

The Complete Social Media & Digital Engagement Guide for Public Communications

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This guide serves as a toolkit for those who are responsible for communicating with the public and specific audiences. Keep in mind that every week new tools, apps, and platforms are being introduced; therefore, keep abreast of new opportunities by networking with experts in the field.

PLATFORMS

The following are common social platforms—and their use—often used by government groups.

PLATFORM	Engage	Inform/Educate	Network	Entertain
Facebook	X	X	X	X
Twitter	x	X		X
Instagram	X			X
Pinterest		X		X
YouTube		X		X
LinkedIn		X	X	
Tumblr		X		
G+ (Inc. hangouts, SoundCloud, etc.)	X	X	X	X

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING AND INFORMATION SOURCES

The following are great resources for the public communications professional.

WHO	WHAT	WHERE	FOLLOW
GovLoop	"Knowledge Network for Government" a network connecting federal, state, and local government innovators.	www.govloop.com/	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn
DigitalGov	A platform to help those in agencies working on providing digital services and information for the public	www.digitalgov.gov/	Twitter Facebook G+ YouTube
NJSLOM Social Media Resources	Social media resources provided by the NJ League of Municipalities	Njslom.org/socialmedia.htm	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn

Government Social Media	Social media resources, training, and services for public organizations	governmentsocialmedia.com/	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn G+
Government Social Media Conference (GSMCON)	National conference for local, state, and federal communication professionals (April)	conference.governmentsocialmedia.com/	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn G+
GovTwit	Provides Twitter info, hashtags, agencies, and more for government use	Govtwit.com	Twitter Facebook
Government & Social Media LinkedIn Group	Networking group for public communication professionals; sub group of Social Media Marketing		LinkedIn
Government 2.0 LinkedIn Group	Group of citizens and professionals exploring the use of digital tools in government		LinkedIn
GovDelivery	Digital government solutions, webinars, online resources	Govdelivery.com	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn G+
National Association of Government Web Professionals	An organization of local & state government web professionals working together to share knowledge, best practices, innovative ideas, and other resources.	Nagw.org	Twitter Facebook LinkedIn Vimeo Flickr

HASHTAGS TO FOLLOW

#CheesyGov	Funny, 'cheesy' things about government		#GSMCON	Government Social Media Conference
#CIO	Chief Information Officer		#LocalGov	Local government
#eGov	eGovernment		#MuniGov	Municipal government
#GoGov	Applaud great government activity		#CrisComms	Crisis communications
#GSMCHAT	Government social media chat		#SocialGov	Social media in government

NOTE: *Hashtag.org and hashtagify.me tracks usage and stats of hashtags*

SOCIAL ARCHIVING

The following companies offer social archiving services and have worked with government organizations.

Archive Social	Archivesocial.com
Pagefreezer	Pagefreezer.com
Smarsh	Smarsh.com

DAYS OF THE WEEK HASHTAGS

Attract new followers and get into the conversation with these 'day of the week' hashtags. Use on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and G+

#MondayFunday	Use this hashtag to show pics of your staff having fun at work
#MotivationMonday	Use this to share inspirational quotes to start the week off
#MountainMonday	Use for all things related to mountains
#ManicMonday	your crazy postweekend work/school schedule
#TransformationTuesday or #TT	This hashtag is accompanied with a split before and after photo, great for showing progress over time (think new facilities, grounds)
#TipTuesday	Share your knowledge and advice
#TransformationTuesday	For all things related to change and transformation
#WayBackWednesday or #WBW	Use this hashtag to show old photos of your municipalities' early years
#WisdomWednesday or #WednesdayWisdom	Similar to Motivation Monday, use this to share words of wisdom
#WellnessWednesday	Use for health and fitness brands; share great foods or exercises (think health dept. or recreation dept.)
#HealthyHumpDay	Use for health related topics
#ThrowBackThursday or #TBT	Similar to Way Back Wednesday but more popular, share those old photos
#ThankfulThursday	Use for topics related to being grateful
#Friday or #FridayNight	Use this hashtag for asking about weekend plans or sharing them; can use to promote weekend events in town
#FridayFunday	Similar to Monday Funday, show pics of your staff or community having fun
#FollowFriday or #FF	Use it to tag and highlight other people or organizations worth following, it's great for making connections
#FlashBackFriday or #FBF	Similar to Throwback Thursday but not as popular, it follows the same theme of sharing old pics
#FridayNight	Use for events on Friday night
#SaturdayNight	Use for events on Saturday night
#SS or #SelfieSunday	Use for selfies!

