



Web Communications Policy & Best Practices

Drafted by:

Lon Peterson, e-Government Administrator
Megan MacPherson, Public Affairs & Communications Director
Brian Jacobson, Public Information Officer
Pam Allen, Marketing & Communications Analyst

Reviewed and approved by:

Social Media Working Group on August 8, 2012
Joe Mandell, Deputy City Attorney on August 9, 2012

REVISIONS

This document is a living document that might have frequent updates to remain relevant due to the ever-changing nature of the Web and the way information is shared in our society. The latest Web Communications Policy document, visit <http://intranet/egov>

All revisions to this policy must be reviewed and approved in writing by the Public Affairs & Communications Department and City Attorney's Office.

GOAL

The purpose of this policy is to establish parameters whereby City of Roseville department/divisions are able to utilize Web Communications: social networking sites, blogs, wikis, and related web tools to enhance customer service through improved communication and the dissemination of information relating to the missions and program goals of the City of Roseville and its departments and divisions while disseminating information with one voice in a consistent, correct and credible manner.

SCOPE

For the purposes of this policy, Web Communications means any facility with a participatory element for online publication and commentary, including without

limitation blogs, wikis, social networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Flickr, Foursquare, Yelp, YouTube, etc. These guidelines address the official use of Web Communications and apply to all employees, contractors, and volunteers when acting on behalf of the City of Roseville or any of its departments and divisions.

PURPOSE

To address the fast-changing landscape of the Internet and the way audiences communicate and obtain information online, City departments may consider participating in Web Communications sites to reach a broader audience. The Public Affairs & Communications Department encourages the use of Web Communications to further the goals of the City and the missions of its departments where appropriate.

The City Manager, City Attorney and Public Affairs & Communications Department have an overriding interest and expectation in deciding who may "speak" and what is "spoken" on behalf of City of Roseville on Web Communications sites. It is the Public Affairs & Communications Department's role and responsibility to establish and govern the City's communications and to speak with one voice - both externally and internally.

The Public Affairs & Communications Department shall approve what Web Communications sites, tools and services may be suitable for use by the City and its departments and educate departments on how to best use various Web Communications tools and services to achieve their goals.

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of Web Communications tools, services and sites.

OWNERSHIP

All digital communications messages composed, sent or received on the City's network equipment and/or City authorized Web Communications sites are the property of the City of Roseville.

PRIVACY & SECURITY

The City has the right to monitor employees' Web Communications use on City equipment and will exercise its right as necessary. Users do not and should not have an expectation of privacy. Web Communications are not a secure means of communication.

POLICY

The Social Media Working Group shall create and administer all Web Communications accounts to be used citywide.

A. All official City of Roseville presences on Web Communications sites or services are considered an extension of the City's information networks and are governed by this policy contained in the City's Employee Handbook.

B. The City of Roseville's website (www.roseville.ca.us) will remain the City's primary and predominant Internet presence. Wherever possible, content posted to City of Roseville's Web Communications sites will also be available on the City's website.

- Wherever possible, links to more information should direct users back to the City's official website (www.roseville.ca.us) for more information, forms, documents or online services necessary to conduct business or communicate with the City.
- All content should derive from the City's news stories, wherever possible, and get pushed to Web Communications platforms as an extension of the City's communications or time-sensitive outreach.

C. City-generated content shall:

- Respect copyright and fair use laws.
- Not engage in political or religious advocacy or commentary or support or oppose any ballot issue or candidate for office.
- Use appropriate language and refrain from ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in any conduct that would not be acceptable in the City's workplace, and not violate City's Administrative Regulations.
- Demonstrate proper consideration for others' privacy and for topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory.
- Be aware that what is written will not only reflect on the writer, but also on the elected officials of the City of Roseville and other City employees, volunteers, contractors and partners.
- Not provide confidential information about cases or clients, including names, or use such material as part of any content added to a site.
- Not provide confidential or proprietary information that would compromise negotiations or including such as part of content added to a site without permission to publish or report on conversations that are meant to be private or internal to the City of Roseville.

