



# Social Media Operating Procedures Handbook

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# 1 OVERVIEW

The information documented in this *Social Media Handbook* is designed to assist departments as they explore and use social media Web sites, and to ensure that online collaboration tools and social networking technologies may be successfully implemented and maintained at Oakland County. It addresses the standards and guidelines related to social media in order to protect against potential liability, maintain network and hardware/software security and data, protect privacy and confidentiality, and follow record retention practices. Adherence to the standards and guidelines documented herein will also ensure the County's continued compliance with all other existing County policies, standards and legal obligations.

Departments are encouraged to experiment with Web-based collaboration tools and social media Web sites, and to make recommendations for additions and/or changes to these standards and guidelines.

## 1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

1. *CIO/Deputy County Executive* and *IT Director* are ultimately responsible for the adherence to these standards and guidelines.
2. *Oakland County Corporation Counsel* and *Human Resources* departments are responsible for approving any policies set forth in this document.
3. The *Information Technology Steering Committee (Standards Committee)* is responsible for approving the standards and guidelines documented in this handbook.
4. The *E-Government Services Team* is responsible for producing and maintaining this document, and for support related to social media for Oakland County, its departments and agencies. Other responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
  - Implementing requests for new social media accounts and changes to existing social media accounts
  - Maintaining an inventory of all social media accounts and passwords
  - Evaluating social media accounts quarterly
  - Managing statistics and tracking
  - Updating Web links to social networks from the Oakland County Web site(s)

## 1.2 Handbook Objectives

This handbook provides a detailed guide to implement social media at Oakland County. It documents the standards and guidelines that have been adopted for use by all Oakland County departments, as well as all agents operating on behalf of the County and/or one of its departments, including but not limited to volunteers, interns and other paid/unpaid resources.

The audience for this document is any employee or agent of Oakland County that uses, or intends to use, social media Web sites and/or tools to collaborate and communicate with the public in the performance of their job duties.

**S** A standard is considered required, is NOT optional and is indicated by this sample shown here (a box with a bolded "S"). Supervisors will be monitoring these standards to ensure compliance. Those standards not adhered to will be brought to the attention of the non-compliant employee and his/her supervisor.

**G** A guideline is also presented and optional when consistency is not required across service requests. They are indicated by this sample shown here (a box with a bolded "G"). As much flexibility as possible is incorporated, however, guidelines are frequently provided to facilitate consistency.

### 1.3 Handbook Updates

Suggested changes or revisions to this handbook will be handled as follows:

- Submit suggestions to *E-Government Services Team* in writing
- *E-Government Services Team* will present suggestions to and obtain approval of *IT Steering Committee*
- *E-Government Services Team* will publish a memo and revisions to handbook specifying the changes
- *E-Government Services Team* will update the revision log

### 1.3 Handbook Update Notification Process

The purpose of this section is to describe the process for updating the Oakland County *Social Media Handbook*.

#### **Notification & Updates**

Any employee or agent of Oakland County may submit a request to change or update any information contained in this document by submitting a written request to the E-Government Services Team, which will evaluate all requests and make recommendations to the IT Steering Committee for modifications where necessary. Changes to this document will be detailed in a corresponding file, which will include the date and content of the change. This file will be posted in an appendix section of this document.

Notification will be made via email to each department's registered Social Media Administrator/Moderator.

## 1.4 Handbook Revision Log

Revision Date	Revision	Version

## 2 Introduction

In 2001, Oakland County launched a newly-redesigned Web site whereby all County departments were organized under a single domain and standardized according to design, navigation and content. At that time, a delegated content management system was implemented throughout the entire County. The Oakland County Board of Commissioners passed Resolution #01109 stating that County departments would be consolidated under a single online brand, and standards were established to ensure the quality and integrity of County Web sites. This effort was undertaken in order to create a user-friendly Web site, reduce the total cost of ownership, and to provide a platform for future growth. Online services have also been implemented through the Access Oakland program to enable online payments, permit and license ordering, data searches, form downloads, and more.

Since that time, the County has expanded its award-winning Web site and Web-based infrastructure to include Web 2.0 technologies, including video and audio podcasts, photogalleries, e-mail subscription, RSS news feeds, blogs, forums, and surveys. A mobile platform was also developed to serve Web site customers via cell phones and other portable devices. These new technologies help to enable two-way communication with the public in addition to one-way, and to provide greater access to government information by presenting it in multiple formats and platforms—resulting in a government that is more transparent, interactive and engaging.

In 2009, several County departments began creating social media accounts on external Web sites, such as Facebook®, Twitter®, YouTube®, Flickr®, and LinkedIn®. In order to support the efforts of these departments, the Department of Information Technology (IT) began the process of defining issues and best practices related to using this new medium. As County departments choose to use social media in day-to-day business practices, they must engage in a risk-based decision-making process made by department or agency business justifications that support mission-based goals. This may require the re-education of senior management officials, as barriers are often perceived to be technology issues rather than communications, policy, strategy, or management issues.

To that end, this document details County-wide standards and guidelines for the secure and effective use of social media technologies for County-related business. Web sites and other social networking tools should be considered an extension of the Oakland County brand. Maintaining the high standards of integrity, design, content and practices of these social media Web sites will be critical to the success of Oakland County's online presence overall.

### 2.1 Overview of Social Media

Social media (and Web 2.0) is an umbrella term that defines the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation ("collaborative tools"). Social media uses the "wisdom of crowds" to connect information in a collaborative manner online. Through social media, individuals, or collaborations of individuals, create Web content, organize content, edit or comment on content, combine content, and share content.

Social media and Web 2.0 use many technologies and formats, including RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and other syndicated Web feeds, blogs, wikis, photo-sharing, video-sharing, podcasts, social networking, social bookmarking, mashups, widgets, virtual worlds, micro-blogs, and more. But social media is, at its core, a conversation that is publicly available for all to see.

The use of social media by the general population has exploded. The share of adult Internet users who have a profile on a social networking site went from 8% in 2005 to 35% by the end of 2008, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project's December 2008 tracking survey (2009 is not yet available). While media coverage and policy attention focus heavily on how children and young adults use social network sites, adults still make up the bulk of the users of these Web sites. (Since adults make up a larger portion of the U.S. population than teens do, the 35% proportion represents a larger number of users than the 65% of online teens who use online social networks.)

Still, younger online adults are much more likely than their older counterparts to use social networks, with 67% of adults 18-32 using these networks, compared for example with just 9% of adults ages 66-83. But the numbers of people using social media are growing fast, and younger online adults will be getting older, getting married, having children, buying homes, starting businesses, and using government services. (See the chart on the next page from the Pew survey for more information about Internet usage trends.)

Consider the following (excerpted from *SocialNomics, How Social Media Transforms the Way We Think and Do Business*, 2009):

- In 2010 Gen Y will outnumber Baby Boomers—96% of them will have joined a social network
- 1 out of 8 couples married in the U.S. last year met via social media
- Years to Reach 50 million Users: Radio (38 years), TV (13 years), Internet (4 years), iPod (3 years); Facebook added 100 million users in less than 9 months; iPhone applications hit 1 billion in 9 months
- If Facebook were a country it would be the world's 4th largest between the United States and Indonesia (Note: Facebook is now creeping up the list with its recently announced 300 million users)
- 2009 U.S. Department of Education study revealed that on average online students outperformed those receiving face-to-face instruction
- 80% of companies use LinkedIn as a primary tool to find employees
- The fastest growing segment on Facebook is 55-65 year-old females
- 80% of Twitter usage is outside of the Twitter Web site: people update anywhere, anytime (mobile, etc.); imagine what that means for bad customer experiences?
- Wikipedia has over 13 million articles; some studies show it's more accurate than Encyclopedia Britannica; 78% of these articles are non-English
- There are over 200,000,000 blogs, and 54% of bloggers post content or tweet daily

