

Social media, public relations

Mount Saint Vincent University

Social media, public relations, and the Government of Canada: An analysis of internal
organizational texts

by

Janine C. Basha

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Communication Studies in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Public Relations)

© Janine Basha 2011

I dedicate this thesis to my parents, Vincent and Mary Basha. This process would have been far more arduous without your support. I hope to someday find a way to fully express my gratitude.

*“If I could give it all back I’d send a thousand suns to warm your worthy lungs”
-Hey Rosetta!*

Abstract	4
Chapter 1 – Introduction	5
Justification & Rationale	17
Research Goals & Question	18
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	19
Social Media & Adolescent Life	19
Social Media & The Sociology of Communication	22
Social Media & Education	25
Social Media & Organizations	26
Social Media & Public Relations	30
Social Media & Politics	33
Government Communication & E-Government Initiatives	35
The Government of Canada & Communication	42
Chapter 3 – Theoretical Foundations	47
Context	47
Structural Composition	47
Structuration Theory	53
Using Structuration Theory: A Brief Introduction	58
Structuration Theory & GC Communication	60
Chapter 4 – Research Method & Methodology	63
Qualitative Research Design	63
Worldview	65
Methodology	67
Method & Process	70
Sample	76
Data Collection	78
Insert	80
Chapter 5 – Analysis & Discussion	86
Overview	86
Guiding Themes	87
Emergent Themes	90
Analysis of Principal Themes	92
Chapter 6 – Conclusions & Recommendations	120
Recommendations	127
Limitations of the Research	129
Directions for Future Study	130
References	132
Appendix A – Acronyms	144
Appendix B – Sample	145
Appendix C – Code Book	207
Appendix D – Environmental Scan (January 2011)	209

Abstract

This thesis examined an internal policy document surrounding social media as a medium of public communication by the Government of Canada. It employed qualitative content analysis to examine an internal policy document titled *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public*. In conjunction with the key considerations of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) and structural elements of the institution itself, this qualitative content analysis endeavoured to examine used the Government of Canada's (GC) perspective on the integration of social media into communication strategies, as well as the social and communicative norms that are demonstrated through this text. Dominant themes were identified and examined to facilitate the provision of practical advice for the GC with respect to how they can improve their communication practices and utilize online social media as a means of effective public communication.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This thesis employs qualitative content analysis to examine an internal policy document titled *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public*. In conjunction with key considerations of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) and structural elements of the institution itself, this analysis examines the nature of the language used by the Government of Canada (GC) (*see Appendix A*) with respect to social media engagement, as well as the social and communicative norms that are demonstrated through this language. Principal themes are identified and examined to facilitate the provision of practical advice for the GC with respect to how they can improve their communication practices and effectively utilize online social media as a means of public communication.

The evolution of the Internet and the rapid growth of its popularity over the past decade has been remarkable and extremely widespread. Perhaps the most stunning growth with respect to online technologies has been in the realm of social media websites. The Internet is rapidly becoming the main source through which people gather and share information, as well as communicate and interact with each other. "Social media is anything that uses the Internet to facilitate conversations between people" (Breakenridge, 2008, p. xviii). It refers to a two-way approach to human communication that is focused on "listening and, in turn, engaging people on their level" (Breakenridge, 2008, p. xviii). Deirdre Breakenridge claims that the rise in popularity of online social media has the potential to democratize traditional media, as "people are becoming the new influencers complementing the existence of experts and traditional journalists" (p. xx).

The latest Canadian Internet Use Survey sponsored by Industry Canada was conducted in November 2009, and data was compiled, analyzed, and disseminated by Statistics Canada in early 2010. This survey asked over 23 000 Canadians (16 and over) about their Internet use for the previous 12 months. According to this most recent Canadian Internet Use Survey, in 2009, 80% of Canadians age 16 or older used the Internet for personal reasons, a 7% increase since 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2010a). With over 21.7 million Canadians availing of the Internet as a source of information and as a means of socialization and communication, rates of Internet usage have increased in every province across the country from 2007 to 2009 (Statistics Canada, 2010a). On the basis of age, Internet use increased among all groups but at different rates. “In 2009, 98% of people age 16 to 24 went online, up slightly from 96% two years earlier. Of those age 45 or older, two-thirds (66%) went online during 2009, up from 56% in 2007. This age group, traditionally slower to adopt and use the Internet, accounted for 60% of all new Internet users since 2007” (Statistics Canada, 2010a, ¶ 13). In addition, according to the results of a 2005 survey, an estimated 8.2 million adult Canadians accessed government information and services online in 2005. Such vast numbers make the Internet an extremely important channel for governments to utilize as a means of connecting with Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2010a).

Additionally, a study spanning 2003-2007 titled *How Canadians’ Use of the Internet Affects Social Life and Civic Participation* suggests that many Canadians are using the World Wide Web in ways that facilitate social and civic participation, such as making contact with others and staying informed about their communities (Statistics Canada, 2010b). Canadian Internet users tend to have large personal networks and

frequent interactions with friends and family, although they tend to spend less time face-to-face with others, and more time online. With the substantial growth of popularity that social media platforms have experienced in the three years since this Statistics Canada study was published, it is logical to assume that the use of online technologies for social and civic engagement has only continued to increase. While the question is often raised as to whether or not Internet use is making Canadians more isolated, reclusive, and less integrated in their communities, the remarkable rise in the frequency of social media use among Canadians provides substantial support to the argument that Canadians are actually becoming more participatory and more integrated in their communities through the development of social networks in online settings (Statistics Canada, 2010b).

The 2009 *Canadian Social Media Use Survey* conducted by 6S Marketing, an Internet marketing company based out of Vancouver, B.C., demonstrates the significant growth of social media use, particularly among Canadians. This survey was carried out using a representative sample of Canadians and found that 70% of Canadians report regular use of social media technologies. Among the most popular were Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flickr (Robertson, 2009). This survey also revealed that, aside from Facebook, social media sites are most popular among Canadians between the ages of 19 and 25, a key demographic that social media engagement strategies have the potential to reach (Robertson, 2009).

Social media appears to have a number of benefits to organizations and institutions across all sectors. *Social Media Reality Check*, a study conducted by the CNW Group and Leger Marketing in 2009 surveyed over 1 500 Canadian consumers and public relations professionals regarding their online social media usage patterns and

behaviours. This study found that 49% of the Canadians surveyed use social media sites at least once per day and that 40% are engaging in dialogue or learning from specific organizations via these online tools. In addition, approximately one-quarter of the users surveyed feel more positively about organizations that are engaged in social media (CNW Group & Leger Marketing, 2009).

In reality, it is not the tools themselves that have made social media the revolutionary medium that it is fast becoming. Rather, it is the people communicating with each other using the tools to reach their respective online communities that are of key importance (Solis & Breckenridge, 2009). Social media technologies have created a more collaborative Web landscape for communication and interaction – a landscape that is now an undeniable reality (Solis & Breckenridge, 2009). There are ongoing conversations happening online between consumers and within various social networks and such dialogue will continue to happen whether organizations participate in them or not. The emergence of such conversations provides organizations with a significant opportunity to join relevant, ongoing conversations and engage with publics in a meaningful and authentic way. The best way to communicate with publics is to join them where they are already communicating. While not without their shortcomings and challenges, social media technologies provide organizations with a means to engage in dialogue with a variety of publics and stakeholders. The use of social media as a means of communication and information sharing continues to pervade the lives of Canadians, and it is important for organizations such as the GC to get involved, join the conversation, and acknowledge the value that such a communicative space can have for organizational communication efforts.

As the popularity of social media technologies rapidly increase, the GC is slowly progressing towards including social media as a component of its overall communications strategy. Between May 2009 and August 2010, many GC Departments and Agencies executed social media pilot projects in an attempt to establish an official social media presence to allow them to reap the benefits of social media engagement. However, policy and legal restrictions have caused this shift in communications to happen at an extremely slow pace. In addition, these same policy and legal restrictions influence the nature and effectiveness of these existing pilot initiatives. Due to the bureaucratic nature of the GC in general, and the resulting policy-laden restrictions imposed on communication, any shift in the nature of communication has proven to be a lengthy and slow-moving process.

The very nature of communication via social media has proven problematic for the GC, as popular online platforms such as Twitter and Facebook require the use of two-way communication practices in order for such efforts to be beneficial. Generally, all Government communication conforms to a one-way model of public information. The majority of Government public communication involves creating traditional written products and merely pushing them into the public sphere through media coverage, departmental websites and marketwire.¹

The only means for the public to engage in dialogue with GC representatives is through departmental “public enquiries” channels, which prove to be problematic due to the absence of set service standards for addressing such enquiries. Depending on the

¹ Marketwire is an online database that can be used by organizations to accelerate the distribution of press releases. The GC currently uses this online service.

nature of the enquiry, it can often go unanswered for days, weeks or months, thus proving that it is an ineffectual system for engaging in dialogue with concerned constituents.

All GC departments and agencies have their own public enquires channels. Canadians can typically contact a given department through vehicles such as telephone, email, facsimile, and postal mail. While departments and agencies often give general timeframes for turnaround responses to public enquires, it is important to note that no official service standards are in place to ensure that the GC is held accountable.

For example, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) provides some general guidelines to public enquires such as general versus specific and complex information requests, statistical queries and media enquiries. INAC clearly states on its website that “some complicated information requests may take up to ten to fifteen business days, or longer, but we will provide you with an estimate of the time required to answer your request within three business days” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010, ¶ 4). Statistical and socio-demographic queries will typically be acknowledged within three business days, accompanied by an estimate of the “expected delivery date of the information requested” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010, ¶ 3). With respect to media enquires, INAC articulates that “standard calls can be handled within one to two business days” (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2010, ¶ 6).

The prescribed process and time frames for this particular department are generally similar to those put forth by other GC departments and agencies. With respect to these guidelines, it is important to note that, while ranges are given for responses, there is no definitive service standard that governs public enquires and holds the GC accountable to Canadians. It is significant that the general time frames prescribed by GC

departments and agencies will likely prove incompatible with the demands of social media. In an age where immediate and swift responses are the norm in online contexts, the GC faces a considerable challenge with respect to engaging with publics and facilitating and sustaining fluid and meaningful dialogue with Canadians via Web 2.0. It seems that the only real forum whereby citizens receive responses from the GC is through the media, but even those responses are often delayed by approval processes and ultimately framed by the involved media outlet.

Based on my own professional experience with the GC in the Summer of 2009, the disturbing reality of current Government communication practices is that they conflict with the ideal two-way model of public communication and therefore fail to engage Canadians in any form of dialogue. As a result, citizens tend to have low levels of interest in GC initiatives and, consequently, often receive information surrounding Government activities through a variety of indirect sources. The nature of current Government communication is undoubtedly problematic and as a result, its communication efforts and initiatives are often ineffectual because of overwhelming restrictions imposed by policy and bureaucratic red tape.

The rise of social media use presents the GC with an excellent opportunity to engage in dialogue with Canadians. Through policy development and new communication strategies the GC could use the inclusion of social media and the understanding of the social nature of such online communication to improve their overall communication efforts. Social media engagement needs to be part of a broader communication strategy. By developing policies and strategies that re-evaluate the process of communication, and by adapting the nature of this communication to strive

towards the idealistic two-way symmetrical model, the GC could see major success with both traditional and online communication efforts.

While the GC's use of social media had been slowly developing, some departments and politicians were experimenting with social media as a vehicle for Government communication. Overall, most GC departments and agencies that were using social media were, and still are, doing so in an ineffective manner. Proper use of social media is to not only share information with the public, but to engage and communicate with them as well. The GC's past and present social media efforts are mainly static, based on traditional communication efforts, and not representative of the social, two-way nature of Web 2.0 communication.

Prior to August 2009, the social media platform that the GC was most commonly utilizing was YouTube. This site proves beneficial for Government to reach online Canadians through made-for-web videos that serve to promote various initiatives. Departments such as Citizenship and Immigration (CIC),² the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade,³ Natural Resources Canada,⁴ the Office of the Privacy Commissioner (PCO),⁵ and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)⁶ have been using YouTube to support Government services and initiatives for some time. For example, in April 2009 CIC launched a made-for-web video called *Waking Up Canadian* that was created and produced to promote new legislation that “gives Canadian citizenship to certain people who lost it and to others who are

² <http://www.youtube.com/user/CitImmCanada>

³ <http://www.youtube.com/user/dfaitmaeci>

⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/user/NaturalResourcesCa>

⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/user/PrivacyComm>

⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/user/economicactionplan>

recognized as citizens for the first time. It also protects the value of citizenship by limiting citizenship by descent to one generation outside Canada” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010, ¶ 1). This video received over 210 000 views and garnered a great deal of positive attention from online Canadians.⁷ Similarly, HRSDC has used YouTube to raise awareness about the availability of federal educational grants among Canadian youth attending postsecondary institutions. From 2008 to present, PCO has held a successful YouTube contest called “My Privacy and Me”, a competition for Canadian youth that challenges them to create videos regarding online privacy concerns facing young Canadians.⁸ Because of the overall success of the initial pilot contest in 2008, the competition was re-launched in 2009 and 2010, and will be extending into 2011. Overall, departmental efforts to utilize YouTube have been moderately successful. Based on the knowledge gained from my work on Public Safety Canada’s social media file and my observation of interdepartmental meetings about GC social media efforts, this can perhaps be attributed to the ease of developing policy that allows the GC and its individual departments to use it without fear of liability. Additionally, YouTube does not require a great deal of actual communication with publics, therefore removing considerations of two-way communication from the equation. In the few cases in which the comment-feature has been enabled for users, the comments are strictly moderated and only those of a positive nature appear on the site. It is important to note that none of the posted comments received a reply from the GC. The only GC YouTube account that attempts to employ the two-way communication approach, which social media demands,

⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDeDQpIQFD0>

⁸ <http://youthprivacy.ca/en/contest.html>

is the Canadian War Museum Channel.⁹ They *occasionally* respond to user questions and provide information to the public when requested.

The GC is moving towards using Flickr as a site to post Government- approved photos in an attempt to control the nature of photos used by media and other journalistic sources. This should be a relatively uncomplicated endeavour since the focus of this platform is photo-sharing as opposed to actual exchanges.

As a result of such engagement on video and photo-sharing sites, Departmental websites are increasingly becoming more interactive. For example, the Afghanistan Task Force website now includes embedded links to photos, videos, and podcasts, thus making access to such interactive materials relatively easy for both citizens and media.

Other useful sites that the GC is currently considering as vehicles of communication include Facebook and Twitter. Legal and policy restrictions had posed many challenges to the use of Facebook but, fortunately, as of September 2010, a review of Facebook was completed by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada and many of the significant challenges have been addressed.

Similarly, policy has been slowly developing regarding the use of Twitter by Government departments and is also being used by independent politicians including Michael Ignatieff, Jack Layton, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. As of August 2009, the date the data sample was released, some Departments were already using Twitter (albeit, ineffectively) and many more were anxious to ensure all obstacles were conquered before developing and implementing any formal social media projects. At that time, however, the compatibility of Government communication and social technologies

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/CanWarMus>

were somewhat problematic. For example, while Harper has a clear presence on Twitter and over 77,000 followers, his tweets essentially serve as a means to convey the same public communication materials that are produced for traditional communication efforts. Harper makes no use of Twitter to mention or reply to other users or to post “twitpics”, and his tone is quite formal and strictly political. There is no evidence of any real engagement with followers and no evidence of any two-way communication, which is probably due to existing policy and legal restrictions.

While there are strict policies and restrictions that can certainly limit politicians’ online activity, Ignatieff and Layton, who have a little more freedom, strive to use their Twitter accounts as a means to engage in dialogue with other users. Ignatieff with over 51,000 followers, and Layton with just fewer than 50,000, both communicate with other government officials and agencies with occasional mentions, replies, and photos.¹⁰ They remain non-communicative with the general public, and thus fail to exemplify effective two-way communication via social media. The tone of Harper’s postings differs from those of Ignatieff and Layton. The common assumption is that these people are much too busy to tweet and post updates themselves, but the tone of Ignatieff and Layton’s Twitter pages are both more believable and less formal. Currently, the Government departments that are utilizing Twitter have done so without reevaluating the nature of their overall communication. Therefore, these social media accounts are not being utilized to their full potential and are ultimately serving as just another vehicle through which Departments and Agencies disseminate the same one-way, public information that is produced for traditional communication efforts.

¹⁰ These numbers refer to metrics recorded 5 months prior to the 2011 election.

Recent developments in the GC's efforts to move into the realm of social media communication include the report that will serve as the focus for this research. In August 2009, a collaborative document created by a working group of GC communicators in affiliation with the Communications Community Office (CCO) titled *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public* was drafted and disseminated to GC communications branches (*See Appendix B*). This document attempts to address the challenges facing government communication via social media and to outline the key considerations that need to be acknowledged for efforts to be successful. While it is readily apparent that the GC is making great strides towards implementing a strategy for engaging with publics online, there are still a number of challenges and limitations that persist. An analysis of the ongoing GC discourse surrounding social media engagement yields some significant and practical recommendations to help improve future discourse, efforts, strategies, and programs. In addition, an environmental scan of various GC social media projects that have been implemented since the dissemination of the policy document serves to illuminate the contributions, if any, that this official text has had in the creation of social media engagement initiatives.

Social media technologies are obvious tools that can be utilized to improve Government communication. However, a re-evaluation of communication techniques and a restructuring of policy to allow for fluid, two-way communication is necessary if the GC is to be successful in establishing an influential and engaging presence in the online communities that exist on social networking sites.

Justification & Rationale

As a student of public relations and communications studies with a desire to pursue a rewarding career in the field, I have a keen and genuine interest in social media and the value, or lack thereof, that new technologies can yield for this constantly evolving profession. My interest in social media as it relates to public sector communication practices and policies stems from my brief employment experience with Public Safety Canada (a Department within the GC) in the spring and summer of 2009. During this time I was able to observe what I felt were significant challenges facing the efficacy of government communication, shortcomings in policy, and obstacles to successful implementation of social media engagement programs. I think that a great deal of these issues can be attributed to the autocratic nature and structure of the GC, and the perpetuation of a discourse about social media that appears to align with the rigidity that the institution's structure imposes on communicative freedom and creativity.

As a result of these experiences, my passion for social media in, and the fact that no research specific to the GC and Web 2.0 has been conducted before, I designed this research project hoping to provide the GC with practical recommendations to assist them in improving their social media engagement efforts by changing the way they discuss it in both formal and informal internal texts.

Research Goals & Question

The proposed research project will:

- add to the growing body of scholarship on social media and public relations
- analyze an official internal text surrounding social media as a medium of public communication by the Government of Canada (GC) through a theoretical lens focused on structure.
- assess the efficacy of the Government of Canada at addressing the challenges and issues surround social media engagement
- examine the influence that firmly established government policies have on the effectiveness of public communication and dialogue that is carried out by the GC in traditional and online contexts
- provide practical advice to the GC with respect to how they can improve their communication practices and policies, and effectively utilize social media as a medium of communication in the public sector

The guiding research question of this study is:

RQ: How is the Government of Canada's perspective on social media articulated in the document titled *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public* and does this approach limit the implementation of effective social media engagement strategies?

