WisDOT Social Media Peer Exchange

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WISCONSIN DOT
PUTTING RESEARCH TO WORK

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16. Abstract

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Office of Public Affairs (OPA), with funding and organizational support provided by the WisDOT Research Program, hosted a peer exchange November 2-4, 2011 in Madison, Wisconsin. Representatives from other state agencies, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the University of Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory (TOPS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) shared experiences regarding the role of social media in agency communications. The meeting consisted of both presentations and roundtable discussions aimed at highlighting best practices, lessons learned and the state of the industry.

This report presents the key observations that came out of the peer exchange discussions.

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November 2-4, 2011

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Office of Public Affairs (OPA), with funding and organizational support provided by the WisDOT Research Program, hosted a peer exchange November 2-4, 2011 in Madison, Wisconsin. Representatives from five state agencies outside of Wisconsin and one state agency within Wisconsin joined representatives from WisDOT, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the University of Wisconsin Traffic Operations and Safety Laboratory (TOPS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to share experiences regarding the role of social media in agency communications. The meeting consisted of both presentations and roundtable discussions aimed at highlighting best practices, lessons learned and the state of the industry.

This report presents the key observations that came out of the peer exchange discussions.

Objectives

The peer exchange covered a range of topics related to the use of social media in supporting agency communication goals. With WisDOT looking at increasing the role of social media in WisDOT's communications, the goal was to learn how other agencies are using and managing social media in order to identify effective practices and learn from their experience.

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Social Media Peer Exchange - Day 1

Wisconsin DOT - Status and Background of Social Media Use
- WisDOT started piloting the use of Facebook and Twitter for a few specific projects: two mega construction projects and a motor carrier project.
- The pilots helped to guide the development of policy, such as outlining roles and responsibilities and restrictions.
- The use of social media has been opened up more broadly. It is managed through the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), which gives approval for the use of social media tools.
- WisDOT is also tweeting 511 updates out to specific regions and posting public service announcements on YouTube.
- As WisDOT begins to look at using additional tools (like Picasa), they would like to learn from other agencies about the best way to reach the intended audience.

Visiting Agency Social Media Case Studies

Washington DOT
Washington DOT provided a case study on their success reaching their audience and building a communications network:
- WSDOT has found that to grab public attention via social media it's important to:
  o Be clever and funny
  o Use pictures
  o Find things people relate to
- They never take the clever or funny approach to emergency situations and avoid topics like budget, tolling and politics.
- Using Twitter in emergency situations has allowed them to quickly correct inaccurate information that has been transmitted by others.
- Pictures attract interest and help WSDOT tell the story of how they are spending money to maintain roadways.
- Pictures get picked up by local bloggers looking for content who will expand upon the story and assist them in getting their message out.
- WSDOT reaches out to local news media personalities to extend their communications network.
- WSDOT tries to break news first across social media channels and then send out the press release. Media outlets will often just retweet the WSDOT story first before they write up their own story.
- They have developed a checklist of how to put out information and content:
  1. Let network know what's coming down the line
  2. Optimize the press release for searchability
  3. Use caution with clever titles
  4. Post the release on the website
  5. Use a clever factoid or summary text and link to the website from Twitter
  6. 10 or 15 minutes later send out the press release

North Carolina DOT
North Carolina DOT provided a case study regarding the use of social media during Hurricane Irene and how it was used to communicate with the public regarding five breeches in North Carolina State Highway 12. Highlights include:
- NCDOT ramped up social media a week prior to Hurricane Irene's arrival, communicating about preparations, providing information from other agencies on emergency management and reposting content from credible agencies.
- During the night that the storm hit, they tweeted relevant updates from the field, 511 feeds, the Governor's office, photos and information about ferry options.
- The communications department provided 24-hour coverage during the storm, which is important for emergency situations.
- NCDOT used questions they received to explain what they do and turned themselves into their own reporters.
- After the hurricane, the Secretary's Facebook page jumped in followers and experienced a 255% increase in "likes."
- NCDOT used Flickr to post pictures of hurricane aftermath and tell their story.
- They also posted YouTube videos that included interviews with DOT staff. This helped put a human face on the work they do.

