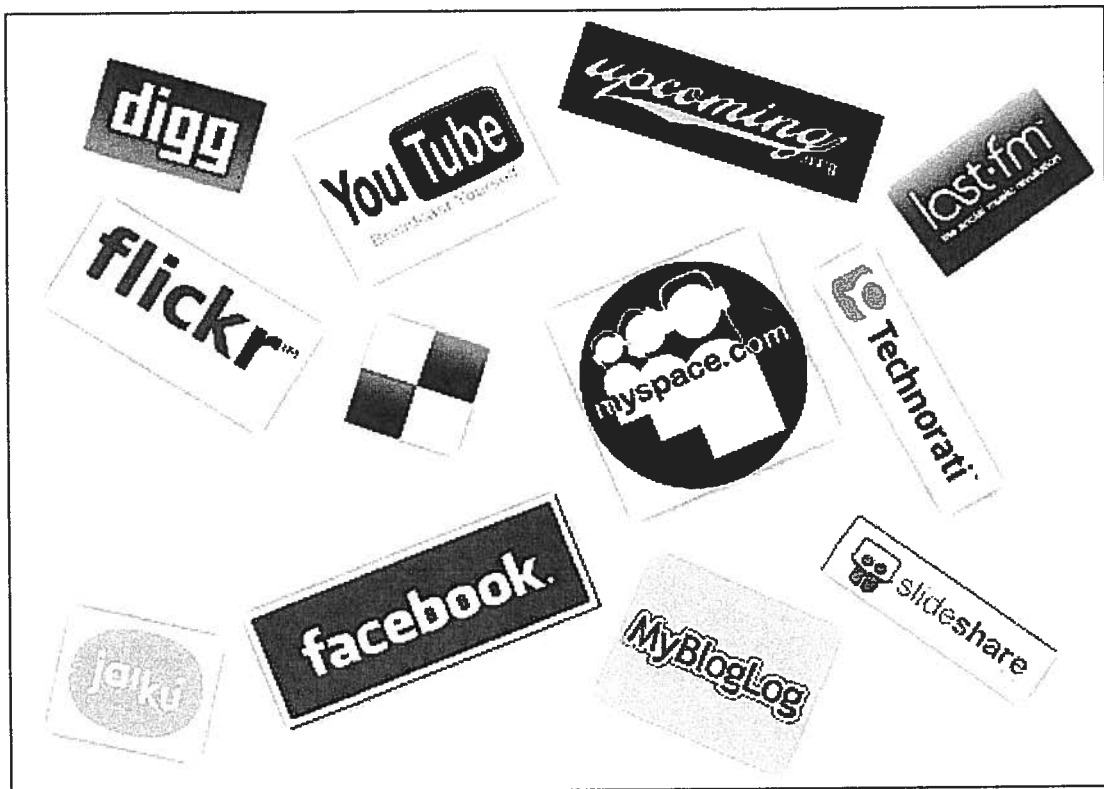


**The Legalities of Social Media:  
A Social Media Policy for Localities**

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**CHESTERFIELD COUNTY  
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**Information Systems Technology  
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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Chesterfield County supports the controlled use of social media sites and tools to enhance the presentation, access and communication about county resources and information to its residents and employees.

**A. Purpose**

Social media sites and tools provide county officials, departments, teams or other county groups the ability to publish, share information and collaborate on issues related to county government.

County social media sites and tools facilitate further discussion of those issues related to county government by providing the public the opportunity to submit information. Materials submitted by the public must be directly related to the topic of the site. Submission of materials by the public constitutes participation in a moderated discussion site and not a public forum.

**B. Scope**

This policy applies to, but is not limited to, all individuals, departments, teams or groups who create, post, moderate or maintain Internet-based communications pertaining to county business. It covers individuals who are full-time or part-time employees, interns, temporary workers, volunteers, consultants, contractors, constitutional officers or other entities who have been contracted or authorized to perform work on behalf of Chesterfield County. This policy does not address the personal and private use of social media by county employees.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

- A. Content manager:** An authorized county representative who is responsible for posting social media communications with appropriate content as well as reviewing and responding to social media responses.
- B. External social media author:** A member of the public, or other person not representing Chesterfield County, who submits a social media communication or social media response for posting on a social media site.
- C. Internal social media author:** A county representative who submits material for posting in response to the content of a particular social media communication.
- D. Principal social media site:** A site intended to encompass all facets of Chesterfield County government and not linked to a specific official, department, team, group, issue or project.
- E. Social media communication:** An original posting of content to a county social media site that is by or has been approved by the content manager.
- F. Social media creator:** A department head, member of county administration, or constitutional officer who has the ultimate responsibility for creating and monitoring a social media site.



