Social Media in Strathcona County

Guidelines, Tools and Start-up

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

Strathcona County supports the use of social media to further the strategic direction and goals of this organization.

Rapidly growing use of social media and social networking communities has started a fundamental societal shift in the way information is conveyed and communicated. As more and more residents in our community use social media to receive and share information, and communicate their views and opinions, it is important that the County include these technologies to enhance communications, public engagement and customer service.

Strathcona County will build its presence on social media sites and use social media tools with adequate consideration given to:
- ensuring efforts align with the County's Strategic Plan, Corporate Values and policies
- identifying the fit within business and communications/marketing plans and objectives
- understanding the benefits, implications and risks in using social media

1.1. What is social media?

Social media refers to freely accessible, third-party hosted, interactive Web 2.0 technologies used to produce, post and interact through text, images, video, and audio to inform, share, promote, collaborate or network.

Social media is built upon user-created content. In its ideal, social media is about conversation… listening, learning and sharing on the web. While social media was originally conceived for social collaboration, government and businesses are increasingly finding these tools helpful in achieving business objectives.

To reach people effectively, it most often involves communicating through various communications vehicles and channels. Social media tools can add to traditional methods of communications.

Social media includes social networks, blogs, microblogs, video sharing, podcasts, wikis, social indexing and tagging, message boards and online forums. Within these types of social media there is a vast spectrum of social media tools. The more commonly used social media tools currently include:
- Facebook (social networking)
- Linkedin (business networking)
- YouTube (video sharing/social networking)
- Twitter (microblogging/social networking)
- Flickr (photo sharing)
- Blogs (commentary or news on a particular subject/comment sharing)

Appendices 2 and 3 list other social media and Web 2.0 online tools.

The scope of these guidelines relates specifically to social media as described above. The broader and emerging concept of Gov 2.0 – toward transforming government by changing the way government works is described in Appendix 1, and indicates social media is one of the enablers of Gov 2.0.

1.2   Background / Need

Many business and government organizations, including many Alberta municipalities are using social media. Both Strathcona County's Public Engagement Policy and Framework, and the Strathcona County Economic Development & Tourism Strategy 2010 to 2013 direct adding social media to the media mix to enhance communications and promotions, and build relationships. Social media needs to be a consideration for communicating in an emergency. As well, various departments have raised interest in and ideas for using social media to improve efficiency and the level of engagement with residents.

1.3   Benefits and managing expectations

Social media:

- offers new communications channels to engage and reach people (respecting where they are in the online world), while linking to programs and services

- has been shown to help build relationships, earn trust and credibility, and enhance transparency for organizations through authentic, responsive online dialogue

- can have a viral–multiplying effect, where the reach and information spread is from one to many

- improves search engine optimization, meaning search engines give higher relevance and placement to organizations connected through different social media channels

- personalizes government, helps to narrow the citizen-government gap

Social media also presents:

- real-time communications posing more instant, public avenues to make a suggestion, lodge a complaint and vent – the County needs to be consistent, timely and appropriate in its response and customer service follow-up

- potential for public criticism about programs and services – the County should be prepared for the positive and the negative

- the ability for social media users to be anonymous, and even present themselves under several different pseudo profiles, though not encouraged in the social media culture

- the reality that in using third-party hosted social media sites, these sites have the data, the County does not

- variable levels of participation and uptake – just because you build it, the public may or may not be that active in the conversation and input.

  * The 90-9-1 rule:

  > 90% of visitors are onlookers
  > 9% of visitors get a little involved
  > 1% of visitors do most of the work

  Also   10% of Twitter users make 90% of the tweets
  10% of social network users provide 30% of the content

* Dealing With The "90-9-1 Rule - Managing Participation Inequality for effective Online Community Engagement, Dr Crispin Butteriss, Founding Partner, Bang the Table, www.bangthetable.com

2.0 Guidelines

2.1   Purpose of social media guidelines

These social media guidelines set direction and requirements to follow as Strathcona County participates in social media. The guidelines are intended to support Strathcona County departments and employees, and third parties working on behalf of the County. Social media tools and practices change and evolve, and these guidelines should be viewed as a "living" document that will also evolve over time.

2.2   Guiding principles for social media

The guiding principles for social media use are as follows:

Transparency: to present the County in an open, realistic, fair and human manner

Customer service driven: information, promotion, engagement to improve public service

Value for effort: the effective use of technology and social media interaction to create value while being efficient

Quality: information and knowledge offered in a timely, respectful, accurate and professional way

Relevancy: the use of the social media channels and niches to connect with residents where they are online

Respect: the same professional and ethical conduct is required in social media interactions as is required in the workplace

Legislative: to adhere to applicable provincial, federal and local laws, regulations and policies. All content must be able to be managed, stored and retrieved to comply with these laws.

2.3   Policies, procedures and plans relevant to social media use

Use of social media by Strathcona County Administration is governed and guided under the following policies and plans (and any related procedures) to ensure professional and ethical conduct, and alignment with other corporate requirements.

