

Responses to questions asked during Hot Topics (August 16, 2010)

I recently inquired and provided some suggestions about how Health Promotion might use social media. I was told that only the state DOH PIO has access to Facebook. In addition, access to any social media sites is blocked on DOH computers. Do you have any suggestions about addressing agency policies around social media?

The Department of Health is excited about the many possibilities regarding social media. We currently have an official agency Facebook site, Twitter site, and have video posted on YouTube. We have been on Twitter for more than a year and have about 900 followers. We frequently post information from agency programs with links to program Web pages. We're in the final stages of developing agency guidelines that will include an application process Department of Health programs can go through if they have a legitimate business need for an official program social media site. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter are tools that work best as part of a larger communication strategy. With that, it is still very important to make sure you know what your messages are, who your audience is, and what the best tools are to reach them. Everyone should ask those questions before deciding which tools are right for them, and whether social media will be an effective way to reach their audience. – Timothy Church, Washington State Department of Health

Is there a membership or fee for this site (PIPL)?

There is no membership fee. Web site: <http://pipl.com/>

Has anyone reacted negatively to you finding them via these sites?

We have not had any negative comments to finding information via these sites. – Krista Rietberg

What sort of privacy concerns do you have with using social media this way?

This is not something that we have officially discussed, but we are only accessing information that has been made available to the public. – Krista Rietberg

Your PH Dept's Facebook site - do you have a good cross-representation of citizens? # of Friends

Currently our site has around 500 people who like the site. I am not sure if we can tell that this is a good cross-representation at this point. Our site is pretty new so we are just trying to get it out there. – Response from Krista Rietberg

What sort of policy & Procedures do you have?

I will share the draft policies with the entire group through the NWCPHP website where the presentation is posted. – Response from Audrey Gray

Are you accepting posts to your Facebook page and if so what do you do if the post is negative, dirty, contrary to good ph practice?

Currently our communication team handles the comments on our page. They are able to hide inappropriate comments. I am not sure this has been too much of an issue, but right now anyone can comment. We are responding to comments as needed. – Response from Krista Rietberg

We do accept posts to our Facebook page, and if they are not appropriate, we remove it, document it, and have it signed off by senior management. We use our current policies as a guide to determine if it is inappropriate or not. – Response from Audrey Gray

Amazon was listed on your logo page, how can you get info from that site? Also, which other sites besides pipl.com do you use a lot, and can you give examples?

PIPL pulls from the Amazon site when people comment on or review products. We use several other sites for locating people Zabasearch.com, www.spokeo.com , white pages, reverse directories, and Google. – Response from Krista Rietberg

Do you archive all of your face book posts for open records law?

We do archive all posts. I take a screen shot or copy and paste the posts into a Word document. Both have been done depending on the amount of time available to manage the site at the time. – Response from Audrey Gray

What are the advantages of a Facebook page vs. a Facebook group?

Social media is one part of a larger communication strategy - what is your primary goal?

We have an education and advisory group made up of various community members who critique our programs and let us know how we are doing. They stated they did not hear about the services we offer and wanted to hear more about them. With this goal, we have done commercials, billboards, social media, and a web site from this feedback. We have not fully evaluated the effectiveness of the various projects, but we have seen an increase in clients through our Health Department. – Response from Audrey Gray

Would you be willing to share your draft policies with us?

I will share the draft policies with the entire group through the NWCPHP web site where the presentation is posted. – Response from Audrey Gray

This seems very time consuming. What percent of your time do you devote to Twitter? Other social networking?

I dedicate around 15 minutes a day checking on things. If I am posting pictures or video, I will often spend an hour doing those, sometimes weekly. – Response from Audrey Gray

Hootsuite actually saves time with social networking because you can manage multiple social network accounts from one interface. But yes, it is time consuming. I spend about 1-2 hours a day social networking but if you are a multi-tasker, it is something you can do throughout the day. – Response from Nicole Staudinger

You work for a clinic, right? Are your Twitter followers patients of the clinic or just your professional colleagues?

My Twitter followers come from a huge audience. Some are people who attend the clinic, yes. However, my clinic strives to serve the impoverished community, whose members do not usually have consistent internet access, so I use the Twitter account more for networking within the sector than for recruiting patients. – Response from Nicole Staudinger

Is this specific to Mozilla?

No, every browser should support Hootsuite. – Response from Nicole Staudinger

This all sounds like a good promotion for PH. How can we get more information about setting up accounts and/or deciding which one would work best for you?

I would open an individual account and play with them. You can then determine which one would work better for you once you become familiar with the platform. For instance, I use Facebook for the NCMRC, but twitter would have been a better tool to use during H1N1. – Response from Audrey Gray

Hootsuite.com will provide you with all the information you need about that specific application. You can also search Twitter forums to see what other people recommend- two popular ones are Tweetdeck and Twhirl, but I have tried them both and prefer Hootsuite. – Response from Nicole Staudinger

Do you think having a twitter stream is worthwhile if you can only devote a couple of hours a week to it? We don't have enough staff to dedicate more.

Yes I do think it is worthwhile. Even if you only update a few times a week, or perhaps spend a half an hour every other day, connections can be created and it looks good to have Twitter as an option for connecting with your organization. – Response from Nicole Staudinger

What is the cost of maintaining twitter acct.?

Zero dollars. It's more about the time you are able to put into it. – Response from Nicole Staudinger

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We do not have these sites blocked at our Health Department, but our state MRC coordinator does not have access at work. She uses her home computer to check out my Facebook page, but is currently working with the state IT department to "unblock" her specific computer for social networking purposes. I also believe that policies help greatly with this issue, as all participants can then feel comfortable with the access issues surrounding social media. – Response from Audrey Gray