

Project overview

The emergence of social media and social networking presents the possibility of transforming the way government agencies communicate and cooperate among themselves and with the public. While the potential benefits of social media use by government agencies are considerable, the number of issues connected with such use and the number of potential pitfalls are substantial as well.

In response to growing interest in and concerns about social media in the public sector among government professionals, the Center for Technology in Government launched a project aimed at exploring some of the issues and benefits connected with social media tools. The first phase of this project was aimed at collecting some of the NY State government professionals' most pressing questions and concerns surrounding the use of social media in the public sector. Results from this phase helped CTG design the second phase, which will delve into the identified issues in greater detail. This document reports on results collected during the first phase of this project.

Project design—Phase I

The project began with an internal discussion at CTG focused on two key issues: (1) what area of government social media use is most pertinent to our expertise and interests; and (2) where do we see gaps in the current literature being published on this general topic. This internal session was followed by an in-depth workshop with government professionals from New York State agencies designed to collect information on the value NYS agencies seek in their current or future use of social media, as well as their most pressing questions and concerns regarding that use. Following this session, a second workshop was held with government professionals from local governments within New York State. The aim of this workshop was to assess the extent of overlap in concerns among state agencies about social media use in local and state governments. The project began in July 2009 and was completed in October 2009.

Project products—Phase I

The main product of the first phase is this workshop summary report that is being shared with the workshop participants and a broader audience of government professionals in New York State.