



Office of Information Technology Services

State Capitol P.O. Box 2062
Albany, NY 12220-0062
www.its.ny.gov

New York State Information Technology Policy	No: NYS-P11-001
IT Policy: Social Media	Updated: 08/14/2018
	Issued By: NYS Office of Information Technology Services Owner: WebNY

1.0 Purpose and Benefits

More people than ever are using social media technologies to create, connect, and collaborate online. For purposes of this policy, The term “social media” typically refers to websites and applications commonly associated with facilitating interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design, and collaboration on the World Wide Web.

There are many benefits to using social media technologies in government. Social media tools can enhance and redefine for the better the relationships between State governmental entities and the public. They can improve government transparency, increase collaboration, encourage greater citizen participation, and improve operational efficiency.

Social networking tools such as blogs and wikis help facilitate and encourage discussion on public policy issues. Multimedia and video sharing tools inform and engage the public about important issues without high maintenance or bandwidth costs. Tools such as mashups allow citizens to view multiple types of publically available data via a web browser.

In order to reap the benefits of social media technologies, it is important that the State maintain a standard social media use policy. The purposes of this policy are to:

- Encourage State government entities to permit the responsible use of social media by their employees;
- Establish minimum requirements for the proper use of social media in New York State government; and
- Help make New York State government more accountable and transparent to citizens.

2.0 Authority

Sections 103(10) and 103(11) of the State Technology Law provides the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) with the authority to establish statewide technology policies, including technology and security standards. Section 2 of Executive Order No. 117 provides the State Chief Information Officer with the authority to oversee, direct and coordinate the establishment of information technology policies, protocols and standards for State government, including hardware, software, security and business re-engineering. Details regarding this authority can be found in [NYS ITS Policy NYS-P08-002, Authority to Establish State Enterprise Information Technology \(IT\) Policy, Standards and Guidelines.](#)

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all “State government entities,” as defined in NYS Executive Order 117, and to the State workforce, which includes both State employees and contract staff.

4.0 Information Statement

Using social media technologies can help State government entities engage citizens and make government more open and transparent. State government entities can use these technologies to increase collaboration, foster greater participation and improve operational efficiencies between and among State workforce members. State government entities are encouraged to use social media tools to further their missions and engage their constituencies. This policy sets forth the responsibilities of State government entities when using social media technologies as well as the rules and expectations for responsible use of social media by State workforce members in their official capacities.

4.1 Agency Use of Social Media Tools

State government agencies can use social media tools in a variety of ways to further their mission and engage their constituencies. Social media sites can consist of public facing sites used to communicate and engage the citizenship and promote transparency. Private internal social media technologies may also be used by State government agencies as a business tool to increase collaboration, greater participation and improved operational efficiencies among State workforce members.

4.1.1 State Government Entity Social Media Sites

The creation, maintenance, and discontinuance of State government entity social media sites is the sole responsibility of the State government entity. The State government entity’s Public Information Officer, Digital Information Officer or other designee is responsible for maintaining the State government entity’s social media site(s), including but not limited to securely maintaining the location and access rights associated with such sites.

Content

When posting on public State government entity social media sites, only users authorized by the Public Information Officer, Digital Information Officer or other designee may post on behalf of the State government entity pursuant to an established content approval process. Public Information Officer approval is not required for postings to non-public, internal-facing, State government entity approved social media technologies. Content posted on any State government entity social media site must comply with all applicable Federal and State laws, regulations and policies as well as any terms of use/terms of service applicable to the social media site being used. State government entities are required to create a moderation (i.e. preview, accept, reject) process for all user-generated content (i.e., comments, file uploads, etc.) in order to help ensure compliance with laws, terms of use, security risk mitigation and the purposes of this policy. If technically feasible, state government entities may disable features on social media sites that allow users to post content such as comments, videos, or other types of shared files in order to manage their sites. Content management should be overseen by the Public Information Officer and the State government entity's Counsel.

Social Media Use Statement

A "Social Media Use" statement outlines the expectations of all of those using a specific social media technology, whether State workforce or external users. All State government entity social media sites must prominently display or link to the following statewide Social Media Use statement or a Social Media Use Statement that is substantively similar to the following:

Statewide Social Media Use Policy

New York State engages New Yorkers through many digital outlets, including NY.gov and Governor.NY.gov. Communicating with the State through social media enables you to contact us in a direct and meaningful way.

New York State agencies' social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter pages, are located within host sites that maintain their own terms of service, terms of use, privacy policies or other rules ("Terms of Service", TOS) governing the use of these sites. You are subject to the TOS of the host site when you visit a New York State agency social media site. Information (photos, videos, messages etc.) you share with or post to New York State agencies' social media sites may be used by the owners of the host site for their own purposes pursuant to its TOS. For more information, consult the host website's TOS.

New York State may also host its own social media sites, whose site-specific TOS govern your use of those sites. You agree that any information you post on a New York State social media site is irrevocably, permanently licensed to New York State and may be treated by the State as public information subject to disclosure to third parties. If a copyright is indicated on a video, photo, graphic or other material, permission to copy the material must be obtained from the original source of the material before posting.

Communications made to a State government entity through a New York State social media site will not be considered formal public comment and shall not

constitute official legal notice to the State or requests for records under the Freedom of Information Law. Such submissions will not be acknowledged.

Questions regarding the New York State social media use policy may be directed to socialmedia@exec.ny.gov or an agency's Public Information Officer, Digital Information Officer or other designee.

