

# Social Media Policy



## Fairfield County

February 2016

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# Overview

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Fairfield County has embraced social media as a means to improve openness, accessibility and transparency. Strategic use of social media helps the county foster positive relationships with key audiences such as customers, social service partners, taxpayers/voters, overseers, government peers and employees.

Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube give the county a cost-effective means for communicating with these audiences.

Social media plays an important part in the county's overall communication and customer service strategies. It complements existing practices such as media relations, newsletters, special events and internal communications.

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way customers communicate and obtain information online, Fairfield County may consider using social media tools to reach a broader audience. The county encourages the use of social media to further the goals of the county and the missions of its departments, where appropriate.

Fairfield County has an overriding interest and expectation in deciding what is "spoken" on behalf of the county on social media sites. To ensure effective usage of social media, the county has adopted the following policies and procedures.

Purpose - The purpose of this policy is:

- to recognize the growing utilization of social media by both individuals and organizations,
- to illustrate the use of social media by Fairfield County as a tool to communicate with employees and the public at large,
- to describe the various types of social media and how they advance Fairfield County's communications efforts and
- to advise Fairfield County employees of the need to adhere to their Codes of Conduct when using social media whether at work or at home.

Social media defined—for the purposes of this policy, social media is defined as electronic, web-based technologies that allow instant, widespread and interactive communication. The communication tools are chosen by the users to get information when and how they want it. Fairfield County offers Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. As new technologies evolve, the county will explore additional social media tools for communication.

# Guidelines

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## Responsibility

The County's Social Media Policy was approved by the Data Board on 08/19/2016 and the Board of Commissioners on 02/16/2016.

The County Data Board is responsible for facilitating the County's Social Media policy in compliance with established Board rules and protocols. This includes responsibility to audit agency/department use of social media and recommend steps for policy compliance.

Elected officials have authority to determine and establish social media activity at the agency/department program level, and nothing in this policy shall be read or interpreted as to derogate the authority of an elected official. The elected official, department head, or designee will designate a communications officer(s) to coordinate all social media activity. Department communications personnel are responsible for all agency social media pages, feeds and platforms.

Only members of Department communications personnel may send messages and/or respond to comments via county social media platforms. They will create new pages, feeds, groups, etc. on social networks. The elected official, department head, or designee will have final say on selection of new social media tools – with close counsel from the IT Department.

The IT Department and communications personnel carry responsibility for technical and security issues.

Staff will follow Fairfield County's Policy while using social media.

All Fairfield County social media sites posted by departments will be subject to approval by the elected official, department head, or designee in coordination with the communications personnel.

The best, most appropriate uses of social media tools by Fairfield County fall generally into two categories:

As channels for disseminating time-sensitive information as quickly as possible (example: emergency information).

As marketing/promotional channels which increase the county's ability to broadcast its messages to the widest possible audience.

Fairfield County social media sites are subject to State of Ohio public records laws. Any content maintained in a social media format that is related to county business, including a list of subscribers and posted communication, is a public record. Fairfield County is responsible for responding completely and accurately to any public records request for public records on social media. Content related to county business shall be maintained in an accessible format so that it can be produced in response to a request. Wherever possible, such sites shall clearly indicate that any articles and any other content

posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure. Users shall be notified that public disclosure requests must be directed to the relevant departmental public disclosure officer.

Ohio state law and relevant Fairfield County records retention schedules apply to social media formats and social media content. Unless otherwise addressed in a specific social media standards document, Fairfield County shall preserve records required to be maintained pursuant to a relevant records retention schedule for the required retention period on approved media in a format that preserves the integrity of the original record and is easily accessible.

Users and visitors to social media sites shall be notified that the intended purpose of the site is to serve as a mechanism for communication between county departments and members of the public. Fairfield County social media site articles and comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be allowed:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
- b. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
- c. Profane or threatening language or content;
- d. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- f. Solicitations of commerce;
- g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems, or an officer or employee of the County; or
- i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- j. Spam or links to other sites.
- k. Content containing personal information. Please see Standard Practices.
- l. Comments, conduct, or communications prohibited under Ohio Revised Code Section 2917.21(A)(1)-(5).
- m. Comments, conduct, or communications that the County deems unlawful under any provision of Title 29 of the Ohio Revised Code.