- Strathcona County's Strategic Plan
- Strathcona County Corporate Values
  [respect | integrity | fairness | safety | cooperation]
- Code of Ethics and Responsibilities (HUM-001-001)
- Communications Policy (upon approval)
- Corporate Records and Information Management (GOV-002-013)
- Corporate Privacy Policy (GOV-002-026)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Public Engagement Policy (GOV-002-025)
- Systems and Data Security Policy (GOV-002-023)

In respect to these policies, the following elaborates on three areas, providing key points to remember in relation to social media use:

Acceptable Internet use
In the County's Systems & Data Security Policy – Procedures, (Document #: Information and TechnoIogy.1029.36853.1), the section on Use of the Internet provides important guidelines on acceptable use of the Internet for County employees, which extends to any County social media activity.

FOIP
- Strathcona County official social media channels will include or link to a Strathcona County privacy policy statement.

- Strathcona County will use available tools or services from social media sites to obtain non-identifying anonymous, aggregate or statistical information concerning its programs, services or marketing efforts.

- Any County social media initiatives that require the collection of personal information (for instance, public engagement efforts) must adhere to the FOIP requirements. In the social media realm, personal information includes an individual's name, email address or username if it includes the individuals' name, a portion of their name, or otherwise identifies them.

- All records concerning Strathcona County content posted to, or obtained from any online sites are subject to the FOIP Act. Note however, third party sites hosting Strathcona County content and comments are not subject to the FOIP Act.

- If a potential risk to privacy is identified, Legal and Legislative Services will assist with mitigating these risks, and conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment to evaluate and meet privacy requirements if required.

- Strathcona County can help to promote the protection of citizens' and visitors' privacy by including on our web page links to information about the risks and how to protect one's privacy when using social media sites.

Records and Information Management
- A record (e.g. text, images, video and documents) that records approvals, recommendations, opinions, decisions or transactions of the County must be maintained in the County's official recording management system. The department or business unit/facility managing the social media site is responsible for this task when such a record is used in social media.

- "Transitory Records" are records which do not need to be kept in a record keeping system. They are information and documents received through e-mail, Internet, voice mail or on paper that have only short-term, immediate, or no value to the organization. Much of the information shared on social media sites is helpful, short-term dialogue, and not the place for official County approvals, recommendations, opinions, decisions or transactions.

2.4 Employee conduct basics in using social media

The following key points summarize ethical and effective social media conduct for Strathcona County employees.

Only share publicly available information
- Do not publish or report on conversations or information that is confidential, pre-decisional or speculative. A good rule of thumb is to ask: Is this information suitable to post to or available on the County's website?
- Never reveal proprietary company information and do not comment on legal issues or litigation involving Strathcona County.
- With the exception of Economic Development and Tourism's mandate, it is not the County's role to promote or endorse companies, brands, or other for-profit or commercial endeavours not affiliated with or a partner of Strathcona County.

Know and play by the online rules
- Adhere to the policies set forth by social media sites (e.g., minimum age requirements on social networking sites are often set at 13 years of age).
- Content posted by Strathcona County, or a member of the public, to a third party social media site is ultimately owned and controlled by the site operator according to its established terms of use.
- Respect copyright, fair use and privacy laws.

Be respectful
- Never engage in personal attacks, or divulge personal information about others. Ethnic or discriminatory slurs, insults, obscenity will not be tolerated.
- Do not defame or speak negatively about the County, its personnel, other companies, or other people when conversing on social media.
- Respect the privacy of colleagues; do not post photos or information about others without their consent.
- Be considerate that the information being posted will not negatively impact or blindside others.

Be mindful about mixing business with personal
- The content that an employee may post online in their personal life can get blurred with their business profile. Try to keep work and personal networks separate, and do not use your County email to set up a personal account.
- In their capacity as private citizens, Strathcona County employees have the same rights of free speech as other citizens; however, they may not represent Strathcona County in their own personal social media activity.

Correct mistakes, use good judgement and be real
- Every effort will be made to keep interactions factual and accurate. If errors in information do occur in what has been communicated, publicly correct it.
- Employee activity in social media during work hours should be related to the job, with the exception of work time breaks (the same approach as to what is stated in County policies).
- Information posted in social media is often publicly available for a very long time. It is open to being republished in or possibly of interest to other media. If uneasy about something, chances are it shouldn't be voiced. If in doubt, don't post.
- The culture in social media is to be informal, human, inquisitive and even to mix in a sense of humour sometimes. A tone of being conversational, professional, helpful and engaging should carry through to social media.

2.5 Representing Strathcona County in social media

Designated roles

Certain staff or small teams will be designated as the lead to manage, contribute and respond to social media discussions on behalf of the County. This will help ensure appropriate staff (often "subject matter experts" or communications and marketing staff) provide consistent, accurate information, while avoiding any duplication in efforts.

Communications and department managers will identify the lead for a social media initiative. Official presence entails a dedicated page or channel on a social media site that includes the Strathcona County logo or identifying profile, and is used for the purpose of informing or communicating with citizens or visitors concerning municipal programs, services, facilities or partnerships.

All employees' use

All County employees are welcome to use social media sites at work for professional networking, peer group collaboration among external field professionals, and in research, learning and training. Just like websites, social media sites can provide a wealth of information, often in a very creative and engaging way. Linkedin is a popular professional social media network boasting 90 million members in over 200 countries; many professional associations also use social networking sites to keep in touch with members.