Chapter 2 – The Rise of Web 2.0: Literature Review

In recent years, the popularity of online social media platforms has grown exponentially and an abundance of sociological, political, and business-oriented scholarship related to these online platforms has emerged. The broader strands of scholarship reviewed includes research surrounding social media and adolescent life, education, communication, organizations, public relations, and politics. This literature survey also reflects on more narrowly focused research related to my study, including scholarship related to government communications and e-government initiatives, specifically including work investigating the Government of Canada and its communication initiatives on and offline.

Social Media & Adolescent Life

There is a relatively large body of sociological research based in the United States and focused on the nature of communication, relationships, and identity in online and social media contexts, particularly with regard to the demographic of teenagers or a more broadly defined segment of “youth”. In their book, *Cyberkids: Youth identities and Communities in an On-line World*”, social scientists Sarah Holloway and Gill Valentine (2001) explored youth’s various online experiences, such as online networks and mobile technologies, during a time when social media is rapidly evolving. Their work suggests that children’s meaningful and frequent online experiences can serve as an indicator of an emerging global society mediated by local experiences of technology. The findings of subsequent research regarding social media and adolescent social life including studies

by Amanda Lenhart and Mary Madden (2007), danah boyd (2008), and the MacArthur Foundation (2008)] serve to support Holloway and Valentine's (2001) findings.

Also within this body of social research, social psychologist Sonia Livingstone (2008) examines the differences between age groups and their approach to social media usage such as strategies for communication and interaction.

In a more specific study affiliated with the Pew Research Center, Lenhart and Madden (2007) survey a group of students on their social media habits and analyze behaviours of interaction, friendship, socialization, and connectivity on social media platforms. Similarly, in *"You Have Another World to Create: Teens and Online Hangouts"*, CJ Pascoe (2007) outlines her study of one seventeen year-old female in an attempt to develop a general model for larger trends of social networking behaviour in broader American teenage life. boyd's (2008) applied research also adds to the existing literature on adolescent social media use and online behaviour by analyzing the strategies used by websites to promote and encourage social participation by this demographic of users. In addition, a three-year ethnographic study funded by the MacArthur Foundation (2008), observe and interview over 800 youth on social networking sites. The focus of this study is to observe and analyze social behaviours that occurred within the context of these online platforms. The findings of this research encourage parents to be well versed in the social media environment as a means of staying connected with their children. The final recommendations suggested that educational institutions could increase student engagement by incorporating new media into their curriculum.

Drawing on a slightly older demographic as the focus for their research, Adalbert Mayer and Steven Puller (2008) utilize data from Facebook to examine the formation of

social networks on university campuses with the goal of identifying factors that predict a social tie between two students. Using a model in which the probability of a social tie between two students is explained as a function of students' demographics and educational goals, Mayer and Puller find that commonalities in race, program major, and campus activities were a strong predictor of social ties among demographic variables.

Using a more broadly defined conception of youth, Sandra Jansen (2009) details a collaborative ethnography that examines various avenues that millennials¹¹ employ to establish social bonds and build social capital in both corporate and social contexts. Jansen utilizes this method to interpret the culture of online social media by this demographic to examine how these individuals communicate with each other socially, how they perceive their online relationships, and how they build social capital in a digital context. As a component of her Master's thesis, she uses an independent blog as a means to put forth issues for discussion and interpretation from the researcher's perspective ("baby boomer"), as well as the perspective of her target demographic (millennials). Based on her analysis, Jansen (2009) determines that social capital is plentiful and that knowledge of millennials' behaviours and social interactions on social media websites could serve as a tool to increase employee engagement of this demographic in various organizational contexts. According to Jansen (2009), social capital appears to be acquired differently in an online world. She argues that "its acquisition is an effective means of both engaging millennial workers, and strengthening their bonds to [a specific] organization" (Jansen, 2009, p. 4).

¹¹ While there is no single definition of "millennials", it is often defined as individuals born from the mid-1970s to the early 2000s.

Social Media & the Sociology of Communication

Research regarding various social and communicative phenomena in the realm of online social media such as impression formation, interpersonal relationships, social identity, usage behaviour, network effects, media richness, uncertainty reduction, and anticipated future interaction are also addressed in the existing scholarly literature.

Research that examines online usage patterns and behaviours, preexisting models, frameworks, and principles of interpersonal communication are often utilized to further our understanding of online activities and individual motivations for use. While such models often already have well-established uses in scholarship, their application to online social media research has yielded significant and innovative insight into how and why people use these online technologies. Dae-Yong Ahn (2009) structurally examines a dynamic model of usage behaviour and network effects in social networking using data retrieved from MySpace.com. Ahn defines social media use as being motivated by either the network effect of maintaining an existing base of relationships or by the network effect of desiring to invest in new friendships in an online setting. As a result of these distinct network effects, he models online social networking as a dynamic process in which an individual's current action to use an existing social network can directly influence the growth of their social network on the site. Ahn found that the real-time chat and messaging feature of MySpace.com served to positively affect individuals' usage decisions and thus serve to achieve the intended managerial goal of generating site traffic. Also utilizing an existing usage framework, Mark Urista, Qingwen Dong, and Kenneth Day (2009) focus on consumption behaviours and employ a grounded theory approach complemented with a uses and gratifications framework to conduct an exploratory study

of why young adults use MySpace and Facebook. Through a series of focus group discussions and an analysis of the emerging themes, they propose that individuals use specific social media sites to “experience selective, efficient, and immediate connection with others for their (mediated) interpersonal communication satisfaction and as an ongoing way to seek the approval and support of other people” (Urista, et. al., 2009, p. 217). Using content analysis, an online survey, and conceptual model of the existing “spaces” within YouTube, Julie Jones (2010) adopts a functionalist framework to examine motivations of users to create and post content within the public space of YouTube. The study found that individuals who created and produced content on YouTube often referred to the online space as a “community.” However, items drawn from the Sense of Community Index and Brief Sense of Community Index scales were not consistent with previous results of similar studies of geographical communities.

In “Media Richness, Uncertainty Reduction, and Anticipated Future Interaction on Social Media Sites,” Dawn Fichera (2009), uses Facebook to explore the relationship between these three communicative phenomena and to add to the existing theoretical research on uncertainty reduction theory. Two mock profiles were created with varied media richness, followed by a questionnaire that determined if uncertainty reduction was diminished and if anticipated future interaction (AFI) was increased as a result of profile viewing. The results of this research suggest that factors that contribute to the richness of social media have a significant effect on uncertainty reduction, leading to an increase of AFI. The relationship between media richness, uncertainty reduction and anticipated future interaction could be a useful one for the Government of Canada to consider, as

active participation and richness of information provided can increase the quality of interactions and help to build meaningful relationships with Canadians.

Within the literature that examines social media contexts and identity, Devon Fitzgerald's (2008) dissertation argues for the reconceptualization of identity and related theoretical constructs based on the fact that the Internet does not exist disconnected from individuals' daily lives, rather he argues, the Internet should be viewed as an extension of this reality. In a similar vein, Nitin Agarwal's (2009) dissertation focuses on studying the online Blogosphere and the characteristics that make social media immensely popular. The research addresses the challenges of social computing, or communicating through social media, within the context of the Blogosphere. Informed by social identity theory, this quantitative analysis of activity and content that exists in the blogosphere also examined the characteristics of influential bloggers based on activity and temporal patterns and proposes a model to identify influential bloggers based on social gestures in an online context.

With a focus on interpersonal communication and interaction, Stephanie Tong, Brandon Van Der Heide, Lindsey Langwell, and Joseph Walther (2008) conducted an online sociological experiment of 153 voluntary undergraduate students residing in the Midwestern United States. Designed to examine the relationship between the number of friends a profile features and interpersonal impressions of popularity and social attractiveness on Facebook, Tong, et. al. (2008) address the ambiguous meaning of friendship within this online platform and explore the question of how "sociometric popularity conveys attractiveness in non-traditional, non-linear ways" (p. 531). The experiment yielded a curvilinear effect of sociometric popularity and attractiveness,

suggesting that an overabundance of friend connections can often lead to skepticism about Facebook users' popularity and social desirability. With a similar focus on relationship development via online communication, Shaojung Wang, Shin-Il Moon, Kyounghee Kwon, Carolyn Evans, and Michael Steganone (2010) use a quantitative experiment to investigate the implications that visual cues have on impression formation and inclination to initiate virtual friendship on Facebook. The experiment yielded a three-way connection between gender and appearance, indicating that both male and female participants were more inclined to establish friendships with users of the opposite-sex who had posted attractive photos. The subjects also displayed a higher willingness to befriend profile owners without visual cues, as opposed to those who displayed unattractive photos.

Social Media & Education

Given that social media is wildly popular among youth, adolescents, and young adults, research relating to social media in education has received some attention within the discipline of Internet and social media research. In his Master's thesis, Brad Ovenell-Carter (2009) outlines the advantages that new web-based technologies, particularly social networking sites, have on the educational experiences of adolescents. In a more research-intensive vein, Jacob Turner (2009) seeks to examine college students' use of social media through a two-study design that employs a quantitative survey and content analysis. The first study explores the frequency and form of students' use of these technologies, while the second examines whether the informal written discourse characteristic of online communication is permeating students' more formal, academic

writing. The findings of this dissertation reveal that interactive technologies are generally popular among the students in the sample and that college grade point averages are negatively related to the frequency of social media use by the students. The second study revealed that frequent use of social media was consistently associated with the use of informal and colloquial communication techniques, establishing a direct relationship between social media use and decreased communication competence in formal writing situations.

Social Media & Organizations

Expanding beyond examinations of youth and considerations of sociological phenomena and education, there is a significant body of research that focuses on the utility of social media in the business world. The existing scholarship covers a range of topics related to consumer engagement and relationships, internal operations, and best practices in business communication.

In “Determinants of Consumer Engagement in Electronic Word-Of-Mouth in Social Networking Sites,” Shu-Chuan Chu (2009) conducts an online survey of students from a large southwestern university in the United States with the aim of providing a theoretical understanding of consumers’ use of social networking sites as a vehicle for electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) behaviours. The results from the study indicate that the social relationship variables of social capital, homophily¹², trust, and interpersonal influence are found to significantly relate to users’ participation in eWOM communication, whereas no effect was found with regard to the variable of tie strength,

¹² The tendency for people to bond and associate with individuals similar to ourselves

which refers to the strength of relational connections formed. Chu (2009) contends that this dissertation can provide marketers with valuable insight into how to approach the building and maintaining of relationships with consumers and how to use eWOM to promote their products and services. Taking a more narrowly focused approach to research regarding eWOM, a study by Jui Ramaprasad (2009) also focuses on the phenomenon of eWOM and uses the specific context of the music industry to explore the relationship between online social influence and consumer choice. In this dissertation, she uses musically themed blogs and relevant online communities to examine the relationship between eWOM and music consumption. Using online sampling and sales data, Ramaprasad (2009) employs numerous empirical approaches to analyze the relationship between online “buzz” and music sales. The dissertation concludes that eWOM has a significant impact on the media consumption of users and that blogs and other forms of new media play a dual role in the music industry by serving as both a mechanism for social influence and as a platform for media sharing. Alisa Agozzino (2010) is also interested in the connection between organization-consumer relationships and millennial students’ social media behaviour. She focuses her research on the role of social media tools in influencing millennial students’ relationships with the 2008 top 10 social media brands. Agozzino (2010) utilizes a relationship management framework lens and examines the relationships between new social media tools and millennial students within Grunig and Hunt’s four models of public relations. The findings suggest that millennials engage with email and social networking more than other social media tools. The study also found that:

as participants’ general use of social media tools increase, their wanting to continue a relationship with the company/brand also increased. However, when

millennials were exposed to a variety of social media tools by each company/brand, no significant correlations were found for wanting their relationship to continue with that particular company/brand. (Agozzino, 2010, p. ii)

Such findings suggest that quality of interaction, rather than quantity of social media tools used, is beneficial to establishing relationships with the millennial generation via social media. Despite the finding that the use of a variety of social media tools yielded no significant correlation with brand/company relationships, the overall findings still suggest that social media engagement can be a beneficial relationship-building strategy for organizations and governments.

Sara Hansen's (2009) dissertation endeavours to explore brands in social interaction via the social media form of massively multiplayer online games. This research within a virtual world was groundbreaking and has still been largely unexplored. The findings of her ethnographic study reveal important meaning of advertised and non-advertised brands for status and sociability and found that brands and objects played a significant role in digital identity construction, social roles, and settings. Analysis of the survey data yielded multiple findings regarding the relationships of online users of virtual worlds with brands. Combined, these findings reveal a complex relationship among players, virtual world, and advertisers that generally related to neutral to positive brand attitudes of online consumers. Like Agozzino, Hansen found some positive relations between social media engagement and positive brand associations, but she also found some neutrality within her findings. This suggests that the benefit of social media use to companies and brands is likely more contingent upon various factors such as the medium chosen, the nature of the company, the strategy employed, or the target demographic.

The existing literature on social media and business includes research focused on social media and its utility *within* organizational contexts. Lesly Simmons' (2009) thesis explores the impact of online social networking on the reputation of professional adults who already have a well-established professional identity offline. While her sample is not statistically significant, through this quantitative survey she provides some significant insights into individuals' thoughts on online experiences. She found that "the majority of respondents believe it is possible to maintain separate online professional and personal identities" (Simmons, 2009, p. 56). She found that most professionals had both personal and professional contacts in their online social networks, and that the majority of respondents made frequent use of available privacy features. However, she also found that instances of embarrassment and shame still occurred for 65% of her respondents, indicating that the user cannot always control the material on their online social network profiles. Simmons illuminates both the positive and negative perceptions of the impact of social networks in the lives and careers of working professionals and argues that there are still a lot of aspects of social media that are ultimately outside of the users' control. Similarly, Daniel Crane Smith (2009) used theories of social capital, trust, organizational climate, and knowledge sharing to test claims that social media adds value to organizations in social dimensions beyond knowledge sharing. The study gathered data from a non-random sample of employees and students in Hawaii regarding their social media usage behaviours and the social media policies of their employers. He investigated how blogging and other social media platforms added to an organizational culture that promotes knowledge sharing, cooperation, and trust. Smith hypothesizes that social media use would fit within a specific model that includes considerations of organizational

context and knowledge-sharing. His findings yielded mixed evidence, some which supported this hypothesis and some which did not. However, the significant role that trust plays in organizational contexts was reaffirmed by this research.

Social Media & Public Relations

In spite of mixed research findings, researchers often argue for the potential that social media has for furthering competitive advantages in the business world. This, coupled with the rise of Web 2.0 technologies, provides significant opportunities and challenges to the field of public relations. While the majority of research relating to social media and communications is practical in nature, the growth of scholarly work within this particular strand of social media research is experiencing rapid growth. Professor of Technical Communication, Karl Stolley (2009) uses activity theory to establish conceptual foundations and concrete steps for integrating social media applications (SMA) into existing work environments. His work aims to build on previous research that calls for “technical communicators’ active participation in the design of information technology” (Stolley, 2009, p. 351). Stolley presents this framework through a sample case of technical communicators’ efforts to integrate the social bookmarking site Delicious into their work environment. From this examination, he argues that the integration and customization of this study of Delicious can be used as a model for how technical communicators in various organizational contexts can “open up” an existing system to support activities that the system currently excludes. By integrating the functionality of social media applications generally, and adapting their user-generated data for purposes unique to the organization, then these purposes would fit with the

actions of communicators and the activities those actions support. Adding to the literature on the utility of Social Media Releases (SMRs), Peter Steyn, Esmail Salehi-Sangari, Leyland Pitt, Michael Parent, and Pierre Berthon (2010) present the Technology Acceptance Model as a useful theoretical framework through which to understand the SMR and blogger outreach strategies. They aim to outline the factors that influence bloggers' use of SMRs and conduct an online survey of bloggers, which provides significant insight into their motivations to use elements of SMRs that are disseminated by businesses. Steyn et. al. found that: bloggers' perceptions of the effectiveness of SMRs are positively related to their use of SMR elements; bloggers' perceptions of the current use of SMRs by companies are positively related to their use of SMR elements; and bloggers' current use of SMR or elements thereof will be positively related to their future intentions to use SMR or elements thereof.

Research attention has been devoted to exploring public relations practitioners' perceptions and opinions regarding the growth of social media trends in their profession. Nina Eyrich, Monica Padman, and Kaye Sweetser (2008) outline the results of an online survey of working, professional communicators in the United States. The results revealed that practitioners have adopted an average of six different social media tools in their professional lives. While the majority of these tools are the more traditional and well-established tools such as email and intranet, practitioners also display significant comfort with other technologies such as blogs and podcasts. The study also found that the sample of public relations professionals were less inclined to integrate more complex platforms into their professional communication tactics that cater to niche audiences.

As a result of the undeniable rise of social media in the field of professional communication, many “how-to” style sources have emerged in the literature. For example, Ann Maureen Murray’s (2009) thesis endeavours to provide public relations professionals with a practical guide to the basics of blogging and social networking in general. Her goal is to illuminate the benefits of new technologies to strategic campaigns, crisis situations, and organizational reputation. Murray’s work serves as a preliminary reference guide that practitioners can use to successfully employ public relations within the context of Web 2.0.

While practical sources regarding public relations and social media abound, some critical research aims to develop theoretical constructs or metaphors that serve to increase understanding of communication in online contexts. Kate Crawford (2009) develops the metaphor of listening related to online communication, asserting that it can offer a useful way to analyze forms of online engagement that have previously been overlooked. While listening is not always overt participation, Crawford argues it is a dynamic process of online attention that is receptive and reciprocal. To examine this concept, she constructs a brief case study that focuses on listening and Twitter. She outlines three modes of online listening: background listening, reciprocal listening, and delegated listening and explores how these modes are experienced and performed by individuals, politicians, and corporations. Crawford makes some insightful observations with relation to social media use by politicians, outlining the need for a reciprocal relationship to make social media efforts beneficial to political campaigns and issues. In addition, she outlines some significant shortcomings of outsourcing the act of listening, which raises some good

points about the challenges of one individual representing a larger entity (such as the Government of Canada). Perhaps the most significant problem this poses is that such an approach to monitoring online conversations will have little benefit to the people responsible for public communication, as they will not be aware of, or involved in, this key step in the communication process. She concludes, “while online technologies are contributing to the development of varieties of listening subjects, they are also revealing the limits of these disciplines” (p. 532).

Social Media & Politics

Since Barak Obama’s successful use of social media in his 2008 Presidential campaign, there has been an increase in social media research related to the political sphere in the United States and related to online campaign strategies.

