STATE OF VERMONT **Agency of Administration**		
STANDARD **STC** **State Technology Collaborative**	**ORIGINAL POLICY ADOPTED BY STC** **DATE:**	**ORIGINAL POLICY NUMBER**
	EFFECTIVE DATE **5/1/09**	**ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

STATUTORY REFERENCE

OR OTHER AUTHORITY:

APPROVAL DATE: **5/1/09**

APPROVED BY: **Secretary of Administration**

POLICY TITLE: **State Blogging Policy**

POLICY STATEMENT: This policy was developed to provide guidance to State of Vermont staff who manage web logs that serve as official state communications.

Blogging Policy Draft

Definition

A weblog, which is usually shortened to blog, is a website where regular entries are made (such as in a journal or diary) and presented in reverse chronological order. Blogs often offer commentary or news on a particular subject, such as technology, politics, or local news; some function as more personal online diaries. A typical blog combines text, images, and links to other blogs, web pages, and other media related to its topic. Most blogs are primarily textual although many focus on photographs, videos, or audio.

The definition of a blog, for the purposes of this policy, also extends to micro-blogs such as Twitter.

Ownership

Blogs hosted by the State of Vermont are the property of State of Vermont and should be used to promote civil, informative online interaction and further a legitimate public interest. These terms of use are not meant to discourage or limit debate or free expression, but rather to create an environment that fosters constructive discourse.

The copyright of all content posted to the State of Vermont's blogging service, regardless of type (text, image, audio, video), is held by the State of Vermont. Posting, uploading or otherwise transmitting content to a State of Vermont Web site or an authorized agent thereof for the purpose of being posted implicitly grants the State of Vermont the right to use that content in any medium at any time without royalty or licensing payment.

Blog owners must have in place a process to evaluate claims that content claimed as copyright has been added to a Vermont Web site without the owner's permission.

Time Commitment

Any State of Vermont employee who wishes to maintain a blog should be aware of the following time commitments and their costs:

- Each blog post requires an average of up to 4 hours to prepare and write
- Each blog post can require up to a half hour per day to moderate and reply to comments.

Oversight

Any blogs maintained by agencies, boards, councils, or branches of the State of Vermont are to be considered official state communications.

State of Vermont Program Directors and/or Managers of Units are responsible for all blogs maintained by their programs. They must be aware of all blogs within their

jurisdiction and assure the appropriateness and quality of the content being posted on them.

State of Vermont Program Directors should maintain oversight of their blogs in the following ways:

- Know how much time is invested regularly in their program's blogs
- Hold quarterly reviews of the content to make sure it is appropriate and accurate
- Periodically review all blogs to determine if they are active and still relevant.

Blogger Responsibilities

Bloggers may not:

- post information anonymously, every blog post by state staff must be signed and date stamped;
- harass others, including creating a hostile environment;
- forge or otherwise manipulate identifiers in order to disguise the origin of any content transmitted through the service;
- intentionally or unintentionally violate any applicable local, state or national laws or regulation;
- solicit personal information from anyone under the age of 18;
- plagiarize or in any way take credit for creative work or ideas that are not their own;
- conduct commercial activities and/or sales including but not limited to sales, sweepstakes, barter, or advertising.

Bloggers will:

- agree to review all comments posted on their blog and remove any which violate the restrictions in the Blog Content section;
- use professional standards in language and decorum;
- use proofreading and spell checking tools to ensure correct use of language in all posts;
- limit blogging to factual issues rather than opinion;
- assure that all content is accurate, and inform readers if content is changed, updated, or corrected;
- be aware that bloggers represent the State of Vermont with their posts,
- provide a method for readers of the blog to contact the blog owner on every page of the blog. If a blog accepts comments then that will fulfill this requirement. If a blog does not accept comments then some other means of contacting the owner must be provided.

Blog Content

Content that is posted, linked to, uploaded or otherwise transmitted through the service may not include:

- any activity that is intended for political or commercial purposes;
- content that is unlawful, harmful, threatening, abusive, harassing, defamatory, vulgar, obscene, libelous, invasive of another's privacy, hateful, or racially, ethnically, sexually or otherwise objectionable;
- material that contains software viruses or any other computer code, files or programs designed to interrupt, destroy or limit the functionality of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment;
- software or computer code that conducts surveillance on the users of the site;
- content that promotes or provides instruction about illegal activities, including illegal drug use or alcohol use, child predation, terrorist activities;
- instructions in assembling or obtaining weapons;
- illegal or unauthorized copies of another person's copyrighted work;
- content that involves the transmission of "junk mail," "chain letters," etc.;
- content that contains nudity, violence, offensive or sexually suggestive subject matter.

Adherence to Other State Policies

All blogs must comply with other state electronic communications policies and standards including but not limited to Web Based Collection of Potentially Sensitive Data, Malware/Anti-Virus Standard, Acceptable Use Policy, Web Accessibility Standard, Web Image Use Policy, Record Retention Standards