> Note: At this time, social media sites are not to be used for internal collaboration or project team management unless authorized by Information Technology Services and Executive Team. As part of the Electronic Information Management System (EIMS) project – Phase 2, and in concert with the County's Intranet upgrade, such collaboration and social workplace platforms and tools will be explored.

County employees who are personally active in social media are welcome to share digitally published County information that would be of interest to their social media networks and followers to help spread the information to different networks, groups or communities. One example of this is to retweet County tweets.

As social media use evolves in the County and in our society, it is very likely more and more staff will have larger involvement in using these tools on behalf of the County. Process and reputation management will remain important.

Training
- Staff assigned to lead an official social media site will be trained on how to best use the tool(s) and represent Strathcona County in a coordinated way.
- General interest lunch and learns will be developed to support staff who are unfamiliar with social media tools and wish to use them for professional networking and learning.

2.6   Social media during emergencies

The impact of social media in the spread of information and misinformation in an emergency situation has been shown to be significant. Social media monitoring is very important in this regard.

It is important, given the real-time speed of social media, that information being released through social media during an emergency is accurate. If details are unknown, a response indicating that the County is aware of the emergent issue and more information will follow is a timely and appropriate response.

The use of social media during emergencies needs to be addressed and protocols included in the Strathcona County's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and respective department emergency response plans.

2.7   Starting a social media initiative

The Communications department is the gatekeeper of social media for the County to monitor and oversee initiatives and activities.

Departments and business units interested in using social media will work with their assigned communications and marketing representatives to discuss objectives, desired outcomes, effectiveness and resources. This would be considered as part of the overall communications or marketing plan for the project or initiative.

Department Managers, in consultation with the Communications Manager, must approve any department official social media presence.

Communications is responsible to manage the corporate social media presence and coordinate social media initiatives overall to ensure quality, active and effective efforts in social media.

2.8   Managing, monitoring and measuring social media

The County will actively monitor social media channels and evaluate the success of social media efforts. Social media sites offer many metrics and reporting tools that can help gauge activity on channels.

There are also sophisticated and robust social media and reputation management software which can integrate and streamline social media monitoring, the cross linking of all of an organization's social media channels, customer service work flow, and measurement and performance.

Integrating and cross linking channels helps optimization, reduces time in manually posting to individual sites and expands the organization's online network.

Some examples of how social media can be measured:

Awareness
- Number of friends and followers
- Social media mentions
- Others posting links to County content

Conversion
- Tracking through promo codes
- Analytics

Relationships
- How much interaction
- Who is initiating/influence

Engagement
- Unique visitors
- Time on site
- Frequency of visit

3.0 Start-up – Social media objectives and tools

3.1 Objectives

To use social media efficiently and effectively to support and enhance the County's:
- Communications
- Community building efforts
- Public engagement initiatives
- Emergency response communications needs
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Customer service abilities

3.2 Tools

Social media tools and technologies are evolving. The following strategies present initial areas to move forward in social media for Strathcona County.

Tool 1

Social media monitoring and management

Description

Monitoring social media and what is being said about our organization on social media sites is an important initial step. Monitoring is useful to alert and keep our finger on the pulse of the content of social media conversations relating to the County. Social media monitoring tools through keyword searches provide a mechanism to find, follow, join in the conversation or assist in customer service as appropriate. They can be used to discover the "influencers", measure social media effectiveness and track online content. As described in Guideline 2.8, social media management systems can offer time savings, tracking and workflow benefits.

Start-up approach

In the spring of 2010, Communications began to actively monitor social media and has been testing several different monitoring and management tools.

Evolution

The current media monitoring tools being used require a fair amount of manual attention. As the County's involvement in social media expands, the need for a more integrated media monitoring and management tool may need to be considered. While there are many tools that are free, there are costs associated with the more robust social media management software platforms that help streamline engaging with residents and customers, measuring results and reporting, and monitoring and posting information across multiple social media channels.

Tool 2

Twitter

Description

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that allows its users to send and read other users' updates (otherwise known as tweets), which are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length (mobile friendly). In 2010, Twitter reported 175 million registered users. In spring 2011, Twitter reports 140 million tweets per day.

Businesses, governments and media are using Twitter for news feeds, customer relations, event coverage and promotions, keyword searches around topics of interest,

community niche and network building, gaining feedback, and questions and conversations.

Start-up approach
Several Council members have been active on Twitter in their elected official capacity. Late in 2010, the County corporate Twitter account StrathcoCounty was established and is managed by Communications and its Web Services "tweetbeat" team.

Appendix 6 - *Twitter tips and how tos* - has been developed to support County employees in using Twitter as designated. Similar "procedure" sheets will be developed for the other listed tools.

Evolution
It is also recognized that Twitter is a tool that may suit department customer service needs. While there are disadvantages to having too many accounts for one corporation, such as overly fragmented follower lists, a business case could be made for other areas to have a separate Twitter account. For instance, these may include Transit with its defined ridership audience or Economic Development and Tourism with its business community networking.

Tool 3
Facebook

Description
Without question in Canada and many other countries, Facebook currently reigns as the most popular social networking site with more than 500 million active users and 50 per cent of them logging on to Facebook in any given day.

Social networks focus on building online communities of people to share and explore interests and activities. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact. They provide a platform to communicate messages to contacts, share information, photos, videos and links with others, participate in communities, promote events and invite others to join.