Oregon DOT
Oregon DOT provided a case study regarding the use of social media during the planning and construction of the I-5 Willamette River Bridge project.
- There was a lot of community interest in the project and social media was a good way to engage that audience.
- They started with a blog and then incorporated other tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, etc.
- ODOT held virtual public open houses, which helped facilitate public involvement. They garnered twice as many responses as the traditional physical open house, and the online comments were more detailed.
- Five field PIOs within ODOT were given flip phones, so they could shoot and edit videos for YouTube.
- The communication office is the sole access point for social media. If an area within ODOT wants to open up a social media channel, they need the following:
    - A business plan that identifies blog purpose, anticipated life cycle, upkeep process, authors and risks.
    - The project team must promise to post two to three times per week and have a plan for postings at least a month in advance.
    - They also need to provide feedback on agency effectiveness.
- They have found that social media allows them to directly reach the public without the help of traditional media outlets.

Texas DOT
Texas DOT provided a case study regarding the use of Facebook during the SH 334 Emergency Bridge Closure.
- The Cedar Creek Chamber of Commerce posted a note on Facebook that gave out inaccurate information on how long the bridge would be closed, and there was a negative public reaction.
- TxDOT used Facebook to get accurate information to the public and address negative comments.
- The Cedar Creek Chamber of Commerce started posting the DOT content and the DOT was able to address all the negative comments and turn them around to the positive.

- They also posted video and pictures of what was being done to address the situation, which had a positive impact.
- They gained fans as a result to their responsiveness in this emergency situation and have maintained them since then.
- Kelli had a hard time getting final approval to use social media, so she kick-started the department's efforts slowly, and others eventually saw its worth, allowing her to continue to grow TxDOT's outreach and engagement.

Michigan DOT

Michigan DOT provided a case study regarding the development of videos distributed via YouTube to address specific issues, such as the gas tax.
- The video ended up being a helpful way to address the public regarding public funding, which is complex to explain.

Wisconsin DWD

Wisconsin DWD is the labor department, and they reviewed their use of social media for agency communication and service delivery.
- They use different tools for different approaches. For example, YouTube works well for providing self-help videos on handling unemployment insurance actions.
- They are also using Facebook and are in the early stages of gathering data to understand what works and what doesn't.
- Demographically, they find that they are attracting an audience that skews towards older women.
- They piloted the purchase of one $50 Facebook ad, which had an immediate impact, increasing their traffic.

Key observations and practices discussed
- As DOT's target mobile devices with transportation information, the key is to emphasize safety and to discourage people from checking the Internet while driving.
- There is tremendous value in branding and being an official outlet, especially if you can add a unique touch that makes it more personal.
- Comments are a great opportunity to gain advocates. People will comment publicly regardless, but comments through social media give the agency a chance to have their voice in the conversation.
- Many state agencies are afraid of using social media, but it allows you to get your message directly to the public and get their feedback.
- Several states have used the online open house to reach out the public. As people expect more and more transparency about every conversation, the public hearing via the web is a useful option.
- Social media gives an agency the chance to tell their own story. An effective social media coordinator should be a mixture of "storyteller" and "geek."
- People become the distribution network using mobile phones and smart phones.
- Hash tags in tweets are an effective way to highlight certain topics, draw people in to your message and build awareness. It's basically an online catalog system.
- Maintaining Flickr requires a lot of effort, so it is beneficial to give more people in the agency access so they can post pictures themselves.
- Kurrently.com is a website that allows you to search social media platforms for real-time comments on your brand. Coincidentally, it is what helped TxDOT identify the Cedar Creek Lake Area Chamber of Commerce as a source of misinformation.

Topic #1 – Potential Usage

Aileen Switzer introduced this topic. WisDOT wants to understand all the different ways that state agencies are using social media.

Social media uses identified:
- Maintenance and construction updates related to particular projects or throughout the state.
- Emergency management and conditions communications.
- Educating the public. For example, regarding driver licensing.
- Design visualization feedback.
- Publicizing and holding public involvement hearings.
- Promotion for businesses affected by construction.
- Job recruitment.
- Practice driver tests.
- Amber alerts.
- Humanizing the agency.
- Surveys to get feedback from the public on agency services or long-rang planning.
- Crowd sourcing to respond to public inquiries.

