



Electronic Records Management: Basics of Managing Social Media Records

Purpose: Provide a high-level overview to state agencies and local government entities on the basics of managing social media records.

Because social media records exist in electronic format and live on third-party platforms, there are several unique considerations for managing them. Here are some basic principles for managing social media records:

1. Social media posts about the work of the agency are public records.
2. This includes posts made from personally-owned devices/accounts.
3. Likes and comments can also be public records.
4. Retention of social media records:
 - Is the responsibility of the agency;
 - Must follow the approved records retention schedules;
 - Is based on the function/content of the message – not its format.
5. Social media records need to be retained in electronic format.
6. One retention strategy is to use a social media capture tool.
7. Some social media comments that agencies receive, which may contain offensive or threatening language, may be “inappropriate”. However, they are still public records.
8. Agencies should adopt a strategy to manage inappropriate social media comments. Suggestions include:
 - Writing and posting an agency policy that defines inappropriate social media comments and states how they will be handled.
 - Removing inappropriate social media comments from view, but retaining them based on their function and content.

**Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available from
Washington State Archives:**

**www.sos.wa.gov/archives
recordsmanagement@sos.wa.gov**