Start-up approach
The County will activate a Strathcona County corporate Facebook page. Its purpose, initially, will be to feature:
- the Wall with County news
- Info as the clearinghouse of all of the County's social media and website links
- Events
- Careers
- Discussions where opportunities to provide input on certain projects can be highlighted

The StrathcoCounty Twitter feed will show on the Facebook wall and links to YouTube and Flickr will also be featured.

As Family and Community Services first social media initiative, it plans to establish a Parent Link Centre Facebook page. There is a community of people involved with the centre, many young parents, who view this as good social networking opportunity. There are staff resources and interest in supporting the online group, and the centre's large roster of events, programs and activities shows potential for an active and dynamic social network.

Economic Development and Tourism sees potential in using Facebook as a means to extend its reach to its audiences, including younger professionals. The department will use Facebook to maintain relationships, promote events and share mobile updates, photos and resources. It aims to create social media presence to engage business, industry, and tourism in the spring of 2011.

Recreation, Parks and Culture is also planning to start a Facebook page in the spring of 2011 to promote, educate and engage residents in leading an active lifestyle. The department provides a vast array of social opportunities, community events and programs that is very fitting subject matter for this social media platform. Facebook presents new opportunities to reach community members to excite and create awareness of indoor, outdoor and cultural activities.

Evolution
These first start-up efforts on Facebook will provide learning in set up and management of Facebook accounts. The corporate page is intended to provide presence on Facebook for many areas, and it is recognized that other County areas may have interest in establishing Facebook pages or groups for a targeted purpose.

For a Strathcona County department or business unit to start a Facebook presence, needs and use are to be defined, and resources identified to manage the site. Flexibility, partnering and adaptability will help to ensure a reasonable number of Facebook pages or groups are created and managed for the County overall.

Tool 4
YouTube

Description
YouTube is a video-sharing website where users can upload, share and view videos. The site displays a wide variety of user-generated video content, including movie and TV clips, music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging and short original videos. Individuals have uploaded most of the content on YouTube. Corporations and government now use YouTube channels to display corporate content. This includes a range of videos such as event highlights, tutorials and other educational and informational clips. YouTube is also a leading search engine tool.

Posting videos through YouTube rather than through media files directly on the County's website is found to be:
• more accessible to multiple platforms
• more mobile friendly
• effective for delivering higher-quality videos
• very easy to upload

Start-up approach
The County will create a branded corporate YouTube channel to host Strathcona County-generated content. Videos can also be accessed directly through this channel on YouTube, as well, the content will be embedded across social media sites including Facebook and on the main County website so viewers can access video content outside of YouTube.

Evolution
The potential for video content through YouTube is great. With no local broadcast media, the tool offers an efficient outlet to host and air videos relating to various areas. Some video ideas include:
- generating virtual facility tours of Millennium Place, the Community Centre and other County facilities to help residents and potential facility users understand what each facility has to offer.
- airing short snippets of a variety of programs to create awareness of the benefits of the activity to help residents and customers choose the program that best suits their needs.
- sharing safety public service announcements
- demonstrating how to access or use County services (e.g., how to safely load bike racks on transit buses – translates to keeping transit on schedule)
- sharing and improving understanding of the budget process or value for tax dollar
- featuring the many environmental and sustainability efforts from Green Routine to wetlands management
- extending public engagement activities/access (e.g., Trails Strategy public review - open house presentation and opportunity for input)

Tool 5
Flickr

Description
Flickr is an online photo management and sharing application (similar to YouTube video sharing). Photo sharing is the publishing or transfer of a user's digital photos online to enable viewers to share with others. Photos published in Flickr can be categorized in different albums according to subject matter, and upload is fast and easy.

Start-up approach
Flickr will be used as an image bank to share County photos of events, programs and services. FOIP requirements in relation to what the County posts will strongly apply. While there is a limited free version, the County will upgrade to the pro for greater uploading capacity, which requires a nominal monthly fee.

Evolution
Photos will be added over time as appropriate.

Tool 6
Blogs

Description
A blog (a contraction of the term "Web log") is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics, video and links to other information. Visitors to the site can also post comments or replies to blog entries. It is an easy and simple form to share news and updates on the web. A commitment to good, value-added content and frequent posts add to the effectiveness and popularity of a blog site.

Start-up approach
Use of a blog service is being tested to collect information on Phase 2 of the Aquatic Strategy. Also, some members of Council have created blogs to share their perspectives on County issues and business.

Evolution
A County employee who is a subject matter expert on a County-related topic or service that has broad appeal might use a blog to share information and insight on that topic.

3.3 Drivers to increase following in social media

A key to the success of social media efforts involves building a strong following. Also important is the ability to link or drive users to the Strathcona County website. There are several creative, cost efficient and targeted tools available to help achieve this, while at the same time catering to an increasing mobile audience. The following lists some drivers to be implemented that interconnect to social media.

