

## **Social Media for Public Engagement**

<b>Date:</b>	February 14, 2012
<b>To:</b>	Government Management
<b>From:</b>	City Manager
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Reference Number:</b>	

### **SUMMARY**

---

This report provides information on the use of social media for civic engagement and business purposes at the City of Toronto.

#### **Financial Impact**

This report will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in the current year's budget.

---

### **DECISION HISTORY**

At its meeting of May 2, 2011 Government Management Committee considered a letter from Councillor Paul Ainslie, Scarborough East, Ward 43, and adopted the following motion:

*"The Government Management Committee requested staff of the Civic Engagement Office, City Manager's Office, in conjunction with Strategic Communications and Information Technology, to report back to the Government Management Committee as soon as possible on opportunities within the City for the use of social media for civic engagement."*

The minutes of the Committee meeting can be found here  
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.GM3.23>.

## ISSUE BACKGROUND

The City Manager's Office supports City divisions in their engagement activities including advice and information about the use of social media to engage the public. The City Manager reported to City Council in July 2011 on the City's Corporate Civic Engagement Strategy. That report can be found here <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.CC10.2>.

For several years the City Manager's Office, Strategic Communications, the City Clerk's Office and the City's Information and Technology Division have supported the use of social media by staff for business purposes - to provide information to the public and to gather public input on City programs and services. In addition, an application, approvals and monitoring process has been developed to support the use of the best social media platform for each program's intended purposes.

### **Corporate Guidelines for the use of Social Media for City Business**

In September 2010 the City Manager introduced corporate guidelines for the use of Social Media for City business purposes. The guidelines recognize that social media can be a powerful tool for City staff to engage with the public, providing dynamic ways for people to share their opinions, insights, experiences and perspectives and help support good decision making and transparency at the City. The guidelines were developed following a review of best practices in industry and other municipalities and in consultation with IT, policy, communications and engagement staff across City divisions.

The *Application of City Policies to Social Media Use* (Attached as Appendix 1) brings together relevant policies and provides a comprehensive resource for employees who use social media for City business purposes, as well as practical tips to assist staff in selecting appropriate applications and using them effectively. The *Application of City Policies to Social Media Use* assists employees in understanding their responsibilities in an online environment and provides guidance to City staff.

At the January 30, 2012 meeting of Government Management Committee (<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.GM10.21>), members of the Committee received a report from Councillor Ainslie suggesting that the City encourage a positive approach to the use of social media, avoid focusing on disciplinary action and support appropriate, professional use of social media for business purposes.

The City's current guidelines include direction on:

- Keeping work and personal uses separate
- Being transparent and accountable
- Being clear and purposeful in all communications
- Collaboration and engagement and,
- Responsible conduct when using social media for city business purposes

## Access to Social Media Sites

City employees must obtain approval to use social media for all City business purposes. This includes using social media to gather information, represent the City in online interactions and manage a site/account to support a City initiative. To obtain authorization, an application must be approved by the employee's Division and, for applications which include the creation of new sites, submitted to the City's internal staff web decision-making body, the Web Governance Committee, for final approval and access.

The three levels of access to social media sites, which must be approved by management, include:

- **Read:** this level of access is used by staff to gather information or conduct research. Staff are able to access content on social media sites but do not have permission to contribute to them.
- **Contribute:** Staff with approval for this level of access are able, with supervision and support, to act as a City representative on an external site. In addition to gathering information and conducting research, staff will use social media to reply to public inquiries, communicate with the public or to comment on social media sites (e.g. on a discussion forum or blog).
- **Create/Maintain:** A limited number of staff will have permission to create and/or maintain an account for City business. This level of access may include, for example, the creation of a Facebook page or Twitter account for communication or a public consultation. Communication, records management and moderation guidelines apply to this type of use.

Staff authorized to use social media also ensure that related City policies are followed including:

- **Records Management:** If using social media as the primary means of communicating City actions or decisions, or transacting City business, staff are required to retain a record of that business. Staff must consult with Corporate Information Management Services (CIMS) or Divisional Records and Privacy staff to prepare a records management plan, including information about records retention and management.
- **Communications:** When using social media to communicate with the public, City staff will coordinate with Divisional or Strategic Communications staff to get advice about effective social media use, and to ensure communications are coordinated and aligned with related City priorities.
- **Privacy and Personal Information:** City Social Media sites will avoid collecting personal information or posting the personal information of users. Information that is provided in a business, professional or official capacity, is not considered personal. Where appropriate, staff will develop a Privacy Compliance Review and Notice of Collection Statement in consultation with staff in the City Clerk's Corporate Information Management Services or with their Divisional privacy and records contact.

