APPENDIX A

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY TEMPLATE
FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

ArchiveSocial
Social media archiving for government

ABOUT THIS TEMPLATE

This template is intended for use as a starting point for public sector organizations drafting a social media policy. The information was compiled from several sources including the Cities of Seattle, WA, and Arlington, TX; and the States of Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, and North Carolina. As each public sector organization is different, this template should be modified to fit the needs of your agency.

INTERNAL POLICY

Purpose

This document defines the social networking and social media policy for [agency name], the "Agency". To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way residents communicate and obtain information online, Agency departments may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The Agency encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the Agency and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

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

Acceptable Use

Personal Use

All Agency employees may have personal social networking, Web 2.0 and social media sites. These sites should remain personal in nature and be used to share personal opinions or non-work related information. Following this principle helps ensure a distinction between sharing personal and agency views.

Agency employees must never use their agency e-mail account or password in conjunction with a personal social networking, Web 2.0 or social media site.

The following guidance is for Agency employees who decide to have a personal social media, Web 2.0 or social networking site or who decide to comment on posts about official Agency business:

• State your name and, if relevant, role, when discussing Agency business;
• Use a disclaimer such as: "The postings on this site are my own and don't reflect or represent the opinions of the agency for which I work."

Professional Use

All official agency-related communication through social media, Web 2.0 and social networking outlets should remain professional in nature and should always be conducted in accordance with the Agency's communications policy, practices and expectations. Employees must not use official agency social media, Web 2.0 or social networking sites for political purposes, to conduct private commercial transactions, or to engage in private business activities.

Agency employees should be mindful that inappropriate usage of official agency social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites can be grounds for disciplinary action. If social media, Web 2.0 and social networking sites are used for official agency business, the entire agency site, regardless of any personal views, is subject to best practices guidelines, and standards.

Only individuals authorized by the Agency may publish content to an agency Web site or state agency social computing technologies.

Approval and Registration

All Agency social media sites shall be (1) approved by [contact] ; (2) published using approved social networking platform and tools; and (3) administered by the contact or their designee.

Oversight and Enforcement

Employees representing the Agency through social media outlets or participating in social media features on agency websites must maintain a high level of ethical conduct and professional decorum. Failure to do so is grounds for revoking the privilege to participate in agency social media sites, blogs, or other social media features.

Information must be presented following professional standards for good grammar, spelling, brevity, clarity and accuracy, and avoid jargon, obscure terminology, or acronyms.

Agency employees recognize that the content and messages they post on social media websites are public and may be cited as official Agency statements. Social media should not be used to circumvent other agency communication policies, including news media policy requirements.

Agency employees may not publish information on agency social media sites that includes:

- Confidential information
- Copyright violations
- Profanity, racist, sexist, or derogatory content or comments
- Partisan political views
- Commercial endorsements or SPAM

Records Retention

Social media sites contain communications sent to or received by the Agency and its employees, and such communications are therefore public records subject to [applicable public records statute]. These retention requirements apply regardless of the form of the record (for example, digital text, photos, audio, and video). The Department maintaining a site shall preserve records pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible. Furthermore, retention of social media records shall fulfill the following requirements:

- Social media records are captured in a continuous, automated fashion throughout the day to minimize a potential loss of data due to deletion and/or changes on the social networking site.
- Social media records are maintained in an authentic format (i.e. ideally the native technical format provided by the social network, such as XML or JSON) along with complete metadata.
- Social media records are archived in a system that preserves the context of communications, including conversation threads and rich media, to ensure completeness and availability of relevant information when records are accessed.
- Social media records are indexed based on specific criteria such as date, content type, and keywords to ensure that records can be quickly located and produced in an appropriate format for distribution (e.g. PDF).
- Each employee who administers one or more social networking sites on behalf of the Agency has self-service, read-only access to search and produce relevant social media records to fulfill public information and legal discovery requests as needed.

Agency utilizes an automated archiving solution provided by ArchiveSocial to comply with applicable public records law and fulfill the above record retention requirements. The Agency archive is available at: archivesocial.com.

ArchiveSocial

EXTERNAL POLICY

The following guidelines must be displayed to users on all social media sites or made available by hyperlink.

Moderation of Third Party Content

This agency social media site serves as a *limited public forum* and all content published is subject to monitoring. User-generated posts will be rejected or removed (if possible) when the content

- is off-subject or out of context
- contains obscenity or material that appeals to the prurient interest
- contains personal identifying information or sensitive personal information
- contains offensive terms that target protected classes
- is threatening, harassing or discriminatory
- incites or promotes violence or illegal activities
- contains information that reasonably could compromise individual or public safety
- advertises or promotes a commercial product or service, or any entity or individual
- promotes or endorses political campaigns or candidates

Public Records Law

Agency social media sites are subject to applicable public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format related to agency business, including communication posted by the Agency and communication received from citizens, is a public record. The Department maintaining the site is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for social media content.

About the author of this template

ArchiveSocial enables public entities to safely and effectively utilize social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. ArchiveSocial is the industry's first archiving technology providing 100% authentic capture of social media for compliance with state and federal records laws such as FOIA. It provides a legal safety net, and eliminates the time and effort required to respond to public records requests. ArchiveSocial is completely hosted and requires zero IT deployment. It serves as a cost effective offering for any sized public entity, and provides the public sector's easiest and most comprehensive solution for managing records of social media. ArchiveSocial is based in Durham, North Carolina.

ArchiveSocial

Social media archiving for government

Additional papers, articles, and free trial
offer available at **archivesocial.com**

Origination Date: June 14, 2011
Amended Date:

APPENDIX B

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

CITY'S SOCIAL MEDIA

PURPOSE

To convey information from the City to its citizens, to facilitate a sense of community and for residents and businesses to communicate with and obtain information about the City of White Oak online. The City of White Oak encourages the use of social media to reach a broader audience and to encourage citizen participation. **The City website will remain the primary avenue for release of information.**

POLICY GUIDELINES

A. The City has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding who may "speak" and what is "spoken" on behalf of the City on social media sites. The City Coordinator will have the sole discretion to approve what social media outlets may be suitable for use by the City and its departments. Each department that maintains a separate media site shall provide the City Coordinator with site log-ins and passwords.

B. All official City presences on social media sites or services are considered an extension of the City's computer information network and are governed by and subject to the City's Internet Access and Electronic Mail Policy contained in the City's Personnel Policy Manual.

C. Respect copyrights and fair use. All postings must comply with applicable federal, state and local laws, and regulations and retention schedules according to the Texas Local Government Code, Chapters 201 through 205. Records required to be maintained pursuant to The Texas State Library and Archives Commission records retention schedule shall be maintained for the required retention period in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible using the usual or approved City platforms and tools.

D. Information collected at this site becomes public record that may be subject to inspection and copying by members of the public, unless an exemption in law exists according to the Texas Public Information Act.

E. When possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City's official website for more information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City.

F. The City reserves the right to remove any content that is not within these guidelines, while retaining said content for the appropriate records retention according to state law.

G. Each social media site shall include a statement which identifies the purpose and topic of the site and discussion not related to the purpose shall not be posted.

