

**Office of the Chief Information Officer  
Enterprise Policy**

**Policy Number:** CIO-061

**Effective Date:** 07/01/2011

**Revision Date:** 03/19/2013

**Reviewed Date:** 07/07/2016

**Subject:** Social Media Policy

**Policy Statement:** The purpose of this enterprise policy is to define and outline acceptable use of social media sites and resources in state government. Examples of social media sites include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, blogs, wikis, virtual worlds and other sites that allow interactive posting of information, images, video and comments.

**Policy Maintenance:** The Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) Office of Enterprise Technology and the Office of the Chief Information Security Officer share responsibility for maintenance and interpretation of this policy. Agencies may choose to add to this policy, in order to enforce more restrictive internal policies as appropriate and necessary. Therefore, staff should refer to their agency's social media acceptable use policy, which may have additional information or clarification of this enterprise policy.

**Authority:** KRS 42.726 authorizes the Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) to develop policies that support and promote the effective application of information technology within the executive branch of state government, as well information technology directions, standards, and necessary management processes to assure full compliance with those policies.

**Applicability:** This policy is to be adhered to by all Executive Branch agencies and staff, including employees, contractors, consultants, temporaries, volunteers and other workers within state government. This policy applies to the use of social networking sites in the course of conducting official state business, and is not intended to address staff members' personal use of social networking sites outside the workplace.

**Responsibility for Compliance:** Agencies and staff that participate in social networking sites are expected to understand and follow these guidelines. Each agency is responsible for assuring that staff under its authority have been made aware of the provisions of this policy, that compliance is expected, and that intentional, inappropriate use of social media sites or resources may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. It is each Executive Cabinet's responsibility to enforce and manage the application of this policy.

**Review Cycle:** This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

**Policy:** The Commonwealth's goal is to have a web presence that offers visitors multiple ways to receive agency updates and information. Social media platforms offer many advantages and help open up government to encourage citizen participation, strengthen democracy and support a civic culture.

All plans for new social media sites and accounts should be approved by the agency head or cabinet secretary and the social media provider's terms of service should be reviewed by the agency's legal staff.

- Agencies should first identify what goal they are trying to achieve. Would a social media account help achieve that goal? Do not set up a social media account unless you have a legitimate purpose to do so.

- Develop a communications plan, including the best communications vehicles to use, by consulting with your agency's communications office.
- If the communications plan includes social media, consider if existing platforms or accounts could be used instead of establishing new ones. Some agencies already have well-established, successful social media presences and the knowledge and experience from these efforts should be leveraged whenever possible.
- The communications office in the agency will control and approve social media accounts and retain information related to those accounts (i.e., name, password, etc.) This authority ensures that the credentials for updating and controlling agency social networking accounts are available in the event of an emergency, staff termination or retirement, etc. This information must be safeguarded against compromise.
- Content included on social media accounts should be sent by the agency communications office to the Governor's Communications Office for approval before posting. Content that has been previously approved by the Governor's Office of Communications, such as a copy of an authorized statement or press release, will not need to be re-submitted for approval before posting.
- An Agency's central authority should notify COT's [Office of Enterprise Technology](#) when developing any significant new initiatives that involve social media.

### Agency and staff responsibilities

- **Use official accounts for official business.** Only official state business should be conducted via official state accounts. Be sure to use state email address, not personal email, for official business related to social media accounts. Official state accounts should not be used to publish personal opinions. Staff members wishing to publish personal comments should use their personal social media accounts to do so on their own personal time.
- **Exercise caution when accessing social networking accounts.** Cyber criminals are increasingly using social networking sites as attack vectors to spread malware and lure users to malicious websites. Agencies using social networking sites should caution their staff accordingly and assign the updating duties to experienced, savvy staff members who will not be easily tricked into falling for phishing schemes and other forms of cyber trickery.
- **Write what you know.** Ensure agency postings center on appropriate areas of expertise as it relates to the Commonwealth.
- **Be transparent.** Honesty, or dishonesty, will be quickly noticed in social media environments. When blogging or commenting about work, individuals should use their real name, identify that they work for the Commonwealth, and be clear about their role.
- **Perception is reality.** In online social networks, the lines between public and private, personal and professional can be blurred. Postings from official Commonwealth accounts create perceptions about the Commonwealth. Be sure all content associated with an official account is consistent with both the agency and the Commonwealth's values and professional standards.
- **Post deliberately and carefully.** All statements must be true and not misleading and all claims must be substantiated before posting. Statements posted online may continue to be visible for a long time, possibly even for years, so consider the content carefully. If you are unsure about any item you are considering to post, ask for management approval first before doing so.

- **Disclaimer.** Social Media pages established by agencies should contain the following disclaimer: Any posting to this page may be subject to disclosure to third parties. The [agency name] reserves the right to address or remove any posts or comments at its discretion. The [agency name] has not evaluated and does not endorse any products advertised or opinions expressed on this page.
- **Your responsibility.** What is written is ultimately the responsibility of the author. Participation in social computing on behalf of the Commonwealth is not a right and it therefore needs to be taken seriously and with respect. When responding to the public, be sure you are the correct person in your agency to do so. Staff should ensure that their use of social networking sites falls within the guidelines of the Commonwealth's Internet and Electronic Mail Acceptable Use policy ([CIO-060](#)). Staff members whose official duties do not include the monitoring of social media sites should be careful to limit the time they spend on such sites.
- **Be open.** One of the great benefits of social media is the interaction between state government and its customers. Share relevant feedback and input with relevant colleagues. When in doubt, talk to agency management or communications liaisons.
- **Add value.** There are millions of words published on the Internet. The best way to get an agency message read is to present information that citizens will value. Communication should help Kentucky residents, staff members and others within the state. Postings should be thought-provoking and build a sense of community.
- **Handle mistakes professionally.** If a mistake is made, admit it. Be upfront and quick with corrections. If posting to a blog, it may be possible to modify an earlier post but make it clear that a correction has been made.
- **Follow the rules.** Staff who fail to comply with these policies are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

### **Prohibited Activities**

Social media sites and resources created on behalf of the Commonwealth shall not contain any of the following:

- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- 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.
- Disparaging or threatening comments about or related to anyone.
- Defamatory, libelous, offensive or demeaning material. Don't engage in a combative exchange.
- Nonpublic information of any kind.
- Personal, sensitive or confidential information of any kind.
- Items involved in litigation or potential litigation.
- Illegal or banned substances and narcotics.
- Sexual content or links to sexual content, pornography or other offensive illegal materials.
- Profane language or content.
- Solicitations of commerce.

- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Comments not topically related to the particular site or blog article being commented upon.
- Violations of copyright, fair use and other applicable laws
- Any other content that would violate any statute, regulation, or internal procedure.

#### **Other considerations**

- Departments are ultimately responsible for establishing, publishing and updating their pages and content on social media sites.
- If possible, agencies should provide a link to the main agency website and include the agency or cabinet logo. Content should link back to the primary agency website for more information if possible.
- The state may monitor content on social media sites to ensure adherence with the guidelines in this policy and ensure a consistent government wide message.

#### **References:**

- CIO-060 -- Internet and Electronic Mail Acceptable Use Policy:  
<https://gotsource.ky.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5282/>
- State Government Employee Handbook:  
<https://hr.personnel.ky.gov/Documents%20Anonymous/Employee%20Handbook.pdf>

**\*END\***