Innovative Ideas
- Texas would like to develop an app (that has multiple apps within it) to be a single source for multiple kinds of transportation information.
- Wisconsin would like to see a pooled fund-style development project for a transportation app, because every state needs basically the same thing.
- Some states conduct design visualization sessions using the social media channels. For example, Washington, Texas and North Carolina do fly-throughs on YouTube, which helps people visualize what a design is going to look like and contribute to a dialogue about it.
- Idaho has stopped doing public meetings. They only conduct online meetings due to the strategic investment of time and effort compared to traveling all around the state.
- North Carolina has a mobile version of their website that aggregates traffic information, rest area locations, ferry dock locations and other key information so that it's optimized for smart phone access. They did this rather than create a stand-alone app or multiple apps.
- Delaware has developed an iPhone app to allow drivers to sample tests on their phone.
- North Carolina has had a great response to allowing practice test results to be shared via Twitter and Facebook.
- Some states are using wiki-style sites, Google groups or Sharepoint for internal collaboration.
- North Carolina creates a weekly video news capsule that has become popular internally as a resource for employees. It complements the regular employee newsletter.

Challenges and Opportunities
- If your web team and your public affairs functions are disconnected it can make it challenging to get your message out in a timely fashion.
- Always link your social media audience back to your agency's website, which drives traffic there and encourages people to explore the site.
- Some states are using Quick Response (QR) codes. The key is to ensure they are optimized for mobile devices and to connect the target user to useful web content.
- It's important to write communications for the web and mobile applications. Too often agencies take what's been printed and just try to apply it online. Communications should be short, to the point and state the main message up front.

- It can be hard to stay on top of traffic incident reporting, so Washington uses crowd sourcing to help people get advice on picking the best route to their destination.
- Know when to tweet and when not to tweet. You want enough traffic to reach your audience, but if there are other major events happening nationally then the transportation message may get lost in an especially large volume of traffic.
- There is a balance to planning topics and posts but still being flexible to respond to what is happening around your state or to unexpected emergencies. Most states plan in advance, although Washington has stopped advance planning entirely.
- Most states do not allow individual projects to have their own Facebook pages or Twitter feeds because it's not easy to maintain and sometimes the pages would just disappear.
- Getting staff around the state to submit videos of what they do gives the department a human face. However, you have to set and maintain standards for length and quality of what gets posted online. Try to keep videos less than 3 minutes.

Topic #2 – Staffing Resources

Peg led off the topic by explaining WisDOT's organization and resources. WisDOT is a large department, which includes both DMV and State Patrol. They have lots of resources involved in communications but are segmented, and that presents some additional complexities:
- State Patrol typically handles communication regarding traffic incidents.
- All snow plowing is outsourced to county agencies, so it is harder to get information on which streets are plowed.
- There are regional communication managers, but they do not report to WisDOT's Office of Public Affairs, and sometimes their communications are outsourced to public relations contractors (for example, to handle their project hotline feedback).
- Web activities are housed in the business services division, so they are not organizationally connected and neither of them is connected to the IT department.

Recommended Practices
- It's better to have one central site than many niche sites, because sometimes enthusiasm flags for the niche sites and they need to be taken down. You can have one site with many dimensions and promote it in multiple ways.
- Staff in the communications office should have administrator privileges on all agency social media sites, so they can control any given page if necessary. People lose passwords or retire and forget to relay the information.
- Centralized management of social media tools also helps to avoid message fragmentation.
- Social media should complement existing communications activities and be used to meet overall communication goals.
- The communications department needs the ability to directly manage web content. You especially need to have control of your agency's main web page for an emergency situation. It's important to be able to post content there directly without delay (even on weekends).
- Agencies need to manage public expectations about when they will find a live person online. For example, you can post a message stating hours of availability.
- Although hours varied, most states have someone dedicated to social media at least part time with additional staff who are also involved in supporting it.
- If you are using the web and social media, print brochures, fact sheets and flyers may no longer be needed, since this information can be distributed online.
- Social media provides another way to connect and be able to tell your agency's story.

- The group agreed on the critical importance of hiring good storytellers. If you have someone who is passionate about getting messages out, they can learn to use the tools.
- In addition to communicating roadway operational information, Twitter can also provide business continuity for communications in case the website goes down.

