Social Media for Personal and Professional Use
(and How to Tell the Difference)

Making Sense of the Blur
Governor’s Social Media Summit

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The same only different

- Social media is powerful
  - Far reaching
  - Faster than a speeding bullet
  - Used by influencers
- OMG, what have I done?
  - Mistakes and bad behavior are magnified and probably at least semi-permanent
  - You are not Betty Crocker, you are YOU
How to use social media as a force for good and avoid the epic fail, personal and professional use edition

- What agencies can do as employers
- What employees can do to protect themselves and avoid embarrassment
- Professional and personal use
- Blurred roles
- Managing social media use, best practices
Agency role

- Set clear policies and educate employees
- Decide whether to allow social media use for professional purposes
  - Supports the mission of the agency
    - E.g., professional networking
  - Distinguish from official agency communications
  - Distinguish from personal use
    - E.g., job search
Agency role

- Decide whether to prohibit all personal use or to allow *de minimis* use
  - *De minimis* use must be consistent with state ethics law
    - Any use of state resources (time or equipment) must be extremely limited, at little or no cost to the state
  - Agency social media policies vary
Employee responsibilities

- Follow agency policy
- Follow the law
  - Ethics, records retention, public perception, confidentiality
- Consider perceptions
- Assume nothing posted via social media is private
Professional use

- Networking, e.g. LinkedIn, GovLoop
  - Making and maintaining professional contacts
  - Professional development
    - Activities should be reasonable in scope and number
      - Training opportunities
      - Making and requesting recommendations
      - Discussion groups
  - Locating speakers or other resources
Personal use

- Connecting to friends, relatives, and “friends”
- Likes and follows
- Exchanging information
  - Family news, photos, memes
- Entertainment
  - YouTube, games
- Researching products, finding deals
- Networking
  - Job search, expanding contacts, seeking professional opportunities
Personal or professional?

I CAN HAS PROM DATE?

LOLCATS.COM
Personal or professional?
Personal or professional?
Personal or professional?
The Blur

- Who are we when we network?
  - What’s the purpose?
  - What resources are being used?
  - How will actions be perceived?
- Often there is no bright line
  - Determining personal or professional requires judgment
  - Err on the side of caution
The Blur

- Increasingly, online private and public life are blurred
  - How active are you in social media?
  - How are you perceived?
- For public employees – same challenges, new venues
  - Records retention, public disclosure
  - Ethics
  - Responsibilities to employer, e.g. confidentiality
  - Reputation
Managing your social media use

- Assume anything you post on social media will be seen by
  - Someone who will pass it along (by accident or on purpose) to
    - Someone you did not intend to share with
  - If you don’t want your mom, your spouse, your boss, your kids, the cops, or investigative reporters to see something, don’t post it
Managing your social media use

- Before you connect, personally or professionally; before you look for a job
- Edit your profile(s) and check privacy settings on LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.
  - Only information you want others to see
  - Understand what is automatically shared
- Do you tweet on Twitter?
  - Check your content
Managing your social media use

- How many platforms, how many profiles?
  - One profile or separate personal and professional profiles
  - Different platforms for different purposes
  - You have to maintain them all
- Facebook only allows one account and one profile for an individual
  - You can have multiple pages and associate multiple email addresses
More best practice tips

- Know the terms of service
  - How many profiles or accounts?
- Know and use privacy settings
- Assume nothing is really private
- Use common sense
  - Don’t discuss the workplace
  - Don’t announce your vacation
  - Don’t over-share
- By the way . . . .
  - Your “friends” aren’t necessarily your friends
  - And what about those friends-of-friends?
More best practice tips

- Remember that traditional ethics rules still apply
- Assume everything you post will become public
- Be professional
- Be aware of perceptions
- Always identify yourself appropriately
- Social networks are tools, not toys
- Be transparent
- Admit when you are wrong; act promptly to correct mistakes
The Takeaway

- Employers and employees both can help assure safe and effective use of social media
- Be familiar with the social media you use
- Public and private online lives can overlap
- Use social media responsibly at work and away
- Never assume anything posted on social media will remain private.
Questions
Thank you!

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