Generational Differences in Online Activities								
	Online Teens <sup>a</sup> (12-17)	Gen Y (18-32)	Gen X (33-44)	Younger Boomers (45-64)	Older Boomers (65-83)	Silent Generation (84-72)	G.I. Generation (73+)	All Online Adults <sup>b</sup>
Go online	93%	87%	82%	79%	70%	58%	31%	74%
<i>Teens and Gen Y are more likely to engage in the following activities compared with older users:</i>								
Play games online	78	50	38	26	28	25	18	35
Watch videos online	57	72	57	49	30	24	14	52
Get info about a job	30*	64	55	43	36	11	10	47
Send instant messages	68	59	38	28	23	25	18	38
Use social networking sites	65	67	36	20	9	11	4	35
Download music	59	58	46	22	21	16	5	37
Create an SNS profile	55	60	29	16	9	5	4	29
Read blogs	49	43	34	27	25	23	15	32
Create a blog	28	20	10	6	7	6	6	11
Visit a virtual world	10	2	3	1	1	1	0	2
<i>Activities where Gen X users or older generations dominate:</i>								
Get health info	28	68	82	74	81	70	67	75
Buy something online	38	71	80	68	72	56	47	71
Bank online	*	57	65	53	49	45	24	55
Visit gov't sites	*	55	64	62	63	60	31	59
Get religious info	26*	31	38	42	30	30	26	35
<i>And for some activities, the youngest and oldest cohorts may differ, but there is less variation overall:</i>								
Use email	73	94	93	90	90	91	79	91
Use search engines	*	90	93	90	89	85	70	89
Research products	*	84	84	82	79	73	60	81
Get news	63	74	76	70	69	56	37	70
Make travel reservations	*	65	70	69	66	69	65	68
Research for job	*	51	59	57	48	33	9	51
Rate a person or product	*	37	35	29	30	25	16	32
Download videos	31*	38	31	21	16	13	13	27
Participate in an online auction	*	26	31	27	26	16	6	26
Download podcasts	19	25	21	19	12	10	10	19
<p><sup>a</sup> Source for online teens data: Pew Internet &amp; American Life Project Surveys conducted Oct.-Nov. 2006 and Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008. Margin of error for online teens is ± 4% for Oct.-Nov. 2006 and ± 3% for Nov. 2007-Feb. 2008.</p> <p><sup>b</sup> Source for online adult data: Pew Internet Project Surveys conducted August 2006, Feb.-March 2007, Aug.-Sept. 2007, Oct.-Dec. 2007, May 2008, August 2008, November 2008, and December 2008. Margin of error for all online adults is ± 3% for these surveys. The average margin of error for each age group can be considerably higher than ± 3%, particularly for the "Matures" and "After Work" age groups. See Methodology for average margins of error for each generational group.</p> <p>* Most recent teen data for these activities are from the Pew Internet Project Teens and Parents Survey conducted Oct.-Nov.</p>								

*Pew Internet & American Life Project's December 2008 tracking survey*

Oakland County seeks to support its departments in engaging in social media and the online conversations happening around their areas of expertise. In some instances, the role of departments may be that of providing information and education to the public, as well contributing facts and figures to blogs, forums, social networks, and other types of interactive discussions that are going on in non-County Web sites, such as news media outlets and other (see Section 2.2.3.7 of this document for more information about implementing social media moderating, and see Section 3.2.5 for information about commenting on behalf of your department).

County departments can expect people to post comments and questions about them on these public social media Web sites, as well as on any social media Web sites established on behalf of business goals and objectives—both positive and negative. They may also expect to find people on social media Web sites to comment back and forth to each other—helping each other rather than relying on a government department to solve a problem or answer a question.

External social media Web sites also sell advertising to support their business models, thereby in part enabling them to offer the service for free to the public. These advertisements may not necessarily be controlled and/or removed by a County administrator.

As a result of the openness of these types of “communities,” malicious activity may occur as well. “Hackers” routinely send “spam” messages to user groups in much the same way e-mail may be used—ultimately trying to get the recipient to open a message and/or click a link, giving them access to a computer to download spyware for example, or obtain passwords or other personal information that may compromise banking or other accounts.

The decision to use social media technology is a business decision, not a technology-based decision. It should be made at the appropriate level for each department in consideration of its mission, objectives, capabilities, and potential benefits. The goal of the Department of Technology is to provide effective and appropriate information, security and privacy controls in order to assist departments in that process. The decision to authorize the use of social media ultimately is made at the department level.

The purpose of this document is to provide the standards and guidelines for use of social media at Oakland County. Departments may use the guidelines contained here as a component of a department policy, to develop processes for determining sanctioned participation in social media, or simply as employee guidelines. If you are a County employee or agent creating or contributing to blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networks, or any other kind of social media, both on or off Oakland County Web sites and social media outlets, these standards and guidelines are applicable.

The County expects all who participate in social media on behalf of the County to understand and to follow these standards and guidelines. This handbook will evolve as new technologies and social media tools evolve and emerge.

## 2.2 Using Social Media

**G** *Oakland County strongly recommends caution when using social media Web sites in a private capacity where Oakland County business is discussed and/or an individual's work at the County. The protocols followed when using social media in an official business capacity for the County may be determined by the department's director and/or manager, unless otherwise specified in this document. The decision to use social media should be determined on a department-by-department basis.*

### 2.2.1 In a Private Capacity

County employees and agents have the same rights of free speech as other U.S. citizens, but with some additional obligations. Regardless of the media being used, an individual must not do anything that could harm the reputation of the County, a department or an employee; and **County material that an individual is not specifically authorized to disclose must not be released or communicated**. Where there may be uncertainty about the capacity in which an individual is acting, it should be made clear to others that the individual's contribution is as a private individual and not as a representative of the County or one of its departments.

Oakland County policies including, but not limited to, the *Computer Hardware and Software Usage*, *Electronic Communications Policy*, and *County Merit Rules* apply to social media as well as the standards, guidelines and policies detailed in this handbook. Use of County property, including but not limited to computers, software, network, and email addresses/accounts are not to be used for personal business and/or activities.

### 2.2.2 As an Agency or Department Representative

All representation of official Oakland County information, services, media, logo, graphics and other on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the County's information networks and are governed by the standards and guidelines presented in this handbook in addition to all other applicable Oakland County policies, including but not limited to the *Electronic Communications Policy*.

Department directors must directly approve in writing the use of all social media. The protocols that apply when acting as an official representative of a department are the same whether talking to the media, speaking at a conference or using social media. Information should only be disclosed, comments or commitments made, or engagement in online activities should occur only when authorized to do so. Comments will often be permanently available and able to be reproduced in other media.

The content of each social media outlet shall be maintained by and the sole responsibility of the department producing and using the site or service. If actively posting comments or managing a social media Web site for a department, written authorization must be obtained from the appropriate manager or director of the department.

***All individuals participating in social media on behalf of the County or one of its department must be trained in the standards and guidelines documented herein.***

Any other participation by individuals in social media on behalf of the County or one of its departments will be considered unauthorized. Unauthorized social media accounts will be reported to

a department director, supervisor and/or manager, as well as Corporation Counsel and/or Human Resources.

Departments using social media are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), First Amendment, and privacy laws.

### **2.2.3 Ways to Use Social Media**

Emerging platforms for online collaboration are changing the way we work, and offer new ways to engage with customers, colleagues and the world at large. It is a new model for interaction and social computing that can help employees to build stronger and more successful customer relationships. It is a way for County employees to take part in national and global conversations related to the work they are doing at the County. For best results, align social media strategies with strategic goals.

#### ***2.2.3.1 Emergency Notification and Public Safety Issues***

Deliver special alerts and emergency notifications, reaching a wide audience quickly and efficiently.

#### ***2.2.3.2 Public Relations and Education***

Proactively share success stories about the good things that government is doing, new programs and services, special events, and other information that may be useful for the public to know. Reach out to customers and residents with educational materials, information, announcements and notices. Conduct education through a series of messages or comments and engage the user community in sharing information about a topic.

#### ***2.2.3.3 Customer Service***

Provide customer service updates and flexible office hours. Solicit feedback about customer service, areas for improvement and new services. Seek input on policy or service changes.

#### ***2.2.3.4 Public Service***

Call on the community to participate in social and government matters such as budgeting and resource allocation, etc.

#### ***2.2.3.5 Recruiting***

Leverage social media Web sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to publicize openings, internships and volunteer opportunities.

#### ***2.2.3.6 Social Media Monitoring***

"Listen" to social media banter by using Web feed readers/aggregators ("Atom" or "RSS") that provide updates to information published on the Internet based on key words or titles. Among other things, this allows a user to keep track of changes to Web site content automatically without visiting the Web sites themselves. "RSS" (short for Really Simple Syndication) and "Atom" are competing file formats of Web feeds. Each feed has its own URL (Web site

address). A feed reader/aggregator is a software, or a Web application, that aggregates Web feeds.

A feed reader/aggregator is necessary to efficiently monitor several feeds. Some free services include Google Reader, Bloglines, SociaMention, Icerocket, MSN Search, and more. Collectively, these feeds may replace media monitoring services that a department may already be paying for.

Upon request, Oakland County's E-Government Services Team can assist in setting up a feed to monitor information on the Web.

## 3 SETTING UP AND MANAGING A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE

**S** *The process for creating and maintaining an Oakland County social media Web site and/or account as detailed below is a County-wide standard. All individuals participating in social media on behalf of Oakland County must attend training in the Social Media Handbook and receive a Certificate of Completion.*

This section details the required steps to set up a social media Web site, or to create a blog or forum on the Oakland County Web site. It also details what a department may need to consider once the social media Web site, blog or forum has been created.

If a County department or agency is interested in using a social media network, tool or Web site not specifically addressed here, an authorized department representative may contact the E-Government Services Team (egov@oakgov.com) to discuss the most appropriate way to evaluate and/or implement it for use.