## Examples of City of Toronto Social Media

The City's website ([www.toronto.ca/e-updates/socialmedia.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/e-updates/socialmedia.htm)) contains a central listing of social media sites maintained for City business. This allows for single-window access for the public to find and connect to the City's social media sites and accounts, ensures that there are no duplications across divisions and supports coordination across the organization. For example, instead of multiple *YouTube* sites, the City supports a single unified channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/thecityoftoronto>) which makes it easier for the public to find information about City services and programs in one place, and have confidence that it is the official City site.

Current examples of social media created for City business includes:

- Mayor Ford's launch of the 2011 City's Toy Drive <http://tinyurl.com/6ujw5rt>
- Youtube video on the Official Plan and five-year review with the City's Chief Planner <http://tinyurl.com/7679ps2>
- 29 Twitter accounts including:
  - [Mayor Rob Ford](#) @TOMayorFord
  - [City Council](#) @TorontoCouncil
  - [311 Toronto](#) @311Toronto
  - [Civic Engagement](#) @TorontoCivicEng
  - [City of Toronto](#) @TorontoComms
- 25 Facebook pages including:
  - [Elections](#)
  - [Emergency Medical Services](#)
  - [Employment & Social Services](#)
- 2 Official Flickr online photo albums: [City of Toronto Photostream](#) and [Toronto History Photostream](#)
- 22 RSS feeds, which automatically send updated website information to subscribers, and several blogs including one about Toronto City Council and a discussion board on the City's web re-branding project.

The City's list of official social media links is updated each time a new site or account is approved. Current applications include *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *YouTube*, *Flickr* and a number of program-specific blogs. Applications such as *Facebook* and *Blogger* have been used to share in-depth information about services and programs, applications such as *Twitter* and *Flickr* provide short blasts of information. All social media types create opportunities for public engagement.

## COMMENTS

The City's strategic communications strategy and engagement strategy will continue to promote the use of new tools and resources, including social media platforms to support public information and engagement.

## CONTACT

Jackie DeSouza, Director,  
Strategic Communications Division, City Manager's Office  
Email: [jdesouz@toronto.ca](mailto:jdesouz@toronto.ca), tel: 416-397-5277

Rosanna Scotti, Director,  
Strategic and Corporate Policy Division, City Manager's Office  
Email: [rscotti@toronto.ca](mailto:rscotti@toronto.ca); tel.: 416-392-8637

Dave Wallace Chief, Chief Information Officer  
Information Technology  
Email: [dwwallace@toronto.ca](mailto:dwwallace@toronto.ca) tel: 416-392-8421

## SIGNATURE

---

Joseph P. Pennachetti  
City Manager

## ATTACHMENT

- 1) Application of City Policies to Social Media Use



## **Application of City Policies to Social Media Use**

### **1. Preamble**

As internet use worldwide continues to increase, social media has grown in popularity. Social media are online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives through words, pictures, videos and audio.

For governments, social media is an important channel for outreach, communications and consultations with the public; for recruitment of employees, volunteers and public appointees; for research and social marketing; and to facilitate public discourse. It provides opportunities to build and maintain public trust, transparency and accountability in government. Social media is also a powerful platform for internally-focussed communication and collaboration.

The City supports the responsible use of social media for City business purposes. The City of Toronto has established an official City of Toronto presence on a number of social media sites including YouTube and Flickr.

City employees are subject to City policies and legislation while using social media, just as they are in any other situation. This document summarizes the specific City policies and legislation that apply to the use of social media to assist employees in understanding their responsibilities in an online environment.

### **2. Purpose**

This document:

- Identifies existing City policies and guidelines, and provincial and federal legislation, that apply to the use of social media by City employees;
- Provides guidance for the use of social media for business and personal purposes; and
- Sets out the approval process for the use of social media for City business purposes.