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- G. **Social media moderator:** An authorized county representative, as designated by the county administrator, who reviews content forwarded by content managers for review to determine if it is acceptable under the posting requirements stated herein.
- H. **Social media response:** A video, image or comment posted or submitted for posting by an external social media author.
- I. **Spam:** The abuse of electronic messaging systems (including most broadcast media, digital delivery systems) to send unsolicited bulk messages indiscriminately. While the most widely recognized form of spam is e-mail spam, the term is applied to similar abuses in other media: instant messaging spam, Usenet newsgroup spam, Web search engine spam, spam in blogs, wiki spam, online classified ads spam, mobile phone messaging spam, Internet forum spam, junk fax transmissions, social networking spam, and file sharing network spam.

### **III. CREATION OF A SOCIAL MEDIA SITE**

A social media creator who wishes to create a social media site shall make a request to the chief information officer of the Information Systems Technology Department (IST) and the director of the Department of Public Affairs. The social media creator shall specify whether the implementation of the site will allow social media responses to post immediately or be reviewed prior to posting. The chief information officer, or designee, shall determine if the social media platform or tools sought to be used can be supported by IST and are approved for use under this policy. The director of public affairs, or designee, shall assist in determining whether the social media site or tool is appropriate for the communication purposes sought. In addition, the social media creator will need to demonstrate sufficient resources to manage the site's content, to keep records of and relating to the social media site, to regularly review social media responses, and to timely respond, as necessary, to social media responses.

If a site is approved by the chief information officer and the director of public affairs, then the social media creator must provide any applicable terms of use to the county attorney's office for review and approval before the site is created.

Prior to submitting an application to the chief information officer and director of public affairs, a social media creator should obtain the approval of the appropriate deputy county administrator as to the need for the site and the resources to appropriately staff it.

### **IV. SOCIAL MEDIA CONTROLS**

The following list includes, but is not limited to, procedural and technical controls and restrictions related to social media sites:

- A. All Chesterfield County social media communications shall adhere to the following policies: General Services Records-Management, HRM Code of Ethics, HRM Privacy of Information, IST Release of Information, Policy 7-8 IST Internet and E-mail Use, IST External Links, Information Security Policy 7-1 and Mobile Data Security Policy 7-4, other applicable IST



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security policies, Department of Public Affairs policies and procedures, and any other applicable county policies and/or procedures.

- B. Every site that is created with the capability for social media responses must be established so that the responses can either be reviewed before posting or deleted after posting if a response does not conform to the posting requirements stated herein. References herein to removal of material include not approving the material prior to posting.
- C. Materials covered by this policy include not just comments, but also images and links to other sites. The county has the right, in its sole discretion, to post, remove, delete or choose not to post any materials on any social media sites created hereunder. The county reserves the right to remove any material that, in whole or in part, does not comply with this policy or applicable law. The county also reserves the right to remove material that (i) contains anything vulgar or sexually explicit; (ii) is spam; (iii) advocates or depicts illegal activity; (iv) targets or disparages any ethnic, racial, religious, gender or other type of group; (v) contains personal attacks of any kind; (vi) promotes private business ventures, services, or products; (vii) campaigns for public office or promotes a political organization; (viii) infringes on copyrights or trademarks; or (ix) is off topic.

In addition, the county reserves the right to remove material containing computer viruses or which otherwise may disrupt, damage or restrict the use of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment.

- D. If a social media site permits social media responses, then a link to the Chesterfield County "Posting Requirements" shall be prominently displayed on the site. A sample of the Posting Requirements (Appendix A) is attached, but the sample must be modified for each social media site so that it identifies the topical scope and content manager for the specific site on which it appears. The County Attorney's Office must approve the final language of the Posting Requirements for each site.
- E. Where possible, external social media authors will be required to provide an identifier in order to provide social media responses. Social media responses from anonymous social media authors may not be allowed.
- F. Content that is designated as inappropriate by the social media moderator will be removed from public view, and a record of the content and the reason it was removed shall be retained pursuant to the appropriate records retention schedule.
- G. The Department of Public Affairs, working with the IST Department, will serve as the content manager for the county's principal sites. Departments, teams, groups or others who wish to submit social media articles for release through principal sites shall submit those communications to the department of public affairs for content approval and distribution.



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- H. All content managers, internal social media authors and moderators shall be trained regarding the terms of this policy and the other policies referred to herein.
- I. All social media sites shall clearly indicate that they contain communications from Chesterfield County and shall prominently display, if available, the content manager and contact information.
- J. After the creation of a social media site, the following information must be provided to the information security office of IST and updated any time a change is made: all new URLs, the date the site was created, the content manager, and date site is removed, if applicable.
- K. Administrative login information, including user IDs and passwords, should have at least one backup in the department and must use IST Security Services as an administrator. Passwords must be secure.
- L. When possible, social media sites created by departments, teams or groups should provide links to the county's principal sites.
- M. Although it will be the ultimate responsibility of the social media creator and content manager to maintain the content of any social media site, the Department of Public Affairs will periodically review content to determine that consistent messages are being conveyed countywide. In addition, the social media moderator and/or IST will periodically monitor sites to ensure adherence to this policy.