**Note:** *Oakland County does not endorse the use of, or imply preference for, any vendor or commercial products or services mentioned in this document unless specifically identified as a standard.*

**Note:** *Advertising on the Oakland County Web site, as well as on its social media Web sites and accounts, is strictly prohibited. The exception is advertising that may automatically appear on social network Web sites that are owned by third-parties and may not be controlled by the County. If this is the case, a department must determine whether or not the advertising interferes with the mission, goals and objectives of the department, and evaluate the use of the social media Web site. Links made to third-party Web sites by Oakland County on social media Web sites and/or blogs and forums may be allowed if the link source falls within the scope of the business, service, information or mission/value of the purpose of the site/page. Determination will need to be made on a case-by-case basis by the department.*

### 3.1 Creating a New Account

**S** *The All requests for new social media accounts, blogs, forums and other must be submitted to the Department of Information Technology, E-Government Services Team, at egov@oakgov.com with the appropriate form attached.*

The following must be provided (form attached):

- type of social media or account required (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and the Web site address (URL) if relevant
- graphics to be used in establishing the design of the site
- desired name of the account
- e-mail address to use in account set-up

*(Note: New accounts will be set-up in accordance with these guidelines and use official Oakgov.com e-mail addresses where possible, unless otherwise noted (i.e., Flickr requires the*

*establishment of a “Gmail” account in which case official Oakland County Gmail accounts will be established and/or used; where possible, generic departmental e-mail addresses are encouraged to be used as Primary on all accounts.)*

- additional information such as official contact information, hours, Web site address, etc. as required by the type of account
- name(s) and contact information of all parties who will be administrators and/or moderators of the account

The request will be evaluated to ensure all necessary information is received, and subsequently a request will be sent to the department’s director, supervisor or manager for written approval. Once the account is set up, confirmation and login information will be sent to the requestor and copied to the department director or manager.

All existing social media accounts must also be registered in the same manner by providing the account name, location (URL), login user name, and password. The name of the Primary account user(s) or administrator(s) as well as any other individuals who do/will have access to the account must also be provided. This information will be submitted to the department’s director, supervisor or manager for approval.

Other general information about accounts:

- information provided will be maintained confidentially by authorized members of the E-Government Services Team
- department or agency representatives must submit any changes made to passwords or account information to the E-Government Services Team over the life of the account
- Oakland County reserves the right to monitor, manage and/or otherwise make modifications as necessary to any official Oakland County social media account where it does not meet the standards of this document and/or in accordance with one of Oakland County’s existing policies
- Oakland County E-Government Services Team must remain an Administrator on all official County social media accounts and may not be removed by a department and/or its representatives

Any unauthorized social media accounts, blogs, forums, or other Web 2.0 media will be removed from the County Web site and reported to the department director, supervisor or manager for investigation and/or further action. Additionally, accounts that do not adhere to these standards and guidelines will be reported to Human Resources and/or Corporation Counsel for further evaluation.

Each social media site or account must include the following:

- Purpose and scope of the site (statement)
- Indicate “Official site of Oakland County, Michigan” (written)
- Statement that any content posted or submitted for inclusion may be moderated and is subject to public disclosure (link to public Social Media Policy)
- Indicate that the site is privately hosted thereby limiting the ability to search for and produce documents related to FOIA requests

- Department name, address/location, phone number, Web site, e-mail address prominently displayed

### **3.2 Moderating and Posting Comments**

All Oakland County social media Web sites must be managed and/or moderated. It is the department's responsibility to assign individuals to this task.

The designated department administrator or moderator will be responsible for sourcing and publishing comments, tweets and status updates, coordinating replies to incoming messages, and monitoring the account and all comments made by the public. It is recommended that all social media accounts be monitored minimally on a daily basis for any new comments that may be posted and/or to review comments to ensure they are appropriate. Where possible, social media administrators or moderators should be able to receive text alerts, which will notify them instantly when a new comment or post is made.

In social media, comments may be made by the public that cause concern to a moderator or responsible party. If user content is positive or negative, and in context to the conversation, then the content should be allowed to remain regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to the County or a department. When a post is inappropriate, blatantly commercial, obscene, or endangers someone, as the site owner a department is responsible for removing the offending post (all account administrators/moderators have a "delete" functionality). Inappropriate content is detailed below.

The temptation to remove posts that are merely critical or represent a different opinion should be carefully examined. A social media Web site is a means for holding a conversation. Suppressing other points of view may be a quick way to lose readers' trust. Even negative comments may be useful because there may be more people in the community that share a similar opinion, and this will be an excellent opportunity to insert more information that may affect how they think about it.

Specifically, content containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:

- comments not topically related to the particular blog article, forum or nature of the social media Web site
- profane language or content
- content that promotes, fosters or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation
- comments that support or oppose political campaigns or ballot measures
- sexual content or links to sexual content
- solicitations of commerce outside of Oakland County government systems
- conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party

### **Removal of Comments**

There is an outstanding debate that removing or moderating comments in a forum designed for public discussion may be a violation of First Amendment rights of free speech. There are currently no court

cases to determine the validity of this. Comments that are considered for removal must be carefully evaluated. It is highly recommended that a department manager, supervisor or director approve the removal of such comments where possible. If it is determined that a comment must be removed and/or deleted, the comment should be copied and pasted into a file that must be saved and printed. Additionally, the removed content should include the following information:

- When it was removed
- Who removed it
- Why it was removed

### 3.2.1 Content Principles

**G** *Individuals acting on behalf of the County or a department in social media are required to adhere to any existing County and department policies related to providing information to the public or media.*

If participating in social media sanctioned by the County or a department or on another Web site that may be discussing the County or a department, these guiding principles should be followed:

- ensure that a department sanctions the individual's official participation and representation on social media sites
- stick to the individual's area of expertise
- post meaningful and respectful comments; no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive
- pause and think before posting; reply to comments in a timely manner when a response is appropriate
- respect proprietary information, content and confidentiality
- when disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite

More general content guidelines include:

**Tone of Voice.** Though the account may be anonymous (i.e., no named officials or employees), it is helpful to define a hypothetical 'voice' so that comments, tweets or status updates from multiple sources are presented in a consistent tone (including consistent use of pronouns). The department's 'voice' will position the channel as an extension of the main department Web site.

**Transparent.** Honesty will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If personal identification is required, use real names and be clear about roles.

**Caution.** Make sure efforts to be transparent do not violate County policies and any applicable legal guidelines for external communication. Get permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the County. All statements must be true and not misleading, and all claims must be substantiated and approved. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation or any parties the County may be in litigation with without the appropriate approval. Be smart about protecting any sensitive or restricted information. What is published is widely accessible, not easily retractable and may be around for a long time, so consider content carefully.

**Consistent.** Tweets, status updates and comments should be consistent in nature and in frequency. Do not deluge subscribers, followers or fans unless there is an emergency or special situation/event.

**Credible.** All information published must be credible and/or from credible sources.

**Perception.** In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred. Be sure that all content associated with the social media Web site operated by the County or a department is consistent with its quality of work and with its mission, goals and professional standards.

**Excitement.** Oakland County is making important contributions to the region, to the future of government, and to public dialogue on a broad range of issues. The County's activities are focused on providing services and on government innovation that benefits residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Share with the participants the things we are learning and doing, and open up social media channels to learn from others.

**Value.** There is a lot of written content in the social media environment. The best way to get read is to write things that people will value. Social communication from the County should help residents, businesses, partners, co-workers, and other stakeholders. It should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community. If it helps people improve knowledge or skills, build their businesses, do their jobs, solve problems, or understand the County and the region better, then it is adding value.

**Responsibility.** Participation in social media Web sites on behalf of the County or a department is an official function and/or task. An individual, department or other responsible party may be held accountable for what is written and/or for not appropriately moderating or managing comments posted. There can be a fine line between healthy debate and incendiary reaction. Do not denigrate others or the County. It is not necessary to respond to every criticism or barb. Frame what is written to invite differing points of view without inflaming others. Some topics, like politics, slide easily into sensitive territory. Be careful and considerate. Once the words are out there, they may not be able to be deleted or removed (if posting on others' Web sites, for example). Once an inflammatory discussion gets going, it is hard to stop. Just put facts out there and stay away from getting involved in an argument.

**Restraint.** Do not react to a comment in anger or frustration. Wait and/or talk to a manager or supervisor before publishing a comment or post that may be made when angry or frustrated.

**Mistakes.** If a mistake is made, be upfront and be quick with a correction. This may be in the form of a follow-up comment or post, or may be in the form of a deletion.

### 3.2.2 Types and Sources of Content

Content for social media channels may be comprised of a mixture of traditional business communications re-purposed for the audience and/or content produced exclusively for social media Web sites. The provision of content for social media may require input from staff and colleagues. This may be an add-on to business activity, for example a quick daily or weekly discussion/meeting of potential tweets or updates, or the exchange of e-mails between designated staff to determine suitable content. The following provides ideas for generating content for social media.

