

Exploratory Social Media Project

***Phase I:
Identifying benefits and concerns surrounding use of
social media in government***

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Introduction

This report summarizes results from two workshops held by the Center for Technology Government at the University at Albany, with government professionals from New York State (NYS) as part of the Exploratory Social Media project. The report begins with a brief introduction to the overall project and the aim of the workshops. The following two sections provide summaries of the results from workshops and a concluding section that describes the next steps in the project. Finally, the appendices provide detailed results from our workshops.

Exploratory Social Media Project

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.

Government Professional Workshops

The term social media, similar to Web 2.0, encompasses a wide range of tools that generally serve three different purposes. Collaborative tools, such as Wikis, are designed to foster collaboration among various parties that would otherwise face organizational or geographical barriers to their efforts to collaborate. Social networking tools, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or MySpace, enable social networking, whether for purely personal use (like connecting with one's friends and family) or creating communities of people centered around a common interest. Lastly, communication tools, such as Twitter, are designed to foster information sharing in real time. All of these tools can be used internally to a government agency, such as using wiki designed to enhance collaborative capabilities among various departments within an agency; or externally to establish collaborative capabilities across agencies. They can also be used externally for

dissemination of information to constituents or for collecting input on proposed services, policies, and other issues. For the purposes of the government workshop, we asked participants to consider the entire range of issues connected to the different purposes and tools outlined above.

The first workshop took place at the Center for Technology in Government on September 17, 2009 from 8:30 – 10:30 a.m. It was attended by twenty-three government professionals from sixteen state agencies, as well as one representative from the New York State Forum. The workshop began with a brief introduction to the project, followed by two plenary sessions concentrating on the values sought, and issues and areas of concern in government use of social media. Participants also provided information about their agencies' existing or planned social media projects that could be later shared with all participants.

The second workshop was held as part of the bi-annual New York State Local Government IT Directors Association Conference on October 8, 2009. It was attended by approximately 40 local government professionals representing over 25 counties and other local government entities. Given the larger size of this group, a different facilitation approach was selected to ensure a fruitful discussion. The workshop began with a presentation of the benefits and concerns collected from the first workshop. The participants were then asked to rank both lists and add any additional benefits or concerns they felt were missing. The group felt that the benefits and concerns articulated in the first workshop represented their situation accurately and so did not add any items to either of the lists. The workshop then concluded with a facilitated discussion of what kind of product or report would be most useful to the participants for analyzing social media use in their local governments.

Results from state agency workshop: Values sought from social media tools

The first session at the first workshop focused on the following question: *What value can your agency gain from using social media tools?* Participants worked for five minutes individually and wrote their answers on separate pieces of paper. The facilitator then collected the answers in a round robin fashion and posted them. The participants were then asked, with the help of a CTG facilitator, to group the answers into the eleven categories presented below (for a detailed listing of all answers within each category, please see Appendix A). The list is not presented in rank-order and the numbers serve simply for ease of reference:

1. *Greater competitiveness in employee recruiting*
The public sector has had difficulties competing against the private sector in attracting new, young talent to their agencies. The workshop participants believed that not using social media further disadvantages their agencies because they “do not have a presence” in spaces generally populated by the next workforce generation. In other words, even if social media tools are not used specifically for recruiting activities, a mere agency presence on social media networks provides needed exposure to the new generation.
2. *Enhanced access for the disabled*
The participants believed that social media tools could provide an additional avenue for access to government information for the disabled population of New York State. While not all social media tools are equally suited for use by the disabled (different disabilities render some tools more useful than others for an individual), participants viewed providing an alternate channel for communication and service delivery as important to improving the experience of the disabled with government agencies.
3. *Creation of virtual communities*
Some social media tools offer the possibility of building a “virtual” community around an issue area or general topic of interest. The participants viewed this as beneficial to their agencies because these communities could eventually serve as an additional source of information for constituents and thus decrease the number of routine inquiries agencies receive. In times of severe budget shortfalls, providing such additional benefit at low or no cost to the agency was seen as very desirable.