H. Content Specifically Prohibited:

   ϙ   Profane language or content;
   ϙ   Any type of political activity;
   ϙ   Solicitations of commerce;
   ϙ   Conduct or encouragement of illegal, improper, or illicit purposes through visual, textual, or auditory posting including but not limited to sexual content or links to sexual content;

        ϙ   Content that is confidential according to the Texas Public Information Act;
        ϙ   Content that promotes, foster, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, religion, gender, marital status, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
        ϙ   Information or references to the personal addresses, personal telephone numbers, personal e-mail addresses, family members, or other personal information of City officials or City employees;
        ϙ   Commercial promotions or spam;
        ϙ   Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
        ϙ   Links to websites or "pages" of outside vendors that are not related to the purpose of the media site.

I.   Posts on City social media sites by employees must remain professional in tone and be in good taste. Each City employee is responsible for content they post on social media sites.

J.   Content Specifically To Be Included:

        ◊   Indication that the media site is maintained by the City;
        ◊   Contact information for the specific department that created the page, including address and phone number;
        ◊   Departmental media sites must clearly identify the department as a unit of the City of White Oak;
        ◊   A link to the official City website;

K. Employees representing the City via social media must conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City and in accordance with the City's Personnel Policy Manual. Employees who fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to disciplinary procedures up to and including termination of employment. Employees using social media sites, whether as an administrator or as a responder to a posting, will follow these guiding principles:

        ➢   Maintain transparency by using your real name and job title, and by being clear about your role in regards to the subject;
        ➢   Write and post about your area of expertise, especially as related to the City and your assignments. When writing about a topic for which you are not the City's expert, make this clear to readers;
        ➢   Keep postings factual and accurate. If a mistake is made, admit to it and post a correction as soon as possible;
        ➢   Reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate. When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite-a City employee is to **never** be involved in an argument with a citizen on a City maintained social media site;
        ➢   Post meaningful, respectful comments that are on topic;
        ➢   Understand that postings are widely accessible, not retractable, and will be around for a long time, so consider content carefully;
        ➢   Ensure your comments do not violate the City's privacy, confidentiality, and applicable legal guidelines for external communication. Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties with whom the City may be in litigation without the appropriate approval;
        ➢   Ensure you have the legal right to publish others' material, including photos and articles pulled from other sites. Do not publish photos taken while on the scene of any incident. Respect brand, trademark, copyright, fair use, disclosure of processes and methodologies, confidentiality, and financial

    disclosure laws. Even when using material from copyright-free sources, include appropriate attributions;

➢ Make it clear that you are speaking for yourself and not on behalf of the City, unless that is part of your duties with the City. Remember that your postings are ultimately your responsibility.

L. Content will be monitored to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy.

EMPLOYEES' SOCIAL MEDIA

While the City of White Oak encourages its officials and employees to enjoy and make good use of their off-duty time, certain activities on the part of its officials and employees may become a problem if they have the effect of impairing the work of any official or employee; harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile working environment for any official or employee; disrupting the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City; or harming the goodwill and reputation of the City of White Oak among its citizens or in the community at large. In the area of social media (print, broadcast, digital, and online), officials and employees may use such media in any way they choose as long as such use does not produce the adverse consequences noted above. For this reason, the City of White Oak reminds its officials and employees that the following guidelines apply in their use of social media, both **on** and **off** duty:

1. If an official or employee publishes any personal information about themselves, another official or employee of the City of White Oak, a citizen, or a vendor in any public medium (print, broadcast, digital, or online) that:

- Has the potential or effect of involving the official or employee, their co-workers, or the City of White Oak in any kind of dispute or conflict with other officials or employees or third parties;
- Interferes with the work of any official or employee;
- Creates a harassing, demeaning, or hostile working environment for any official or employee;
- Disrupts the smooth and orderly flow of work within the City, or the delivery of services to the City's citizens;
- Harms the goodwill and reputation of the City of White Oak among its citizens or in the community at large;
- Tends to place in doubt the reliability, trustworthiness, or sound judgment of the person who is the subject of the information; or
- Reveals private information;

the official(s) or employee(s) responsible for such problems will be subject to counseling and/or disciplinary action, up to and potentially including termination of employment, depending upon the circumstances.

2. No official or employee of the City of White Oak may use City equipment or Facilities for furtherance of non-work-related activities or relationships without the express advance permission of the City Coordinator.

3. Officials or Employees who conduct themselves in such a way that their actions and relationships with each other could become the object of gossip among others in the City, or cause unfavorable publicity for the City of White Oak in the community, should be concerned that their conduct may be inconsistent with one or more of the above guidelines. In such a situation, the employees involved should request guidance from the City Coordinator to discuss the possibility of a resolution that would avoid such problems. Depending upon the circumstances, failure to seek such guidance may be considered evidence of intent to conceal a violation of the policy and to hinder an investigation into the matter.

4. Should you decide to create a personal blog or participate in social media, be sure to provide a clear disclaimer that the views expressed in the blog/media site are the author's alone, and do not represent the views of the City of White Oak.

5. All information published on any official or employee blog/media site should comply with the City of White Oak's privacy and/or data policies. This also applies to comments posted on other social networking sites, blogs, and forums. All employees and/or potential employees shall make available access to publicly posted material if requested by his/her supervisor at any time.

6. Be respectful to the City of White Oak's, co-workers, citizens, vendors, and partners, and be mindful of your physical safety when posting information about yourself or others on any forum. Describing intimate details of your personal and social life, or providing information about your detailed comings and goings might be interpreted as an invitation for further communication - - - or even stalking and harassment that could prove dangerous to your physical safety.

7. Social media activities should be limited as time spent on the telephone or internet as it is when conducting personal business and it should never interfere with work commitments.

8. Your online presence can reflect on the City of White Oak. Be aware that your comments, posts, or actions captured via digital or film images can affect the image of the City of White Oak.

9. Do not discuss City citizens, vendors, issues, or business without express consent.

10. Do not ignore copyright laws or cite and/or reference sources inaccurately. Remember that the prohibition again plagiarism applies online.

11. Do not use any City of White Oak logos or trademarks without written consent. The absence of explicit reference to a particular site does not limit the extent of the application of this policy. If no policy or guideline exists, the City of White Oak's officials or employees should use their professional judgment and follow the most prudent course of action. If you are uncertain, consult your supervisor or manager before proceeding.

12. Do not disclose confidential or proprietary information.

If an employee has any doubt about posted subject matter, they should not post it.

DISCIPLINE

    A. Employees found in violation of any provision of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Where laws are violated, the City may pursue criminal or civil action against the employee.

    B. The policies and guidelines outlined herein also apply to employees posting City-related information on personal (non-City) social media sites.

    C. All department heads are responsible for their subordinates' compliance with the provisions of this policy and for investigating non-compliance.

DEFINITIONS

- "Social Media" is information content that is intended to facilitate communications, influence interaction with peers and with public audiences, typically via the Internet and mobile communications networks. Types of social media include but are not limited to, instant messaging, blogging, microblogging, picture and video sharing, and wall postings.

- "Social Networking" is the practice of engaging business and/or social contacts by making connections via interactive Web-based applications;
- "Blog" is a web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer;
- "Post" is to display (an announcement) in a place of public view in writing on a social media site.
- "Comment" means a response to a City article or social media content submitted by any person or entity.
- "Link" is short for "Hyperlink" which connects a hypertext file to another location or file; typically activated by clicking on a highlighted word or icon at a particular location on the screen
- "Public Information" is any information collected, assembled, or maintained by the City in the transaction of official business. (Ch552, Texas Government Code)

DISCLAIMER

This policy is not a contract and the City reserves the right to make changes to this policy at any time.