### **3. Application**

The Application of City Policies to Social Media Use applies to City of Toronto employees. This document does not apply to the Offices of the Accountability Officers; the City's agencies, boards, commissions and corporations; or Members of Council and their offices.

### **4. Approval Process**

City employees must obtain approval to use social media for all City business purposes. This includes using social media to gather information, represent the City in online interactions and manage a site/account to support a City initiative. To obtain authorization, a business case form must be completed, approved by the employee's Division, and then submitted to the Web Governance Committee. The form can be found at [http://insideto.toronto.ca/policies/social\\_media\\_use.htm](http://insideto.toronto.ca/policies/social_media_use.htm).

## **5. Applicable Policies, Guidelines and Legislation**

City employees are subject to City policies and related legislation when using social media just as they are in other work situations. Employees should be aware that when using social media for work purposes, the breach of applicable City policies and related legislation is subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. One purpose of this document is to assist employees who are using social media to comply with existing applicable City policies and related legislation.

Posts and contributions on social media sites or accounts can be considered business transactions and create City records. For example, posts that place the City under any obligation or collect personal information are considered City records. However, other posts are not considered business records, such as posts that provide information that is already public or seek public input. City employees approved to use social media are required to recognize business transactions as City records and to take appropriate action for their retention.

Because records on external social media platforms are not within the control of the City, business transactions on these platforms must be avoided. These platforms include Blogger, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn, MySpace and others. Rules for identifying and managing City records are detailed in the Municipal Code, Chapter 217 – Corporate Records.

Confidential information about the City or personal information cannot be posted as set out in the City's Conflict of Interest Policy, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Personal Health Information Protection Act. Privacy breaches must be managed in accordance with the City's Managing a Privacy Breach Protocol.

The use of City Information and Technology resources to access social media are governed by the Acceptable Use Policy.

See Appendix A for a list of City policies and guidelines, and related Provincial and Federal legislation that apply when using social media for City business purposes.

## **6. Responsible Conduct When Using Social Media for City Business Purposes**

When using social media for City business purposes employees should conduct themselves as they would in any other work situation and protect the City of Toronto's image and reputation. They should govern themselves as they would in a meeting, conference or public event.

The City reserves the right to monitor content posted on social media sites or accounts and to modify or remove any postings that it deems, in its sole discretion, to be in contravention of City policies or guidelines or relevant Provincial and Federal legislation.

For external (i.e. non-City) social media platforms, City employees must comply with the terms and conditions of use that have been established by the service provider.

### **6.1 Keep Work and Personal Uses Separate**

Social media can be used for a variety of purposes, and some employees use it in both their work and business lives. While conducting City business, employees should only use social media accounts set up specifically for work purposes. Section 7 outlines considerations when using social media for personal purposes.



## **6.2 Be Transparent and Accountable**

The public expects that employees are identifiable and accountable in the course of their duties. When using social media for business purposes, employees should disclose their true identity and affiliation with the City of Toronto.

Communication in social media sites or accounts should always be considered public and permanent. Online communities are not private; postings may be accessed by a wider audience than intended or copied by others and posted elsewhere without the author's permission or knowledge.

City-managed social media sites or accounts are official City web sites or accounts and should be easily identifiable as such.

## **6.3 Be Clear and Purposeful in Your Communication**

When representing the City of Toronto, employees should write and post about their areas of expertise. Reserve comment and refer questions to knowledgeable staff, and only respond to media inquiries if authorized to do so.

Avoid contributions, postings or comments unrelated to the social media site's purpose including extraneous hyperlinks to material. Avoid transmitting commercial content, spam, or confusing, misleading or out-of-date information.

## **6.4 Be Respectful of Others**

Privacy, libel and human rights laws and policies apply to social media sites or accounts as they do to verbal, hand-written or printed communications. Do not post obscene or racist content; personal attacks, insults or threatening language; or potentially libelous statements. Moderators must remove postings of this nature.

Do not post documents, logos, photographs, graphics or other materials owned by other individuals or external organizations without written permission, unless such postings fall under an exception to copyright protection.

## **6.5 Seek to Collaborate and Engage**

Social media can enhance collaboration among City staff, facilitate information sharing and support dynamic discussions with the public. It can provide opportunities to enhance outreach and inclusion, engaging individuals, communities and groups that may not otherwise participate in City initiatives.

