

Environmental Scan on Social Media Use by the Public Sector

Administration, Public Engagement and Citizen Centered Services

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INTRODUCTION

By

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INTRODUCTION

Despite their short history, the Internet and Web have fundamentally changed politics and public policy, with all of government's traditional partners and stakeholders now using digital technologies to supplement their participation in the policy process (Margetts 2009). In Canada, where Internet penetration is extremely high, citizen's expectations concerning e-government services have increased markedly with demands for greater transparency, horizontal coordination, responsiveness and public engagement (Borins et al. 2007; McNutt 2007; Roy 2006). Despite some experimentation by the public sector, the use of Web technologies to enhance collaborative interaction between government, stakeholders and citizens remains limited. The emergence of Web 2.0, and in particular online social media tools, has had an uneven impact across governments, ministries and agencies.

Web 2.0 was coined by Tim O'Reilly in 2004 to describe the cumulative changes of Web uses and applications. Web 1.0 as it existed throughout the 1990s and into the early 2000s was a prototype characterized by passive users consuming static content functioning as a *publishing* medium with limited interactive capacity. Web 2.0 is fundamentally different as users produce and share dynamic content in real time with the platform functioning as a *communication* medium with extensive interactive capacity (DiNucci 1999; Manovich 2009). Online trends emblematic of the transition include Google usurping Netscape, blogs replacing personal web sites, content management systems transforming into Wikis and the shift from digital highways to virtual communities. As Tim O'Reilly (2007) describes it "Web 2.0 doesn't have a hard boundary, but rather, a gravitational core. You can visualize Web 2.0 as a set of principles and practices that tie together a veritable solar system of sites that demonstrate some or all of those principles, at a varying distance from that core" (17). What all Web 2.0 technologies hold in common is the functional ability of a community to co-create content in real time.

The most visible and widely used area of the Web 2.0 universe is social media, the host of sites that invite participants to become part owners by sharing their personal information with the site and with their fellow users, and encourages interaction in a specialized social network of like minded people. While social media sites number in the thousands and exist in almost every language, the most well-known social networks are Facebook, with over 1 billion users, and Twitter, which now has over 500 million users. Politicians have already noticed the potential of such new technologies and many have adopted their usage in political campaigns and the day-to-day management of relations with constituents (Jackson and Lilleker 2011; Golbeck, Grimes and Rogers 2010; Grant, Moon and Grant 2010).

The aim of the environmental scan is to compare how different jurisdictions use social media. This will be achieved by scanning selected jurisdictions' applications of social media including Canada, the United States, Australia, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario. The research explores implications of social media arising from convergent administrative and social trends by examining how different digital strategies produce different outcomes. It seeks to highlight both potential opportunities and challenges by surveying different public sector experiences. To this end the project draws evidence from

government reports, academic journals, case studies, other grey literature, mainstream news media coverage, and direct observation. In addition, the scan will identify various social media experiments to gather lessons learned. From this comprehensive literature search the scan will focus on three key dimensions of public sector use of social media including administration, public engagement, and citizen-centered service.

The first six chapters of the e-scan focus on social media use by three national governments (Canada, the United States and Australia) and three Canadian provinces (British Columbia, Manitoba and Ontario). Each of these six chapters scans the administrative practices, public engagement activities, and citizen-centered service models of the respective jurisdictions. Within these three dimensions, both opportunities for and challenges of social media use by the government will be highlighted. The final chapter examines various social media innovations and potential threats, drawing on both social media successes and problems, and explores several key programming trends.

The rest of this introduction offers a broad overview of the emergence of Government 2.0; some context regarding social media and the public sector, specifically the ideas of digital governance and open government; and finally, discusses the three key dimensions (administration, public engagement, and citizen-centered service) identified above.

GOVERNMENT 2.0

Governments around the world are experimenting with social media using the tools to enhance public engagement, improve service delivery, collaborate, and communicate (Dixon 2010; Osimo 2008). A growing body of research suggests that Web 2.0 technologies are fundamentally changing how people socialize, communicate, shop, participate in public affairs and learn with consequences for society, politics and the economy (Thomas and Sheth 2011). For public administrators, keeping pace with new Web technologies will be critical to governments committed to knowledge-based economies that simultaneously foster innovation and promote social cohesion (Valtysson 2010). For citizens the density of online communication networks provides greater access to information, more opportunities to engage in public debate and enhanced capacity to undertake collective action (Woolley et al. 2010).

With little application to collaborative policy-making, Web 1.0 functionality fit well with new public management approaches to service delivery, with websites achieving efficiency gains by broadcasting and collecting information targeted at clients (Dunleavy and Margetts 2006). Even where increased participation was encouraged, such as e-consultations, input was often limited to expert opinion (McNutt 2010). Second generation Web technologies have triggered significant changes in both policy and administrative processes as governments respond to the new behavioural, social, economic, and political norms of the network society. As Dunleavy and his colleagues have observed, information technologies (IT) are fundamentally reshaping public management systems, service delivery models and state-society interaction. In contrast to new public management, characterized by disaggregation, competition and incentivisation, digital era governance features reintegration, needs-based holism and digitalization trends that have been even further entrenched by Web 2.0 technologies (social networking platforms, wikis, blogs, virtual worlds, photo and video sharing and so forth) (Dunleavy and Margetts 2010).

In a recent foresight study by Policy Horizon Canada (2011), four scenarios were identified regarding plausible Government 2.0 futures. In the first scenario entitled *The Undernet Emerges*, social media

remains a risky proposition, with cyber-threats scaring governments, businesses and individuals from using the platform for its full potential. As such, social media is primarily an entertainment medium with the trend moving towards closed and exclusive groups. In *Cyber "Babel" Lives On*, information and communication technology (ICT) corporations market their unique products and wage a constant battle for users, creating virtual silos that do not allow cross-platform pollination. People want new and innovative ideas, but cooperation is distinctly lacking as governments and companies jealously guard their secrets. *It's Not Just Play Anymore* envisions truly mass access to ICTs as constant technological progress drives the prices for physical devices (e.g. computers, smart devices, etc.) and access (e.g. to Internet connections) down to the point where a majority of the world's population can afford it. Now connected to each other and using social media software on a daily basis, user-generated content and user-exchanges in services, goods and interests are ubiquitous. Finally, *The Global Village Has Arrived* sees the full maturation and potential of social media realized. It is efficiently used and projects broad in scope and wide in application are common, with outside suggestions welcomed. Technological breakthroughs have also simplified processes, proactively creating linkages between and among peoples, organizations and governments. As these four scenarios suggest however, the future implications of Government 2.0 remain cloudy.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Three waves of public sector digitization have taken place: processing, infrastructure and mobility. Processing refers to many legacy systems electronically processing payment systems (pensions, social assistances and so forth). The second wave of infrastructure occurs as the public sector integrates the online channel with more traditional channels (in person/phone/mail). The goals during the infrastructure wave were 'one stop shopping' and 'citizen centered service delivery.' The third wave is mobility and is associated with high speed broadband and wireless connectivity. The technological advancements of this latest wave of digitization helps enable the emergence of social media use and programming in the public sector.

Leadership, operations, skill levels, technological capacity, and trust are all key drivers in effective social media programming. In terms of leadership, policy pioneers or champions are required to overcome entrenched bureaucratic interests that are concerned with the loss of control as a result of more interactive citizen engagement. In terms of operations, appropriate guidelines and legislative oversight may be necessary to ensure that social media is properly treated as a *tool* for better policy making and implementation, as opposed to an *objective*. In terms of skill levels, public servants need specialized training so as to develop suitable competencies and aptitudes when it comes to executing social media programming. Finally, in terms of technological capacity, the appropriate type of social media must be matched to its most relevant category of public policy; in other words, not all social media programming is suitable as tools for all types of public policies. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) offer a good taxonomy of different social media types (collaborative projects, blog, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds). Of these key drivers none is more important than trust, with citizen expectations concerning direct participation and collaborative engagement increasingly pushing more consultative and open governance approaches.

DIGITAL GOVERNANCE

The three pillars of digital governance are e-administration, e-democracy, and e-government. These align fittingly with the three dimensions (administration, public engagement, and citizen-centered

service) identified earlier that will serve as guides for the e-scan chapters devoted to different jurisdictions.

E-Administration involves more efficient internal dynamics on the part of governments where new ICTs are integrated into management and organization. E-Democracy enhances the idea of participatory democracy and utilizes digitization to develop e-voting and e-participation. E-Government creates a multi channel service architecture where it becomes possible for governments and citizens to *coproduce* content, thereby allowing for genuine collaboration when it comes to making and implementing public policies. Overall however, the public sector has been cautious when it comes to adopting digital governance in practice, especially regarding new social media venues and tools.

Yet public sector experimentation in social media ventures is increasingly common with a growing list of government innovations available to draw from. For example, Tourism Queensland 2009 Best Job in the World program designed to market the Great Barrier Reef as a global tourism destination was one of the most successful social media campaigns to date. The program, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three, took web video applications for the job of “Caretaker of the Islands” with the winner living on Hamilton Island for six months. Duties included creating web video, blogging, and posting photo diaries. The program was both cost effective and very successful, generating 230,000 blog posts, 7 million unique website visits per month and attracting extensive global attention from mainstream media. In 2011, the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport replicated the program using the Saskatchewaner competition to showcase Saskatchewan. Another success story in the UK involves FixMyStreet, a collaborative map tool that allows citizens and neighbours to communicate directly with local government regarding infrastructure problems and designate their precise geographical location, thereby saving time, money, and effort on the part of government. A second UK example called PledgeBank uses Web 2.0 as a means of tackling the age-old collective action challenge. A website is setup with an identified issue or problem; people then “pledge” their support in any form they deem feasible, such as with money, time, or other resources; once a minimum threshold is met by the deadline, the pledge is activated and everyone fulfills their obligations (Bittle, Haller and Kadlec 2009). Examples such as these demonstrate the underlying potential of many new ICTs and their ability to become an effective tool in the creation and execution of public policies.

OPEN GOVERNMENT

In 2008 President Obama introduced the open government initiative designed to embrace, both managerially and politically, the digital era. Three main principles underlie the Open Government Directive - participation, transparency and collaboration, all of which have been embraced as key public sector values around the world. The Obama mandate has led to both academic and policy developments attempting to put this vision into practice. Lee and Kwak (2012) designed an open government maturity model (OGMM) as a complement to their (2011) open government implementation model (OGIM) and backed by empirical evidence and studies, illustrate how the US government has begun movement in this direction. In Canada, the G4 initiative involved the four large municipalities of Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver, who sought to collaborate in terms of sharing city data. Specifically, their goals included: “share notes on experiences with open data, identify common problems that could be worked on together, provide leadership in the open data space, and support other jurisdictions looking to develop open data catalogues” (Giggey 2012). In many ways, open government appears to be a future symbol of how governments should work (World Economic Forum 2011).

The next three sections discuss the three dimensions that serve as guides for the chapters scanning different jurisdictions around the world and their use of social media.

ADMINISTRATION

Traditional public administration has emphasized top-down hierarchical control mechanisms in terms of making and implementing public policies. This then shifted with the advent of new public management (NPM) to an emphasis on competition. It made sense since NPM focused on adapting private sector competencies and capabilities to the public sector. Now, however, a new movement is occurring towards public value management, which highlights the idea of collaboration. In response to advancing ICTs and the new role of social media, many public policy actors must now reevaluate their roles in the policy making and policy implementation process (Klischewski 2010). Though the process may be changing in new, more horizontal ways (as opposed to traditional vertical command-and-control policy processes), social media does not represent an end-goal or objective when it comes to resolving social issues. Social media *is not* a social end; rather, it is one tool (potentially a very powerful tool) amongst many in the government's arsenal in making and implementing public policies to resolve social problems (Bryer and Zavattaro 2011). At the same time, the rapidity of technological change has outpaced regulatory and policy frameworks designed to guide governments' use of these emerging ICTs (Bertot, Jaeger and Hansen 2012).

Social media offers both opportunities and challenges for governments in terms of internal management and organization, enhancing efficiency in administration and effectiveness in policy while needing to address and mitigate emerging issues in areas like privacy, security, data management, accessibility, and social inclusion to name just a few.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Participatory engagement is an ideal that many governments aspire to and the emergence of new ICTs, especially social media, makes this aspiration more realizable. From relatively simple consultations to more personal democratic participation and engagement, social media presents new opportunities for public engagement, co-production, and crowdsourcing (Bertot et al. 2010). The idea of crowdsourcing as a means of engaging citizens in collaborative projects (the co-creation of content by multiple end users) has been gaining traction and there is increasing empirical evidence to support its effectiveness at developing and implementing public policies (Schweitzer et al. 2012). Some scholars are even suggesting frameworks for citizen-sourcing via Government 2.0 (Nam 2012). This would entail a participatory architecture enabling the harnessing of collective intelligence through "pluralist interactivity, community-centeredness and citizens' own content production" (Anttiroiko 2010, 18). Overall, open data, open policy development and crowdsourcing initiatives all provide a means of enhancing citizen and stakeholder engagement.

At the same time however, public engagement via social media technologies is not without challenges and possible downsides. There are costs to further democratization and increased public engagement (Bryer 2011) and reliance on the idea of "build it and they will come" has resulted in suboptimal policy outcomes. At the end of the day, Web 2.0 remains a platform, or a tool (Blaise 2011). Governments should not use social media for the sake of using social media. Nonetheless, the potential for social media to enhance public engagement on the part of governments is tremendous (Clark and Logan 2011).

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

Traditionally, public service production has been government-centric characterized by bureaucratic procedures and concerned with the equity and legality of public services. This approach was challenged by the NPM doctrine which encouraged government to view citizens as clients with the goals being customer satisfaction. Despite the focus on citizen centered service, as it is most commonly called, the approach remains government-centric relying on formal procedures, bureaucratic control, and a passive citizenry. These governance assumptions are however increasingly misaligned with the collaborative capacity provided by second generation web technologies. Thus there is an increasing focus on the networked coproduction of public services with governments and virtual communities of citizens engaged in the co-creation of a service delivery provision (Meijer 2011). This is a fundamental shift when compared to the citizen-centered approach highlighted by NPM, where it would be more appropriate to label the end-users of public policies as clients. Some classic literature exists that analyzes this angle in great detail (Ambrose, Lenihan and Milloy 2006), and offers outcomes such as the “one-stop shop” idea like Service Canada’s integrated service delivery approach (Flumian, Coe and Kernaghan 2007) though there remain challenges (Kernaghan 2005).

This new idea involves the concept of a ‘prosumer’: a citizen who is involved in every step of the public policy process, with or without support of the government (Flumian 2009). Rapidly advancing ICTs have in fact created the possibility that governments may become marginalized or less key to the process than before. “Traditional conceptions of service planning and management are now outdated and need to be revised to account for coproduction as an integrating mechanism and an incentive for resource mobilization” (Bovaird 2007, 846). Governments face a wide array of opportunities and challenges when it comes to adopting social media to enhance and augment citizen-centered service.

Together, administration, public engagement, and citizen-centered service represent the three key dimensions wherein social media offers the potential of Web 2.0 to the public sector. The next six chapters scan six jurisdictions (Canada, the United States, Australia, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Ontario), highlighting how each engages social media in these three dimensions and analyzing the opportunities and challenges therein.

CHAPTER 1 CANADA

By

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of social media has the attention of the Canadian government as they begin to adopt programs and policies to use these technologies efficiently and effectively. The Federal Government of Canada is exploring new Information Technologies (IT) programs such as social media, internal government wikis to promote communications amongst government, online service delivery websites such as Service Canada and interactive employee recruiting such as *Second Life*. In 2011, the Federal government created a blueprint for the sharing of information and citizen engagement known as *Canada's Action Plan on Open Government*. This action plan includes a three-year commitment to open government, access to social media, promotion of horizontal collaborations amongst ministries, restructuring of current practices and enhanced communications. However, there are both internal and external barriers to adopting different forms of social media regarding privacy, information management and misuse of government information. Three different trends must be analyzed to showcase the capacity of the Federal Government to respond to Web 2.0: administration, public engagement and citizen-centered service.