These guidelines must be displayed to users or made available by hyperlink. Any content removed based on these guidelines must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster when available according to record retention schedules.

The County Data Board reserves the right to restrict or remove any content that is deemed in violation of this social media policy or any applicable law.

The agency will approach the use of social media tools as consistently as possible.

All new social media tools proposed for the county use will be approved by the Fairfield County Data Board.

## **Administration of Fairfield County social media sites**

- a. The IT Department will maintain a list of social media tools which are approved for use by all departments.
- b. The IT Department, along with department communications personnel will maintain a list of all Fairfield County social media sites, including login and password information.
- c. The county must be able to immediately edit or remove content from social media sites.

For each social media tool approved for use by the county the following documentation will be developed and adopted:

- a. Operational and use guidelines
- b. Standards and processes for managing accounts on social media sites
- c. County branding standards
- d. Standards for the administration of social media sites

## **Social Media Standards**

The following social media tools have been approved for use by the county:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Youtube
- Instagram

## **Social Media Content**

The standards listed below apply to all social media tools.

### **Content**

- Department communications personnel maintain the agency's account with information specific to their department.
- Each agency will have only one account unless otherwise approved by the elected official, department head, or designee.
- Account information, including usernames and password, shall be registered with the elected official, department head, or designee as well as IT in a sealed envelope.
- Content shall mirror information presented on the respective web site and other existing information disseminating mechanisms.
- All information posted should conform to the policies and procedures of the agency.

### **Archive**

- Each agency shall be responsible for archiving content based on their respective Records Retention Policy. Archived posts will not be visible to the public, but shall be accessible for public records retention purposes.
- Where applicable, comments and followers are subject to public disclosure.

## Twitter Standard

### Purpose

Twitter is a micro blogging tool that allows account holders to tweet up to 140 characters of information to followers. By procuring and maintaining a Twitter account, an agency will communicate information directly to their Twitter followers, alerting them to news and directing them to the official agency web site for more information. These standards should be used in conjunction with the Social Media Policy.

### Content

- Each agency's Twitter bio will read "Fairfield County ***Agency Name***". Comments and the list of followers are subject to public disclosure.
- The county logo or agency logo will be used as the Twitter logo.
- The Twitter account shall serve three primary purposes:
  - Provide information related to the programs and services of the agency
  - Promote agency sponsored events/activities
  - Refer followers to content hosted at the official web site for the agency.
- Information posted on Twitter shall conform to the policies and procedures of the agency.
- Tweets shall be relevant, timely, and informative.
- Departmental communications personnel shall ensure that information is posted correctly the first time as Twitter does not allow for content editing.
- Departmental communications personnel shall be responsive to those constituents who communicate via Twitter's @reply or direct message functions. Communication with followers will be timely and consistent with existing protocols.

## Facebook Standard

### Purpose

Facebook is a social networking site. Businesses and governments have joined individuals in using Facebook to promote activities, programs, projects and events. This standard is designed for county agencies looking to drive traffic to department web sites and to inform more people about agency activities. These standards should be used in conjunction with the social media policy. As Facebook changes their standards, this policy will be updated as needed.

### Content

- The county logo or agency logo will be clearly visible on the home page.
- Facebook applications should not be used unless approved by the elected official, department head, or designee. There are security risks involved in using some applications.
- Information posted on Facebook shall conform to the policies and procedures of the agency.
- A link to the agency web site should be included on the home page.
- The page name should be descriptive of the department.
- Generally, comments / posting should be turned off on the agency page.
- If comments are allowed, departmental communications personnel shall be responsive to those constituents who communicate via Facebook. Communication will be timely and consistent with existing protocols.



