Technical Panel
of the
Nebraska Information Technology Commission

Standards and Guidelines

Draft Document
30-Day Comment Period

Title: Social Media Guidelines (Revised)

Notes to Readers:

1. The following document is a draft document under review by the Technical Panel of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC). This document is posted at http://nitc.ne.gov/standards/comment/.
2. If you have comments on this document, you can submit them by email to rick.becker@nebraska.gov, or call 402-471-7984 for more information on submitting comments.
3. The comment period for this document ends on June 12, 2011.
4. The Technical Panel will consider this document and any comments received at a public meeting following the comment period, currently scheduled for June 14, 2011. Information about this meeting will be posted on the NITC website at http://nitc.ne.gov/.

State of Nebraska
Nebraska Information Technology Commission
Standards and Guidelines

NITC 4-205

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.

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 (ne-support@nicusa.com) to have their Social Media pages initially linked or updated 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, Item Numbers 124-1-41, 124-1-49, and 124-7: http://www.sos.ne.gov/records-management/retention_schedules.html)

2.6 It is the agency's responsibility to assure that more than one staff member can access the agency logon, and edit the website/social media. This is a backup in case of staff turnover. For example: An agency may set up one 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.~~ If comments are allowed on a Social Media site, it is a limited forum and comments must be related to the subject matter of the Social Media posting. Comments may be monitored and the following forms of content will not be allowed:

- Comments not related to the subject matter of the particular Social Media article being commented upon;
- Comments campaigning for or against the nomination or election of a candidate or the qualification, passage, or defeat of a ballot question;
- Profane language or content;
- Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- Solicitations of commerce;
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

A copy of the content which is removed 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 Section 2.6 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 make 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 Schedule 124 – State Agencies General Records, Item Numbers 124-1-41, 124-1-49, and 124-7. (http://www.sos.ne.gov/records-management/retention_schedules.html)

4.3 Personnel Rules. Classified System Personnel Rules and Regulations , Chapter 14, Section 003.15 (http://www.das.state.ne.us/personnel/classncomp/classifiedrules.htm). NAPE/AFSCME Labor Contract, Section 10.2 (http://www.das.state.ne.us/emprel/publications.htm)