
CITY OF OTHELLO POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Subject: SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY		Index: ADMINISTRATIVE	
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OVERVIEW

The City of Othello uses various tools to share information and communicate with the public, stakeholders, partners and the media. Social media platforms offer a way to deliver public information and customer service to constituents. The addition of social media tools gives citizens another means to interact with their government. The City encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the city and the missions of its departments when appropriate.

1. PURPOSE:

The City of Othello 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 in the performance of City business. It also provides guidelines for conduct by City employees who use social media to engage with customers on behalf of the City. This policy is not intended to address employee’s personal use of social media sites.

2. OPERATIONS AFFECTED:

This policy applies to all users of City of Othello communications and computing resources, including regular employees, temporary employees, elected officials, volunteers, contractors and all others who use these resources on the City’s behalf.

3. DEFINITIONS:

Social Media: Third-party hosted online technologies that facilitate social interaction and dialogue and allow departments to distribute information through an additional public internet presence. Such third-party hosted services and tools may include, but are not limited to: social networking sites (Facebook, Linked-In), micro-blogging tools (Twitter, RSS Feeds), audio-visual networking sites (YouTube, Flickr, blogs, etc.)

4. POLICY:

- 4.1. Any official City of Othello participation on Social Media sites or services is considered an extension of the “City Computers, Cell Phones, E-mail, Internet and Other Communication Resources Policy”, which is contained in the City of Othello Personnel Policy.
- 4.2. The City of Othello website (www.othellowa.gov) will remain the City’s primary and predominant internet presence.
- 4.3. The best and most appropriate use of City Social Media tools generally fall into two categories:
 - A. Methods for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (e.g. emergency information).
 - B. Marketing/promotional outlets which increase the City’s ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

5. PROCEDURE:

- 5.1. A copy of the City of Othello Social Media Policy shall be posted to the City’s official website at www.othellowa.gov. All City of Othello Social Media sites shall include a link to access this policy through the official website.
- 5.2. Unless otherwise specified, the City of Othello shall have a singular Facebook page encompassing all departments.
- 5.3. The City Administrator or his/her designee will review department requests to contribute to Social Media sites and has the sole authority to approve or deny requests for site or account changes and/or terminate City Social Media accounts and pages.
- 5.4. Requests for site or account changes (including, but not limited to, adding or removing sites, creating new user accounts, and changing permissions) must be submitted to the City Administrator or his/her designee using the Social Media Approval Form (Appendix A).
- 5.5. The City Administrator or his/her designee will authorize up to one (1) representative, not including the Department Head, from each City department responsible for writing, posting and responding to items on Social Media sites in reference to their department. City departments are as follows:
 - A. City Clerk
 - B. Building and Planning
 - C. Finance
 - D. Information Technology
 - E. Police Department/Emergency Services
 - F. Parks and Recreation
 - G. Public Works
- 5.6. The City Administrator or his/her designee shall designate one previously authorized department representative to act as the Social Media Manager. The Social Media Manager shall oversee all content on each Social Media site to ensure adherence to the Social Media Policy, including appropriate use, message and branding that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the City of Othello.
- 5.7. The City Clerk and designated Social Media Manager shall maintain a list of all City of Othello Social Media sites, including Social Media Approval forms and applications, as well as login and password information, to allow for the immediate alteration or removal of content that is inappropriate or inconsistent with City policy.

- 5.8. Authorized Social Media websites must provide a mechanism for the employee to remove posts that violate City policy.

PRIVACY POLICY AND DISCLAIMER

- 5.9. Any individual accessing, browsing and using a City of Othello Social Media site accepts without limitation or qualification, the City's Social Media Policies. These terms and conditions apply only to the Social Media sites managed by the City of Othello.

The City of Othello maintains the right to modify this policy without notice. Any modification is effective immediately upon posting the modification on the Social Media Policy page unless otherwise stated. Continued use of a City of Othello Social Media site following the posting of any modification signifies acceptance of such modification.

All users of a City of Othello Social Media site are also subject to the site's own Privacy Policy. The City of Othello has no control over a third party site's privacy policy or their modifications to it. The City of Othello also has no control over content, commercial advertisements or other postings produced by the Social Media site that appear on the City of Othello Social Media site as part of the site's environment.

