Fact Sheet 1

Capturing Records of Social Media Posts

Social media posts that relate to agency business are public records and must be managed as part of the agency's records management program. This Fact Sheet provides an overview of what to consider when capturing them.

Social media posts are public records

Social media (such as Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr) may be used by agencies for a range of different purposes. Social media posts created or received by a public officer in the course of their duties are evidence of government business. They document the actions taken by public officers and should be retained for reasons of accountability and transparency.

Planning to capture social media posts

An assessment of risk and requirements will determine which social media posts will need to be captured and the level of resources required to capture them. This will depend on the risk to the agency of not capturing them. Not all social media posts will need to be kept.

Methods of capture include:

- Manually saving a screen shot of the post along with information regarding its context as a Word or PDF document
- Using an automated application to capture posts.

Social media posts should be captured as soon as possible after posting as there is no guarantee as to how long they will remain online.

What to capture

Posts relating to agency business and assessed as needing to be kept should be captured and stored. This is regardless of whether they are posted on an agency or personal account.

It is important when capturing these records that **both** the **content** (including the format) and the **context** of the post are captured**.**

Types of posts to be captured

Types of social media posts include:

- The original post from the social media site
- Responses, if any are received, to the original post
- Relevant posts identified when monitoring social media sites
- Content republished by the agency when the content has come from elsewhere (take note of copyright).

Context to be captured

Where posts are to be kept, the context will also need to be captured. The context will assist with the understanding of the message when it is viewed by a third party or at a later date. Context to be stored with the record are:

- Date and time it was sent or received
- The name of the public officer that sent the message, who authorised the social media message, and to whom it was sent (at a minimum a group address)
- The public officer and account name that received the message, the person to whom it was sent, and the name used by the person who posted the message (no need to determine the sender's actual identity)
- The purpose of the message
- The name of the social media application that the message was published on.

Further Resources

Further information on social media and recordkeeping is available from PROV's website: http://prov.vic.gov.au/government/standards-and-policy/policies/social-media

Copyright State of Victoria through Public Record Office Victoria 2013

Except for any logos, emblems, and trade marks, this work (*Capturing records of social media posts Fact Sheet*) is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia license, to the extent that it is protected by copyright. Authorship of this work must be attributed to the Public Record Office Victoria. To view a copy of this license, visit *http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/*