

Follow-up from ICMA Global Engagement Webinar: Strategic Management of Social Media in Local Government

Resources from Panelists

Summary Document of Resources from Wentzville, Missouri, USA:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1F-NNQFfcm7WFWrpLwiQaAFeumDE9omrW4IURYgg_fA/edit?tab=t.0

Links to “Love is Not Abuse” Campaign from Wigan Council, United Kingdom

[Working with survivors of domestic violence on the award-winning campaign 'Love is Not Abuse' – Wigan Council | Local Government Association](#)

[Domestic abuse campaign at the forefront as Wigan Council marks White Ribbon's 16 days of action](#)

[Domestic abuse](#)

Questions and Comments from the Webinar Chat Social Media Platforms & Engagement

Audience Questions:

For those of you getting away from X, are you going to Bluesky? Is anyone on BlueSky and finding good engagement? What other apps are used? Do you direct your followers from X to other platforms? Do you find that lack of consistent posting on X impacts engagement during emergency events?

Panelist and/or Chat Answers:

- Left X and ramped up engagement on other platforms including Instagram, Facebook, and Nextdoor.
- Left X and integrated an announcements feed on homepage.
- Have started testing BlueSky and seen surprising engagement rates compared to X and Threads.
- Other platforms: TextMyGov, app for their city.
- Keep X account to make sure it's not taken by anyone else but used sparingly.
- Our data shows our following on X is actually declining and our posts don't receive anywhere near the engagement that we get on Facebook/Instagram/LinkedIn. The ROI is becoming apparent.
- Use Facebook and website primarily, and YouTube for Council meetings.

Audience Question:

What scheduling platforms do you use, and do you find any of them to be better than others?

Panelist and/or Chat Answers:

- Hootsuite, Meltwater, Hubspot, Loomly, SocialNewsDesk, Buffer.

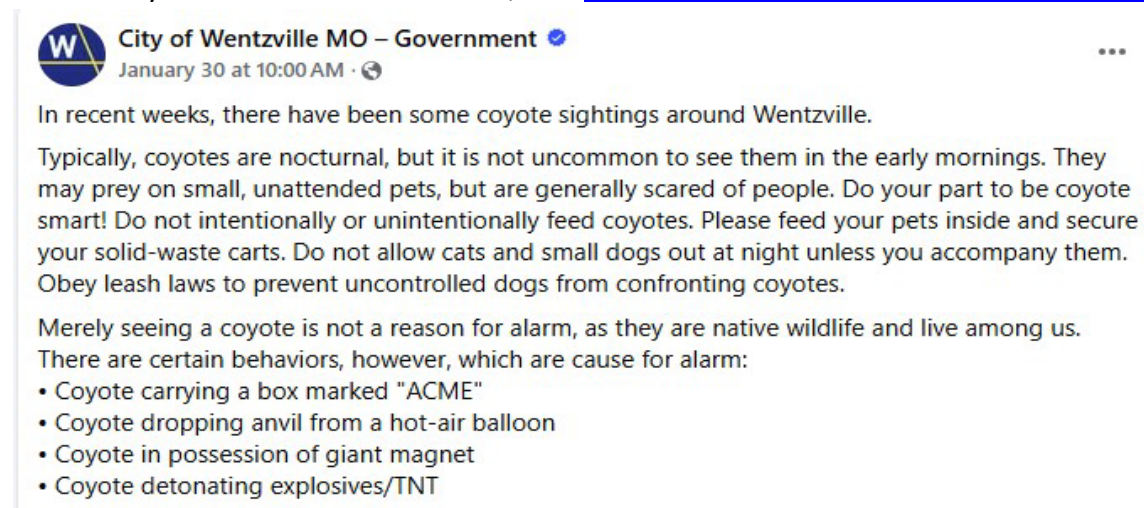
Audience Question:

Would you recommend following more of a professional approach (set fonts/colors/theme) or a fun approach (more creative, more lenient) on social outlets for a city official page?

