



SEARCH:

Business

Community

Arts &amp; Rec

Climate

Government

Public Safety

Transportation

Utilities

Visiting

## About Seattle.gov

 History

 Policies and Planning

Mission Statement

Budget and Staffing

Strategic Plans and Reports

Legislation, Policies and Standards

Computer Literacy

Website Statistics

E-Government

 Contact Us

 Awards

 eDemocracy

## City of Seattle Social Media Use Policy

### Purpose

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, City of Seattle departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

The City of Seattle has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on social media sites. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of social media.

### General

1. All City of Seattle social media sites posted by executive departments will be subject to approval by the Mayor's communications director.
2. The City of Seattle's websites (Seattle.gov, SeattleChannel.org, SeattleCenter.com, SPL.org, etc.) will remain the City's primary and predominant internet presences.
  - a. The best, most appropriate City of Seattle uses of social media tools fall generally into two categories:
    - i. As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).
    - ii. As marketing/promotional channels which increase the City's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.
  - b. Wherever possible, content posted to City of Seattle social media sites will also be available on the City's main webs.
  - c. Wherever possible, content posted to City of Seattle social media sites should contain links directing users back to the City's official websites for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of Seattle.
3. As is the case for City of Seattle's web sites, departmental public information staff will be responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites their department may create.
4. Wherever possible, all City of Seattle social media sites shall comply with all appropriate City of Seattle policies and standards, including but not limited to:
  - a. [Acceptable Use of City Digital Equipment, Internet Access, Electronic Communications and Other Applications](#)
  - b. [Web Presentation and Accessibility Standards](#)
  - c. [Blogging Policy](#)
  - d. [Online Privacy and Security Policy](#)
  - e. [Policy on Non-Government Information and Links](#)
  - f. [Inclusive Outreach & Public Engagement Executive Order](#) & [Inclusive Public Engagement Policy](#)

Any exceptions will be approved by the DoIT Citywide Web Team and subject to review by the Chief Technology Officer and the appropriate branch public information authority.

5. City of Seattle social media sites shall comply with Seattle Ethics and Elections code and administrative rules.
6. City of Seattle social media sites are subject to State of Washington public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to City business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. The Department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media. Content related to City business shall be maintained in an accessible format and so that it can be produced in response to a

request (see the City of Seattle [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [CityLink](#) standards). Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public disclosure officer.

7. Washington state law and relevant City of Seattle records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific social media standards document, the Department maintaining a site shall preserve records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period on a City server in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Appropriate retention formats for specific social media tools are detailed in the City of Seattle [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [CityLink](#) standards.
8. Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between City departments and members of the public. City of Seattle social media site articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:
  - a. Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
  - b. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
  - c. Profane language or content;
  - d. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
  - e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - f. Solicitations of commerce;
  - g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.

These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available (see the City of Seattle [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [CityLink](#) standards).

9. The City reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.
10. The City will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible, enterprise wide.
11. All new social media tools proposed for City use will be approved by the Chief Technology Officer and the appropriate department's public information authority.
12. Administration of City of Seattle social media sites.
  - a. The DoIT Citywide Web Team will maintain a list of social media tools which are approved for use by City departments and staff.
  - b. The DoIT Citywide Web Team will maintain a list of all City of Seattle social media sites, including login and password information. Departmental public information officers will inform the DoIT Citywide Web Team of any new social media sites or administrative changes to existing sites.
  - c. The City must be able to immediately edit or remove content from social media sites.
13. For each social media tool approved for use by the City the following documentation will be developed and adopted:
  - a. Operational and use guidelines
  - b. Standards and processes for managing accounts on social media sites
  - c. City and departmental branding standards
  - d. Enterprise-wide design standards
  - e. Standards for the administration of social media sites

#### Social Media Standards

The following social media tools have been approved for use by the City of Seattle:

- Video - [Video Posting Standard](#)
- Twitter - [Twitter Standard](#)

- Facebook - [Facebook Standard](#)
- CityLink - [CityLink Standard](#)

[Top of Page](#)

Bill Schrier, Chief Technology Officer, City of Seattle  
October 2, 2009

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