Web 2.0 is the contemporary version of the Internet and the Canadian government has shown interest in fostering this new technology since over 28 million people in Canada use the Internet (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2011). Web 2.0 is described as an “umbrella term defining the various activities that integrate technology, social interaction and content creation” (Wigand 2010, 167). Canadians realize the potential of Web 2.0 as “87% of Canadians feel the government should invest in the use of Web 2.0” (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2011). Examples of Web 2.0 include web services, social networking, blogs, wikis, video sharing, podcasts, Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds, mash-ups, and tagging (Wigand 2010). The Government of Canada must understand the challenges and opportunities of expanding democracy online as they begin using Web 2.0 technologies.

ADMINISTRATION

From an administrative perspective, the Federal government has to control the influx of Web 2.0 usage throughout different government departments. On November 18, 2011, they released a guideline for external use of Web 2.0 to provide direction on acceptable usage of Web 2.0. This guideline encourages departments to “designate clear accountability for the coordination of departmental Web 2.0 initiatives and develop guidance for personnel on the use of Web 2.0 that addresses expected behaviours, benefits, risks and consequences for all types of potential use” (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2011). All departments and agencies of the Federal government are encouraged to use the policy framework to support their existing obligations with Web 2.0. However, Web 2.0 guidelines are not legally binding and this technological opportunity is accompanied by several internal and external challenges.

Opportunities

The Federal government of Canada has introduced an internal Web 2.0 technology known as *GCpedia*, a government-wide wiki. A government wiki is a collaborative web space that breaks down organizational and institutional barriers to enhance employee knowledge and increase partnerships with other departments. The Federal government explained that the wiki would be accessible to over 250,000 employees in more than 100 departments nationwide (Braybrook 2010). The amount of information available to government employees is extensive with over 15,000 contributors that have created over 6,700 articles with over 3.2 million page hits with over 300 communities and topics (Braybrook 2010). For example, Natural Resources Canada has adopted an internal wiki program to promote the “creative use of blogs and ‘wikis,’ helping to break down silos and engage younger employees” (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2011). A government wiki provides opportunities for civil servants to become more engaged and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their daily work.

Recently, different federal departments have adopted external Web 2.0 technologies to provide information and engage citizens. For example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) “welcomed the highest number of legal immigrants in more than 50 years, at 280,636 permanent residents in 2010” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011). Since 2008, the Canadian government wanted to keep the economy strong by maintaining immigration levels and the integrity of Canada’s immigration system. Recently, CIC began using Web 2.0 tools such as social media and YouTube to “tell the story of Canada’s immigration, integration and citizenship programs, the people it assists and how it has helped build a community of citizens respected around the world” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011).

Since the release of the Federal Web 2.0 Guidelines, CIC has developed their own strategy when using social media. CIC accepts disagreements and constructive arguments as part of the general discussion online but reserves the right to edit, refuse or remove comments that are considered offensive, violent, racist etc. (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011). CIC also recommends that citizens do not include telephone numbers or e-mail addresses in comments or posts and that CIC cannot commit to replying to all questions/concerns through social media (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2011). Currently CIC has a highly active Twitter account with over 1,750 tweets and 23,376 followers as they provide up-to-the-minute information on immigration policy, employment opportunities and applying for permanent status or citizenship. CIC is using social media as an opportunity to reach a broader scope of clients but this has not occurred without significant challenges.

Challenges

As Web 2.0 evolves, the guidelines represent significant challenges for the Canadian government. Some of the internal administrative challenges include “the complexity of the department paradigm; poor IT infrastructure, human resources (HR) constraints such as lack of skilled personnel; lack of financial resources; and a reluctance and fear of sharing resources across departments and organizations” (Tassabehji, Elliman and Mellor 2007). Departments of the Federal government must be aware of these realities as they become more actively engaged in Web 2.0 and *GCpedia*. With the increasing engagement in Web 2.0, the Federal government must also create stronger privacy policies as these new technologies create environments for high levels of information sharing.

The Federal government must be careful as external challenges such as privacy infringement can have negative implications. Any personal or false information that is externally leaked can present significant

challenges for government from a legal perspective (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2011). Privacy violations are not only legally binding but they will be subject to public scrutiny. The administrative guidelines presented in 2011 highlighted the opportunities and challenges of Web 2.0 but there are still many unanswered questions.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In the early 2000s, social media emerged as a political tool for promoting campaigns and engaging citizens online. E-government is expanding and there are both challenges and opportunities for government when using these new technologies. The Government of Canada has begun using new Web 2.0 technologies to promote citizen involvement in decision-making processes but this has not occurred without significant challenges.

Opportunities

The Canadian government has begun to promote citizen engagement online with new technologies. Public sector renewal is a key priority for the Canadian government and one of the initiatives is “to recruit new people to join Canada’s rapidly aging ranks of civil servants” (Canadian Press 2010). In response to this, the Public Service Commission of Canada created “a ‘*Second Life*’ site where young people seeking employment can use an avatar to explore the dimensions of a job such as a firefighter; rather than just reading about it they can experience it indirectly” (Fyfe and Crookall 2010). *Second Life* is an online universe that “sees about 830,000 people wander hundreds of virtual communities each month” (Canadian Press 2010). The Public Service Commission’s island includes informational booths; presentations on jobs and a chance to interact live with federal bureaucrats and ask questions about employment opportunities. This provides an internal opportunity for the Public Service Commission to respond to the public service renewal initiative. Web 2.0 technologies such as *Second Life* are not the only form of citizen engagement, as new e-programs are providing up-to-the-minute information to Canadian citizens and even Americans.

The Treasury Board of Canada acknowledged various external opportunities for public engagement with Web 2.0, not solely internal. For example, providing risk and emergency communications from the Public Health Agency of Canada, that provided up-to-the-minute updates on the H1N1 pandemic on Twitter, reaching a broader scope of citizens instantly. The Federal government of Canada is also serving individuals who are interested in visiting Canada. *Connect2Canada* is Canada’s communication tool for the United States, offering Canadian travel information for Americans and aids in developing a greater understanding of the Canada-US relationship. Government websites are not the only form of public engagement, as Canadian politicians are beginning to witness the benefits of social media usage. More candidates are using social media to become better connected with the public. There is an increasing reliance on social media as a free form of self-promotion as “Facebook, Twitter, and other social media channels not only interact with the electorate during political campaigns but also to consult the public while in office” (Linders 2012). In the 2011 election, the Canadian Press took a digital survey of social-media usages during the election and the amount of citizens discussing the election was significantly high. The Canadian Press discovered that “over 22,000 messages were tagged as being related to Canadian politics or the election in under a week using micro blogging or Twitter” (Levitz 2011). This number is 12 times higher than the average weekend tweets that are normally around 1,800 (Levitz 2011).

Even though citizens are actively using social media, there are some politicians that are reluctant to use this form of self-promotion. A new listing of the top 25 world leaders in terms of social networking ranks Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper at No. 16 (Bouzane 2011). Although Prime Minister Harper's activity on social networking sites is low to moderate, Andrew MacDougall, a PMO spokesman acknowledged the importance of social media by stating: "We do take social media seriously and it is certainly part of our communication plans. The Prime Minister makes a point to be present in social media to communicate, primarily, what the government is doing, but...whether it's naming the new family cat on Facebook or doing an interview on YouTube, we certainly try to make a point of being there" (Bouzane 2011). Even though the Prime Minister has over 12,000 followers on Twitter and claims the importance of social media, he rarely updates his Facebook account and tweets very sporadically.

Challenges

The relationship between Web 2.0 and public engagement also has challenges with its usage both internally and externally. For external use, citizens concerns involve familiarity or experience with e-services and government. Governments must acknowledge civil literacy as a barrier due to its "ease of use, trust in the organization and service, for example, interacting with government online and the perceived safety/risk of providing information to government; perceived quality of information and service; and perceived behavioural control and subjective norms" (Tassabehji, Elliman and Mellor 2007). Citizens need to be educated on how these e-services function and understand that using these sites is efficient and safeguarded.

Privacy standards are one of the biggest external problems with citizen engagement online. Although, the government of Canada has implemented security measures to keep citizen information private, known as *Secure Channel*, citizens need to be better educated on this program. The lack of information on security measures has created a "gap between actual security implemented by e-government service providers, and citizens' perception of that security-which we will see- plays a part in generating trust and engaging citizens in e-government" (Tassabehji, Elliman and Mellor 2007). The gap needs to be lessened by educating citizens to provide more opportunities for success.

Public engagement can also affect the internal functions of government as the capacity to control an external influx of commentary and concerns from citizens is challenging. An internal concern facing the Federal government is that "for many senior managers, the rapid acceleration of technological innovation is challenging government's capacity to adapt in an unparalleled manner" (Roy 2006). For example, the Federal government created informational call centers about 25 years ago and "even today issues arise as to their effective utilization" (Roy 2006, 277). Another emerging internal issue is the "balance between corporate direction and departmental flexibility" (Roy, 2006). Federal executives must show more flexibility, openness and leadership in using these new technologies.

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

Citizen-centered service delivery ensures that citizens receive help and that resources are allocated accordingly by assessing their needs and levels of satisfaction. Governments are adopting an open government concept, and implementing Web 2.0 technologies to bring faster, more reliable service to citizens online. Service Canada was launched to provide citizens with a 'single-window' approach including a wide range of information and services from government agencies. Although Service Canada provides online services to citizens there are still challenges to its usage.

Opportunities

The Government of Canada's open government concept is being pursued through three main streams known as open information, open dialogue and open data. There are various opportunities associated with this concept both internally and externally. Open information involves releasing information on government activities on a regular basis. Open dialogue is allowing citizens to have an opinion on government policies and priorities by using Web 2.0 technologies. Open data includes providing single-window access to Federal databases such as Service Canada and making data available for commercial or research purposes to benefit all Canadians (Open Government 2012).

Service Canada is a multi-channel and multi-jurisdictional initiative that strives to provide Canadians with improved service delivery from the Federal government. Service Canada aims "not only to foster efficient, effective, and accountable service delivery, but also to fulfill the public service's traditional role of helping to sustain and strengthen democratic institutions" (Flumian, Coe and Kernaghan 2007). Service Canada is an opportunity for the Federal government to provide a wide range of programs and services for citizens online.

Government On-Line (GOL) created a six-year initiative from 2000-2006 to enhance electronic service delivery. In response, the Service Canada model was first acknowledged in the 2005 federal budget and it included "one-stop service through in-person, telephone, Internet and mail delivery channels" (Flumian, Coe and Kernaghan 2007). Since 2005, Service Canada has over 22,000 employees and operates over 580 in-person points of service across the country and 1-800-O CANADA is the country's one-stop telephone service.

Challenges

Citizen-centered service has many external challenges that threaten its efficiency, most notably privacy and security online. The Federal government has an obligation to protect personal information online through the Service Canada website. Providing services online for citizens has challenges as the "integration of data collection and business processes across program, organizational and jurisdictional boundaries so that, for example, disabled persons can apply for related services from different departments and governments by a single process" (Flumian, Coe and Kernaghan 2007). This gives government the ability to reuse information across different jurisdictions that can become a privacy issue, if the data is leaked. Citizen-centered service also needs to address internal challenges to provide high-quality service to Canadians.

Providing citizen-centered service is problematic as internal struggles hinder efficiency levels. Online information sharing is "a lengthy process requiring both the removal of structural and managerial barriers and the development of shared commitment to such overriding values as teamwork and citizen-centered service" (Flumian, Coe and Kernaghan 2007, 16). It is important to push through these barriers as increasing relations amongst departments provides opportunities as "research findings on a service value chain showing that increased service satisfaction leads to higher trust in government" (Flumian, Coe and Kernaghan 2007, 16).

CONCLUSION

This environmental scan has showcased how the Federal government of Canada has slowly begun using Web 2.0 tools to enhance citizen engagement. Although Canada is not a leader in using social media as a form of free promotion, steps are being taken to explore these new technologies. As the world becomes

technologically savvy, the Federal government will have to take bigger strides in adopting more Web 2.0 technologies. There are challenges to using these technologies but there are also substantial opportunities. Web 2.0 can result in more citizen engagement and with proper policy making can be a win-win for government.

CHAPTER 2 THE UNITED STATES

By

Benjamin Sipple

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is designed to provide a more coherent overview of the use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies within the United States federal government so that e-government practices and initiatives may be better understood. Such undertakings in the United States began in 1993 with the Clinton-Gore Administration which focused on providing better services to citizens through the emerging information technologies. The Bush Administration continued this theme but shifted the focus to internal communication within government using Web 2.0 tools to enhance performance and efficiency. Finally, the Obama Administration followed the natural evolution of Internet use by introducing the Open Government Initiative which attempts to increase the openness and transparency of government operations (Luna-Reyes et al. 2010). This cohesive timeline illustrates the familiarity of use and willingness to adapt to relative innovations by the federal government.

This federal government is also considered an early adopter of social media and Web 2.0 technologies as it followed the example of the private sector and then adjusted such practices to fit within a government context. Such action has allowed the government to study the risks of using these tools as well as helping to reduce costs (Wigand 2010). Due to rampant private uptake and the longevity of use the U.S. Government was able to learn from the performance of other entities. Such a wide range of use has also altered how governments must approach new issues.

Any document addressing Internet use must now also address social media use and its key aspects. For example, a memorandum was issued by the Office of Management and Budget to clarify the use of social media in regards to the *Paper Reduction Act*. However the document does not stipulate requirements for using such communication channels, such as providing access to Internet-based information or updating current records of information (Bertot et al. 2010). The memorandum attempted to address social media but neglected to attend to critical attributes of its use. With these key concepts as the backdrop, this study will expand upon the opportunities and challenges that the United States federal government confronted and continues to face when addressing social media's role in administration, public engagement, and citizen-centered services.

ADMINISTRATION

The administrative duties of the federal government have been both enhanced and possibly undermined by the implementation of social media and Web 2.0 technologies. Through a closer evaluation into specific areas of success and disappointment a more insightful approach may be gained in regards to undertaking such actions. The first section will closely evaluate social media opportunities, while the latter section addresses some of the challenges.

Opportunities

The federal government has chosen to provide a general framework to guide the use of social media through providing best practices and guidelines. The U.S. General Service Administration (USGSA) Office of Citizen Services has developed a web site, <http://www.webcontent.gov>, managed by the Federal Web Managers Council and created to provide best practices and guidelines for using Web 2.0 (Wigand 2010). Best practices and guidelines permit adaptability, where the slower policy process would ultimately fall behind (Bertot et al. 2010). These two points of consistency and adaptability are demonstrated by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). The CDC created its own guidelines for using social media which connected both their message and their purpose in a meaningful way and allowed for consistency in communication (Reynolds 2010). With internal guidelines the CDC can remain faithful to their purpose as well as foster a steady use of these technologies.

The administration has also used these technologies to control and direct relations as well as communicate with private individuals and firms because social media adoption in the United States is relatively high (Wigand 2010). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is one example for managing public communication. For instance, comments posted outside of normal operating hours will be addressed the following business day. This creates an open policy that is readily available, plainly states that employees will not receive additional pay for using social media while at the same time making this stance publicly known, and it ultimately allows the agency to control the timeline of response (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). The USGSA demonstrates how agencies must also adjust their current relations with private firms as they are not accountable to government needs by default. Social media firms, such as Twitter and Facebook, require Terms of Service Agreements to be consented to before allowing the use of their services. However, many of the parameters in these agreements seem to either violate or at least expose governments to undue risk. In response to this the USGSA successfully renegotiated such agreements and other federal agencies are now following suit (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). These examples make the apparent shift in relations clear and that these can be successfully managed.

