CIO P 2106.2 GSA Social Media Handbook

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
 Washington, DC 20405

GSA ORDER

SUBJECT: GSA Social Media Handbook

1. <u>Purpose</u>. This Order issues and transmits Handbook (HB), GSA Social Media.

2. <u>Cancellation</u> CIO 2161.2, GSA Blog Policy is cancelled. Guidance on blogs is contained in this policy.

3. <u>Applicability</u>. This Order applies to all GSA employees. It also applies to contractors engaged in social media on behalf of GSA as part of their duties.

4. <u>Background</u>. GSA encourages the use of social media technologies to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange in support of GSA's mission. By openly sharing knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned within the agency, with and from other federal, state, and local partners, and with and from the public, we can provide more effective solutions and efficiencies to enhance excellence in the business of government.

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Chief Information Officer

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Chapter 1: Introduction

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Purpose. This Handbook establishes GSA guidance regarding the use of social media tools to facilitate collaboration and information sharing inside and outside of the agency and expands upon the GSA Directive on Social Media Policy. The scope includes the use of social media technologies hosted outside of federal government servers, social media technologies hosted on internal federal government servers, and individual user's responsibilities when accessing social media services in either environment.

2. Applicability. This Handbook applies to all GSA employees. It also applies to contractors engaged in social media on behalf of GSA as part of their duties.

3. Background. GSA encourages the use of appropriate social media technologies to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange. GSA has already signed agreements with social media providers, such as Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo and blip.tv that make it possible for GSA employees to use external social media technologies for official use while meeting their current legal requirements.

Social media tools are network-enabled and include interactive features and user-generated content. Tools include wikis, blogs, mash ups, web feeds (such as Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds), moderated discussion tools, social networking sites, and virtual worlds. These tools are evolving rapidly and are shaping how we work with our customers, business partners, other government agencies, and the public. Use of these technologies must follow the current laws and guidelines that govern information and information technology. These statues and regulations include, but are not limited to accessibility, records management, privacy, security, and information quality.

4. Definitions.

   a. "Social media" or "Web 2.0" technologies - Though many definitions of Web 2.0 exist, it is consistently characterized as the collection of Web tools that facilitate collaboration and information sharing. Web-based communities and hosted services include social-networking sites, video and photo sharing sites, wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, and other emerging technologies.

   b. Internal Web 2.0 technologies - Web 2.0 systems running on agency-controlled servers (within GSA or via contract to GSA). This could include, for example, wiki and blogging software installed on the agency's own infrastructure or a website on an outside server under contract with GSA.

   c. External Web 2.0 technologies - Web 2.0 systems hosted on servers over which the agency has no control. This includes proprietary social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and Bebo, as well as collaboration services such as Wikipedia, Blogspot and Delicious.

   d. Blog - a web-based forum with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other materials where the blog host posts material on the website, and others may provide comments. Blogs may be moderated by the host or may allow any material to be posted.

   e. Micro-Blog - extremely short blog posts in the vein of text messaging. The messages can either be viewed by anyone or by a restricted group that is chosen by the user. Twitter, a popular micro-blog client, allows for posts of up to 140 characters in length to be uploaded and read online or through instant messaging or mobile devices via text messaging.

   f. Cloud Computing – The use of applications hosted across the internet by an independent service provider. An example of cloud computing is a Google Doc, in which the word processing program is accessible through a web

browser, and the content in the document resides in Google's servers.

g. Mashup – a web-based presentation of information that combines data and/or functionality from multiple sources. For example, a mashup would be a Google map showing average housing prices drawn from a city assessor's online database.

h. Photo Sharing – websites which allow users to post and share digital photos. These sites typically allow commenting and meta-data to be attached to photos.

i. Podcast – a way of publishing MP3 audio files on the web so they can be downloaded onto computers or portable listening devices. Podcasting allows users to subscribe to a feed of new audio files using software which automatically checks for and downloads new audio files.

j. RSS Feed – a web content format which, when used with an RSS aggregator, alerts users to new or exciting content on a website. They enable users to avoid the conventional methods of browsing or searching for information on websites. Once users subscribe to an RSS feed, they can gather material from web sites of their choosing.

