



TULSA CITY COUNCIL

social media policy

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INTRODUCTION

What is social media?

Social media is an umbrella term referring to internet-based communications tools which focus on interactivity, user participation, and person-to-person information sharing within online social networks. Just as email and static websites were the new modes of communications throughout the past decade, social media is quickly rising as an important means of outreach and two-way communications.

Some typical examples of social media include:

- social networking sites (*Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, MySpace*)
- wikis (*Wikipedia*)
- blogs
- podcasts
- message boards

Social media also has some unique characteristics that differ from standard communications tools:

- its content is managed and regulated by the user community itself, and not the provider
- it supports global collaboration and sharing of thoughts, opinions, experiences, and perspectives — often among strangers
- host sites are mostly free to use

Why is social media important?

Social media is quickly becoming a critical mode of communication. One in five Oklahomans use some form of social media on a daily basis, making it one of the most effective, direct communications tools for nonprofit and governmental organizations.

As the Tulsa City Council seeks to actively inform, serve, and engage citizens, social media provides an opportunity to reach a large audience directly, and allows for greater personal interaction between officials and residents. It is therefore important that we all understand how social media tools can help the City Council office (Councilors and Council Staff) achieve its community objectives, and that both are equipped to use this tool effectively and comfortably.

When properly used, it can be an effective tool for the City Council office to:

- openly, directly, and publicly communicate with citizens
- develop new and/or improved relationships with constituents and community partners
- seek input from citizens on key issues or services provided
- promote educational information directly to constituents
- potentially recruit employees and volunteers (especially among younger demographics)



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Who can use the Tulsa City Council's primary social networking accounts?

The use of the City Council's social media tools and sites will be available to all City Councilors and Council Staff in support of their professional role, provided it meets the policies outlined below.

POLICIES

As social media creates personal contacts between individuals, this presents a new set of challenges in a professional environment. Therefore, the Tulsa City Council has established some basic, important guidelines to assist in using this evolving form of communication. These policies apply to all social networking sites directly managed by the Tulsa City Council Office.

Author and commentator identification

All Tulsa City Council authors and commentators shall be clearly identified by name and position within the Tulsa City Council. This is done to ensure accountability with postings, and also allows for a more personal interaction with social networkers.

General policies

1. All Tulsa City Council social network site posts shall be first reviewed by the Council Communications Director and/or Council Social Media Director. Ultimate approval lies with the Council Administrator.
2. Tulsa City Council social networking content is subject to the State of Oklahoma public records and freedom of information laws, and therefore content must be managed, stored, and retrieved to apply with these laws. All social networking sites shall be subject to public disclosure.
3. All social networking sites managed by Tulsa City Council Office Staff shall clearly indicate that they are maintained by the Tulsa City Council, and shall have contact information prominently displayed.
4. Each Tulsa City Council social networking site shall include an introductory statement which clearly specifies the purpose and topical scope of the particular site. Where possible, social networking sites will link back to the official Tulsa City Council or City of Tulsa websites for forms, documents, and other information.



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5. Tulsa City Council social networking content and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed for posting:
 - a. Content and use which conflicts with the Tulsa City Council's adopted *Rules and Order of Business* (as amended), or the City of Tulsa's computer and internet use policies.
 - b. Content that supports or opposes political parties, campaigns, ballot measures, individual officials, or candidates for public office;
 - c. Comments not topically related to the particular issue, site, or blog article being commented upon;
 - d. Comments containing profane language or unsubstantiated allegations;
 - e. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation;
 - f. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
 - g. Solicitations of commerce;
 - h. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
 - i. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
 - j. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
6. Employees representing the Tulsa City Council via social media outlets shall conduct themselves at all times as a representative of the City Council, and in accordance with all City of Tulsa policies.
7. Employees found in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action.
8. The Tulsa City Council reserves the right to restrict or remove any content determined to be in violation of this policy, or any applicable law.

Staff policies



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DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this Tulsa City Council social media policy, the following terms are defined as provided below:

1. **social media:** collaborative content created by individuals through the internet. Examples of social media include blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, YouTube, Delicious, Flickr, etc.
2. **post:** original content placed on a Tulsa City Council social media site by an *author* (see below) within the Tulsa City Council.
3. **author:** an authorized Tulsa City Council staff member that creates and is responsible for posted articles and information on social media sites.
4. **blog:** (*web log*) is a Tulsa City Council website with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Blogs are typically topic-specific, where content is provided by one or several authors, and then made available for comment.
5. **commenter:** a Tulsa City Council official or member of the public who submits a comment for posting in response to the content of a particular Tulsa City Council article or social media content.
6. **comment:** a response to a Tulsa City Council article or social media content submitted by a commenter.