Many internal social media advantages have also emerged to facilitate modernized public administration activities. These currently fall within the areas of enhanced communication and retaining vital information. Communication has been enhanced through the use of internal networks which are made explicitly available to government employees based on Web 2.0 and social media approaches. MiniGov 2.0 and GovLoop are two of the better known examples. Both allow professionals to share and update information through a closed system (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Intellipedia is a similar platform which is designed like a closed wiki. This allows professionals within the United States intelligence community to receive as well as update relevant information in a timely manner (Wigand 2010). These new means of communication have allowed government officials access to needed and updated information quickly. Many agencies are also using the privately owned service IdeaScale. This web site allows users to submit ideas, vote, and comment on uploaded material. Through this tool many agencies have been able to learn from shared experiences and undertakings (Bertot et al. 2010). Enhanced communication allows agencies to avoid costly mistakes and form a network of internal collaboration so that any action taken may be more effective.

One of the most pronounced advantages the U.S. has in terms of administration of social media is the general outlook it adopt, which is only one part of the larger federal strategy to create openness and transparency in government (Luna-Reyes et al. 2010). In this way the new initiative issued by the current administration does not hinge on the success or failure of social media and Web 2.0 use. Through this initiative it has become apparent that a vast majority of federal agencies, 22 out of 24, now have a

presence in social media (Lee and Kwak 2012). This large willingness of participants demonstrates the general success of using these technologies. Adopting social media also allows currently available resources to be fully maximized, such as current software and video cameras (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Along this same line it has also become more apparent that social media and Web 2.0 use carries large advantages when compared to older or other technologies for carrying out similar tasks (Wigand 2010). These separate benefits can also be adapted to a standardizing benchmark to allow for a more uniformed assessment of success.

Challenges

There are a number of challenges to providing a reliant and resilient framework which would have the ability to guide social media use. The main difficulty is that each individual agency would need to clearly state its social media goals and responsibilities (Bertot et al. 2010). A second challenge is implementing social media, which may be more resource intensive than initially assumed. Such undertakings necessitate significant investments, which include gaining new expertise, training employees, purchasing the needed technologies, and upgrading the current infrastructure to meet the demands of social media and Web 2.0 use. In addition to this, the tools are expected to be operational in a very short amount of time. This can cause far too many programs to be initiated and then neglected; in a sense placing quantity over quality (Lee and Kwak 2012). Government agencies also largely depend on third party providers to use social media. These firms must be held completely accountable to current government policies, especially in the areas of privacy and security. These pragmatic inhibitors all stress issues on establishing a policy framework that can be fully realized.

Currently there are a large number of agencies using social media; however several remain unmoved at the current moment. This causes standardized use to be illusory (Lee and Kwak 2012). In addition, it has also been difficult for a single organization to standardize use due to the large number of social media tools available (Wigand 2010). Social media presents the issue of atypical use as well as possibly violating an agency's stated purpose or responsibilities. Along the same line, the current hierarchical structure of government runs against the central notions of social media use (Lee and Kwak 2012). It is a collaborative and participatory means of action. This means that once any information is released the relevant government agency will have to surrender some of its control as it would then become communal property (Wigand 2010). The issues of current government organization and the activity of control seem to be a principal challenge for adopting social media use.

The ability to control external relations and communication in regards to the use of social media may also be problematic from an administrative perspective. This is largely due to several inherent characteristics of social media and Web 2.0 technologies. Communication through these means is both informal and instant, which removes the traditional levers and timelines once used for regulating communication (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Social media is also largely recognized as a decentralized tool meaning that it does not rely on any single person (Wigand 2010). The ability to communicate in real time through a number of different avenues has largely altered the manner in which a government approaches communication.

Determining the success of using social media and Web 2.0 technologies also carries a fair amount of concern. Current processes for determining the effectiveness of social media are still based on previous metrics, such as number of views and time spent looking at the web site (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Such approaches are outdated or nonexistent at the moment meaning that any form of success is currently normative. It also remains to be seen what the actual costs will be of implementing new

programs so that current resources are fully utilized as well how much employee training will cost and the frequency with which such training would have to occur (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). This means that the true costs of pursuing social media initiatives have yet to be realized. The goals of social media use have also not been well defined nor made clear. From these three points it also becomes apparent that completing an accurate cost-benefit analysis for social media and Web 2.0 use is quite difficult to perform (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). In order to fully evaluate the relative advantage of social media, clearer factors must be established.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement is a fundamental priority for the United States and correlates closely to the Open Government Initiative to pursue openness and transparency. Social media and Web 2.0 approaches to this ideal bring immense potential for gain as well as loss.

Opportunities

The federal government has created an atmosphere conducive to creating strong internal support. The Open Government Initiative was issued by the Obama Administration in order to encourage a transparent, collaborative, and participatory approach to government. This obvious push from the Executive Branch of the government for more public input on the actions of the government shows a clear support for this endeavor (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Senior as well as executive support seems vital in regards to the success of such an undertaking. Several government agencies are also using this approach on social networking sites. NASA, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the USGSA are using these platforms to promote government and relevant information, list services, and engage new people in their activities (Wigand 2010). Through this means, government agencies are becoming more open about their respective operations.

Social media and Web 2.0 technologies are truly revolutionary in regards to their ability to allow for higher levels of participation. Approximately 74 percent of Americans use the Internet (Wigand 2010). Through this one form of communication the vast majority of Americans can be reached with detailed and relevant information. Web 2.0 also encourages democratization through its collaborative nature and user-generated content. End-users can now produce information, facilitate interactions, and function cooperatively with one another to generate completed work (Wigand 2010). Social media and Web 2.0 uses have altered the way in which people are able to interact by allowing for advanced collaboration that results in the production of original work. Different agencies are also utilizing these attributes in the form of comments. For example Wikis are being used to hear the public's comments on a variety of subjects; OMBUSAspending.gov allowed the public to comment on the "Federal Funding and Transparency Act" (Wigand 2010). Also, the Office of Science and Technology Policy uses a plethora of social media outlets to engage the public in discussions concerning open and transparent government initiatives (Bertot et al. 2010). These specific instances demonstrate different avenues that are being employed to become more democratically engaged with the public. Public engagement achieved through social media and Web 2.0 also conveys several challenges.

Challenges

Ensuring meaningful participation comes with a number of issues.. An increasing number of people are calling for open and transparent government operations (Bertot et al. 2010). In addition to this a growing number of citizens now expect the government to communicate with them through social media outlets (Wigand 2010). However an odd juxtaposition quickly emerges. It is quite complicated to

understand what citizens both expect and want from the government in regards to online activity (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Individuals use social media subjectively for different purposes and different amounts of time. With such use it seems as though reliably facilitating significant conversations would be quite troubling, if not improbable (Bertot et al. 2010). The challenge will be balancing the growing levels of expectation put forth by the public while also choosing social media and Web 2.0 avenues that correlate to and best utilize this shortfall of information in regards to private use.

The desire for a more government openness may force some agencies to include social media use when it is superfluous (Bertot et al. 2010). In addition to forcing agencies to use undesirable social media tools, some are rather reluctant to allow public comments due to a lack of infrastructure or a lack of a strategy to address them. This inaction would ultimately reduce the quality of conversation that could be achieved through social media (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). In these ways meaningless conversation or the unnecessary use of public resources may become the norm of an agency. This may become quite troublesome as there is no clear plan depicting correct use, and will seemingly result in separate government agencies using social media in unstable ways (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). The public engagement that does result from the use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies appears as though it will be centered on specific agencies and not the government as a whole. A series of specialized conversations may be the result of such efforts.

The most pronounced internal challenge of actively pursuing public engagement will be incorporating it into the act of governing. In order for contributors to truly feel as though they are participating in a democratic way, comments will have to be accumulated and then used to steer policies and regulations. The relevant statements would have to be imbedded into government actions. According to the research this could potentially be accomplished through referencing certain remarks that are used while also clearly stating why others were not used (Bertot et al. 2010). This action has not been implemented by the United States and seems to be a much more difficult challenge to traverse.

Equitable access to the democratic process through the use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies is a further challenge. Relying too heavily on social media can become exclusionary because a person needs access to the tools and the knowledge to successfully use social media. These restrictions can be brought on through the location, the costs, the level of education, or the age of the individual who is currently unable to participate (Bertot et al. 2010). Community based initiatives could be pursued to supplement both access and education where it is needed. This is currently being done through partnerships between public libraries and certain agencies, such as the US State Department and the US Citizenship and Immigration Services. But such ventures are currently sparse and this unbalanced distribution has negative implications for attempting public engagement through social media (Bertot et al. 2010). In order to be seen as a viable option equitable use must be made available so that citizens have the greatest available opportunity to participate.

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

Service delivery and its improvement through emerging technologies has been a central concern for the U.S. federal government since 1993 under the direction of the Clinton-Gore Administration. Through the use of Web 2.0 tools the focus has now shifted away from simply providing services to citizens to allowing citizens the ability to be involved in the creative process. The high levels of collaboration and communication that have resulted from these new technologies bring both strengths and challenges to the altered landscape of service delivery. The following evaluation will carefully examine each in turn.

Opportunities

Using social media to both expand upon as well as improve the delivery of services is a relatively new phenomenon. Through social media tools information released to the public is done in a much more effective, efficient, timely, and valuable manner (Wigand 2010). Since information can be disbursed in a more advanced way the relevance and value of the information to the public is much higher. Other agencies are also encouraging use by adapting mobile apps and web sites, such as the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the White House, the EPA, and the USGSA. These mobile uses allow these agencies to interact with the public more often (Bertot et al. 2010). These developments allow the participating agencies to be more available to the public as they are accessible from a mobile platform as well. Others are choosing a somewhat different route.

Instead of going to where the public currently is, some agencies are opting to use social media tools. For instance, the USGSA uses a single web site which offers interested people a variety of ways to contact them, from online forms to phone calls. It also has the ability to disburse information through several different mediums including e-mails and RSS feeds (Wigand 2010). The United States Department of Health Services has also chosen this action by creating a public blog to engage the public in a conversation covering vaccine allocations during an influenza pandemic (Wigand 2010). This more stationary approach allows the public to choose which way to access available services, especially in the case of the USGSA.

Social media is also assisting in enhancing collaborative efforts to delivering services. Some forms of this activity are relatively simple. Making some services a more shared effort in both creation and delivery simply requires that credible, high level data sets be made publicly available which fosters the creation of accurate user-generated content, such as Data.gov. This enhanced collaboration improves internal as well as external services. For example, social networking sites are allowing government agencies to cooperate across agencies and assist in collective actions (Wigand 2010). Through opening more collaborative channels of communication and information not only are private individuals better situated to enhance services but government agencies are also able to improve their current practices.

Managing a crisis and delivering vital services during such a time has also become more streamlined and open. Web 2.0 and social media technologies capture the two big challenges of using volunteers properly, which are that the need for volunteer assistance is not pre-planned so an efficient form of mass communication greatly assists in expressing the need when it does arise and that the decentralized nature of volunteerism is communally guided through social media. Social media allows volunteers to coordinate their own efforts with others in a direct and efficient manner while simultaneously obtaining or disbursing needed information (Majchrzak and More 2011). Web 2.0 and social media can also allow currently separated data to be combined in meaningful and innovate ways to address a crisis. For example, during the San Diego County fires the locations of the fires were placed over Google maps which allowed the public easy access and understandable information (Majchrzak and More 2011).

Finally, social media and Web 2.0 technologies do not require the same sort of infrastructure as previous technology which seems to provide for more reliable use. During the fires a radio tower was destroyed which quickly eliminated any function the radio stations could have played, but the Internet and new technologies did not fall victim to infrastructure destruction (Majchrzak and More 2011). With the use of social media and Web 2.0 a crisis is much easier to manage due to reliable communication, decentralized coordination, and more timely information.

Due to the long history of using web based technologies to deliver services there are a number of examples of this practice which were outlined in the research. The following is a list of current examples.

- The CDC has hosted public forums on Second Life so that the agency can disburse information in a new and proficient way.
- The TSA uses a public blog to keep the public informed with current information as well as address the openly stated concerns and criticisms of the public. (*Previous examples stated in Helbig and Hrdinov 2010*)
- Many different federal agencies host a YouTube channel that is used to disburse information.
- The Veterans Administration uses social media to interact with current veterans
- Disabilities.gov uses social media to disburse information and offer services.
- The Federal Register site has made its data more accessible and interactive through Web 2.0 and social media technologies.
- The US Patent and Trademark Office used social media to create the “Peer-to-Patent: Community Patent Review” to open the approval process to a larger community of people, with the inventor’s permission. (*Exemplified previously listed found in Bertot et al. 2010*).
- The CDC has used social media to create a framework for “Crisis and Emergency-Risk Communication” which puts the public’s need for information foremost in priorities (Reynolds 2010).

These examples serve to demonstrate the wide spectrum that social media currently occupies in regards to improving and allowing for the evolution of service delivery. Challenges to the practice of improving service delivery also run throughout the system.

Challenges

Most of the challenges discussed in the research were centered on the availability of use. As more Americans gain access to the Internet and feel comfortable participating in this dimension a large number of people, approximately 70 percent, now expect the government to provide online services and information (Wigand 2010). With such a large demand this issue requires significant effort. This task becomes more pronounced because the services that the public would like to receive through an online medium have yet to be determined (Bertot et al. 2010). There needs to be a more comprehensive study to fully determine what services the American public would feel comfortable obtaining through the use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies. There are also an inexhaustible amount of social media channels which the public has access to, and from these people will choose the ones that best fit their needs and wants. In response to this it seems as though the stationary approach to interaction is not fully utilizing available resources. The agencies should be willing to go to the locations of the public so that interaction is more natural and that services become more available (Wigand 2010). However, this approach brings challenges with it as well. This would require each agency to individually assess the benefits and costs associated with each social media option available and decide if it is capable of meeting its stated purpose and deliver the appropriate services through the chosen social media venue (Wigand 2010). Using social media to deliver services also seems to bring inherent challenges regardless of the individual agency’s efforts.

Concerns over the reliability, effectiveness, privacy, and security of services delivered in this manner remain largely unresolved. Furthermore, privacy has thus far existed on the periphery and not been addressed as a primary concern. Any attention it does receive is done on a case by case manner which means no standardized federal approach has been formulated as of yet (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). This is a large cause for concern as several services may pertain to rather confidential aspects of an individual's life. Along this same line, several government officials are concerned about the current reliance on third parties to distribute required government services (Helbig and Hrdinov 2010). Since these parties are not as accountable to the public or the government their failure to act may translate into blame falling on the government.

Social media and Web 2.0 technologies also require the need to experiment with current practices, which could yield undesirable outcomes (Majchrzak and More 2011). Such innovations may have the ability to yield better results; however failing to deliver mandated services is a large problem from a federal government stand point which may result in either less experimentation or simply the neglect of such a practice in any significant way. It is also troublesome that determining the effectiveness of service delivery through this new means is still largely determined by old metrics of success (Majchrzak and More 2011). The evaluations would have to be updated in order to fully grasp both the prospective benefits and costs.

The final point of criticism is seen through the perspective of crisis management. The use of social media during the fires in San Diego County relied heavily on the ability of the public to view and correct the information that was being disbursed. The entities involved were aware of this and released a general disclaimer making this publicly known (Majchrzak and More 2011). But, if the public had chosen to not be so intimately involved in the process such information disbursement could have been detrimental. This specific crisis also experienced such success with the use of social media because they had immediate access to professionals, such as geologists as well as Google programmers, which allowed them to maximize the use of the available technologies (Majchrzak and More 2011). Had these professional volunteers not been available the technology and related information would have most likely not been as adaptable or relatable in an immediate fashion.