Panelist Answers:

At the city of Wentzville, we take a strategic approach to social media by balancing informative content with engaging, lighthearted posts. While we occasionally have fun with our regular posts — like using Wile E. Coyote references to talk about roaming coyotes (post shared below) — we primarily reserve our most playful content for Reels. Reels are a space where fun is expected, which helps us get better engagement and reach a younger demographic.

We also believe it’s important to not always take ourselves too seriously — using humor helps humanize government and make our content more relatable. While fun is a great way to increase engagement, we strive for (most of) our Reels to serve a purpose, whether that’s sharing important information, driving a call to action or strengthening our connection with the community. To view Wentzville's Reels, visit <https://www.facebook.com/Wentzville/reels/>.



In Lennox and Addington County, they used a non-traditional approach with their recruitment efforts.

Recruitment:

We tried a new approach to our recruitment strategy that was aimed at being timely, responsive and fresh. Social media requires quick engagement and in healthcare, there is an abundance of jobs for candidates to choose from (both full time and part time). We commenced daily non-traditional job posts created by Administration for PSW staff only. These posts were different each day and incorporated facts that could separate JMPC from other Homes such as large free parking, wage rate, technology etc. The first photo example below is our traditional post followed by two of the non-traditional posts created for the week of May 21 2024. We responded within hours of the interested individual reaching out, asked pre-screening questions and booked for an interview to occur the following week. This was a collaborative effort between Administration, Human Resources and JMPC and was a great success coupled with some excellent lessons learned and opportunities.

Traditional Job Posting:
Posted for 5 days and had 8 shares and no comments.

Posted May 22 with 70 shares and 10 comments

Posted May 21 and has 133 shares and one comment. This first post had 100 shares in 24 hours!

We were able to book 35 interviews. Following each interview, a PSW toured the candidate through the Home. We put out 13 job offers during that week.

Dealing with Negative Comments and Trolling

Audience Question:

One of the panelists mentioned turning off commenting or hiding/deleting comments. In the US, local government communicators have been advised that this goes against First Amendment (free speech) rights. How do you handle these situations?

Panelist and/or Chat Answers:

- At a local government in Tennessee, the municipality's insurance provider gave the organization a list of things that could be deleted or hidden and this was included in their social media policy. This list is below:
 - Comments not topically related to the post.
 - Comments in support of or in opposition to political campaigns or ballot measures.
 - Profane language or content.

- 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.
- Sexual content or links to sexual content. ○ Solicitations of commerce.
- Information that may compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems.
- Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
- Other advice includes:
 - Attorneys advised not to delete or hide unless very abusive and threatening.
 - Can't delete comments unless pornographic.
 - Facebook does not allow one organization's municipal page to turn off comments. As a result, they have added a whole list of "banned words" that automatically filters them. They only delete comments that are vulgar/profane to prevent our page from getting flagged, but even those that are clearly inaccurate or misleading need to stay up. ○ On Facebook, you can set up a post to only allow comments from accounts you tag in a post so if you don't tag anyone then comments won't be allowed.
- Turning off comments:
 - Some municipalities have turned off all comments because they have been informed they can't delete any if there are comments allowed, so they simply turn them off to avoid that. ○ Another municipality turned off comments on livestreams but comments are available for other posts. ○ An additional municipality is very clear that their social media accounts are a way to provide information to residents, and not a forum for feedback, and thus they don't allow comments on most of their social media. They instead direct residents to email, call, or visit their town administration office if they have comments, questions, or feedback.

Other Communications Methods

Audience Question:

Do you use newsletters alongside social platforms, and if so, how are you finding the response/engagement with those vs some of those other platforms?

Panelist and/or Chat Answers:

- We send out a quarterly periodical and use our government access TV station to supplement social media.

