

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

31 August 2016

Memorandum Circular No. 2016-_____

FOR : HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, BUREAUS, OFFICES AND AGENCIES OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNMENT-OWNED AND -CONTROLLED CORPORATIONS, INTER-AGENCY COLLABORATIONS, PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS, STATE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES; LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS, CONSTITUTIONAL BODIES AND ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

SUBJECT : RULES AND REGULATIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT)

Section 1. INTRODUCTION

Social Media is a form of online communication through which people can connect with other users of the social media platform, form networks, and share information.

In accordance with AO No. ____, the DICT hereby adopts the following as the Social Media Policy governing the agencies covered by abovementioned Order.

Section 2. OBJECTIVES

This Social Media Policy aims to:

1. Strengthen government and citizen ties through fast and cost-effective communication methods;
2. Provide citizens with greater openness and transparency through the quick dissemination of information that is possible through social media;

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3. Make government more responsive by using social media as a venue for rapid communication and assistance for citizens; and
4. Provide the government with preliminary information on trends on citizens' opinions and interests through social media.

Section 3. SCOPE

This Social Media Policy is mandatory for:

1. National Government Agencies (NGAs), including instrumentalities under their control;
2. Government Financial Institutions (GFIs);
3. Government-Owned and -Controlled Corporations (GOCCs); and
4. Inter-agency collaborations, programs, and projects.

The following bodies are encouraged to adopt this Social Media Policy:

1. Constitutional bodies;
2. The Judiciary;
3. Congress
4. Local Government Units (LGUs) and other instrumentalities under the LGUs' control; and
5. Other autonomous branches of the government, including State Universities and Colleges (SUCs).

Section 4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Agency Social Media Team – personnel primarily in charge of the agency's social media activity;
2. Agency Web Administrator – personnel primarily in charge of the agency web content uploaded to the NGP. Includes the web administrator and his/her team.

3. Audience - a social media site's main clientele or user base;

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4. Content - actual data, information, or communication posted or uploaded on social media, including but not limited to text, images, videos, sound clips, and applications;

5. Format - the way information is stored in digital media;

6. NGP (National Government Portal) - the government's unified portal from which various agencies' content may be easily accessed;

7. Range - how widespread a social media site is used with respect to geographic area, membership count, popularity, or other similar variable;

8. Social Media Account - an agency's account or page on any given social media platform;

9. Social Media Platform - any website offering social media services;

10. Social Media Policy (SMP) - the policy governing government agencies' use of social media platforms; and

11. VPN (Virtual Private Network) - an extension of a private network to a public network. This improves an otherwise public domain with the security and features of a private network.

Section 5. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM APPROVAL PROCESS

Social media platforms shall be screened by the management of each agency using an approval process based on a social media selection criteria outlined below.

The social media platform approval process is as follows:

1. Agencies shall identify their desired social media platform and assess the same using the social media platform criteria outlined below;

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2. The Head of the Agency shall either grant or deny the social media platform under consideration; and
3. If approved, the social media platform shall be reviewed periodically to ensure continuing compliance with the selection criteria and to ensure that any amendments or supplements to the contracts with the social media platform are within the best interests of the agency.

Section 6. SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM SELECTION CRITERIA

Social media differ in terms of audience, main content, purpose, and terms of service. A set of criteria shall be used to determine which social media sites are suited for an agency's use, as follows:

1. *Agency Purpose* - the social media platform must be relevant to the fulfillment of the agency's mandate, goals, and purpose;
2. *Audience* - the users or subscribers of a particular social media platform should coincide with the citizen-clients of a particular agency or the demographic target of the agency;
3. *Social Media Range* - the social media platform must have enough active subscribers fitting within the criteria of main audience so as to justify the use of resources and personnel in maintaining the social media account;
4. *Content Supported* - the social media platform must support the file formats which the agency plans on disseminating through the particular social media platform; and
5. *Appearance and Design* - the social media platform must be easy to use, interactive, and accessible;

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6. *Terms of Service and Contract* - the terms of service, end user agreement, subscription agreement, or any other contract governing the agency's use of the social media platform shall be reviewed by the agency's legal officer to ensure that the obligations imposed on the agency by virtue of the said contracts are legal and in the agency's best interests.

Section 7. MINIMUM SECURITY

Each agency using social media shall undertake the following measures to ensure the security of their social media accounts:

1. Each agency shall designate social media personnel under the supervision of the agency web administrator. Only the designated social media personnel, web administrator, or agency head shall:
 - a. Have access to a social media platform's user credentials and account;
 - b. Post, upload, share, modify, or delete content through the social media platform, or
 - c. Perform other functions available through the social media platform.
2. Social media accounts shall be accessed through a secure computer, web browser, and Virtual Private Network (VPN) or any other secure network; and
3. To the extent possible, all security features, including two-factor authentication, alternate credentials, and secure passwords, offered by a social media platform shall be utilized.

