What is Social Media?

• Definition: Websites and apps that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.
• Focus on sharing and participation
• A tool (but just one tool) in a complete public affairs/outreach strategy
• Most common platforms are: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, Instagram, Linked-In

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SOCIAL MEDIA REPLACES NOTHING -- BUT COMPLEMENTS EVERYTHING

Neal Schaffer, social media guru

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WHY DO SOCIAL MEDIA?

• Magnifies your message
• Counters/augments traditional media coverage
• Rapid dissemination of information
• Easy feedback loop/public input
• Different platforms target different audiences
• Being part of the conversation
• Increasingly how people today get their news
• Crisis communication tool
NOT CONVINCED YET?

- 2.3 billion worldwide active social media users
- 1.71 billion Facebook users
- 500 million tweets sent each day
- WordPress alone has 56 million new blog posts a month
- 300 hours of video uploaded to YouTube per minute

*Statistics from Brandwatch Blog

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THE WORRY OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- Mistakes are magnified
- Rumors and misinformation live forever
- Negativity of comments/feedback
- Burden of creating a good content tailored for the platform
- Need for speed vs accuracy vs completeness
- Takes time, effort, resources and staff to create content, respond and monitor

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LESSONS LEARNED

• Start small
• Create synergy among platforms
• Balance openness with civility
• Integrate social media into overall outreach
• Monitor social media for situational awareness
• Keep focus on general public – what do they need to/want to know?
• Devote sufficient resources i.e. staff

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