOI approved. Only approved social media presences will be included on this list.

The use of social media services is further dependent on those services that have approved DOI TOS agreements. If there are third-party services that a bureau has identified as appropriate for use, the bureau office of communications or public affairs officer should contact the DOI Office of Communications for review of the TOS and confirm PIA and SORN compliance.

To see the full policy in context, please visit:

- *http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/wo/Communications_Directorate/public_affairs/socialmedia.Par.83084.File.tmp/ExternalNewMediaStrategy.pdf*

FINAL THOUGHTS
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GOVLOOP RESOURCES

ON GOVLOOP...

GovLoop's Communications Center:
http://www.govloop.com/communications

GovLoop's Social Media Center:
http://www.govloop.com/social-media

12 Commandments for Federal Employees on Twitter:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/new-twitter-guides-for-government-agencies-and-employees

15 Commandments for Government Agencies on Twitter:
http://www.govloop.com/page/15-commandments-for-government-agencies-on-twitter

State of Government Communications Report:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/annoucing-govloop-state-of-government-communications-report

Navigating the Digital Road Map:
http://www.govloop.com/techgovguide

5 Emerging Trends of Social Media in the Public Sector:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/5-emerging-trends-of-social-media-in-the-public-sector

Let's Give Them Something to Talk About: Role of Social Media Going Forward:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/let-s-give-them-something-to-talk-about-role-of-social-media-goin

Infographic: Local Gov2.0 - How Councils Can Use Social Media:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/inforgraphic-local-gov2-0-how-councils-can-use-social-media

Infographic: Blueprint for Perfect Facebook Post:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/blueprint-for-perfect-facebook-post

Set Your New Social Media Manager Up for Success:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/set-your-new-social-media-manager-up-for-success

#Sandy - Did the 20 Million Plus Tweets Help or Hurt Emergency Managers?
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/sandy-did-the-20-million-plus-tweets-help-or-hurt-emergency-manag

Social Media and Gov - Are We Still in Love?
http://www.govloop.com/forum/topics/happy-5th-anniversary-social-media-in-government-are-we-still-in-

Video Use in Gov: NASA Debunks End of World, Creates Gangnam Style Parody:
http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/video-use-in-gov-nasa-debunks-end-of-world-creates-gangnam-style-

What's Your Preferred Tool for Managing Social Media Activity?
http://www.govloop.com/forum/topics/what-s-your-preferred-tool-for-managing-your-social-media

...AND BEYOND:

HowTo.gov Social Media Resources:
http://www.howto.gov/social-media

Federal Social Media Community of Practice:
http://www.howto.gov/communities/federal-web-managers-council/social-media

GovTwit:
http://www.govtwit.com

Federal Social Media Leaderboard:
http://govtwit.com/leaderboard

Social Media in the Public Sector Field Guide:
http://www.amazon.com/Social-Media-Public-Sector-Field/dp/1118109937

Local Government Use of Social Media to Prepare for Emergencies:
http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/301647/Local_Government_Use_of_Social_Media_to_Prepare__for_Emergencies

The Rise of Social Government Report:
http://2012naspaaconference.wikispaces.com/file/view/Social_Media_2_Promising_Practices_FINAL_web_version.pdf

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