4. *Instantaneous information sharing*

The participants saw the instantaneous nature of social media as one of its key benefits to government agencies. Not only do social media tools provide additional communication channels, they do so in real time, irrespective of time or location of the sender or recipient. This feature is especially important for communication to citizens during emergencies, as well as receiving information from citizens in time of a disaster or accident. In addition, participants stated that social media can free them from the restraints of traditional media outlets, allowing them to post information on their own schedule instead of a set news cycle. These tools also enable them to post information about things customarily deemed “not news worthy” by commercial or other media, yet may be seen as important to their constituents.

5. *Enhanced collaboration*

Participants saw collaborative social media tools, especially internal agency wikis, as crucial to enabling collaboration among agency departments that typically do not work well with one another. This enhanced ability to share knowledge and information in turn could improve agency operations as problems are solved from multiple perspectives instead of one isolated and limited viewpoint. In addition to internal collaboration, participants also hoped that social media tools would enhance their collaborations with other state agencies and allow them to learn and share information with agencies from other states. In other words, collaborative social media tools allow people to take advantage of cumulative knowledge and experience irrespective of time or geography, thus contributing to further improvement of agency operations.

6. *Enhanced public safety*

Participants viewed social media tools as potentially improving public safety by allowing increased dissemination of pertinent information in a time of emergency. They also allow for more targeted distribution of agency information to populations at risk on issues such as domestic violence or health concerns like H1N1 or AIDS. In addition to enabling wider dissemination of agency information, the instantaneous nature of social media has the potential to improve coordination and response among rescue teams in emergency situations by allowing for continuous and wide dissemination of status updates.

7. *Information dissemination and exchange*

Not surprisingly, virtually all participants viewed information dissemination and exchange as one of the key benefits of social media. The majority of participants emphasized the importance of communication to citizens, especially concerning improving public awareness of government services, increasing their access to young generations traditionally viewed as a difficult population to reach, and giving the public greater access to government services. While participants also mentioned the desire to receive feedback and input from their constituency and to create dialogue with the public, they emphasized it less frequently. In addition to increasing information dissemination externally with the public, several participants also mentioned increasing information flow internally within the agency.

8. *“Coolness” factor*

While government is perceived to be many things, it is rarely perceived as “cool,” especially by younger generations. Participants viewed social media tools as potential means for enhancing the citizenry’s image of government as being in touch with current technology and able to react quickly to emerging technologies. Participants also believed that social media tools would allow them to put a “human face” on their agency, thus improving the public perception of the agency and government as a whole.

9. *Improved training capabilities*

Social media tools could improve training for government employees by facilitating the sharing of training materials with others and simply allowing more employees to take advantage of training by making it widely available. Additionally, participants also saw social media as being beneficial for

training of external customers by giving agencies a venue for easy dissemination of its materials to external entities.

10. *Documentation*

Participants viewed certain social media tools, specifically internal collaborative tools, as serving an important function of creating a common information depository that is openly available to all agency staff. This function of making consistent information available to all agency employees in turn benefits the public by making responses to public inquiries consistent over time and over disparate departments that might otherwise provide different answers to the same question. This function is especially important in disseminating agency interpretations of relevant legislations so that they are freely available to all departments at the same time without having to rely solely on more cumbersome forms of communication.

11. *Cost saving*

Not surprisingly given the current economic climate, social media was also seen as a potential cost-saving measure. Specifically, participants mentioned that agencies could potentially save money on travel by using social media for collaborative efforts that would otherwise require people's presence at a given location, harnessing the power of communities in providing answers to the public, and saving money by greater reliance on electronic communication over other traditional methods.

