

NITC 4-205 (DRAFT)

State of Nebraska Nebraska Information Technology Commission Standards and Guidelines

NITC 4-205 (Draft)

Title	Social Media Guidelines
Category	E-Government Architecture
Applicability	Applies to all state government agencies, excluding higher education

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the use of social media by state government agencies. Agencies may utilize these guidelines as a component of agency policy development for sanctioned participation using Social Media services, or simply as guidelines. State employees or contractors creating or contributing to blogs, microblogs, wikis, social networks, or any other kind of social media both on and off the Nebraska.gov domain need to be made aware of these guidelines or the guidelines of their agency. The State expects all who participate in social media on behalf of the State, to understand and to follow the appropriate guidelines. These guidelines will evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge.

The decision to utilize social media technology is a business decision, not a technology-based decision. It must be made at the appropriate level for each department or agency, considering its mission, objectives, capabilities, and potential benefits.

The goal of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) is not to say “No” to social media websites and block them, but to say “Yes”, and to continue to investigate innovative ways to bring government information to its citizens.

Since these technologies are tools created by third parties, these guidelines are separate from state policies regarding privacy and cookies. Agencies may choose to author disclaimers to remind users that, at their own risk, they are leaving an official state website for one which is not hosted, created, or maintained by the State of Nebraska, and that privacy controls and the use of cookies becomes the jurisdiction of that third-party utility.

2. Guidelines

2.1 These guidelines apply to all Social Media and Web tools. See definitions below.

2.2 The decision to utilize Social Media and Web tools is an organizational decision, not a technology-based decision. It must be made at the appropriate level for each department or agency, considering its mission, objectives, capabilities, and potential benefits.

2.3 All state agencies will email the webmaster of the State of Nebraska website to have their Social Media pages initially linked or updated on the state website. Webmaster contact is located on the state website.

2.4 Branding of the Social Media pages

2.4.1 All Social Media pages will be branded with the words “Official Nebraska Government Page” either in the bio or profile/information section.

2.4.2 List your official agency name and provide a link back to your agency website.

2.5 Retention Policy (Schedule 124 -State Agencies General Records:
http://www.sos.ne.gov/records-management/retention_schedules.html)

2.6 It is the agencies responsibility to assure that more than one staff member can access the generic logon, and edit the website/social media. This is a backup in case of staff turnover. For example: An agency may set up one generic nebraska.gov email account through the OCIO and have several email address aliases created. This will accommodate the requirement of unique email addresses on your Social Media accounts, yet keep all of the emails from all of the accounts going into one email inbox.

2.7 If the Social Media page is intended for pushing information only, indicate the proper channel for contacting the agency.

2.8 Below are some recommended key points to address in a Social Media webpage disclaimer/disclosure notice. Each agency may create their own or Link to this Guideline from their Social Media web page:

- General statement of the intent/purpose of agency Social Media tool.

Example: The Library Commission uses Social Media as an outlet to show the Library community how they can interact with their public.

- Notice to users of the following:
 1. Communication of a personal or private nature in relation to agency business, as well as official state business interactions, should continue to be made via the traditional agency offices and communications channels and not via the public comment areas of the Social Media tool.
 2. The agency is not responsible for any webpage author's personal content outside the work place.
 3. The agency is not responsible for any 3rd party content of any kind.
 4. All interactive communications made on this Social Media tool are subject to the state public records disclosure requirements (<http://www.nebraska.gov/privacypol.html>).
 5. Material deemed inappropriate will be monitored and possibly removed by the agency. Inappropriate content will be maintained in accordance with records retention policies.

2.9 Best Practices. Suggestions on how best to use and maintain social networking at work:

2.9.1 Ensure that your agency sanctions official participation and representation on Social Media sites. Stick to your area of expertise and provide unique, individual perspectives on what is going on at the State and in other larger contexts. All statements must be true and not misleading, and all claims must be substantiated and approved.

2.9.2 Post meaningful, respectful comments, no spam, and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.

2.9.3 Pause and think before posting. Reply to comments in a timely manner when a response is appropriate unless you have posted a disclaimer that this is not official two-way communication.

2.9.4 Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, your agency, and any restricted, confidential, or sensitive information. What is published is widely accessible, not easily retractable, and will be around for a long time (even if you remove it), so consider the content carefully. Respect proprietary information, content, and confidentiality.

2.9.5 If you are under a generic name (see above) consider using some form of tagging so staff and users can find out who this is.

2.9.6 Email or login names should lead the user back to a “state id”, such as an official state email address or making a user name that indicates you are a state employee.

3. Definitions

3.1 Social Media and Web tools

Social Media and Web tools are umbrella terms that encompass various online activities that integrate the use of hardware/software to facilitate social interaction and collaborative content creation. Social Media authoring uses many forms of technology applications such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, social networking, and multiuser virtual environments.

4. Related Documents

4.1 Acceptable Use Policy. NITC 7-101 (<http://nitc.ne.gov/standards/7-101.html>)

4.2 Records Retention Schedule 124 - State Agencies General Records (http://www.sos.ne.gov/records-management/retention_schedules.html)

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