SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES
KEEP CONTROL OF POSTS AND COMMENTS

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW
- Design clear workflows
- Assign responsibilities for approving social media content
- Develop an editorial calendar
- Implement procedures for spontaneous posts
- Use tools to monitor social media activity and respond accordingly

FIND OUT MORE FROM OUP
- Karlstad Facebook guidelines
- Groningen web care guidelines
- OUP – Social media training programme
- Social media monitoring tools
- Memori study on social media policies

More opinions, case studies and stories at
www.opening-up.eu/socialmedia

Social media is perfect for sharing sudden thoughts, feelings and spur-of-the-moment experiences. It is easy to have fun on Facebook while Twitter lets you get things off your chest right away.

But as soon as you click "Send" your post is published and there is no going back.

So how can municipalities embrace the spontaneity of social media, yet avoid embarrassing mistakes and regrettable posts?

As with all aspects of municipal activity, you have to implement clear processes, procedures and guidelines. Employees must know exactly what they can and cannot say, and who is responsible for approving and publishing content. They must also know the procedures when they need to respond quickly to comments and discussions.

Training for staff is vital so they know exactly what to do. They must be aware of where they stand in relation to the law, and how their work social media activity is effectively the official "voice of the city". The global reputation of your town depends on getting posts right first time.

However, although it is essential that checks and controls are in place, there is little scope for cumbersome and hierarchical workflows. Social media moves too fast so there's no time for officials to dither over precise wordings. For social media, you need "lean management". You have to trust employees to make good decisions, so you must provide them with plenty of support and training: examples, illustrations and discussions about the best ways to use social media in different scenarios.

Running social media activities is a bit like first aid. You can't do it without proper, professional training but no amount of theory will replace hands-on practice and real-world experience. As an employer, you must do everything you can to help your employees know when it's OK to click "Post" or "Share".

During the project we have developed tools like the social media game that can help define the impact of social media on your organisation. Try it on http://www.socialmediagame.net/

NAME: Jenny Broden
MUNICIPALITY: Karlstad
PULL QUOTE: **"WE GIVE EMPLOYEES FREEDOM TO ENGAGE AND TRUST THEM TO USE GOOD JUDGEMENT."**

STAY ON MESSAGE

Karlstad has been using Facebook since 2010. It is a really important channel for us as more than half of our residents are on Facebook and most will check their news feed at least once a day.

We encourage people within the council to set up Facebook pages for specific initiatives or municipal activities so they can network more effectively with target audiences. People chose to follow particular pages because they are interested in the subject – these are just the people you want to attract so it works well.

But how do we make sure that all of these different pages and groups each reflect the municipality as a whole, so people always know they are on a municipal Facebook page? We developed a set of guidelines which anyone in our organisation must follow when they are posting.

They aren't very prescriptive because we want our employees to interact freely and informally with citizens, so we just highlight the key issues and questions that staff should ask themselves before they post. Permission to post on a page can be given to any employee, but we give chief editors the responsibility of monitoring pages and ensuring that all posts adhere to the guidelines.

Our guidelines include how people should sign posts, when they can post on behalf of someone else, and the permissions that they need to post photos and videos. We outline circumstances when posts should be deleted, for example if they cause offence or break privacy laws. There are only a few specific actions they must follow, including taking a screenshot of the page every six months for our document archive and keeping our service level agreement to respond to all queries within 24 hours.

Beyond just a few set rules, we give employees freedom to engage and trust them to use good judgement.

Høje-Taastrup Kommune

NAME: Birgitte Städe, Communications Consultant, Høje-Taastrup, DK

"AS PUBLIC OFFICIALS WE GIVE POLITICALLY NEUTRAL ANSWERS. SOME QUESTIONS CANNOT BE ANSWERED ON FACEBOOK SO WE GUIDE CITIZENS TO THE RIGHT CHANNELS: EMAILS, OUR WEBSITE, ONLINE SERVICES, ETC."

Gemeente Groningen

NAME: Renske Stumpel, Project Leader, Groningen, NL

"OUR CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE DEALS WITH QUESTIONS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA. OUR COMMUNICATIONS TEAM DEALS WITH MORE SENSITIVE AND POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS."

THE BASICS

1. Know why you want to establish a Facebook page and what it should achieve
2. Assign responsibility for monitoring compliance to guidelines and strategy
3. Let go of strict control
4. Train staff to make good judgements
5. Implement a fast decision-making process for deleting posts or urgent responses
6. Evaluate your policies on a regular basis
7. Archive all content