Kanakara Navasartian’s (2008) thesis offers an examination of the online public relations techniques employed by four 2008 presidential candidates: John McCain, Hillary Clinton, Barak Obama, and Ron Paul. Navasartian offers a critique and discussion of all four candidates’ approach to online engagement, concluding that Obama would appear to be the clear winner. Because this thesis was authored prior to the actual election, she refrained from drawing any absolute connections between online competence and electoral outcomes. Also using the 2008 Presidential election as a benchmark, Rebecca Hayes (2009) conducted a multistage research study to explore the uses of social networking websites for political engagement. Using Bandura’s social cognitive theory, Hayes developed a scale entitled “Political Learning Efficacy” which she proceeded to employ in a nationally representative survey of 18 to 25 year-olds in the

United States. The results of this study suggest that the use of social media for political purposes can have a positive influence on political efficacy¹³, knowledge, and participation. However, the results revealed that, during the 2008 Presidential election, participation through social media was much lower than previously reported. The findings suggest that contrary to conventional wisdom regarding the influence of social media on political engagement, traditional media remains the preferred source for information gathering regarding political issues. The findings, however, do not address the preferred method of communication between citizens and politicians with respect to issues and concerns.

Similarly, despite previous evidence that social media played a noteworthy role in the 2008 U.S. Presidential Election, a quantitative analysis conducted by Alex Budak (2010) based on data provided by the Pew Center's Internet and American Life project found that contrary to popular opinion, old media consumption remains predominant in explaining voting behaviour in the United States. It is also important to note that Budak's research focused strictly on voting behaviour rather than actual communicative efforts and preferences.

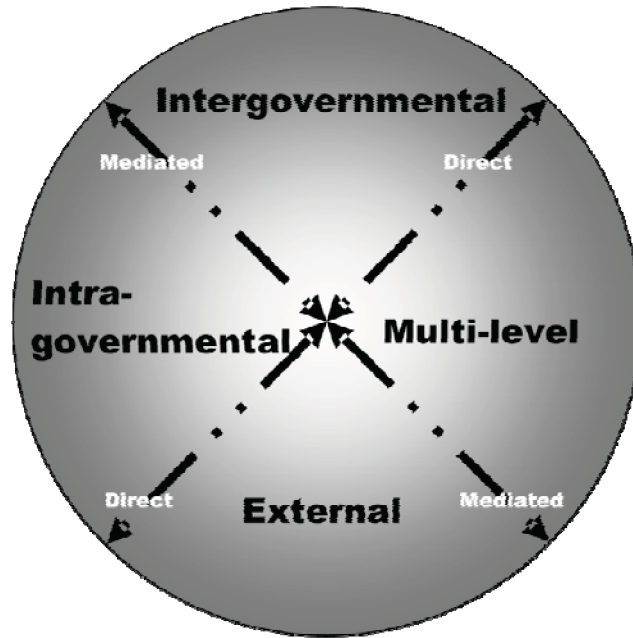
Departing from a focus on the electoral politics, Ganaele Langlois, Greg Elmer, Fenwick McKelvey, and Zachary Devereaux (2009) construct three case studies of online political activism on Facebook. They argue that "issue publics" on Facebook form through articulations of code and politics "that link and reshape informal processes, communicational constraints and possibilities, and political practices in different and sometimes contradictory ways" (p. 416). Through considerations of Maurizio

¹³ The confidence that one can both effectively participate in and influence the political process (Hayes, 2009).

Lazzarato's work on immaterial labour (2004), they demonstrate the need to further understand the networking of publics through a more comprehensive understanding of how online platforms provide the means for publics to exist, assemble around an issue, and restrict political agency.

Government Communication & E-Government Initiatives

Perhaps most significant to my research is the existing scholarship that focuses on the unique environment of the public sector and the resulting challenges and opportunities facing government communicators. In 2007, Brooke Fisher Liu and J. Suzanne Horsley proposed a new model of public relations that is specific to the public sector: the government communication wheel (See *Figure 1*). Through the identification of eight specific attributes unique to government communication and the subsequent application of these characteristics to the five existing models of public relations: the contingency theory model, the two-way symmetrical model, the public relations process model, the synthesis model of public sector crisis communication, and the model of the government communication process, they conclude that these models do not adequately account for the unique environmental characteristics of the public sector.



Four Public Sector Microenvironments

Figure I —The Government Communication Wheel (Liu & Horsely, 2007, p. 386)

In the first of three follow-up studies, Brooke Fisher Liu and Abbey Levenshus (2008) test the validity and applicability of the government communication wheel as a model for public relations in the public sector. Through 40 in-depth interviews with U.S government communicators, Liu and Levenshus tested the model's theoretical propositions to determine if the government decision wheel accurately identifies key differences in how public relations is practiced within the two sectors. This study yielded support for the model and the findings also allowed for the extension of its theoretical constructs and the addition of six attributes to the list of those unique to government communications. In the second follow-up study, Liu, Horsley, and Levenshus (2009) conducted a survey of 976 US government (n=640) and corporate (n=336) communicators to further evaluate the effectiveness and validity of the government

communication decision wheel model. While this study revealed similarities in the communications activities and challenges faced by communicators in both sectors, the differences between the two were proven to be greater and more significant. Building upon these three previous publications, Liu, Horsley, and Levnshus (2010) investigate the differences between the communications practices in the public and private sectors. Through a survey of government and corporate communicators in the United States, the 12 organizational attributes previously identified in research on the government communication wheel were tested. The results provide some significant insights into the flow of communication within the public sector and the unique challenges that face government communicators. Differences were found between corporate and government communicators with regard to budgets, political influence, communication frequency, public pressure, interaction with other organizations, media coverage frequency, media coverage evaluation, and impact of legal frameworks as they relate to communication practices (Liu, et. al., 2010). Additionally, “no significant differences in diversity of publics, opportunities for professional development, participation in organizational leadership, or management support for communication between the two groups were found” (Liu, et. al., 2010, p. 190). An acknowledgement and understanding of such differences serves to support the need for research specific to government communication with respect to various on- and offline communications practices, including, but not limited to, Web 2.0 engagement efforts. Also beneficial to my study is the literature that addresses the nature of public sector communications and the concept of e-government. A substantial amount of scholarship is focused on e-government and its relationship to the “promise” of democracy. Perhaps the most prominent theme that emerges from this

literature is the undeniable presence of both significant advantages and challenges with regard to online communication technologies. Irina Netchaeva's (2002) research argues that e-government can make government institutions more transparent and can broaden public participation in the democratic process. With a particular focus on South Africa's experience with e-government, Netchaeva's analysis of the obstacles to, and advantages of, using e-government to promote democracy in different regions yields significant insight into the differences in the effectiveness of "e-democracy" in both the developed and developing world. Similarly, Gene Brewer, Bruce Neubauer, and Karin Geiselhart (2006) examine the emerging challenges and opportunities related to the adoption of information technologies in government processes in North America. They argue that democratic values need to be included as design elements to e-government systems and assert that public administrators need to take an active role in designing and implementing online communication systems to ensure that democratic processes and outcomes can be adequately realized.

While researchers such as Brewer, et. al. (2006) view the relationship between e-government and democracy in a positive light, there is also a presence in the literature that takes a more critical stance on the relationship between the two.

Victor Bekkers and Vincent Homburg (2007) identified and analyzed the myths underlying e-government programs in Australia, Canada, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Their analysis found that "in all national policies myths of technological inevitability, a new and better government, rational information planning, and empowerment of the intelligent citizen can be discerned" (Bekkers & Homburg, 2007, p. 373). Although the mobilizing powers of these myths are acknowledged, the

researchers concluded that existing empirical evidence provide little support for the promise of democracy in e-government initiatives.

Similarly, Julie Freeman and Brett Hutchins' (2009) investigation into the changes caused in the Australian government as a result of implementation of e-government initiatives, takes a critical stance on the relationship between technology and democracy. Through a study that focused on the e-government initiatives of one Australian city, Freeman and Hutchins were able to attain a critical understanding of the features and dynamics of e-government mechanisms. Their investigation reveals "an imbalance between service delivery and civic engagement in e-government strategies, with the emphasis on consumer-oriented service delivery far outweighing civic participation and political dialogue" (Freeman & Hutchins, 2009, p. 378). Freeman and Hutchins (2009) conclude that governments need to envision citizens as more than consumers when using online frameworks and applications, especially given the emerging dialogical demands of Web 2.0. They contend that "the future of e-government in Australia is one of consolidation, risk and promise. Consolidation involves investigation and survey of existing e-government practices," as the building of knowledge regarding existing policy and practices is vital to understanding and improving online communication efforts (Freeman & Hutchins, 2009, p. 25). The risk of e-government experiments "involves ongoing experimentation with online communication in an effort to improve civic participation" and "[the] promise...is that they can help policy-makers and political representatives come to terms with the distinction between service delivery and civic engagement, and accelerate the process of transforming e-government principles into reality" (Freeman & Hutchins, 2009, p. 25).

The authors argue that concentrated efforts to increase civic participation could restore this equilibrium and avoid the actual and potential problems posed by a “digital democratic deficit.” With respect to the Government of Canada, based on the all literature reviewed and the current environmental scan, I would argue that the GC is currently placing more emphasis on service delivery and less on civic engagement. My research will contribute to the movement towards more effective social media engagement strategies by attempting to provide the first step in what Freeman and Hutchins (2009) define as “consolidation” (p. 25).

Another important strand of literature that influences this research is that which addresses the now widespread use of mobile communications such as text and instant messaging. Research in the field of government communication has devoted considerable attention to the benefit of such technology to public communication and may provide some significant insights into possible communication strategies for Government of Canada departments, agencies, and review bodies.

Ashleigh Jordan and Margie Comrie’s (2006) study of municipal governments in New Zealand and constituents and councillors openness to new communication tools as components of government communication tactics, reveals that many individuals are not ready or willing to accept text messaging as a tool for submissions in local government consultations. This case study showed that councillors were unhappy with text submissions, even though a previous trial indicated that texting was a good way to gather the opinions of young people. Jordan and Comrie suggest that the rejection of text messaging as a vehicle for communication in public consultation is based more on the

perceived threat of allowing young people to have a more prominent voice in political processes rather than on its limitations as a communication tool.

In an attempt to determine how to effectively implement mobile technologies as a more effective tool for the interaction of government and publics specifically within the United Kingdom, Jane Vincent and Lisa Harris (2008) argued that despite the large role that mobile technologies play in citizens' everyday lives, "mobile-government" will take a substantial amount of time to become a reality unless there is a significant change in social practices related to government and politics. By drawing on the findings of previously conducted case studies of best practices in mobile government communication from around the world, Vincent and Harris investigate the ways in which the use of mobile-text communications can facilitate meaningful interaction between government and publics.

Within the literature there is research that aims to explore more specific uses for e-government communication via mobile technologies. One such example is the work of Paul Jaeger, Ben Shneiderman, Kenneth Fleischmann, Jennifer Preece, Yan Qu, and Philip Fei Wu (2007). They explore the practical advantages and policy implications of the use of mobile communications and development of Community Response Grids (CRGs) for crisis and emergency situations that pose imminent threats to public safety. With reference to previous research from computer science, information studies, public policy, emergency management, and several other disciplines, these authors argue for the need of CRGs, examine current efforts that can inform the development of CRGs, discuss how research about community networks can be used to establish trust and social capital in CRGs, and address the issues of public policy, telecommunications, and e-government

related to such a system (Jaeger, et. al., 2007). The authors conclude that CRGs offer a means to effectively harness the social benefits of the Internet, e-government, and mobile technologies. They argue that CRGs have the potential to link telecommunications, e-government, and social networks – a connection that could be revolutionary in the way we manage and communicate during crises. While they acknowledge that the current circumstances of government use of Internet and mobile communications in e-government do not yet reflect any such major changes to the way we communicate during disasters, they continue to argue for its undeniable social benefits. They concede that there is still no meaningful communication on e-government sites between constituents and government officials, and they also acknowledge that mobile technologies have, thus far, not been properly employed to facilitate dialogue between government and stakeholders (Jaeger, et. al. 2007). The authors argue that governments can harness the power of technologies to change the way we share information and manage crisis situations. They assert that policy decisions to develop and foster CRGs would ultimately yield significant benefits to all parties involved.

The Government of Canada & Communication

While the majority of research related to public sector communications and government use of new technology focuses on various countries around the world, there has been some insightful research conducted with a particular focus on the Government of Canada (GC). While there has been no research conducted exclusively on “social media” and the GC, the existing literature provides a useful foundation to this study by

providing additional context that reflects the existing social realities of the GC and approach to public communication.

Jodi Redmond and Fraser Likely (2002) provide a critical discussion of the review of communication practices conducted by Likely's research firm for the GC in 2001. Based on their analysis of this 2001 review Redmond and Likely recommend that the GC can improve and rebuild communication competence and effectiveness by striving for a model communications function. Such an ideal recognizes communication as a management function, requires involvement at every departmental level with the Deputy Minister (equivalent to a CEO in a private organization) taking the lead in all communication decisions and initiatives, and demands the employment of formally trained communicators and strategic thinkers (Redmond & Likely, 2002). Such findings provide a useful contextual overview of the state of affairs of government communication in Canada, as it is only within the last 10 years that communications has begun to achieve a place of prominence in GC operations and receive a seat at the management table. It is evident from this research that communications branches were, at one time, significantly undervalued by the GC and that substantial efforts were devoted to conducting research, restructuring policy and relocating resources to support a more effective use of the communication function. I argue that a similar effort with respect to research, policy restructuring and resource allocation will be necessary to successfully integrate the demands social media projects and accommodate the shift in communication that the rise of Web 2.0 has produced.

Drawing upon a previously established model of leadership/decision-maker competencies, as well as upon a five-step heuristic model of leadership, Mahmoud Eid

and Toby Fyfe (2009), conduct an analysis of the GC communication strategies and tactics in crisis situations. They examine the theoretical foundations of decision-making in organizations to consider the requirements of an effective crisis communication decision-making process in the public sector and, particularly, with respect to the Government of Canada. Eid and Fyfe (2009) propose that “as a result of the Government of Canada’s ongoing evolution towards the new public organization, three core interrelated competencies (the abilities to manage information, to think horizontally in a changing management environment, and to deal with authoritative ambiguity) are required by managers to facilitate effective crisis communication decision-making” (p. 7). They continue to apply these three competencies to the GC document “The Government of Canada Framework for Public Communications Management of National Security Threats” to assess and determine their practical applicability.

Claire Harrison and Lynne Young (2005) utilize systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine the effects of leadership discourse on organizational change within the context of the major realignment of Health Canada that took place in 2000. They seek to uncover how this significant organizational change “transforms the language that both forms and informs the organization’s shared meanings” (Harrison & Young, 2005, p. 43). This research is useful to my study as it illustrates the importance of language in government contexts. It serves to inform my preliminary analysis of the document that was analyzed.

Michael Felczak, Richard Smith, and Geoffrey Glass (2009) conducted the only scholarly research study found in the available databases related to the GC and the Internet. Based on secondary research on communication rights, Felczak et. al. construct

a communication rights framework and employ it to evaluate recent GC online initiatives. They conduct an analysis of policy documents, government websites, and user experiences to support their argument that government online programs fail to consider and ensure the communication rights of Canadians who use free and open source software to access the Internet. The results yielded from the analysis provide significant support to this central argument and allow the authors to identify specific problem areas with respect to the provision of government information, services, and consultations. The study concludes with the recommendation that policies governing accessibility and “Common Look and Feel Standards for the Internet” be amended “to take into account Canadians who select or must use free and open source software. As a minimum, these guidelines need to address compatibility issues related to multi media, digital documents, online submissions, and advanced interactive applications” (Felczak et. al., 2009, p. 456). They also recommend that the GC needs to make a considerable effort to ensure that the communications rights of all Canadians are guaranteed and that the public consultation process is as inclusive as possible” (Felczak et. al., 2009). Felczak et. al. contend that their prescribed changes could be adopted as a frame to adequately address the identified shortcomings of the GCs current online communication initiatives. It is important to note that this study focused on GC websites in particular, thus considerations of social media applications (which often use third-party hosted free and open source software) will require a slightly different perspective on Accessibility and Common Look and Feel Standards. Nonetheless, accessibility is certainly an important theme in relation to GC online communication efforts and will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

The presence of a rapidly growing and diverse collection of literature with regard to communication, public relations, and social media is undeniable, as is the presence of a growing body of scholarship that addresses the unique environment of public sector communications. However, there still remains a significant gap in the literature that addresses these topics through a Canadian perspective – a gap that can be filled by a research study that addresses the challenges of implementing social media strategies in GC communication.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Foundations

Context:

Structuration Theory (ST), as developed by Anthony Giddens, was selected as the theoretical lens to inform this research for two primary reasons. First, ST posits that the individuals within a system or institution can sustain or transform the social realities of the system through their approach to texts and various other institutional practices; this theoretical framework is appropriate to both my social constructivist worldview and chosen method. Secondly, the GC is an intricate bureaucracy and many of its policies, processes, and formal texts are influenced by and reflective of its overall structure and processes of structuration. For this reason, it is appropriate to include considerations of the structural components of the GC in order to uncover the processes and relationships that result from textual constructions of social reality and determine if the current structure of the GC influences the nature of this particular document and subsequent policy and programs.