CONCLUSION

The United States federal government occupies a privileged position in regards to these new technologies due to its early adaptation of such practices. Through the increased use and correlating expectation of the federal government to be involved in the use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies it is still necessary though to carefully evaluate these tools so that they may be better understood. The use of social media and Web 2.0 technologies poses many realized advantages capable of improving current government practices along a wide spectrum of use. However it seems as though each realized strength is swiftly followed by a related challenge, either currently realized or yet to be seen. Any action taken in regards to implementing social media and Web 2.0 technologies requires careful consideration as well as the transformation of current practices.

CHAPTER 3 AUSTRALIA

By

Shari Tremaine

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of social media provides the public with an opportunity for societal improvement and progress through enhanced collaboration and engagement with government. Along with these prospects come many challenges in terms of how government can and should participate in social media given the values of openness and collaboration along with concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality (Roy 2012). This environmental scan will explore how the Australian government is using social media in three areas namely administration, public engagement, and citizen-centered service, and the internal and external opportunities and challenges it faces in each of these areas.

In 2009, a taskforce was mandated with exploring opportunities of Web 2.0 for government. Their report titled *Engage: Getting on with Government 2.0* provided a number of recommendations for using Web 2.0 including the need for coordinated leadership and improved guidance to consult and engage stakeholders online and making public sector information available (Fyfe and Crookall 2010; Australia 2009). The Australian Government agreed with most of the report's recommendations and in 2010 responded to the central recommendation with a declaration of open government that stated Australia's commitment to increasing citizen participation through engagement, access to information and the use of technology (Australia 2010a; Australia 2010b). A number of initiatives related to the declaration as well as existing tools and technologies, all of which will be discussed in this chapter, provide opportunities and challenges in Australia's journey towards government 2.0.

ADMINISTRATION

Opportunities

Guidelines

The Australian Government provides a host of resources for public servants around how agencies can progress towards government 2.0. For example, a *Government 2.0 Primer* document was developed to help government agencies achieve the objectives of the declaration by outlining scenarios and tools that agencies can use (Australia 2012e). *Guidelines for online consultation* are found in the Government 2.0 Primer and there is also an online policy consultation checklist available (Australia n.d.b; Australia 2008). *Principles on open public sector information* exist to help agencies publish information and improve information management (Australia 2011a). Revisions to the *Australian Public Service Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online* are available which addresses the public services' values and code of conduct in online communication (Australia 2012b; Australia 2012d). All of these resources are available on the Australian Government's web pages.

Collaboration

Web 2.0 can assist in facilitating more horizontal discussion and decision-making within government (Fyfe and Crookall 2010) providing various opportunities for internal collaboration and to build expertise and knowledge among public servants across issues (Australia 2009). There are numerous examples of Australia adopting digital tools for these purposes. For example, govdex is the Australian government's collaborative workspace where government agencies can share and manage projects and information in

a private, secure space. Currently, govdex is under revision (Australia 2012d). GovLoop is a “knowledge network” that aims to improve service by providing a place for public sector professionals to collaborate, learn, and solve problems. GovLoop is an active social network with over 60,000 members and offers blogs, discussions and resources. Members are from around the world but mostly located in the United States (GovLoop 2012). In addition, there is MuniGov 2.0, a subgroup of GovLoop that brings together public servants to explore how Web 2.0 technology and tools can help to improve service delivery, communication and collaboration with citizens. MuniGov 2.0 has 570 members from local and municipal governments, but does not appear to have been active in over a year (MuniGov 2012).

Lead Agency

The taskforce report supported the establishment of a lead agency that would be responsible for a long-term strategy and provide leadership, guidance and support for moving towards government 2.0 (Australia 2009; Fyfe and Crookall 2010). Finance was the agency chosen to be the lead and they have been involved in a number of initiatives through the Government 2.0 Strategy and Services team developed within the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) including developing guidelines, websites and operating a blog (Australia 2012c).

International Collaboration

The United States Intelligence Community uses a collaborative data sharing system called Intellipedia (CIA 2009). Part of Intellipedia is the Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNet) that is a secret-level computer network which the United States has granted access to Australia, one of its historical intelligence allies (McGill and Gray 2012). These systems allow communication and collaboration between public sector professionals across international borders.

Challenges

Security and Privacy

Government must address concerns including security, privacy, confidentiality and organizational risk before information can be published (Fyfe and Crookall 2010; Australia 2011b). Barriers exist around what to do about information that is deemed sensitive, agencies operate with secrecy as the default, and there are also concerns about copyright issues and the expense to publish (Australia 2009). Existing legislation around privacy and legal, policy and contractual requirements must be considered before the release of information. These include the *Privacy Act 1988*, *Public Service Act 1999*, *Financial Management Act 1997*, and *Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997* (Australia 2011b).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities

Open Government

The use of Web 2.0 can help to achieve better openness, engagement, transparency, and accountability and take full advantage of public sector information (Australia 2009; Fyfe and Crookall 2010).

Technology can increase citizen engagement and collaboration when making policy decisions and designing services by being able to provide feedback on the services they receive in a more meaningful way. Technology provides an increased opportunity for more people to connect, it limits the number of people who are left out and it is also a cost-effective way to generate discussion, participation, and collaboration (Australia 2009).

Online Consultation

Part of Australia's government 2.0 plan includes increasing the use of online consultation that will complement traditional consultation in order to receive feedback and engage with the public on a variety of issues. Online consultations may be on a number of issues and can take a number of forms including websites, social networking sites, blogs, or a combination of these (Australia n.d.b).

Social Media

Web 2.0 tools provide the potential to support Australia in meeting the objectives of the declaration by increasing government transparency and accountability in consultation and decision-making. A wide range of government agencies, as well as the Prime Minister, are active in multiple ways including blogs (47 blogs), Twitter (131 Twitter sites), Facebook (82 Facebook pages), YouTube (58 YouTube channels), Flickr (22 Flickr photostreams), Apps (30 apps), RSS feeds (44 RSS feeds) and podcasts (19 podcasts) (Australia 2012d).

A Closer Look at Twitter

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has an active Twitter site with 287,090 followers. A study conducted by Grant, Moon and Grant between November 2009 and February 2010 found that most politicians in Australia were very active on Twitter with both broadcast and conversational tweets (Grant, Moon and Grant 2010). The study identifies concerns that online engagement may lead to social disengagement and dislocation while others have shown the opposite that social media can actually lead to increased local engagement. For example, there appears to be a relationship between politician's online social engagement and candidate support (Grant, Moon and Grant 2010).

Researchers also found that Twitter may strengthen the discussion of politics between the major parties; however, they also found that there was space for other or minor parties on Twitter to engage with the public that might not be available in mainstream media. In this way, Twitter can be more personal and local as well as being a platform for national and global conversations. Overall, the researchers found that Twitter provides an opportunity for increased engagement and opportunity to shape political discussion (Grant, Moon and Grant 2010).

Publishing Public Sector Information

The availability of public sector information allows stakeholders to use and add value to the information, it helps government make decisions and it supports public engagement, all of which support progress towards achieving the Australian Government's declaration (Australia 2011b; Australia 2009). Public sector information is viewed as a national resource that should be made available as much as possible (Australia 2009). The Office of the Information Commissioner and amendments to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* facilitate and promote accessibility of public sector information (Australia 2009; OAI 2012; Australia 2011b).

OpenAustralia

OpenAustralia is a website that people can use to "keep tabs on" their Members of Parliament (MPs) by finding out who their MP is and what they are saying, by following certain topics or issues that are of interest to them, and receive email alerts when their MP is active. The website is run by a charity, the OpenAustralia Foundation, and volunteers launched the website to make information more accessible to the public and to use technology to make government more open (Fyfe and Crookall 2010). Citizens are able to connect with their representatives and become engaged with the issues that are being discussed in Parliament in hopes of encouraging transparency and engagement. OpenAustralia is based

on the UK charity MySociety which launched the website www.theyworkforyou.com with similar goals of encouraging open government (OpenAustralia 2012).

Challenges

Policy, Culture and Resources

The Australian Government suggests that when introducing the use of social media within a government agency it is important to identify if there are gaps in existing guidelines, to undertake a risk assessment, address any resource issues such as staff training and the resources required to monitor and manage information as well as ensure that staff feel that they are trusted by their supervisors (Australia 2012d). Macnamara (2010) supports this with research suggesting there are four areas of focus for online consultation: policy and planning, culture, resources and technology. However, Macnamara (2010) suggests that the first three factors, policy, culture and resources, need to be in place first for successful consultation, and further, that without the first two factors, a policy framework and a supportive culture, the latter two factors are irrelevant for successful online consultation. Macnamara (2010) concludes that the barriers to online engagement and consultation are “cultural, organizational and constitutional not technological” and that just trying to increase e-democracy does not necessarily lead to increased engagement. Consulting with the public needs careful planning to find the right tools and processes and will not be successful with a “one-size-fits-all” approach. In Macnamara’s (2010) view, online methods should be a complement rather than a replacement to traditional consultations.

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

Opportunities

Centrelink

Centrelink was a website that came out of the restructuring of four government organizations into a website that aimed to serve Australians and provide “integrated, seamless service” (Fyfe and Crookall 2010). Since 2004, Centrelink has been incorporated into the Department of Human Services website. The new site is intended to be a “convenient, single point entry for health, social and welfare payments and services” for Australians (Australia 2012a).

Best Job in the World

In 2009 Tourism Queensland invited people to apply for the best job in the world and be a “Caretaker of the Islands” for six months in an effort to promote the Great Barrier Reef as a tourist destination (BBC News 2009a). The website received 34,000 video applications from over 200 countries for the job whose duties were publicity related and included web videos, blogging and photo diaries (BBC News 2009b; BBC News 2009a). The successful applicant maintained a website for the duration of the job and continues to share “inspiration, ideas, stories, photos and more about travel and holidays in Queensland” on the now Official Blog Site for Holidays in Queensland (Tourism Queensland 2012). Journalists and travel bloggers write stories for the website and anyone is invited to apply to be a contributor to the site (Tourism Queensland 2012).

Challenges

H1N1 Pandemic 2009

During the H1N1 Pandemic in 2009, the Health Emergency website was set up to be the main source of information for the public and healthcare professionals. This was a new website and the general public was not aware that it was the official site for information regarding the Australian pandemic, whereas the Center for Disease Control website was well established and well known as the official source. There

were also Pandemic Influenza websites that provided information that contributed to duplication and confusion between the purposes of the Health Emergency and Pandemic Influenza websites (Australia 2011c).

Jurisdictions and other health organizations also had websites with information regarding the pandemic and this created challenges with consistency. In addition, the media were routinely distributing information often before health organizations were able to provide updated information on their sites (Australia 2011c).

A report looking at lessons learned from the pandemic experience suggested that having a more centralized, consistent, current and accessible government website designed to provide relevant information to the public would have been beneficial. In addition, the report noted that social media was not used during the pandemic and that these tools “should be considered as a means of delivering key messages in a timely manner” (Australia 2011c).

CONCLUSION

This environmental scan has explored social media use in the Australian Government and some of the opportunities and challenges faced in the journey towards government 2.0. Through its commitment to overcome the challenges that social media may present to government, there is opportunity for Australia to use the benefits of government 2.0 towards its National Innovation Agenda to “create a better Australia – a fairer, richer, healthier and greener Australia that can meet the challenges and grasp the opportunities of the twenty-first century” (Fyfe and Crookall 2010).

CHAPTER 4 BRITISH COLUMBIA

By

Benjamin Orr

INTRODUCTION

The Government of British Columbia is aware of many of the opportunities and challenges associated with social media. It and its public services have released several reports outlining the possibilities and obstacles of social media and its applications. Their attitude of recognizing instead of ignoring the realities of social media has been a great asset to them. While they do face challenges, such as reconciling current privacy legislation with improved democratic participation and service, the problems they are facing are not unique to British Columbia and they are well positioned by virtue of being willing to have conversations about what changes need to occur.

ADMINISTRATION

Opportunities

There are several ways in which the Government of British Columbia is taking the lead in regards to administration and social media. This analysis will focus on three of those, having Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government, their Guidelines for *Social Media Background Checks*, and the efficiency gains they plan on taking advantage of by using social media. While this list is not exhaustive, it does do an excellent job of demonstrating how British Columbia has positioned itself to make the most of social media in its administrative practices.

Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government

Within the B.C. government there are already clear lines of responsibility forming around the government's adoption of social media. The Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government has citizen-centered services, open data, and citizen engagement as important parts of its mandate (British Columbia 2012a). Not only does tasking one ministry with the adoption of social media lead to greater accountability, it also leads to greater coordination between ministries. Social media is not the sole purview of this Ministry, instead, its role is to provide "infrastructure, legislation policies, and governance" for the benefit of other ministries (British Columbia 2012a). The key functions of the ministry in this context include improving government operations through social media, a source of accountability during the transition, and a coordinating body.

Guidelines for Social Media Background Checks

The Government of British Columbia and the B.C. Public Service have produced guidelines to help employees use social media and to navigate the relevant current legislation (British Columbia 2010a; British Columbia 2011). Their *Guidelines for Social Media Background Checks* is an excellent example of this. Essentially, the guidelines were created to help the public service navigate two realities, social media background checks and current privacy legislation. The main issue is privacy, which is extremely easy to violate when doing one of these checks (British Columbia 2011). The reason this legislation serves as an excellent example of the guidelines being produced is that, instead of shying away from the

risk posed by the privacy legislation and denying the reality of these checks, the guidelines recognize the benefits, teach about the risks, and show best practices.

Efficiency Gains

According to the B.C. Public Service's report *Citizens @ the Centre: B.C. Government 2.0* the B.C. Government is facing a looming demographic shift which will place a greater burden on its health care system, drawing resources away from other departments (British Columbia 2010b). Web 2.0 is seen as a way to improve efficiencies to compensate for this (British Columbia 2010b). Efficiencies in this sense is broad. It means much more than providing more services on-line, though that is part of it. It also refers to things such as improved information sharing between departments and greater communication, things that may be less tangibly but that do affect the bottom line.

Challenges

Again, this list is not exhaustive; however, it does serve to highlight many of the administrative difficulties faced by B.C. as it begins to expand its social media use.

Privacy Legislation

Privacy legislation is consistently cited as one of the main challenges to social media use (British Columbia 2010a; 2010b; 2011; 2012a). The *Citizens @ the Centre* express the issue succinctly when it says

Existing policies and legislation to protect personal privacy were not designed to accommodate social media and the potential benefits of more effectively sharing data within government and with citizens. That includes freedom of information and protection of privacy legislation, which was developed decades ago and never anticipated today's technology (British Columbia 2010b).

The aforementioned *Social Media Background Check Guidelines* are again an excellent example. Under current privacy legislation, the subject's permission is needed to gather information, but even if it is granted it can be withdrawn and that information can no longer be considered (British Columbia 2010a). Until a ministerial order by Minister Ben Stewart modified the privacy legislation, the government could not share information that had been posted publicly by a citizen, effectively making a conversation or consultation impossible. Now the ministerial order has changed the legislation enough to do just that, but the order is temporary and set to expire this December (British Columbia 2009).

Continual Change

Perhaps the greatest challenge that this shift to social media has exposed is not the B.C. government's difficulties in adapting to social media technology, but its difficulty adapting to new technology. The B.C. Government's challenge is not simply technological and/or policy related but is instead focused on the flexibility to adapt to whatever comes next. In the words of the *Citizens @ the Centre* report "It is a question of ensuring that government policies and platforms support not only the current technology options, but the longer-term flexibility that will be required to adapt to the inevitable evolution of new technologies and innovation over time" (British Columbia 2010b, 25).