Section 8. CONTENT MANAGEMENT

The following guidelines shall govern the content that may be posted, uploaded, or shared in a social media platform:

1. Posting or uploading of content shall only be done by authorized personnel, including the social media personnel, web administrator, or the head of the agency;

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2. Content must not be designated as “Top Secret,” “Secret,” “Confidential,” or “Restricted,” in accordance with Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 78, series of 1964;
3. Ownership, privacy, security, and copyright issues as identified by the legal officer reviewing a social media platform's terms of service, end users agreement, subscription agreement, and other contracts shall be considered. The legal officer reviewing the contracts shall issue a report on content that should not be posted, uploaded, or otherwise shared in a particular social media platform. This memorandum shall be approved and adopted by the head of the agency and shall supplement the blacklist mentioned above.
4. Content must not belong to the blacklist below:
 - a. Blackmail/insulting content – content which threatens an agency with possible problems. These are done usually to get personal advantage via exceptional treatment
 - b. Pornographic/malicious content – content which contains lewd, indecent, or sexually connotative words, photographs, advertisements, and the like;
 - c. Unauthorised posting of copyrighted material – content that is copyright-protected material such as books, publications, or research that is posted without the permission of the author/issuing organisation;
 - d. Unrelated information, jokes, or promotions – content containing unrelated or irrelevant advertisements, links, personal jokes, social media pages, and other information not of value to the agency; and
 - e. Suspicious links and viruses - content with links to files or websites which may post security threats to the agency.

Section 9. INTERACTION AND ACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

The following guidelines shall govern the conduct and interaction of agency personnel with users of a social media platform:

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1. Agency personnel in charge of or with access to social media account shall interact with users of the social media platform with good faith and in accordance with the code of conduct prescribed under RA 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees.
2. Queries from citizen-users shall be processed by the agency's social media personnel as follows:
 - a) Refer the citizen-user to a post or page on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) or provide an answer based on the FAQs;
 - b) Refer the client to any relevant prior posts;
 - c) Refer the client to the agency, office, or division in charge of the matter under inquiry; or
 - d) Refer the client to the appropriate agency or office helpdesk.

Section 10. PERMISSIONS, PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY

Private information or information privately shared by a social media platform user to their account or to the agency through private channels such as private messages shall be presumed private and shall not be shared or publicly used by the agency without the consent of the user.

Content that is shared publicly may be used and shared under applicable Creative Commons licenses or in accordance with the terms of service or contract governing the social media platform.

In case any personal information from users is given to the agency through a social media platform, the information shall be processed in accordance with Section 12 of RA 10173, or the Data Privacy Act. Under said law, the processing of personal information shall be permitted only if not otherwise prohibited by law, and when at least one of the following conditions exists:

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1. The data subject has given his or her consent;
2. The processing of personal information is necessary and is related to the fulfillment of a contract with the data subject or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract;
3. The processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the personal information controller is subject;
4. The processing is necessary to protect vitally important interests of the data subject, including life and health;
5. The processing is necessary in order to respond to national emergency, to comply with the requirements of public order and safety, or to fulfill functions of public authority which necessarily includes the processing of personal data for the fulfillment of its mandate; or
6. The processing is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the personal information controller or by a third party or parties to whom the data is disclosed, except where such interests are overridden by fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subject which require protection under the Philippine Constitution.

Section 11. NAMING CONVENTION

The following naming convention, to the extent possible, shall be used by agencies in naming their social media accounts:

1. Departments, agencies, GOCCs, bureaus, and instrumentalities shall spell out their entire name;
2. If there are limits on the number of characters that may be used, the official acronym shall be used, followed by "govph"; and
3. If the account name is already taken, the agency shall contact the account name holder and/or the social media platform and request for the use of the

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said name or request the revocation of the name in favor of the agency

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Section 12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the roles and responsibilities relative to the implementation of the social media policy for each agency.

Entity	Responsibility
Agency Heads	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve or reject proposed social media platforms.
Legal Officer	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review the terms and conditions, end user agreement, subscription agreement, or contract governing the use of the social media platform;2. Prepare a report on the acceptable content which may be uploaded, posted, or shared on any given social media platform;3. Periodically review the amendments and changes in a social media platform's contracts to ensure that the same is in accord with the interests of the agency.
Agency Social Media Officer	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Screen content to be uploaded, posted, or shared by the social media personnel to a social media platform;2. Supervise the social media personnel in the management of the social media site.
Agency Social Media Personnel	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Monitor, access, and maintain the agency social media accounts;2. Post, upload, and share content in accordance with the guidelines in this circular;

3. Refer clients with specific queries to the concerned parties; and

4. Prepare the FAQs and ensure that this is kept updated.

Section 13. AGENCY DESCRIPTION

Whenever possible, agencies must include the following information in a prominent page in their social media account:

1. Charter and mandate;
2. Description of the agency with its vision, mission, and goals;
3. Citizen's Charter;
4. Organizational Chart; and
5. Contact details, including address, telephone numbers and email.

Section 14. REPEALING CLAUSE

All issuances, orders, rule, and regulations or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this order are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 15. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE

Should any provision of this order be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 16. DIRECTIVE TO THE DICT RECORDS OFFICE

The Department of Information and Communications Technology records officer is hereby ordered to furnish three (3) certified true copies of this Memorandum Circular to the University of the Philippines Law Center.

SECTION 17. EFFECTIVITY

This Memorandum Circular shall take effect immediately.

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