D. Departments that use Web Communications are responsible for complying with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, and policies. This includes adherence to established laws and policies regarding copyright, records retention, the California Public Records Act (CA Govt. Code section 6250), First Amendment, privacy laws and information security policies established by the City of Roseville.

E. Employees representing the City via Web Communications outlets must conduct themselves at all times as representatives of the City of Roseville. Employees that fail to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner shall be subject to the Disciplinary Procedures outlined in the City of Roseville Employee Handbook and this policy.

F. The Public Affairs & Communications Department will monitor content on all City Web Communications sites to ensure adherence to this policy for appropriate use, message and branding consistent with the goals of City.

G. Violation of these standards may result in the removal of department pages from social media outlets. The Public Affairs & Communications Department retains the authority to remove pages at its sole discretion.

H. Designated departmental employees will be assigned as content managers. Content managers are responsible for the content and upkeep of any social media sites or pages their department manages. Content shall be current and updated as appropriate. If resources are not available to maintain and update a City-sponsored social networking page, it will be taken down to the extent possible for that Web Communications site.

I. If an authorized employee or volunteer leaves the City or a contracted vendor's relationship with the City terminates for any reason, responsibility for administration of the page will either be turned over to another designated City employee or the page will be removed. User names and passwords shall be changed immediately to avoid security-related issues.

J. This policy works in conjunction with and does not override existing or new policies or agreements.

AUTHORIZATIONS

Staff members may request authorization of their department heads and the Public Affairs & Communications Department to create Web Communications: social networking pages, blogs, wikis, and other types of web instruments for the purposes of:

- Marketing/Advertising
- Social marketing
- Public information
- Engagement
- Other purposes that serve customers and further the mission of the department or division and the goals of the City

Requests for use of Web Communications sites must be approved by the Social Media Working Group, which maintains a master list of all City-approved Web Communications sites. This authorization does not extend to allowing City staff to create new stand-alone Web Communications sites, independent of established social networking, wiki, blog or similar networking types of site – such as a divisional, departmental, or program-oriented website.

WEB COMMUNICATIONS DESIGN GUIDELINES

Content and design of Web Communications pages are subject to the approval by the Public Affairs & Communications Department.

To the extent that design parameters of the host site allow, City of Roseville pages will conform to the following:

1. Be identified as a City of Roseville posting;
2. Mimic the City's brand as applicable;
3. Contain the City logo where appropriate;
4. Have a link to the appropriate page of the City of Roseville website.

WEB COMMUNICATIONS POSTING GUIDELINES

Facebook and Twitter are separate outlets and we should conduct our outreach through them in different ways. There will of course be some overlap in that use. In the guidelines outlined, assume application to both unless noted.

1. Posting to only be done by approved users. At all times, users will be representing the City of Roseville and not themselves. This should be kept in mind for every post or response.
2. Content shall be current and updated as appropriate to the extent possible for that Web Communications channel.
3. Aim for brief, newsy posts with strong opening sentences. Be professional

- but also conversational and friendly. Do not treat posts with the same formality as a press release. Posts should be bite-sized with links to more formal information if needed.
4. Consider your audience and outlet, whether is an account representing the whole city or a smaller subset such as traffic or libraries.
 5. Do not feel compelled to post every day. Post when you have something to share.
 6. AP Style guidelines do not apply, especially on Twitter. Use of commonly accepted abbreviations on Twitter can be used if needed.
 7. Posts should refer or link back to city's website whenever possible.
 8. Use relative dates when possible. For example; today, tomorrow, this Friday instead of Saturday June 17th when that date is a less than a week away. Think conversational.
 9. Do not tag anyone in posts or photos ever, even city employees or civic leaders. A follower can tag themselves if they'd like, but it not for the City to do.
 10. Users should look for opportunities to cross-post (simultaneously posting to multiple accounts) when appropriate - such as a Library event being posted on both the Library and Parks twitter accounts. However, posting this event to the utilities Twitter account would not be appropriate. We anticipate many of our followers will be following multiple Roseville social media outlets. While we do want to reach the maximum number of followers with information, we should make common sense decisions on the proper outlets so those who do follow multiple accounts don't receive 5 copies of the same tweet. We anticipate this coming into play more on Twitter, less in Facebook.