The Culture of the Public Service

The Public Service will be the ones using this new technology so it is important that they be supported in the adoption of it. According to the B.C. Public Service itself, the culture of the public service is a potential obstacle. The change that the B.C. Public Service is discussing in their report *Citizens at the Centre: B.C. Government 2.0* will require change in how things are done. Information will necessarily be

shared more between ministries, citizens will have more input, and the public employee will be addressing the public more than in the past (British Columbia 2010b). Adjustment and flexibility will require a willingness to change and innovate, and in the words of the report itself “the traditionally risk-averse culture of the public service often smothers the spark of innovation” (British Columbia 2010b 25). An emphasis on support and training will be needed to make public servants more comfortable with social media. The greatest administrative threat will be that the Public Service does not adapt to the new technologies and practices.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities

B.C. has had several successful experiences with public engagement and open data. In this section three of their better known public engagement programs will be discussed, in addition to their efforts to improve their open data programs. It should be noted that 84% of the B.C. population had Internet access in 2010 (Statistics Canada 2011). This high level of connectivity leads to a larger pool of citizens who could participate in a consultation or discussion, and thus increase the legitimacy of any such exercise.

Open Data Sites

Currently legislation in B.C. allows for proactive release of information, but generally it is done on a case by case basis. The government plan outlined in *Citizens @ the Centre* involved creating one new online source for all government data, and eventually for the public sector as well. To do this the plan calls for citizen participation in identifying which data sets should be made public first (British Columbia 2010b). Currently, there are two sites that the government uses to share data Open Info which focuses on information releases and government expenses, and DataBC which hosts data sets.

Water Act Modernization

In December 2009, the Water Modernization Process was launched to engage the public in the process of updating B.C.'s Water Act (British Columbia 2010b, 2010c). It began with the “Living Water Smart Blog,” a policy oriented blog which also acts as a forum. A call for submissions was made in 2010 and, in order to increase the level and quality of discussion, a *Technical Background Report* was released. The program received 900 submissions, 720 of which were from individuals; in the interest of maintaining transparency all of the submissions are available for viewing on their site (British Columbia 2010c).

Apps 4 Climate Change

Apps 4 Climate Change was a contest for citizens to use publicly available data on climate change to create web and mobile applications that would help people better understand climate change and their impact on the environment (British Columbia 2010b). The data was an open catalogue of B.C.'s climate and greenhouse gas emissions data. Eight private sponsors provided prizes for the contest (British Columbia 2010d). The program created a number of useful and valuable apps and was itself recognized by the National Institute of Public Administration of Canada/Deloitte Public Sector Leadership Awards when it won the silver award in 2010.

Conversation on Health

The *Conversation on Health* was a wide-reaching forum designed to gather opinions on, and create discussion around, making changes to the healthcare system. While the government did try to guide the conversation with questions, the forum was open and citizens could suggest topics for discussion

(Davidson 2008). The *Conversation on Health* was done through a number of mediums, but electronic submissions were an important part. There were 1,906 submissions made on the site, 2,217 people posted to the discussion board, and they received another 1,676 emails (British Columbia 2007). It has also yielded policy ideas. In 2009 the B.C. Government gave pharmacists more power to renew prescriptions and it credited some comments made during the *Conversation on Health* as the inspiration.

Challenges

There are also challenges associated with increased public engagement. Once again, this list isn't exhaustive. The challenges discussed here can be divided into two different groups, losing control of the conversation and challenges of legitimacy.

Losing Control of the Conversation

Public engagement will always mean giving up a certain measure of control, but there is the risk that the government will lose too much. One possibility that isn't hard to imagine would be the capture of the conversation by a well-organized interest group. If anonymity is part of the conversation there is no limit to how many times the same group could post similar comments, questions, or even begin to direct the conversation.

Another threat is how the information gathered is used. In an article about the *Conversation on Healthcare* Davidson notes that the conversation didn't bridge large gaps in opinions so much as widen them (Davidson 2008). What can happen is that a forum such as that one can lead to a lot of different messages. Any interest group could mine the forum to find opinions that suit their purpose. Lastly there is a certain amount of cynicism to overcome. A significant portion of the comments made during the *Conversation on Health* were debating the validity of the forum, with many seeing it as merely a legitimacy seeking exercise by a government which had already decided what it would do (Davidson 2008). These conversations aren't harmful in and of themselves, but cynicism could lead to lower turnouts and lower levels of engagement, which lowers the legitimacy of the exercise. When it comes to public engagement, cynicism cannot be ignored.

The flip side of losing control of the conversation is when there is a lack of it. The Government of British Columbia is very diligent in updating its Facebook and Twitter accounts and uses them effectively to provide information to the public. However, they are not utilizing these sites to their full potential because they are not engaging in conversation with their citizens on them. These tools have the potential to foster public engagement; used improperly they become indistinguishable from press releases.

Legitimacy

There are other threats to legitimacy besides cynicism. One has to do with issues of access, limiting who can participate in the conversation. As mentioned earlier, 84% (Statistics Canada 2011) of the population in B.C. had access to the Internet, but an important question that needs to be asked is who are those other 16% and do they have other ways to participate in the conversation? And it is also important to recognize that those who participate in these forums are self-selected and not necessarily reflective of B.C. as a whole (Davidson 2008). At what point is the level of participation in an online consultation high enough to give it legitimacy? While the numbers may be up for debate it is clear that low-participation undermines the legitimacy of any exercise.

Low civic or technical literacy is also an important issue. In its report on the *Conversation on Healthcare* some members of the public did have technical concerns about the ease of use of the site (British Columbia 2007). In addition, 84% Internet connectivity does not necessarily translate in 84% social media literacy. For many, technical skills and not accessibility could be the limiting factor. Of course low civic and technical literacy also refers to not understanding the problem being debated. B.C. has acknowledged this issue in their *Water Act Modernization* by releasing a *Technical Background Report* to better inform participants.

CITIZEN-CENTRED SERVICE

Opportunities

Social media has the potential to lead to great improvements in citizen service by being part of a shift to a more citizen-centric model. Since the beginning of web 2.0 the idea that citizens could find all their needed services in one place has been at the forefront of governments' agendas (Ho 2002). The Government of B.C. has already begun this shift and has identified areas of potential for later action.

New Website

The *Citizens @ the Centre* report identified the importance of making changes to the structure of the Government of B.C.'s website. The old website was organized around ministries and government structure. In that system someone looking for information on a service would have to know which ministry provides said service. It required a certain level of knowledge of government. The new website is instead organized around services, which is a more citizen-centric model (British Columbia 2010b).

Integrated Account Management

Integrated account management (ICM) is a program which will more effectively capture data and share it between ministries. This will allow for individual case files to be managed between ministries. When a citizen's file is accessible to other ministries (securely) it will mean that everyone helping that citizen is up to date on the details of that case. A higher level of coordination between ministries will lead to improved outcomes for citizens. Eventually a web portal will be created for citizens to apply for services, check the status of those applications, and update their information (British Columbia 2010b). Integrated Case Management is premised on the same idea as the new website, centering services on the citizen rather than organizational structure. Central to the creation of integrated account management will be the creation of a system of e-identity management which allows for securing information while making it accessible to different departments (Aicholzer and Straub 2010).

Challenges

Citizen-centered service isn't without its challenges. This section discusses security risks, privacy risks, and finally the importance of consistency.

Security of Patient Data

An obvious challenge in moving to a more citizen-centered approach will be keeping the data gathered and shared between ministries secure. It is possible that some agency could attempt to steal information from the system. There is also a chance that the more people that have access to information the likelier the information could be used inappropriately. The first issue is a technical one, the second a human resource issue. There is another risk associated with security however, and this one has more to do with perception. In order for citizens to buy-in to the new systems, they will have to have confidence in the security.

Privacy Legislation

Identity management is a key component of citizen-centered service, and it is currently impeded by privacy legislation (British Columbia 2010b; Aicholzer and Straub 2010). Identity management does carry some risks, and an e-identity management system would require high levels of security and would ideally require individual identification and verification whenever sensitive information was being shared (Aicholzer and Straub 2010). The gathering and sharing of information, which is central to any citizen-centered service faces many barriers stemming from the current privacy legislation. This is another example of why there needs to be a discussion of updating privacy legislation to accommodate new realities.

Consistency

In this instance consistency refers specifically to the citizen experience and more broadly to government's approach. For the citizen consistency is important to being able to navigate this new system. But for the government it is important that common practices and standards be developed as the government shifts to Web 2.0 so that a cohesive, citizen-centered system can develop (British Columbia 2012a). The risk would be that ministries develop their systems and strategies separately, creating silos and returning to a system that is necessarily organized around organizational structure.

CONCLUSION

British Columbia faces many issues as it embraces social media. These issues are not unique to British Columbia, and the province will be able to learn alongside many other jurisdictions who are dealing with similar issues. The province and its public service have studied the potential benefits and pitfalls of Web 2.0 and this may be its greatest strength. Social media represents a new future full of possibilities, and British Columbia is entering it with eyes open.

CHAPTER 5 MANITOBA

By

Robert Hanna, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Manitoba participates in various social media networks. A central social media directory is linked to their main website, which integrates social media into the overall communications and marketing strategy of the government. It includes a well-organized listing of government, and other public service organizations' social networks as well as an explicit moderation and privacy notification (Government of Manitoba 2012a). Manitoba uses most of the social media tools (eg. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, RSS feeds, social plug-ins/bookmarking) to have convenient, accessible government information and services and help people stay connected in the province. A common look and feel for all their social media promotes user friendly tools and reinforces Manitoba's branding.

Since 2010, the Government of Manitoba has had an active account with the social networking site Facebook (Facebook-Manitoba Government 2012). Facebook allows people to keep in touch with Manitoba government programs, services and community news. There are a total of 564 likes attached to this account. New content, including events, news and photos is posted several times a week. In fact, the majority of activity on the site is one-way communication; however, there are some instances of conversation with people who visit the site.

The Government of Manitoba also has an active account with the microblogging site Twitter. Similar to Facebook, Twitter allows people to receive updates about happenings around Manitoba through the exchange of quick, frequent information online. There have been 2,429 tweets through the centralized account with a total of 3,777 followers (Twitter-Manitoba Government 2012). Content is updated almost every day, but again the majority of activity on the site is one-way communication. Retweets hover around two or three per item, and have surpassed ten only a few times.

RSS feeds are used by the government to provide people with news about frequently updated web content. Some of the key feeds people can subscribe to are: Government of Manitoba news releases, City of Winnipeg new releases, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority news releases and Government of Manitoba Jobs.

The last social media tool to highlight is Manitoba's video sharing website on YouTube. In addition to random videos about the Government of Manitoba posted on YouTube, there is a YouTube channel registered to the government as well. Since March 4, 2011, Manitoba's YouTube channel has had 45,616 videos viewed along with 41 subscribers (YouTube-Manitoba Government 2012).

Scanning Manitoba's social media administrative practices, public engagement activities, and citizen-centered service is difficult to do without a recognized framework endorsed by the government. Consequently, examples of online social media use by the Government of Manitoba, and by extension

Agencies/Boards/Commissions, over the last few years will be highlighted to help determine overall capacity. The following three sections assess Manitoba's social media capacity in the areas of administration, public engagement and citizen-centered service. Each section explores both opportunities and challenges associated with these three themes.

ADMINISTRATION

No formal government-wide or department specific policies, definitions or guidelines exist in Manitoba to manage their online social networks. However, in summer 2010, Executive Council did engage members of the MB4Youth Advisory Council in a focus group about social media. "Using an appreciative inquiry approach, the Council discussed what the best social media tools available were, likes and dislikes for each tool and what an ideal Province of Manitoba Facebook page would look like" (MB4 Youth Advisory Council 2010). Information gathered from the focus group was eventually used by the Government of Manitoba to help develop their social media tools. The Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU) also tried to offer some sort of guidance in an October 2011 document titled *Navigating the World of Social Media*. MGEU suggested employees follow tips, both personally and professionally, from the Canadian Media Guild for "using social media and staying out of trouble" (MGEU 2011).

Communications Services Manitoba is responsible for administering all social media tools and monitoring social media use. Considering their many other responsibilities, there were only 66 Full Time Equivalents working in the central division as of 2011. Several impressive examples of multi-media and social marketing campaigns recently coordinated and managed by Communications Services Manitoba include: "legislation related to smoking in cars with children, cell phone use while driving, online resources for business, positive parenting resources, encouraging Manitobans to get a flu shot, severe summer weather safety and the tuition fee rebate program" (Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism 2011).

As the government's advertising, communications and public affairs division, Communications Services Manitoba also just completed online administrative enhancements. New social networking options have been added to the Government of Manitoba website such as a *Share* toolbar that can bookmark webpages for users and instantly connect them to many other social media applications (Government of Manitoba 2012b). Upgraded website search and browsing functions for mobile users promotes social media use as well. Yet another beneficial administrative practice is the visual social media connectors in the footer of every government webpage. Combining these advantages with the social media directory/tools mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that Manitoba has strong administrative practices in place for how they are using social media. Unfortunately, it could be argued that their social media use to-date has been no different than what was done using traditional media channels; it is still about government information/communication sharing instead of engaging social networks in e-democracy. The only glaring administrative weakness is a lack of a formal social media policy detailing the rules and responsibilities for both government employees and people using the government's social media tools. But, according to a source in Communications Services Manitoba, the opportunity to develop and deploy such a policy is currently being finalized.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Despite high hopes that government social media networks would be used for two-way communication and a platform for collaboration with citizens, evidence shows that they are still largely used in a one-

way manner for distribution of information and services (Bryer and Zavattaro 2011). Communications Services Manitoba confirms that little success has been achieved by using social media for public engagement activities. One of the only instances, public consultation about the provincial education system attempted through Facebook and Twitter, failed due to a lack of responses. Even those that responded to the consultation did not provide useful information in some cases; Twitter spam actually crowded out the potential for legitimate engagement. Respondents were also typically from a younger demographic, which likely skewed perspectives resulting in an inaccurate representation of the entire population in Manitoba. In total, more problems were created than solved in this example. Had the education consultation gone the other way and people engaged on government social networks with a flood of responses, government capacity to handle the feedback effectively would have been threatened anyway. Government recognizes the dilemma and has hesitated since to use social media for public engagement.

It can then be assumed that the Government of Manitoba chooses not to use social media for public engagement because the costs outweigh the benefits right now. Until more research, training and resources are allocated to social media use, government will continue to use traditional public engagement methods. They do however excel in terms of their social media communication practices. As mentioned, there is a central government approach in place for using Facebook, Twitter, etc., but there is also an extensive system of social media interlinks with many other relevant public organizations throughout the province. Information, therefore, is communicated frequently and in real time through various government channels for the benefit of the end user. The interaction process between government and the people of Manitoba has become less structured and friendlier as well. Access to government information and transparency of activities has improved with Manitoba's social media use.

A great example of communication using social media would be the Manitoba Government Twitter account (Manitoba Government – @MBGovRoads) that exists specifically for provincial highway conditions and closures. Fed largely by information from the Department of Infrastructure and Transportation, updates are continually tweeted online to inform people about important events affecting the use of public infrastructure. Not only is this Twitter account a central dumping place for government information, it is a hub for external user retweets and interaction with the people of Manitoba. For instance, a road closure is tweeted online by the Manitoba Government, yet information about its reopening may be generated by someone waiting near the actual location and then communicated back to the government. Engagement, free communication and improved service are clear advantages of social media use in this case.

Travel Manitoba's commitment to social media in the 2012 to 2015 Business Plan and their efforts in practice is another good example of an effective social media communication approach in government. Travel Manitoba describes "the important role of social media in a marketing strategy, as online social networks, blogs and discussion forums become increasingly a part of daily life" (Travel Manitoba 2012). Investment is being made in social media to stimulate business, encourage repeat business and deliver travel information to potential consumers (e.g. promotional travel offers), the travel industry (e.g. mentoring provincial tourism operators in delivering social media) and the media (e.g. showcasing stories, photos or videos of positive tourist experiences). To illustrate, Toba, a polar bear mascot has been seen at popular venues over the last few months and his experiences have been streamed over Travel Manitoba's YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/TravelManitoba>) to help profile these attractions. Travel Manitoba firmly believes that "social media will become standard

communication practice and offer the greatest opportunity to create a strong endorsement of Manitoba and its unique tourism offerings” (2012).