Each employee will receive a copy of this policy. Employees are required to read, sign, and return the policy acknowledging receipt to their department head.

Acknowledging Receipt of Social Media Policy

I have received my copy of the City of White Oak's Social Media Policy and I have read and I understand the information contained herein.

I further acknowledge that disciplinary actions can and will result if I violate this policy. Employees found to be in violation of this policy will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination.

_____

Date

_____

Employee's Signature

_____

Name [Please Print]

<u>APPENDIX C</u>
Administrative
Order   City of University Park, Texas

Number:	TECH-9
Date:	May 1, 2013
Updated:	November, 3 2014

Subject: SOCIAL NETWORKING

POLICY

An employee's use of social media, both on and off duty must not interfere with or conflict with the employee's duties or job performance, reflect negatively on the City or violate any City policy. The intent of these standards is to regulate the creation and distribution of information concerning the City, its employees and citizens through electronic media, including, but not limited to online forums, instant messaging and internet social media and blogging sites. Protecting the City's reputation and ensuring that an employee's communication with people outside the City, not only reflects positively on the employee as an individual, but also on the City.

Personal use of the Internet is a privilege and carries responsibilities requiring responsible and ethical use. The City may monitor an employee's access, use, and postings to the Internet, including from personal computers, to ensure compliance with internal policies, support the performance of internal investigations, assist management of information systems, and for all other lawful purposes. The City expects all employees to follow the Guidelines below when posting information on the Internet, regardless if done during or after work hours.   This policy encompasses: wikis, tweets and twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Instagram, blogs, and other online journals and diaries; bulletin boards and chat rooms, microblogging and all other social networking sites, instant messaging and the posting of video on YouTube and similar media, as well as City-operated networks.

This policy should be read and interpreted in conjunction with other City policies, including but not limited to, policies prohibiting harassment, discrimination, offensive conduct or inappropriate behavior and the City's Internet and E-mail Use policy. Violations of the City's Social Networking Policy may lead to disciplinary action. The City provides an effective system for employee complaints "off-line" through the Misconduct policy without resorting to social media.

EMPLOYEE GUIDELINES

- Any blogging or posting information on the Internet, must comply with the City's guidelines (as listed below), regardless of where the blogging or posting is done.

- Blogging, or posting information of a personal nature on the Internet, is prohibited during work hours. Employees are not permitted to engage in social networking while using any of the city's electronic resources.
- Never disclose any confidential information concerning another employee of the City in a blog or other posting to the Internet. Posting of confidential information may violate state law and subject the user to criminal penalty. All requests for City documents must be processed through the Public Information Act.
- Employees must abide by all federal and state law and policies of the City with regard to information sent through the Internet.
- Any social media presence on behalf of the City or representing any City department must be requested by the associated department director and authorized by the City Manager or the Director of Information Services. The requesting department director shall be directly responsible for all content appearing on the requested social media sites.
- If the employee's social networking includes any information related to the City, the employee must make it clear to the readers that the views expressed are the employee's alone and not reflective of the views of the City.
- No use of wikipedia, tweets and twittering, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, blogs, and/or other online journals and diaries; bulletin boards and chat rooms, microblogging and all other social networking sites, instant messaging and the posting of video on YouTube and similar media, as well as City-operated networks is considered private or confidential even if password protected or otherwise restricted. The City reserves the rights to access, intercept, monitor and review all information accessed, posted, sent, stored, printed or received through its communications systems or equipment at any time.
- Employees are encouraged to act responsibly on and off duty, and to exercise good judgment when using social media.
- Respect co-workers and the City. Do not put anything on your blog or post any information and/or pictures on the Internet that may defame, embarrass, insult, demean or damage the reputation of the City or any of its employees.
- Do not put anything in your blog or post any information and/or pictures that may constitute violation of the City's Harassment policy. Do not post any pornographic pictures of any type that could identify you as an employee of the City.
- Do not post pictures of yourself or others containing images of City uniforms or insignia, City logos, City equipment or City work sites, unless you are posting them on the City official website as part of your job duties.
- Do not post information on the Internet that could adversely impact the City and/or an employee of the City.
- Do not permit or fail to remove postings violating this policy, even when placed by others on the employee's blog. Recognize that postings, even if done off premises and while off duty could have an adverse effect on the City's legitimate business interests.

- Individual supervisors do not have the authority to make exceptions to these guidelines.

FACEBOOK, TWITTER, INSTAGRAM USE

The City of University Park encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments and divisions where appropriate. It also supports the use of social media to reach broader audiences and to strengthen the connection between City government and the community. Accordingly the City uses Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to distribute information and photos that are relevant, timely and informative. Whenever possible, links should direct users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of University Park.

Only designated City employees will be allowed to post or distribute information on the City's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts. Department Directors will approve designated employees. The City's Community Information Officer will monitor content of each social media site to ensure adherence to appropriate use, message and branding consistency as outlined in the City's Social Networking Policies. The Community Information Officer will notify the City Manager, Director of Information Services and appropriate Department Directors in the event of possible misuse of any of the City's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts.

- **Facebook** posts should contain information that is of interest to residents and other City audiences and partners including but not limited to:

  - Event and meeting announcements and reminders
  - Updates on issues such as ordinances or actions by the City Council
  - Road construction and repairs, traffic detours
  - Photos of community events and City projects
  - Emergency information

Whenever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City's official website for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business with the City of University Park.

- **Twitter** use should serve three primary purposes:

  - Get emergency information out quickly
  - Promote City-sponsored events
  - Refer followers to content hosted on the City's website or Facebook pages

All City employees who distribute information by Twitter shall ensure that information is posted correctly. Twitter does not allow for content editing.

- **Instragram** photos should:

  o Generate interest about City events
  o Promote City facilities or services
  o Illustrate the beauty of University Park and its neighborhoods.

CORRECTIONS

Erroneous information, either posted or distributed, needs to be corrected as quickly as possible. Serious errors need to be brought to the attention of Department Directors or the Community Information Officer.

USER COMMENTS

Users and visitors to City social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communications between City departments and the public. Posted comments will be monitored and the City reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments including:

- Comments not related to the post for which they are made
- Profane language or content
- Solicitations of commerce
- Sexual content or links to sexual content
- 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
- Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity
- Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems
- Content that violates a legal ownership of any other party

COMMUNITY INFORMATION GROUP

The City's Community Information Group (CIG) will assist the City's Community Information Officer in the review of content on all communications platforms to help maintain consistent messaging. CIG is comprised of City staff from across the organization, specifically those who are involved in the distribution of materials to various City audiences and partners. CIG will also assist the organization helping to define strategies and tactics for engagement using Social Media.

This Social Media Policy may be revised at any time.