Results from state agency workshop: Social media issues and concerns

In the second session participants concentrated on describing the challenges their agencies are facing or have faced in connection with social media use. Specifically, they answered the following question: *What are the most pressing questions/concerns/challenges that your agency is facing in regards to social media tools?* Participants worked individually for five minutes and wrote their answers on separate pieces of paper. They then shared their answers in a round robin fashion and the facilitator posted them on the white board. After all of the responses were collected, the group again clustered them into eight larger categories. The participants were then asked to prioritize among the eight categories and, with the help of four sticky dots, select four areas of concern that they viewed as the most pressing for their agency. The resulting rank-ordered list is as follows (for a detailed listing of all answers within each category, please see Appendix B):

1. *Resources*

The highest ranking concern among the workshop participants with respect to using social media tools is the availability of resources. In general, the concerns centered around three major types of resources: technical, staff, and training. In terms of technical resources, participants were concerned about having the necessary bandwidth to support streaming videos, additional security precautions to protect the agency networks from the virus and malware-rich world of social media, and simply having enough disk space to support some of the applications. In addition to technical resources, participants also emphasized the labor-intensive nature of social media, from having to continuously update information and maintain the sites to responding to an increased number of inquiries and comments from citizens. All these resources would also have to be produced in multiple languages, further exacerbating the strain on current employees. In addition, participants discussed the additional burden placed on managers and IT personnel for monitoring use by employees to ensure legality and appropriateness. Participants expressed concern whether the agency staff would be able to take on these additional responsibilities without the ability to hire additional staff. Similarly, participants also mentioned the need for additional training of their employees, whether on the use social media for official purposes or training employees on new policies with respect to personal use of social media during work hours.

2. *Legal and regulatory ramifications*

The second highest ranked category of concerns spanned a number of large issues that could be summarized under the category of legal and regulatory ramifications. There were roughly four

areas of concern under this category: monitoring appropriate use by agency employees, regulation of accuracy of content, adherence to existing federal and state laws, and ramifications of entering into legal agreements with social media providers. Monitoring appropriate use by agency employees encompassed things such as ensuring that employees were not engaging in inappropriate activity on agency computers and that productivity levels are not suffering due to employees "socializing" while at work. Participants were also concerned about the legal ramifications of ensuring accuracy of content on an agency social media site. More specifically, concerns related to posting of inaccurate information in the agency's name, whether intentionally or accidentally, and the resulting liability for consequences resulting from such misinformation. Adherence to state and federal regulations was also of concern to workshop participants. Some worried that censoring content posted by citizenry could potentially violate an individual's First Amendment rights. Others were more concerned about adhering to e-discovery and FOIA laws and regulations. Lastly, the workshop participants expressed concern regarding legal agreements that an agency would have to accept in order to use some of the current social media tools. State regulations explicitly prohibit an agency to agree to some of the terms of use and the provisions in some agreements that give the site rights to content. This was particularly troubling for agencies considering posting images of artwork or other copyrighted material.

3. *Governance*

Participants ranked governance questions as the third highest concern. Three themes dominated the overall discussion about governance: who can post information on agency's behalf, leakage of sensitive information, and perceived endorsement of advertisements posted on the same page as the agency site. The question of who within the organization will be responsible for posting information and ensuring accuracy of that information was very sensitive for many of the participants. Many worried that if this question is not clearly specified, the agency might face a situation where a number of employees are posting inaccurate or inconsistent information. Leakage of sensitive information involved not only information about citizens, but also sensitive agency information that could potentially jeopardize agency operations or at least cause embarrassment. Lastly, participants were concerned that since control over content would not be fully in their hands, the agency would be viewed as endorsing views or advertisements posted on or around their social media sites.