Structural Composition:

Figure II provides a general overview of the basic composition of the GC as a whole. While this diagram neither provides an exhaustive breakdown of the many intricacies of the entire institution, nor provides a comprehensive list of all departments and agencies within, this diagram is sufficient to illustrate the complexity of the rigid and hierarchical governmental system for the purposes of this research. Collectively, the GC lists 252 Departments, Agencies, Crown Corporations, Special Operating Agencies and

various affiliated organizations on their website, thus further illustrating the highly compartmentalized nature of the institution's structure (Government of Canada, 2011).¹⁴

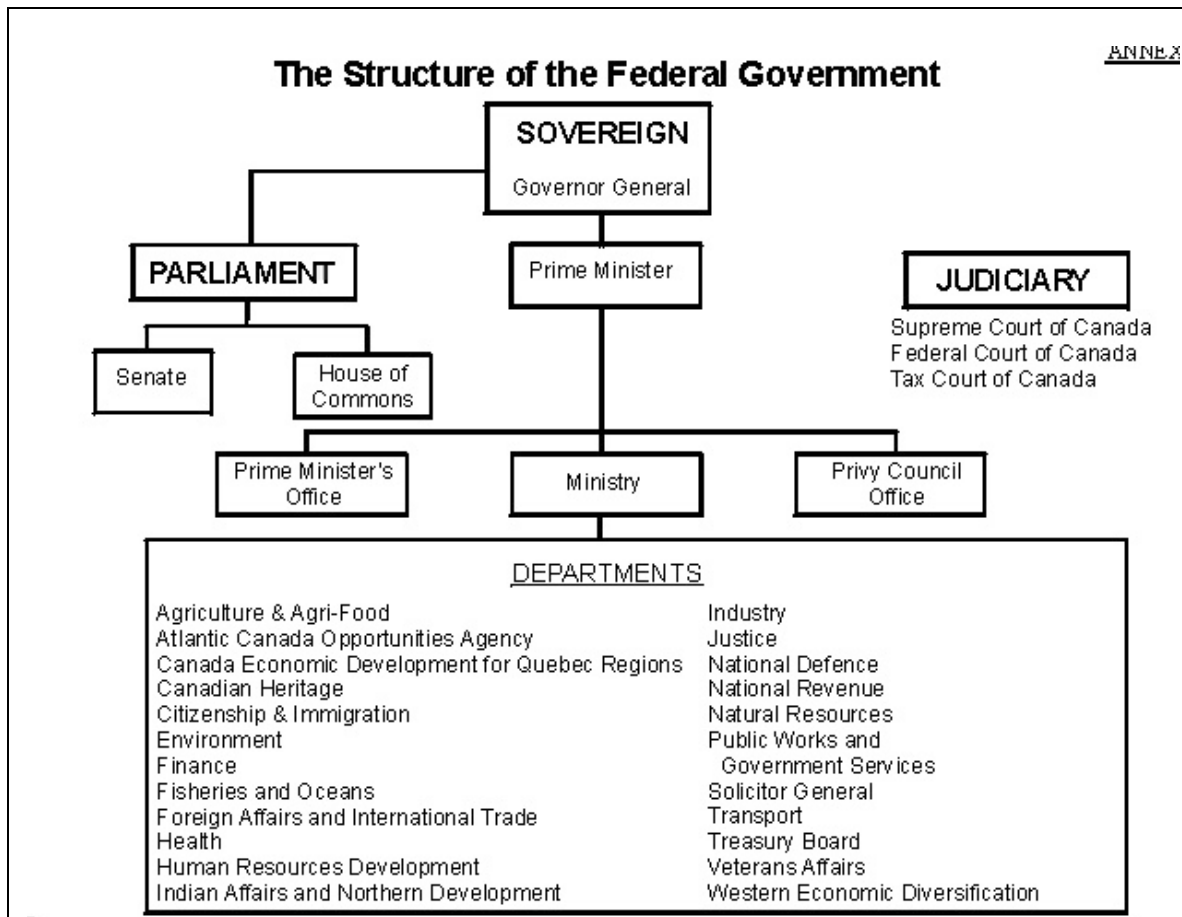


Figure II – Structure of the Federal Government (Privy Council Office, 1998)

Within this intricate hierarchy, the structure of a single department within the Canadian Public Service is equally as complex and hierarchical, often including a complex web of Deputy Ministers (DMs), Assistant Deputy Ministers (ADMs), Director Generals (DGs), Strategic Policy, Communications, and Legal Advisors, as well as an active public service of departmental employees with various specialized skills. As an

¹⁴ It is important to note that I do not claim to have provided a comprehensive exposition of the Government of Canada. For the purposes and scope of the present research, however, the above discussion does serve to establish the GC as a structurally rigid and hierarchical bureaucracy.

example, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEP-C) is a single Department within the GC, with a comparably intricate and compartmentalized portfolio that includes five GC agencies and two review bodies (*see Figure III*). PSEP-C was created in 2003 to bring together a number of key federal departments, agencies, and review bodies responsible for national security and the safety of Canadians.

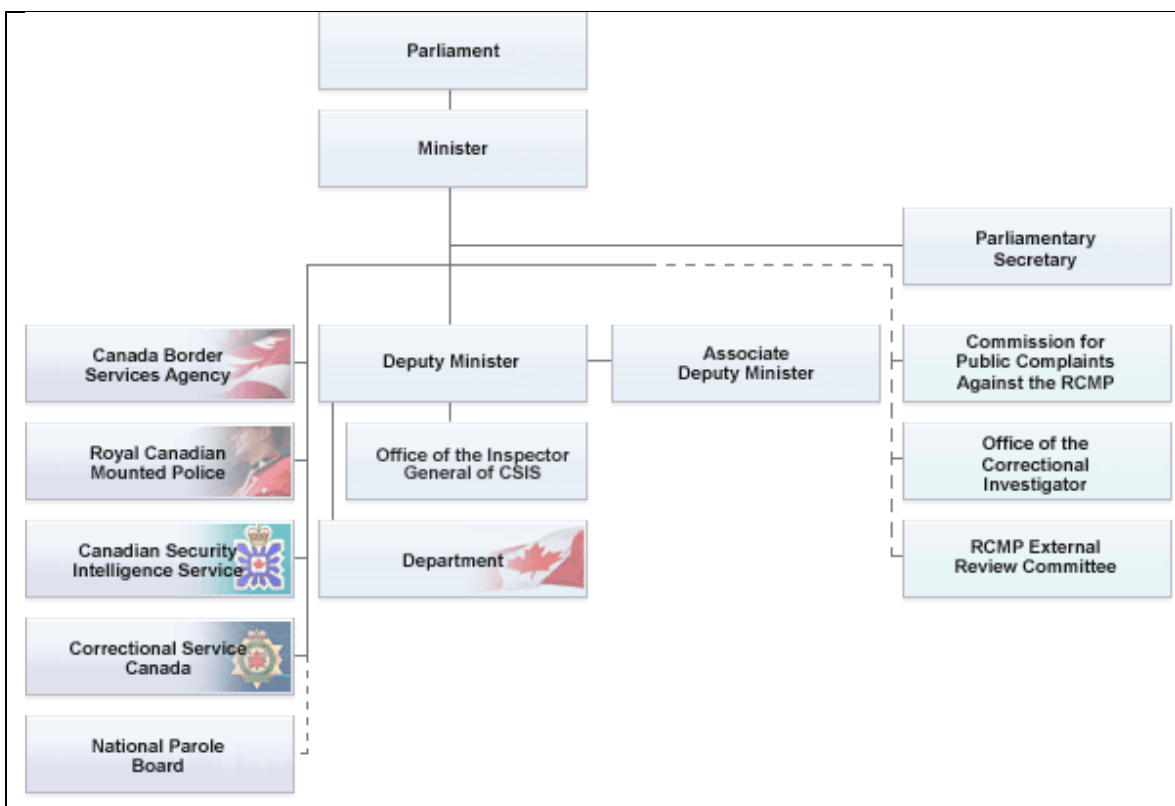


Figure III – The Public Safety Portfolio (Public Safety Canada, 2009)

The above diagram details the main structure of this department with regard to its central agencies and public figures. In addition to the positions illustrated in *Figure III*, there are also a Director General and Associate Director General for Communications, and Assistant Deputy Ministers for Strategic Policy, Law Enforcement and Policing, Community Safety and Partnerships, and Corporate Management, as well as Senior and

Associate Deputy Ministers for Emergency Management and National Security. The branch of this extensive department (and others) that is of particular relevance to this research is the Communications Branch which, under the Director General and Associate Director General, is separated into three main divisions: the Public Affairs Division, the Emergency Communications Division, and the Strategic Communications Division, which also houses the Regional Communications team. Also on this level of the hierarchy is the Division Administration and Human Resources and Ministerial Liaison. Each of the three primary divisions (Public Affairs, Emergency Communications, and Strategic Communications) has its own Director responsible for the plethora of employees within their given division. The employees in each division typically include a Communications Manager, two to three Senior Communications and/or Policy Advisors, and a Communications Assistant.

While not all GC departments and agencies are structured in the exact same manner, this general overview of the breakdown of one specific department speaks volumes about the highly compartmentalized nature of the institution as a whole, as well as its Communications Branches. This structure helps to illuminate why GC Communicators may find enacting change and implementing social media initiatives challenging, as not only are there numerous policy challenges facing effective projects on the whole, but there are significant challenges related to gaining official approval to public content attributed to the GC. Within the all branches of GC Departments, there is an onerous approvals process of readings and revisions that all written and verbal communication materials must undergo before they can be disseminated (either internally or externally). While it varies by Department, and has likely changed since my time as a

Communications Assistant for Public Safety Canada, it generally involves a maze of approvals by direct managers, policymakers, directors, DGs, ADMs, DMs, Ministers' Offices, under whose portfolio of responsibilities the topic lies. Once the revisions suggested are made, the material is forwarded to the Privy Council Office where it must undergo another round of rigorous review and approval. The material is then sent back to the responsible party in the Communications Branch for further revision. After this process is complete, it must then be forwarded to the Public Works and Government Services Translation Bureau, where relevant personnel will ensure that the material is properly translated and is accessible in both official languages. Depending on any number of factors such as the volume of materials passing through these channels simultaneously, the amount of revisions required, the length of the document, or the nature of the subject matter being discussed, this approval process can often take anywhere from 48 hours to three weeks. This approvals process is obviously at odds with the demands which social media place on communication. Responses need to be immediate and dialogue needs to be fluid and ongoing – requirements which are hindered by the preexisting structure of the GC.

An important aim of this research is to examine the current GC approach to public communication and its current policy and perspectives towards social media use as a mode of public communication. The focus of this research is on the communication branches of the GC and its departments and agencies and an existing internal discussion that is ongoing within these divisions regarding social media engagement initiatives. While communications is but a relatively small branch of the GC's divisions and an even

smaller portion of the activities that the GC is responsible for as a national institution, it is undeniably important. The communications branches of all GC departments are exclusively responsible for all aspects of the provision of information to the public, and therefore the employees within these branches play a lead role in the construction of the internal texts surrounding communications and social media engagement.

As a long-standing institution, and the principal entity responsible for the array of issues affecting Canadians and Canadian life, the GC has a firmly established structure, which exists primarily as a means to ensure consistency and control of all aspects of policy, law, safety, and Canadian life in general. While this organizational structure was undoubtedly created through various social processes and based on the social needs of such a large institution, its composition and structure is extremely hierarchical and has remained largely fixed over time. This is of particular concern to the communicative demands of such an institution, as all forms of public communication often need to be conceived and treated as a fluid and adaptive process.

It is important that this research study was designed and conducted with a keen awareness of the structural composition of the GC, as well as an awareness of the effect that this may or may not have on communication policy and practice. It is imperative to acknowledge that all aspects of public communication, as well as the internally constructed texts surrounding it, are undoubtedly influenced by the overarching configuration of the institution as a whole.

Structuration theory provides a useful lens through which to understand the existing internal discussions regarding GC social media use, current GC approaches to communication, the problems and challenges inherent in these approaches, and the need

for, and possibility of, innovation in these communicative practices and policies.

Giddens's ST also provides a useful framework for understanding how the GC's discourse regarding communication practices can be improved and transformed, as well as for assessing how social media, in particular, can be effectively utilized as a means of public communication.

Structuration Theory:

Structuration theory (ST) originated as a result of the rise in interest of the relationship between human behaviour and communication practices to the social structure of society's institutions (Poole & McPhee, 2005). British social theorist and creator of ST, Anthony Giddens, believed that current theories of societal and organizational structure were inadequate and incomplete, and much of his work in the 1970s and 80s attempted to provide a new theoretical perspective through which to understand the impact of structure and human agency on societal systems (Scott, 1995). For Giddens (1984), the goal of social theory in general, and ST in particular, is to illuminate the concrete processes of social life. Giddens developed his theory of structuration very much in opposition to "activity theory," which was developed and endorsed by American sociologist, Talcott Parsons (Giddens, 1984). Parsons' theory centers on the concepts of systems, norms, and actors, and asserts that actors are driven by the fulfillment of tasks and that social norms account for systems' structures. In this "theoretical scheme the object (society) predominates over the subject (the knowledgeable agent)" (Giddens, 1984, p. xx). Thus, Parsons offers a more constrained

theory of social behaviour that does not acknowledge or allow for the role of personal action and power to influence organizations and enact change (Hatch, 2006).

Giddens's theory of structuration shares many elements with activity theory, but offers a more dynamic conception of individual agency and the capacity for institutional change. While structural aspects of an organization are important, Giddens contends that it is equally crucial to acknowledge an organization as a system of interrelated parts. A system is not just a system of objects; rather, it is a system of human practices (Poole & McPhee, 2005). Giddens takes issue with constructing social theory with the extremes of objectivism and subjectivism as a basis. Hence, ST "is based on the premise that this dualism has to be reconceptualized as duality" (Giddens, 1984, p. xxi).

While ST proves to be a complex framework, it has practical significance to organizational contexts and is ultimately linked with three key terms: **system**, **structuration**, and **structure**. *System* refers to society's major institutions; *structuration* refers to the actors' interactions within systems; and *structure*, which results from the process of structuration, acts as a guard for the perpetuation of society. Giddens believes that once such ephemeral social scientific terms and truths have been established and learned, people within societal systems can act contrary to them and affect change within the system. While he acknowledges that the idea of structuration can indeed constrain changes in organizational practices and social behaviours, he also argues that his conception of structuration can serve an emancipatory and transformative purpose for societal actors and institutions by providing them with a plausible means through which to enact change within the systems to which they belong (Giddens, 1979). However,

before one can understand how exactly ST can serve this emancipatory purpose, it is essential to have an understanding of the main elements that constitute ST.

The central focus of ST revolves around the key concepts of structure and agency. Giddens defines *structure* as the “rules and resources recursively implicated in social reproduction” that are drawn on by actors taking part in system practices (Giddens, 1984, p. xxxi). He describes *agency* as the capacity for actors within a system to construct, maintain, and transform the very social systems in which they live (Giddens, 1984). Giddens not only acknowledges the existence of structures, but he acknowledges that the actors within institutions are inextricably linked to the structure and have the power to alter the social reality of the structure (Giddens, 1979). Giddens ultimately departs from Parsons in his focus on the “duality” of structure and action – he contends that structure both constrains and enables the acts of interacting individuals, and that these same actions in turn create the structure that enables and constrains them (Giddens, 1984). For Giddens, actors are viewed as an extension of the system or institution within which they function and this experience of the duality of structure and agency is actually an everyday occurrence in the modern organization (Hatch, 2006).

Other concepts related to social action, which Giddens identifies as key to an understanding of structure and are relevant to the study of the GC, include: *rules*, or unconscious social norms that enable and inform social action and interaction; and *resources*, which include physical objects and intangible assets that people are able to use in social action (Poole & McPhee, 2005). Giddens distinguishes between “two aspects of rules – normative elements and codes of signification” (1984, p. xxxi). Normative elements refer to things that seem natural, unconscious, or innate. Codes of signification

refer to the field of semiotics and the symbolic representation of meaning (Giddens, 1984). He also classifies resources as being either “*authoritative resources*, which derive from the coordination of the activity of human agents, and *allocative resources*, which stem from control of material products or of aspects of the material world” (p. xxxi).

For Giddens, all structured systems, activities, and behaviours can be arranged in terms of rules and resources. “Structuration theory holds that when we draw on structural rules and resources to act within a social system of practices, we also keep that system going” – we essentially reproduce the system and its structure (Poole & McPhee, 2005, p. 175). The result of the use of these rules and resources are that behaviours within a system can be “patterned in” and “out” depending on their utility within the institution and its social practices and norms (Hatch, 2006). It is important to note, however, that this reproduction of the system and its structure does not necessarily mean that systems endure without change, rather, transformation is possible and is merely “the reproduction of the system in a new direction” (Poole & McPhee, 2005, p. 175). “The key idea in ST is that every action, every episode of interaction, has two aspects: It ‘produces’ the practices of which it is a part..., and it ‘reproduces’ the system and its structure, usually in a small way, as changed or stable” (Poole & McPhee, 2005, p. 175).

Another significant element of ST is the role of time and space in human affairs and interaction. Giddens refers to this as *time-space distanciation*, which refers to the rate at which we can communicate over time and space. This is a useful concept put forth by Giddens’s work, and is particularly useful when dealing exclusively with the characteristics of specific technologies. For the purposes and scope of my research this concept is not specifically employed as a means to interpret my analysis, as my focus is

on the actual institution (the GC), rather than the structures of the technologies themselves. It is, however, included in an effort to provide a comprehensive overview of the theory that informed this research.

With current advances in technology, Giddens argues that the resulting high level of time-space distancing allows for more effective monitoring of public opinion upon which any and all institutional policies and practices can be based (Giddens, 1984). Advances in technology ultimately create new patterns of time and space with fewer barriers and allow organizations to have more power to thrive within broader societal structures (Poole & McPhee, 2005).

Perhaps the most important feature of ST that sets it apart from previous theoretical scholarship relating to structure is that Giddens affords a considerable amount of power and influence to individual agency. He asserts that “human beings, in the theory of structuration, are always and everywhere regarded as knowledgeable agents” (Giddens, 1995, p. 265). He disagrees with the idea that “human social affairs are determined by social forces of which those involved are wholly unaware” and contends that actors have the power not only to act within the system and maintain its social norms, but also to transform it and precipitate institutional change in any number of its social – and in my case – communicative processes (Giddens, 1995, p. 265).

While ST is often criticized for lacking empirical grounding, for being too eclectic and broad in nature, and for affording “too much” power to agency (Hatch, 2006), this is a deliberate feature of Giddens’s theoretical framework and is nonetheless beneficial to social theory and this research study as it acknowledges that agency can indeed play a role in organizational improvement and change (Falkheimer, 2007).

Using Structuration Theory: A Brief Introduction

Structuration theory is a commonly used framework in sociological research and has been employed in various studies regarding institutional change, particularly with regard to the introduction of technology in organizational contexts. Structuration theory has been used in the past to understand and support the utility of new technologies by organizations for public communication. The previous applications of ST give a credible foundation to my research design and informs my study in a general sense. This theory is beneficial to my study because it provides a lens through which to explore the implications of social media as a medium of public communication, and the impact that organizational structure has on the policy and approaches surrounding such communication in online contexts.

With the rise in popularity and availability of information technologies, Gerardine DeSanctis and Marshall Scott Poole (1994) utilize the tenants of ST to investigate the “promise” that technological advancements can improve organizations and their internal communication practices. They propose, Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST) as a useful approach for examining the role of information technologies in organizational change. AST is essentially an extension of ST, which also includes consideration of the mutual influence of technology and social processes in the internal workings of an organization. DeSanctis and Poole (1994) conclude that despite the potential for information technologies to improve and transform an organization, actual changes do not often occur, and when they do, there are often inconsistencies. Their work is primarily concerned with how technology can affect the *internal* workings of an organization, as opposed to my study’s concern with how a technology such as social

media can affect *external* organizational relationships. In spite of this, their work remains useful and significant to this study, as my analysis reveals a consistent finding that significant organizational change is necessary but often difficult to engender.

The work of DeSanctis and Poole (1994) was also useful because of its inclusion of considerations of the structural features of technology. They acknowledge that various information technologies possess many structural features such as rules and resources, which bring meaning and control to the medium. However, they speak of the “spirit” of technology, or the general intent of how it should be used and acknowledge that actors cannot as easily change this structure. In applying this perspective to social media, it makes logical sense as the vast number of users obviously make it difficult for a small portion of actors to transform the norms and structure of the technology. This “‘spirit’ of technology provides...a normative frame with regard to the behaviours that are appropriate in the context of technology” (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994, p. 126). In the case of social media, this “spirit” is social, reciprocal, interpersonal, relational, and, most importantly, dialogical.

In “Anthony Giddens and Public Relations: A Third Way Perspective,” Jesper Falkheimer (2007) argues that structuration theory can provide a relevant basis upon which to examine public relations and “how it may be developed as an instrumental society-centric and public-oriented practice” (p. 288). Falkheimer (2007) suggests that Giddens’s theory can be used as a “third way public relations perspective: between managerial, functionalistic, and prescriptive traditions and critical and interpretive approaches” (p. 292). He focuses on Giddens’s attempt to transcend the division of structure and agency with ST and draws connections between this aim of the theory and

the reality of modern organizations, which includes a growing emphasis on the possibilities of human actors to transcend and transform existing institutional structures (Falkheimer, 2007). Falkheimer draws on numerous aspects of ST and applies them directly to public relations practice. Such connections include the dynamic conception of public relations practice, the social constructivist underpinnings of the profession, and the need to both reproduce and transform social structures of communication. These parallels were useful in justifying the use of the theory in my study, as ST was used as a lens through which to understand the nature of existing texts surrounding public relations and social media, as well as the traditional public relations practices of the GC. This theoretical lens assists in conceiving the existing social realities of the GC's communications practices as something that can be either maintained or altered. It is through utilizing existing institutional structures that shape the social realities of communication practices, that the GC can begin to use social media as an effective vehicle of public communication. This concept of making public relations a more "public-oriented" practice is vital to this research as one of the principal problems it identifies in relation to government communication at present is that it is too inwardly focused and too heavily defined by communication policies and legal restrictions.

