

Using Social Media

Policy Number: XXX

Effective Date: DRAFT as of 9/22/09 referring

Application: Applies to all employees of the Washington State Department of Personnel (DOP).

Contact: [Communications Director](#)

Approved by: _____
Director

NOTE: The Agency Director has the prerogative to make exceptions at any time when in the best interest of the agency.

What is social media?

Social media commonly refers to the use of the Internet for blogging, microblogging, media sharing, and social networking. Social media can denote any web-based technology that enables and facilitates rapid communication and/or networking through the Internet and/or cellular networks.

Social media includes text, images, audio, and video. Some examples of social media are:

- Blogs, and micro-blogs such as WordPress and Twitter
- Social networks, such as Facebook and MySpace
- Professional networks, such as LinkedIn
- Video sharing, such as YouTube and vlogs (video weblogs)
- Audio sharing, such as podcasts
- Photo sharing, such as Flickr and Photobucket
- Social bookmarking, such as Digg and Delicious

Can DOP employees use social media for DOP business?

As with other aspects of the Internet, authorized social media use must support the Department of Personnel (DOP) mission and operations, and may be subject to the restrictions set out in DOP's *Use of State Resources* policy. Any use of state resources reasonably related to the conduct of official state duties does not violate RCW 42.52.162. When authorized and used for official business purposes, social networking sites do not fall under the guidelines of de minimis use. However, use of social networking sites for professional networking must follow de minimis use guidelines.

Under what conditions are DOP employees authorized to use social media?

When an employee identifies a business need for using social media, the employee must present the business case to the division's Assistant Director (AD). If the AD decides to move forward with the use of social media, the AD (or designee) must work with the Web Strategy

Team to review any required Terms of Service agreement (may also require legal review by Assistant Attorney General) and develop a business plan that identifies:

- The resources needed to support and sustain the social media tool.
- Risks and mitigation strategies.
- How the social media tool integrates with the DOP website and the business area's communications strategy.
- Whether or not a unique "use policy" is necessary.

A draft business plan and policy (if applicable) will be presented to the AD and Communications Director, who will then finalize the business plan and make a recommendation to the Senior Management Team for final approval.

Once the approval has been given, the Communications Director may then authorize the posting of information or prepared materials such as text, documents, video files or streams to a social networking site by agency employees on behalf of the agency. Before the logo or trademark of a private social networking site is featured on an agency web site, the Communications Director should ensure that the use of the logo or trademarks in question is consistent with the agency's purpose.

What restrictions exist when using social media?

Social media must not be used to transmit information or knowingly connect to sites for an unlawful or prohibited purpose, including, but not limited to, the following examples:

- Discrimination on the basis of sex, race, creed, color, gender, religion, age, marital status, national origin, sensory, mental, or physical disability, sexual orientation or veteran status.
- Sexual harassment or sites containing sexual content.
- Transmission of obscene materials.
- Transmission of protected or private information.
- Infringement on any copyright.
- Expression of any campaign, political or religious beliefs.
- Conduct of a personal, outside business, or other financial benefit or gain.

Agency management has the authority to monitor employee use of the Internet to ensure appropriate use.

Should employees using social media be aware of privacy issues?

Yes. Employees and volunteers should have no expectation of privacy in the use of Internet resources. Employees or volunteers using social media should never disclose private or protected information.

Where the agency posts information to a site or service offered or controlled by a third party, the employee posting the information and the employee authorizing the post should, to the extent possible, include or make reference to the privacy policies or privacy notice applicable to the site or service. See DOP's privacy statement:

<http://www.dop.wa.gov/Pages/PrivacyStatement.aspx>

Are there security risks associated with using social media?

Yes. The Internet is an unsecured publicly accessible network. Owners of social media sites commonly monitor usage activity and those activities may be disclosed to any number of parties.

Links and embedded files on social networking sites may contain malicious software or redirect users to inappropriate sites. As such, links and embedded files on social media sites should not be trusted.

The DOP reserves the right to monitor employee Internet usage at such times and in such circumstances as appropriate.

What should employees do to ensure proper copyright use?

When materials are posted on behalf of other entities, employee posting the material must:

- Obtain copyright releases for all such material from the creators or indemnification from the entity for which the material is to be posted,
- Obtain releases for each image of a person who may have a potential claim to such a right or indemnification from the entity for which the material is to be posted.

Materials obtained from pages on social networking sites may or may not be the property of the page owner. Employees must not assume materials obtained from the Intranet are in the public domain and must follow the process outlined above.

Will the content of DOP's social media be reviewed periodically?

Yes. The Web Strategy Team will conduct annual reviews of any social networking sites to which the agency posts information. The team will consult with the Communications Director, Assistant Director for Legal Affairs and/or the Deputy Director, as needed, in conducting these reviews. Reviews will consider whether or not the information:

- Supports the state's standards of ethics in government,
- Supports and promotes the agency mission,
- Protects the intellectual property rights of creators of content, and
- Protects the personality rights of any person appearing in material posted by the agency.

What are the consequences if an employee does not abide by the policies and restrictions established for the use of social media?

Failure to abide by policies established for use of social media or participation in any activity deemed inappropriate may result in the loss of access privileges. As with any policy, violation may also result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