Web enhancements
As part of the vision to enhance the County's website, work is underway to enable the addition of these tools and features:
- **RSS** – (Really Simple Syndication) is a feed that pushes newly posted web content to people who have subscribed to receive updates, without expecting them to browse through the site to find what is new. This is a way for publishers to syndicate content automatically.
- **Mobile-enabled** (friendly) website – improves the user experience using a mobile device (such as a smart phone). This can also make browsing the corporate intranet easier for staff working away from the office or off site.
- **Commenting** – enables users to leave comments on content or engagement initiatives

QR codes
A technology called QR or "quick response code" is quickly making its way to the mainstream. A QR code is a two-dimensional code (like a barcode) that can be read by a smart phone's camera. Without typing any information, it links a user to websites, images, video and more. QR codes can be used virtually on any product or printed material (e.g., promotional products, business cards, accessories, even jewelry) to link to various information such as directions, interactions, coupons, maps and promotions. It is a new way to advertise to mobile phone users. QR codes can be stored on the phone, quickly available for future reference. There are QR code generators online that produce QR codes at little or no cost.

Examples of how QR codes could be used in Strathcona County include scanning the code from an ad, poster or sign to link to:

- event maps/schedules such as for Canada Day (a "green" savings, reducing the number of printed maps)
- artist bios on the Art Gallery displays
- a comment form to directly provide feedback on service in a County facility

Online advertising

Geo targeting is a cost-effective and more direct way to advertise to a defined audience. Social media sites such as Facebook and online local and regional newspapers offer ways of tapping into a specific audience. This is achieved by determining the geolocation of a website visitor and delivering different content to that visitor based on his or her location, such as country, province, city, postal code, organization, IP address, ISP or other criteria. For example, you can choose to display your advertisement to people who live within a 30-minute radius of Sherwood Park.

3.4 Key implementation actions

1. Communicate the guidelines among staff
2. Coordinate corporate social media activities with the Mayor's and Councillors' efforts in social media as required
3. Develop training and coordination mechanisms for designated social media leads
4. Implement and communicate start up-strategies; track and report issues, share knowledge on success and how tos, and evaluate over time
5. Incorporate social media protocol and procedures into the Emergency Management Plan
6. Develop social media information sessions for all staff interested in learning about how they can use social media
7. As social media efforts expand, cross link all of the County's social media channels, and embed on County website
8. Promote the County's social media opportunities in the communications and marketing media mix

3.5 Resource impacts, budget and structure

Staff time impact to manage these new social media channels is not fully known but will be tracked. Currently, approximately 30 minutes a day is spent on social media to monitor, connect with other departments as necessary, and participate.

The budget allocated to social media will cover:
- Social media monitoring and management "software as a service" fees
- Social media tool and advertising fees, and costs to support web enhancements for a more "social-facing" website
- Contract services to support and expedite corporate and department social media efforts, such as video and other social media content creation
- Contract services, and fees and materials to support training

In moving forward to implement social media, it is recommended the Social Media Steering Committee charged to develop social media guidelines be dissolved, and that the In-house Communications and Marketing Team become the group to coordinate and evolve social media in Strathcona County, led by Communications.

Appendix I – Gov 2.0

The Information Technology Services department has provided this interpretation of Gov 2.0.

Gov 2.0 is the concept of transforming government by changing the way government works. The goals of Gov 2.0 are to increase:

- Government innovation
- Transparency
- Collaboration within and between governments
- Citizen participation
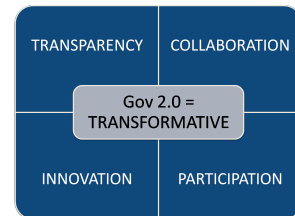
The main enabler of Gov 2.0 is technology – governments and citizens using technology to move towards the goals listed above. Of course, enabling something doesn't make it happen – for example, having a catalogue and facility for open data allows for open data to happen, but doesn't make it happen. That takes the commitment of the departments that own the data.

Because technology is always changing, so is the list of Gov 2.0 enablers. Here is a list of what are currently considered enablers for Gov 2.0:

Social Media – including blogs, RSS feeds, microblogs (e.g. Twitter), podcasts, collaboration sites, wikis, and networking sites (e.g. Linkedin and Facebook). These may be externally focused (for citizen interaction) or internally focused (for staff-to-staff interaction).

Open Data – governments publishing data in a way that citizens can analyze. Generally this means government information that is easily discoverable (e.g. in a catalogue), readily accessible (not behind a wall), freely available, and machine readable (can use software programs to access it).

Unified Communications – enhanced voicemail, instant messaging, video chat, virtual meetings, and presence display. Essentially making it easier and faster to communicate.

Mobile Applications – Smartphone applications for phones like the IPhone, BlackBerry, Android, etc., that have value to citizens or staff. Mobile Apps often use Open Data as an information source (e.g. Transit Schedules).

Cloud Computing – applications that are used by multiple organizations by hosting them in a place accessible to everyone from anywhere.