Existing City-managed social media sites or accounts provide an established window for communication with the public. Employees should encourage, support and participate in City-managed sites or accounts and coordinate their activities with the site's sponsor (e.g. divisional staff wanting to post videos to the City's YouTube Channel).

## **7. Personal Use of Social Media**

The City acknowledges that City employees, in their private capacity as a citizen, may use social media to share information and communicate with friends, family and co-workers.

Employees are reminded that even though they are using social media for personal purposes, some City policies apply to off duty conduct. These policies are listed in Appendix A.

Employees using social media for personal purposes should consider the following:

- An individual using social media may be identified as a City employee by the posting of their name, their place of work, their photograph, or by the content they post.
- Identifiable City of Toronto employees should make it clear when discussing City-related matters, that their position does not officially represent the City's position. This can be accomplished by using phrases such as "in my personal opinion" or "Personally...".
- Employees must avoid placing themselves in a conflict of interest, including revealing confidential or privileged City information, as described in the City's Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Employees must abide by the Fraud Policy, Human Rights and Harassment Policy, Hate Activity Policy and other applicable City policies that govern employee behaviour.
- Employees must not reveal personal information gained through work, such as client or employee information, as described under the City's Privacy Guidelines and Workplace Access and Privacy Protocol.
- Employees should not identify and comment about other City employees without their consent.
- Employees should avoid the appearance of officially representing the City on their personal sites or accounts. They must avoid posting City owned identifiers including logos, photographs, graphics or other media without the City's authorization, as described under the City's Corporate Identity Program.

Approved by: Joseph Pennachetti, City Manager

Date Approved: September 24, 2010

## Application of City Policies to Social Media Use

### **Appendix A: Applicable Policies, Guidelines and Legislation**

City employees are subject to City policies and guidelines, and related legislation, when using social media for business purposes and personal use. The tables below indicate those policies, guidelines and legislation which are applicable for each use.

#### **Applicable City Policies and Guidelines**

	Business Use	Personal Use
Acceptable Use Policy	✓	✓
Conflict of Interest Policy	✓	✓
Corporate Identity Program	✓	✓
Fraud Policy	✓	✓
Hate Activity Policy	✓	✓
Human Rights and Harassment Policy	✓	✓
Internet Blocking	✓	
Managing a Privacy Breach Policy & Guidelines	✓	
Media Relations Policy	✓	
Municipal Code, Chapter 217 – Corporate Records	✓	
Privacy Guidelines	✓	✓
Toronto Public Service Guide	✓	✓
Wireless Communication Devices Policy	✓	
Workplace Access and Privacy Protocol	✓	✓

#### **Relevant Federal and Provincial Legislation**

	Business Use
<i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>	✓
<i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i>	✓
<i>City of Toronto Act, Sections 199-201- Records</i>	✓
<i>Copyright Act</i>	✓
<i>Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</i>	✓
<i>Ontario Employment Standards Act</i>	✓
<i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i>	✓
<i>Personal Health Information Protection Act</i>	✓

## Application of City Policies to Social Media Use

### **Appendix B: Definitions**

Personal Information	Recorded information about an identifiable individual. Personal information does not include the name, title, contact information or designation of an individual in a business, professional or official capacity. For a more detailed definition, refer to <u>Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act</u> (S. 2 and 14(3), 14(4)) and <u>Personal Health Information Protection Act</u> (S. 4).
Record	Information however recorded or stored, whether in printed form, on film, by electronic means or otherwise, and includes documents, financial statements, minutes, accounts, correspondence, memoranda, plans, maps, drawings, photographs, and films. For more detailed information, see <u>City of Toronto Act, Sections 199-201- Records</u> .
Social media	Online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. Social media can take many different forms, including internet forums, web logs (blogs), social blogs, wikis, podcasts, pictures, video, rating and bookmarking. Technologies include: blogs, picture-sharing, email, instant messaging, music-sharing, crowdsourcing, to name a few. ( <u>Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0</u> )
Social networking	Engaging in a social network service, i.e. a service which builds online communities of people who share interests and/or activities. Blogger, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, LinkedIn and MySpace are examples of social network services which are used worldwide.