Guidelines for Social Networking

to define the standards for the creation of social networking websites created for the purpose of promoting a message in the City's name

Contents

Policy Statement

The guidelines contained in this policy are meant to aid city employees with the creation and continued communication through social networking services to promote the City's message.

Scope

This policy governs all City of Georgetown employees, volunteers, vendors and other representatives who wish to create a website or other social networking service that represents the City of Georgetown.

Related Statutes, Policies, Requirements or Standards

City of Georgetown Media Use Policy

City of Georgetown Branding Guidelines

Contacts

webmaster@georgetown.org

Information on how and when to create City websites, social media, lists, newsletters, groups and other digital networking communications

pio@georgetown.org

Information on the media policy, content, branding questions, and other

communication services.

Definitions

A "social network service" focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail, instant messaging, and comment threads.

When Are You Speaking For the City?

When are you representing the City of Georgetown in a post to a social networking site? Many factors can be involved, so good judgment and common sense are the rule.

Not representing the City:

- Describing the weather or talking about a new network TV show
- Saying that you think the traffic is bad on Williams Drive, but you are not identified as a City employee in your profile
- Saying that you visited a City park, but you are not identified as a City employee in your profile

Representing the City:

- Offering an opinion about a new ordinance related to your department in which you identify yourself as a member of that department
- Talking about your co-worker's statements quoted in a newspaper article and your profile identifies you as a City of Georgetown employee in the same department
- Discussing with a vendor to your department the problems with the bid from a competing vendor on a bid issued by your department

Borderline cases:

- Employee that is a division director telling people not to shop at a local store because they have bad service
- Personal photo shows a person in a shirt with a City logo
- City department head offering an opinion on recent statements by a County

Commissioner, but the employee is not identified as a City employee in their profile

Procedures

Creation

When a department, volunteer, or vendor wishes to create a social network service that represents the City of Georgetown, the sponsoring department(s) must first bring this intent to the Public Communications Department in writing. For those social networks tied to an identity, credentials for that identity must be documented with the City Records Manager and the administrative email address for that site must be a City of Georgetown email group rather than an email address tied to any one person.

Any person who is to administer a social media site in the City's name must acknowledge receipt of the City's social media guidelines by signing the Social Media Guidelines Acknowledgement Form which can be found at the end of this document and acknowledge that the account used to speak as the City becomes subject to City Records Management Policy and to Open Records Requests regarless of whether he or she is speaking on a City-administered network or a third-party sponsored site.

Any social networking service is to be placed into a backup schedule so that the content can be properly reviewed and the service's usage tracked to meet open records requirements. If there is no existing service available for automated backup of content, the sponsoring department(s) becomes responsible for manual backup of all content. This includes communication threads on third-party networks/sites.

Administration

Administrators to any social network must be added with individually identifiable usernames. Group logins must not be used. Additionally, logins must not be shared amongst administrators.

Content

Any and all postings to any social network are subject to open records. This includes communications done in the City's name on third-party networks.

The City openly welcomes feedback from citizens, positive or negative. Deletion of user-created content must fall into the definitions of what is allowed to be deleted under the

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City moderation policy. If the content does meet the guidelines for what is allowed to be removed, before deleted, the content must be saved and emailed to the webmaster as a screenshot, with the date it was created clearly visible in the screenshot.

Any responses and/or posts by City representatives must meet the high standard of customer service expected by the City of Georgetown. The social media site must be monitored by the sponsoring department(s) and any user questions posted on that media must be acknowledged by an administrator within one (1) business day.

Anyone posting content as "the City" must consider how the content may be perceived by members of the public, which includes people from varied backgrounds. Additionally, it must be understood that anything we publish is subject to being quoted in third party publications such as newspapers and/or television media.

Additionally, the City must refrain from being seen as endorsing any one company over another. This includes "liking" one commercial page and not "liking" others. Administrators must take care to not advertise for a commercial entity and demonstrate understanding of the fine line between acknowledgement of a sponsor and recommending their product or service.

Administrators must use caution when "liking" networks that may have a political affiliation or intent.

Any responses to offers by businesses for discounts and/or benefits for City employees on these social networks is governed by the City of Georgetown Personnel Policies. If it is unclear how to respond to such offers, please contact Human Resources.

Summary

Social networking sites are a growing part of the new media environment. As the City explores ways to use new media such as social networking sites, it is important to align those efforts with guidelines and standards for City communication. By reviewing all proposals for new social networking services prior to implementation, we can ensure effective use of resources and professional communications with our audience.

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Content Deletion:

I acknowledge that I can not delete or hide content that is allowable under the City's moderation policy. I also understand that if it is allowed to be deleted, I have to first create a permanent record of that content for purposes of Open Records.

Sharing of Usernames:

I acknowledge that I must not share my administrator login with anyone and that I am responsible for anything that is posted using my account.

Customer Service:

I understand that I am speaking as the City of Georgetown and will only speak in such a way to meet the City's high standard of customer service and professionalism.

Open Records for Administrator Accounts:

I understand that any account I use to speak "as the City" becomes subject to open records searches.

Moderation Policy:

I have read and understand the City of Georgetown Moderation Policy