## Leverage Existing Web Content

**News releases, speeches and statements** – the headlines of news releases, speeches and statements may be repurposed for social media

**Marketing messages** – information about events, awards, staff accomplishments, promotions, services or other

**Videos on YouTube and photos on Flickr** – alerting followers on Twitter, Facebook, blogs or other to new media content on other official County or department media outposts

**Blog posts** – any blogs run by the department may be configured to automatically post an update and short URL on Twitter announcing new content

**Other Web site updates** – new or updated sections on OakGov.com or the County's other sanctioned Web sites, new publications, or Web site user surveys where we are inviting participation

## Add Value with Exclusive Content

**Updates on officials' movements** – for example, Commissioners or County Executive official appearances on behalf of the County

**Insights from officials** – thoughts and reflections of Commissioners, executives or directors, for example, immediately after an event or meeting

**Announcement and coverage of events** – pre-announcement and promotion of forthcoming events that the department has organized; or at events, providing live coverage where there may be significant interest beyond the attendees

**Thought leadership (or "link blogging")** – highlighting relevant research, events, awards, etc. to position the County or a department as a thought leader and reliable filter of high-quality content

**Asking and answering questions** – occasionally a question may be asked of Twitter followers, Facebook fans and general readers for immediate customer insight or to conduct a 'straw poll.' Questions should be answered from followers in the forum they were presented; these answers may be visible to all followers, not just the person who asked them; if a public commenter tries to dominate the social medium with posts in such a way as to potentially alienate other members of the community, it may be appropriate to request that the conversation be taken offline or to another forum; the resolution of the discussion may be summarized and posted for other followers to see.

**Crisis communications** – in the event of a major incident where the County or a department needs to provide up-to-the minute advice and guidance

### 3.2.3 Copyright and Fair Use

**S** *Copyright and Fair Use laws are the same for social media as they are in any other medium. Written authorization forms may need to be updated to include digital media.*

If information is published by the County or a department that they did not produce, the source of the material, publication or any other media must be given. Seek and obtain written permission for any

material or content not created internally or on behalf of the County or department. This includes text, photographs, video, audio (including music), and any other types of content. In the case of copyrighted items, observe all rights as stated.

When using photo-sharing Web sites, respect the articles of use for photos. Never use images that found on the Internet without express permission or consideration for its terms of use as stated. The same applies for video, audio, widgets and/or other copyrighted works.

If an individual takes photos on behalf of the department, make sure that any identifiable faces have given written permission for use in electronic media. A photo release will help protect the County from potential liability. Existing authorization forms may only cover print media and/or restrict the usage of the image (for a specific time period, for example, i.e., one-time use). If the photos were taken at a public event, a photo release is not necessarily required but should be obtained where reasonable and possible.

Recognizable photos of children under the age of 18 are unacceptable unless prior written permission is secured from a parent or guardian. With or without a signed photo release, avoid posting pictures of minors where possible. Also do not use their first or last names to identify.

### **Protect Confidential and Proprietary Information**

There is a difference between being transparent and giving away information before it is ready for general distribution. Make sure information published is approved by a manager, supervisor or director of the department prior to its release.

#### **3.2.4 Link Shortening**

**G** *Use shortened URLs (Web addresses) where applicable.*

When posting links to Web sites and Web pages, unless it is already a very short URL (Web site address), it may be shortened using a link compressing site such as [www.tinyurl.com](http://www.tinyurl.com). This helps when the amount of space that is available to post a comment or status link is limited (in Twitter or Facebook, for example). A shortened URL may then be copied and pasted for use in social media content.

#### **3.2.5 Commenting on Blogs, Forums and Other Social Media Sites**

When is it appropriate for someone to respond?

##### **Gauge the environment**

When interacting on other peoples' blogs it is essential to gauge the environment. Read some posts, comments and responses on a blog or site before determining that commenting will be the most constructive course of action. If possible, have subject area experts react to the blog or comment.

As more and more conversations are happening online, it is less and less feasible that a department will be able to task a single individual to respond; identify subject area experts and encourage them to monitor online media and interact where appropriate.

If someone finds a comment on a Web site that may need to be responded to, it should be reported the the department's manager or supervisor for that area. It is up to the manager or supervisor to

determine the appropriate course of action. Employees should not take matters into their own hands without authorization from a manager or supervisor. Do not comment on a post or content found during searching or monitoring unless you are specifically designated to do so by your manager or supervisor. Report it.

If you find an image or logo that violates Oakland County's copyright, report this to your supervisor or manager. The supervisor or manager should send a link to the potential violation to Corporation Counsel for investigation and/or action if necessary. Again, do not contact the party in question directly – report it to your manager/supervisor, and ultimately Corporation Counsel.

## Wikipedia

When Google became the most popular search engine on the Web, it made business sense to focus effort into affecting Google search results. Nowadays, Wikipedia has become a common result for many searches on Google. People will often gather information about the County or a department from third parties, and currently Wikipedia is a popular place to do this.

There have been many stories in the mainstream media about individuals or sometimes governments from around the world embarrassing themselves by editing their own pages. It is important to note that while editing your own Wikipedia page is not always forbidden, deleting accurate criticism always is. The safest way to avoid trouble on Wikipedia is to propose changes versus actually making them.

Almost all "Wikipedians" do not want to harm or help, nor do they want to provide a platform for the subject matter to shamelessly promote themselves. They just want a complete, accurate and neutral encyclopedia.

Check who has been editing the department's page. Before making any edits, check through the "history" tab to check if names that appear may already be from the County and/or from within the department.

Every edit on Wikipedia is attributed to an author. If an edit is "anonymous" it is attributed to the IP address of the author (which can easily be traced to the organization that owns it—meaning that an anonymous account is still traceable to where it comes from). Before requesting the creation of an account, read Wikipedia's policy on user names and accounts. Recognize that the Wikipedia article on your department belongs to Wikipedia, not to the County or a department.

As opposed to editing the article itself, changes may be proposed on the articles "Talk" area (discussion). This way, it is a collaboration with other "Wikipedians" on the content rather than storming their territory.

### 3.2.6 Support

**S** *Support requests must be made via the IT Service Center.*

Oakland County social media is supported by the E-Government Team, Department of Information Technology. Support requests may be made by contacting the I.T. Service Center at:

**Self Service:** <http://sc.oakgov.com>

**Service Center Direct Line:** 248-858-8812

Tell them you have a social media service request.

## 4 SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES

**S** *Community Server, Sharepoint, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn are the only social networking tools authorized for use at this time at Oakland County. To suggest a new tool for inclusion in this Standard, send an e-mail to [egov@oakgov.com](mailto:egov@oakgov.com) with the name and URL of the Web site or tool/service for consideration.*

### 4.1 Blogs and Forums

Oakland County Web logs, commonly referred to as "blog" sites, provide County officials and departments the ability to publish articles related to County business and activities. County blogs facilitate further discussion of the published articles, providing members of the public the opportunity to submit comments related to each article.

Public forums are discussions of County-related topics that directly relate to County business, services or information. Forums are similar to blogs in that the public may submit comments; however, forums are usually not related to an article or story, but rather stand on their own as discussion topics. In some cases, members of the forum community may start their own forum topic to solicit comments from other members of the public. Oakland County currently does not allow the public to start their own discussions.

**S** *All public-facing blogs and forums must be hosted internally on Community Server and will be available to the general public via <http://community.oakgov.com>. Blogs and forums designed for internal County use only, or for private collaborative sharing, are hosting on My.OakGov.com using Sharepoint..*

### Definitions

For the purpose of this section the following terms are defined as provided below:

**Blog:** (an abridgment of the term Web log) is an Oakland County Web site with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events or other material such as graphics or video

**Blog Author:** an authorized Oakland County official that creates and is responsible for posted blog articles

**Blog Article:** an original posting of content to an Oakland County blog site by an Oakland County blog author

**Blog Commenter:** an Oakland County employee/agent or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular Oakland County blog article

**Blog Comment:** a response to an Oakland County blog article submitted by a blog commenter

**Blog Moderator:** an authorized Oakland County official who reviews, authorizes and allows content submitted by Oakland County blog authors and public commenters to be posted to an Oakland County blog site

## Blog Guidelines

All Oakland County blogs and forums shall be (1) approved by the department manager, supervisor or director; (2) published using the approved County blogging/forum platforms and tools; and (3) administered by the Department of Information Technology E-Government Services Team.

All Oakland County blogs and forums shall adhere to the following:

- Oakland County Web Site Standards & Guidelines
- Online Privacy and Legal/Accessibility
- Policy on Non-Government Information and Links (Disclaimer)
- Electronic Communications Policy
- Local, State and Federal Elections ordinances and Administrative Rules
- State of Michigan Public Records Laws
- Freedom of Information Act

All blogs and forums shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. All blog sites and forums shall include a notification on the home page, or in another easily-accessible location, that public disclosure requests must be directed to the department's public disclosure officer.

Relevant Oakland County records retention schedules apply to blogs, blog content and forum content. Where necessary, records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the approved County blogging and forum platform and tools.

Each Oakland County blog and/or forum shall include an introductory statement that clearly specifies the purpose and topic and scope of the blog or forum as follows:

### Purpose

The purpose of this blog (or forum) is to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between the public and employees of Oakland County. We encourage your comments, ideas and concerns and hope that you will find the information here helpful in understanding what your government is doing and what you can do to help. This is a moderated blog, so all comments will be reviewed for compliance with our policies before posting. We recognize that the Web is a 24/7 medium, and your comments are welcome at any time. However, given the need to manage County staff time and resources, moderating and posting of comments will occur during regular business hours Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Comments submitted after hours or on weekends will be read and posted as early as possible; in most cases, this means the next business day.