Structuration Theory & GC Communication:

Structuration theory provides a useful framework through which to understand the shortcomings in government communication and how these shortcomings are perpetuated and maintained through internal texts and discourses. This research investigates these existing challenges as well as the means through which these flaws can be overcome through language. Structuration theory encompasses both "social structure and human

action in a common framework that could explain individual behaviour and the development and effects of social institutions such as the economy, religion, and the government” (Poole & McPhee, 2005, p. 173).

Structuration theory does not regard organizations as static entities. Rather, organizations are created, maintained, and changed through human action, discussions, and texts. But the very nature of the GC, its structure, its communication policies, and its current discourse on social media pose significant obstacles to allowing human agents to influence the structure of the organization. Giddens’s definition of structuration is defined broadly to refer to the recursive interdependence of social activities and structure. This is significant because the internal texts that address the external social and communicative activities of the GC are often defined by its structure; and while social and communicative norms can affect structure, it is not as influential because of the autocratic nature of the GC hierarchy. The contemplation of the main elements of ST, including the concepts of system, structure (rules and resources), structuration, and the duality of structure and agency, and the application of these elements to close textual analysis of thematic threads that were identified in my sample, facilitate my ability to identify the challenges posed to the GC’s effective social media engagement by structure and the possible solutions available.

This concept of human agents having the ability to transform organizational structure and practices, in this case through text, is undeniably important because it indicates that it is indeed possible for the GC to change their communication practices from the current, traditional, and established practices. It is necessary to recognize that change can and needs to be enacted, which, from my experience, is something that the

GC, its executives, and its communicators may find difficult. The decision- and policy-makers appear to only reproduce current discursive activities and practices in old and new technological contexts. This is the crux of the problem this research study addresses.

By recognizing and employing the concepts put forth by ST in the construction of internal texts and conversations, GC communicators could contribute to both a necessary and remarkable change to the nature of GC communications. Perhaps the first step is to realize that the same processes that maintain the status quo of institutional life can also be used to initiate radical change (Falkheimer, 2007). There needs to be a fundamental change in the communication practices of the GC; its traditional, structured practices need to be altered to correspond with the demands of social media and the nature of communication that is necessary to use it effectively. According to Falkheimer (2007), ST provides a means through which to understand public relations communication as a process that can be utilized as both “a reproductive and a transforming social instrument” (p. 287). This work provides additional support for my use of this theoretical lens as it does not view organizations as stable and fixed, but rather as dynamic and transforming systems. Overall, ST proves useful to this research design as its constructivist underpinnings highlight that “we construct systems to manage information and then tell ourselves we cannot do something because the system and its routines will not allow it. Our failure to recognize that the system does not exist as a fixed entity prevents us from realizing that it can be changed using the same creative forces that produced it in the first place (Hatch, 2006, p. 123). Thus, this theoretical lens provides a way forward and a viable means for institutional change to occur.

Chapter 4 – Research Method & Methodology

Qualitative Research Design

Within the overall design of this research, I have chosen a qualitative approach to content analysis to examine an internal policy document titled *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public* – a document that represents one of the first official and internally authored work focusing on public communication and social media engagement. As there has been very little previous scholarship specific to the GC and social media, a qualitative, exploratory approach is appropriate (Creswell, 2009). Through the issues examined and the results yielded from this research, I intend to add to the growing body of scholarship on social media and public relations and to provide advice to the GC to improve their communication practices and effectively utilize social media as a mode of communication in the public sector. Such research goals are compatible with a qualitative design as it provides the freedom to include the researcher's perspective, the basis for both a deductive and inductive approach through which central themes and issues will emerge, and the interpretive freedom of the researcher to address the complex challenges that arise in professional communications contexts (Creswell, 2009). The chosen theoretical lens of *structuration theory* (ST) also fits well with my qualitative research design, as its primary theorist, Anthony Giddens, deliberately distances himself from conceptions of social theory that assert “that the only form of ‘theory’ worthy of the name is that expressible as a set of deductively related laws or generalizations” (Giddens, 1984, p. xviii). Giddens is a proponent of the concept that social realities are constructed and transformed by individuals through interaction with the various social contexts in

which they live – a perspective that closely aligns with the worldview reflected in the qualitative approach to content analysis and its underlying methodology. For the proposed analysis to yield any useful and significant findings it is necessary for it to be able to acknowledge the pragmatic function of language, or what is being “done” through the texts under analysis (Wood & Kroger, 2000). Quantitative methods take language literally and offer little recognition to its performative function – a function that will be integral to a meaningful analysis of the GC’s ongoing discussions on social media engagement with Canadians (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

While the primary method employed is that of qualitative content analysis, the work of Wood & Kroger (2000) in the qualitative field of discourse analysis, as well as additional studies that employ discourse analysis have loosely informed and impacted my research design. Research such as theirs was closely reflected upon early in the proposal stages of my study, and while the design does depart from the main tenants and concerns of discourse analysis, were nonetheless useful throughout the research process.

While the qualitative design is undeniably appropriate to this research design, it is not without its limitations. Within the qualitative paradigm it is difficult to generalize findings, and especially difficult to replicate results due to the subjective influence of the research and his or her biases and experiences (Creswell, 2009). In addition, qualitative research yields no quantifiable or numerical conclusions through which the results can be measured. However, it is important to note that while such limitations need to be acknowledged they do not detract from the value of my research, as my goals are more intrinsic and institution-specific and are not reliant on replication, generalization, or

quantification to yield significant findings. In fact, such concepts would actually serve to undermine the naturalistic approach to analysis that I prescribe.

Worldview:

This study is informed by my social constructivist worldview, a view that is reflected in the theoretical foundations, method of inquiry, methodology, and subsequent conclusions.

Social constructivism posits that “every person constructs their own different meaning of the same object according to their previous concepts” (Flecha, Gomez & Puigvert, 2003, p.58). This worldview asserts that meanings are ultimately constructed “by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Creswell, 2009, p.8). Constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world around them and because of individual differences, the developed meanings will be varied and multiple (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In other words, the world we experience on a day-to-day basis is not a static and objective reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).

In relation to this thesis, the fundamental assumptions of social constructivism are of paramount importance. A primary goal of this research was to identify the need for organizational change and to provide some idea of the methods through which this change can be achieved. For the GC to effectively engage with Canadians online, it is necessary for this institution to re-evaluate its current communication practices, recognize that they have been socially constructed over time, and acknowledge that, within the

worldview of social constructivism, these same social processes can be utilized to change them in such a way that will facilitate meaningful online dialogue with Canadians.

For social constructivists, reality is “a subjective construction created by people” in the context of their social worlds and experiences (Flecha, Gomez & Puigvert, 2003, p.52). Such an assumption has been of particular value to this project, as it is important to understand the reality perceived by members of a particular organization in order to understand their views towards specific campaigns and programs. A major focus of this research involved examining the influence that the current socially constructed, and firmly established, texts regarding communication policies and practices has on the effectiveness of messages that are communicated by the GC in traditional and online contexts. Given such purposes, social constructivism as an underlying worldview is certainly appropriate because of its premise that “humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspectives” (Creswell, 2009, p.8). Although my research has not examined human subjects, it is still important to consider how people engage with their world, as communication policies and practices are ultimately a result of socially constructed realities. Essentially, “we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture” (Creswell, 2009, p.8). With this in mind, this research has been approached within the social realities of the GC and the co-constructed worldviews of the communicators who authored *Considerations for the Government of Canada’s use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public*.

This worldview is closely linked to the underpinnings of the naturalistic methodology upheld by qualitative content analysis and is reflective of my own

perspective on the social realities of modern organizations. It is also compatible with the overall design and goals of this research as it is fundamental to the basic assumptions of structuration theory, which have been employed as the primary theoretical lens; and the possibility and plausibility of change within the GC.

Methodology

It is important to note that in this study I conceive of research method and methodology as being interconnected, yet distinct notions. To elaborate, the method simply constitutes a set of tools that will be used to conduct a particular study, while the methodology represents the more complex philosophical and theoretical underpinnings that inform the method being employed. In my research I employ qualitative content analysis as my method and draw on the philosophical worldview of social constructivism within the paradigm of naturalistic inquiry.

Content analysis, through a qualitative lens can be conceived as the systematic study of cultural texts and their role in social practices (Berg, 1998). My textual analysis is therefore not focused on language as an abstract entity, but rather as a medium for interaction. Based on this qualitative conception of content analysis, research that focuses on various forms of texts or discourses fundamentally becomes an analysis of what people do (Berg, 1998).

Throughout its historical development content analysis was initially championed as a predominantly quantitative method of inquiry (Krippendorff, 1980; Holsti, 1969). Over time, however, the utility of a qualitative approach to content analysis has been established, particularly in the fields of health and communications (social scientific) research. The methodological foundations of the historically-rooted and firmly

established quantitative camp are deeply entrenched in positivist conceptions of society and humanity, and are thus commonly associated with research designs with reductionistic goals and methodological underpinnings. Positivism represents a philosophical worldview that is concerned with absolute knowledge and truth (Creswell, 2009). It is commonly defined as “a family of philosophies characterized by an extremely positive evaluation of science and scientific method” (Reese, 1980, p. 450). This “family” includes abstractions such as reductionism, a concept that informs quantitative research that aims to “reduce ideas into small, discrete sets of ideas” for the yielding concrete findings that can be replicated and generalized (Creswell, 2009, p. 10).

My qualitative approach to textual analysis, however, is actually rooted in a completely different set of methodological underpinnings. The methodology that informs my study connects well with my own philosophical worldview of social constructivism, which conceives of social realities and meaning as being constructed and negotiated by the members of a given social system (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This perspective is closely tied to the naturalistic paradigm commonly associated with qualitative research.

Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba (1985) define naturalistic inquiry based on five axioms: ontological and epistemological foundations, the possibility of generalization and causal linkages, and the role of values (p.37). The first deals with the nature of reality, which the naturalistic paradigm recognizes as consisting of multiple, negotiated, and socially constructed realities – an ontology that aligns closely with the overall worldview that informs my study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The epistemological assumptions of this paradigm also align with my approach to the analysis as naturalists recognize that the inquirer and the ‘object’ of inquiry interact to influence one another,

and that both elements are inextricably linked (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The possibility of generalization is typically not a primary aim of naturalistic inquiry. Instead, the goals of my research aim to form conclusions and findings that describe the individual case of the GC (Golafshani, 2003). Similarly, the possibility of causal linkages is not a primary goal of research informed by the methodology of naturalism as “all entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping”; the process of analysis does not follow any form of linear path and therefore it becomes impossible to distinguish causes from effects (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38). Finally, unlike the positivist tradition where research must be “value-free”, a naturalistic research design is ultimately “value-bound” in a number of ways (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 38). For example, my own values are expressed through the research in the choice of topic and overall goals, as well as in the general framing of my discussion of context, process, and findings. The tenants and values of my theoretical lens, Structuration Theory, and its founder, Anthony Giddens, also bear influence on the values espoused by the research design and its results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln & Guba (1985) contend that the impingement of such values on the research design does not affect its value and rigour, provided that the values put forth are “*value-resonant*” or reinforcing of each other, rather than conflicting. Overall, both the personal, philosophical, methodological, and theoretical values that run through this research ultimately align with a similar conception of the world as a place where social realities are multiple, varied and co-constructed through social practices and texts. Thus, a naturalistic approach to this analysis allows me to maintain my constructivist worldview while gleaning meaningful insights from my analysis that will ultimately enhance the GC’s social media engagement strategies and efforts.

Method & Process

The multifaceted method of content analysis (CA) is broadly defined as the systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic materials and the structured analysis of message characteristics (Neuendorf, 2002). As a research method, CA is comprised of both qualitative and quantitative methods that can be utilized to analyze data in the form of verbal, print, or electronic communication (Kondracki, Wellman & Amundson, 2002). It is a method and process for “the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Thus, my chosen method goes beyond merely counting words and, instead, takes a more organic approach to textual analysis. CA is a useful tool through which to “provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of ‘facts’, and a practical way forward” (Krippendorff, 1980, p. 21). CA can be used to identify principal and prominent themes, relative emphasis on various thematic threads, as well as to examine “latent or inferred meanings” of the data under analysis (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 224).

“Research using qualitative content analysis focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). The process itself usually includes close readings of the text and coding of data or messages. Overall, the systematic, yet naturalistic approach of the method allows for “conclusions to be drawn about such factors as the presence or absence of particular ideas, theories, or biases; the extent of coverage of specified topics; contradictions; or myths, to name but a few applications” (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 224).

The selection of the specific strand of CA to be employed is a decision that was informed by my vision and goals for the study and was also contingent upon a number of design-related considerations that can be clarified by pondering “the type(s) and length of material to be analyzed, results desired, and researchers’ preferences and technological capabilities” (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 224). Bruce Berg (1998) describes CA as consisting of two axes: *intent*, which involves determining the purpose of the study and the outcome desired; and *technology*, which differentiates the actual method of analysis, be it manual reading and analysis, computerized coding, or some combination of the two. The intent axis is where most of the method-related considerations can be clarified.

Berg’s (1998) discussion of CA also lends support to both my research design and methodology. The overall goal of my research was to illuminate existing social practices in the GC related to social media; determine if they pose barriers to effective social media engagement projects; and provide some practical recommendations going forward related to future discourse, efforts, strategies, and programs. Berg (1998) contends that a qualitative approach is most convenient with text-based data, which allowed the analysis to explore the (thematic) richness of the data. Such features of qualitative research design are particularly appropriate and useful because of the foundational and exploratory nature of my study.

Another consideration that lies on the *intent* axis involves deciding whether the research will take an inductive or deductive approach to the study. In an inductive approach, “the researcher first examines the communication messages in question without preconceived notions of categories” (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 225). Whereas deductive techniques allow “the researcher [to] begin with predetermined

keywords, categories, or variables” (based on relevant literature or other resources) and sifts the data using these variables” (Knodracki et. al., 2002, p. 225). It is noteworthy that these approaches to qualitative CA are not mutually exclusive; thus, I decided to incorporate both into my research design in an attempt to enrich the analysis of the sample. At the outset of this research, my intent was primarily deductive as it entailed identifying the prominent themes related to social media in the existing scholarly literature and utilizing them to inform my understanding of “effective social media engagement” and the subsequent analysis of the data. As the research design evolved, I also decided to incorporate five signposts (*see below*), which were adapted from research employing discourse analysis, to guide the analysis and allow for additional thematic categories to emerge from the data (Thurlow, 2007). The relationships among the predetermined and emergent themes yielded by the analysis are of particular significance to my study and therefore, the benefit of incorporating elements of an inductive and deductive approach to the design.

Drawing again on the intentions of the researcher and goals of the study, determining whether the research will examine the manifest¹⁵ or latent¹⁶ content of the sample is an additional design-related issue (Berg, 1998). My process involved an assessment of both forms of textual content. However, given the nature of thematic devices themselves, and my intention of “drawing conclusion to add broader meaning to the text,” latent content was of primary importance to my findings (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 225).

¹⁵ Manifest content is surface level content that is explicit in the text (Berg, 1998).

¹⁶ Latent content is deeper, implicit meanings in the discourse (Berg, 1998).

Within this approach, the initial coding process demands a broad and flexible approach to the textual analysis. As close readings progress, the criteria provided by the predetermined thematic devices and guiding signposts are utilized to create concrete thematic categories and subcategories. The data is organized (and, if necessary, reorganized) into these more narrowly focused codes as they develop. Berg outlines many different approaches to coding that can be adopted in a qualitative approach. With the goal of taking a flexible and thorough approach to the analysis, I incorporated features of both inductive and deductive inquiry that search for both manifest and latent meanings to arise from the text based on predetermined thematic threads and signposts. In addition, my coding process took into account various types of codes that can be utilized when using content analysis. American sociologist Anselm Strauss (1987) differentiates between *in vivo codes* and *sociological constructs* in content analysis. *In vivo* codes derive directly from the sample under examination and use the literal language used in the data, whereas, sociological constructs are created by the researcher, and commonly materialize in the form of phrases or categories that provide a linguistic representation of what the researcher sees in the language (Berg, 1998). For example, “democratic idealism” is a term I coined to represent the ongoing thematic presence of language that refers positively to the democratizing potential of Web 2.0 in the literature and the sample. The inclusion of both forms of coding was beneficial to my analysis as they connect well with the combination of inductive and deductive techniques that are employed in my study.

Also in line with the exploratory goals of my research and the holistic nature of my qualitative design, the process of “open coding” was adopted as a second step to

compliment and further enrich the analysis that utilized the predetermined themes and conceptual signposts (Strauss, 1987). According to Berg (1998), it is necessary to remain cognizant that “although interpretations, questions, and even possible answers may seem to emerge as researchers code, it is important to hold these as tentative at best” (p. 236). Open coding allows the coding process to follow a set of reasoned and guided steps, while also ensuring that a comprehensive approach is taken when coding the data. Strauss (1987) prescribes four basic guidelines for open coding, three of which are applicable to the nature of my textual analysis: “(1) ask the data a specific and consistent set of questions” (p. 30) (my “questions” are guided by predetermined themes and signposts), “(2) analyze the data minutely” (p. 30), which calls for starting with broad categories and narrowing the focus throughout; and “(3) frequently interrupt the coding to write a theoretical note” (p. 30), a criteria that is fulfilled by my decision to include an informal journal during the coding process.

CA offers a multitude of approaches and numerous options for research design that is informed by a variety of methodological and theoretical underpinnings. The commonly cited concepts of validity and reliability are deeply rooted in the positivist worldview that informs quantitative research designs, and are important concepts in quantitative content analysis, particularly when replication and generalization of data are the primary aims of a study (Golafshani, 2003). My research goals, however, are more explorative and, thus demand an organic and naturalistic method of textual analysis. The chosen qualitative approach is less concerned with generalizability of findings, and more concerned with the soundness of the logic employed and its value to the context-specific institution under analysis (the GC) (Golafshani, 2003).

Within my qualitative research design, which employs an approach to textual analysis, it is ultimately the *quality* of the study that is of key importance (Golasfhani, 2003). My study attempts to contextualize and synthesize the GC's complexity of structure, policies, and legislation, as well as the demands of social media, technology, and public communication into a meaningful research design that will serve to foster growth and change in the way this bureaucracy communicates on and about social media at all levels. Such an approach aligns my research with the conception of a sound qualitative design as serving to provide an understanding of a situation "that would otherwise remain enigmatic or confusing" (Eisner, 1991, p. 58).