The City of Othello operates and maintains its Social Media site(s) as a public service to provide information about City programs, services, projects, issues, events and activities. The City of Othello assumes no liability for any inaccuracies these Social Media sites may contain and does not guarantee that the Social Media sites will be uninterrupted, permanent or error-free.

INFORMATION POSTED TO SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

City Posted Information

- 5.10. Wherever possible, content posted to City of Othello Social Media sites will also be available on the City's main website. Content posted on City Social Media sites should contain links directing users back to the City's official website for in-depth information, forms, documents, or online services necessary to conduct business with the City.
- 5.11. Staff members authorized to write, post and respond to items on Social Media sites are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and county laws, regulations and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, Public Records Act, First Amendment, privacy laws, anti-discrimination, anti-harassment and other civil rights statutes, acceptable use of City owned or controlled digital equipment, Internet Access and information security policies established by the City of Othello.
- 5.12. Staff members authorized to utilize Social Media sites do so under the premise that they are representing the City of Othello via Social Media outlets and must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Othello. The City expects those staff members to adhere to best practices and to use their best judgment and discretion when using online outreach and community building. They must remember that professional and personal lines can easily blur online, and at all times, they are representing their employer.

- 5.13. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of City pages from the Social Media outlets and may cause disciplinary action to be taken as determined by the City Administrator and/or his/her designee in compliance with the City of Othello Personnel Policy.
- 5.14. The City of Othello reserves the right to deny access to City of Othello Social Media sites for any individual who violates the City of Othello's Social Media Policy, at any time and without prior notice.
- 5.15. A successful page requires "babysitting." The department's authorized Social Media representative is responsible for monitoring department post. Posts should be approved by the Department Head or a designated alternate. The department's authorized Social Media representative is responsible for making sure department content is not stale.
- 5.16. All City of Othello Social Media sites shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the City and shall prominently display City contact information. Branding the City's Social Media pages as "the official site of the City of Othello" is required. All City-maintained Social Media pages shall include the official City seal and the following language:

"This is the official (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) page for the City of Othello, Washington."
- 5.17. All information posted to Social Media sites on the City's behalf must:
 - A. Present the City in a positive and professional manner;
 - B. Contain information that is freely available to the public and not be confidential as defined by any City policy or state or federal law;
 - C. Not contain any personal information except the names of employees whose job duties include being available for contact by the public;
 - D. Comply with any current or future local, state and federal laws.
 - E. Clearly identify the department for which information is posted on behalf of.
- 5.18. Councilmembers, commissioners, appointed volunteers (i.e. Planning Commission) and other officials should not comment or otherwise communicate on the City's Social Media sites. Participating in online discussions may constitute a meeting under the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30). Employees, volunteers and independent contractors of the City may post comments, but only in their capacity as members of the public, and not as an official representative of the City regarding the comment unless prior approval for the comment(s) has been obtained in accordance with this policy.
- 5.19. Employees administering a Social Media site on behalf of the City of Othello are expected to understand the current terms of service for that site.
- 5.20. City of Othello employees and/or elected officials shall not use personal equipment and/or personal accounts to post information regarding official City business to official City of Othello Social Media sites. Similarly, City employees and/or elected officials shall not use personal equipment and/or personal accounts to post information regarding official City business on other Social Media sites. All Social Media site posts by City employees and/or elected officials regarding official City business are subject to Washington State public disclosure laws, open meetings laws, and all other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Information Posted by Outside Individuals