k. Social Bookmarking - a web-based service where users create and store links. Although web browsers have the ability to bookmark pages, those links are tied to that browser on that computer. Social bookmarking, in contrast, is tied to an online account, which can be made public. These bookmarks can be shared and discovered by others. Examples of social bookmarking sites include del.icio.us, Digg, and, Reddit.

l. Social Networking Services – tools used to connect people who share the same interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Social network services are internet based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact.

m. Widgets - interactive tools with single-purpose services such as displaying the latest news and weather, a map program, or photos.

n. Wiki –a collection of web pages that encourages users to contribute or modify the content. By using a simple web interface, a community can collaborate on developing a document or web page, no matter where they're located.

o. Video Sharing – websites on which users post video they have taken for others to view and comment on. Such sites allow viewers to "embed," or display others' video on their own sites

p. Virtual worlds – imagined places where users can socialize, connect and create using voice and text chat.

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Chapter 2: GSA Sponsored Blog Guidelines

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1. Purpose: Guidelines for creating and maintaining a GSA sponsored blog. These may also be applicable to other GSA sponsored social media (e.g., wikis).

     a. GSA provides blogging forums to improve communications with employees, government customers, commercial suppliers and the general public. Blogs are an element of GSA business communications and this chapter provides guidelines on how to establish and maintain a GSA sponsored blog. The Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) supports enterprise operations and the Office of Citizen Services and Communication (OCSC) oversees editorial use.

     b. Process for initiating a GSA sponsored blog.

     (1) A "Blog Request Form" http://insite.gsa.gov/blogrequest)   is used to initiate a blog. Requests for blogs should be submitted to the OCIO's Enterprise Applications Division.

     (2) Requests must be approved by a Regional Administrator (RA) or the Head of a Service or Staff Office (HSSO)

     (3) Requests for blogs should include a title for the blog, a short statement about the purpose and/or value of the blog, and a desired URL shortcut (typically some variation of the unique blog name, but in all lower case, no spaces, no special characters, e.g., /gsacioblog). If hosting a blog outside of GSA, then indicate where it will be hosted and why that is preferable. The RA or HSSO does not need to name the blogger(s) in the request, but no more than 5 employees should serve as regular bloggers for a particular blog.

     (4) The Blog Request Form on Insite automates approval from OCSC.

     (5) Monitoring the blog is the responsibility of the blog owner (RA or HSSO). The RA/HSSO (or a designee, appointed in writing and designated on the Blog Request Form) must ensure proper supervision of the blog to ensure the information is accurate, timely, relevant, complete, and does not reflect adversely on GSA or the United States Government. This responsibility includes inactivating the blog upon the blogger's termination and/or notifying OCIO that the blog has been transferred to another individual.

     (6) The blog will be suspended if any of the following occurs:

     (a) Use of vulgar or abusive language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive terms targeting individuals or groups.

     (b) Endorsement of commercial products, services, or entities.

     (c) Endorsement of political parties, candidates, or groups.

     (d) Discussion of topics unrelated to GSA's mission.

     (e) Failure to adhere to the posting requirements and disclaimers contained in Paragraph 2.

     (f) Failure to make Section 508 compliant postings.

     (g) Failure to follow the latest guidance posted on InSite for GSA blogs.

     c. Guidance for bloggers.

     (1) Blogs succeed when visitors feel they have reached a trusted source of information. Let readers know who the blogger is from a professional standpoint. Do not release any personal information that the general public should not know, for example releasing home addresses or phone numbers.

     (2) Be prepared to post content on a regular basis. This may mean daily, weekly, but not less frequently than every two weeks. Let readers know what the posting schedule is. Be realistic in preparing a schedule. It is always better to increase frequency over the life of a blog. If a blog remains idle for 60 days or more, GSA reserves

the right to take it offline.

        (3) Be prepared to make time and devote resources to moderating all comments that readers post. Be committed to reading every comment received, even if nothing is posted in response to all of them. Time may be needed to research responses. Communicate to the audience the timeframe within which the comment may be posted.

        (4) Invite guest contributors. This is a great way to enhance value without increasing workload. Announce in advance who contributors will be.

        (5) Be prepared to respond on the blog to the posted comments, especially negative ones. Blogs build credibility and readership when they are as open as possible.

        (6) If the same questions are posed over and over again, consider creating boilerplate responses to some questions.