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER TECH – 9

Robbie Corder, City Manager
November 3, 2014

The Use of Social Media Policies by US Municipalities

2 authors, including:

Aroon Manoharan
University of Massachusetts Boston
69 PUBLICATIONS **395** CITATIONS

Some of the authors of this publication are also working on these related projects:

Project   Public Administration Pedagogy in India View project

Project   IT Pedagogy View project

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

The Use of Social Media Policies by US Municipalities

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ABSTRACT

As the use of social media technologies becomes ever more ingrained in the day-to-day functions of public organizations, it is important to develop relevant social media policies to guide their effective use and enable increasingly transparent engagement with citizens. Analyzing the content of such policies can inform scholars about the intended purpose of government's use of social media. Hence, to build the foundation for a research agenda focused on the role of policy in government's ability to effectively engage citizens, this exploratory study first identified 156 US cities with a recognizable social media presence and then employed a content analysis to analyze the key elements of their social media policies. Based on our findings, most cities have integrated social media into daily operations, however, many do not provide effective social media policies to guide such use.

Introduction

As public organizations have become more conscious of the value of social media technologies, they have begun to use social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to communicate and interact with citizens while employing traditional websites for conventional functions like information provision and online transactions. The value of using these technologies is evident by the scope of social media use among the public. According to a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center (Anderson & Caumont, 2014), nearly two-thirds (64%) of Americans use Facebook, with roughly one-third (30%) using Facebook as a primary news source. Given this scope, governments have recognized social media as a useful tool for engaging citizens, and some scholars (Lee & Kwak, 2012) have gone as far to say that if used properly social media can help facilitate ubiquitous engagement and citizens will have the ability, through these technologies, to be fully engaged in decision making process.

The presence of social media technologies is also an indication that governments are transitioning toward the two-way communication of e-governance and away from the one-way communication of e-government. Given its potential for increased citizen participation and deliberation online, this transformation is not only desirable but also necessary because

as the availability of mobile computing devices such as PDAs, iPhones, and location-aware GPS-based systems has become increasingly useful, and wireless access to the Internet has dramatically increased throughout the United States, so has the ordinary citizen's expectation for quick and easy access to information. (Mandarano, Meenar, & Steins, 2010, p. 123)

The use of social media technologies also offers benefits for governments who can "tap into the collective knowledge of society quickly and directly [ensuring that] citizens move from being passive consumers of government services to advisers and innovators contributing ideas that are in better accord with their individual and group needs" (United Nations, 2010, p. 45). This is because social media has shown itself, as a useful tool for citizens to have a greater voice in the affairs of government, and in some cases the collective voice of social media users has been the catalyst for social change. Warren, Sulaiman, and Jaafar (2014) interviewed five hundred citizens and social activists on the role of social media in civic engagement and found that the use of social media by citizens will increase their likelihood to participate in the political process. Another example of the power of social media is the fact that these technologies were used to push back against government oppression in places like Belarus, Moldova, and Iran (Shirky, 2011). In the American context, social media has proven to be a useful tool in exposing and challenging flagrant police

misconduct (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015), which has given rise to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Social media has provided the fuel for this movement and has allowed the issue of police misconduct to become a major part of political discourse in the United States.

The adoption of social media technologies also has great potential to increase the transparency and accountability of governments toward their citizens and stakeholders, while also enhancing citizen participation and engagement (Bonsón, Torres, Royo, & Flores, 2012; Picazo-Vela, Gutierrez-Martinez, & Luna-Reyes, 2012). By transparency, we mean the basic principle that citizens have a fundamental right to access information about their government's actions. Social media support this right by enabling greater citizen awareness of the day-to-day working of their public officials, thereby facilitating a positive perception of government, particularly with regard to openness (Song & Lee, 2013). They thus empower citizens to examine public problems from a macrolevel perspective and empathize with government officials as they work to solve public issues. Transparency in government perpetuates a deeper trust because it allows citizens to look beyond surface level issues to the greater problems faced by their administrators and communities.

Transparency also extends to the duty of governments to readily provide information about government actions. A simple example of such government transparency is the Congressional Record in which all speeches, motions, and procedures are available for public view. In the US context, government transparency is legally codified in the Administrative Procedures Act (APA), which, as Rosenbloom (2003) noted in his seminal work, *Administrative Law for Public Managers*,

> serves as a platform for requiring federal administrative processes to embrace the basic democratic-constitutional values of openness for accountability; representativeness and public participation in policy formulation; procedural due process for the fair treatment of individuals; and rationality when regulating private parties and other entities. (p. 13)

A majority of US states have followed the federal government and enacted their own APA statutes to govern transparency at the state and local level. These laws have done a great deal to bolster the constitutional values of openness and public participation, which were impeded in the pre-Internet era by the cost and difficulty of giving citizens easy access to government information. In those days, citizens wanting to obtain government documents either had to go to a library or file a formal request, which acted as a disincentive for them to seek out information on government actions

and their impact on citizens' lives, thereby undermining the whole concept of transparency. The rise of the Internet as a mainstay of American culture, however, has provided government with an opportunity to enhance transparency by reducing the monetary and nonmonetary costs associated with accessing government information. Today, thanks to the 2002 E-government Act, all federal agencies must make documents and information pertaining to the day-to-day work of government readily accessible on line. The majority of states have since followed suit and enacted similar laws that require state and local agencies to provide online access to documents. The ability of such laws to enhance transparency is a primary motivating factor for cities to provide online access to documents (San Diego Regional Data Library, 2013).

Research has also found that citizens who use e-government to access government services and information are more likely to perceive government as responsive and responsible as well as transparent, a finding that led Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) to conclude that "[e]-government is worth pursuing as a means of enhancing the effectiveness of government agencies and their relationship with citizens" (p. 365). Park, Kang, Rho, and Lee (2015) directly test the role that social media plays in enhancing citizen trust through their analysis of citizen-government communication via Twitter. The major finding of their study was that government officials who use Twitter to communicate directly with the public increased citizen trust in their agency and government as a whole.

It could also be argued that social media technologies can enhance transparency and transform the citizen-government relationship because their users play a direct role in creating content, disseminating useful information, and influencing decision making. Thus, Linders (2012) in his a study of social media use by the American federal government, argued that public organizations use social media technologies to create value through government by involving citizens in coproduction as partners rather than customers, with a greater and more active role in solving public problems.

Linders (2012) further argued that this concept of coproduction plays a major role in the management of public organizations, such as auxiliary police forces in which citizen volunteers play an active role in maintaining public safety in their community. Nevertheless, the traditional means of coproduction have shown themselves insufficient in improving transparency and civic engagement, with one major limit being the cost involved. For instance, in the auxiliary police, only citizens with enough time and knowledge of the process and issues can

participate and it could be persuasively argued that most working people cannot afford to take time off work or personal responsibilities to participate in such activities.

Cost also undermines a government's ability to enhance trust and transparency through coproduction because the limited number of citizens able to participate greatly reduces its capacity to widely disseminate information about services. Linders (2012) thus proposed social media as one means by which government can reduce the costs of coproduction and increase citizen engagement and transparency. More specifically, he likened such "government as a platform" to SaaS (software as a service) by which social media technologies make knowledge and IT infrastructure available to the public, help inform citizens, and enable them to participate in the decision-making process (Linders, 2012).

Yet despite such recognition of how social media can be used to enhance government engagement with citizens, provide a more transparent experience, and increase citizen trust in authorities; little scholarly attention has been devoted to the content of social media policy and how it can inform scholars about the intended purpose of social media use by government. This is important because policy provides clear guidance to government officials about how social media should be implemented in their organizations. Although governments have increasingly turned to social media as part of their overall strategy to improve the citizen-government relationship, a lack of clear policy has frustrated its implementation. This view is supported by pubic officials' views of the utility of social media as a tool to engage the public.