Challenges and Opportunities
- The benefit of social media is that you can talk <u>with</u> people, not just at them. Because you do hear back from the public, your organization needs to be prepared to hear and respond to their input.
- Most DOTs are not able to pay staff to be available to handle social media 24/7, yet emergency events come up where the public may rely on updates via social media.
- A crisis can be a real opportunity to get the story right and let the public know that your agency is on top of the situation.
- Most agencies are willing to pay engineers to be on call but not communications staff. Using staff outside of communications to work evening and night shifts is a way to get 24/7 coverage.
- Washington tries to staff their accounts whenever there is an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activation. They use staff outside their unit who announce themselves as new to Twitter and most people find it charming and appreciate that someone is trying to keep them up-to-date.
- During an emergency, you can just post a tweet indicating that you need sleep and your audience finds it humanizing. It's the human side of social media that people connect with and that is the benefit of the medium.
- The key to getting more staff involved is to give them training and then give them latitude. Identify red flag issues, which require a check-in with the communications office but otherwise let them go.

Social Media Peer Exchange - Day 2

Topic #3 – Policy and Guidance
Patty Mayers introduced this topic and referred to TAM 301, which is WisDOT's policy on social media. WisDOT spent a year or so doing research on what other government agencies were doing. They defined business needs, general administrative and operational processes, and roles and responsibilities. WisDOT is interested in what kinds of policies other states have, especially how loose or restrictive they are and how they are communicated.

Recommended Practices
- It may not be necessary to write a separate policy for social media compared with the Internet or other e-communications. There is no inherent reason why social media requires more policy to guide it than writing letters or emails.
- Washington and Oregon recommend looking carefully at what goes into policy versus what is guidance or training. Keep the policy broad, so you don't have to revise it for minor changes in tools or equipment.
- Training materials or guidance documents can provide the detail that is left out of the policy. For example, in Washington they have rules for Twitter that make more sense as guidance than as policy:
    - All tweets should be 120 characters or less to allow retweeting within the 140 character limit.
    - Make sure no one else is using a hashtag for something else that you wouldn't want associated with your agency.
- The US Military provides a good example of an organization that uses social media and takes an open and empowering approach to the usage.

- North Carolina encourages the use of social media, but also encourages everyone to have a plan and ensures that the communications office has the password and administrative rights.
- The group emphasized how critical it is to keep track of all the sites and their passwords.
- Centralized ownership of various websites can also help ensure that standard design templates used and consistent messages are promoted.

Challenges and Opportunities
- Human resources or labor relations issues end up driving most policy, because there are just a few extreme personnel situations that necessitate a change in policy across the board.
- One of the challenges with policy is to define what social media is, because it can be so broad. For example, Washington has started having employees log in to news sites and add comments to correct news stories with inaccurate information. This is not what people typically think of within the realm of social media.
- Texas has specific and direct policies and guidelines, but there is not much enforcement behind it.
- Each state's open record laws are different, so there are a variety of tools and practices for ensuring that the different types of social media records are properly archived.
    o Some states make sure they are not posting unique content, so they don't have to worry about separate archiving requirements.
    o There are also different interpretations by agencies on what constitutes transitory material.
- It is important to delineate policy about consultant access from the start. Most agencies have policies regarding consultant involvement in public meetings and media interviews that can apply to social media.
- With regard to negative comments, the group consensus was that it was better not to edit or delete them unless they are profane or constitute a personal attack.
- Negative comments can be an opportunity to correct inaccurate information and participate in the dialogue. The negative dialogue is likely to happen somewhere and this allows the DOT to have a voice in the discussion. In some cases, non-DOT staff may offer a correction, which is better than the DOT defending itself.
- Texas and other states do remove posts with profanity, but they alert the individual about the need to remove the post and give them a chance to repost the comment in a more respectful way.
- In Washington, they had a consistently cantankerous negative poster, but they have met with him and he has become a big fan even though he is also a big critic.
- North Carolina notes that it usually becomes obvious to the online community when there is a kooky poster.
- Most states agreed they would not use closed social media sites for internal communication because each state has a huge push for transparency.

Topic #4 – Legal Issues
Daniel Yeh introduced this topic by highlighting a couple of unique legal issues in other states:
- North Carolina has a small group of people who are concerned with a right-of-way issue related to a historical statue.
    o There is a court case, but this small group is also commenting on the state DOT website.
    o North Carolina would prefer to respond to the posts, but their attorney general has not approved the response yet.
    o Everyone agreed it would be better to respond and potentially calm the situation or create a more favorable opinion with other members of the public, but they need the attorney general's approval.

- Washington has a policy that states "Communications made through the blog's e-mail and messaging system will in no way constitute a legal or official notice."
  - This is a liability issue, because they don't want someone's tweet about a pothole to be considered an official notice to the agency.

