

From Our Corner

INTERACTING

The Washington Office of the Secretary of State's blog, From Our Corner, provides from-the-source information about important state news and public services.

Using new media tools, like our blog, we can interact with public – instead of just talking at them. This space acts as a bridge between the public and Secretary Sam Reed and his staff, and it is a place for people to contribute to the conversation – they can leave comments and discuss what is important to them.



SHARING

The blog provides a two-way street between government and the people. That's why we have elements to make the public feel included and we encourage them to share.

Take From Your Corner of Washington, for example. We ask the public to submit landscapes from all over Washington and we share them with the state by posting them on the blog and making them available via a Facebook application.



EVOLVING

Times are changing and the way government is able to reach out to the public has been strengthened thanks to the Internet. We want to keep up with emerging technology, to deliver services to Washingtonians in the way they are accustomed to getting information.

That's why it's so important for us to invest in new platforms of communicating – we want to make sure people who do most of their business and daily activities online can easily integrate our services and news into their routine.



PHILOSOPHY

At the Secretary of State's Office, we believe that you have to give social media importance for it to work – and we have to keep the public first for it to matter.

LAUNCHING

- Create goals and set expectations
- Make sure management is supportive
- Contact legal — make sure they're in the loop
- Prepare blog post guidelines
- Create comments policy and disclaimers
- Sort out comments response guidelines
- Assign staffers to tasks according to strengths
- Spell out the workflow for everyone involved
- Have "rainy day" posts ready for slow days
- Regular check-ins on content
- Monthly reports on traffic and effectiveness

LEARNING

- Visibility matters — make it a priority
- Blogging is for immediate news, not leftovers
- Have regular team brainstorming meetings
- Relate current news or topics to your agency
- Use creative takes on the same old news
- Art is worth a thousand words
- Keep writing short and tight
- Designate one "editor" who ensures consistency
- Be social with other bloggers by linking and referencing

CONTACT

For more information about our agency blog and social media program and policies, please contact:

Christina Siderius
csiderius@secstate.wa.gov
(360) 902-4176.