4. *Making a business case*

In an era of sparse resources, organizations routinely use cost benefit calculations when proposing new initiatives, such as use of social media tools. In general, concerns in this category fell into three areas: fast pace of change in this environment, potential political risks, and loss of opportunities stemming from use of one tool over another. The participants mentioned on several occasions that the speed of change in the social media landscape is stunning, making it very difficult for slow-changing government agencies to keep up. Participants expressed fears that an investment of precious resources will be wasted if tools selected soon disappear. A different area of concern involved potential harm that could come to an agency if an oversight or legislative body used negative public comments posted on the agency's social media site to justify cutting funding for a specific program. Lastly, participants were concerned about possible missed opportunities resulting from making a decision about using a specific tool without the benefit of detailed knowledge of the entire social media landscape. They worried that if they invest in one tool, they will be precluded from investing in a different tool in the future that might be better suited for fulfilling the agency's mission.

5. *Security*

Participants ranked security concerns quite high. In general, there were three areas of security concern: security of agency infrastructure, security of citizens, and security of sensitive or confidential data. Given the relatively unsecured environment of social media, participants repeatedly mentioned the need to protect agency networks from accidental exposure to malware and limit exposure to hacking. Workshop participants also felt responsible for ensuring that use of an agency social media site does not expose citizens to computer viruses and malware or endangers their physical safety by encouraging them to check their messages while driving or

other similar activities. Lastly, securing confidential data against hacking or simple information leakage was an issue of particular concern to the participants.

6. *Accessibility*

Interestingly, while many participants hoped that social media would enhance access to government information and services for the disabled, they also worried about making sure that the social media tools they select will be fully accessible, both for the disabled and economically disadvantaged populations. Namely, they worried about making all venues conform to the requirements put forth by NYS technology policies and standards and making sure they do not further perpetuate disadvantages of people who do not have access to high speed internet.

7. *Perception*

The importance of executive support has long been recognized as crucial to any new organizational endeavor and social media use is no exception. Workshop participants expressed concern that getting buy-in from the agency managers could be potentially difficult depending on the views of the particular executive regarding social media tools. Some participants worried that their agency executives might see social media as “time-wasters” and have difficulty seeing the potential value of social media tools. They reported that their executives are worried about the potential damage to their agency stemming from data leaks or being seen as wasting tax payers money on frivolous and “too cool for government” pursuits. In addition to these concerns, workshop participants also expressed worries about the public’s perception of government agencies using social media tools. On one hand they feared creating false expectations for young people, and on the other hand worried about citizens viewing social media as “fun” and “social” and thus not appropriate for government agencies funded by taxpayers money.

8. *Information overload*

Finally, workshop participants were also concerned about the volume of information that is currently “out there” and further adding to this volume by posting more information. Overloading citizens with information from a variety of sources, they feared, would ultimately result in confusion as citizens would not be able to digest all this information, sort through it all, and verify sources. They were concerned that important agency messages would get lost in the sea of information that already exists.

Results from local government workshop

The lists generated from the first workshop with state agencies were presented to local government professionals at the second workshop. The local government participants were then asked to rank both lists in order of importance. The benefits were ranked as follows:

Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I		
Ranking of social media benefits by local government workshop participants		
Rank	Benefit/Value	Number of votes
1	Information dissemination and exchange	40
2	Enhanced public safety	34
3	Enhanced collaboration	30
4	Instantaneous information sharing	27
5	Improved training capabilities	10
6	Coolness factor	8
7	Cost savings	7
8	Greater competitiveness in employee recruiting	6
9	Enhanced access for disabled	5
10	Creation of virtual communities	3
11	Documentation	1

The participants ranked the issues and areas of concerns as well. As you can see in the table below, the two groups ranked the eight individual areas of concern somewhat differently.

Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I			
Ranking of social media areas of concern by local government workshop participants			
Ranking by local government professionals	Ranking by state agency professionals	Area of concern	Number of votes
1	3	Governance	32
2	2	Legal and regulatory ramifications	24
3	7	Perception	23
4	5	Security	22
5	1	Resources	18
6	8	Information overload	5
7	4	Making a business case	1
8	6	Accessibility	0

Concluding remarks

Government agencies adopting social media tools are faced with a number of issues and concerns, as well as a number of potential benefits of such use. Some of the problems facing government entities replicate issues faced by private companies, while others are specific to the public sector. While much has been written about social media in trade journals and in news media, the public sector is still wrestling with many unanswered questions in its adoption of social media tools. The purpose of the government workshops was to bring forward questions that are specific to NYS agencies at this time. The eight

categories of concerns and issues are not mutually exclusive, but rather overlap to some degree, as do the eleven value statements, which seem to be cumulative and mutually reinforcing.

Based on these results and internal CTG discussions, the second phase of the social media project will be aimed at producing practical advice for government professionals centered around the eight concerns identified above. For a more detailed project description of phase II, please see Appendix C.

Appendix A: Values sought from social media tools

As mentioned in the text of the report, the eleven value statements are not rank-ordered; the numbers in front of the statements are purely for ease of reference. The capital “E” and “I” in parenthesis behind some of the statements designate “external” and “internal” uses of social media.

Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I State agency workshop results		
	Category	Social media value statement
1	Greater competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competing for employees where private sector is looking
2	Enhanced access for disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced access for the disabled and those in SES sectors without internet or ability to use IT • Accessibility for disabled
3	Create virtual communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote career readiness among peer groups • Creation of online communities around issues of interest to them (constituents)
4	Speed/instant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with constituents independent of time and location • Getting incident information into traffic management/response staff and state police • Get immediate feedback from wide geographic area • Instant communication • Get most up-to-date information about cyber attack vulnerability • Quick communication of information – don’t have to wait on news cycle or shrinking news media (E) • Quick dissemination of info
5	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance interactive collaborative work to lower cost of single threaded tasks • Improve communications (i.e. agency, multiple locations, IT staff don’t know each other – similar challenge in other professions) (I) • Internal communication/collaboration with project managers and employees to share project related info (I) • Information collaboration/sharing from different sources • Collaboration without the cost of time and travel (E) • Collaborative, dynamic, problem-solving vs, isolated limited perspective and outcomes • Knowledge sharing – share tips, ask questions to a wider audience, communities with common interest (Java, Oracle, etc.) – (I) • Collaborate with peers (problem solving) in other states (National Guard) (E) • Collective knowledge
6	Public safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help save lives (E) • DR “response” team coordination + communication (I/E) • Increased awareness of agency mission and program (save lives, reduce injury) • Sharing of safety programs/best practices throughout the state (E) • Improved EMS communications • Vehicle for crisis communication

**Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I
State agency workshop results**

	Category	Social media value statement
7	Information dissemination/exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share documentation and information (I) • New method of engaging our target audience (generation X – soldiers and families) • Greater public awareness and participation • Can open communication between public and government • Reaching people with “push” technology (E) • Increase our audience (E) • Greater public awareness of our agency’s mission (E) • Make the public more aware of and give greater access to our cultural holdings and offerings (E) • The ability to reach populations we serve in ways we couldn’t before (faster, different audiences, wider cast) (E) • Communicating with teens and other young people on issues of dating abuse (E) • Direct access to one of our target users – students (E) • Another communication platform to distribute traveler info to thruway/canal customers (E) • Can help reach wider/different audiences change government image to more in touch • Distribution of TV/radio PSA campaigns to public (E) • Communicate with millennials in a medium they are accessing already (I/E) • Dissemination of information to a wider audience than you otherwise might have – go viral, using other networks (E) • Disseminate young driver safety messages to a large number of teens. • Ability to reach stakeholders outside networks • Broaden distribution of materials • Ability to get feedback from public • Better way to communicate to public • Better ways to communicate • Distribute the labor message through viral distribution channels • Drive traffic to labor sites for the “whole story • For some groups only/bets way to reach them – i.e. younger audience • Creates dialog with public • Information sharing with teens – outreach to teens • Expand public awareness • Open government communication – up, down, sideways
8	Coolness factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public perception as being “in touch” and “social” (The cool factor) (E) • Puts a personal face on a faceless gov’t entity • Enhance “coolness” of stem education through peer reinforcement • Puts human “face” on agency • Speaking new language • Reaching younger demographic • Looking “cool” to the next working generation
9	Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of video training resources to DMV employees (I) • Distribution of training to other agencies (E) • We use these tools for research and training of our external customers (I)
10	Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiki: easy to use and value exceeds effort (documentation) (I) • Forms of documentation • Posting of consistent responses to inquiries – interpretation of legislation

**Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I
State agency workshop results**

	Category	Social media value statement
11	Saving money	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Saving money• Saving money through electronic communication

Appendix B: Social media tools issues and concerns

The following list of questions and concerns as related to use of social media tools is rank ordered. The number in parentheses next to each of the categories indicates the number of votes it received from workshop participants.

Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I State agency workshop results		
Rank	Category	Social media issue statements
1	Resources (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't keep up with current communication responses – the number will even increase • IT resources already oversubscribed • No organized web management support for the technology • Concerns regarding training costs • It's not always possible to answer questions in "real" time – if questions are asked in off hours and no staff is available • Cost of maintaining connections (i.e. if somebody has to respond) • Maintaining multi-language multi-cultural presence • Use of tools is not "instant" – logging in, large graphics/maps, • Translation into different languages • Non-millennial factor – average state worker's age is 47 • Cost of development (especially Labor's virtual world) • Maintaining the site (keeping info up to date) • Impact on network resources – bandwidth, malware • How to integrate the technology with existing systems? • Current environment already stretched – can staff take on more responsibilities? • Support costs (for internal implementation – sw, support, disk space; for external – monitoring content) • Lack of experience with the social networking tools and very small staff to implement initiatives • Allocation of resources to manage info • Internal resources to manage the content • Resources: how do you allocate more staff time with less staff resources • Time – if you want people to follow, you must provide "fresh" information • Productivity vs. bandwidth concerns – Is your network ready? Can you monitor and ID problems?

**Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I
State agency workshop results**

Rank	Category	Social media issue statements
2	Legal and regulatory ramifications (19) Internal vs. external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety related – how do you justify sending a tweet to people’s cell phones when they are driving and NYS law prohibits cell phone use and texting • Do all social media address the policy/legal/regulatory requirements of US/state/local governments • Potential to drive traffic for labor sites • Are you friends with everyone? Who is allowed access? • E-discovery issues • Can you/should you block access to “troublemakers”? – they are members of the public • Agreement of use – what are we signing up for? • Ownership of content by the “tool” • Controlling the message – how to control/moderate comments in political environment? Incivility • 1st amendment rights – FOIL • Content is “owned” by the site – how will it be used in the future • “illegal activities” – employees downloading pirated software, movies, music has collateral legal risk for the agency • Controlling legitimate use (work) • Misuse of state and agency resources • Controlling legitimate use (work) • Security will not allow staff to access public sites (FB, LinkedIn) • HR issue: is access to social medial detrimental to productivity • Staff use • Work productivity takes a seat, everyone is socializing • Lack of control over/monitoring of communications • Loss of productivity • Monitoring employees • Crossover between work and personal life – lack of boundaries

**Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I
State agency workshop results**

Rank	Category	Social media issue statements
3	Governance (17) Liability for information posted (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you ensure all communication platforms are successfully updates at the same time to ensure accuracy and consistency (web, HAR, VMS, Transalert) • Internal staffing: who maintains social media presence? IT or PIO? How to manage messages from multiple sources? • Controlling/managing content/message released...(formal policy, procedures are key) • Posting of sensitive information • Perceived endorsement of information contained on site (ads, opinions, etc.) • Deliberate posting of misinformation – how to prevent it? • Concerns about accuracy of content and legal issues • Sensitive information leakage – how much? • Assuring information validity + source reliability and/or authority • If manual, not automated – in a real time environment how to ensure messages are appropriate according to agency policy/procedures without approval process • Agency staff speaking publicly without approval • Want to ensure that info shared is valuable – not just use because everyone else is • Information is too “instant” – incorrect info or too much info • Consistency of message • Coordination of a;; of the agency information sources – what is “official” communication? • You can’t take anything back • Hacking + hijacking risks - someone else gets your account credential and posts as you/your agency) • Managing content release – (only releasable information) • Information leaks • Once it’s out, it’s out • No ability to create and post appropriate content: meaning people to make messages and tech. access to post them • You can’t always “control” the message • Do you allow comments? • Most business/agencies block access to social media – how to get to people during workday
4	Cost-benefit – business value (13) All eggs in one basket (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to determine (with some types of social media) if there is a cost/benefit • Lack of business case • Unstable unreliable environment • Government dragging its feet in a fast moving technology world • Use of negative posts by oversight/legislative type bodies against the agency • How long will this last? What’s the next big thing? • Are we missing opportunities • Costs associated with supporting vs. benefits + given risks • Dependence on different single tools by different agencies may lead to selective benefits (plus related privacy issues) • All eggs in one basket

**Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I
State agency workshop results**

Rank	Category	Social media issue statements
5	Security (12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security issues: for our constituents and for our networks (computers) • Security issues both with internal use (viruses and malware) • Malware – going viral in a bad way) due to the rich application environment (peer to peer file sharing, up loads and downloads) • Security – both information and architecture, especially for legacy information (anonymous reporting – is this even possible now?) • Dependencies on communication channels outside your control – may evolve/evaporate unexpectedly (here today, ...) • Data Loss/leakage – confidential/sensitive information accidentally/intentionally, accurate or malicious info. • Data aggregation – enables profiling of employees/agency leading to increased social engineering and ID theft opportunities • Security • Security of information • IT worried about security • Information security • Security concerns download viral programs • Social networking sites are vulnerable to ill intent – malware, virus, hacking – thus integrity and availability is questionable • Risk of malware infecting agency network • Social engineering – identity theft • Some times it is dangerous – texting, web-browsing while driving
6	Accessibility (7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concern that social networking tools may not be accessible for people with disabilities • Constituents are not connected to the internet • External accessibility for PWDs – some agencies posting to social media to avoid NYS policy • Stimulating participation by non-traditional technology users • Finding technologies to reach widest population within NYS • Digital divide – will agencies have to maintain multiple communications channels • Usability – need to use plain language, develop skills • Accessibility of social media
7	Perception (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can raise false expectations • Acceptance in the social media world • Opening up medium for negative feedback from public • Answering criticism for use of “unsecure”, “punk media”, “uncontrolled”, “indiscriminate” channels • Some (older) managers view all social media as a “time waster” (vs. a tool) • Management: Too cool for government • Getting executive buy-in • Perception that it is very hard to meet needs of people with disabilities • Negative information reflecting the agency • Public relations • Negative blow-back/civility • Embarking on something “new” is out of comfort zone • Reputational damage – data leakage, inaccurate information, negative comments, exposure of internal matters, loss of public trust • Convincing some people on the value – not a waste of time • Perception: wasting taxpayer money on frivolous pursuits • Dealing with negative comments/feedback in a public forum • Is it OK/appropriate to be “fun” and “social”

**Exploratory Social Media Project: Phase I
State agency workshop results**

Rank	Category	Social media issue statements
8	Information overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information overload – too much, too many sources, can't digest it all, don't know where to look or what to believe• Documentation• So much information that is shared to find the right source• Social vs. authoritative: how much is too much? You don't want to be a broadcaster, you want to engage• When people follow too many tweets the messages tend to get lost

Appendix C – Exploratory Social Media Project Description

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.
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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.