Crowdsourcing – using the power of a large network of participants to come up with solutions or answers.
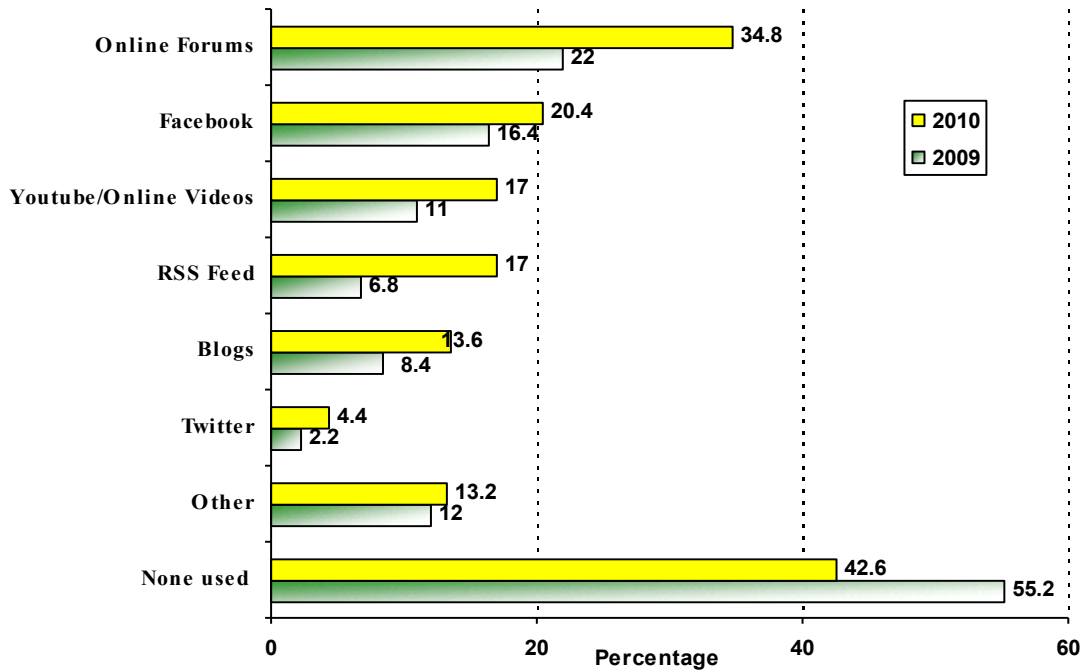
Credits:
http://radar.oreilly.com/2010/05/what-does-government-20-look-l.html
http://www.gov2summit.com/gov2010
http://gov20radio.com/

Appendix 2 – Benchmark - Social media use preferences

Use of Social Media /Online Methods by Strathcona County Residents
2009 and 2010

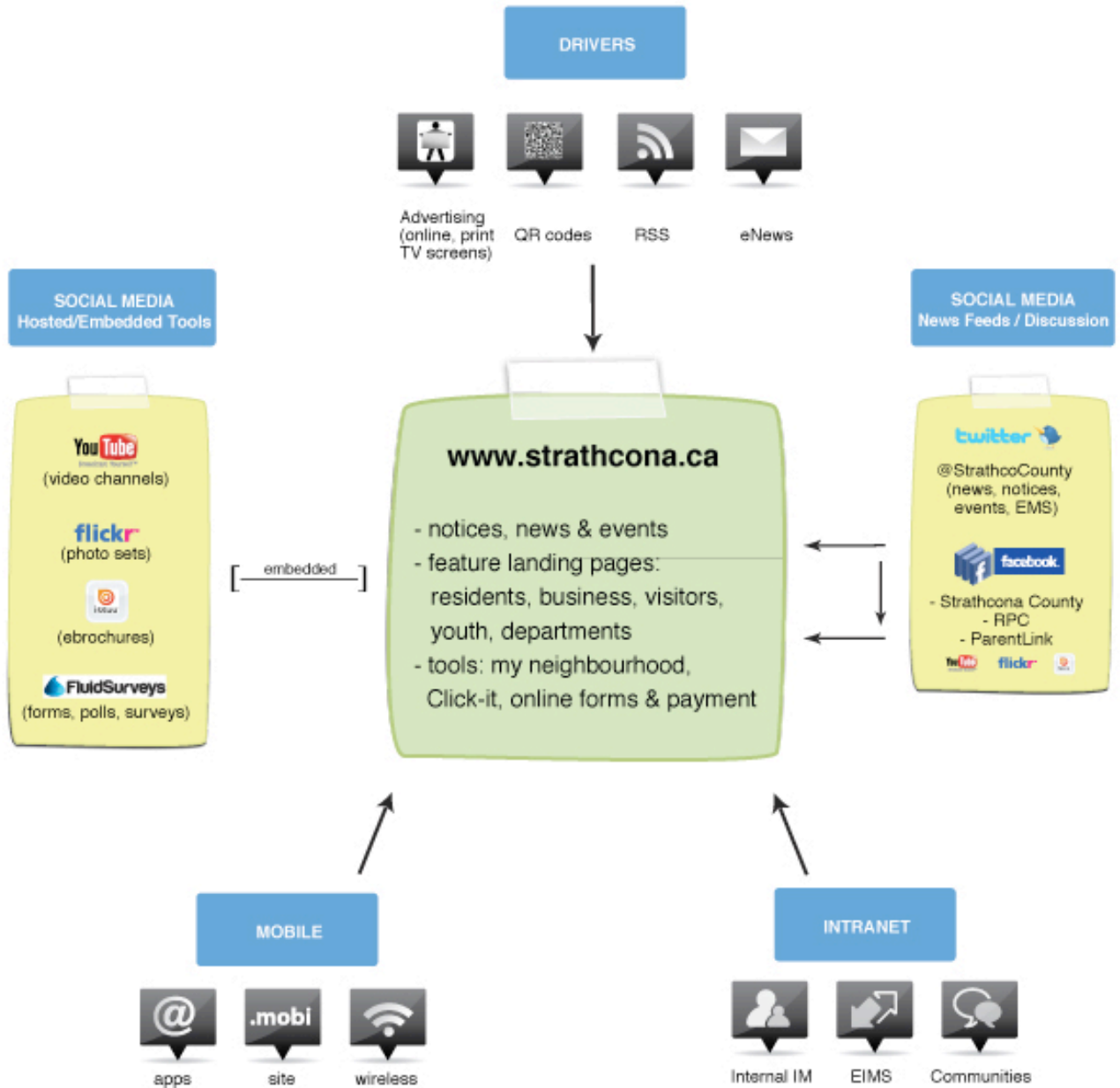| Category	2010	2009
Online Forums	34.8	22
Facebook	20.4	16.4
Youtube/Online Videos	17	11
RSS Feed	17	6.8
Blogs	13.6	8.4
Twitter	4.4	2.2
Other	13.2	12
None used	42.6	55.2