## Instagram Standard

### Purpose

Instagram is a social media network that uses a mobile app to capture and share pictures between users. Using filters through a mobile app, photos are given a unique, finished look. Instagram can also be viewed via the Web, displaying recent photos. Because Instagram requires posting photos, it can be time consuming. Consider the time and department resources needed to maintain an Instagram account. This standard is designed for county agencies looking to drive traffic to department web sites and to inform more people about county activities. These standards should be used in conjunction with the social media policy. As Instagram changes their standards this policy will be updated as needed.

### Content

- The county or agency logo should be the account picture.
- Follow all [Instagram Terms of Service Policy](#).
- The account should be monitored regularly. All comments are immediately released to the public domain. By design, you can only block specific people from liking or commenting on your posts.
- When photographing individuals, be aware you should get a photo release form signed.
- Make sure that the photo is of the highest quality.
- Departmental communications personnel shall be responsive to those constituents who communicate via Instagram. Communication will be timely and consistent with existing protocols.

## YouTube Standard

### Purpose

YouTube is the largest video sharing site on the Web. YouTube lets anyone upload short videos for private or public viewing. Videos are streamed to users from the YouTube site ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)) or via blogs and other Web sites. YouTube provides code that can be embedded in any Web site page to view a specific video.

- Follow all [YouTube Terms of Service](#).
- Keep your video content simple, short, and engaging. Avoid jargon and detailed technical information if possible. Simple, easy to follow messages work best.
- Place the link to the video on the appropriate agency web site.
- The video title should be descriptive of the content
- The video description should provide detailed information of the video content.
- Comments should be turned off for all YouTube videos.
- If comments are allowed, departmental communications personnel shall be responsive to those constituents who communicate via Instagram. Communication will be timely and consistent with existing protocols.

## Standard practices

The county will follow these practices:

- Protect sensitive or personal information  
Account Numbers, Biometric identifiers (fingerprint and voiceprints), Certificate / License Numbers, Device identifiers and serial numbers, e-mail addresses, fax numbers, full-face photographic images, health plan beneficiary number, individual's name, Internet protocol (IP) address numbers, Social Security numbers, Telephone Numbers, VIN and serial numbers including license plate numbers, Web URL's, Geographic markers including street address, city, state, and zip, Dates directly related to an individual including birth date, date of death, discharge date, and any other unique identifying number characteristic or code unless otherwise permitted by the Privacy Rule for identification.
- Monitor user comments (if enabled)
- Be accurate
- Correct mistakes
- Be considerate
- Respect copyrights and trademarks
- Use work e-mail addresses and strong passwords
- Avoid advertisements, sponsorships and endorsements
- Stay within area of expertise
- Passwords will be changed immediately should an administrator leave.

## Training

All communication personnel will be trained in the use of social media tools to ensure consistency during vacation/sick time, and prevent interruption of service if staff leave the county.

## Branding

All county social media presences should have a consistent look and feel, including use of the appropriate county or department logo approved by the elected official, department head, or designee.

## Implied endorsements

If possible, the county's content will not appear next to advertisements. Platform settings will be reviewed to disable advertisements when possible.

## Personal use of social media

Elected officials and employees have the right to participate in social media using personal equipment on their own time. They are expected to never post or create anything that would be potentially embarrassing or considered offensive. It should be clear that views expressed are not necessarily those

of the county. Ohio requires public servants to avoid the appearance of leveraging the stature of the state in the use of their assigned state e-mail address.

## Monitoring

The communication personnel will closely monitor social media sites. They will view social networking pages at least once each weekday and periodically check during weekends.

## Public records

Social media users should be aware that these types of communications are considered public records.

## Comments

This policy will be added to the agency's Facebook pages.

We welcome you and your comments to the Fairfield County agency name Facebook pages.

The purpose of this site is to present matters of public interest in Fairfield County agency name. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, and concerns, but please note this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.

Once posted, the County reserves the right to delete submissions that contain vulgar language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive comments that target or disparage any ethnic, racial, or religious group. Further, the County also reserves the right to delete the following types of comments:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular social medium article being commented upon;
- b. Comments in support of or opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures;
- c. Profane language or content;
- d. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
- e. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
- f. Solicitations of commerce;
- g. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
- h. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
- i. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- j. Spam or links to other sites.
- k. Content containing personal information. Please see Standard Practices.