Disclaimer

Many social media tools generate advertisements for third party websites and applications as a source of revenue. To safeguard against potential liability issues, State government entities must develop and post a disclaimer in a prominent location on each of its social media web pages that contains these advertisements. All disclaimers must be approved by the State government entity's legal counsel before being posted. See below for an example of a social media disclaimer:

Example Disclaimer

Thank you for visiting [AGENCY] on [SITE]. The opinions and beliefs expressed by users on this site are those of the users and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of [AGENCY]. Comments posted on this site are not considered formal public comment and are not promised or guaranteed to be accurate, current, or complete. [AGENCY] assumes no responsibility for and expressly disclaims responsibility for updating this site to keep information current or to ensure the accuracy or completeness of any posted information. New York State is not required to preserve indefinitely all material posted to its digital outlets. Links or advertisements provided on this website may have been placed there by the social media host site and not the [AGENCY]. Their placement does not constitute an endorsement of the content, viewpoint, accuracy, opinions, policies, products, services, or accessibility of those items by the [AGENCY] or the State of New York. Once you follow a link to another website from this website, including another website maintained by the State, you are subject to the terms and conditions governing the use of that website.

4.2 Use of Social Media by State Workforce Members In Their Official Capacities

State workforce members may use social media technologies in their official capacities and on behalf of the State government entity they work for when authorized to do so. State government entities may also authorize State workforce members to use social media technologies to (a) increase collaboration among State workforce members, (b) support greater participation in the State government entity's operations, where appropriate, and (c) improve operational efficiencies within the State government entity.

State workforce members must adhere to the following rules when using such technologies through State government entity IT resources and/or in their capacities as a State workforce member. State workforce members:

- Shall abide by all applicable policies, terms of use and work rules including the NYS IT policy on Acceptable Use of Information Technology (IT) Resources, regarding the use of the Internet and information technology resources when using social media tools in their capacity as State workforce members. The use of social media

tools on State government entity IT resources will be monitored by the same method as defined in those policies and work rules.

- Are responsible for all of their online activities
- Shall not discuss or post confidential, proprietary or otherwise restricted information.
- Shall obtain the necessary authorizations by management and the Public Information Officer, Digital Information Officer or other designee, as appropriate, to communicate on behalf of the State government entity.
- When speaking on behalf of the State government entity, must be transparent when participating in any online community; they should disclose their identity and affiliation with the State government entity.
- Shall communicate in a professional manner.
- Shall abide by copyright and other applicable laws. A user's comments and posts may be permanently available and open to being republished in other media. Users should be aware that libel, defamation, copyright and data protection laws apply to postings on social media websites.
- Must obtain permission before publishing photographs, videos or quotes of others.

State workforce members should be aware that there is a reasonable chance that their posting on social media sites could be misconstrued as a position of the State government if the State workforce member posts material while using their official title, or posts material with a description of their work at a State government entity. In such circumstances, users can use a disclaimer such as the following, where technically feasible, to avoid this situation: "The postings on this site are my own and do not represent the position, strategy or opinion of (the State government entity)."

4.3 Legal Issues

The legal issues regarding the use of social media may differ across State governmental entities. Therefore, before the implementation of social media technologies, State government entities should be aware of the legal issues relevant to their organization. Specifically, State government entities need to make sure that the tools they use do not violate any privacy laws; New York State information technology, records retention, and Freedom of Information policies and laws; requirements of Federal law; copyrights; and Terms of Service or Use.

4.4 Mitigation of Security Risks

For successful integration of social media into an organization's operations, it is important that special consideration be given to securing the organization's information and systems from malicious activity. State government entities should review the [NYS Information Security Policy](#) as well as [NYS Information Technology Policy, IT Best Practice Guideline for Secure Use of Social Media](#) which provides best practices for the secure use of social media by State government entities. State governmental entities should realize that the use of social media within the organization does pose a risk that can be limited but never eliminated.

5.0 Compliance

This policy shall take effect upon publication. Compliance is expected with all enterprise policies and standards. ITS may amend its policies and standards at any time; compliance with amended policies and standards is expected.

6.0 Definitions of Key Terms

Except for terms defined in this policy, all terms shall have the meanings found in <http://www.its.ny.gov/glossary>.

Term	Definition
Social Media	Media that is created to be shared freely across different web publishing platforms.

7.0 Contact Information

Submit all inquiries and requests for future enhancements to the policy owner at:

WebNY Enterprise Platform Services Bureau
Reference: NYS-P11-001
NYS Office of Information Technology Services
State Capitol, ESP, P.O. Box 2062
Albany, NY 12220
Telephone: (518) 457-3300
Email: webnysupport@its.ny.gov

Statewide technology policies, standards, and guidelines may be found at the following website: <http://www.its.ny.gov/tables/technologypolicyindex>

8.0 Revision History

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every two years to ensure relevancy.

Date	Description of Change	Reviewer
10/20/2011	Original Policy Release	OFT/CIO
09/12/2012	Formatting and Branding Updates	OFT/CIO
07/28/2014	Updated Policy	Public Information Office
10/19/2016	Formatting and Branding Updates	Public Information Office
08/14/2018	Updated policy	Web NY Tim Crommie

9.0 Related Documents

[NYS-P14-001 Acceptable Use of Information Technology Resources Policy](#)

[NYS-G10-001 Secure Use of Social Media Guideline](#)

[NYS-P03-002 Information Security Policy](#)

[NYS-P10-006 Identity Assurance Policy](#)

[NYS-S13-004 Identity Assurance Standard](#)

[NYS-S14-005 Security Logging Standard](#)