

REPORT TO COUNCIL



Date: October 12, 2011
File: 0410-70 RIM
To: City Manager
From: Director, Communications
Subject: Social Media Update

Report Prepared by: T. Wilson, Communications Supervisor

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives for information the report from the Director, Communications dated October 12, 2011, regarding the use of social media by the City of Kelowna and Council members.

Purpose:

Council directed staff on Feb. 21, 2011, to report back with an update on the use of social media as a communications tool in public service with the City of Kelowna, with additional information about the use of social media by elected officials.

Background:

The City of Kelowna established its Facebook presence in 2008 and sent its first Tweet on Sept. 9, 2009, during Twitter Business Day. The City of Kelowna has built up a Twitter following of more than 3,000 people since that time and is using other social media platforms to engage with citizens on current projects and initiatives.

In general, the City of Kelowna uses social media to connect with citizens on these new communication channels and direct them to our main source of information, kelowna.ca.

Existing Policy:

The City of Kelowna implemented a Social Media Policy in 2010, working guidelines manual and a formal engagement process in the summer of 2010 that established principles to guide staff when engaging in social media on the City's behalf. The Policy also explains how and when the City will engage with the public on social media platforms.

City of Kelowna social media channels can only be used for authorized City purposes. The Communications department oversees City of Kelowna social media channels. However, the Cultural Plan Facebook page is managed by staff in Cultural Services. The City updates and monitors social media accounts during office hours, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

As with other communication tools, such as email and telephone calls, employees engaging in social media must abide by the City's Code of Ethics Policy, Social Media Policy and Visual Identity Guidelines.

The Social Media Policy states that official City channels should not be used to promote opinions or political campaigns.

A handwritten signature in the bottom right corner of the page.

Members of Council who establish personal accounts with social media service providers can have those addresses included on their City business card. Links to those addresses can be posted on the Council member's webpage at kelowna.ca/council. In the spirit of social media, Council members are encouraged to link back to kelowna.ca/council.

Links to social media may remain in place during general municipal elections on the basis that those running for re-election are still elected officials who continue their Council duties during election periods.

During general municipal elections, all candidates who consent can have their contact information posted at kelowna.ca/council. All candidates are permitted to include social media links on this webpage.

Council members are also permitted to use their portrait and group photograph in their social media communications while in office.

Elected officials and social media:

Elected officials such as the Prime Minister and Provincial Premiers are active social media users. These officials typically have staff dedicated to blogging, tweeting, fulfilling online communication obligations and maintaining websites.

The open, transparent nature of social media can present procedural considerations for elected officials. For example, Council members cannot engage in discussions or receive new information on subjects pertaining to closed public hearings. In general, social media should not be used to conduct official City business other than to informally communicate with the public.

Also, communications via social media channels is not considered official city correspondence in the way email and letters to and from the Mayor are deemed to be official. Nonetheless, comments made on social media channels are subject to the same public and media scrutiny as any other forms of communication.

What We've Learned:

Social media presents an informal, human voice to residents and allows the City to show a more social personality and to engage the public in a less formal, more interactive manner. It also requires a long-term commitment of time and resources to reap the full benefits.

With multiple communication channels reaching multiple audiences, it multiplies the time and effort required to monitor these channels and respond in the expected timely manner. The City is currently limited in its ability to maximize the two-way nature of social media channels.

However, the City is seeing the benefits of this form of communication, particularly at its more active social media sites such as the City of Kelowna Twitter and Kelowna International Airport Twitter accounts and the Cultural Plan Facebook account. These sites have successfully engaged the public and each has a strong following.

According to national surveys, the average social network user is 38 years old. Our analysis indicates the City's social media network consists largely of professional business community members and adults in the 25-plus age range.

The City has seen some benefit to monitoring Twitter as an early-warning service about issues or events happening in Kelowna. In addition, some residents are using social media instead of the phone or e-mail to inquire about road construction schedules or to report suspicious activities. These emerging options for communication with the City require diligence to ensure messages are monitored and directed to the appropriate staff contact, often through our online service request system.