Hiltz, Kushma, and Plotnick (2014) interviewed emergency managers and based on their findings, the second most barrier to greater social media use by their organizations is the lack of a clear policy on how social media should be used. The managers stated that the lack of clear policies makes them reticent to using social media because of concerns about the accuracy of information as well as who is held accountable for the content of the social media page. Another source of concern for public managers is the tendency for organizations to focus on technical issues rather than organizational issues when the agency decides to use social media. In a focus group discussion with Mexican civil servants Picazo-Vela et al. (2012) noted that managers cited the lack of a regulatory framework to guide implementation as the biggest organizational issue with regard to social media use. Further evidence of the lack of attention paid to establishing formal polices for social media use is evident in Kavanaugh and collaborators' (2012) focus groups with twenty-five emergency service managers. The major finding was that

managers perceived that government is operating in the dark when it comes to social media use. Governments, in their opinion, use social media without having a clear idea of their target audience, how posts are monitored, and the capacity in which social media is used. Based on these findings, the authors argue that for social media to be successful in government it should be institutionalized and its use should be driven by formal policy.

Beyond the views of public managers, the need for future research on the presence and content of social media policy is evident in studies of social media policy and social media adoption. Bertot, Jager, and Hansen (2012) undertook one of the few studies of social media policies. They found that many of the policies that govern social media use predate the advent of the technology. They argue that social media policy, at the federal level, is patchwork of seventeen law, administrative memos, and executive orders. One could argue that the major implication of this patchwork approach is that the policies lack a clear focus and provide little guidance to federal employees about how social media should be used. Although this study has provided a baseline understanding of social media policy, the authors did not address what provisions a social media policy should contain or, more importantly, how those provisions will ease the implementation of social media in government.

Mergel and Bretschneider (2013) view the development of social media policy as a natural part of the adoption process. Their three-stage model of social media adoption draws from research (See Melitski, Gavin, & Gavin, 2010) on how new technologies, such as e-government, are adopted by public organizations. In the first two stages—experimentation and constructive chaos—the organization is testing the technology to get an idea of how it will fit into their strategic mission. Once the organization is comfortable with the technology they move to the next stage—institutionalization—where the use of the technology is standardized through the establishment of formal polices to guide implementation. In their view, the purpose of these policies is to reduce the risk of failure. Although the model provides clarity to the process of social media adoption, the manner in which they characterize institutionalization may have problematic implications. One could argue that in a public organization that policy guides the use and implementation of any technology. For instance policy, not social media specific policy per se, lays out how managers procure and test a new technology.

Based on this literature review the purpose of this study is twofold:

(1) To provide an overall picture of the state of social media policy in local governments.

(2) To identify the key elements in social media policies with particular attention to what currently constitutes policy and the ways in which policy is lacking.

We addressed these issues by conducting a content analysis of local government's social media policies. However, as the analysis was exploratory, its aim was merely to provide the foundation for a research agenda focused on policy's role in the ability of government to effectively engage citizens. Nevertheless, we hope that it may also extend the conversation on how scholarship can support government effectiveness by providing insight into the current workings of and needed improvements in policy development and implementation.

Models, research questions, and methodology

Research models

Given our focus on improved citizen engagement and transparency, from the myriad possible models of how and why governments choose to use social media, we selected two that have these ends as their ultimate goal: government maturity (Lee & Kwak, 2012) and three-stage adoption (Mergel & Bretschneider, 2013).

Government maturity model

Because the most frequently cited model of e-government development, that of Chadwick and May (2003), has several important gaps, Lee and Kwak (2012) used data from five case studies of governmental social media use to develop their Open Government Maturity Model. This model addresses the earlier shortcomings by focusing on the roles of organizational culture, regulations, policy, outcomes, and challenges in the implementation of social media in government. These authors view the adoption process as progressing from an initial stage of implementation through stages of data transparency, open participation, open collaboration, and finally, ubiquitous engagement. Each stage is governed by four dimensions: capabilities, process, outcomes, and measures of performance.

In the initial stage, government agencies use social media to communicate simple information about government services, such as when the Federal Emergency Management Agency uses Facebook and Twitter to inform citizens of the deadlines for disaster assistance applications. Both the information provided and the capabilities and processes are simple, and the amount of data provided is limited. Likewise, communication is one-way, static, and provides few opportunities for

citizens to interact with the agency. The agency outcome for social media use at this stage is that citizens do not visit the social media page and are relegated to a passive role in governance.

In the second stage, data transparency, government agencies focus on two objectives: transparency of government operations and the provision of high quality data that allows citizens to judge the quality of government services. One example is the Census Bureau using social media to notify citizens of the publication of new data or reports and inviting them to comment on the information's quality. The capabilities and process of social media in this stage are the provision of high quality and high impact data while also developing formal data governance structures and privacy standards to protect the integrity of publicly available data. Nevertheless, as in the initial stage, communication remains limited: the predicted agency outcomes are increased public awareness of government services and activities and, to a lesser degree, an increase in government accountability.

In the open participation stage, government agencies focus on three objectives: public feedback, interactive communication, and crowdsourcing, exemplified by a local parks department using Facebook to solicit feedback on the proposed location of a new park. The capabilities and process of governmental social media usage at this stage are citizen ability to create, post, and share content online as government agencies develop a formal data governance structure and clearly defined privacy policy. The predicted agency outcomes are real-time continuous feedback from citizens and a cultural shift toward open government. In particular, the open participation stage creates an environment conducive to open dialogue and communication between citizens and government.

In the open collaboration stage, the government's main focuses are interagency collaboration, open collaboration with the public, and working with other agencies to create value-added services. In this stage, data from social media applications are used to develop data capabilities that improve decision-making, a skill that cascades down to employees who have been trained in and refined their analytic skills. The predicted outcomes are increased synergy among agencies and departments, increased cost savings from the development and use of analytical tools, and increased citizen engagement from the wide dissemination of data. At this stage, governments use social media to help develop a culture of open government.

In the final stage of ubiquitous engagement, governments realize the full potential of social media to promote open government. Although the capabilities and

process at this stage resemble those in open collaboration, they further extend to easing access to public data and integrating social media usage as a critical activity in the organization's mission. The predicted outcomes are direct channels of communication and the full embrace of a culture of open government.

Three-stage adoption model

Although Halpern and Katz (2012) have argued that the purpose of social media is to increase transparency and citizen engagement, they apply a less expansive model to chronicle its adoption. After using an analysis of citizen comments on official government social media pages to show that higher levels of media participation increase government transparency and citizen engagement, they proposed that the relation between social media and citizen engagement is a three-stage process quite similar to the model of Chadwick and May (2003). The first stage is purely *informative*: the government uses social media to enhance service delivery and although the media provide opportunities for two-way exchanges, most communication is one way and restricted to government notifying customers of service offerings and changes. In the second *consultative* stage, government begins to use the two-way communication capability of social media to engage citizen in a conversation. However, the communication is limited in that the government sets the terms of the conversation and gives citizens no real opportunity to impact the decision-making process. Nevertheless, government use of social media at this stage does promote greater transparency because it provides greater access and gives a voice to the daily activities of government. In the final stage, *participation*, the government, having recognized social media's capacity to promote transparency and citizen engagement, provides citizens with an authentic opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. In addition to using citizen feedback to change how the agency provides services, it increases transparency by providing greater access to public data in order to facilitate citizen deliberation.