        (7) Be aware that there are a variety of ways people will find the blog (e.g., via search engines, search and other e-mail alerts, RSS feeds, various social networking sites, book marking sites, or e-mail from another person). This means the individuals will often be reading only a headline (or title), or a headline and a couple of sentences. The more intriguing and relevant the headline of the blog and the content that follows, the more likely the content is to build readership.

    d. <u>Public notices on blogs</u>. All GSA blogs must contain the entire notice listed below under "Blog Use Policy." If the notice itself is not on the main page, then a prominent link must be placed on the blog homepage that clearly identifies the attachment as "Privacy, Security, and Legal Notice."

    e. <u>Records management, retention and archiving</u>. All records, including information posted, received and/or connected in any way with GSA blogs that meet the definition of a record, will adhere and conform to all documentation contained in but not limited to CIO P 1820.1 GSA Records Maintenance and Disposition System.

        (1) According to 44 USC 3301 the definition of a federal record is "all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency, as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them."

        (2) If unsure about how best to comply, work with the GSA Records Management Officer to determine what meets the definition of a record and how best to capture it.

    f. A blog must adhere to GSA Order, *GSA Logo And Visual System* (CSC 1808.1), which states, "the GSA Star Mark… will be used on all stationery, business cards, print and electronic communications products throughout the agency."

2**.** <u>Blog posting requirements and disclaimers.</u>

  a. The sections below identify required statements and disclaimers for GSA sponsored blogs. These statements, or links to pages containing them, should be located on the main page of every GSA sponsored blog.

    (1) <u>General policy</u>. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) manages this blog to provide a forum for improving communications with our employees, government customers, our commercial suppliers, and the general public. This blog will discuss <u>(Subject matter of blog, e.g. information technology, schedules, communications, building issues, etc.)</u>. This blog use policy is subject to amendment or modification at any time to ensure the blog's continued use is consistent with its intended purpose as a limited forum.

    (2) <u>Posting policy</u>. You are encouraged to share your comments, ideas, and concerns. This is a moderated blog, and GSA will only post comments from bloggers over 13 years of age that relate to topics on <u>(Blog Subject Matter)</u>. GSA will review all comments before posting them. GSA will not post comments that contain abusive, vulgar,

offensive, threatening or harassing language, personal attacks of any kind, or offensive terms that target specific individuals or groups. GSA will not post comments that are clearly off-topic, that promote services or products, or that promote or oppose any political party, person campaigning for elected office, or any ballot proposition. Gratuitous links to sites are viewed as spam and may result in the comment being removed. Communications made through the blog's e-mail and messaging system will in no way constitute a legal or official notice or comment to GSA or any official or employee of GSA for any purpose. The content of all comments are released into the public domain unless the commenter clearly states otherwise, so do not submit anything you do not wish to be broadcast to the general public. GSA does not discriminate against any views, but reserves the right not to post comments that do not adhere to these standards. GSA will make best efforts to review comments and post them as quickly as possible.

        (3) Product references by blog host. Any references to commercial entities, products, services, or other nongovernmental organizations or individuals that are included in this blog are provided solely for the information of individuals using this blog. These references are not intended to reflect the opinion of GSA, the United States Government (Government), or its officers or employees concerning the significance, priority, or importance to be given the referenced entity, product, service, or organization. Such references are not an official or personal endorsement of any product, person, or service, and may not be quoted or reproduced for the purpose of stating or implying GSA or Government endorsement or approval of any product, person, or service.

        (4) Records management. All blogs must conform and comply with the agency's records maintenance and disposition system.

        (5) Linking policy. The (Blog Name) blog may include useful hypertext links or pointers to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations and individuals' blogs. All hypertext links must conform to all points in Section 6. (Blog Name) provides these links and pointers solely for the blog users' information and convenience.

When a user selects a link to an outside website, he/she is leaving the (Blog Name) blog and is subject to the privacy and security policies of the owner/sponsor of the outside website. Hyperlinks to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations should not be construed as an endorsement of the views or privacy policies contained on those linked pages.

        (a) GSA and (Blog Name) **do not** control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness or completeness of information contained on a linked website.