Oakland County blog articles, forums and comments should adhere to content guidelines and principles detailed in this document. All Oakland County blog and forum moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of these guidelines, including responsibilities associated with reviewing and moderating content submitted for posting.

## Author and Commenter Identification

- all blog sites and forums shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by Oakland County and shall have Oakland County contact information prominently displayed
- all Oakland County blog authors and public commenters shall be clearly identified; anonymous posting shall not be allowed
- enrollment of public commenters shall be accompanied by valid contact information including a name, address, and e-mail address
- authentication credentials used for posting blog articles and blog comments by authorized Oakland County blog authors and public commenters shall conform to the County's password standards

## Ownership and Moderation

- content of each Oakland County blog and forum shall be owned by and the sole responsibility of the department/agency producing and using the blog
- all blog articles, forums and comments shall be reviewed and approved by an authorized blog and/or forum moderator before posting
- blog articles, forums and comments submitted for posting with attached content shall be scanned using antivirus technology prior to posting
- Oakland County blog and forum moderators shall allow comments that are topically related to the particular topic being commented and thus within the purpose of the limited public forum, with the exception of the prohibited content listed in Section 3.2 of this document
- linked content (embedded hyperlinks) within any Oakland County blog article, forum or comment submitted for posting shall be evaluated prior to posting; any posted hyperlinks shall be accompanied by a disclaimer stating that Oakland County guarantees neither the authenticity, accuracy, appropriateness nor security of the link, Web site or content linked thereto
- link content shall adhere to the Policy on Non-Government Information and Links contained in the online Privacy Policy

## 4.2 Micro-Blogging: Twitter

Twitter (twitter.com) is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of followers or, by default, allow open access. Users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter Web site, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications. While the service costs nothing to use, accessing it through SMS may incur phone service provider fees. Twitter enables you to distribute brief messages to many people at one time quickly and easily via the web. This form of social media is used to provide brief updates about a topic or to describe details of an event as it happens.

## Twitter works like this:

- An account is created comprised of user name and password, profile image and optional background image.
- You find interesting people to follow and they can choose to follow you back. Other Twitter users may also initiate contact by following you. It is normal Twitter etiquette to follow/be followed by people who you do not know offline. In this way, unlike many social networks, Twitter is a powerful way of building a network, making new introductions and accessing interesting and varied content.
- You post updates of up to 140 characters in length by using a Web application on your computer or mobile phone. Everyone who is following you can read your updates. People can also subscribe to your updates using the RSS feed (this means they can receive your updates via their preferred feed reader software or browser start page, without using Twitter), or see them in the Twitter public timeline.
- Twitter updates are usually in the form of an answer to the imaginary question: “What are you doing now” or “What holds your attention now”? This will often include links to other Web sites (using link shortening services such as [tinyurl.com](http://tinyurl.com); see Section 3.2.4 for more information on link shortening). Two useful terms often used to describe this activity are “microblogging” (blogging in miniature by posting short updates throughout the day about thoughts and findings of interest) and “hyper-connectedness” (the idea of being in constant contact with your network and aware of what holds their attention right now).
- Your Twitter stream (the information you see when you use Twitter) is made up of your own updates and those of all the Twitter users you are following. Other users will see their own streams, which display the updates of the users they are following. Therefore what you see is not the same as what other users will see.

## Users interact with each other in the following ways:

**@Reply.** You can reply to an update posted by another user in your Twitter stream by clicking the reply button or typing @ and then their user name at the start of the message. Anyone following you will see this reply irrespective of whether they are already following the recipient. (This is one of the ways in which users find new people to follow, as you are effectively introducing that person to your followers by showing his/her user name and engaging them in conversation).

**DM.** You can send Direct Messages to individual users provided you are ‘friends’ (i.e., you are both following each other). These are private and can only be seen by the sender and recipient.

**Re-tweeting.** Because people have different networks of followers, it is common to repeat interesting tweets from your own stream for the benefit of all of your followers, preceding it with “Re-tweet:” or just “RT” for short. You do not need permission to do this—it is considered a compliment to the originator to repeat their content. You may cite the source of the original tweet by typing “RT@:user name”, and then the content of the re-tweet.

**Hashtags.** You can include keywords in your updates in order to associate those updates with a particular event, movement, current trend or issue by adding a hash sign (#) in front of a word. For example at events, Twitter users will often agree to a common tag to identify themselves to each other and form a Twitter ‘back channel’ for that event. Tagging tweets enables users to collaboratively document a cultural happening and aggregate all tweets containing that tag on another medium—for example on a blog, projected on screen at the event, or displayed on a map as a visual representation of what is being said in different places about the same issue.

The Twitter Web site itself is not the only (or even the main) way that users access or post updates to their Twitter accounts. The majority of Twitter access is via mobile devices (such as Twitter applications on the iPhone), third-party desktop applications (such as TweetDeck or Thwirl), Web browser plugins (such as Twitterfox), or widgets on personalized home pages (such as iGoogle, Pageflakes or Netvibes).

It is also possible (and popular) to include photos and videos in your messages using third-party add ons, such as TwitPic. Twitter updates may also be integrated with other social media profiles, for example you can use Twitter to edit your Facebook status updates.

### Why is Twitter Important?

- it’s a place where news often breaks
- it’s establishing itself as a main source of live update information
- trending: as everything being discussed on Twitter is by nature happening now, it is increasingly being used as a way of monitoring and reporting on trends; top trends are shown on the right hand side of every Twitter user’s stream and tracked by other tools (examples include Retweetist, Twitturly and Twitvision)
- Search Engine Optimization: because it is updated frequently, Twitter content ranks highly on Google and is therefore an increasingly important way to generate traffic and disseminate messages online
- it provides quick snippets of information that may be distributed and received quickly

### Positioning and Profile of All Oakland County Twitter Accounts

**S** *The department’s logo or other appropriate graphic will be used as the profile image. The profile text will read: “Official Twitter channel of the Department of [fill in], Oakland County, Michigan. The background image for the account will be selected and posted by the Department of Information Technology with input from the department. Departments are not to change background or profile pictures and must send all requests to IT.*

### Following and Followers

As part of the initial channel launch it is common practice to actively follow other relevant organizations and professionals. It is recommended that anyone who follows a County account be “followed back.” It is also possible to automatically follow users back using an automated service such as tweetlater.com.

- it is good Twitter etiquette to follow people back when they follow you

- having an imbalance between ‘following’ and ‘follower’ figures can result in poor Twitter reputation and grading on third party Twitter sites like Twittergrader.com, and even account suspension by Twitter administrators in extreme cases

For more information, see Section 3 on Setting Up and Managing a Social Media Web Site.

### **4.3 Community Network: Facebook**

Facebook (facebook.com) is a global social networking Web site that is operated and privately-owned by Facebook, Inc. The Web site's name stems from the colloquial name of books given at the start of the academic year by university administrations with the intention of helping students get to know each other better. Users set up a personal ‘profile’ with information about themselves and can add friends, post status updates (brief messages), write on their friends’ pages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. Users can also create profiles that include photos and lists of personal interests, exchange private or public messages, join Groups, and follow Fan pages. Additionally, users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region.

“Public” profiles allow any stranger or acquaintance to contact the user, which results in lack of privacy. Public profiles can be blocked by any user but “private” profiles cannot. Users can set their profiles on private so as to prevent people from contacting them.

Facebook also allows its members to set up a Fan page or a Group. Fan pages are popularly used for businesses, organizations, entertainment, and other types of non-personal affiliations. Similarly, a user can set up a Group in which they can invite their ‘friends’ join. The term “friends” is used to identify members of the community who belong to your network. Messages can then be sent to all members of the group simultaneously.

Users can join and create up to 200 groups according to their interests or areas of expertise. It will appear in the search results of Facebook if the group is set to “public.” Users can choose groups to join according to their interests in order to connect and interact with others.

The Web site is free to use and generates some of its revenue from advertising, including banner or other ads that may appear on any page of the site.

**S** *The E-Government Services Team (O.C. Egov) must be added and/or remain the primary Administrator on all Facebook pages and groups. All existing Facebook pages, profiles and/or groups operated on behalf of Oakland County must be registered with the Department of IT.*

All Fan pages and Groups must be managed through existing Facebook personal profile accounts. A department personal profile page may be established (using real identities and not the department or unit name) to manage the account, or a representative of the department may use a personal profile to manage the account, provided that written authorization is submitted by the department director, supervisor or manager.

#### **Managing a Facebook Fan Page or Group**

Once an account is set up it must be managed. Facebook is designed for “status updates” to be posted on the user’s “wall.” Status updates may be considered micro-blogging in format—information written in a headline or other brief statement.

Status updates should be posted in a regular and consistent manner with a voice consistent with the tone of the department. Updates should be from the perspective of the department—not from an individual’s own personal opinion.

Be prepared for the public to post comments to your status updates. Facebook allows people to become a “fan” or to join your “group” without permission (public/open), or by requesting to join the group and permission is granted through the administrator (semi-private), or not at all and the administrator must add group members for them to participate (private/invitation only). Once they are members they will be sent everything you write on your page, and subsequently, they will see everything any other member of that group writes on the page as well.