- 5.21. Communications made through City of Othello Social Media sites do not constitute an official form of communication for legal notice, specific requests for service, public records requests, registering a complaint, filing a claim or reporting criminal activity.
- 5.22. All posts and comments submitted to City of Othello Social Media sites are public records subject to public disclosure under the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56). Public disclosure requests should be directed to the City Clerk's office.
- 5.23. Official City of Othello Social Media sites shall include notification to site users/visitors that comments posted to the page are not monitored outside of weekday hours, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and any comments containing any of the following inappropriate forms of content shall not be permitted and are subject to removal or restriction by the City Administrator or his or her designee and/or the designated Social Media Manager;
 - A. Comments unrelated to the original topic or article;
 - B. Anonymous posts;
 - C. Comments in support of, or in opposition to any political campaigns or ballot measures;
 - D. Profane, obscene or pornographic language or content or links to such language or content;
 - E. Solicitations of commerce, including but not limited to advertising of any business or product for sale;
 - F. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - G. Any information that is illegal or that might compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems;
 - H. Content that violates a legal ownership interest, such as a copyright, of another party;
 - I. Defamatory or personal attacks that are not on the topic at hand and protected by the commenter's First Amendment rights;
 - J. Threats to any person or organization;
 - K. Conduct that violates any federal, state or local law;
 - L. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, veteran status, parentage, marital status, medical condition, sexual identity, sexual orientation, as well as any other category protected by federal, state, or local laws.
- 5.24. A comment posted by a member of the public on any City of Othello Social Media site is the opinion of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of or agreement by the City of Othello, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the City of Othello.
- 5.25. Comments on topics or issues not within the jurisdictional purview of the City of Othello are subject to removal.
- 5.26. If comments are positive or negative and in the context to the topic at hand, then the content should be allowed to remain, regardless of whether it is favorable or unfavorable to the City of Othello.
- 5.27. Information posted to City of Othello Social Media sites becomes public information and there should be no expectation of privacy in regards to the information posted on these Social Media outlets.
- 5.28. The City of Othello reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed to be in violation of this Social Media policy or any applicable law.

LINKS POLICY

Links to Other Social Media Pages and External Websites Provided on City of Othello Social Media Pages

- 5.29. The City of Othello may select links to other Social Media sites and outside websites that offer helpful resources for users. Once an individual links to another page or site, the City's Policies no longer apply and the individual becomes subject to the policies of that page or site. The City of Othello is not responsible for the content that appears on these outside links and provides these links as a convenience only. Users should be aware that these external pages and sites and the information found on those pages and sites are not controlled by, provided by or endorsed by the City of Othello. The City reserves the right to delete links posted by outside individuals that violate the City of Othello Social Media Policy.

Links by Other Entities to Social Media Sites

- 5.30. It is not necessary to get advance permission to link to City of Othello Social Media sites; however, entities and individuals linking to City of Othello Social Media sites should not in any way suggest that the City of Othello has any relationship or affiliation with that organization or that the City endorses, sponsors or recommends the information, products or services of that site.

COPYRIGHT POLICY

- 5.31. All information and materials generated by the City of Othello and provided on City of Othello Social Media sites are the property of the City of Othello. The City retains copyright on all text, graphic images and other content that was produced by the City of Othello and found on the page. You may print copies of information and material for your own non-commercial use, provided that you retain the copyright symbol or other such proprietary notice intact on any copyrighted materials you copy. Please include a credit line reading: "credit: City of Othello (or Twitter or YouTube) Page" or "Courtesy of City of Othello."

Commercial use of text, City logos, photos and other graphics is prohibited without the express written permission of the City of Othello. Use of the City logo is prohibited for any non-governmental purpose. Any person reproducing or redistributing a third party copyright must adhere to the terms and conditions of the third party copyright holder. If you are a copyright holder and you feel that the City of Othello did not use an appropriate credit line please notify the City of Othello Social Media Manager with detailed information about the circumstances, so that the copyright information can be added or the material in question can be removed.

RETENTION OF POSTED INFORMATION

- 5.32. Information posted to the City's Social Media sites is subject to the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56) and records retention requirements (RCW 40.14) set by state law. Records retention schedules can be found at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/archives/RecordsRetentionSchedules.aspx>. See Attachment C for records retention information.
- 5.33. The Information Technology Manager shall periodically save an electronic copy of all Social Media site's page content to a City server.
- 5.34. The IT Manager shall set up each Social Media page in conjunction with a City e-mail account, which will be set to receive and archive all user comments and fans joining the page for purposes of records retention. Any postings removed from the site will be retained in the same format.

6. REFERENCES:

- 6.1. State of Washington. Office of the Governor in Coordination with Multiple State Agencies and Contributors. *Guidelines and Best Practices for Social Media Use in Washington State*. Washington: 2010. Print.

