

Leon County Social Media Guidelines

What Is Social Media?

Social media/networking refers to Internet-based technologies that enable individuals to communicate through the sharing of content, interacting and collaborating through bi-directional applications or messaging, and developing communities around common interests. Content can be in the form of text, pictures, videos, audio, and chatting. Communities are developed by association which can revolve around personal relationships, work, special interests, news, and content sharing via photos and videos. Examples of social media/networking include, but are not limited to:

- Social Networking – Facebook, foursquare, and MySpace
- Social Networking and Video Sharing – YouTube
- Photo Sharing – Flickr
- Blogging – Twitter, Nixle, Instant Messaging Services
- Business Networking – LinkedIn
- Instant Messaging and Webcam Chatting – Skype
- Reference and Social Networking – Google and Yahoo Groups
- Technology Networking – Slashdot.org
- Miscellaneous and “Cool” Content – Stumbleupon.com
- News – Clipmarks.com, Newsvine

Why Use Social Media?

Organizations have recognized that social media/networking can provide access to this “community” for expanded market research or product promotion with minimal effort or advertising. Use of the “like”, “friend”, and “follow” features enable an organization to understand what is trending and to easily access a growing network of consumers.

Select groups or individuals can be targeted with specialized discounts and information and indirectly to their contacts/friends/followers. A personal touch can build brand loyalty and commitment along with access to the friends, followers, and contacts of the customer. Building strong social networks can help an organization’s reputation by exposure and positive acknowledgement of services, products, and information. It is obvious that social media/networking has become an inexpensive “add-on” to existing channels of communication through the Internet and has had a major impact.

For governmental organizations, social media/networking can become another platform for public information and education, as well as transparency.

Scope and Application

These guidelines, and their provisions, apply to and serve as a guide to all County employees, departments, divisions, programs and contracted entities that distribute information on behalf of Leon County while engaged in any social media activities, implied or directed.

Definitions

Social Media: Internet- and wireless-based technologies that enable individuals to communicate/interact through the sharing of content, including the development of communities around common interests and bi-directional applications or messaging. Social media are used for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques through web-based and mobile technologies.

Facebook: A social network service and website. Users may create a personal profile, add other users as “Friends” and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Additionally, users may join common interest user groups, organized by workplace, school, or college, or other characteristics. Facebook allows anyone who declares themselves to be at least 13 years old to become a registered user of the website.

Twitter: A social networking and microblogging service, enabling its users to send and read messages called tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the user's profile page. Users may subscribe to other users' tweets—this is known as following—and subscribers are known as followers.

Official Facebook Page: Pages are distinct presences, separate from user profiles, and optimized for an organization's needs to communicate, distribute information/content, engage their fans, and capture new audiences virally through their fan's recommendations to their friends. Businesses are not allowed to use a profile for professional promotion, as that is a violation of Facebook's official user policy, and are required to create a page. For a page, someone just has to “like” a user to gain access to the organization's updates, and they become “fans” of that business or organization.

One-Way Communication vs. Two-Way Communication: One-way communication (information dissemination; no back-and-forth discussion) differs from two-way communication (information dissemination and response) in that two-way engages replies to comments/posts made by the user.

Guidelines for Creating a Social Media Account

1. Creation of any County-related profile or page, as well as any use of social media/networking on behalf of the County, must be vetted with the Public Information Office.
2. Once the purpose and scope of the use is established and approved, departments or divisions interested in creating a social media/networking page will need to fill out a Social Media/Networking Request form, located at www.leoncountyfl.gov/SocialMedia. Submit the completed request to the Public Information Office via PIO_Team@leoncountyfl.gov for review.
3. After approval, the Public Information Office and MIS will establish, set up and set the controls and operational settings of the social media account.
4. The Public Information Office and MIS will maintain a record of all login credentials for all County social networking sites.

Digital Communication Liaison (DCL) Guidelines for Using Social Media

1. Content published on social media sites must remain within the topic and within the digital communication liaison's defined area(s) of expertise.
2. The County's social networking presence may only be used for the promotion of County programs, events and issues and for disseminating public information related to the County.
3. Any information posted should be factual and meaningful. Avoid using acronyms and/or jargon.
4. Leon County DCLs are personally responsible for the content they publish. DCLs should be mindful that anything they publish will become public record.
5. Links may only lead to functioning County web pages, and email addresses referenced should only be County addresses. When possible, content should include a link back to the County's website for more information.
6. Communication will be one-way, meaning no back-and-forth communication.
7. DCLs must adhere to copyright, fair use and public records laws.
8. DCLs may not remove any comments once posted unless the content could cause a breach of the peace, create violence or display obscene speech.
9. Only DCLs are permitted to post information.
10. DCLs may only use computers and web browsers for posting.
11. Any electronic correspondence/message sent or received from County social networking accounts is considered public record and is therefore subject to the State of Florida's Public Records Laws. Such correspondence should be recorded by the DCM and kept in an organized fashion for future retrieval.
12. DCLs are not to modify any account settings.
13. DCLs may not provide confidential or other proprietary information.
14. DCLs should always check spelling and grammar prior to posting.