Content analysis is, at present, still a fluid method, as the techniques that constitute its methodology are constantly growing and evolving. With respect to my research design, the use of content analysis had both strengths and weaknesses. Content analysis allows for the use of retrospective data, something that was imperative to my research as the latest formal documents produced by the GC were authored in late 2009. Additional advantages include lower costs associated with this type of research, as well as the unobtrusive nature of the research process, which decreases the occurrence of "unwanted interaction effects between subject and researcher" (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 227). Finally, "content analysis methods can be used to track messages over time, to assess changes, or detect trends," which fits well with the exploratory nature and thematic focus of my study and will prove useful to follow-up research that can build upon the findings of this groundbreaking analysis (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 227). The method proves useful in measuring knowledge and assessing attitudes and behaviours, which in this case are the attitudes and behaviours related to social media initiatives and the GC

(Berger, 1998). Based on these features of CA, such an approach proves useful to the evaluation of the thematic trends of GC communication about social media, and the findings yielded can, in time, lead to improvements of the language and themes used in this particular strand of the GC's institutional texts and discussions.

Although CA is certainly a useful method to form a foundation of knowledge upon which the GC can build to improve their social media engagement strategies and resulting projects, it is not without its limitations. For instance, it is imperative to acknowledge that CA limits the nature of inferences drawn, as the results yielded from this qualitative method of analysis cannot be generalized to other texts and institutions. Another noteworthy limitation is that CA cannot assess causality in its findings and conclusions. In other words, "content analysis can identify relationships...but, on its own, it cannot explain how those relationships came to exist" (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 227). While this is unfortunate, it is not detrimental to this study as the key goal is change and progression rather than continuity and retrospection.

Sample

The research design utilized an internal policy document titled *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public* as its sample (See Appendix B). This document was developed by a working group of GC communicators in affiliation with the Communications Community Office (CCO) and disseminated internally in August 2009.

The CCO is an interdepartmental initiative that was created and funded by the GC. Its primary goal is to promote professionalism, collaboration, and excellence in

government communications. The authors of the sample, The Working Group on Applying Leading Edge Technologies, consists of 120 federal employees, from 33 GC departments and agencies who have collaborated to outline the key considerations that are necessary to effective social media use in the Canadian public sector.

The document structure is summarized in the table of contents (*see Figure IV*). It begins with a brief, contextual overview of the current state of GC online communication. This is followed by a more comprehensive section that provides a summary of Web 2.0 and a description of the various platforms. This introductory material constitutes the first third of the document and serves a primarily expository function, providing the reader with in-depth background on the many applications that constitute online social media. Following this section, the general barriers and challenges facing the GC with respect to online communication are outlined, as are all existing policies that are relevant to the implementation of Web 2.0 projects; these include Procurement, Information Technology, Information Management, Access to Information, Privacy Protection, Copyright, and Communications. All subsequent sections are structured around these existing policies. Each section provides a brief description of the policy, a discussion of the specific considerations that are necessary for the implementation of social media projects, and an outline of the specific questions that arise and challenges that are present with respect to public communication via Web 2.0. It is also important to note that while this document focuses exclusively on social media and existing GC policy, the authors are careful to articulate that they are neither experts nor authorities on either subject.

While this document represents only a small portion of a larger, ongoing discussion that is occurring within GC communications circles regarding social media use, it is the first official internal document that has been created and disseminated within the institution regarding the necessary practical and policy considerations that need to be addressed if the GC is to effectively utilize social media as a means of public communication and dialogue.

Forward	3
Introduction	6
Context (Excerpt from Phoenix Report)	6
Web 2.0/Social Media Environmental Scan	7
Characteristics of Social Media tools and examples of Government use	9
Policy Considerations	22
PROCUREMENT (CONTRACTING POLICY)	24
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (FOCUS ON IT SECURITY)	28
POLICIES ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION	31
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	35
ACCESSIBILITY & COMMON LOOK AND FEEL (CLF) STANDARDS	40
POLICY ON PRIVACY PROTECTION	45
COPYRIGHT	50
COMMUNICATIONS POLICY	54
Conclusion	59
Endnotes	60
Useful References	62

Figure IV – Table of Contents (CCO Working Group, 2009)

Data Collection

A former colleague and current Communications Advisor at the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada provided this document to me with the understanding that it would be utilized for graduate research. It was electronically transmitted in February 2010, and at this time it was the most recent internal document pertaining to GC communications efforts regarding online social media. The document was chosen due to its ease of accessibility, as well as its “newness” and relevance. While

access to previously commissioned documents such as a comparative report authored by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (2008) titled “New Technologies and Government of Canada Communications” were available for use, the most recent, internally-authored document was selected as the sample because of the constantly evolving and progressive nature of the subject matter.

This research relied on a close reading and systematic textual analysis to identify the presence of the primary themes that have emerged from the literary survey (these arose through words, phrases, structure etc.). The analysis was also informed by the theoretical lens of Giddens’s (1984) ST, specifically, the concepts of system and structure (rules and resources), the processes of structuration, and the instances in which structure and/or agency bear influence on institutional perspectives and approaches to public communication. As a starting point, the analysis attempted to identify the presence of the themes of ‘democratic idealism’, ‘dialogical necessity’, ‘organizational change’, ‘organizational continuity’, and ‘the cultural shift in communication’ in the sample; such themes were identified from the Literature Review as dominant and significant with respect to social media.

The themes derived from the literature were identified as most important when constructing a text that aims to improve an organization’s social media efforts, and the prevalence of such themes in the sample would serve to ensure that the social reality stemming from the organizational text is compatible with the demands of the current social media environment. While the themes are central to organizational approaches to and discussions about effective social media use, they served merely as a starting point for this analysis. Operating within the paradigm of qualitative research, it was important

to recognize that these themes may not take precedence in the text and additional motifs and patterns may emerge from the sample as the analysis progressed. Thus, the themes discussed in the findings of this research are slightly different from those outlined above. Also, because these themes served only as a preliminary guide, this analysis has also adopted signposts, which were informed by the tenants of discourse analysis and served as an additional conceptual guide for the close textual readings (*see below*). The signposts informed the nuances of the sample, provided the analysis with a structured guide, and allowed new thematic threads to emerge from the text itself. For example, one signpost prescribes that the researcher allow “the text and context inform the overall analysis.” While reading, I noticed a prevalence of language surrounding cyber security, as well as a lot of explicit questions that articulated concern regarding the security implications of using media hosted on third-party websites. The prevalence of words like risk, security, defence, danger, threat, vulnerability, and surveillance, in combination with my contextual understanding of the GC as an institution that is consumed with concern for respecting policies, rights, and legislation, prompted me to examine such language further to uncover a deeper thematic construct.

These emergent themes were then interpreted and analyzed with reference to the organizational context in which the text has been created. The number of close readings necessary to complete the analysis was not prescribed ahead of time. Instead, I decided that close textual readings would continue until no new themes emerged from the text.

Signposts

The guiding signposts for this research were adapted from Amy Thurlow’s (2007)

Meaningful change: Making sense of the discourse of the language of change, which

employed Critical Discourse Analysis and were created based on the guiding principles of discourse analysis as articulated by Teun Van Dijk (1993) and Linda Putnam (2005). Although this study is not a discourse analysis, the signposts were nonetheless a valuable conceptual guide that allowed new thematic trends to emerge from the sample.

This study utilized the following signposts to guide the analysis:

1. Let the text and context inform the overall analysis. While themes have been identified from the literature, the analysis will allow for further thematic threads to emerge. The analysis will also be carried out with reference to the organizational context and structure in which the text was produced. (Whose interests are served? What voices are missing?)
2. Allow the text to inform the concepts, the concepts to inform the text, and take an open and flexible approach to the analysis.
3. Look for contradictions and inconsistencies in the text, as well as, themes and issues that are unexpected (missing voices, missing issues that are deemed important based on the literature, etc.).
4. Dispute your own interpretations and explanations by remaining cognizant of the reflexive nature of the chosen research method.
5. Look for language and themes that allow the discourse to reflect the structures of the organization.

The above signposts served as a general conceptual guide allowed the central thematic categories of the text to emerge while ensuring that key theoretical and contextual considerations are acknowledged and discussed within the analysis. While there were selected themes already identified and derived from the literature review, the above signposts allowed me, as the researcher, to think critically about the existing themes while, at the same time, allowed new thematic threads to emerge. From both the predetermined and emergent themes, various codes, and keywords were determined. To illustrate the logic that underlies my organization, with the broad thematic category of “democratic idealism”, various themes were identified through close readings. Again, these were informed both by my own contextualized understanding of the concept of democracy as it is presented in the literature survey, as well as the language used in the sample itself. For example, as close readings and coding focused on this predetermined theme progressed, the codes were organized, evaluated, and reevaluated. The overarching sociological construct of “democratic idealism” was further classified into secondary strands, which I labeled: (1) “the democratizing potential of Web 2.0 technologies”; (2) “the overwhelming power of the average user”; and (3) “the importance of meeting Canadians in the online spaces they already use”. It is also important to note that this process did not occur in a linear fashion, but was rather a circular process, which is fitting with the exploratory nature of this research.

While the research design and method required frequent and multiple close readings and in-depth textual analysis, it was thematically oriented rather than focused on dissecting the text into measurable units. Therefore the coding process was essentially one of “organizing communication content in a manner that allows for easy

identification, indexing, or retrieval of content relevant to research questions” – in this case, thematic threads (Kondracki et. al., 2002, p. 224). Based on my own personal preference, as well as the factors of ease of access and navigation, QSR NVivo 7 was utilized as a means to retain all of my data in a single electronic location for the purpose of remaining organized and focused. QSR NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software designed to assist researchers with deep levels of analysis. This software is but one of many textbased managers available to qualitative researchers, and is a form of coding software that is well established as a useful tool that helps to systematically organize information that is unstructured or richly text-based (Berg, 1998; QSR International, 2007).

All themes identified within the literature were treated as an umbrella category and entered into the software as Tree Nodes, the accompanying sub-nodes entered under each Tree Node identified codes or key words and ideas associated with each theme. Each reading of the text was typically undertaken with one signpost or theme as its central focus to ensure that each concept or guiding principle received an equal amount of attention. As close readings progressed and new themes emerged, a new Tree Node was added to accompany the new thread, as were additional sub-nodes which documented the codes or keywords for each theme (*See Appendix C*).

Throughout the coding process, I also kept a separate unstructured journal, which allowed me to elaborate on my thought process when coding words, phrases, and ideas under various thematic categories. This served as a useful practice because this journal constituted a vital portion of my in-depth analysis, which occurred as a process throughout the months of close readings and thematic investigation. This journal was

also beneficial as it allowed me to track how my own perspectives changed and the nature of principal themes were reconceptualized over the course of the analysis. For example, this journal was a significant factor in my discovery of the prevalence of the predetermined theme of ‘organizational continuity,’ which steadily gained prominence as the analysis progressed. As I reflected upon the entries made throughout the initial coding, I found an entry that stated, “there is a lot of language that’s focused on upholding and respecting traditional structures and existing policies – *what is being accomplished by this?*” This prompted me to revisit the portions of the sample I cited and examine the diction and format more closely for thematic significance. This led to the eventual decision to code specific portions of the descriptions and discussions of policies including Information Management and Common Look and Feel Standards under the theme of organizational continuity. Thus, from here I proceeded to analyze these codes more closely through the lens of Giddens’s perspective on the duality of structure and agency. It becomes evident that, in addition to documenting my thought processes, this informal, unstructured journal allowed me to draw connections among the thematic threads and identify the relationships, processes, and structures: key reflections that ultimately formed the basis of my overall analysis, findings, and conclusions.

As a result of this open, exploratory, and thus, circular approach to my study, the outcomes of my thematically oriented textual analysis do not align all that closely with what I had expected in the earlier stages of the design. While the predetermined themes, which I expected would dominate the document, influence and alter existing institutional structures, and introduce new approaches and strategies for public communication, were present in the text, the themes of security, access, and continuity that emerged from my

content analysis were actually the thematic constructs that dominated the document and, thus bear influence on the institution's structures and social practices.

Chapter 5 – Analysis & Discussion

Overview

The foundation of this research revolves around the constructivist assertion that social reality is produced and made real through talk and text (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). The existing Government discourse of social media both produces and transmits meaning to those within the institution, thus providing a means through which to understand and define the social realities of the GC. The methodological foundation of this research assumes there is a set of shared “meanings” or themes that are perpetuated by institutional texts, meanings that determine the overall function of the text itself. Thus, my analysis serves to reveal the social realities of the institution and to assist in the examination of how these realities are constructed in government documents. I will illustrate that this GC text about social media is, in fact, limiting the implementation of effective social media engagement strategies.

My analysis will provide an overview of the four primary thematic constructs that were derived from the literature survey: democratic idealism, dialogical necessity, the cultural shift in communication, and organizational change. The discussion will also outline the themes that emerged as a result of the guiding signposts and close readings – these include access, security, and organizational continuity. Collectively, all seven thematic constructs were identified as having a presence in the document, however, in the interest of time, space, resources, and clarity, my discussion will focus on the four most prominent thematic threads of democratic idealism, access, security, and institutional continuity. As this is a qualitative study the “prominence” of the themes is not based on quantitative and numerical measures such as frequency – instead, the most

prominent thematic threads were identified based on my close textual readings, as well as my foundational and contextual research, my guiding methodology and signposts, my QSR-journal, and the overall assessment of the text as informed by all of these factors.

Guiding Themes

Based on the provisions of my chosen method of qualitative content analysis and its underlying methodology of naturalism, the process of analyzing the sample was guided by significant themes adapted from the literature and guiding signposts adapted from studies employing discourse analysis. The overall goals of this analysis were organic, and while the conceptual guide provided by the themes and signposts was valuable, the analysis actually revealed that the themes I extracted from the literature as deemed as vital to organizational discourses of social media did not hold a place of prominence in the sample.

As mentioned above, the thematic constructs extracted from my literature review identified: democratic idealism; dialogical necessity; the cultural shift in communication; and organizational change and continuity as the most prominent and valuable themes to any talk or text concerned with developing effective social media engagement strategies.

Democratic idealism.

A great deal of the literature argues that social media technologies yield a “promise” of democracy by providing ordinary citizens with the opportunity to actively participate in society, engage with others regarding political issues, and have a voice with which to engage in dialogue with other individuals and government representatives (Brewer et. al., 2006; Natchaeva, 2002). Some of the literature is critical of this promise,

arguing that the potential for social media to enhance democracy is merely an idealistic and utopian assertion (Bekkers & Homburg, 2007; Freeman & Hutchins, 2009). My data analysis looked for statements and words that alluded to either the idealistic or critical perspective of the democratizing potential of social media. I also examined whether the GC has a positive or negative view of this potential.

Dialogical necessity.

One of the key features of social media technologies is that it provides an online forum where people can engage in conversations with each other regarding any number of issues (Agozzino, 2010; Chu, 2009; Crawford, 2009; Solis & Breakeyridge, 2009). For organizations to successfully use social media as a means of communication, they must be willing to engage in dialogue with users and respond to their concerns, queries, and comments with immediacy (Jaeger et. al., 2007; Murray, 2009; Solis & Breakeyridge, 2009). Based on this foundational literature, my analysis of this text looked for references to the necessity for a two-way, reciprocal approach to public communication.

The cultural shift in communication.

Another theme that emerged from the literature is that of a fundamental shift in the way we communicate with each other and with organizations that have an impact on our lives (Fitzgerald, 2008; Urista et. al., 2009). The rise of social media has engendered new demands with respect to online communication. Concepts such as immediacy and portability are now of paramount importance, as is the idea that online communication serves a social function, emphasizing concepts such as interactivity, collaboration, and

information and idea sharing. Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the fundamental changes in public communication that have accompanied this cultural shift, which are of vital importance for organizations who wish to engage effectively on these platforms (Eyrich et. al., 2008; Smith, 2009; Steyn et. al., 2010). Notions of embracing the medium and moving traditional communication into an online sphere are also accentuated. The analysis has closely examined *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public* for acknowledgement of this cultural shift and whether or not the GC is open to the fundamental changes in communication that are necessary for the effective use of social media as a vehicle of public engagement and communication.

Organizational change & continuity.

Both the relevant literature and the theoretical foundations of this research reflect the themes of continuity and change within organizational contexts (Jaeger et. al.; Redmond & Likely, 2002; Giddens, 1979; Giddens, 1984). Various studies emphasize the need for a significant change in social practices related to government communication if Web 2.0 is to be used to engage with citizens (Vincent & Harris, 2008). The sociological construct of organizational change was borrowed from Chreim's (2005) study. Additionally, because her work included a discussion of continuity in concert with change, this theme was also included in the thematic threads derived from the literature, which served as an initial guide for the analysis. The thematic presence of language that communicated the need for change in institutional approaches to social media use is particularly vital, as the current GC efforts to use social media have proven ineffectual and fail to engage Canadians in any meaningful dialogue with their government.

Throughout the document, I probed for language and words that reflect the GC's openness to transforming traditional approaches to communication, as well as language that perpetuates current, more traditional approaches to public communication practices.

Emergent Themes

Throughout the analysis, many themes that were not included in the predetermined constructs became apparent as my research progressed and close readings of the sample were conducted. The thread of "access" emerged early in the analysis from both the context and background research that informed my design. While "security" emerged as a principal theme during the initial close readings, "organizational continuity" gained prominence through the previously described process of open coding. In the following section, I provide an overview of these emerging themes.

Access.

The right of all Canadians to have equal access to all GC services, programs, and information is a major concern for top officials and policy-makers; more specifically, accessibility of Government information and services is of particular importance to all communications initiatives enacted by the GC. This concept is intimately connected to the language and ideals of democracy because in order for a democratic system to prove effective, all citizens must have equal access to information and equal opportunities to contribute to the democratic process. Thus access to GC information is an essential requirement of the Canadian system of democracy. The thematic construct of "access" emerged from the contextual and background research about the GC and its many

policies and procedures and was later merged with the theme of democracy to provide a more holistic understanding of both thematic constructs.

Governments around the world have started to use social media to engage their citizens and employees. The Canadian Government has been slowly incorporating social media pilots into their communication strategies in the hope that such platforms will provide significant “opportunities for government leaders to connect to their stakeholders and learn about their needs” (Chun & Warner, 2010, p. 5). Through the Internet, the Government is able to share a “rich set of information” to a much larger audience than before. Many scholars including Soon Ae Chun, Stuart Shulman, Rodrigo Sandoval, and Eduard Hovy (2010) argue that the proliferation of Internet use provides a possible means for all Canadian citizens to have access to the same quality and quantity of information. They further contend that this has “extended the notions of participatory democracy” and created “a digital market place of information” (Chun et. al., 2010, p. 4).

Security.

As close readings of the sample were conducted, I observed the commanding presence of a concern for and questions about risks, threats, and security. I began noting these instances and through the process of open coding I subsequently divided these references into two in vivo codes of: cyber-security and protection against litigation. The theme of cyber-security quickly gained prominence in my analysis and was clearly articulated in this text as a primary concern for Web 2.0 initiatives. It is noteworthy that “cyber-security” emerges and maintains thematic prominence throughout the entire text and is particularly commanding in the policy-specific sections of the sample.