Research questions

In both models, achieving the ultimate goal is a stepwise process that requires the agency and its employees to familiarize themselves with how these applications function before applying them strategically to promote open government. The primary focus of this research is:

> What is the current status on the content of local government social media policies?

This question is important because the formal policies that guide e-government, and by extension, social media, can potentially dictate how well this technology works in a governmental organization. For instance, if there is no clear formal statement of who is responsible for managing a government agency's social media presence, how can the agency be held accountable when posted information is inaccurate or inappropriate? Another equally important issue is that current policies governing the use of social media applications in e-government do not account for how quickly such technologies are growing, which makes it difficult for government agencies to employ them.

Yet despite the critical importance of policy to successful use of social media as a tool to promote transparency and engagement, few scholars have systematically studied the topic. In fact, based on our search of the current literature, only one manuscript published in a peer-reviewed journal investigated the role that policy plays in social media implementation. In this study, Bertot, Jager, and Hansen (2012) presented evidence that social media use in the American federal government is growing quickly but that growth is occurring in a highly antiquated policy environment. They further asserted that the lack of clarity in public policy has undermined the ability of federal agencies to use social media to promote three important principles that guide the use of social media in government: democratic participation and engagement, coproduction, and the crowdsourcing of solicitation and innovations. Although their list of areas not fully addressed by current policy is exhaustive, they did specify four areas not fully covered by Federal law that relate to transparency and citizen engagement:

- Ensuring that information disseminated through social media is consistently available;
- Maintaining consistency of access for both government agencies and for members of the public;
- Archiving information disseminated through social media for permanent access and retrieval; and
- Fostering the transparency and accountability to make government operations open and transparent, thereby building citizen trust and further increasing accountability.

Based on their findings of what is lacking in governmental social media policy, they provided a comprehensive list of areas that merit further research, one of which is governance, the focus of this study. Another set of necessary elements for a coherent and comprehensive social media policy was proposed by Hrdinová, Helbig, and Peters (2010) based on their analysis of the social media policies of 26 local governments or

agencies and interviews with social media professionals. These authors identified the following eight common components: (i) employee access, (ii) social media account management, (iii) acceptable use, (iv) employee conduct, (v) content, (vi) security, (vii) legal issues, and (viii) citizen conduct.

Employee access pertains to how governments control who has access to the agency's social media page. According to these authors, government agencies accomplish this goal in two ways: by limiting the number or type of employees who are permitted to access the agency social media site and/or by specifying which social media technologies are permitted for agency use.

Social media account management refers to the "creation, maintenance, and destruction of social media accounts" (Hrdinová et al., 2010, p. 6), meaning that this portion of the policy generally covers those in the organization responsible for permitting the agency to use social media applications. Hrdinová and her colleagues used the example of the Public Information Officer of the state of North Carolina, who is responsible for approving all requests to use social media. The purpose of such a provision is to promote leadership and accountability in government's use of social media in its daily activities.

Acceptable use covers the agency's expectation of how employees should use social media in an official capacity. As an example, the authors cited the city of Chandler, Arizona, which cautions employees about excessive use of social media for personal reasons because such use in their capacity as a public official may be a matter of public record. A few cities in the study, however, only focused on what content is appropriate for posting when employees use social media in an official capacity. One dictate common to most policies is that employees should not offer their own personal or political opinions when posting official information.

Employee conduct is quite similar to acceptable use, with the major difference that these policies specifically specify which content may not be posted on the agency's social media page. Whereas most policies reviewed by Hrdinová et al. (2010) covered the use of racist or vulgar language, only a few addressed transparency and accuracy by noting that all comments posted on the agency or government's social media page would be subject to state and local public records laws.

Content policies stipulate which employees are responsible for posting information and lay out protocols to ensure that all the information posted is accurate and up to date. In their study, the authors noted, content management strategies ranged from agencies exerting little control over the content posted on social media pages to agencies charging a single office or officer (e.g., the public affairs office or chief technology officer) with creating and managing all social media content. The ultimate purpose of content policies is to ensure a clear line of accountability when social media are used to enhance government services.

Security policies cover how best to ensure the integrity of user and agency data, as well as the infrastructure used to maintain the agency's social media presence. Most policies reviewed by the authors did not explicitly mention social media technology, but social media were covered in the general statements of the privacy policy. For instance, the security policy of Hampton, Virginia, states that social media is governed by all privacy policies that cover the use of information technology.

Legal policies ensure that an agency's use of social media is consistent with all laws and regulations. Such policies often mention that all posts on social media sites are subject to public record laws, and some specifically cover employee conduct. For instance, the authors reported that a few of the websites explicitly mentioned that when employees are expressing their own personal views, they must clearly state that their views are not those of the agency. Other policies also covered the appropriate use of copyrighted material and in some cases, barred copyrighted material on the agency's social media page.

Citizen conduct policies govern the content of citizen's social media posts. In Hrdinová et al. (2010) study, most addressed what types of content are inappropriate or illegal and thus prohibited on the agency's social media page. For the most part, these policies prohibited citizens from posting content that contains vulgar language or promotes violence or hate.

Based on their observations, Hrdinová et al. (2010) recommended that, in addition to the eight elements discussed above, government should apply four strategies to develop an effective social media policy:

(1) Government should clearly lay out the goals and objectives for developing a social media presence so that its agencies can fully understand what elements should be emphasized in a formal policy. For instance, if an agency's goal for using social media is to increase opportunities for citizen participation, then having a policy that limits citizen communication (i.e., bars external comments) would not be a good fit.

(2) Government should assemble a team that includes key leaders and stakeholders from across the organization. This strategy is critical

because it provides an opportunity for a variety of viewpoints to be considered and integrated into the policy while still ensuring that the policy is fully in line with organizational goals and objectives. For example, including a human resources professional in the development of a social media policy can ensure that employee conduct policies are in line with prevailing human resources practices.

(3) Government should identify existing policies that cover social media so that agencies can see whether any policy that they are developing is redundant or conflicts with current policy. For instance, in nearly all US states, all content posted online is covered by open record laws. By recognizing this fact, a city will be sure to include this information when developing a new social media policy.

(4) Government should have an open conversation about conflicts and/or inconsistencies between proposed social media policies and existing policies that govern the use of technology. In particular, the rapid nature of social media communication may not fit well with current policies on how the government provides official messages to the public. Discussing and resolving inconsistencies will ensure that implementation of social media will not disrupt organizational functions.

Methodology

Our study was developed with the following two research questions in mind:

(1) *What is the current status on the content of local government social media policies?*

(2) *What values do local government social media policies emphasize?*

We limited the study to cities ($n = 156$) with a population of 150,000 or greater. The data for city population are taken from 2010 census data (see Appendix A for the list of cities). One caveat should be noted about the data. These cities are the largest (by population) in the United States, but they may not be representative of all cities or regions. Since this study is exploratory in nature, the findings of this research should provide a good starting point for scholars to embark on a more comprehensive study of local government social media policies. Our analysis of social media policies focused on the following areas:

- Presence of a formal policy;
- The intended purpose of using social media;
- Social media management;
- Social media training;
- Planning and implementation;
- Best practices;
- Designated users; and
- Transparency (public records and freedom of information laws).

