Guidelines of Proper Use of Social Media for State of Vermont Government

State of Vermont

Introduction

With the increasing popularity of social networking sites, both personally and professionally, the Department of Information and Innovation's Security Office and State's Chief Marketing Officer have partnered to put together this guide to ensure that social media use by State of Vermont organizations or programs is properly set-up and maintained using the appropriate security and privacy settings and administrative control. Social Networks such as Facebook, Twitter and others are good tools when used properly. This document is provided to help you understand some of the risks involved with social networks and how to mitigate them.

IMPORTANT: Please keep in mind that any social networking site is out of the control of the State of Vermont's networks and security. Use of these sites may result in breaches of the networks. If any such breach is recognized, please be sure to notify your agency IT department immediately and stop use of the site until the issue has been resolved.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to State of Vermont agencies and departments who may have a need to use social networks such as Facebook or Twitter to conduct marketing and promotional activity. The security of state networks, as well as limited liability and the reputation of the state are of primary concern, so please review this document carefully before participating in any social media on behalf of the State. If a department or agency is already using a site, please review this document to be sure all required security settings have been applied and other guidelines are being met.

The Security Office of DII would request that agencies or departments not use any social networking sites other than Facebook or Twitter. The guidelines in this document address primarily Facebook. The security of social networking sites is

limited, at best. Facebook and Twitter have the best of breed as far as security of the sites are concerned, however limited.

Security

Security, as stated above, is of paramount concern when creating and using a social networking site. There are important guidelines to follow every time the site is used. Please refer to the bullet points below to review these tips:

- Create passwords that utilize both numbers and letters, both upper and lowercase, and special characters for added complexity. Don't share your password with anyone.

- After you type your email address and password into the login page, make sure the "Remember me" check box is turned off before you click the Login button and do not allow your browser to save any passwords.

- Always remember to log out when finished using the social media site.

- Be sure that information that could compromise the networks or state are not posted or passed on to fans or participants of the sites. This includes confidential information or personally identifiable information (such as addresses or phone numbers).

- If a site is hacked, discontinue the site immediately and notify the agency IT department. Indications that the site has been tampered with may include alteration or removal of site graphics or logos, changes to expected functionality, or unapproved content postings.

Administration of Site

Each agency/department that has a site should have a minimum of three people administrating the site, with one of the people being the Chief Marketing Officer. The responsibilities of these individuals are as follows but not limited to:

1. **Public Records Requirements**. Understanding the requirements for maintaining records in accordance with state public record rules and regulations; and having a process in place to comply with public records requirements

for social media sites. Your records management program must include your social media activity. Contact your records officer within your agency or department or Vermont State Archives and Records Administration within the Secretary of State's office at archives@sec.state.vt.us.

2. **Identity**. Monitor the creation of the site to include proper use of state logo, images, and representation of the state.

3. **Monitoring**. Site should be monitored **daily** for postings. Any inappropriate postings should be removed immediately. Fans who post inappropriate materials may need to be blocked from future use of the site.

4. No third party vendors or sales materials should be posted on the site unless approved through appropriate channels within the department or agency. This does not include advertising sold by Facebook and appearing in the ad sections on Facebook pages.

5. Sites should be checked on **weekends and holidays**, as well as during the work week.

6. **Updates.** New materials and updates need to be made on a timely basis.

7. If it is determined by the state organizations that a social media account, page, or site is no longer of use or will not be maintained, the account, page, or site should be canceled and/or removed. Accounts, pages, or sites should not be abandoned or unmonitored for any period of time.

The following Terms of Use statement should be included in the information section of each Facebook page stating the following:

"This page is operated by the State of Vermont. Posted materials are to be viewable by all age groups. Hate material, obscenities, inappropriate photos, discrimination against any individual or groups will not be tolerated. If a person or persons post such materials, they will be permanently blocked from this page. If materials warrant, legal action may be taken."

Setting up a State affiliated Facebook page

Facebook is a useful tool for quickly connecting to a large group of people with common interests and allows for rapid dissemination of information through the networks these people form. That is why it has become a popular tool for organizations to use in their marketing and outreach activities. It is important that you understand how Facebook works before setting up a Facebook page for a state organization or program.

There are three Facebook page types for organizations/programs: Fan page, Group, or Cause. Each have different capabilities and page layouts. The Fan page (or site) is set-up similarly to an individual's page and is most commonly used by organizations who desire long-term presence and engagement with their audience.

The following guidelines refer to Facebook Fan pages. These guidelines should be followed for all State of Vermont organization and program Facebook pages:

1. The Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) recommends setting up a personal – or individual – page and using Facebook for six to eight weeks prior to setting up a page for an organization, program, group, or cause. If you are not familiar with using Facebook or if you have questions about how Facebook could be used to support your marketing and outreach objectives, contact the CMO (marketing@state.vt.us) to discuss your needs.

2. Prior to setting up a state Facebook page, be sure to notify your manager/supervisor and IT staff and obtain any required approvals within your agency or department. **It is also required that you notify the Chief Marketing Officer and the Security Office of the Department of Information and Innovation.**

   a. Send an e-mail with the name of the agency/department setting up a Facebook page as well as the names and contact information of the site administrators to:

      i. marketing@state.vt.us
         kris.rowley@state.vt.us

b. Please notify the CMO and the Security Office of any change in administrators or if a site is being removed.

Generally Accepted and Recognized Best Practices

As an increasing number of organizations are using social media as a means of communicating with their customers and/or citizens, best practices are being developed and shared among organizations. These practices are common sense and practical steps to ensuring professional and effective marketing and promotion activity.

1. Choose a person who is an effective communicator or writer to maintain your social media sites. Provide training as needed on what to say and how to respond to the public in social media environments.

2. Although communication in social media sites may have an informal tone, spelling and grammar counts!

3. Consider a risk plan. Know what you will do if a negative comment is posted to your site. Determine what is acceptable or unacceptable and have a plan on how to address it.

4. Be sure that your management, legal counsel, and IT staff are aware of your social media use.

5. Understand the records management requirements and have a plan or process in place for compliance.

6. Be sure your social media sites are named and branded. Anyone can set up a site/page with your name. Your site should have proper branding and use names such as "official" in the content to differentiate between you and other 'advocates' for you.

7. Engage at appropriate times and often. If a comment is posted with a question or concern, be sure to respond appropriately. Be sure you are provided updates on a regular schedule and engaging often enough to maintain audience interest.