

THE BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

"I want us to ask ourselves every day, how are we using technology to make a real difference in people's lives."

- President Barack Obama

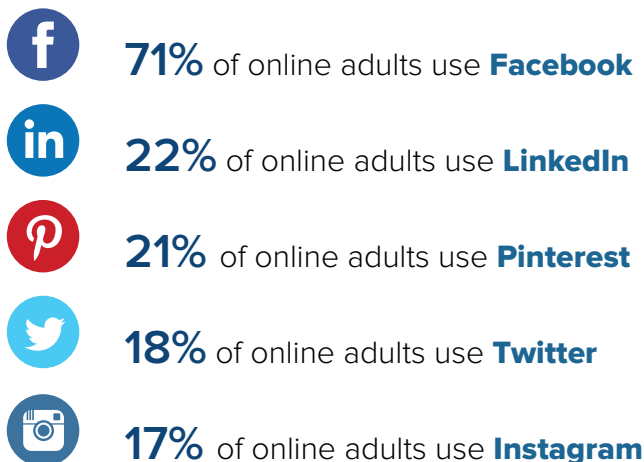
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Now that Facebook is over ten years old, it's safe to say that social media is here to stay. While social media has been embraced by both the public and commercial businesses, it's still relatively new to government agencies. However, federal, state, and local governments, elected officials, law enforcement agencies, campaign strategists, and others have started to see the potential in social media. Not only is social media ideal for sharing news, videos, and special reports, it's an interactive, real-time platform that facilitates engagement.

Getting started on social media, however, has its challenges including ensuring consistent brand messaging and appropriate levels of privacy and security. Social media management tools are available that address these challenges while also improving internal collaboration, efficiency, and citizen engagement.

WHO'S USING SOCIAL MEDIA?

Perhaps the larger question is, who isn't using it? According to Pew Research Internet Project's Social Media Update 2013, about 73 percent of online adults use social media. For example:



WHY IS SOCIAL MEDIA A PRIORITY?

San Francisco-based Granicus, the leading cloud platform provider for government, recently surveyed local government professionals to learn why they were prioritizing 21st Century tools such as social media. A few interesting statistics about the driving forces behind social media were uncovered in their study:

- **42%** want to make civic engagement more productive and useful
- **36%** want to improve transparency to create a well informed citizenry
- **22%** want to streamline the way citizen outreach and collaboration is achieved

Whether it is Facebook, Twitter, or another online community portal, it is clear that facilitating a two-way dialogue with citizens online is a big part of governments' digital priorities this year. Leveraging social media and other civic collaboration platforms has been proven to augment traditional engagement methods, such as in-person at meetings. Granicus has found that social media and other online collaboration tools can dramatically increase the rate of citizen engagement and the quality of results by automating the way it is captured, managed, and measured online.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT

Who else is using social media? The White House for one, as well as just about every other federal agency, the US Armed Forces, and a host of state and local agencies across the United States. According to a timeline depicting the US government's use of social media, the US government has been dabbling in social media well before Twitter was born. For example, the SBA became the first government agency to launch a YouTube channel back in December 2005.

WhiteHouse.gov's Digital Government Strategy has this to say about digital technology and the opportunity it brings:

"Today's amazing mix of cloud computing, ever-smarter mobile devices, and collaboration tools is changing the consumer landscape and bleeding into government as both an opportunity and a challenge. New expectations require the Federal Government to be ready to deliver and receive digital information and services anytime, anywhere and on any device. It must do so safely, securely, and with fewer resources. To build for the future, the Federal Government needs a Digital Strategy that embraces the opportunity to innovate more with less, and enables entrepreneurs to better leverage government data to improve the quality of services to the American people."

Part of this strategy focuses on delivering customer-centric digital services, such as online forms or benefits applications, across a variety of platforms, devices, and delivery mechanisms such as websites, apps, and social media. The strategy specifies that these services must be "designed and delivered with customer service first in mind and reflect the technologies used by today's customers."

THE BENEFITS OF USING A SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Whether prompted by the White House's Digital Government initiative or by a desire to communicate with citizens using their desired channels, many government agencies have made the move into social media. While you could build a Facebook page directly on Facebook.com or set up a Twitter account on Twitter.com, consider using a social media management tool. Doing so can result in several important benefits including:



SECURITY - With a social media management tool, individual users have limited access to your social media accounts based on predetermined user permissions and roles. You can also configure the software so that all messages must be approved by administrators before they are published. Individual user accounts, permissions, and a controlled workflow work together to ensure that inappropriate content and honest mistakes never make it past your administrative team.



COLLABORATION - Rarely is an agency's social media strategy carried out by a single individual. Social media management tools are built for collaboration. Again, each user has his or her own account with specific permissions and user roles which means there's no sharing of passwords required. Multiple team members can share ideas, contribute content and view reports in one place.



EFFICIENCY - Social media management tools typically include tools that help to drive efficiency such as scheduling tools and idea generation. For example, rather than logging into a social media account every few hours and struggling to find something relevant to share, many social media users spend a block of time preparing several weeks of posts and then schedule them to appear every few days.



REPORTING - Social media takes a great deal of time and effort. As with any other expenditure, it's important to evaluate which efforts are paying off. Detailed reports allow you to do so quickly and easily. As you evaluate each post's reach, engagement, and other metrics, you become better able to optimize future messages to improve your reach and increase engagement.

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Social media is indeed here to stay, and it represents a fantastic, interactive way to communicate with citizens. In order to get the most out of social media and ensure that your social media strategy is executed as designed, consider using a social media management tool designed specifically for government.

Measured Voice is that tool. Designed for governments, Measured Voice has the features your team needs to collaborate, brainstorm, work, and communicate. We believe that your voice is the most important part of any organization's brand and that social media is for everyone -- including government agencies. Our solution makes your job easier and more enjoyable. Its tools and dashboards empower your entire team to consistently share the right messages with your constituents.

Measured Voice and other civic engagement can easily be acquired and deployed through the Granicus AppStore. Visit <http://www.granicus.com/appstore/measured-voice/> for more information.

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