Percentage

(Preference for Strathcona County to use for sharing information and engaging)
Source: Strathcona County Public Satisfaction Surveys

Appendix 3 – Online communications - Future state example

Appendix 4 – The technology - The advantages

Technology	Benefits/Functionality	Opportunity
Microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Jaiku)	Provide updates without a desktop computer (mobile) Update people of developments as they happen in real-time (news feed) Keep in touch with interested/engaged followers Customizable with viewer permissions and distribution (RSS, email, micro-podcasts)	News feed to keep followers up-to-date of ongoing activities (e.g. meeting details, special events, emergencies, news and notices) Community-building with administration Creating professional networks (Communities of Practice)
Blogs (e.g. Blogger, Wordpress, Blogspot, LiveJournal, Technorcrati)	Share your own news and updates on the web easily Include links, images, photos and other files Discuss topics with others online (discussion forum)	Communications channel for staff member working groups Interdepartmental communication Management announcements to staff Public engagement projects – serves all four levels of the continuum (input, listen and learn, collaborate, empower)
Wikis (e.g. PBwiki, Mediawiki, Screwturn, SocialText)	Create, edit and revise documents collaboratively Reduce inbox clutter and simplify document archiving (document management & workflow) Promote collaboration and information sharing [internal and public engagement]	Internal policy development Public engagement/consultation Knowledge sharing and management
Social networks (e.g. Facebook, Linkedin, MySpace, Bebo, Ping.fm, About.me)	Share personal and professional information online Connect with friends, family, colleagues, communities of practice Share parts of your life with your connections	Building online communities of interest with residents and businesses Creating professional networks Event/program organization and promotion

Social bookmarking (e.g. del.ici.ous, digg, stumbleupon, reddit)	Tag your bookmarks with keywords for easy search Share bookmarks between computers and with others online Create custom tags for team collaboration Subscribe to different keyword tags	Improved organizational knowledge management Share important sites within workgroups and with colleagues
RSS (e.g. Google Reader, NewsGator, iGoogle)	Provide real-time updates of changing web content Another way to get your information out there similar to a newsfeed or microblog	Transit & recreation schedules and information Notices such as road closures, RFP's or other timely events Media releases
Podcasting (e.g. iTunes, GarageBand [creator]; Winamp, Windows Media)	Distribute audio-clips of meetings, interviews or event announcements Make information accessible to people who can't attend events News highlights	County broadcast news or summaries Media releases
Video sharing (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo)	Easily post videos online and share with others Tag videos with keywords for each search Discuss videos online with others	Broadcasting events (inform, promote) Educational (fitness equipment orientations, Green Routine school program, internal training delivery)
Interactive mapping (dynamic online tools with the potential to be in the form of mobile apps) (e.g. Google Maps, Yahoo Local, Live Search, Google Earth)	Easily find out more about locations within the County (My Neighbourhood) Add layers of contextual information to landmarks Connect text & images to places on maps	Recreation centre locations, hours and information; fitness trails; transit schedules (could be delivered in the form of mobile apps) Seasonal information such as road construction Community requests – pot holes, park maintenance, graffiti management

Appendix 5 – The social media match – Purpose / Tools

Inform	Promote	Public Engagement	Customer Service
Send news, notices, events out through various news feeds and social media sites Website always serves as primary/main source of information	Use new forms of social media to create engaging promotional programs (expanding media mix) Consider fairness	Refer to continuum of engagement in the policy: • Input • Listen & Learn • Collaborate • Empower	Monitor and respond to resident/customer inquiries through the appropriate social media channel.
Tools	**Tools**	**Tools**	**Tools**
Twitter Facebook advertising YouTube (e.g. fitness orientation; Green Routine – educational tool) Podcasts Photo-sharing (e.g. as part of a media section) Mobile apps (e.g. Green Routine; recreation & transit schedules) RSS enabled website (social bookmarks) eNewsletter Mobile enabled website (caters to mobile devices) QR codes	Twitter Facebook advertising YouTube Podcasts Mobile apps RSS enabled website (social bookmarks) eNewsletter Mobile enabled website (caters to mobile devices) QR codes	Collaborative tools (wikis, discussion forums, collaborative documents, workflow) [EIMS] Facebook (communities of interest) Twitter /YouTube - promote public engagement - monitor for input/feedback/ ideas QR codes linked to Twitter/Email/SMS Video conferencing Online survey tools (e.g. Fluid Surveys) Blogs – as a discussion forum	Mobile apps (e.g. City Source for graffiti management; trails) Social media monitoring (respond to tracked customer/resident/ business feedback & inquiries)
Considerations (The How)	**Considerations (The How)**	**Considerations (The How)**	**Considerations (The How)**
Process/protocols to manage accounts and sites	Partner representation (cross promotions)	Document management protocols	Connecting to operations/ response protocols

Appendix 6 – Twitter Account - Tips and how tos

Account
StrathcoCounty

What is Twitter?
Twitter is a microblogging platform that uses short messages (140 characters long).
Messages are public.