        (b) GSA and (Blog Name) **do not** endorse the organizations sponsoring linked websites, and do not endorse the views they express or the products/services they offer.

        (c) GSA and (Blog Name) **cannot** authorize the use of copyrighted materials contained in linked websites. Users must request such authorization from the sponsor of the linked website. Those who provide comments are responsible for the copyright of the text they provide.

        (d) GSA and (Blog Name) **are not** responsible for transmissions users receive from linked websites.

        (e) GSA and (Blog Name) do not guarantee that outside websites comply with Section 508 (Accessibility Requirements) of the Rehabilitation Act.

        (6) Copyright information. Links to GSA blogs are welcomed. Unless a copyright is indicated, information on GSA's blogs is in the public domain and may be copied and distributed without permission. Citation to the U.S. General Services Administration as the source of the information is appreciated.

If a copyright is indicated on a video, photo, graphic, or other material, permission to copy the material must be obtained from the original source.

    (7) Public affairs. If you would like verification or a transcript of information released on GSA blogs or if you have any questions or comments about the information presented, please contact GSA's Office of Citizen Services and Communications' Public Affairs Office. Reporters must submit questions to the Public Affairs Office through normal query channels and refrain from submitting questions on blogs as comments. GSA will not post questions from reporters. Public Affairs may be contacted at 202-501-1231.

(8) Privacy. (Blog Name) follows the gsa.gov privacy policy. GSA will not share or sell any personal information obtained from users with any other organization or government agency except as required by law. Please view our complete Privacy and Security Policy. To protect your own privacy, and the privacy of others, please do not include phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or other personal information in the body of your comment.

(Blog Name) is unable to post comments from children under the age of 13 due to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). If you are 12 years old or younger, you may email us rather than posting a comment on (Blog Name).

The (Blog Host Office Name) manages this blog as a portal for information from the U.S. General Services Administration. However, information posted on this blog is not official policy of GSA and will in no way grant anyone any rights, privileges, or standing on any matter. All information should be verified through official channels at GSA. For contact information at GSA, please check http://www.gsa.gov/contacts.

Chapter 3: Commercial Sites

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Commercial Sites	1

1.   Commercial sites: Commercial sites are opportunities for supplementing how GSA reaches its target audiences, such as citizens. They should never replace official communication channels, such as gsa.gov.   Because these sites evolve at a rapid pace, how to best incorporate them will need to be tailored to your organization's needs and its overall communications strategy.

Below are common online commercial sites; however, they do not represent the full spectrum available.

   a. Flickr - an image and video hosting and sharing website, web services suite, and online community platform.

   b. LinkedIn - a business-oriented social networking site mainly used for professional networking.

   c. Twitter - an online social networking site where members can post short updates and keep up with other members through online profiles or cell phone text messages.

   d. YouTube - a social networking site where members can post and share videos, comment on videos, and respond to videos. Organizations can create channels to post videos.

   e. Vimeo - a video-centric social network site that supports embedding, sharing, video storage, and allows user-commenting on each video.

   f. Blip.tv - a hosting, distribution and advertising platform for creators of Web shows.

   g. Facebook - a social networking site where individuals can create and customize their own profiles, and organizations can create their own pages, with photos, videos, and information about themselves, and send e-mail or instant message with other members.

 Chapter 4: Section 508

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, (as amended), requires that electronic and information technologies purchased, maintained, or used by the federal government meet certain accessibility standards. These standards are designed to make online information and services fully available to the 54 million Americans who have disabilities, many of whom cannot possibly access information that does not comply with the Section 508 standards. Agencies are already required by the Federal Acquisition Regulations to modify acquisition planning procedures to ensure that the 508 Standards are properly considered, and to include the standards in requirements documents. OMB reminds agencies to disseminate information to the public on a timely and equitable basis, specifically mentioning meeting the Section 508 requirements in OMB Memorandum M-06-02. Agencies employing non-federal Web 2.0 services are required to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to those services as defined in the Accessibility Standards. The agency must evaluate the accessibility of the non-federal site and consider the accessibility of all available alternatives. If dissemination of information in an accessible manner constitutes an undue burden on the agency, a non-accessible non-federal site may still be used, but the agency must make the information available in alternative formats for individuals with disabilities. In these cases, the program office must document these evaluations and determinations. Resources: Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act ,OMB Memo M-06-02

Chapter 5: Records management, retention and archiving

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: When using electronic media, whether it is a blog, a website, a wiki, email, or any other type of electronic communications, the regulations that govern proper management, archival of records, and release (Freedom of Information Act) still apply. GSA users working with the Records Management Officer determine the most appropriate methods to capture and retain records on both government servers and technologies hosted on non-federal hosts. The National Archives and Records Administration offers resources and guidance to agencies to ensure proper records management, and GSA's record management directions are contained in CIO P 1820.1, *GSA Records Maintenance and Disposition System*.

