

## Information Management Advice 57 Managing Social Media Records Part I: Overview

### Introduction

*With so much government business taking advantage of the opportunities offered by social media, this set of advice explores the issues, opportunities and options for managing social media information.*

*This advice contains a range of strategies, examples and case studies to help you determine:*

- *what business information is being generated by your corporate social media accounts*
- *the long term business value of this information and associated risk*
- *the different recordkeeping strategies that should be used to capture and keep social media records*
- *how long different types of social media records need to be kept.*

*This advice is in 4 parts:*

- *Part 1: Managing Social Media Records Overview*
- *Part 2: Strategies for Implementing Social Media Recordkeeping*
- *Part 3: Determining what records need to be captured*
- *Part 4: How to capture Social Media Records*

*This suite of advice accompanies State Records Guideline 18 Managing records of Social Media.*

Tasmanian Government has a strong and growing social media presence.

Studies of government use of social media show that these communication channels can enable government to reach new audiences, establish communities of practice, provide services and deliver important and effective messages to the community. (See New Zealand Government Controller and Auditor-General, *Learning from public entities' use of social media*, June 2013)

Social media can support government business to:

- improve customer services
- increase access to information, and
- involve the community directly in government decision making.

Information generated through social media can provide value to business and the community, and should therefore be well managed in order to maximise this value. Social media use by government is also subject to community expectations, and legislative requirements, for the appropriate management of information.

This advice clarifies how agencies can meet obligations for good information management by providing detailed social media information management strategies. This advice also provides guidance on managing information generated by many forms of social media including social networking tools, blogs, photo and video sharing tools and wikis; and provides an overview of tools which can assist with the management of social media business information.

## **Does the use of Social Media result in a State record?**

The *Archives Act 1983* defines a record as:

*“a document or an object that is, or has been, made or kept by reason of any information or matter that it contains or can be obtained from it or by reason of its connection with any event, person, circumstance, or thing”.*

The Act is not content specific, so records can be in any format, including those generated through the use of social media.

## **Information in Social Media applications needs to be managed**

Many types of social media applications are in use within Tasmanian government including:

- Micro-blogging sites (e.g. Twitter, Yammer)
- Social and professional networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Video and photo sharing websites (e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Pinterest)
- Blogs – online diaries for pictures and updates (e.g. Instagram, Tumblr, Blogger, WordPress)
- Wikis – libraries of collaborative documents that groups of people can edit (e.g. Wikipedia)
- Forums and discussion boards (e.g. Google Groups, Ning, Whirlpool)

Information about government business is increasingly located in social systems. If this information is needed by your organisation to help perform, improve or report on its operations, then you will need information management strategies to support your social media business.

## **Manage the social media information that meets your business needs**

You may not need to make and keep information about all of your organisation’s social media business. There are no blanket rules that say ‘you must make and keep information about everything you tweet and every update on your Facebook wall’. Information management rules do apply to social systems but they are governed by your organisation’s specific needs and risks.

Social media is a delivery channel for business, and decisions to keep information are based on business needs for information, not the fact that social media is being used as the delivery platform.

Business needs could include the need to:

- integrate information received through social media with ‘business as usual’ processes, or business improvement strategies
- keep social media information of long term business value

- enable corporate accountabilities operating in other business areas to apply in social systems.

A basic rule of thumb to apply to information in social systems is: if you need it, manage it. If you don't need it, leave it. Determining whether you 'need it' or not will come down to business use and need, perceived value, legislative requirements, and risk assessment.

## Social media information strategies must be planned and proactive

Social media information strategies need to be proactive, not reactive. Strategies need to be proactive because in general social media applications are:

- third party owned
- located in the cloud
- subject to regular change, and
- unable to be relied upon to maintain business information for as long as it may need to be kept.

Be aware that different strategies may be required for different social media applications.

Recent advice in the United States, *The Sedona Conference Primer on Social Media, December 2012*, says that:

*“Social media data is often hosted remotely, is dynamic and collaborative by nature, can include several data types and is meant to be accessed through unique interfaces.”*

The Sedona Conference Primer therefore recommends proactive export and maintenance of social information that has ongoing business value, because maintaining accessibility to core information in social systems is challenging.

It is particularly important to be proactive in the management of social media information because the majority of social systems make it very clear that it is not their job to manage your business information.

### **Example: LinkedIn User Agreement, Section 4.1 - Services Availability (last revised 12 September 2013)**

***We may change or discontinue Services, and in such case, we do not promise to keep showing or storing your information and materials ... For avoidance of doubt, LinkedIn has no obligation to store, maintain or provide you a copy of any content that you or other Members provide when using the Services.***

In short, if your organisation is likely to need the business information you are generating through your social systems, you will need to plan for this information to be kept, and develop the associated strategies and frameworks (policy, procedure and systems) to support appropriate capture and retention to ensure this is achieved.

## Recommended Reading

- Section 8.5 Non-Tasmanian Government websites<sup>1</sup>

## Further Advice

For more detailed advice, please contact:

Government Information Strategy Unit  
Tasmanian Archive and Heritage Office  
91 Murray Street  
HOBART TASMANIA 7000  
Telephone: 03 6165 5581  
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## Acknowledgements

This Advice is based on Managing Social Media Business Information, Future Proof, State Records NSW.

## Information Security Classification

This document has been security classified using the Tasmanian Government Information Security classification standard as PUBLIC and will be managed according to the requirements of the Tasmanian Government Information Security Policy.

## Document Development History

### Build Status

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1.0	May 2014	Allegra Huxtable	Initial Release	All

## Amendments in this Release

Section Title	Section Number	Amendment Summary
All	All	Document imported into new template

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**Ross Latham**  
State Archivist

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.communications.tas.gov.au/policy/methods/8.5\\_non-tasmanian\\_government\\_websites](http://www.communications.tas.gov.au/policy/methods/8.5_non-tasmanian_government_websites)