Even though Manitoba has a strong base in communicating through social media, there are opportunities for enhancement. Having chosen a centralized approach to social media use does limit the promotion of any particular department. Nineteen different departments, plus accompanying branches and units, all communicating information through one social media tool leads to information overload, competition among departments and overall online clutter. The Government of Manitoba could categorize departmental social media activity and look to offer stand-alone social media privileges to those busier departments. Moreover, the government could deploy the inexpensive crowdsourcing model through their established social media tools to make improvements for online users by collectively problem-solving communication gaps.

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

The mechanism to deliver government services has expanded with social media tools. Although ad-hoc delivery procedures are still happening and the process for consistency is slow in Manitoba’s experience, there has been increased interest and demand to utilize social media to better connect with citizens, understand their short/long term needs and provide timely, effective public services.

Rescue efforts during the 2011 provincial flood are one key incident where the Government of Manitoba, and citizens frankly, demonstrated a clear value of social media to service delivery. In collaboration with Manitoba Water Stewardship and Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, government was able to leverage real time interactions with areas affected by flooding over Facebook, Twitter and YouTube to help execute evacuation and devastation protection plans. “The presence of social media also adds to preparedness. With the increased prevalence of social media, there is no need to sit around blind and wait for someone to report back on a situation. The networks are filled with up-to-date personal accounts and constant alerts” (Claims Canada 2011). In essence, “traditional government public relations are distributed to social media users, which depends on interactivity, legitimacy and a user’s social stake” (Smith 2010). The Government of Manitoba also created a separate Flood homepage, accompanied by RSS feeds, to stream constant flood news and bulletins. Program information, service contacts, fact sheets, links and a 2012 flood outlook were all coordinated online as well (Government of Manitoba 2011).

On October 4, 2012, Manitoba expanded amber alert services by introducing an Amber Alert Facebook page. Government and law enforcement agencies now urge Manitobans to “Like” the page in order to protect children (Facebook – Amber Alert Manitoba 2012). The next time an amber alert must be issued, social media will help provide faster notification of a missing child through a network of eyes and ears all over the province, which will lead to faster coordination of government and partner agency services to find the abducted child and arrest the suspect(s). Government capitalizes here on the opportunity to use people’s social networks in Manitoba and surrounding jurisdictions as a free resource to enhance their own delivery of services.

A new contest beginning in fall 2012, titled *It’s Your Job*, is one more example of using social media for service delivery. Manitoba Family Services and Labour department is trying to innovate programming by challenging young students/workers to create YouTube videos about workplace rights, health and safety (Government of Manitoba 2012c). People between the ages of 18 and 24 are among the most

vulnerable to get injured at work, so the government targeted a social campaign at the group to facilitate service improvements. All entries will be broadcasted to social media networks, and in turn, the winning videos will increase awareness and education of workplace issues.

Manitoba has the opportunity to deliver more government services with social media because administrative practices continue to advance and the social network grows. Still, the government must be strategic in what services are supported by social media – services are for everyone, but social media is not for everyone. For instance, online accessibility may negatively affect homeless individuals, so this external threat must be factored in when selecting a service delivery model for public assistance programs.

CONCLUSION

A 2012 evaluation of provincial and territorial eGovernment initiatives ranks the Government of Manitoba average for all online initiatives except social media use (The Stratford Institute for Digital Media 2012). Manitoba's performance in social media use, including online involvement in Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, is significantly above average. That finding is confirmed by the above synopsis. Overall, the Government of Manitoba benefits from getting an early start to social media use and has gained three years of experience accumulating best practices along the way. All major social media tools are used, communication approaches are outstanding, administrative practices are improving and services delivered via social networks have been appropriate to-date. Additionally, social media policy to guide internal/external users is supposed to be released soon.

Public engagement activities, therefore, remains as the only deficient component of Manitoba's social media use, which will likely change as the Government of Manitoba progresses in the open government maturity model. For the most part, the government currently sits in Level 2 – Data Transparency of the five levels of public engagement experimenting with social media for public participation. "Level 2 opens up government data to the public; Level 3 opens the government to the public's ideas and knowledge" (Lee and Kwak 2012). As the government shifts organizational culture to openness and sharing, more public engagement activities will be possible and a stronger social media presence will result.

CHAPTER 6 ONTARIO

By

Kimberly Shaw

INTRODUCTION

Similar to many other governments, the Government of Ontario has been cautious in its adoption of social media. In 2007, the public service banned at work use of popular social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube (Lombardi 2008). The concern was not only employee productivity but also privacy concerns and security of government information and reputation. Social media use challenges many key tenants within the public service, such as the importance of hierarchy, security of information and protection of reputation. Social media adoption creates new networks that function with more transparency, more access, and greater collaboration between public servants and citizens. This comes with as many challenges as it does opportunities. Social media access in the Ontario government has changed since 2007, “Today, some employees are permitted access — approximately 3,500 out of the total workforce of 65,000 — provided that they have a legitimate reason to use it for government business. Most of those people work in communications departments, accessing Facebook so they can gauge the public’s perception of the Ontario government” (Dowler 2011). The challenges of social media use need to be addressed and mitigated because social media is not only here to stay but will become an increasingly important communication tool for Canadians.

ADMINISTRATION

Opportunities

Social media use within the public service allows the exchange of ideas, quick flow of information, as well as greater network capability with others in government, NGO’s and citizens.

OPSpedia – Ontario Public Service Internal Wiki

The Ontario Public Service has an internal professional networking site called OPSpedia. OPSpedia is a type of wiki that allows real time collaborative input from multiple people working in different departments. It is an internal wiki and access is limited to the Ontario Public Service. OPSpedia was created with existing financial, personnel and infrastructure resources (Tallon 2010), which makes it a cost effective tool that changes how employees of government collaborate and communicate. OPSpedia was developed with a few goals in mind: to mitigate the knowledge loss from retiring workers, to facilitate knowledge transfer quickly across many departments, and to facilitate internal engagement on policy issues (Dowler 2009). Internal wikis such as OPSpedia are used for information with low-sensitivity, and contributors are accountable as they have open profiles. Internal wikis are successful platforms for communication because they have all the benefits of social media (collaborative and responsive) without the risks (security risks and anonymity).

Challenges

Hierarchy, Culture and the Generational Divide

There are many challenges at the administration level to the adoption of social media within the public service. One of the greatest challenges in Ontario as well as other jurisdictions is the hierarchy which manifests as vertical structures with a top down orientation of decision making and control. This system has its advantages in keeping a discrete and efficient organization but the organizational structure makes adoption of social media difficult. Using social media changes how networks are organized and creates more horizontal structures. Information and decision making becomes more lateral and direct. With networks such as OPSpedia, public servants are able to relate to other employees in a more open manner. It becomes more difficult for ministries to protect information and maintain control when there is networking between different departments at all levels. Another challenge related to confronting hierarchy while developing social media policy is the generational divide between those in the public service that are comfortable with social media and those that do not use it and do not understand its value and potential. To further complicate the matter; those in positions of authority within the public sector often belong to generations that do not use social media. There are generational differences in how much and how often baby boomers use Web 2.0 compared to those under age 35; baby boomers use the web in a 1.0 format (to find information) while the younger generation use it as a collaborative space (Bermonte 2011).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Opportunities

Greater transparency within the public service may lead to a better trust relationship between the citizenry and the public service. Responding to citizen questions and concerns in real time gives the public a better idea of how government works as well as a better understanding of the multiple processes required to supply information as well as complete tasks within the public sector. When citizens are able to better understand that government workers are busy, engaged and doing their best to be innovative, this has the potential to decrease the apathy and democratic deficiency within the public.

Improving Public Health through Social Media Campaigns

The Government of Ontario has used social media in a few innovative ways to connect with citizens. Combating misinformation about public health issues continues to be a challenge for many health regions. Peel Health Region has pursued pilot projects to reach citizens as they are looking for health information on social media. This approach has a two pronged effect: to use traditional media methods in a new way, such as broadcasting a message; but also to create a dialogue with citizens, and receive feedback so government can interact with citizens regarding important health issues (Schein 2011). The 2009 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine catch-up campaign used social media to inform and engage the target audience, those born between 1970 and 1995. The campaign used a Facebook page and two YouTube videos, the videos were set up in such a way that they spread quickly on the social networks. It is difficult to separate the effect of traditional media influence from the social media influence, but the campaign did result in 30,000 catch-up vaccines given (Schein 2011).

Another social media campaign was used by the government during the H1N1 pandemic. The approach differed from traditional public service information campaigns in that social media was used as a feedback mechanism to better understand where and how to direct the messages. Further, the campaign used established Mom bloggers to promote the message for vaccination and used a

moderated forum to hear the citizen's experience with H1N1 as well as citizen's experience receiving the vaccination. The campaign was innovative and the sites received a tenfold increase in traffic but vaccination rates remained low at less than 40% (Schein 2011).

Top searches on popular social media sites such as YouTube revealed videos that contain questionable information often in direct contradiction to evidence based public health findings (Schein 2011). Public health officials have successfully used Web 1.0 tools to change Google search results to display a more balanced output of information. Addressing short falls of information on social media sites will require the use of Web 2.0 tools.

Challenges

Access

Public engagement through social media can only be successful when large proportions of the population have access to the Internet. Citizens may not access social media because they lack economic means such as not having access to smart phones or computers, lack literacy skills, have disabilities which make social media platforms inaccessible, or even lack the time it takes to learn new ways of communicating. Social media is one tool that allows a proportion of the population to access services in a mobile and highly personalized way. Until the tools become common place, providing similar service levels to all citizens needs to be considered as social media policy is developed.

Evidence

The public service produces policy based primarily on evidence. Many pilot projects and campaigns featuring social media have limited metrics to gain insight in to their effectiveness (Schein 2011). They are currently used as educational campaigns and it is difficult to identify even a correlation between a social media campaign and a social outcome. Social media tools are new and with time there will be more case studies and academic literature that will provide guidance in best practice use of social media tools.

Crowd Control

Engaging citizens through social media can result in two opposite results that are both problematic. There can be too many citizens with too many varied views so that a cohesive consensus is impossible to find. Or the opposite can occur, where the platform is developed but there is no interest, and no one shows up for the conversation.

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

Opportunities

Service Ontario using Social Media to serve citizens

Social media use in government affords greater opportunity to reach citizens in real time, convenient to their location. Service Ontario has a Facebook page, Twitter account and YouTube channel that functions to answer questions, provide informative video and direct citizens to services. Service Ontario's twitter feed is active and shows the possibilities of citizen centered service using real time responses. On Service Ontario's twitter feed, citizens ask diverse questions such as how to fill out forms, why services are closed but also use it to complain about service delivery (Service Ontario 2012). Although it may seem like a forum for complaints, the complaints are valid and allow Service Ontario to receive important feedback. The conversations often lead to resolution or suggestions about how to more conveniently access services.

Municipalities within Ontario have embraced social media; there is a 672% increase in municipality participation of social media platforms within the last two years (Timoshenko 2012). Municipalities use social media, mainly Facebook and Twitter to inform and engage with citizens. Facebook has been more popular as there are currently more Facebook users than Twitter users, although Twitter followers are increasing at a much faster rate (Timoshenko 2012).

Challenges

Capacity

Communicating with citizens in real time also creates capacity issues. Staff needs to be trained and available to respond in real time to fully utilize social media benefits. Part of social media's success is that citizens are able to access information and networking opportunities at all times, this access is incongruent with current government hours. Skills training in Web 2.0 tools needs to be an integral part of social media adoption within the public service.

Government Employee Access to Web 2.0 Tools

There is still currently a ban on Facebook and YouTube within the Ontario government, although employees may access social media with approval from their supervisor to monitor public opinion (Bermonte 2011).

CONCLUSION

The Government of Ontario has been slow to adopt the tools of Web 2.0. There are significant opportunities for social media use in the Ontario public service. OPSpedia is a low cost communication platform developed from existing resources. It functions as a wiki and internal social networking site that allows a more horizontal and collaborative approach to information sharing within the public service. Social media campaigns have the potential to not only inform but also engage citizens in decisions about public health. Using the tools of Web 2.0 allows government to find cost-effective and efficient methods to serve its citizens. The integral aspect of social media use is allowing and encouraging input from citizens. The value of the tools is in allowing the public to shape and use information to inform others and create solutions specific to their needs. This has been a difficult step for the government of Ontario to make because of the vertical structures with an emphasis on top down flow of decision making. There is also a generational divide in social media use and much of the truly innovative projects have been collaborative projects that use social media to solve internal problems, such as the development of OPSpedia.

CHAPTER 7 SOCIAL MEDIA IS MAINSTREAM

By

Richard Hall and Jeremy Phillips

INTRODUCTION

Social media is not just an interesting development on the Wild West that is the web, it is mainstream (Qualman 2011). It is not a segregated area visited occasionally by a small portion of online citizens; it permeates everything on the Internet. It can be found in business, in the non-profit sector, and in the public sector. It connects friends, families, citizens, customers, stakeholders, interested parties, and strangers with common interests, all around the globe.

How deep has social media permeated modern life? Social media sites make up five of the top ten web sites worldwide and the others are essentially search engines (Alexa 2012). Facebook reports over one billion users (Facebook, 2012) and Twitter has passed 500 million accounts (Techcrunch 2012). So many Canadian politicians are on Twitter that there is a website, politwitter.ca, designed to sift and track what they are “saying.” The Governor General of Canada and the Canadian Senate have Twitter accounts, while the Prime Minister of Canada has both a Facebook and Twitter account. The Premier of Saskatchewan has a Facebook page, a Twitter feed, and even a Pinterest page.

Facebook, in particular, is so broadly used that “Login with Facebook” is available on over one million websites, encouraging people to connect with their personal information and see what their friends are doing across the web (Facebook 2012). Regina’s Leader-Post, a member of the Canada.com network, is now using this feature to facilitate each article’s comments section, in order to promote a “welcoming and thoughtful forum where real people can debate” (Leaderpost 2012).

PRESIDENT OBAMA AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

Perhaps the most widely recognized use of social media in the public arena centers on the 2008 presidential election in the United States. The Obama campaign endorsed social media very early on, both because of supportive demographics and the cost of dominating traditional media (Qualman 2011). This focus led to unprecedented fundraising success, largely through tens of thousands of small donations, and eventually the Democratic nomination (Qualman 2011). Once in the general election campaign, the younger Obama dominated the older John McCain in every way imaginable online, from Facebook friends, to YouTube views, to blog mentions, and most certainly in enthusiastic supporters (Qualman 2011). Today, Obama is number six in followers on Twitter, at over 20 million; he trails only Lady Gaga, Justin Bieber, Katy Perry, Rihanna, and Britney Spears (Twitaholic 2012).

President Obama made openness and transparency a primary focus of his new administration, and this included a focus on social media for citizen engagement (Bertot et al. 2010). The examples are almost endless, so what follows is but a selection of current activity:

- The U.S. Geological Survey has a twitter feed with 30,000 followers aimed at communicating information regarding earthquakes: <https://twitter.com/USGSted>.

- The National Archives hosts “Our Archives”, a wiki encouraging citizens to share stories of what they have found in the archives: <http://www.ourarchives.wikispaces.net>.
- The CDC found a way to generate public interest in disaster preparedness by publishing guidelines related to a Zombie Apocalypse. The post has generated almost 90,000 “likes” on Facebook, and almost 3,000 direct “tweets” at the time of writing (CDC 2012) and ended up crashing the host website due to viewer demand (CNN 2012).
- The U.S. Coast Guard posted a video of the so-called “Miracle on the Hudson” (Klapper 2009) and generated over 1.2 million views (YouTube 2009).
- The FBI has created “Bureaupedia”, U.S. intelligence agencies have created “Intellipedia”, the Department of State has created “Diplopedia”, and the Department of Defence has created “Techipedia.” Each are secure wikis driven by internal communities designed to improve information sharing and knowledge retention (Barnett 2011; Nam and Sayogo 2011).