What's next:

For the City, social media will continue to be approached as a highly interactive form of informal communication.

The City's website, kelowna.ca, remains the hub of all electronic communication. All forms of communication from the City should direct interested parties to kelowna.ca for more detailed information, background, supporting documents and contacts.

For example, this is how the e-Subscribe service works. It provides subscribers with email updates on municipal topics they wish to follow. These updates are triggered when a kelowna.ca webpage is updated by staff with new information.

e-Subscribe is part of the continuing effort to make communication with the City of Kelowna as easy as possible. The City launched this pilot project website-based service in May. It allows people to receive emailed information about municipal projects, Council meetings, news releases, career opportunities and more than 20 other topics. To date, the City has 2,200 e-Subscribers.

As this pilot project is tested and the benefits are measured, expansion of the service to include texting and social media links is possible. These electronic communication options will decrease the need for direct mail, phone calls and other administrative costs while simplifying and improving citizen access to City information.

The City will continue to assess the benefits and challenges of social media as these channels mature and the City becomes more adept in this realm of communication.

Social Media Platforms used by the City of Kelowna:

PLATFORM	ACCOUNT	ACTIVITY	DEMOGRAPHICS	POSTS	VIEWS
kelowna.ca	City of Kelowna				1.4 million (2010)
Facebook	City of Kelowna	513 Likes	54% Female 38% Male		10,742
Facebook	YLW	756 Likes	59% Female 38% Male		17,032
Facebook	Cultural Plan	554 Likes	64% Female 31% Male		3,958
Twitter	City of Kelowna	2,986 followers		1,163 tweets	
Twitter	YLW	3,051 followers		2,309 tweets	
Youtube	City of Kelowna	26 subscribers	47% Female 53% Male		12,171
Blogger	Bernard Avenue Revitalization			16	1,034
Flickr	City of Kelowna	25 members		458	

Internal Circulation:
City Clerk

Considerations not applicable to this report:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Existing Policy:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Personnel Implications:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:



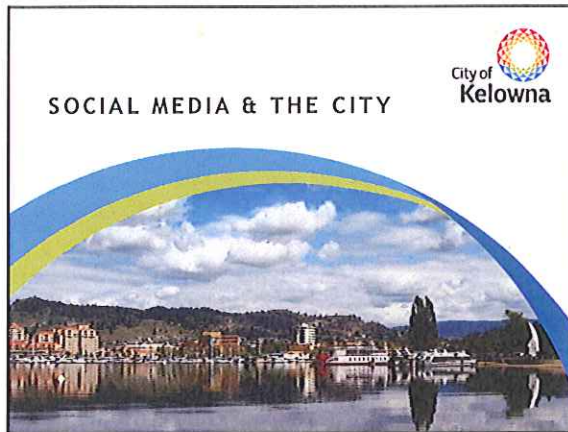
C. Stephens, Director, Communications

Approved for inclusion



P. Macklem, General Manager, Corporate Sustainability

cc: City Clerk



TALK TODAY ABOUT...

- ▶ Social Media in general
- ▶ Social Media policy & procedures
- ▶ Conversations we are having
- ▶ Council and Social Media
- ▶ Questions?

CHANGING FACES OF MEDIA

City of Kelowna

2009 COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

- ▶ 18-34 year olds are much more likely to rely on the internet.
- ▶ 35-54 year olds are 'all source' media consumers (8/10 access internet for news)
- ▶ 55 + are much more likely to look at the newspaper and television for news.

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA?


- ▶ Social Media refers to online e-technologies and practices that are used to share opinions and information, promote discussion and build relationships.

Social media is about engaging in 2-way conversation.