RE-POSTING (RE-TWEETING) GUIDELINES

Re-tweeting a post on micro-blog sites like Twitter or sharing a post on Facebook from an appropriate outside source can be a useful tool in informing our residents about city activities, policies and issues. You should look for opportunities to do this using these criteria.

1. The outside source must be identified clearly.
2. The content of the original tweet or post and link (if applicable) should promote or highlight City issues and policies in a positive manner.
3. The content of the original tweet and link should enhance knowledge about activities, issues, policies and priorities important to the City.
4. If the content of the original tweet does not specifically reference Roseville, it should be of interest to the specific account audience. For example, a story about the growing use of solar power in California being re-tweeted by the Utilities and/or UEC Twitter account. Or a story about trends in park design, re-tweeted on the Park's account.

5. Positive, affirmative comments about Roseville from followers. For example, “I just spent the afternoon at the Indoor Pool with my family and had a great time.”
6. Make sure you thoroughly read any information/stories in links before re-tweeting to insure it follows the above criteria. Do not just go by the headline. If in doubt, do not repost.

Do not re-tweet a City Twitter post; instead, copy and paste the same information into a new post. This may seem like a subtle difference. But our goal is to communicate as one city and a re-tweet can give the impression of “hey, look what I just found.” It can make it seem as though one part of the City doesn’t know what the other is doing.

RESPONDING TO POSTS

Web Communications sites such as Facebook and Twitter offer great opportunities for the City to interact with residents. Questions or comments posted to City-established Web Communications sites or pages should be answered within one business day during standard operating hours by a qualified administrator. Responses should be professionally conversational, accurate and positive no matter how the original question or comment was phrased.

Although we should strive to engage our followers, we do not need to respond to every comment if there is nothing positive to add to the conversation.

EXTERNAL LINKS

To meet its purpose, Web Communications sites may contain links to other social networking sites or websites that are not owned, regularly reviewed or controlled by the City. The City of Roseville does not endorse any content, viewpoint, products or services linked from its Web Communications sites and shall not be held liable for any losses caused by reliance on the accuracy, reliability or timeliness of such information. The City of Roseville does not warrant the accuracy or reliability of or endorse any products or service providers listed or linked to its site.

External links may be reviewed and removed by Public Affairs & Communications Department, Social Media Working Group or at the request of the City Manager’s Office.

FOLLOWING OR LIKING OTHER ACCOUNTS

For City Facebook accounts, we should be judicious with the other accounts we “like”. Liking or becoming a fan of a page or account on Facebook can be perceived as an endorsement and typically does not offer much useable information that is not readily available elsewhere (such as Twitter).

Before liking any other account, ask yourself if this will be helpful in the City’s outreach. Simply being a city-friendly account is not in itself worthy of “liking”. Individuals should not be followed under any circumstances. With this in mind, City Facebook accounts should only “like” accounts that fit these criteria.

1. Other City of Roseville accounts.
2. Other regional governments or quasi-governmental agencies relevant to the account.
3. Event pages of city co-sponsored events. But NOT the other sponsors of that event. If the city is co-sponsor of the ABC Pizza’s Fun Run, it is entirely appropriate to like that event page. It is not appropriate to like ABC Pizza because they also sponsored the event.

City Twitter accounts can have more latitude in persons or organizations they can follow, as a follow on Twitter isn’t perceived as an endorsement. Twitter can also be used more readily as an informational feed and as an effective way to monitor media coverage of the City and community viewpoints. Accounts followed should be relevant and helpful to the specific City account, not to the administrator’s personal interests.