Social media has become so common in the U.S. military that in 2011, the Pentagon shut down its social media office, instead encouraging Twitter, YouTube and Facebook as part of regular communication throughout the organization: “Social media tools are pervasive in the 21st century communications environment, and the department intends to fully utilize those capabilities.” (Ackerman 2011)

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

One of the primary advantages social media offers is the opportunity to engage and solicit community feedback, and governments around the world are taking advantage.

In 2007 the New Zealand Police launched a “Police Act wiki” inviting citizens to contribute ideas and participate in a re-write of the 1958 Police Act (New Zealand Police 2007). The process was considered a success, with engaged citizens suggesting new and innovative ideas, but was not without its challenges, including outlandish ideas and a substantial amount of vandalism (Bell 2007). In 2009, the City of Melbourne in Australia set up a “Future Melbourne” wiki to engage citizens as they developed an official ten-year plan (Furnas 2012). The site generated over 9,000 visits from 7,000 individuals but only 200 individual edits (Future Melbourne 2010).

In 2011, Iceland invited consultation as it began the process of re-writing its constitution. The process featured opportunity for citizens to comment on draft clauses through Facebook, a Twitter account to keep citizens informed, and a YouTube channel with interviews of council members (Siddique 2011). According to one member of the 25-person panel, the process was very consultative, but was not crowdsourced, as true consensus was not possible and majority ruled (Goldman 2012).

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Municipal governments are at the forefront of using social media to engage their citizens (Bonsón et al. 2012; Nam and Sayogo 2011; Mann 2010). Adoption of these consultative and interactive tools may be more advanced for local governments because they are more accustomed to direct citizen engagement. EngagePlano is a good example of an online town hall approach, where citizens of Plano, Texas are encouraged to connect with city government and offer practical ideas to improve their community (EngagePlano 2012). Participants get points for sharing ideas, providing feedback, and supporting the ideas of others. Topics bubbled to the top, are voted on, and the best ideas are implemented. The site is

based on a concept by MindMixer, which focuses on maximizing civic engagement. Los Angeles (ideas.la2b.org) and Fort Worth (futureddowntown.org) are also using this approach, along with many others (Stacey 2011).

Another popular platform for civic engagement is peakdemocracy.com, which boasts 40 government agencies and almost 800 open town hall forums, including: Salt Lake City, Utah; Palo Alto, California; and Saint Paul, Minnesota. This approach emphasizes civility, fairness, moderation, ease of use, and cost effectiveness.

Another excellent example of a municipal government embracing social media to engage with its citizens is in Regina, Saskatchewan, where the City recently won a Government Technology (GTEC) award for incorporating social media into its daily operations (GTECH 2012). Reginsans can watch and comment on YouTube videos, follow and interact with City Hall on Twitter (over 10,000 followers), and “like” it on Facebook (21,000 likes), where city employees regularly answer questions on all manner of topics, from water main breaks to construction to taxes. Regina also recently launched Design Regina (designregina.ca), inviting citizens to share their thoughts and ideas online on everything from housing to transportation.

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE DURING NATURAL DISASTERS

While social media has proven popular and useful for regular engagement with citizens at the municipal level, it has also proven very effective as a rapid communication tool during a crisis. In particular, we have recently seen the critical role it can play in distributing information during a natural disaster (Gao et al. 2011).

After the Earthquake in Haiti in 2010, people shared their personal experiences via Flickr, Twitter, Facebook, blogs and YouTube, and this activity and awareness led to an increase in fundraising by the Red Cross (Gao et al. 2011). When telephone networks were jammed after the Tsunami in Japan in 2011, citizens used Facebook, Twitter, and local Japanese social media networks to communicate with loved ones (Gao et al. 2011). Right after the earthquake in Virginia in 2011, 40,000 tweets were posted online (O’Toole 2011), and there is even some evidence that tweets can travel faster than shockwaves, such that people are notified about the quake before they feel its first effects (Chittney 2011; Plumer 2011). Indeed Twitter, in particular, has proven extremely useful in sharing information and connecting individuals around the globe after a natural disaster, mobilizing people to raise funds, offering opportunity to comment on relief efforts, and raising awareness through trending topics and hashtags (Smith 2010).

To take advantage of modern communication trends like these, a non-profit organization called Ushahidi has developed an open source tool designed to coordinate the flow of information and harness social media (Okolloh 2009; Gao et al. 2011). Ushahidi was born during the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007, it has grown and since been deployed on virtually every continent, including Haiti after the aforementioned earthquake (Ushahidi 2012). The platform provides motivated citizens the opportunity to connect, challenge governments, and share information quickly and easily.

EXTERNAL RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Of course social media is not a panacea. Governments face a variety of legislative, regulatory and cultural difficulties as they expand their presence in this new world. There are also a number of external risks and challenges governments should be aware of, and if possible, prepare for.

Managing Professional and Private Social Media

Not every challenge brought about by social media is government-specific, or overly complicated. Some are as simple as an employee accidentally posting a message to a corporate account instead of their own, personal account. There have been several recent examples of this happening, and the incidents and ensuing follow-up offer lessons that government can learn from, and potentially use to prepare for the possibility of such mistakes.

On February 15, 2011 the American Red Cross tweeted, “Ryan found two more 4 bottle packs of Dogfish Head’s Midas Touch beer...when we drink we do it right #gettnslizzerd” (Segall 2011). Gloria Huang, one of the agency’s social media experts, had meant to post to her own account, but instead sent the tweet to the Red Cross’ 270,000 followers.

The response shows how social media mistakes can be successfully managed, and even turned into a positive. After the error was noticed, the Red Cross removed the message, and tweeted, “We’ve deleted the rogue tweet, but rest assured the Red Cross is sober and we’ve confiscated the keys” (Segall 2011). The mistake and the light hearted, reasonable response from the Red Cross resulted in a Twitter fundraising and blood drive organized under the hashtag #gettnslizzerd. Many of the bars and pubs that carry Dogfish Beer got in on the act, launching “beer-for-blood” promotions (Segall 2011). A more recent, and more serious, example of a ‘mis-tweet’ happened on the night of the first 2012 American presidential debate. The appliance brand KitchenAid tweeted “Obamas gma even knew it was going 2 b bad! She died 3 days b4 he became president” (Taylor 2012). Again, an employee responsible for social media had posted a message to a corporate account as opposed to a private one. The company immediately removed the tweet, and an apology came out from Cynthia Soledad, the company’s senior director of brand and marketing and the person responsible for the company’s Twitter account. She made herself available for interviews and took personal responsibility for the mistake. The offending staff member was fired (Segall 2011).

These are just two examples of the mistakes that can happen when employees try to alternate between an official work social media account and a personal one. Other prominent companies including Microsoft and Chrysler have experienced similar mistakes (O’Connor 2012). As Mia Pearson, a communications professional wrote in a feature for *The Globe and Mail* “[social media] is instant, provides a wide reach, and you can’t take back what you say...how you acknowledge your mistakes will go a long way toward determining how the story is told” (Pearson 2012). In the KitchenAid example, the offensive tweet was deleted and an apology was posted within eight minutes – but that was still plenty of time for the message to be passed along in the form of retweets. Even after a tweet is deleted, it can still exist in screen shots, and some Internet search engines keep a log of all social media activity, even if it has been deleted (O’Connor 2012). There is probably no way that the possibility of this type of error can be prevented – Gloria Huang of the Red Cross was employed specifically for her expertise in social media and still accidentally updated the wrong account. The Government of Saskatchewan can,

however, look at these slip-ups and learn how to prepare for, and mitigate the fallout from, a similar mistake.

Hijacked Twitter Campaigns

Tourism officials for the Maldives tried to use the Twitter hashtag #sunnysideoflife as part of a social media campaign designed to bring travelers to the island nation in the Indian Ocean. Visitors were asked to tweet about their trip to the islands, with the idea that the hashtag would eventually become a slogan for the country (Smith 2012). The country's tourism authorities also used the hashtag, attaching it to messages like "Tourism accounts for over 32% of GDP of Maldives." Many citizens of the country, unhappy with an apparent military coup that took place in early 2012, decided to use the hashtag to spread awareness of human rights violations. Some Twitter users attached the tag to pictures they said showed police brutality, while other users tweeted messages like "#SunnySideOfLife: Pristine white sandy beaches, crystal clear lagoons filled with blood of its citizens who are fighting for democracy" (Smith 2012). The #SunnySideOfLife hashtag ended up a trending topic on Twitter, although not for the reasons the Maldives government was hoping for.

Even a Twitter campaign with the noblest goals can go awry. The London Metropolitan Police Service wanted citizens to #thinklikeaburglar in order to prevent theft and break-ins. A typical message says "Leaving windows and doors unlocked makes life easy for burglars. Lock up, even if you're just popping out. #thinklikeaburglar" (Twitter 2012a). While some users have chipped in with useful tips, many uses of the hashtags have had less-than helpful comments such as "Own no possessions worth stealing. #thinklikeaburglar" and "#thinklikeaburglar - tweet that the couple down the road who you can't stand are hoarding gold. The burglars will choose their house instead" (Twitter 2012a).

Social media campaigns have the potential to allow governments to spread messages quickly and at a low cost. A Twitter hashtag, a YouTube video, or a Facebook update can go viral, creating its own momentum as users spread the message independently of the campaign's creators. The problem, of course, is that social media users may decide to use the campaign to spread a message that runs contrary to the original goals. Government agencies must be prepared and accept the fact that social media campaigns can be taken places that the creators may not have intended.

Fake Followers

As previously mentioned, U.S. President Barack Obama has over 20 million Twitter followers. This massive social media presence is a major part of what has been called "Brand Obama" (Zavattaro 2010). By relying on publicly available social media tools, Obama and his communications team are able to cheaply, and reliably make citizens feel connected with the political process and the office of the President (Zavattaro 2010). Some analysts would point to the President's extremely large Twitter following as proof that such efforts are working. But can these numbers be trusted?

The answer varies by social media platform, but perhaps not. A study cited on the website of *Forbes* magazine found that 30% of Obama's 18.8 million followers (at the time of the study) were fake, and a further 39% were attached to inactive accounts. That means Obama only had about 5.82 million active followers on Twitter, still a good number, but nowhere near the 'official' total (Greathouse 2012). Obama is not the only one with a questionably large following. In 2011, Republican politician Newt Gingrich had 1.3 million followers on Twitter – but a study found that only about 105,000 were real, meaning 92% were fake (Horn 2011).

So, where do these fake twitter followers come from? It is difficult to say for certain, but at least some of them could have been purchased. A blog post entitled “The Twitter Underground Economy” by Baracuda Networks, an information technology company revealed that you could buy 1,000 Twitter followers on eBay for anywhere between \$2 and \$55 (Davies 2012). There were at least 20 users on eBay with Twitter followers for sale; some also sell the promise of a certain number of retweets. Social media prominence is based, at least in part, on how much you are followed, liked, viewed, and so on, but these numbers must be looked at critically.

Social Media Impersonation

Creating a social media account is easy. Often all it takes is an email address and a few minutes of time. This ease of use has been a major benefit for social media companies, but it also means that there is rarely a rigorous verification process in place to confirm identities. This has resulted in countless fake accounts registered to prominent individuals and agencies. Many of these are created for parody purposes, which is at best distracting, and at worst, an avenue for misinformation to spread. Others, however, may be attempts to commit fraud, theft, or other illegal activities.

The official English-language Twitter account for Statistics Canada is @StatCan_eng. There is, however, another Twitter account registered to ‘Stats Canada’ under the Twitter handle @stats_canada. The description for this account reads “Stats Canada provides parodic demographic statistics for the Canadian people, about the Canadian people and is 100.67532% not affiliated with Statistics Canada” (Twitter 2012b). While the fact that the account is not official is stated right in that description, it still seems to trick people. A tweet from @stats_canada posted on October 14, 2012 said “There is one Tim Hortons location for every three living Canadians.” While many users were in on the joke, it seems as if some treated it as an official statistic. One person tweeted “just saw smthg from "Stats Canada" which I do not believe. See, stats are nonsense. They say there is "One Tim Hortons for every 3 Canadians" (Twitter 2012b). It’s impossible to know how many people are actually deceived by such ‘facts’ but it does show that there is the potential for parody accounts to cause confusion. It is worth noting that the parody account has over 62,000 followers, while the official Statistics Canada Twitter has about 29,000 (Twitter 2012c).

Not all impostor social media accounts are meant to be harmless. Several high ranking British military officers and Ministry of Defence employees thought they had received Facebook friend requests from American Admiral James Stavridis, NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander. After accepting the friend request, which had not come from Stavridis, all of the personal information posted to their Facebook profiles was compromised. Military officials and diplomats were apparently told that the fake profile could have been created by “state sponsored individuals in China” (Lewis 2012).

An additional complication brought about by the presence of fake social media accounts is that government agencies may find it difficult to confirm who they are interacting with. This is not a major issue currently, but as governments begin exploring service delivery options through social media, there may be a need for users to verify their identity in some way. Many social media platforms offer a verification system for prominent individuals and businesses – this practice may need to become more widespread in the future.

Wikipedia Editing

Wikipedia, the collaboratively-edited online encyclopedia, has become the go-to source for information for many Internet users. Despite allowing users to make edits, the accuracy of Wikipedia was described by *Nature* magazine as ‘surprisingly good’ and similar in quality to the Encyclopedia Britannica (Giles 2005).

There are examples around the world where government employees have found themselves under fire for editing Wikipedia articles. Typically, it’s not possible to trace edits to a specific individual, but rather to an IP address registered to an organization. In Australia, staff for former Prime Minister John Howard were accused of making 126 changes to various articles, including a number related to issues controversial at the time. Employees of the Australian Department of Defence had editing privileges for Wikipedia blocked after more than 5,000 edits to a variety of articles were made (Moses 2007). Political staff and government agencies in countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Japan and Israel have also been found to be editing entries closely related to their official responsibilities (Nowak 2008). Closer to home, the former mayor of Vancouver, Sam Sullivan, found himself in political trouble after members of his staff removed several unflattering, but true, statements from his Wikipedia profile (Skelton 2007). Wikipedia’s Conflict of Interest Guidelines advise editors to “avoid editing or exercise great caution when editing articles related to you, your organization, or its competitors, as well as projects and products they are involved with” (Wikipedia 2012). Many government-related mishaps could be avoided if contributors followed this recommendation.

Canada’s Federal Government has been involved in at least two controversies over Wikipedia editing. In 2008, an IP address traced back to Industry Canada removed references to controversial copyright-reform legislation from the profile of then-Minister of Industry Jim Prentice (Nowak 2008). Someone using the same IP address also wrote that Prentice personified “experience, confidence and competence, ability and capability,” (Nowak 2008). All of this opinion-related material was deleted from the online encyclopedia. Two years later, IP addresses registered to Defence Research and Development Canada made edits to the article on the Joint Strike Fighter stealth aircraft, which the Canadian government plans to purchase. The edits removed information critical of the government and hurled insults at politicians who had criticized the planned purchase (Pugliese 2010). Wikipedia administrators locked the article on the aircraft, and characterized some of the alterations as vandalism. Reporters from the *Ottawa Citizen* tracked the IP addresses used to CFB Cold Lake, which is one of the busiest fighter jet bases in the country (Pugliese 2010).

Despite these difficulties, there are still government agencies trying to use Wikipedia to share their knowledge and expertise. The United States National Institute of Health has guidelines for participating on Wikipedia, the preamble of which says “There is a real opportunity to strengthen this public resource...we hope these guidelines will help you to become part of a unique opportunity in keeping with the NIH’s history of making credible, vetted, authoritative information available to the public” (NIH 2012). The guidelines consist of 11 points, advising employees that they can contribute to Wikipedia during work time in areas that relate to their areas of expertise. All contributions must be factual as opposed to opinion-based, appropriate references must be cited, and staff are not allowed to engage in policy discussions (NIH 2012). Following these guidelines should allow employees to contribute to Wikipedia (and similar resources) while avoiding some of the pitfalls referenced above.