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Key: 0 = Free service \$ = Subscription-based 0/\$ = Free and Subscriptions offered

WHO	WHAT	WHERE
iNeighbor (0/\$)	Community website and discussion forum	i-neighbors.org
Mind Mixer (\$)	Crowd sourcing tool	Mindmixer.com
Neighborland (0)	Collaboration tool for community and local officials	Neighborland.com
Next Door (0)	Community sharing tool	Nextdoor.com
Open Town Hall (\$)	Online public comment forum for government	Opentownhall.com
Civic Commons (0)	Promotes conversations around specific issues and promotes collective action	theciviccommons
Crowdbrite (0/\$)	Organizes comments for online brainstorming sessions and workshops	Crowdbrite.com

IMAGE SIZES

The following are the preferred image sizes for various parts of platforms. These ensure good visibility and resolution. Sizes are in pixels.

Twitter	Profile 400 x 400	Header 1,500 x 500	Stream 440 x 220	
Facebook	Profile 180 x 180	Cover 851 x 315	Feed 1,200 x 630	Highlighted Image 1,200 x 717
G +	Profile 250 x 250	Cover 1,080 x 608	Feed 497 x 373	Video 496 width
Pinterest	Profile 165 x 165	Pins 236 height scaled)	Board Display 222 x 150	
LinkedIn	Banner (Group/Brand) 646 x 220	Background 1,400 x 425	Personal Profile 220 x 220	Logo 100 x 60
You Tube	Cover 2,560 x 1,440	Video 1,280 x 760 16:9 aspect ratio		

Instagram	Profile 110 x 110	Thumbnails 161 x 161	Photo 640 x 640	
Tumblr	Profile 128 x 128	Posts 500 x 750		

CONTENT IDEAS

Struggling for content ideas? Consider the following!

- Share or comment on breaking news; local or national
- Post calls to action such as “Register to Vote” or “Don’t forget to take the community poll!”
- Share stories and photos from events such as festivals, graduations, or swearing in ceremonies
- Milestone events like significant number of passports issued, employee milestones, etc.
- Launch of programs in town, at the library, recreation department, etc.
- Stories from the field - restaurant inspections, water rescues, new registered voters
- Interview or link to experts; e.g. “Ask the Housing Inspector”
- Job openings in any in department
- Share resource and useful tips such as Hurricane Preparedness, Fire Safety, Getting Out of a Rip Current
- Numbered lists such as “5 things to eat each day” or “3 things to do at the park”
- Pet of the week from animal services
- TBT, FBF or other trends
- Crime prevention; most wanted individuals (local or national)
- Hard news items and how it relates to your audience
- Customer service problems being resolved
- New facilities
- Incorporate mainstream references (Restaurant Week - how are restaurants inspected?)
- Quick videos (uploaded) on interesting topics
- Thanking and acknowledging community partners
- Holidays and other observations
- Create a poll, such as “What is your favorite shore town” or “What play do you want to see in the park?”
- Interesting facts about the town/county
- Volunteer opportunities
- PSAs
- Repurpose great content that has been used before
- Free stuff (many websites focus on this)
- Retweet/share relevant content from followers
- Contests such as “Post a picture of you in your favorite part of town to be entered”
- Inspirational graphics and quotes (search Flickr under ‘creative commons’)

OTHER COOL STUFF

CANVA: Free online graphic design tool to create social graphics, posters, slide decks and more (canva.com)

Mail chimp: Free (up to 2,000 addresses) email list and newsletter service. (mailchimp.com)

Survey Monkey: Free (up to 10 questions) survey tool

socialmention: Social media research tool to help identify users sentiment, keywords associated with an individual/event/town, and frequency and strength of mentions (socialmention.com)

Best Practices in Government for Twitter: Twitter page on best practices (bit.ly/TWBestGov)

Bitly: Free URL shortener service that includes analytics. Can customize long links (like above) (bitly.com)

HubSpot: A marketing software company that offers a lot of great FREE resources and webinars (hubspot.com)

Sources: The following was accessed for some of the content in this *Guide*: Sprout Social, *Always Up To Date Guide for Social Media Images* (June, 2014); Todd Christenson, *Breaking the County/Public Invisible Barrier with Social Media*, GSMCOM 2014; GOVLOOP *Hashtag Directory*; SparkUpArts, *Social Media Posting with Hashtags for Each Day of the Week*, 2015