7. APPENDICES:

- A. City of Othello Social Media Approval Form
- B. Records Management Advice, Office of the Secretary of State, Washington State Archives (November 2013)
- C. Washington State Code Regarding Retention/Destruction of Official Records.
 1. RCW 40.14.060 Destruction, disposition of official public records or office files and memoranda – Record retention schedules.
 2. WAC 434-662-030 Retention scheduling and disposition of electronic public records.

APPENDIX B: Records Management Advice

Office of the Secretary of State, Washington State Archives.



Records Management Advice

Issued: November 2013

(Originally Issued: September 2009)

Electronic Records Management: Blogs, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter & Managing Public Records

Purpose: Provide guidance to state and local government agencies regarding the retention of public records of posts to social networking websites such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Agencies need to consider the following five (5) factors when managing the retention of their public records created or received through social networking sites:

1. Are the posts public records?

If the posts are made or received in connection with the transaction of the agency's public business (such as providing advice or receiving comments about the agency, its programs, core business, etc.), then they are public records for the purposes of records retention and need to be retained for their minimum retention periods.

2. Are the posts primary or secondary copies?

If the posts are simply copies of records that the agency is already retaining for the minimum retention period (such as links to publications), then the posts may be considered secondary copies and retained accordingly. Otherwise, the posts are the agency's primary record.

3. How long do the posts need to be retained?

Agencies should use the same records series for posts that they would use if the same advice was distributed as a letter or an email to everyone within the agency's jurisdiction. Agencies need to retain their primary record of posts which are public records for at least the minimum retention period listed for those records in the approved records retention schedules.

4. How will the posts be retained by the agency?

Agencies need to consider how they will retain a record in their custody and control of their posts to social networking websites. When retention of the posts themselves is outside the agency's control, the agency needs to consider what other records they will retain, such as email confirmations of each post or comment. Agencies need to consider these issues in any service contracts with vendors of social networking websites and in their configuration settings for their social networking website accounts.

5. For which types of records is this technology appropriate?

Agencies need to determine the business activities for which social networking technology is appropriate if the agency is unable to manage the creation, receipt and retention of public records documenting the public business they transact using social networking websites.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from
Washington State Archives:**

**www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov**

APPENDIX C: Washington State Code Regarding Retention/Destruction of Official Records.

RCW 40.14.060 Destruction, disposition of official public records or office files and memoranda — Record retention schedules.

(1) Any destruction of official public records shall be pursuant to a schedule approved under RCW [40.14.050](#). Official public records shall not be destroyed unless:

(a) Except as provided under RCW [40.14.070](#)(2)(b), the records are six or more years old;

(b) The department of origin of the records has made a satisfactory showing to the state records committee that the retention of the records for a minimum of six years is both unnecessary and uneconomical, particularly if lesser federal retention periods for records generated by the state under federal programs have been established; or

(c) The originals of official public records less than six years old have been copied or reproduced by any photographic or other process approved by the state archivist which accurately reproduces or forms a durable medium for so reproducing the original.

(2) Any lesser term of retention than six years must have the additional approval of the director of financial management, the state auditor and the attorney general, except when records have federal retention guidelines the state records committee may adjust the retention period accordingly. An automatic reduction of retention periods from seven to six years for official public records on record retention schedules existing on June 10, 1982, shall not be made, but the same shall be reviewed individually by the state records committee for approval or disapproval of the change to a retention period of six years.

Recommendations for the destruction or disposition of office files and memoranda shall be submitted to the records committee upon approved forms prepared by the records officer of the agency concerned and the archivist. The committee shall determine the period of time that any office file or memorandum shall be preserved and may authorize the division of archives and records management to arrange for its destruction or disposition.

WAC 434-662-030 Retention scheduling and disposition of electronic public records.

Electronic records are bound by the same provisions as paper documents as set forth in chapter [40.14](#) RCW. Electronic records must be retained pursuant to the retention schedules adopted by the records committees. Destruction of, or changes to the retention period of, any public record, regardless of format, requires legal approval from the state or local records committee pursuant to chapters [40.14](#) RCW, [434-635](#) WAC and other applicable state laws. Public records that are designated "archival" by the state archivist must be maintained pursuant to the provisions of this chapter until such time as they are transferred to the state archives.