The starting point for the analysis was to determine whether a city had an official social media policy, defined as "a law or administrative order that governs the use of social media." To determine the presence of a social media policy the authors conducted an exhaustive search of local government websites from August to December 2014. Of the 156 cities investigated, only 20% (31) cities had such polices (as shown in Appendix B). This finding is surprising not only because all the cities studied had a social media presence, because many of those lacking a formal policy were using myriad social media applications (e.g., Facebook, Google+, and Twitter) to engage citizens. The cities with social media policies were primarily from the West (14) and South (10), followed by Midwest (4) and Northeast (3).

After locating the policies the authors analyzed their content and coded it based on the various elements listed above. The research used double coding methodology to ensure the accuracy of the content analysis. After the initial coding a research assistant was employed to recode the policies to ensure consistency. The coding was deemed to be consistent based on the fact that coding was 95% consistent, which is well within the lines of adequate consistency for a research study of this magnitude. The following section discusses how we determined the content for each city's social media policy.

Once we established that a city had an official social media policy, we determined its intended purpose for social media from among the choices highlighted in the literature on social media use by government. These include communication, supporting the mission or objectives of the city and its agencies, citizen engagement, citizen participation, improving efficiency, departmental collaboration, increased trust or confidence in government, branding, transparency, and customer service. In general, each policy stated the purpose clearly in the introduction.

The next element, social media management, essentially answers the question of who manages the government's social media presence. We classified management responsibility into four categories: decentralized (the department or agency is primarily responsible for management),

centralized (a central office has primary responsibility), shared (the department and a central agency share responsibility), not specified (it is not explicitly stated who is responsible for managing the city's social media presence).

To identify the third element, employee training, we analyzed policy content to assess whether it required that employees receive training on social media use and management before being allowed to use social media as part of their job.

The fourth element, planning and implementation of social media, was identified based on whether the policy required an agency to submit a formal plan that articulated how social media was to be used and how it relates to the overall mission and objectives of the organization.

The fifth element, best practices, was evaluated based on whether or not the policy laid out best practices for the use of social media. Defined as a set of practices that employees use as a guide for using social media, best practices differ by city but may include how employees are to post and respond to comments, ensure accuracy of posts, and ensure that social media use is consistent with public records law and employee conduct policies. Although many policies have one or more of these elements, we considered a formal statement of best practices to exist when the policy explicitly stated how employees are to use social media to ensure their effectiveness in meeting the agency's mission or objectives.

The sixth element, designated users, was judged based on whether or not the policy stipulated that only the department or its designate be permitted to use social media in an official capacity.

The final element, transparency, was determined by whether or not the policy required that all activity on social media conform to existing public records or freedom of information laws, which was indeed explicitly stated in most policies.

Findings

To establish the scope of the use of formal social media policies in US cities, we first determined whether each city had such a policy. As Table 1 shows, of the 156 cities included in the analysis, only 31 (20%) had any such document, a surprising finding given not only that all had an actual social media presence but also that a large majority used multiple social media applications to engage citizens. These findings imply that although cities are quick to embrace social media as part of their larger communication and service delivery strategies, few have developed policies to guide their implementation. Although their reasons for failing to do so could be many, we suspect that one major reason is that the development and use of social media has

Table 1. Presence of media policy.

Does the city have a formal social media policy	No. of Cities	Cities (%)
Yes	30	19
No	125	81

Table 2. Purpose of using social media.

Purpose of Using Social Media	No. of Cities	Cities (%)
Communication	28	90
To support the mission or objectives of city/agency	10	32
Citizen Engagement	5	16
Citizen Participation	4	13
Improve Efficiency	3	10
Collaboration	3	10
Increase Trust/Confidence in Government	2	6
Branding	2	6
No Purpose Stated	2	6
Transparency	1	3
Customer Service	1	3

outpaced the capacity of government to develop formal social media policies.

Having identified the cities with a formal policy, we next examined each city's intended purpose for social media use. As Table 2 shows, a large majority of the cities (90%) see social media primarily as a means of communication between the city and its citizens. Nevertheless, communication does not imply engagement. As Chadwick and May (2003) demonstrated, cities often apply a managerial approach to e-governance, meaning that many governments view communication with citizens as a one-way process that gives citizens no meaningful opportunity to shape policy or administrative practices. In fact, very few cities with formal policies see citizen participation or citizen engagement (16% and 13%, respectively) as the purpose of using social media applications. Another stated purpose, albeit by only one third of cities with a formal policy, is as a tool to support the mission or objectives of the city and its agencies, which implies that in these cities, social media use is part of a larger strategic vision. Few social media policies, however, cite improved efficiency (10%), collaboration (10%), increased trust and confidence in government (6%), transparency (3%), or customer service (3%) as the intended purpose of using social media applications.

We determined whether a city's social media policy explicitly assigns responsibility for managing its social media presence based on the four categories of management responsibility: decentralized, centralized, shared, or not specified. Forty-percent of the cities with a formal policy employ the centralized approach, with a single department or agency managing the city's social media presence. As shown in Table 3, just over a third (35%) use a decentralized approach, with each department or agency managing its own social media presence. A small minority (6%) adopt a shared approach in which each agency or

Table 3. Management of social media.

Management of Social Media	No. of Cities	Cities (%)
Decentralized (e.g., the Agency or Department)	11	35%
Centralized (e.g., Public Information/Relations Department or IT Department)	13	42%
Shared (both agency and central department (e.g., PR or IT departments)	2	6%
No Mention of Management Responsibility	5	16%

department works collaboratively with a single central authority, and 15% make no specific mention of who is responsible for managing the city's social media presence.

Even though a majority of cities with a formal social media policy clearly state who is responsible for managing the city's social media presence, only three (10%) require employees to receive training before using social media as a part of agency operations. Yet 32% require the agency or department to submit a formal plan describing how the agency will use social media, which seems contradictory given plan submission implies a need for employees to be trained in using these technologies. Best practices also are only specified in the social media policies of 19% of the cities. Taken together, these findings seem to indicate that local government's social media policy focuses heavily on management and accountability but pays far too little attention to the strategic use of social media, perhaps because the cities do not fully understand its potential to improve citizen engagement.

Provisions for transparency, privacy, and designated users, however, are far more common. A large majority (84%) of the cities with a formal social media policy stipulate that all social media content is subject to public records laws. The same is true for privacy, with nearly three-quarters (74%) of the policies specifying how the city should protect user privacy in the use of social media applications. On the other hand, just under half the cities' policies include a provision that requires agencies to restrict social media use to designated employees.

Conclusions

The use of social media technologies has become entrenched in the daily operations of public organizations and is being extensively incorporated into policy-making and political campaigns. The adoption of such technologies for public relations purposes such as promoting a positive organizational image is also becoming more widely acknowledged. In particular, social media enable governments to connect with increasingly diverse groups of constituents and promote collaborative governance. Yet although social media tools provide a more cost-effective means of information transmission to large groups than do traditional media, which usually involve

a significant financial investment (Wright & Hinson, 2009), they bring their own challenges, particularly with regard to privacy and security.