To begin, there is a single account for all of Strathcona County. Over time, Strathcona County may choose to open separate Twitter accounts for departments if the need is apparent. Too many accounts can create overly fragmented follower lists. Approval to create new County Twitter accounts must go through Communications.

Who uses Twitter?
In 2009, Twitter user age demographics looked like this:

- 12-17 year olds - 1%
- 18-34 year olds - 47%
- 35-49 year olds - 31%
- 50+ year old - 21%

These age demographics should be considered when determining to tweet or not to tweet.

Who Tweets for the County?
As stated in Strathcona County's social media guidelines, aside from Council members, only staff members who have been designated and trained will be authorized to tweet in an official capacity on behalf of Strathcona County.

Bio
StrathcoCounty
Link to FOIP statement.

What to tweet
Using Twitter should be part of a communications and marketing strategy for the program, just as all other traditional forms of media. Determine what level of engagement you require and if Twitter suits the need.

Tweets must be relevant and interesting to StrathcoCounty and the program's target audience.
- Events
  - Upcoming events
  - Live-tweet an event (play-by-play)
    - On occasion, a hashtag could be created for the event and attendees encouraged to tweet using the hashtag. Only main points that would be interesting to most followers should be tweeted by the County.
- Notices
- News
  - All news releases – when news releases are tweeted, it should be mentioned they are a news release in the tweet.
- Emergencies
- Question and answers

- Use on occasion to get immediate customer incite or straw-poll
- Interest items and promotions

Staff names are not to be used in tweets without prior permission. Position titles should be used instead and only when appropriate.

For example:

What's with all the wasps this spring in #shpk? The County's biologist says its normal link to story

How to tweet

Strathcona County will only tweet on behalf of County departments, partners and affiliated groups.

To make our tweets more retweetable, they should be limited to 120 characters. This will allow for our tweets to be RT to include our name (@StrathcoCounty).

To support clarity, SMS "slang" is not recommended to save on character space (i.e. 4, r, u, c), however standard abbreviations such as &, km, @ are acceptable.

Keep in mind that starting a tweet with @replies are usually seen only by the people following both parties to the conversation. So if you want your reply to be seen by all your followers, don't start with @ at the start of the tweet.

Links in tweets should always link back to the County website as a source to more information. Only use the GPS location-style links if specifically related to the tweet. Example, water main break, bus stop delay, parade route.

Retweets (RT) and replies

Strathcona County should retweet positive tweets of account followers when appropriate (particularly community news and events). This shows respect and amplifies their voices, which are both great techniques for building relationships and engaging our followers.

The culture of Twitter does not pose expectations that every tweet needs a reply. It is the County's discretion to reply. The County appreciates feedback and opinions, and at times a tweet may be a strong opinion. As often as possible, the County will acknowledge/reply to tweets directed to StrathcoCounty. If replying to criticisms and negative comments, wording should be appropriate and non-confrontational. For example: Thanks for pointing this out, we've passed this along to…., thanks for participating, etc.

If a direct question or inquiry is tweeted to StrathcoCounty every effort will be made to reply. If an inquiry requires a reply that is more involved than can be effectively provided through a tweet, direct the individual to the information on the web or provide the contact and number for the person to call to get the inquiry answered.

Strathcona County will not reply to off-topic or abusive tweets.

Tone of tweets
The tone of the tweets posted on Twitter should be informal, relevant and conversational. Creativity or a message tease adds to the interest in a tweet.

For example:
> Way to go Strathcona County Youth Council for celebrating 20 years. You don't look a day over 15. link to page

> Do you still have your grandmother's fruit cake left over from Christmas? We'll take it! Link to organics page

> We ate way too much at the Canada Day pancake breakfast. Good thing there is a drop-in Buns 'N Bellies class this afternoon at GARC link to drop in fitness schedule #shpk

How often to tweet
There is a balance of tweeting too much and too little. Followers do not want to be spammed with tweets.

Research shows that unless people see your message within five minutes of posting, they're unlikely to see it at all. Because of this pattern, it is alright to repeat the same message a couple of times over the course of several days if appropriate. The tweet should change (i.e. don't repeat verbatim, use different words or a different angle to promote your message)

When to tweet
The days that most tweets are sent and RT are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays.

Following
Strathcona County follows only County elected officials, and monitors various other tweeters such as news media.

Hashtags
The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics to create what is called a hashtag. Hashtags are important and are often used at the end of a tweet, or as part of the message. They help to organize information or topics on Twitter, and can be used to follow a certain subject, community or live-tweet event.

For example:
- Wow #shpk has some great trails!
- Check out some of our great trails hyperlink #shpk

Popular hashtags used for the Strathcona County area are:
- #shpk
- #strathco