

# SOCIAL

Social media is an all-encompassing label for Web-based tools that encourage people to connect. Social media is made possible by technology, but conversation is the real driver behind it. Here is a brief overview of the tools used in this agency's social media program:

Washington Office of Secretary of State  
**SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM**

# MEDIA

## 1 Blog

So long to hiding a diary under one's bed. A blog is an online journal, posted for the world to see. Bloggers post entries to a Web site and get reader feedback in the form of comments. The technical capability to blog has been around since the early 1990s, but the influence of blogs has exploded in the past decade.

External blogs are defined as those that track our agency. These are typically grouped as news media blogs (written by professional journalists as a way to post breaking news faster), and commentary blogs (written by independent commentators who tend to opine on news rather than report fresh facts). External blogs have the potential for wide visibility and influence, since bloggers often link, reference and react to each other.

Internal blogs, like our agency's From Our Corner blog, allow us to interact with public – instead of just talking at them. This space acts as a bridge between the public and Secretary Sam Reed and his staff, and it is a place for people to contribute to the conversation – they can leave comments and discuss what is important to them.



Visit  
<http://blogs.sec-state.wa.gov/FromOurCorner/>

## 2 FACEBOOK

Facebook is an online meet-and-greet site. It was set up by Harvard students in 2004 to link and look up college students. Two years ago, the site opened up from student-only access to the general public. It's basically the new era of the White Pages.

Facebook has been a major platform for "causes" – its networking is used to rally others for various issues. Facebook has more than 200 million active users. In late 2007, Microsoft purchased a sliver of Facebook – a 1.6 percent share – for a whopping \$246 million.



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[facebook.com](http://facebook.com)  
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Elections group,  
or join our Find Your  
One Thing cause.

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### 3 YOUTUBE

YouTube is a site that is a bit like a dormitory for videos. People can use YouTube as a place for their Web videos to “live” communally online. While YouTube users can set up and maintain their own “channel” (or personalized page) to upload videos onto, everyone can see the video and share it. YouTube, formed in 2005, has become well-known as a place to find goofy and outrageous home videos.

In 2006, Google Inc. acquired the company for \$1.65 billion in Google stock. In January 2009 alone, nearly 14.8 billion online videos were viewed.

### 4 TWITTER

Twitter is a tool that constantly documents a person's status. It is called “microblogging” or “moblogging” because it is like a blog, except entries are typically one thought at most. It typically answers the question: “What are you doing right this second?” Its appeal is that it is immediate, and it's portable – messages can be retrieved from your mobile phone.

CNN and the BBC are using it to break news, and NASA earned buzz when it used Twitter to inform the public about its Mars Phoenix Lander. Success on Twitter means having “followers”. These people can subscribe to get your updates.

### &... KEY CONSIDERATIONS

#### Before diving into social media:

- Understand investment versus return in social media
- Know the “cost” of the public's attention.
- Remember the price of the wrong mind-set.

#### Best practices:

- Be accessible. Avoid agency lingo and know who you're talking to.
- Be committed to the conversation. Pay attention, allow enough time and deliver on all promises you make.
- Keep the toolbox pristine. Use the correct tools for your specific goals and maintain them properly.
- Keep tabs of everything. Tracking is important, both for the public record and for documenting progress.



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