You can delete or remove any comment that is deemed inappropriate. There is a “delete” button next to every comment, including your own updates. You should be diligent in responding to comments made in order to maintain the credibility of your Fan page or Group. You want to treat followers like customers, as if they are calling you on the phone or standing at the counter.

Facebook also allows you to create discussion threads under the “Discussions” tab. Discussions may be created and publicized before and after an event, activity or other important public discourse. You may also upload photos and photos, provide links to videos, create short surveys, and provide other types of information, such as links and events.

Facebook and Twitter may be linked together so that when you update your Twitter status it will automatically post the same status update to your Facebook page.

#### **4.4 Business Network: LinkedIn**

**S** *LinkedIn Groups must be created through the E-Government Services Team. Additional managers and moderators will be added by request*

LinkedIn (linkedin.com) is a business-oriented social networking site launched in May 2003 that is mainly used for professional networking. As of October 2009 it had more than 50 million registered users, spanning more than 200 countries and territories worldwide.

The purpose of the site is to allow registered users to maintain a list of contact details of people they know and trust in business. The people in the list are called “connections.” Users can invite anyone (whether a site user or not) to become a connection.

This list of connections can then be used in a number of ways:

- a contact network is built up consisting of their direct connections, the connections of each of their connections (termed “second-degree connections”) and also the connections of second-degree connections (termed “third-degree connections”); this can be used to gain an introduction to someone a person wishes to know through a mutual, trusted contact
- it can then be used to find jobs, people and business opportunities recommended by someone in one's contact network
- employers can list jobs and search for potential candidates
- job seekers can review the profile of hiring managers and discover which of their existing contacts can introduce them

LinkedIn also allows users to research companies. When typing the name of a given company in the search box, statistics about the company are provided. These may include the ratio of female to male employees, the percentage of the most common titles/positions held within the company, the location of the company's headquarters and offices, or a list of present, past and former employees.

The feature LinkedIn Answers, similar to Google Answers or Yahoo! Answers, allows users to ask questions for the community to answer. This feature is free. The main differences from the latter two services are that questions are potentially more business-oriented and the identity of the people asking and answering questions is known.

The searchable LinkedIn Groups feature allows users to establish new business relationships by joining alumni, industry, professional, and other relevant groups. LinkedIn groups can be created in any subject area and by any member of LinkedIn. Some groups are specialized groups dealing with a narrow domain or industry, whereas others are very broad and generic in nature.

#### **4.5 Video-Sharing: YouTube**

YouTube (youtube.com) is a video-sharing Web site on which users can upload and share videos. Three former PayPal employees created YouTube in February 2005. In November 2006, YouTube, LLC was bought by Google, and is now operated as a subsidiary of Google.

YouTube uses Adobe Flash Video technology to display a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie clips, TV clips and music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. Most of the content on YouTube has been uploaded by individuals, although media corporations including CBS, the BBC, UMG, and other organizations offer some of their material via the site as part of the YouTube partnership program.

Unregistered users can watch the videos, while registered users are permitted to upload an unlimited number of videos. Videos that are considered to contain potentially offensive content are available only to registered users over the age of 18. The uploading of videos containing defamation, pornography, copyright violations, and material encouraging criminal conduct is prohibited by YouTube's terms of service. Accounts of registered users are called "channels."

Oakland County allows the use of YouTube to post appropriate video content as long as it is owned by the County or written permission to re-publish a video is secured by the copyright owner.

**S** *All videos posted to YouTube must also be posted to Oakland County's Media Center. All Oakland County videos will be posted to the Oakland County, Michigan YouTube account, unless requested to create an account for a specific department. All departmental YouTube accounts must be created via IT.*

For more information about Oakland County's Media Center, send an e-mail to the E-Government Services Team at [egov@oakgov.com](mailto:egov@oakgov.com).

You may upload videos to YouTube yourself that are:

- less than 10 minutes in length (smaller than 100MB)
- .AVI, .MOV, .WMV, and .MPG file formats

Within your department's YouTube account, you may organize your videos and create video playlists. Visitors to your page may also comment on individual videos much in the same way they can post comments on blogs and Facebook pages.

There is more you can do and YouTube has a help center that can answer most of your questions.

### **Branding Your Channel**

After an account is created and you have begun posting videos, we can contact YouTube to apply for a branded channel. Becoming a branded channel means that you will be allowed to upload a branded banner to your channel. You will also be given the ability to upload longer videos to your site. Branded channel requests are honored at the discretion of YouTube. The Department of Information Technology can not guarantee a request will be approved by YouTube.

To submit a request for a branded channel, please send an e-mail to the E-Government Services Team at [egov@oakgov.com](mailto:egov@oakgov.com) with the following 5 pieces of information:

- the name of your department
- your OakGov.com Web site URL/address (i.e., <http://www.oakgov.com/health>)
- the existing account name registered on YouTube (i.e., department's YouTube user name)
- the e-mail address you are using to manage the account
- any other information about your plans to launch the channel and what types of content you plan to post

## **4.6 Photo-sharing: Flickr**

Flickr is an image and video hosting Web site, Web services suite, and online community platform. In addition to being a popular Web site for users to share personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository. As of October 2009, it claims to host more than 4 billion images.

Flickr offers two types of accounts: Free and Pro. Free account users are allowed to upload 100 MB of images a month and 2 videos. Also, if a free user has more than 200 photos on the site, they will only be able to see the most recent 200 in their photostream. The other photos that were uploaded are still stored on the site and links to these images in blog posts remain active. Free users can also contribute to a maximum of 10 photo pools.

Pro accounts allow users to upload an unlimited number of images and videos every month and receive unlimited bandwidth and storage. Photos may be placed in up to 60 group pools, and Pro account users receive ad-free browsing and have access to account statistics. If a department requires a Pro account, they must submit payment information from the department's budget.

Flickr asks photo submitters to organize images using tags (a form of metadata, or information about a photo) that allows searchers to find images related to particular topics, such as place names or subject matter.

Flickr also allows users to organize their photos into "sets," or groups of photos that fall under the same heading. However, sets are more flexible than the traditional folder-based method of organizing files, as one photo can belong to one set, many sets or none at all. Flickr's "sets" then

represent a form of categorical metadata rather than a physical hierarchy. Sets may be grouped into "collections," and collections further grouped into higher-order collections.

## 5 SUCCESS METRICS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

**G** *Departments are encouraged to establish a regular review schedule to determine if changes need to be made to its social media strategy.*

It is important to understand the impact of your efforts in social media marketing and customer service. The table below offers guidelines to help set clear objectives in order to evaluate the effectiveness of your social media outlets. You may contact the E-Government Services Team to assist you in developing a more detailed metric/evaluation plan, or for more information.

Objective	Measure
Extend reach of existing messages online (e.g. news, speeches, Web updates, videos) by building relationships with relevant audiences including intermediaries, stakeholders and key influencers such as journalists and bloggers.	Number of followers; relevance and type of followers; number of web traffic referrals from social media Web sites to our Web site content.
Provide an informal 'human' voice of the department to promote comprehension of, and engagement with, our messages.	Feedback and comments from followers and social media community (unsolicited and solicited).
Provide thought leadership and credibility, increasing our visibility as the experts in our field(s) within the online space.	Feedback and comments from followers and social media community (unsolicited and solicited); number of re-tweets (Twitter users repeating our updates); click-throughs from our tweets.
In line with County policies, demonstrate commitment to and understanding of digital channels with exemplary use of emerging sectors.	Feedback and comments from followers and social media community (unsolicited and solicited); neutral mentions elsewhere on the Internet.
Provide an additional, low-barrier method for audiences to interact with the County to provide feedback, seek help and suggest ideas.	Volume and quality of responses and comments; contact from followers and social media community; impact of this feedback on the County.
Provide ways for our audiences to subscribe to updates (by RSS, e-mail and SMS).	Is this available? How many are using it?
Monitor mentions on social media Web sites of the brand, its key officials or leaders, and key policy initiatives; engaging with our critics and key influencers to resolve problems/dissatisfaction and correct factual inaccuracies, and with satisfied customers to thank them for and amplify their positive comments.	Qualitative assessment of individual cases of turning negatives to positives and positives into brand advocates.
Provide live coverage of events (such as policy launches, speeches or promotions) for those who cannot attend	Number of events covered per year; positive feedback on that coverage

While measuring followers, fans, mentions and other items mentioned above is a quantifiable way to gauge results, an additional method is to determine how the social media marketing/outlet affects your business goals. If a social media tool is used in support of a specific business objective or strategic goals, measure the impact on the goal. If trying to increase attendance at an event, measure attendance results before and after the social media campaign. If trying to improve a work process or procedure, gauge customer satisfaction before and after engaging in social media.

Evaluation data may be obtained from a variety of methods:

- Web analytics for department Web sites on OakGov.com and other County government URLs and clickthroughs from URLs in tweets (using bit.ly) to track referrals from Twitter to our Web pages
- surveys: regular 'straw poll' surveys to ask for feedback
- friend, followers or contributors data and volume of friends, followers or comments
- third party tools and alert services that track mentions of content, including news feed data
- real time observation

## 6 EVALUATION

The E-Government Services Team will provide evaluation of all Oakland County social media Web sites and accounts every three months using some or all criteria listed below.