The City and social media

MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

- ▶ Code of Ethics
- ▶ Media Relations Guidelines
- ▶ Social Media Policy
- ▶ Social Media Strategy & Marketing Guidelines



CONVERSATIONS THE CITY IS HAVING

- ▶ [facebook.com/cityofkelowna](https://www.facebook.com/cityofkelowna) – 513 likes since Nov 2008
- ▶ [facebook.com/ykwkelowna](https://www.facebook.com/ykwkelowna) – 756 likes since mid 2009
- ▶ [facebook.com/kelownaculturalplan](https://www.facebook.com/kelownaculturalplan) - 554 likes since July 2010
- ▶ [@cityofkelowna](https://twitter.com/cityofkelowna) – 2,986 followers since Sept 2009
- ▶ [@ykwkelowna](https://twitter.com/ykwkelowna) – 3,051 followers since Sept 2009
- ▶ [youtube.com/user/cityofkelowna](https://www.youtube.com/user/cityofkelowna) – 3,313 channel views / 12,171 upload views
- ▶ [flickr.com/groups/kelownacity](https://www.flickr.com/groups/kelownacity/) - 458 posts
- ▶ bernardavenue.blogspot.com – 1,034 views

HOW THE CITY USES SOCIAL MEDIA

- ▶ Create topic-driven pages (Cultural Plan)
- ▶ General informational pages (City of Kelowna, Kelowna International Airport)
- ▶ Cross-platform promotion (video)
- ▶ Monitoring the pulse of the city
- ▶ Social Media advertising

FACEBOOK - TOPICAL DISCUSSION

Cultural Plan Facebook

- ▶ Purpose: Engage in discussion around culture in the city and the City's cultural plan
- ▶ Short-term use of social media platform
- ▶ Successful due to weekly, interactive questions



GENERAL PAGES

Kelowna International Airport (YLW) Twitter

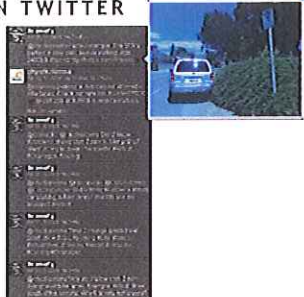
- ▶ Successful engagement with customers, tenants and visitors
- ▶ Strong Marketing and customer service drive
- ▶ Awards



ENGAGEMENT ON TWITTER

@cityofkelowna

- ▶ Engagement with local businesses and residents
- ▶ Touch point for residents



VIDEO - YOUTUBE

- ▶ Popular
- ▶ Easily spread through other social media channels
- ▶ Effective but not free. Costs vary to produce



kelowna.ca

CITY OBSERVATIONS & CHALLENGES

- ▶ Not a “youth” tool: each platform has it's own unique audience
- ▶ Social media is being used primarily as a broadcast tool vs. engagement tool
- ▶ Time demanding: requires primarily staff resources
- ▶ Multiple channels multiply demand & effort
Press release + webpage + calendar event + newspaper ad + Castanet ad + facebook event + tweets + + + +
- ▶ Website is main information source

kelowna.ca

KEEPING ON TRACK FOR COUNCIL

- ▶ Currently no guidelines on using social media for Councillors
- ▶ Abide by Community Charter & Local Government - correspondence rules apply
- ▶ Policies in place for staff can be used as guiding principles & best practices

kelowna.ca


KEEPING ON TRACK FOR COUNCIL

- ▶ What can you do?
 - ▶ Participate as yourself
 - ▶ Link to your social media sites from kelowna.ca council profile pages & on personal web pages
 - ▶ Provide social media addresses on Council business cards
 - ▶ Blog about your role as a Councillor or Tweet about Council business
 - ▶ Direct issues to Service Request system

kelowna.ca

KEEP IN MIND AS COUNCIL

- ▶ Social networks as a Councillor requires a different approach to using it as a citizen
- ▶ What you ‘say’ is permanent - be professional - think before you publish
- ▶ It is just one method of communication




kelowna.ca

KEEP IN MIND AS COUNCIL

- ▶ Keep personal items personal
- ▶ People look online to see who officials are and what they stand for
- ▶ Helps engage with a wider range of people in a powerful, focused way
- ▶ Takes commitment and time resources

kelowna.ca





THINGS TO REMEMBER

Social Media is not a set it & forget it tool

&

Once you start, you can't stop



QUESTIONS?

Just 