Our purpose in this study, therefore, was to profile the adoption of social media policies by cities across the US and identify the policies' key elements. According to our findings, although cities use social media extensively in daily operations, most provide no formal social media policy. Even beyond its external implications, this absence of a social media policy or guidelines can have an adverse effect on employee performance through a lack of proper communication and may also reflect a lack of effort in creating greater trust among employees.

The most surprising finding is that over 80% of the cities in the original sample have no social media policies, an alarming omission given the extent of their social media use. Moreover, few cities seem to provide any IT training for their employees, which may hinder the use of social media technologies to their full potential (Bromberg & Manoharan, 2015). In the private sector, across a wide range of industries that are both IT and non-IT related, social media training is now a requirement, one that some companies are even making an important aspect in recruiting and new employee orientation (Meister, 2012). Hence, in addition to adopting new technologies, cities need to introduce their employees to IT training and development in order to update their skills to match current trends (Manoharan, 2013).

Our analysis also reveals that city governments primarily gear their social media policies to internal communication and control rather than external communication with citizens and stakeholders. This finding mirrors the internal versus external dimensions in Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Competing Values Framework, which asserts that organizations with a tendency to externalism are more likely to support increased communication with external stakeholders. Many of the cities in our research exhibit a tendency to internalism, with a greater focus on control and communication within the organization.

In terms of the external dimension, however, many cities are still in the initial information and communication stage of social media usage, which is clearly reflected in their policies. Future research thus needs to focus on the outcomes related to social media policy and the challenges in trying to link the quality of social policy to actual outcomes. In particular, more assessment is needed of whether governments truly desire coproduction and transparency or whether this goal is simply an assumption on the part of researchers. More important, studies need to assess whether increased social media usage is actually resulting in more transparency and coproduction. There is also a need for case

studies on the organizational adoption of social media that test policy theory itself. It would also be helpful to determine whether those in charge of social media really understand the related policies and what social media training would be adequate for their employees. This exploratory study provides a foundation and framework for such future research on the role of social media policies in effectively engaging citizens.

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Appendix A

City	State	City	State	City	State
New York	New York	Tampa	Florida	Des Moines	Iowa
Los Angeles	California	Aurora	Colorado	Oxnard	California
Chicago	Illinois	Honolulu	Hawai'i	Tacoma	Washington
Houston	Texas	Anaheim	California	Fontana	California
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	Santa Ana	California	Fayetteville	North Carolina
Phoenix	Arizona	Corpus Christi	Texas	Moreno Valley	California
San Antonio	Texas	Riverside	California	Columbus	Georgia
San Diego	California	St. Louis	Missouri	Huntington Beach	California
Dallas	Texas	Lexington	Kentucky	Yonkers	New York
San Jose	California	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	Montgomery	Alabama
Austin	Texas	Stockton	California	Aurora	Illinois
Jacksonville	Florida	Anchorage	Alaska	Glendale	California
San Francisco	California	Cincinnati	Ohio	Shreveport	Louisiana
Indianapolis	Indiana	Saint Paul	Minnesota	Akron	Ohio
Columbus	Ohio	Greensboro	North Carolina	Little Rock	Arkansas
Fort Worth	Texas	Toledo	Ohio	Amarillo	Texas
Charlotte	North Carolina	Newark	New Jersey	Augusta	Georgia
Detroit	Michigan	Plano	Texas	Mobile	Alabama
El Paso	Texas	Henderson	Nevada	Grand Rapids	Michigan
Seattle	Washington	Lincoln	Nebraska	Salt Lake City	Utah
Denver	Colorado	Orlando	Florida	Huntsville	Alabama
Washington	DC	Jersey City	New Jersey	Tallahassee	Florida
Memphis	Tennessee	Chula Vista	California	Grand Prairie	Texas
Boston	Massachusetts	Buffalo	New York	Overland Park	Kansas
Nashville	Tennessee	Fort Wayne	Indiana	Knoxville	Tennessee
Baltimore	Maryland	Chandler	Arizona	Brownsville	Texas
Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	St. Petersburg	Florida	Worcester	Massachusetts
Portland	Oregon	Laredo	Texas	Newport News	Virginia
Las Vegas	Nevada	Durham	North Carolina	Santa Clarita	California
Louisville	Kentucky	Irvine	California	Providence	Rhode Island
Milwaukee	Wisconsin	Madison	Wisconsin	Fort Lauderdale	Florida
Albuquerque	New Mexico	Norfolk	Virginia	Garden Grove	California
Tucson	Arizona	Lubbock	Texas	Oceanside	California
Fresno	California	Gilbert	Arizona	Rancho Cucamonga	California
Sacramento	California	Winston–Salem	North Carolina	Santa Rosa	California
Long Beach	California	Glendale	Arizona	Port St. Lucie	Florida
Kansas City	Missouri	Reno	Nevada	Chattanooga	Tennessee
Mesa	Arizona	Hialeah	Florida	Tempe	Arizona
Atlanta	Georgia	Garland	Texas	Jackson	Mississippi
Virginia Beach	Virginia	Chesapeake	Virginia	Cape Coral	Florida
Omaha	Nebraska	Irving	Texas	Vancouver	Washington
Colorado Springs	Colorado	North Las Vegas	Nevada	Ontario	California
Raleigh	North Carolina	Scottsdale	Arizona	Sioux Falls	South Dakota
Miami	Florida	Baton Rouge	Louisiana	Peoria	Arizona
Oakland	California	Fremont	California	Springfield	Missouri
Minneapolis	Minnesota	Richmond	Virginia	Pembroke Pines	Florida
Tulsa	Oklahoma	Boise	Idaho	Elk Grove	California
Cleveland	Ohio	San Bernardino	California	Salem	Oregon
Wichita	Kansas	Birmingham	Alabama	Corona	California
New Orleans	Louisiana	Spokane	Washington	Lancaster	California
Arlington	Texas	Rochester	New York	Eugene	Oregon
Bakersfield	California	Modesto	California	Palmdale	California

Appendix B

City	State	Population (2010)
New York	New York	8,175,133
Houston	Texas	2,100,263
Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	1,526,006
Phoenix	Arizona	1,445,632
Charlotte	North Carolina	731,424
El Paso	Texas	649,121
Seattle	Washington	608,660
Washington	District of Columbia	601,723
Milwaukee	Wisconsin	594,833
Portland	Oregon	583,776
Fresno	California	494,665
Sacramento	California	466,488
Omaha	Nebraska	408,958
Raleigh	North Carolina	403,892
Cleveland	Ohio	396,815
Tulsa	Oklahoma	391,906
Minneapolis	Minnesota	382,578
Arlington	Texas	365,438
Greensboro	North Carolina	269,666
Plano	Texas	259,841
Chula Vista	California	243,916
Chandler	Arizona	236,123
Reno	Nevada	225,221
San Bernardino	California	215,213
Irvine	California	212,375
Spokane	Washington	212,052
Tallahassee	Florida	181,376
Worchester	Massachusetts	181,045
Santa Rosa	California	167,815
Vancouver	Washington	161,791
Elk Grove	California	153,015

City	Population
Aurora, TX	1452
Nevada	938
Tom Bean	1067
Shady Shores	2843
Newark	1043