**V. ENFORCEMENT**

Violation of this policy may include, but is not limited to, discipline up to and including termination. In addition, the county attorney, chief information officer and director of public affairs retain the authority to remove pages due to violations of this policy, underuse or misuse of the site, and inability to provide technical or content support.

**VI. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. **Social Media Creators**  
Social media creators are ultimately responsible for creating and maintaining their social media sites and supervising the individuals who serve as content managers and internal social media authors to make sure that they perform their tasks and responsibilities in a timely and appropriate manner. Social media creators may request assistance from the Department of Public Affairs to create social networking sites
- B. **Content Managers**  
Content managers shall create or approve social media communications, including managing delivery and publication of such communications in accordance with county policies, procedures, guidelines and standards, including maintaining the necessary records to comply



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with the records management policy. The content manager is responsible for regularly reviewing all social media responses. Responses that clearly do not meet the Posting Requirements shall be immediately removed by the content manager. Responses that are potentially inappropriate shall be removed by the content manager and sent to the social media moderator for a compliance determination. Content managers are responsible for keeping a record of all materials that are removed or not approved, the dates the material was submitted and removed, and the reason the materials were removed or not approved. The social media site must contain contact information for its content manager(s).

**C. Internal Social Media authors**

Internal social media authors shall create social media communications in accordance with county policies and procedures and submit them to content managers for review before release through a social media site.

**D. Social Media Moderator**

The principal responsibility of a social media moderator is reviewing social media responses forwarded by content managers to determine if the responses meet the Posting Requirements and notify the content manager of the appropriate action to take based on the moderator's determination. In addition, the social media moderator shall periodically review social media sites to determine if social media communications are appropriate and may remove any communications that are not appropriate.

**E. Director of Public Affairs or Designee**

The director of public affairs or designee, working with the IST Department, will serve as content manager for the county's principal sites. In addition, Public Affairs will offer assistance and guidance for moderated content and appropriate action to take when social media responses include information inquiries.

**F. Chief Information Officer or Designee**

The CIO or designee shall approve all county social media technology tools, software, processes and requests for department social media authors and moderators.

The CIO shall address exceptions associated with this policy using the exception process identified in the Chesterfield County Information Security Policy 7-1.

**G. Department of Information Systems Technology**

IST shall acquire, approve and implement all social media technology related software and tools used to create, manage and publish county social media-based content.

The information security office of IST shall maintain a current inventory of all URLs for social media sites, the date the site was created, the content manager and the date a site is removed, if applicable. This information may be made available as appropriate to allow integration and coordination of county communications.



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IST shall be responsible for identifying and removing material containing computer viruses or that which otherwise may disrupt, damage or restrict the use of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment and for keeping a current inventory of materials removed, the date of removal and the reason for removal.

**H. Chesterfield University**

Chesterfield University shall develop and provide educational opportunities to increase awareness of appropriate communication strategies and methods for management of county social media sites and tools, as well as provide the training needed for social media content managers, internal social media authors, and social media moderators.



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**Appendix A: Sample Posting Requirements**

**Posting Requirements**

The purpose of this site is to present matters relevant to the services, activities, local political issues, or policies of Chesterfield County. We encourage you to submit your questions, comments, criticisms and concerns, but please note that this is a moderated online discussion site and not a public forum.

Material covered by these posting requirements includes not just comments, but also images and links to other sites. The county reserves the right to remove any material that, in whole or in part, does not comply with these posting requirements or applicable law.

The county also reserves the right to remove material that (i) contains anything vulgar or sexually explicit; (ii) is spam; (iii) advocates or depicts illegal activity; (iv) targets or disparages any ethnic, racial, religious, gender or other type of group; (v) contains personal attacks of any kind; (vi) promotes private business ventures, services, or products; (vii) campaigns for public office or promotes a political organization; (viii) infringes on copyrights or trademarks; or (ix) is off topic.

In addition, the county reserves the right to remove material containing computer viruses or that otherwise may disrupt, damage or restrict the use of any computer software or hardware or telecommunications equipment.

The content manager for this site is \_\_\_\_\_. Please note that material posted on this site or links created by anyone other than the content manager does not reflect the opinions and position of Chesterfield County. If you have any questions concerning the operation of this online moderated discussion site, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.