Continuity.

Any attempt by the GC to integrate social media into the firmly established, traditional way of communicating with Canadians must recognize, address, and embrace the need for change if initiatives are to be successful. As I began my analysis I expected that the construct of “organizational change” would be a principal theme. While the presence of the language of change was identified during my coding and analysis, the thematic strand of “organizational continuity” surprisingly overshadowed it. Throughout the sample, multiple words, phrases, and sections were identified that served to reproduce or emulate the language of preexisting government texts and thus, the processes of structuration and resulting social realities. It is this preoccupation with existing policy and legislation that revealed the principal thematic thread of continuity.

Analysis of Principal Themes

Upon concluding my close textual analysis and open coding process, I was mindful of my own reflexivity when determining which thematic threads were the more prominent in the text. When beginning this process I had expected the constructs of “dialogical necessity,” “the cultural shift in communication,” and “organizational change” to be the dominating themes of the text. What actually became apparent, however, was that while these themes were present, they were actually marginalized in favour of themes of democracy, access, security, and continuity. Thus, the social reality (or “structure”) that results from the process of structuration (or the creation of this text) actually serves to maintain the current social realities that have produced the existing, ineffectual social media initiatives commissioned by the GC.

Democracy and democratic idealism.

The GC is a democracy, in which the governing power is derived from the majority of the people, through consensus, referendum, and elected representatives of society. Based on the general provisions of democratic systems of governments and my contextual understanding of the GC specifically, it was anticipated that this, or any formal discourse related to public communication produced within the GC would explicitly articulate concern for respecting the ideals of democracy and the accompanying concerns of access for all. It is important to note that true democracy often materializes in social reality as more of a conceptual ideal than a concrete, attainable reality. Although many scholars assert that Web 2.0 technology has the potential to enrich and further the cause of democracy, there are many more critical perspectives present in the literature. This research aimed to identify the presence of the themes of democracy and access in this portion of the formal GC discourse of social media and utilize the analysis to determine whether or not the ideals of democracy and access are realistic and plausible in the current social reality of the institution.

In a representative democracy such as the GC, votes have equal weight and the freedom of the country's citizens is secured by legitimized rights and liberties which are generally protected by a constitution. Democracy is commonly defined simply as "the rule of the people, for and by the people" (Opuamie-Ngoa, 2010, p.1). To elaborate, democracy, as an ideal, is conceived as the rule of the people through debate and discussion that is open to all members in a given society who wish to participate, as opposed to rule by arbitrary will or dictation by an individual or a smaller group of individuals (Opuamie-Ngoa, 2010). "A common denominator here is that the people

constitute the foundation of the democratic space; in other words, democracy has to run according to the wishes, directions and decisions of the people”(Opuamie-Ngoa, 2010, p. 1).

Through policies and legislation, as well as social media, governments such as the GC have to represent themselves in a way that will facilitate dialogue and better suit the freedom of their citizens as stated by the Human Rights Act and other policies. As a result of such demands, a balance in legislation needs to remain stable between the people and the Government. For democracy to operate effectively, a society needs not only a well-informed citizenry, but must also provide the means for freedom of participation in the decision-making process and accountability to the citizens by those who exercise power on their behalf. Any governing and governed environment that encourages and enables citizen participation in decision-making can be described as a “functional democracy” (Opuamie-Ngoa, 2010).

Mass media and democracy balance well because a democratic system of governance is the only form of government that respects freedom of speech, expression, and information, as well as the independence of the media from the government (Trappel & Maniglio, 2009). The notion that the people are constituted as the foundation in the democratic definition is a fundamental notion, as effective communication via social media is facilitated with the ability to gain access to information and public forums. Generally, the media have three specific democratic functions to carry out: to safeguard the flow of information, to provide a forum for public discussion, and to act as a public watchdog against the abuse of prevalent power (Trappel & Maniglio, 2006). The ideals of social media often frame it as enriching the democratic function of media, as it provides

the common citizen with a public platform through which to gain information, voice their opinions, and publicly discuss pertinent issues. However, in order to contribute effectively to the ideal of democracy, social media must also facilitate two-way communication between the government and its people, while ensuring that concerned citizens still have the ability to voice their opinions without fear of ridicule.

Based on the literature, the theme of democratic idealism was identified as a concept that could enrich government texts about social media and facilitate the implementation of effective Web 2.0 projects. Thus, I expected to see this concept of democratic idealism evidenced in the text. The analysis revealed that this theme is prominent in the text, and is actually a component of the emergent and overall presence of “the language of democracy”. Numerous thematic threads including the democratizing potential of social media for the GC and the power of the average user accompany this broad theme. The close textual analysis also revealed language that placed emphasis on the general importance of upholding and respecting the basic provisions and ideals of Canadian democracy.

Throughout the text, there are statements that allude to the traditionally cited provisions of Canadian democracy, which serve to establish a theme of continuity that connects this text to a previously-constructed discourse of Canadian democracy present in the authoritative resources of existing GC policy and law. For example, in the discussion of Official Language (OL) concerns (p.35-9), the statements regarding the public’s “right to communicate with and receive services in either English or French” serve to apply the previously held conditions of democracy to this new online context (p. 35). Similarly, it is articulated that “the government is committed to openness and

transparency by respecting both the spirit and requirements of the Access to Information Act, its Regulations and its related policy instruments” (p. 31). In addition, the specific case example of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade’s (DFAIT) Policy E-Discussion program illuminates that GC Departments are attempting to utilize new media of communication in an attempt to enrich the existing democratic process. Within this thematic thread the emergence of the theme of continuity begins to become apparent in relation to the language of democracy, a feature that must be present given the nature of the concept itself and its intimate connection to all GC activities.

Through the frame of Structuration Theory (ST), the existing policies can be best understood as *authoritative resources* or intangible assets that derive from the coordination of the activity of human agents – in this case, policy-makers. The very act of drawing on existing resources in this new text also reflects the *rules*, or unconscious social norms, that influence the processes of structuration that constitute the creation of this document. It is an institutional practice of the GC to reproduce previously-established resources to ensure consistency of language about a given subject matter. This institutional practice is but one example of the processes of structuration from which the current structure and social realities of the institution result. This is an example of how structure, or the rules and resources repeatedly implicated in social reproduction, can act as a guard for the reproduction of a given social reality.

A dominant thematic thread related to the power of the user is evident within the broad thematic construct of democracy. This thread includes references to the equal influence of institution and individual in a Web 2.0 environment, the nature of the media,

themselves, as being supportive of democratic ideals, and the overall importance of meeting the public in the online spaces they already occupy. In the introductory section of the document, the description of the various social media platforms are somewhat focused on the power of the users. There are multiple references to users' abilities to post and manage content, to create profiles and build networks of their choice, and to utilize these media to meet personal communicative and social preferences. This shift in communicative power is intimately connected to the democratizing potential of social media applications that is emphasized in the work of Brewer, et. al. (2006), as individual agency is identified as a key feature of social media applications. The nature of the language used in this expository section also serves to illuminate that the characteristics of the online platforms themselves are supportive of the ideals of democracy, as they are described as giving the average citizen the power to contribute to ongoing conversations about current issues facing Canadians. While some members of the Working Group thought that a GC-hosted platform "would be useful as it would allow the GC to ensure the integrity of the message and to comply with applicable policy requirements, others felt strongly that part of the reason for using other channels is to bring the message to where people are spending their time." (p. 5). Within the expository descriptions of specific social media platforms, there is a considerable amount of emphasis on the individual agency of users as they choose to use the applications, create accounts, share or conceal certain information, and participate in conversations of interest. For example, the document describes social networks as "fundamentally closed spaces" and emphasizes that "users control what is visible to the public and to the network of 'friends' or colleagues" (p. 12). Similarly, the language used to outline the features of wikis draws

attention to the fact that such online spaces “*allow users* to add, edit, manage, search and link content” (p. 16). Overall the authors put forth the argument commonly present in the literature that Web 2.0 “is more than just the technology and web-based applications that allow for easy online publishing, sharing and collaboration. Moreover it represents a cultural shift to an online environment that views the Internet as a platform for services and embraces a common set of core values (e.g. user as producer, collective intelligence).” (p.7).

It is important that new technologies advance the GC’s ability to connect with Canadians in efficient and practical ways, and the interactive features and participatory nature of these media are undoubtedly supportive of such goals (Natchaeva, 2002). Within this thematic thread that addresses the power of the user, the text also contains statements that relate directly to the important feature articulated in the practical literature, of meeting the public in the spaces in which they are already communicating. Throughout the sample, issues such as procurement of technologies are discussed, as is the possibility of creating a GC-hosted social media platform. The idea of a GC hosted medium is at odds with the idea of the importance of joining existing online networks and conversations. In trying to determine where creative production of social media should reside, the GC needs to consider where (the majority of) Canadians are spending their time online. A social media initiative hosted by the GC on a GC domain is not compatible with the practice of meeting publics in the online spaces that they are already occupying. Similarly, procurement policies should not be a huge issue or challenge as, again, it is important to join Canadians in existing spaces and contribute to ongoing conversations regarding issues and concerns pertinent to the GC. Traditional

procurement procedures do not necessarily “fit” with the demands of social media engagement. The presence of such statements detracts from the conception of social media as having the potential to enrich the democratic process. However, in spite of this, the presence of language that espouses this ideal is present and, therefore, still significant.

Based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, there are divergent opinions within the existing scholarship with regard to whether or not social media actually enhances democracy. While researchers such as Irina Natchaeva (2002) argue that e-government initiatives can make government institutions more transparent and can broaden public participation in the democratic process, there are also contrasting arguments put forth by researchers such as Victor Bekkers and Vincent Homburg (2007). Their research is critical of the idea that online technologies have the potential to strengthen the democratic process and they argue that such idealistic perspectives are founded upon very little empirical evidence. It is important to remain cognizant of this divide in existing scholarship when analyzing the presence of the motif of democratic idealism in the text and endeavouring to provide a definitive assessment of its plausibility in the context of this official Government discourse.

Considerations for the Government of Canada’s use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public is littered with references to the requirement of social media initiatives to respect and uphold the provisions of democracy that govern all other communications. Therefore, it is logical that the text would articulate the ideals of democracy espoused in existing policy and law, as obviously our democratic system of government, whether successful or not, must be acknowledged and respected. For example, even though challenges arise with regard to upholding existing GC policy, such

as Common Look and Feel (CLF) and access standards regarding content on third party websites, the authors of the sample are careful to articulate the overall obligation of the GC to “consider and accommodate the needs of all Canadians” (p. 41). The reality is that some Canadians rely on social media as their primary means of information and communication. So while all Canadians are not using social media, many are, and in the spirit of democracy, it is therefore important to utilize these websites as a component of broader communications strategies. Within the text, the authors acknowledge the importance of using “multiple tools/sites/application to reach...target audiences while understanding that these products may cater to different audience segments and different levels of accessibility” (p.44). The GC has an obligation “to reach out and communicate with citizens” and this obligation is “concomitant with the right of citizens to address and be heard by their government” (p. 54). The sample contains many conventional statements about the ideals of democracy. Consider the following example:

In a democracy, listening to the public, researching, evaluating and addressing the needs of citizens is critical to the work of government. The government must learn as much as possible about public needs and expectations to respond to them effectively. The dialogue between citizens and their government must be continuous, open, inclusive, relevant, clear, secure and reliable. Communication is a two-way process. (p. 54)

Based on these general provisions of communication in a democratic system, this document proceeds to highlight that all of these demands must translate to social media engagement strategies and, in turn, acknowledge that social media undeniably has the potential to assist in achieving the communicative goals outlined by Canadian democracy as it is immediate, portable, and interactive.

At this stage in the analysis, it is important to consider the disagreement that exists in the literature regarding the democratizing potential of social media. In a similar fashion, the sample reflects the same bipolar perceptions of the democratizing potential of social media that is evident in the scholarly literature. While it is fair to claim that such online platforms have the potential to enhance the democratic process, it is important to maintain a critical perspective and remain cognizant of the reality that social media will likely not solve all the challenges facing democracy in Canada.

Social media initiatives need to serve as a component of a broad, multifaceted public communications strategy, and as institutions adopt new means of communication, they must continue to reach citizens who face challenges in relation to access to technologies or who prefer to obtain and receive government information through more traditional channels.

Nevertheless, the language of democracy remains undeniably present in this text and in the specific discussion of social media and the GC; there is a definite attempt to espouse the ideals of democracy within this new framework of Web 2.0. I would argue, however, that the presence of the language of democracy considered in concert with the earlier findings, which point to an absence of a definitive presence of the language of change with respect to dialogical demands and the cultural shift in communication, is ultimately limiting to any fair transformation of social realities that would foster the enrichment of the Canadian democratic process. Thus, while a discourse that furthers the enhancement of democratic ideals is not entirely impossible, it is much more idealistic and rhetorical than it is plausible and realistic.

Access.

One of the primary concerns articulated by the GC with regard to employing social media as a means of public communication is that social media engagement is at odds with the ideals put forth by official policies that address standards of access. This text about social media draws on the existing authoritative resources represented by GC policies and articulates a GC commitment to upholding existing access standards. In fact, the document includes a section of text that was taken verbatim from existing Treasury Board policy documents:

The GC recognizes the right of access by the public to information in records under the control of government institutions as an essential element of our system of democracy. The government is committed to openness and transparency by respecting both the spirit and requirements of the Access to Information Act, its Regulations and its related policy instruments. (p. 31 & Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2008, ¶ 5)

Overall, the sample includes various noteworthy thematic threads of access related to existing resources and policy provisions, the application of these provisions to a Web 2.0 context, specific challenges to existing policy that arise in relation to social media, and considerations of free and open source software applications. Based on the analysis, it is apparent that access in relation to the specific context of social media dominates its thematic presence in this GC text. Within the sample, there is a noteworthy presence of a discussion of access as a primary concern and significant challenge facing the implementation of social media projects.

Within this theme of access, traditional concerns are addressed with respect to existing policies. For example, the discussion of Official Languages emphasized the importance of ensuring that available online platforms enable users to access information and communication in both Official Languages. In addition, explicit statements are made

regarding the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the resulting responsibility of the GC to ensure that all “electronic and information technology is accessible to persons with disabilities” (p. 40).

This preoccupation with fitting new communications initiatives into the frame of existing resources is not surprising, as policy change can be quite an onerous and lengthy process. Within the frame of ST, this is an example of the authors drawing on existing structural rules and resources to act within the system. Such interactions and social practices actually serve to maintain current structures, thus hampering change and reproducing the system and its social realities (Giddens, 1984; Poole & McPhee, 2005).

A substantial portion of the discourse of access that is Web 2.0-specific is devoted to articulating challenges and questions that arise when considering existing Access to Information Policy within the unique landscape of social media. Challenges of access are outlined in relation to multiple social media platforms including difficulties of ensuring Canadians have equal access to: content on social networks; audio on podcasts; software and equipment that is compatible with the demands of virtual worlds, social bookmarking sites, instant messaging, and mobile communications. Such language serves to illuminate how drawing on existing resources, in the case of this particular policy, serves to constrain the progression of the GC by reproducing a social reality that hinders the success of new Web 2.0 initiatives by posing significant challenges and barriers to the implementation of successful engagement projects.

In addition to these challenges, some recommendations are offered in an attempt to outline the “next steps” in relation to social media and access concerns. A “CLF 2.0

compliance assessment to identify accessibility issues” is suggested, as is a “risk mitigation strategy that identifies how each of the risks [of access issues] will be addressed and how the content will be made available” (p. 43). It is also proposed that all content posted to social media applications be available on institutional websites in an accessible format, accompanied by the recommendation that a “‘terms of use’ and/or ‘service standards’ template be created which includes a common statement to users on how to access alternative formats” outside of the particular social media platform (p. 43).

Third-party service providers are obviously not held to the specific accessibility standards to which the GC is subject. As a result, this text acknowledges that the responsibility to respect existing policies on accessibility lies with the institution alone. However, the new demands placed on the GC by the cultural shift towards social media as a central vehicle of communication are unavoidable for any institution in Canada today. While the existing Access to Information policy is understandably a vital concern for the GC, it is an unfortunate reality that the institution may not be able to address and remedy every possible accessibility issue that arises in relation to online social media use. Such reliance on previously established rules and resources leaves many challenges that arise without viable solutions, as the present social realities of the institution have not been constructed to include structures that address the specific challenges put forth by Web 2.0 technologies. However, many Canadians are still active users of various social media applications and rely on these platforms as a primary source of information and means of communication. To effectively satisfy accessibility standards, and benefit the overall GC approach to public communications, social media needs to be a significant component of a broader communications strategy that, combined, respects and upholds

the right of every Canadian to have equal access to government information and services and equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process. In this case the GC discourse succeeds at utilizing this informed perspective of social media communications as a possible means to rectify the central challenges posed by Access to Information standards. The text puts forth an acknowledgement that “institutions must maintain a capacity for innovation and stay current with developments in communications practice and technology. As they adopt new means of communication, institutions must continue to reach, in a timely manner, citizens whose access to technology may be limited or who prefer to receive government information through more traditional means” (p. 55).

The GC and all of its affiliates have a responsibility to ensure that all Canadians, and especially marginalized groups, have access to the communications offered on social media platforms, as well as the opportunity to engage and participate. The CCO Working Group’s recommended solution to addressing inequities related to access to Web 2.0 technologies is to ensure that social media projects contain communicative activities that can be accessed by all Canadians in alternative, more traditional formats such as information on Government websites that meet Access to Information Policy provisions and the opportunity to participate in more traditional forms of public consultation.

Many Canadians are using these media as primary means of communication with each other and with organizations. In spite of the fact that all Canadians may not have access, the reality that some Canadians are using these media indicates that the GC needs to balance commitments to both upholding existing Access to Information standards and engaging with Canadians in Web 2.0 contexts. Not all Canadians have access to, or the means to navigate, the Internet and social media platforms, and any text that emphasizes

the necessity of this would be overly idealistic. While the discourse of access present in this document illuminates a slightly utopian tone, practical means of ensuring that GC communications can be carried out in alternate, accessible format are offered; thus establishing means to maintain the current institutional realities surrounding the standards of access, as they are reflected in this text, as plausible within the current social media landscape.

As previously discussed, this analysis uncovered an intimate connection between the ideals of democracy and the standards of access emphasized in government policy. To conclude, while not without democratizing *potential*, the challenges put forth by standards and concerns of access suggest that social media will not revolutionize democracy, and within the discourse of social media put forth by the GC the theme of democracy is both idealistic and slightly improbable. Although the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies may indeed contribute to increasing dialogue between governments and constituents, it is partially due to access and usage inconsistencies that social media will not enhance democracy on its own. Thematic considerations of access, however, are prominent in this text about social media and are both realistic and plausible as alternate communications strategies can offset inequities.

Security.

