

### Project Background

Over the last several years, the emergence of social media and networking has offered a possibility of transforming the way government agencies communicate and cooperate not only amongst themselves, but also 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. This project is a response to the increasing frequency with which social media is being discussed in the popular press as well as among government professionals.

The overall aim of this project is to provide government professionals with practical advice on policy and regulatory issues associated with the use of social media by government agencies and offer guidance on tools that would help agencies achieve their organizational social media objectives effectively and efficiently.

### Project design

The project is divided into two phases.

#### Phase I: July—October 2009

The aim of the first project phase was to collect input from government professionals in New York state on the most pressing questions surrounding the use of social media in the public sector, and to determine on which of these issues should CTG concentrate its research efforts. The project consisted of the following three main activities:

- An internal CTG discussion intended to collect ideas from CTG staff on potential project ideas.
- An in-depth workshop with NYS government professionals concentrating on what are the benefits and the most pressing questions and issues in regards to social media use by New York state agencies.
- A workshop at the New York State Local Government IT Directors' Association conference with local government representatives aimed at ranking the benefits and issues and concerns identified at the state government workshop.

The first phase resulted in a workshop summary report that was shared with all workshop participants as well as the NYS Forum community.

#### Phase II: November 2009—March 2010

The primary aim of the second project phase is to provide practical advice on policy and regulatory issues associated with the use of social media by government agencies. In addition, the project will also offer guidance on tools that would help agencies manage their social media presence in an efficient manner. There are four main components of work:

- Brief review of CTG business case materials and Smart IT as applicable to social media;
- Social media policy analysis;
- Review of available social media management tools; and
- Overview of top eight concerns along with review of available solutions.

In addition to review and synthesis of available literature on the aforementioned topics, we plan to interview approximately 15 interviews with government professionals in order to supplement existing literature with real world examples of how government agencies manage social media use.

The primary product from this project will be a report describing the four components of work mentioned above. A separate white paper will be written for the policy analysis, which will then be incorporated into the overall report. The project will include a partnership with the New York State Forum, which will mainly assist us with data collection from their members and member agencies.