Recommended Practices
- Tweetake is an application that allows you to back-up your Twitter account, which is useful for records retention.
- Washington does not retweet any photo that looks like it came from the driver's side window.
- People get excited about capturing the first photo on the scene of an accident, but it's also important to make sure they have called 911.
- Texas suggests posting in both Spanish and English, based on regional demographics. They don't require it though.

Challenges and Opportunities
- Texas had a situation with an online comment that related to pending litigation. They were waiting for legal guidance on the response, but the negative message was spreading. After four hours, they finally posted a simple straightforward response, and it did help calm things down.
- There are potential liabilities to giving advice via Twitter or Facebook. Washington typically employs crowd sourcing to mitigate the liability.
- Twitter and Facebook are not Section 508 compliant. They are third-party websites, which allows DOTs to avoid responsibility for compliance, but as more and more meetings are held online, accessibility will become a greater issue.

Mobile Technologies Presentation
Lloyd Brown presented on wireless and mobile technology, trends related to their demographics, and what that means for transportation agencies.

Presentation Highlights
- Desktop computers are becoming less popular and mobile technology is on the rise.
- The Pew Internet and American Life project did an update to their previous study on the rising app culture.
  - 23% of people with cell phones downloaded apps in 2009;
  - 50% of them did in 2011.
- Lloyd suggests that as more and more of the population goes mobile, the term mobile media may be more appropriate than social media.
- 78% of American adults use the Internet whether it is via a computer or a mobile device. Age, race and income play a role in the nature of the usage as well:
  - 95% of 18-29 year olds use the Internet
  - 80% of the Hispanic population uses the Internet, especially for banking and job hunting.
  - 59% of American adults connect to the Internet wirelessly and 85% own cell phones.
  - Many Americans are using mobile apps to access the Internet because it's cheaper than owning a home computer.
  - Men and young adults are major app users.
- Mobile technology is a complementary technology, not a replacement and it's still important to have a message that breaks through the daily information clutter.
- Timeliness and accuracy are critical, and that means more pressure on communication teams to manage more tools.

- 35% of adults own a smart phone and for 25% it's their primary way of accessing the Internet. This means customers are mobile and active, and they expect you to be as well.
- People fill their gap times with mobile devices. For example, when waiting on appointments or standing in lines.
- Consider your customer's expectations, and you will see old challenges but with new opportunities.
- Be available: keep doing the basics well, for example, is the website easy to access? What about a mobile app or optimization?
- Be responsive: are there internal processes in place to handle questions or to pass along information?
- Be creative: are there opportunities to engage the public in new ways?

Discussion
The group continued to discuss trends in mobile media to reach different demographics:
- Transportation agencies are developing some cool apps, such as to pay parking fees via mobile phones or for sending text alerts to the freight community.
- If a customer reaches out to the DOT, the agency should respond using whatever format they received (letter, email, Twitter, etc.) in a timely fashion.
- There are peaks and valleys to traffic on both Twitter and Facebook, and it's likely that trends vary somewhat regionally. Understanding this flow will help determine when you post different types of information.
- It is harder to reach the older generations, because they are not on the Internet. However, the elderly often have someone in their life who helps get them access to information they need on the Internet.

Topic #5 – Long-term Sustainability
Peg Schmitt introduced this topic regarding social media tools and how to handle their likely impermanence. There is also a training component to sustainability—the need to address what happens to social media when a key person leaves.

Recommended Practices
- Agencies should ensure that the Facebook page, Twitter feed, etc. are centralized and have good documentation for their maintenance in case of turnover.
- Servers and licensing for websites require a plan for long-term support. Third-party options are sometimes more flexible and more responsive than in-house support.
- As long as the DOT owns the domain name, there is not any inherent problem with using websites outside of the agency's own.

Challenges and Opportunities
- It's not easy to determine when to invest in a new technology. Washington has regular internal discussions about new technologies. Knowing "where it's going next" is a challenge that is not easily resolved.
- Florida and Georgia contract with private vendors to broadcast their 511 information via a mobile app. The only caution is that you could be compromising the agency's integrity as a credible source of information by giving it to a contractor.
- States can sell ads on their websites to bridge budget shortfalls, but that also puts them in competition with news outlets.
- There is sometimes a snowball effect of investing in social media. During the Wisconsin protests, OPA had been monitoring social media. Law enforcement took over, and soon every shift was monitoring the flow of information.
- The states agreed there can be an addiction to monitoring the social media feeds.