Risk	Mitigation
Criticism arising from an inability to meet the demands of social media users to join conversations/answer questions/comments due to resource and clearance issues.	Reduce by managing expectations with clear, published policies; use standard replies where answer will need research; respond to 'themes' not individual replies.
Criticism arising from perceptions that the content, voice or tone of the social media outlet is not supporting the image or brand of the County or department in a positive way, or in a way that does not support its missions or goals.	Reduce by sourcing varied content; evaluate staff assigned to post comments and consider re-aligning the types of content with goals; accept that there will be some criticism regardless.
Criticism of jumping on the bandwagon/waste of public money/lack of ROI; pointless content.	Reduce by evaluating against objectives and adhering to content principles.
Inappropriate content being published in error, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News releases under embargo</li> <li>• Information about officials' and government leaders' whereabouts that could risk security</li> <li>• Protectively marked, commercially or politically sensitive information</li> </ul>	Establish 'light' but effective procedural controls and guidelines for social media users; require clearance of all comments; educate any social media contributors.
Technical security of the social media account and potential for hacking and vandalism of content.	Change passwords frequently; only authorized personnel to have access to account information; do not use unknown third-party tools that require the account password; training and education of account holders.
Lack of availability due to social media site being over capacity or unavailable due to server capacity or maintenance issues.	Accept (affects all users, occurs rarely and is usually brief).
Changes to the social media platform (to add or change features or to charge users for accessing the service).	Review business case for continuing to use the service when any such changes are made.
Squatters, spoofers or automated commenting by spammers.	Accept residual risk and monitor for this occurring. Report spoof accounts to social media administrator for suspension or blocking.

**S** *This evaluation is required for all Oakland County social media Web sites.*

## 7 PROMOTION

At launch, new social media accounts may be promoted in a variety of ways such as:

- a link will be included in the OakGov.com Social Networks page
- a link from the Department's Web site home page and/or Social Networks page
- a link from other appropriate existing Oakland County social media Web sites
- request to other Oakland County Social Network Administrators to send announcements to their fans or followers
- request to staff to add to their email signatures
- an e-mail to key stakeholders
- a press release
- an e-mail subscription message sent to appropriate subscribers
- departmental and/or Countywide newsletters and other publications

## 8 PUBLIC SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

**S** *A link to the Oakland County Social Media Policy will be placed on all Oakland County social media Web sites and accounts at the time of set up and is not to be removed by departmental; administrators or authors.*

The Oakland County Web site, OakGov.com, contains a page (a link to it may be found in the footer of every page) detailing the Social Media Policy for the public. This is in addition to the existing Privacy/Legal and Accessibility policies, which are all to be adhered to as they relate to social media. Users of your departmental social media Web sites must have access to the County's online policies and implicitly agree to the terms stated therein in order to participate in a County-sponsored social media.

### **Oakland County Social Media Policy**

#### *Purpose*

The purpose of Oakland County's social media Web sites is to present matters of public interest in Oakland County for its many residents, businesses and visitors. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments and posts to any authorized official Oakland County social media outlet, however please note that they are both monitored and/or moderated for appropriateness according to guidelines established based on industry-wide best practices and liability concerns.

Oakland County's social media Web sites are a place for collecting suggestions and new ideas and to encourage conversations among the people it serves, not a substitute channel for services or general questions. Do not submit unsolicited proposals or other business ideas or inquiries through this media; these sites are not to be used for contracting or commercial business.

Do not submit any claim, demand, informal or formal complaint, or any other form of legal and/or administrative notice or process. Oakland County's social media Web sites are not to be used to report criminal activity. If you have information for law enforcement, please contact your local police agency.

#### *Comments*

We expect conversations to follow the rules of polite discourse and we ask that participants treat each other, as well as our employees, with respect. For the benefit of robust discussion, we ask that comments remain "on-topic." This means that comments posted must relate to the topic that is being discussed and/or congruent with the nature of the social media Web site and its nature of business or service.

We will not allow comments that include:

- profanity and vulgar or abusive language
- personal attacks of any kind
- threats of physical or bodily harm

- advocating an illegal activity
- sensitive information (for example, information that could compromise public safety)
- offensive comments containing terms that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, religious or other groups
- off-topic comments (if you have topics you'd like to hear more about, please suggest them by submitting e-mail to us at [webmaster@oakgov.com](mailto:webmaster@oakgov.com); if you have off-topic comments that are relevant to Oakland County or one of its departments or agencies, please send us an e-mail as well)
- questions from the media
- infringement or violation of existing copyrights or trademarks
- spam, or commercial or non-commercial promotion of a business, service or political organization or individual
- identical posts by the same user (please don't submit over and over expecting the post to show up faster), multiple users (a group of people sending identical messages, or one person submitting under different aliases); in the case of identical posts, we will post the first submission

If comments containing any of the above-listed restricted content are posted, Oakland County reserves the right to delete submissions that violate any of the above-stated restrictions.

Please note that the comments expressed by community members of any Oakland County social media Web site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Oakland County government or its officers and employees. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the Chief Information Officer, Department of Information Technology at [webmaster@oakgov.com](mailto:webmaster@oakgov.com).

Oakland County may use volunteers to assist its departments in responding in a timely manner to social media informational queries that are posted in publicly-available settings. Oakland County does not guarantee the accuracy of these volunteers' comments nor does it guarantee the accuracy of information posted by the general public which may appear to be informational in nature. Volunteers provide information to the best of their ability within the scope of their assigned duties. If someone provides information on any County-sponsored Web site or social media outlet, we recommend you verify the accuracy of the information by following up with a phone call or e-mail request to a County department or office.

Qualified volunteers that are used by Oakland County on behalf of its social media programs are trained in standards and guidelines applicable to duties assigned and performed. Volunteers are required to identify themselves as such when conducting business or providing information on behalf of Oakland County government and/or one of its departments or units.

### *Privacy and Security*

To protect your own privacy and the privacy of others, please do not include personally-identifiable information, such as Social Security numbers, phone numbers or e-mail addresses in the body of your comment or post. If you do voluntarily include personally-identifiable information in your comment or post, your comment may or may not be removed. If your comment is posted, Oakland County holds no liability in the release of this information.

Oakland County will make its best effort to remove any posts that contain personally-identifiable information posted by you or other members of the community. In some cases, you have the option of posting comments anonymously, but if you opt not to, any information, including your login name, may be displayed on the site.

#### *Following or Membership*

Being followed by Oakland County, Michigan, or an entity of Oakland County Government, does not imply endorsement of any kind. If you follow any Oakland County social media Web site or account, we may or may not follow you back or join your group or network. Being followed by an Oakland County agency does not imply endorsement of any kind.

#### *Advertising*

Oakland County does not accept advertising on its social media Web sites, nor does it allow the promotion or endorsement of any business or other entity. Oakland County may provide information about resources available to the community as it relates directly to its purpose and mission. Any advertising found on an Oakland County social media Web site is controlled by the owner of that Web site and not the County-sponsored account holder; Oakland County does not control what advertising appears on these pages as it is operating on a third-party Web site not owned or operated wholly by Oakland County or its departments and agencies.

#### *Availability*

All Oakland County social media Web sites are managed by staff or sanctioned agents of Oakland County during regular business hours Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Comments or questions submitted after hours or on weekends may be read by staff members or its authorized agents the next business day. Social media Web sites may occasionally be unavailable and we accept no responsibility for lack of service due to downtime.

## 9 RISK AND PROTECTION

**G** *This section provides important information on maintaining the security of Oakland County networks, hardware and software systems.*

### 9.1 Overview of Security Threats

The use of social media for government services and interactions is growing tremendously, supported by initiatives from the administration, directives from government leaders and demands from the public. This situation presents both opportunity and risk.

Government information systems are susceptible to targeted threats by individuals using technology to gain personal information or to cause harm (in the form of a cyber attack). In April 2009, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released a Headline Alert specifically citing social networking sites as a mechanism for attackers to gather information on their targets by harvesting information from publically-accessible networks and using the information as to launch an attack.

As County departments begin to use public social media Web sites, these threats may target our efforts made in social media. These attackers may use social media to collect information and launch attacks against information systems because attackers are likely to target less-secure information systems to reach their targets, such as social media outlets. In order to defend against these rapidly-evolving social media threats, departments must learn about the methods used by potential attackers.

Some of the more common threats are detailed below.

#### 9.1.1 Spear Phishing

Spear phishing is an attack targeting a specific user or group of users, and attempts to deceive the user into performing an action that launches an attack, such as opening a document or clicking a link. Spear phishers rely on knowing some personal piece of information about their target, such as an event, interest, travel plans, or current issues. Sometimes this information is gathered by hacking into the targeted network, but often it is easier to look up the target on a social media network.

Spear phishers use social media as an alternative way to send phishing messages, as the social media platform bypasses traditional e-mail security controls. Social media Web sites are used to trick users into opening a document or clicking a link. Sometimes these attacks use URL shorteners to obscure the actual Web site name.