According to 44 USC 3301, the definition of a federal record is "all books, papers, maps, photographs, machine readable materials, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by an agency of the United States Government under federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency, as evidence of the organization, functions,

policies, decisions, procedures, operations or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data in them." Resources: OMB Circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources," section 8a4, Implications of Recent Web Technologies for NARA Web Guidance

Chapter 6: Information Quality

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: The Public places a high degree of trust in .gov content and considers it an authoritative source. Under the Information Quality Act and associated guidelines, agencies are required to maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information and services provided to the public. With regard to social media information dissemination products, agencies must reasonably ensure suitable information and service quality consistent with the level of importance of the information. Reasonable steps include: 1) clearly identifying the benefits and limitations inherent in the information dissemination product (e.g., possibility of errors, degree of reliability, and validity), and 2) taking reasonable steps to remove the limitations inherent in the product or information produced. Agency management must ensure that the agency position is reflected in all communications rather than one person's opinion. Resource: Information Quality Act, Pub. L. No. 106-554

Chapter 7: Availability to Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: Executive Order 13166 requires that agencies take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their federally conducted programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency (LEP). The use of social media technologies to communicate and collaborate with citizens is a federally conducted activity. In order to ensure meaningful access by LEP individuals, agencies must conduct a flexible and fact-dependent individualized assessment that balances four factors; (1) the number or proportion of eligible LEP persons, (2) the frequency of contact, (3) the nature and importance of the program or activity, and (4) the availability of resources. This framework was established by the U. S. Department of Justice (DOJ) pursuant to Executive Order 13166 to guide federal agencies on the implementation of and compliance with the Order. For more information on LEP at GSA, please contact GSA's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at (202) 501-0767 or review the following information at OCR's website library on LEP. DOJ's guidance and other information/resources can be accessed at lep.gov and Commonly

Chapter 8: Availability of Information and Access to Persons without Internet Access

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: Agencies are required to provide members of the public who do not have internet connectivity with timely and equitable access to information, for example, by providing hard copies of reports and forms. For the most part, using social media technologies as an exclusive channel for information distribution would prevent users without internet access from receiving such information.   In addition, some social media services require high speed internet access and high bandwidth to be effectively utilized, which may not be available in rural areas or may be unaffordable. In general, this requirement is no different for social media implementations than it is for other electronic service offerings. Programs must simply make alternative, non-electronic, forms of information dissemination available upon request. Resources: OMB Circular A-130 section 8 (See a5(d)) and Appendix IV

Chapter 9: Usability of Data

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: Many social media technologies allow users to take data from one website and combine it with data from another, commonly referred to as "Mashups." Agency public websites are required, to the extent practicable and necessary to achieve intended purposes, to provide all data in an open, industry standard format that permits users to aggregate, disaggregate, or otherwise manipulate and analyze the data to meet their needs. Agencies need to ensure that these open industry standard formats are followed to maximize the utility of their data.   Resource: OMB Memo M-05-04

Chapter 10: Intellectual Property

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers

Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: The use and management of social media technologies raises several questions about the legal concepts of copyright, fair use, and intellectual property ownership. Agencies must be diligent to ensure that they consider existing intellectual property and copyright laws when implementing social media technologies. While the federal government typically provides public data which is not considered copyrightable intellectual property, social media technologies that allow public contribution of content may potentially create challenges regarding the protection of intellectual property contributed by visitors. The ease of copying and propagating data from many sources on the internet makes it very easy to unintentionally breach copyright laws. Most commercial media sharing websites warn of the illegal use of copyrighted materials and trademarks. This strategy may or may not prove sufficient to protect the interests of government agencies, depending on specific circumstances. Agencies must establish policies and post clear disclaimers detailing the copyrights that non-government contributors to their sites may retain. Government content on any site is generally public domain and therefore can not become the intellectual property of an individual or be protected by a site provider. Care must be taken to not create the appearance of a copyright on a government created work, unless specifically permitted by statute. Resources: Copyright.gov, U.S. Trademark Law