Topic #6 – Measuring Impact

Washington DOT introduced this topic by talking about their "missing teddy bear" story. Social media was successfully employed to help reunite a little girl with a teddy bear lost at the side of the road, and it was a huge, unplanned public relations success with viral retweets, picture shares and even attention from Diane Sawyer.

Innovative Practices

- Washington is shifting away from reporting numbers to reporting on the emotional or qualitative impact, such as numbers of comments or likes.
- North Carolina has had similar experience. There was a woman who wanted to invite the whole North Carolina bridge crew to her wedding, because they had made it possible given the location.
- For marketing social media, cross-fertilize between them and advertise on websites and through email footers.

Challenges and Opportunities

- Although lost teddy bears may not be part of the DOT's core mission, people make decisions based on how they feel about an agency, and this is an opportunity to have a positive impact on perception.
- Numbers may not be inherently meaningful in social media, but there is still value in tracking how they change over time.
- Surveys are also a way to establish a baseline regarding public perception and should be repeated annually. You have to ask the same questions year after year in order to spot trends.
- There is tremendous qualitative value if you can get members of the public to respond on behalf of the DOT in social media forums.
- Some states have also used social media to help engage DOT staff. For example, posting pictures of good work being accomplished by specific employees or honoring a fallen worker.
- Wisconsin's 511 site sees an increase in traffic when there are storms. Getting 511 information on Facebook or Twitter would be a great way to connect with a broader audience.

WisDOT Social Media Peer Exchange
November 2 - 4, 2011

AASHTO | MI DOT | NC DOT | OR DOT | TX DOT | WA DOT | WI DOT | WI DWD

Social media uses by visiting agencies

- Maintenance or construction updates
- Emergency conditions communications
- Educating the public
- Public involvement on specific projects
- Long range planning feedback
- Promotion for businesses affected by construction
- Design visualization feedback
- Job recruitment
- Practice driver tests
- Amber alerts
- Humanizing the agency

Common social media tools – a growing list

- Facebook – website for sharing and receiving information
- Twitter – website for sending very short text posts
- Flickr – website for managing photos with details
- YouTube – website for posting videos
- Blogs – website with chronological posts
- Podcasts – audio and video recordings
- Virtual town halls – videos and presentations with opportunities to post feedback
- Website content optimized for mobile devices
- Apps – applications for mobile devices

Recommended practices – social media should meet your communication goals

Policies and guidance
- Keep the policy simple and broad to accommodate changing technologies. Be open with few restrictions.
- Provide detailed training and guidelines for developing and managing content.
- Leverage policies already in place for other forms of external communication like email and press releases.
- Centralize oversight of the department's use of social media including accounts and passwords.
- Require business plans for using social media – plan for content and resources to maintain it.
- Aim for fewer social media sites. This helps with sustainability and enhances business continuity.

Legal issues and records retention
- Get assistance from legal office in handling challenging complaints or posts.
- Regularly encourage safe use of the agency's social media. (No use while driving.)
- Save content per retention policies. Try automated tools for harvesting and storing posts and tweets.
- Use disclaimers to communicate expectations and limitations of social media to the public.

Measuring impact
- Capture qualitative impacts (most valuable): number of engagements, likes and supportive feedback.
- Track quantitative measures of use and reach: number of followers, retweets and mentions.
- Consider ways to continually evaluate the effectiveness of communication formats.

Developing content
- Social media is a complement to other communication formats. Know your audience.
- Tell stories. Be clever and creative. Be human.
- Be available and responsive.
- Use a voice that connects with your intended audience.
- Use pictures and videos.
- Educate your audience.
- Emphasize accuracy, credibility and timeliness.
- Develop a network of communication contacts internally and externally.
- Piggyback on external news.
- Use crowd sourcing to have others help share information and tell the agency's stories.

Staffing and resourcing
- Oversight and staffing for social media needs to be centralized with communication team. IT and Web need to support social media initiatives.
- Hire or train technically savvy storytellers.
- Update most content daily but only during the workday. Emergencies could require 24/7 posts.
- Manage customer expectations for quantity and timing of new content.
- Plan additional time for using additional communication formats. Be selective.
- To be successful it has to be supported.