- **Policy Examples:**

- Communications and Linking Policies

- City of Johnston

- https://www.cityofjohnston.com/DocumentCenter/View/14349/Cityof-Johnston-Digital-Linking-Policy-FINAL_September-18-2023

- <https://www.cityofjohnston.com/DocumentCenter/View/14350/Cityof-Johnston-Communications-and-Social-Media-Policy-Adopted-61923>
- Social

- Comments/Engagement

- <https://www.wycokck.org/Departments/County-AdministratorsOffice/Strategic-Communications/Social-Media#panel-1-2>

- With the advice of our city attorney, the city of Redlands, CA, developed social media terms and conditions that adhere to First Amendment rulings.

- https://www.cityofredlands.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/city_of_redlands_terms_and_conditions_for_govt_social_media.pdf?1664312142

Social Media User Stats: Toxic Users

The webinar referred to some social media statistics regarding toxic users. Panelist Alison Mckenzie-Folan covered the following in her presentation:

- 3% of online communities are considered toxic, but they generate 33% of online conflict.
- 1% of online communities are responsible for launching 74% of online conflicts
- Only 0.1% of users spread 80% of fake news

For more information, see the article "[Inside the funhouse mirror factory: How social media distorts perceptions of norms](#)" from *Current Opinions in Psychology*

Communications Strategies Stated in Webinar

- Lennox and Addington County: Take the cue not the bait
- City of Wentzville: Respond in three instances: direct questions, contact information, and correct misinformation/disinformation
- Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council: Be positive, be courageous, be accountable and be kind

Communications Ambassador Program

Audience Question:

We don't have an official comms ambassador program, but more active individuals do this on their own. But recently they have been getting labeled as "insiders" by the vocal minority to try and discredit anything they say/accuse them of just being compliant with whatever the town/elected officials are doing. This occurs mostly in the private community forum group in town. How do we support residents that try to do this?

Panelist and/or Chat Resources:

- Our WestonGov Academy has inadvertently led to community ambassadors who have become trusted voices to share relevant community news and deflate a lot of the errant community rumors and negativity. More info at <https://www.westonfl.org/government/city-commission/civiceducation/westongov-academy>

Dealing with Incivility from the Standpoint of Mental Health of Employees

Audience Question:

How do you deal with harassment in the comment section? For example, hate speech or degrading comments?

Panelist and/or Chat Insights:

- I even had one citizen in our vocal minority call me the spin doctor and "Pravada" which is the mouthpiece of Russian propaganda. For me, those things hurt since I also live in the county I work for, but it also fuels me to keep communicating all of the great things happening in our community. I am also working with citizen ambassadors to help spread all the goodness...love that idea!
- The legitimacy of government organizations is a challenge we all face. There are no easy solutions outside of delivery of goods/services while also remaining civil. Remember, nothing is personal. I'll be the first to admit I also feel hurt when people hurl unfair accusations.
- In Canada, there are codes of conduct and integrity commissioners. If someone is not following the code of conduct, they can be reported to the relevant integrity commissioner.

ADA (U.S.) Compatibility

Audience Recommendation:

We currently use a lot of Canva art to post and duplicate as physical flyers, but given ADA issues coming into play in 2026 based on the size of our municipality, we plan to switch to images with accompanying copy only to better allow for reader app compatibility.

CRM Options

Audience Question:

Does anyone have a great CRM recommendation? We use Zoho for social media and Constant Contact for contact lists and email blasts.

Panelist and/or Chat Answers:

- We use Sprout Social for socials and Mailchimp for SMS, newsletters, email blasts.
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FOIA Requests and Archival Platforms

Panelist and/or Chat Recommendations:

- ArchiveSocial
 - Pagefreezer
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Continue the Conversation

Google Doc:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FxnHoTn0Ttj_oWhUP6zDa6zyfcNXAdc4j8G932h1PBE/edit?usp=sharing

LinkedIn Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13172105/>

Professional Communications Associations

- U.S. – 3CMA; PRSA
- UK – CIPR
- Canada – CPRS, CAMC
- Government Social Media: <https://www.government-social-media.com>

- The Global Alliance for Public Relations and Communications Management