Spear phishing may target a high-profile individual, also known as “Whaling,” and use a customized infected document with specific information containing a unique malicious payload, making it more difficult for anti-virus companies to detect its unique signature. Attacks may even appear as though they look like an internal document, thereby safe to open.

#### 9.1.2 Social Engineering

The second concern regarding social media use is Social Engineering, which relies on exploiting the human element of trust. Social Engineering attacks begin with collecting information about the attacker’s target. Social networking Web sites can reveal a large amount of personal information,

including resumes, home addresses, phone numbers, employment information, work locations, family members, education, photos, and private information.

For example, a study by the University of Virginia cites that out of the top 150 Facebook applications, all of which are externally hosted, 90.7% of applications needed nothing more than publicly available information from members. However, all of these applications were given full access to personal information not necessary for operation, but supplied by the user granting the applications total access to their account.

When an employee joins a social media Web site, they may identify themselves as an employee of their department. This may happen intentionally in their profile, or unintentionally. Their self-identification creates a departmental Internet footprint, which is valuable information to potential attackers. As more County employees self-identify on social media Web sites, the County's footprint on social networking will grow, creating a target-rich environment to help attackers target specific individuals to launch various Social Engineering and Spear Phishing attacks.

For example, an attacker may learn personal information about an individual and build a trust relationship by expressing interest in similar topics. Once the victim trusts the attacker, the attacker can collect more information about the user, or use their relationship to expand their influence. The attacker can expand their trust relationship to other users and friends, further gathering information and penetrating the trust of departmental personnel. The result can be the attacker gaining enough information to potentially steal someone's identity, gain access to banking information, etc.

Additionally, high-profile employees or public officials create an even larger footprint, as they have greater name recognition, collect more friends, and often want to engage with the public. A high-profile person with greater name recognition is a prime target for a social engineer to exploit the trust relationships established within that social network. In an attack similar to the "Whaling" spear phishing threat cited earlier, social engineering attacks may target high-profile individuals by relying on established trust relationships, such as close friends and colleagues. Through a compromised social media account, the attacker may pose as a friend to elicit information, action or support.

### **9.1.3 Web Application Attacks**

Web applications are dynamic Web pages that use scripting to provide additional functionality to the user. They can be developed and used by attackers on social media Web sites. For example, emerging techniques include using custom Facebook applications to target users. Facebook applications are written by third-party developers and often have minimal security controls.

To illustrate this security issue, consider that a user may grant a malicious web application access to their Facebook account, which may compromise their account or download unauthorized software to their computer. This is demonstrated in the screen shot below of the "Secret Crush" application, which installs the "Zango" Spyware/Adware program.

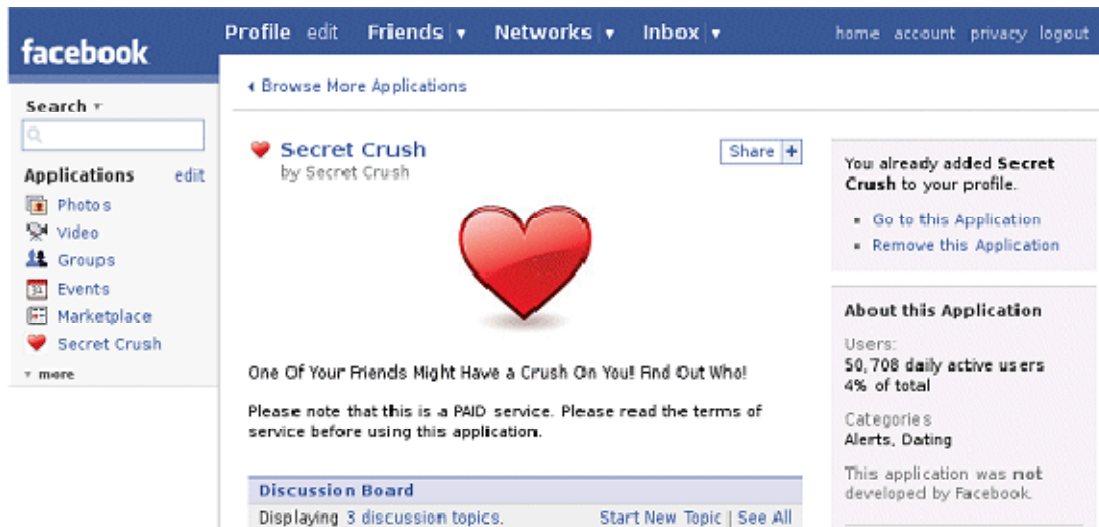


Figure 2: Secret Crush application in Facebook.

While a hijacked personal social media account may be annoying and personally costly or embarrassing, a hijacked account of a County user or a County account may have more serious implications. Unofficial posts, tweets or messages may be seen by the public as official messages, or may be used to spread malware by encouraging users to click links or download unwanted applications.

## 9.2 Protective Measures

Consider the following security measures when engaging in social media:

- departments may already have a "media relations" policy; if not, you may want to consider creating one—a departmental policy on social media communications may also be an extension to the media relations policy
- make sure your computer is protected before visiting sites—make sure you have a firewall (if on a non-County PC) and anti-virus software on your computer and that it is up-to-date; keep your operating system up-to-date as well
- do not assume you are in a trusted environment—just because you are on someone's page you know, it is still prudent to use caution when navigating pages and clicking on links or photos (because links, images or other content contained on the pages may include malicious code)
- be cautious in how much personal information you provide—remember that the more information you post, the easier it may be for an attacker to use that information to steal your identity or access your data
- use common sense when communicating with users you DO know—confirm electronic requests when it relates to money, personal identity, account numbers, and/or password information; the communication could be from someone who has stolen the credentials of the person you know with the intent of scamming as many people as possible

- use common sense when communicating with users you DON'T know–be cautious about whom you allow to contact you or how much and what type of information you share with strangers online
- understand what information is collected and shared–pay attention to the policies and terms of the sites; they may be sharing your e-mail address or other details with other companies
- do not download or use applications associated with social media Web sites, such as Facebook
- do not click links or open e-mail messages sent through private social media Web sites unless you are certain they are from a trusted source; be wary of unusual “subject” fields when a message is sent to your account; this may be a clue that an attacker has assumed the identity of someone you may know or who may be a member of your network

## 10 ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT: SOCIAL MEDIA SITES AND CONTENT

**S** *Record retention of social media posts, comments and private messages should be considered electronic communications as detailed in the Oakland County Electronic Communications Policy and be retained according to the retention standards established by the Department of Information Technology.*

The purpose of this section is to provide guidance to County departments regarding the retention of public records of posts, comments and other content sent to or received from its social media Web sites. Departments should adhere to existing record and information retention policies related to electronic communications. Departments may also want to consider the following factors when determining retention of social media content:

### 1. Are the posts public records?

If the posts are made or received in connection with the transaction of the department's public business (such as providing advice or receiving comments about the department, its programs, core business, etc.), then they are public records for the purposes of records retention and need to be retained for their minimum retention periods.

### 2. Are the posts primary or secondary copies?

If the posts are simply copies of records that the department is already retaining for the minimum retention period (such as links to publications), then the posts may be considered secondary copies and retained accordingly. Otherwise, the posts are the department's primary record.

### 3. How long do the posts need to be retained?

Departments should use the same records retention standards for posts that they would use if the same advice was distributed as a letter or an e-mail to everyone within the department's jurisdiction. Departments need to retain their primary record of posts, which are public records for at least the minimum retention period listed for those records in the approved records retention schedules.

### 4. How will the posts be retained by the department?

Departments need to consider how they will retain a record in their custody and control of their posts to social media Web sites. When retention of the posts themselves is outside the department's control, the department needs to consider what other records they will retain, such as e-mail confirmations of each post or comment. Departments need to consider these issues in any service contracts with vendors of social media Web sites and in their configuration settings for their social media accounts.

### 5. For which types of records is this technology appropriate?

Departments need to determine the business activities for which social networking technology is appropriate and re-evaluate its use if the agency is unable to manage the creation, receipt and retention of public records documenting the public business they transact using social media Web sites.

## 11 RESOURCES AND REFERENCE

1. *State of Utah Social Media Guidelines*, October 12, 2009
2. *Social Media Guidelines*, Michigan State University, Extension Services, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2009
3. *Code of Conduct for the State Services*, New Zealand State Services Commissioner, April 2009  
*Advice Sheets*, Washington State Secretary of State, Electronic Records Management
4. *Social Media Policy*, Roanoke, VA
5. *Social Media Policies*, Fairfax County, VA
6. *Template Twitter Strategy for Government Departments*, By Neil Williams, Department for Business, Universities and Skills; July 13, 2009
7. *Web Tools*, State of California
8. *GSA Social Media Handbook* and *GSA Social Media Policy*
9. *IBM Social Media Guidelines*
10. *Intel Social Media Guidelines*
11. *Social Media and Web 2.0 in Government* and *Web 2 0 Governance Policies and Best Practices*, United States Government
12. *Wikipedia*, descriptions of social media sites
13. *SocialNomics, How Social Media Transforms the Way We Think and Do Business*, 2009