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AASHTO | MI DOT | NC DOT | OR DOT | TX DOT | WA DOT | WI DOT | WI DWD

Social media uses by visiting agencies

- Maintenance or construction updates
- Emergency conditions communications
- Educating the public
- Public involvement on specific projects
- Long range planning feedback
- Promotion for businesses affected by construction
- Design visualization feedback
- Job recruitment
- Practice driver tests
- Amber alerts
- Humanizing the agency

Common social media tools – a growing list

- Facebook – website for sharing and receiving information
- Twitter – website for sending very short text posts
- Flickr – website for managing photos with details
- YouTube – website for posting videos
- Blogs – website with chronological posts
- Podcasts – audio and video recordings
- Virtual town halls – videos and presentations with opportunities to post feedback
- Website content optimized for mobile devices
- Apps – applications for mobile devices

Recommended practices – social media should meet your communication goals

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AGENDA

Wednesday, November 2, 2011 – Concourse Hotel, Conference Room II

7:45 – 8:00	**Registration and Refreshments**
8:00 – 8:15	**Welcome Messages** • Peg Schmitt, Wisconsin DOT • Daniel Yeh, Wisconsin DOT
8:15 – 8:45	**WisDOT Social Media Usage Status and Background** • Peg Schmitt, Wisconsin DOT
8:45– 10:00	**Visiting Agency Case Study Presentations (20 minutes each)** • Jeremy Bertrand, Washington State DOT • Lisa Schell, North Carolina DOT • Patrick Cooney, Oregon DOT Brief question and answer session to follow.
10:00 – 10:15	**BREAK**
10:15 – 12:30	**Visiting Agency Case Study Presentations (20 minutes each)** • Kelli Petras, Texas DOT • Adam Collins, Wisconsin DNR • Nicole Fite, Wisconsin DWD Brief question and answer session to follow.
12:30 – 1:30	**LUNCH (Conference Room IV)**
1:30 – 3:15	**Potential Usage** • Brief introduction of topic by Aileen Switzer, Wisconsin DOT. • Facilitated question and answer/round table discussion.
3:15 – 3:30	**BREAK**
3:30 – 4:30	**Staffing/Resources** • Brief introduction of topic by Peg Schmitt, Wisconsin DOT. • Facilitated question and answer/round table discussion.
4:30 – 5:00	**Recap Discussions and Takeaways**

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Thursday, November 3, 2011 – Concourse Hotel, Senate AB Room

7:45 – 8:00	**Networking and Refreshments**
8:00 – 8:10	**Welcome** Facilitator provides welcome, recap of Wednesday meeting, and overview of goals for the day.
8:10 – 10:00	**Policy and Guidance** • Brief introduction of topic by Patty Mayers, Wisconsin DOT. • Facilitated question and answer/round table discussion.
10:00– 10:15	**BREAK**
10:15 – 11:45	**Legal Issues** • Brief introduction of topic by Daniel Yeh, Wisconsin DOT. • Facilitated question and answer/round table discussion.
11:45– 1:00	**LUNCH**
1:00 – 1:45	**Mobile Technologies Presentation** • Lloyd Brown (AASHTO) will present on how mobile technologies have the potential to impact how state governments plan and implement information sharing and customer engagement programs.
1:45 – 3:00	**Long-term Sustainability** • Brief introduction of topic by Peg Schmitt, Wisconsin DOT. • Facilitated question and answer/round table discussion.
3:00 – 3:15	**BREAK**
3:15– 4:30	**Measuring Impact** • Brief introduction of topic by Emlynn Grisar, Wisconsin DOT. • Facilitated question and answer/round table discussion.
4:30 – 5:00	**Recap Discussions and Takeaways**
6:30	**Group Dinner at the Great Dane Pub & Brewing Co.** 123 E. Doty Street, Downtown Madison

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Friday, November 4, 2011 – Hill Farms, Room 364

8:15 – 8:30	**Networking and Refreshments**
8:30 – 8:40	**Welcome** Facilitator provides welcome, recap of Thursday meeting, and overview of goals for the day.
8:40 – 9:45	**Group Development of Executive Summary Report** Prepare brief (one-page) reporting document on peer exchange highlights, participant takeaways and next steps for WisDOT.
9:45 – 10:00	**BREAK and Report Printing**
10:00 – 10:45	**Report to Senior Management** Facilitated report to WisDOT senior managers.
10:45 – 11:00	**Closing Remarks**