Inability to Control the Platform

One benefit of utilizing existing social media sites is that much of the hard work has already been done. The system has been created, many users and potential followers are in place and government does not need to invest major resources to effectively utilize it. The problem is that when you rely on a third-party for services, you also have live with their terms-of-use, privacy policies and advertising systems. Social media advertisements are often targeted towards the users of the page, as opposed to the person or agency hosting the page (Pinkerfield 2007). This means that government agencies will have no control over what ads run alongside their official messages, and may not even know what ads are present. "Trust becomes an issue when ads on a government Facebook page undermine or run contrary to the message or goal of a page," Michael J. Magro (2012) wrote in his article 'A Review of Social Media Use in E-Government.' For example, a government office that is officially non-partisan could create a Facebook page. Certain users may see ads for political parties when they visit the page. Although the creating agency would have no control over the ad content, the impression could be that a political party is sponsoring a non-partisan office. Or, a page dedicated to preventing drinking-and-driving could feature ads promoting alcohol. Government agencies must be aware that they do not have complete control over the content of their pages. Some jurisdictions include disclaimers confirming this. A portion of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's disclaimer reads "Any content, views, opinions and/or responses to questions uploaded, expressed or submitted to the creators, sponsors, advertisers, or users of social media services, utilized by DFAT, other than the content provided by DFAT, are solely the views, opinions and responsibility of the person submitting them...DFAT is not responsible for content that third parties publish, post...or otherwise transmit via social media services" (DFAT n.d.). Disclaimers such as this won't eliminate the possibility of confusion by end-users who see unsuitable advertisements, but they do at least offer proof that government is aware of the underlying issue.

CONCLUSION

Future Opportunities

While there are risks to be considered, social media use shows no signs of slowing down, and is likely to continue its rapid growth as global citizens become increasingly mobile in their online participation. As a result, new opportunities for policy makers are developing.

Co-funded by the European Commission (EC) as part of the FP7 Programme, the Padgets project seeks to bring together Web 2.0 technologies and the policy design process to engage and interact with citizens directly in an environment where they are already comfortable (Ferro et al. 2011). The idea is to allow "non-technical users to deploy complex and layered policy queries within Web 2.0 networks...By fully utilizing the capabilities of modern user interactivity within social media, we intend to collect equally nuanced and complex feedback" (Padgets 2012). In a similar way, and funded under the same EC project, the we.gov project seeks to "develop a toolset that allows full advantage to be taken of a wide range of existing and well established social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Bebo, WordPress etc.) to engage citizens in two-way dialogs as part of governance and policymaking processes" (we.gov 2012). Both of these projects offer interesting possibilities but both are at the concept stage of the development process. As we look toward future opportunities, it is exciting to consider how much the world has changed in the last ten years, and how much it will change over the next ten.

CONCLUSION

By

Ryan Deschamps, Kathleen McNutt and Wayne Zhu

The influence of the Internet in general, and the interactive, collaborative potential of Web 2.0 technologies in particular, will continue to create both opportunities and tensions for governments. From an organizational context social media provides many opportunities to maximize impacts and improve effectiveness and efficiency (DiStaso et al 2011; Malita 2011; Miller 2009). From a social context emerging evidence suggests that social media fosters social inclusion, encourages stakeholder participation and advances democratic dialogue (Tondeur et al. 2011). Finally, from the public engagement context social media tools offer new opportunities for collaboration, consultation, public education, transparency and accountability (Dixon 2010; Eggers 2005). Despite the seemingly positive benefits, there are also negative implications associated with new digital tools as benefits are variable across populations with perennial digital divide problems persistent in the Web 2.0 era (Cotton 2009; Pfeil et al. 2009; Watling 2011). In addition, there are new manifestations of old problems such as privacy and security, which are major priorities in the information technology sector, with social media sites prone to various types of cyber threats (Boyd 2008; Leitch and Warren 2009).

ADMINISTRATION

In some ways, this is the dimension where governments find it easiest to adopt Web 2.0. The internal nature ensures control over how social media is used remains in the hands of civil servants. The widespread implementation of “wikis” which allow real time information sharing and content co-creation represent the public sector enhancing efficiency and improving effectiveness in regards to public administration and policy. While there is ample evidence of individual social media projects and programming undertaken by the six jurisdictions scanned here in efforts to improve their administrative capability, widespread adoption for such purposes has not materialized. In other words, social media’s potential benefit for public sector administration continues to be more opportunity and promise than reality; many obstacles remain.

Among the opportunities for social media, increasing open access to government information is at least perceived to be within reach. Many of the jurisdictions have made commitments to increase access to information in terms of quantity, usability and accessibility. Besides the U.S. Open Government initiative mentioned in the introduction, British Columbia has opened a department responsible for open government initiatives. Like the wiki initiatives, these initiatives promise rapid information sharing, and increased efficiency, however many of the initiatives remain at the commitment stage, rather than achieving full implementation of broad open government initiatives.

The use of social media guidelines as a tool to increase participation in social networks has been one approach to increasing government presence on Web 2.0. These guidelines offer limited support to promoting the use of social media, but are not a mandatory device. The purpose of social media

guidelines varies across the country with Alberta and British Columbia treating social media as a communication tool, Nova Scotia viewing it as an interactive instrument, and Saskatchewan approaching it from a service delivery approach (Deschamps 2012). The Manitoba example suggests that taking a controlled centralized approach to social media can at least reduce the challenges associated with miscommunication in the absence of such guidelines; however, this occurs at the cost of engaging departments in social media activities. While providing some direction on how public sector staff are expected to behave on social media, guidelines do not provide direction on the level of resources that should be applied to achieve any stated goals, nor do they identify accountability structures for successful outcomes on social media.

Another common theme is a lack of human resource capacity and/or social media fluency. Building human resource capacity requires training and social media expertise. Other frequently cited obstacles include inability to measure return on investment, privacy and other legal concerns, lack of computer equipment, and difficulties with connectivity (Frick 2010).

Social media is a policy instrument that should be incorporated into the policy design stage and be assessed on its effectiveness to achieve intended policy goals. A common weakness across all jurisdictions is the lack of standardized performance measures and evaluative criteria, which limits strategic social media planning. The current lack of evidence-based smart practices creates significant challenges as there are no clear rules on which social media tool(s) will best achieve the intended policy purpose. This trouble stems from the novelty and rapid diffusion of the technology, combined with the much slower pace of research. Thus, while various actions might be taken to employ social media, there are no specific formulas that guarantees success only instances. Reliable social media metrics that measure performance and evaluate outcomes must be developed to ensure optimal social media interventions.

Ultimately, in terms of efficiency, a budget allocation for social media spending should be able to demonstrate a return on investment so as to maximize available resources (Weinberg and Pehlivan 2011).

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In first generation e-participation forums government would often create structured spaces with specific rules of engagement. Reflective of traditional democratic institutions the process protected centralized decision making structures and managed conversations through a 'control the message' paradigm. As a result these first generation e-participation practices arbitrarily incorporated citizen input into decision making process providing little accountability in terms of outcomes. Second generation e-participation, and especially those practices associated with Web 2.0 and social media, differ fundamentally in that government must now 'go to where the conversation are 'by engaging citizen more proactively and preventing again participation as tokenism. As a result decision makers must be able to demonstrate that citizens' engagement is valued and will impact policy outcomes.

Bryer (2011) argue that public participation in decision making incurs three types of costs: production, participation and democratization. The cost of production refers to the costs borne by government in the design and implementation of a participatory process. The cost of participation refers to the efforts of citizens to engage in that process. Production and participation costs have traditionally had an inverse

relationship. For example, in large scale consultation processes governments often host public meetings in different communities increasing production costs (venues, facilitators, travel costs), while lowering participation costs. Engaging citizens in online venues does mitigate the traditionally inverse relationship between production and participation costs; however, it is also increasing citizens' democratic expectations. The cost of democratization is thus a result of social media tools "not implemented in the social, collaborative, and deliberative manner intended" (Bryer 2011, 344). Thus when social media is used to engage citizens and solicit participation, there is an expectation that government will incorporate that feedback into decision making processes. If citizen's input is not valued the cost of democratization will be high as citizens lose trust and governments lose legitimacy.

Currently, governments lack effective mechanisms to incorporate comments, feedback, and other forms of participatory inputs into legislation, regulations, and services outcomes (Bertot et al 2010). The tendency to use social media tools for purely informational and transaction purposes demonstrates the layering of old managerial approaches and institutional culture onto new digital media purposes. As Bertot (2010) and his colleagues suggest

It's one thing to solicit participation and feedback but quite another to actually incorporate such public participation into government regulations, legislation, and services. This shift requires processes and mechanisms by which comments, feedback, and other forms of participation are incorporated into the government organization, vetted, and acted upon in some way, either by initiating action or returning feedback as to why a specific action wasn't taken (56).

There were a number of instances of the design tensions between social media driven public engagement and the hierarchical structures of bureaucracies, especially Westminster. Despite the excitement surrounding the democratic potential of these digital tools, there remains numerous challenges to public sector implementation. Governments' organizational culture is risk averse, and without a basic set of best practices on managing risk, support for social media use may be undermined by traditional administrative propensities to control the message. Furthermore, there are a number of information, privacy and official languages concerns (Fyfe and Crookall 2010), which are further exacerbated by many of the Westminster structures. Thus although the popularity of social media for political purposes and the use of blogs and Twitter for providing political commentary are standardized features of the modern democratic landscape, the public sector often resists the levels of collaborative capacity of Government 2.0. If governments want to tap into the potential of social media to enhance public engagement, greater transparency in decision making processes is required to ensure citizen trust and democratic legitimacy.

CITIZEN-CENTERED SERVICE

Citizen centered service delivery is a key policy priority across Canada and in other advanced digital nations with most levels of government developing digitized service transformation strategies to improve public sector effectiveness and efficiency. Citizen centered service refers to the delivery of services from a citizen perspective with services integrated across governments and multiple service channels (service-counter, telephone, and Internet) (Kernaghan 2005). As citizens become increasingly sophisticated users of online service delivery the activities of service delivery agencies must become increasingly integrated across federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments. Despite the shared goals of integrated service and one-stop single-window models discussed in chapter four, there are some divergent ideas on how to structure and govern service delivery across the provinces. For example, Service New Brunswick, which is a crown corporation, was the first Canadian public sector

multi-service agency to provide all direct public services on behalf of the government. Alternately Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations was created as an individual ministry in 2005, while Service British Columbia was established as a division in the Ministry of Labour and Citizens Services (Roy and Langford 2008).

Moving forward, the best way to use and structure social media for citizen-centered service and service delivery must depend on the specific context and circumstances unique to each jurisdiction. There is no “one-size fits all” model that will ensure success each time. Rather, during the program planning and formation stage, discussions regarding the role of social media need to take place and an appropriate governance structure approved. Like the administration and public engagement dimensions, Web 2.0 offers great opportunities for the public sector to improve policy and program outcomes in terms of citizen-centered service. It is now simply a question of grasping the promising tools of social media and applying them in a manner that enhances public administration and advances public policy.

THE UNPLUGGED

Despite the promise of social media as tools of digital era governance, the social cleavages between the virtual and traditional worlds must be examined. Use of social media sites is generally correlated with building social capital; however, this may vary along different dimensions (active versus passive use, entertainment versus information seeking) (Burke et al. 2010; Ellison et al. 2011). In addition, the current body of research on the social inclusion value of social media is typically focused on youth populations who are often more familiar with social media applications (Notley 2009; Valenzuela et al. 2009). Thus, while social media does provide valuable opportunities to encourage people to participate in society, there is also concern that traditionally vulnerable populations’ social exclusion may also lead to digital exclusion (Gross 2009). It should be noted that this literature is extremely limited; most recognized barriers are drawn from the traditional digital divide (socio-demographic and geographic variables) literature. Still, an emergent body of research suggests that there may be some commonality in the barriers facing nonprofit organizations’ application of social media tools, especially in the context of vulnerable populations (Chang et al. 2004).

Despite the promise of new digital tools, social media benefits are variable across populations. Digital exclusion exacerbates social exclusion. Growing social capital through social media tools requires both access and empowerment (Kaplan 2005). In terms of access, broadband territorial coverage is a major issue; the geographical digital divide has long been recognized as a major barrier to availability. Empowerment, on the other hand, refers to e-inclusion and is concerned with people’s participation in the information society including access to digital technologies that promote social inclusion (Verdegem 2011). While social media presents opportunities to promote greater social participation, vulnerable populations experience higher rates of digital exclusion arising from existing socio-economic and cultural barriers.

Many factors impede the use of the Internet by vulnerable populations some of which are associated with the traditional digital divide while others result from a combination of low accessibility, lack of ICT skills or negative attitude towards Internet use. Nonetheless, as Verdegem and Verhoest (2009) suggest: The pervasiveness of ICT in society and the increasing dependency on ICT in everyday life makes the capacity to use ICT at home a more important condition for social participation. The goal of any e-inclusion policy should therefore be to achieve meaningful Internet access for all. This will

require a continuous effort on behalf of policy makers. Indeed, inequalities in ICT adoption and usage are not likely to diminish or disappear of their own accord (642).

Taking advantage of the social Web to enhance social capital it is not a replacement for real world relationships and face-to-face communication nor is it a panacea for social exclusion (Lee and Lee 2010). While a number of identified barriers reflect historical digital divide challenges, it is also critical to discern if social media tools have introduced new impediments (Schneider 2003).

CONCLUSION

The Internet and the Web have significantly altered how society communicates, how services are delivered, how information is shared and how government is organized. As Dutil et al (2008) describe it, e-government “has brought with it a rhetorical flourish of promises to reinvent the business model of government on the one hand and to redesign the institutional conduct of democracy on the other” (78). As the early days of e-government as a managerial approach intermingle with modernization agendas that push e-government toward a more democratic orientation, the shift from e-government to e-governance will produce new tension between the old public administration, new public management and digital era governance paradigms.

In the last five years, interest in the application of Web 2.0 technologies on the public sector has produced a flurry of advice on how to maximize impact, improve organizational effectiveness and increase engagement (Dixon 2010; Grant 2010; Shirky 2011). While previous e-government initiatives, especially those that came out of the new public management era (Gov 1.0), were largely concerned with realizing cost efficiencies and enhanced service delivery (outputs), the modern e-government agenda is far more concerned with transparency, openness and participation (outcomes). By scanning the various jurisdictions’ social media application portfolios, it is apparent that a great deal of experimentation is occurring; however, there is a general lack of an agreed upon set of smart practices to develop social media campaigns. This is unsurprising as many of the novel challenges associated with electronic governance, co-production of services or open government are juxtaposed with new manifestations of old problems including privacy, security and digital exclusion. Still it is incumbent on governments to demonstrate a commitment to expanding participatory venues to improve organizational effectiveness and enhance citizen’s view of democratic responsiveness.

Internet phones and the provision of mobile support for Web connectivity allows users to be constantly connected to their online world. Government capacity to adapt will largely be contingent on their willingness to shift their activities away from the broadcast paradigm associated with Web 1.0 towards a communicative paradigm associated with Web 2.0. In addition, government will have to more fully embrace the social dimensions of Web 2.0. As Government 2.0 is defined in reference to Web 2.0, the assumption is that a successful transition to Government 2.0 will not simply occur through an incorporation of new digital tools but that government will adopt a Web 2.0 ethos characterized by bidirectional flows of information, collaboration and engagement. The shift from traditional public administration, to new public management, and now to digital era governance, represents the underlying essence of public sector renewal; from broadcast to communicative and collaborative engagement, this is the expectation of the 21st Century “citizen-prosumer,” and now is the time for governments to realize their potential.

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