Non-city Twitter accounts should only be followed if they fall into these categories.

1. Relevant media outlets (local, regional, state, trade)
2. Relevant journalists (local, regional, state or topically appropriate)
3. Topically appropriate and recognized local, regional, state or national organizations.
4. Topically appropriate and recognized experts.

As examples, media outlets might include the Sacramento Bee, Roseville PT, KCRA. ESPN would not be appropriate. Appropriate journalists might include those at the Bee or PT who cover the city. Following the opinion writers for the NY Times would not be appropriate.

All of the City’s Web Communications accounts should be run with the City’s interests in mind, not the content manager of the individual accounts. The Social Media Working Group and Public Affairs & Communications Department can remove “liked” or “followed” accounts if needed.

COPYRIGHT

As a City of Roseville official posting, any division or department webpage or site on a social networking or wiki site, blogs, or other Internet postings are subject to the Public Records Act.

Unless a copyright is indicated, information on the City of Roseville pages, wikis, blogs, or other website is in the public domain and may be copied and distributed without permission.

If a copyrighted video, photograph, graphic, or other material is posted, it should bear appropriate copyright information, which may be embedded in the image or file. Visitors to the pages or sites would require the permission of the copyright holder to distribute them further. City of Roseville staff cannot grant that permission and should not be responsible for making the appropriate referrals.

DISCLAIMERS

Most Web Communications sites have their own policies, which the City of Roseville does not control. Depending upon the Web Communications site, users must comply with site policies as well as the City's policy.

All City-sponsored-and-approved Web Communications sites shall contain the following disclaimers and public comment policy, to the degree permitted by the host.

Legal disclaimer

The City of Roseville assumes no liability for damages incurred directly or indirectly as a result of errors, omissions or discrepancies. Moreover, the City of Roseville is not responsible for the content nor endorses any site, which has a link from this page.

Public comment policy

The City of Roseville reserves the right to remove any messages or postings that are obscene, in violation of the copyright, trademark right or other intellectual property right of any third party.

For example, the following content may be removed by City of Roseville, pending review of the City Attorneys Office:

1. Comments that violate the host's content policy.
2. Materials violating copyright infringement, and libelous speech. The content, or any material contained in it, holds up an individual or groups of people to public ridicule, derision or embarrassment, or is libelous, or is an infringement of a copyright, trademark or registered mark.

3. Obscenity. The content, or any material contained in it, contains obscene matter or any other matter that is prohibited under the provisions of Chapter 7.5 (beginning with Section 311) of Title 9 of Part 1 the California Penal Code, and as such laws may be amended or supplemented.
4. Use of vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language. The content, or any material contained in it, that is vulgar, offensive, threatening or harassing language.
5. Unlawful goods, services, behavior or activities. The content, or any material contained in it, promotes or encourages, or appears to promote or encourage, the use or possession of unlawful or illegal goods, services, and behavior or activities.
6. Support or opposition of any ballot issue or candidate for office. The content, or any material contained in it, contains political campaign speech. For purposes of this Advertising Policy, the term "political campaign speech" is speech that: (1) supports or opposes or appears to support or oppose a ballot measure, initiative, or referendum, or (2) refers to any candidate for public office.
7. Religion. The content, or any material contained in it, advocates or opposes a religion or religious belief.
8. Violence. The content, or any material contained in it, contains an image or description of graphic violence, including, but not limited to: (1) the depiction of human or animal bodies or body parts, or fetuses, in states of mutilation, dismemberment, decomposition, or disfigurement, and (2) the depiction of weapons or other implements or devices associated in the advertisement with an act or acts of violence or harm on a person or animal.
9. "Adult"-oriented goods or services. The content, or any material contained in it, promotes or encourages, or appears to promote or encourage, a transaction related to, or uses brand names, trademarks, slogans or other materials which are identifiable with, films rated "X" or "NC-17", video games rated "A" or "M," adult book stores, adult video stores, nude and/or topless clubs and other adult entertainment establishments, adult telephone services, adult Internet sites, and escort services.
10. Comments unrelated to the topic of the forum; hyperlinks to material that is not directly related to the discussion;
11. Spam or commercial promotions; content containing any unsolicited or unauthorized advertisement or solicitation (i.e. spam, junk mail, chain letters, pyramid schemes or other promotional materials).
12. Promotion or advertising of any businesses or commercial enterprises, unless they are providing support to City services.
13. Posts or links that contain malicious software (malware) such as viruses, worms, Trojans, rootkits, spyware, adware or any other unwanted software.