Please note that the comments expressed on this site do not reflect the opinions and position of the Fairfield County government or its officers and employees. The appearance of external links or

advertisements on this site does not constitute an official endorsement and will be removed. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact the *agency name / contact / e-mail.*

The Social Media Engagement Policy is to be used in conjunction with the Social Media Policy as an agency specific form to list detail of the social media platform. It is to be used at the agencies discretion.

**Fairfield County agency name  
Social Media Engagement Policy**

1. **Agency/Department/Section/Unit:** Agency Name
2. **Proposed Timeline:** 100 Followers by date with continued growth thereafter.
3. **Contacts:** name / title/ e-mail/ phone number
4. **Social media platform on which we will participate:** media platform
5. **Departments we have talked with regarding Twitter account:** List departments

**Specific mission, goals, and objectives:** The goal and purpose of this account is to alert members of the community and county staff of proceedings, updates, and relevant news pertaining to the Board of Commissioners. The goal is to connect county offices with the community.

**6. Description of Strategy:**

List strategy

**7. Content Management:**

**Which position will be responsible for content creation and editing:** Name / title

**Will platforms require moderation:** Platforms will be monitored daily by \_\_\_\_\_.

**How frequently will content be updated:** We will tweet at least \_\_\_\_times a week

**What level of participation will be given to followers/visitors/users on social media platforms:**  
We will respond to all questions within \_\_\_\_ hours.

**8. Public Records and Accessibility:** The agency name account will be a public account.

**9. Links, Endorsement, and Advertising:** Any links on the social media page(s) will be to the agency name website or other relevant websites. No advertising or endorsements will take place.

**10. Social Media Branding:** The account picture will be the county or agency logo. Backgrounds and wallpapers will be crisp and clean. Content will be professional in nature.

## Example: Social Media Engagement Policy

### Fairfield County Commissioners Twitter Engagement Policy

1. **Agency/Department/Section/Unit:** Fairfield County Board of Commissioners
2. **Proposed Timeline:** 100 Followers by December 31, 2013 with continued growth thereafter.
3. **Contacts:** Carri Brown, Executive Director, [cbrown@co.fairfield.oh.us](mailto:cbrown@co.fairfield.oh.us), (740) 652-7096  
Rachel Elsea, Clerk, [relsea@co.fairfield.oh.us](mailto:relsea@co.fairfield.oh.us), (740) 652-7091
4. **Social media platform on which we will participate:** Twitter
5. **Departments we have talked with regarding Twitter account:** Board of Commissioners, Information Technology, Legal, Programs/Business Updates, and Records Management.

**Specific mission, goals, and objectives:** The goal and purpose of this account is to alert members of the community and county staff of proceedings, updates, and relevant news pertaining to the Board of Commissioners. The goal is to connect county offices with the community.

#### 6. Description of Strategy:

- We are aiming to connect with the public, Elected Officials, Department Heads, media outlets, agencies, stakeholders, and county employees.
- Though tweets and retweets we will not only increase our followers but also increase the followers of those mentioned in our tweets.
- Our mission will be improved by the sharing of information and communicating accurate information about the Commissioners and the county overall. The public will see an increase in access to the Commissioners, information, and communication. Increased communication with the community will result in greater education and outreach and an improved understanding of county business.

#### 7. Content Management:

**Which position will be responsible for content creation and editing:**

Carri Brown, Executive Director  
Rachel Elsea, Clerk

**Will platforms require moderation:** Platforms will be monitored daily by the Clerk, Rachel Elsea.

**How frequently will content be updated:** We will tweet at least five times a week

**What level of participation will be given to followers/visitors/users on social media platforms:**  
We will respond to all questions within 24 hours.

8. **Public Records and Accessibility:** The Board of Commissioners twitter account will be a public account.

9. **Links, Endorsement, and Advertising:** Any links tweeted by the account will be to the Board of Commissioners' website or other relevant websites. No advertising or endorsements will take place.

10. **Social Media Branding:** The twitter account avatar will be the county logo. Backgrounds and wallpapers will be crisp and clean. Tweets will be professional in nature.