Chapter 11: Privacy

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: Federal public websites are required to conduct privacy impact assessments if they collect personally identifiable information, post a "Privacy Act Statement" that describes the agency's legal authority for collecting personal data and how the data will be used, and post privacy policies on each website in a standardized machine readable format such as Platform for Privacy Preferences Project, or P3P.

   a. OMB policy mandates that federal websites are prohibited from using persistent cookies and other web tracking methods unless their use has been approved by an agency head or designated agency sub-head, for a compelling need. When approved in this fashion, agencies must post clear notice of the nature of the information collected in the cookies, the purpose and use of the information, whether or not and to whom the information will be disclosed, and the privacy safeguards applied to the information collected. Resource: OMB Memo M-03-22

   b. Although some social media websites are exempt from the prior requirements since they are not federal websites, GSA is always bound to protect personally identifiable information on internal websites or pages on external social media websites. The Privacy Act of 1974 (as amended) may also apply to the activities undertaken on social media platforms, and individuals should consult with the GSA Privacy Office and Office of General Counsel to ensure they are in compliance with all privacy protection requirements.

Chapter 12: Federal Advisory Committee

Act

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1. Requirement: Since many social media technologies excel at enabling information sharing across the Internet, government programs may use them to share ideas regarding current and future plans, to gather opinions about a wide variety of issues and to strengthen the relationship between citizens and their government. Depending on circumstances (such as targeting specific experts for an online discussion of proposed policy), some of these efforts, depending on how they are structured, may meet the functional definition of a virtual or electronic advisory group and therefore fall under the purview of the federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Just because an advisory committee meeting is held in virtual space instead of office space, it is not exempt from the government's rules on such activities.

Any advisory group, with limited exceptions, that is established or utilized by a federal agency and that has at least one member who is not a federal employee, must comply with the FACA. In general, when government agencies seek input and suggestions from the general public on various issues, FACA likely would not apply. However, if the government is managing and controlling the group in any way, such as selecting members, setting an agenda, or consolidating results generated by the group of participants, the group would fall within the bounds of FACA. To find out if a group comes under the FACA, any individual may contact the sponsoring agency's Committee Management Officer, or the GSA Committee Management Secretariat. Resource: FACA

Chapter 13: Information Collection & Paperwork Reduction Act

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1. Requirement: Agencies are required, when practicable, to use electronic forms and filing to conduct official business with the public, and social media technologies can be used in many cases to meet this need. Federal public websites must ensure that information collected from the public minimizes burden and maximizes public utility. The Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) covers the collection of data from the public. The PRA requires OMB approval of all surveys given to ten (10) or more participants. This includes any sort of survey where identical questions are given to ten or more participants, regardless of the format. The exception to the survey rule is an anonymous submission form where users can provide open ended comments or suggestions without any sort of Government guidance on the content. Questions about the applicability of the PRA should be directed to the Office of General Counsel or the office with PRA coordination responsibilities with OMB. Resources: Government Paperwork Elimination Act and Paperwork Reduction Act

Chapter 14: Lobbying

Paragraph Title	Paragraph Numbers
Requirement	1

1.   Requirement: 18 USC 1913 prohibits the use of appropriated funds for purposes of lobbying a member of Congress. The use of appropriated funds may extend to the payment of employee salaries, equipment, office space, etc. Such funds may not be "used directly or indirectly to pay for any personal service, advertisement, telegram, telephone, letter, printed or written matter, **or other device**, intended or designed to influence in any manner a Member of Congress, to favor or oppose, by vote or otherwise, any legislation or appropriation by Congress, whether before or after the introduction of any bill or resolution proposing such legislation or appropriation..." Federal employees using social media should be mindful of 18 USC 1913, because a violation or attempt to violate the statute may result in a fine or imprisonment, as well as a removal from government office or employment. Resource: 18 USC 1913

References

http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/reqs_bestpractices/omb_policies.shtml