The City of Roseville will not be responsible for content posted by any subscriber in any forum, message board, wall, tweet or other area within the Web Communications host.

If a customer (Web Communications user) does not agree to these terms, the individual should not use the City of Roseville sponsored pages as a violation of these terms may lead to legal liability.

Content may be removed only if it violates the Public Comment Policy. Any content removed must be retained, including the time, date and identity of the poster.

ADDITIONAL POLICY – The other policy referred from this policy:
City of Roseville Employee Handbook

DEFINITIONS (A-Z)

Administrator

Administrator of Web Communications accounts creates and administrates systems and content.

Blog – short for web log

A blog is a personal or topic specific web page or personal journal with stories, comments, hyperlinks, images, and videos.

Content Manager

Content Manager represents a department/s or division/s that has the ability to and oversee the content on City of Roseville pages and Web Communications site and pages.

e-Zine – Electronic Magazine

e-Zines are an opt-in and opt-out electronic web-based magazine/newsletter that site visitors can sign up to receive up-to-date information via e-mail:
www.roseville.ca.us/subscription

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website (13 years of age or older) where individuals can setup a webpage (blog) for themselves, a business, group, etc. that allows other users to join networks that connect each other's content, events, etc. Postings are like a digital public or private conversation with interaction with "friends".

Friending, Following & Fanning These terms are used to indicate a digital association in web 2.0 communities or micro-blogs. Friending is where your digital identity, personal or business, has a personal connection with another digital identity. Following is associated with linking to personal or business stream of information (sometimes referred to as tweets). Fanning is associated with an acknowledgement that you “like” or are a “fan” of something, such as personal profile, business, group, etc.

Forums

Forum is an online community where contributors can read, post, and comment on topics of common interest.

Micro Blog

A micro blog is an individual or topical blog-style page or service that allows posters to send small updates (140 characters) that can link to the article, video, or file.

Online Service

Online services are Web-based systems that allow its visitors to transact, interact, and communicate with the host organization. In contrast, non-interactive websites are limited to the passive viewing of information.

RSS - Real Simple Syndication

RSS is a format for delivering regularly changing web content. Many news-related sites, weblogs and other online publishers syndicate their content as an RSS Feed to whoever wants it.

Social Media

Social Media is digital social interaction via technology, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media uses Internet and web-based technologies to transform broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many). It is changing the way we get and share information. It allows non-technical users the ability to distribute information (about themselves or any topic imaginable) - basically switching from content consumers into content producers.

Twitter

Twitter, or twitter like, is an RSS-based micro blog that allows Twitter users to follow (keep up-to-date) on anything posted on the page (tweets). Most tweets are headline-based blog that links to the content of the headline, or can be small, but informative, information related to quick updates or notifications. As example, Transit can inform passengers that a route was change or been cancelled.

Web Communications

Web Communications is commonly associated with websites or online applications that facilitate interactive information sharing, interoperability, user-centered design and two-way collaboration on the Web. Examples of Web Communications include web-based communities, web applications, social-networking sites, video-sharing sites, wikis, blogs, and collaborative tagging and group organization.

Wiki

Wiki is a collaborative website where all content can be edited by anyone with access. Basically, no one owns content; all posts can be changed by any other collaborator.