A concern that emerged from the series of close readings and became a principal theme in the sample was security and risk with respect to GC infrastructure, networks, and databases. It is noteworthy that “security” maintains thematic prominence throughout the entire text and is particularly commanding in the policy-specific sections of the sample. Thematic concerns of security and risk take precedence over the communicative

themes such as “dialogical necessity” and “the cultural shift in communication” – these constructs are of the utmost importance for effective social media projects to materialize. Given the nature of the GC and its broad portfolio of responsibilities, this is somewhat understandable, but nonetheless, still limiting to the implementation of Web 2.0 projects. The limitations imposed by the dominance of GC-specific themes over Web 2.0-specific constructs are further illuminated by considering Giddens’s (1984) argument that structure can both constrain and enable the acts of interacting individuals, and that these actions can in turn create the structure that enables and constrains them. In other words, focusing on current institutional concerns and utilizing the rules and resources that constitute the existing structure actually constrains the authors’ use of language in the text and the nature of the thematic constructs that dominate the document. Thus, the text they produce also serves to reproduce that structure and therefore serve to constrain the social reality from changing or evolving.

The theme of security is a principal thread that resonated throughout my multiple readings of the document, and because the GC’s traditional approach to writing involves repetition of key concepts and concerns, this consistency accentuates the overwhelming preoccupation with how the GC can successfully engage with Canadians using software outside of the Federal Crown Corporations in Canada without putting the Crown at risk for litigation. In particular, the primary concern in this text is related to concerns of cyber-security, or the protection of all electronic resources and information housed by the GC, including infrastructure, networks, and databases. IT Security officials display a slight resistance to social media use, as they are concerned with the security implications that accompany granting employees access to social media at their work stations, as well

as with questions of how the GC can implement social media projects without posing any number of risks to cyber-security. The document also articulates that the rapidly evolving nature of social media contributes to security issues, as it is “unclear what key risks are, and how serious they may be to the institution” (p. 28). The emergence of this theme from the text illustrates that, as of August 2009, no one within the GC had formally investigated or assessed the actual nature of risks that social media projects could pose to the institution and its infrastructure. The document is dominated by questions regarding this issue including, inquiries such as:

“Does accessing social media sites pose a risk to security?” (p. 29)

- “Do the software demands required by platforms like Second Life introduce threats to the network?” (p. 29)
- “Could social media applications used on mobile devices pose a risk or threat to the GC data on that network?” (p. 33)
- “How should the GC safeguard and protect against loss or inappropriate distribution of user-generated content placed in a GC environment hosted by a third-party site?” (p. 29)
- “Could web gadgets compromise the network?” (p. 29)
- “Is there a recommended best practice or approach for...mitigating risks?” (p. 41)

The presence of such preliminary questions and considerations provide further support to my finding that this document constitutes only a preliminary text of social media, which draws on, and is informed by previously-established structures. By August 2009, social media had already been well established as a popular medium among Canadians and a

useful medium for business communication. Based on the rapid growth and evolution of this technology at this point in time, it would be expected that organizations have already assessed such fundamental considerations and accommodated the demands of social media into their existing policies and practices. For the GC, it is important to recognize that all online activities and communications carry a degree of risk. While it is important to identify and be prepared to address security threats, it is also important to recognize that it is crucial for the GC to engage in this evolving landscape of public communication. The GC could take an active lead in creating safety mechanisms that address and mitigate risk and, in the mean time, GC officials could focus efforts on communicating the vital importance of increased awareness and caution to employees. It is essential to recognize, however, that safety mechanisms cannot guarantee complete protection from security risks. Therefore, it is equally important, when dealing with online communication, that individuals and organizations continue to practice constant vigilance when engaging in online environments. Risks will never be entirely obsolete and “it is important to note that doing nothing poses its own risk” (p. 4). The presence of such passing statements in the text are significant as they illuminate that the authors are aware of such challenges that relate to effective social media projects. However, such statements and allusions are minimal and marginalized throughout the text and suggest to me that, while such challenges and issues are recognized, they are not addressed with the vigor and prominence they deserve.

Organizational continuity.

Based on the foundation of secondary research and environmental scans conducted to inform this analysis, I expected that “organizational change” would emerge

as a commanding and principal theme, taking prominence over language of continuity and stability. This assumption is based on the constructivist notion that the language of change is vital if the GC is to successfully implement effective social media strategies. While the text reveals clear articulations of the need for change, the use of transformative language is noticeably lacking in sections of the text that specifically discuss the GC, its policies and social media in combination.

Early in the sample, the rise in popularity of social media is articulated as “a significant opportunity for governments to re-envision how they communicate with and serve their citizens” (p. 6). It is acknowledged that “Web 2.0 will continue to have an important impact on government” and that it is expected to “bring sweeping changes to government culture and structure” (p. 6). The instability of current practices and policies is suggested, as it is explicitly stated that many GC employees and representatives feel that “there is no way to engage in social media while respecting all policies, laws and guidelines as they are written today” (p.4). Such a strong statement early in the text would lead one to expect that change will obviously be a necessary and significant factor in the remainder of the text. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Throughout the various sections of the document, questions related to a specific policy in question are articulated and these questions vaguely allude to the possibility of change in relation to policy. There are no definitive recommendations offered, nor is there any decisive voice that emphasizes change as crucial. It is possible, that such an approach to the text is absent because there is no previous text from which to draw the language of change and transformation. For example, in the section of Accessibility & Common Look and Feel (CLF) Standards, questions are raised as to whether or not the policy needs to be

amended. However, even though these questions give a slight nod to the fact that social media use won't necessarily *fit* neatly into the policy as it is currently written, there is no viable solution offered to rectify the obvious disconnect. Despite another passing reference in a discussion of Procurement Policy that "current procurement processes and contracting policies may need to be re-examined with these issues in mind," the remainder of the text contains little or no reference to the need to amend existing policy so that it is Web 2.0-friendly (p. 24). In the section that addresses Communications Policy (p. 54-8), there is no explicit discussion of the challenges posed by current communication practice, nor are there any instances where the construct of organizational change emerges.

While I perceive the presence of the theme of continuity as limiting to the successful implementation and integration of social media strategies into GC communications, it surprisingly emerged from the text with more prevalence than expected. The presence of this theme actually overshadowed the thematic thread of change, thus further contributing to the limitations this text places on social media initiatives. Continuity becomes the more dominant theme in latter sections of the sample where the focus shifts from a general discussion of social media to a more specific deliberation about the GC's use of the media. Such findings indicate how this text serves to limit the implementation of effective social media engagement strategies.

Although there is explicit acknowledgement in the "Conclusions" section of the document that "[s]ociety and technology are ever changing and the GC needs to adapt to these changes," there is equal acknowledgement that this must occur "while still respecting existing laws, policies, directives and standards" (p. 59). The sparse amount of

language that reflects the theme of change is often immersed in portions of text that are actually emphasizing continuity. This is reinforced through the structuring of the document's contents around existing policy (See *Figure IV in the previous chapter*). Each section is devoted to a current GC policy or standard and within each section an overview is provided; aspects of the policy that directly relate to social media are identified; questions and specific challenges raised by the incompatibility of social media are outlined; and a summary of recommendations is offered (although no viable, practical solutions are suggested). The subsequent discussion following the general overview is primarily focused on working the demands of social media into the provisions that existing policy prescribes for public communication. Thus, discussions of maintaining traditional practices and policies take as much precedence in this document as the primary objective of addressing the implementation of social media initiatives. For example, in the section regarding Policies on Information Management and Access to Information, the social media landscape is not differentiated from traditional communication contexts and, therefore, is discussed as though social media strategies can fit neatly into the preexisting provisions of these policies.

Although the theme of change emerges from the text in some instances, the prevalence of continuity is further exemplified through specific instances in the sample that demonstrate some resistance to institutional change. There is a clear articulation that IT Security officials are posing resistance to the use of social media altogether, due to perceived risk to GC networks and databases. The specific challenges and barriers listed in the document (see *Figure V*) reveal a strong reluctance to embrace the basic institutional changes that social media use requires. This is evident from the fact that

these elementary challenges could be remedied given the wide range of allocative resources that the GC is known to have at its disposal. The resources necessary for Web 2.0 initiatives to overcome preliminary obstacles and progress and evolve into useful components of communication strategies include, monetary funding for research and development, as well as personnel to conduct research, prescribe changes, and formally review, amend, and implement relevant policy and practices if necessary. Such resources are not difficult for the GC to procure as funding is readily available to research and development and qualified personnel can be found within the existing base of GC employees. With the exception of the social media overview that constitutes approximately one-third of the sample, the remainder of the document is dominated by the theme of continuity that enforces the need for consistency and emphasizes the importance of upholding traditional practices, respecting existing policy, and maintaining current social realities and structures.

1. Institutional barriers

- Web 2.0 may not yet be viewed as a legitimate means of conducting business
- Web 2.0 initiatives are often treated as IT solutions, not as a core business function
- Policy-making is time-consuming and Web 2.0 is rapidly-evolving
- Hierarchical nature of government (vs. a culture of collaboration)
- Emerging participatory environment has the potential to radically transform how institutions operate internally and interact with citizens

2. Technological Obstacles

- Outdated technology that does not support Web 2.0 or collaboration
- Limited bandwidth; social media can be bandwidth-intensive
- Implications for information architecture and content management systems

3. Workforce Capacity Issues

- Need for appropriately skilled staff dedicated to working on Web 2.0 from various functional communities

4. Financial barriers

- Web communications may lack dedicated budget
- Addressing technological issues will have financial impacts
- Lack of human resources has obvious financial implications for organizations as staffing

levels/composition will need to be adjusted and/or training provided to some staff

5. Policy and legislative concerns

- Accessibility: Some applications contain media and text that may not be fully accessible to all citizens. The knowledge base of users may limit the ability for them to create accessible content on those that do.
- Security: There is a risk that information may be compromised or that our networks would be compromised by opening them to the external world without proper protection. Viruses targeted to social media could be brought into internal networks.
- Privacy: The ability to track users and manipulate data in more sophisticated ways has implications for citizen privacy.
- Legal: Most applications require users to enter into a legal agreement governed by 'terms of use' and applicable legislation.
- Retention of information resources: Electronic communication increases the type and volume of records that may be subject to access to information requests.
- Procurement: Many Web 2.0 tools and applications are free, which makes the selection of suppliers an issue (e.g. YouTube vs. Vimeo).

Figure V (CCO Working Group on Applying Leading-Edge Technologies, 2009, p.22-3)

Guided by Signpost 5, which prescribed that I probe for language and thematic threads that allow the text to reflect the structures of the organization, my analysis uncovered a wealth of language that is reflective of the rigid and complex nature of the institution's structure. My close readings of the text illuminated language, words, and implicit tones that were indicative of the fixed and inflexible nature of this Canadian bureaucracy. After identifying portions of the text that implicitly allude to the structural composition and the social realities of the GC, this language was subsequently analyzed through the theoretical lens of Structuration Theory (ST) which serves to illustrate the influence that an organization's social reality (or "structure") exerts upon this internal texts about, and discussions of social media, and determine whether it serves to maintain the current structure or aims to transform it. The overall analysis called for an in-depth qualitative approach, and Signpost 5 (*see Chapter 4*), involved a close textual analysis that identified tacit reflections of the GC's structural and social realities. It was from this reading, in particular, that the theme of organizational continuity took prominence. While

organizational continuity was identified as a thematic concern in some of my early readings of organizational literature, it was in no way expected to be prominent. In actual fact, the prominence of the theme itself actually emerged from the analysis as a result of the guiding signposts, my theoretical lens, my multiple readings and constructivist interpretations.

Throughout the sample, the portions of text that I saw as reflecting institutional structure allude to various concepts, including the notion that the GC is still very much in the preliminary stages of successfully utilizing social media, as well as the presence of a pronounced focus on the tenants of existing policy and a explicit attempt to transfer old standards and practices to a new medium of communication. There are also references from which the GC's reluctance to change and a desire to control communications can be inferred.

The authors articulate numerous questions and statements that place the GC in the early planning and implementation stages of Web 2.0 project timelines. It is important to be cognizant of the fact that when this text was produced and disseminated in late 2009, the popularity of social media as a means of communication and interaction was already quite prominent among Canadians. There are instances in the text that convey the need for guidance to be provided to employees regarding online participation, as well as for the role of Web 2.0 application in relation to an organization's business processes to be assessed, which implies that such critical precursory considerations have yet to be addressed. The working group proceeds to suggest that it would be helpful to develop "a document that clearly explains the security risks of engaging with social media," as well as recommend that the GC should "consider addressing the issues of outdated technology

and systems with limited bandwidth” (p. 30). It is also recommended that “IM principles and recordkeeping requirements be established at the outset of projects” (p. 34). Again, such work is quite foundational to any successful implementation of social media initiatives and thus demonstrates how early in the process the GC was in time late 2009. While it would be expected that the GC would have already addressed such preliminary and essential concerns, the analysis of this text accentuates the slow-moving nature of the GC with respect to new programs and the challenges that often accompany them, thus illuminating the prominence of the theme of organizational continuity in the text and reflecting the steadfast, bureaucratic structure of the GC.

As previously established in the discussion of the major thematic devices in the text, there is an overwhelming focus on existing policies and standards including, but not limited to, Procurement, Information Management, and Communications. This focus is accompanied by a subsequent attempt to simply apply existing provisions of these resources neatly to the new concept of social media, pointing out relevant questions that need to be answered along the way. For example, attempts are made and questions raised surrounding the possibility that the traditional concept and process of media lines could be implemented with respect to Web 2.0 communications, as well as regarding whether or not traditional information management processes carried out by Library and Archives Canada could be compatible with new online initiatives. The following excerpt illustrates the nature of specific questions put forth in this text:

- “If records are deemed to be of business value, and the GC is responsible to capture and archive GC content hosted on third-party sites, what information, what format, and how and where should information be archived?” (p. 32)

- “Are there any third-party service provider policies on retention of content that could conflict with any GC policies or legislation?” (p. 33)
- “How should the GC safeguard and protect against loss or inappropriate distribution of user generated content placed in a GC environment hosted by a third-party site?” (p. 33)

Within the sample, it is noteworthy that many sections of the documents are extracted almost directly from preexisting government texts about social media or current policy documents. This practice is commonplace for GC communicators and therefore can be best understood as an explicit example of the types of “rules” that influence the existing social realities of the GC. For example, in the introduction, a section of text is included that has been extracted directly from the only previous GC-commissioned report on social media, which was conducted by Phoenix Strategic Solutions earlier in 2009 (p. 6). There are many portions of text in each separate policy chapter that can be identified verbatim in existing policy documents, such as Access to Information and Official Languages policies. The presence of large amounts of text from preexisting sources speaks volumes regarding the tendency to recycle text that is already GC approved, resulting in reduction of writing and approval times, the ability to control the information being relayed, as well as less likelihood that documents authored by working groups will force the GC to enact any radical change.

Although the multitude of new and unique demands that social media use places on the GC is acknowledged throughout the sample, there is undeniably a noticeable absence of language that aims to emphasize the need for the change in current practices, standards, and policies and the overall need for institutional evolution. The presence of

this focus on existing policy and the underlying theme of continuity, not only reveals the limitations of this text, but also the limitations imposed on its authors as a result of their affiliation with the GC itself. Thus, this text is ultimately influenced and defined by the current social realities that are reflective of the machinistic structure of the GC and its reluctance to accept, embrace, or enact any major institutional change.

In his conception of Structuration Theory (ST), Anthony Giddens presents a dynamic conception of individual agency and the capacity for institutional change. While the structural features of any organization are important to sustain it, Giddens argues that it is equally vital to conceive of organizations as a system of interrelated components. Within the scope of this research, the lens of ST posits that social phenomena such as the language used in this text are quite often influenced by structure and utilized within the GC as a means to maintain current social realities. However, ST also provides a means through which to remedy the challenges posed by the reproduction of current structures and acknowledges that these same phenomena can be employed as a means through which to transform the social realities related to social media and to enact institutional change.

The preceding analysis and discussion demonstrates that the text under examination serves to maintain the current bureaucratic structure of the GC and ultimately constrain the possibility of change that would facilitate communication practices that properly integrate and utilize Web 2.0 technologies. Thus, this text serves only to reproduce the conventional social and communicative norms associated with the institution. Processes of structuration and the resulting social realities associated with the GC influence the nature of the text. If we consider the Giddens's conception of individual

agency, he might also assert that the Working Group failed to avail of a significant opportunity to utilize this document as a platform through which to facilitate institutional change regarding communications challenges related to social media. In spite of the promise of such agency, it is apparent from the analysis that the nature of the text produced is ultimately limited by the hierarchical, machinistic structure of the GC and the actions of actors within the system that serve to maintain current social norms and realities. While the authors are not identified as an “official” GC voice, the Working Group is nonetheless closely affiliated with the institution and must therefore appear to be bound to current GC structure, policies, and procedures. Finally, based on the specific structural realities that influence the construction of this text, the document offered ultimately serves to constrain, rather than transform, the social reality surrounding social media and communication.

Chapter 6 – Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has illuminated the shortcomings and inadequacies of the GC's current Web 2.0 initiatives, which have resulted from the maintenance and reproduction of traditional structures that are sustained by the institutional actors, their interactions within the system (the GC), and the subsequent institutional texts that result. Upon the completion of this in-depth content analysis, it is clear that there is a need for a significant change in the way the social realities surrounding the implementation of social media programs are constructed. The "problems" surrounding the GC's social media efforts that I have investigated were less affected by the structures of the technological media than the structure of the GC itself, as the only real challenge of the structure of social media applications, is that their demands are inconsistent with the communication practices and policies of the GC. The GC's structure and its public communication practices essentially do not "fit" with the communicative demands of social media technologies and, therefore, a change needs to occur within the internal texts that address social media engagement initiatives if use of this media is to be successful. Structuration theory would say that actors have the ability and freedom to either maintain or transform the norms of a system. But, with respect to social media, the GC is only one actor among millions who use these platforms. Therefore, the GC and its communicators could not single-handedly transform the structure and norms of the systems through their social behaviours to make it fit with their current and traditional approaches to communication. The result of this logical progression regarding the need for change is that the onus is on the GC to alter the way social media is discussed internally, thus allowing its structure and norms to be transformed through social processes (discussions/texts, policy change,

behavioural change, etc.) to fit with the demands that are unique to the social media platforms they wish to use.

The main goal of this research was to reveal the collectively constructed meanings that shape and constitute the social realities of the institution with respect to social media. The sample does not altogether inhibit the implementation of social media projects, but the authors do not attempt to put forth a text focused on change and innovation, which would serve to foster **effective** initiatives by altering the processes of structuration and the resulting social realities. The thematic threads of dialogical necessity, the cultural shift in communication, and organizational change, which were identified from the Literature Review as both relevant and significant to any text addressing social media, were ultimately marginalized in this text in favour of the more traditional thematic concerns of continuity, security, democracy, and access. Thus, one of the principal problems identified and supported through this research is that GC texts regarding communication are too inwardly focused and too heavily defined by current structure and restrictive communication policies and legal considerations. Therefore, for the GC to effectively engage with Canadians online, it is necessary for the institution to re-evaluate its current communication practices, recognize that they have been socially constructed over time by texts and discourses such as the sample, and acknowledge that these same social processes can be utilized and changed in such a way that will facilitate meaningful dialogue with Canadians online.

As this analysis draws to a close it is important to reiterate that this document constitutes only a small portion of a much larger conversation about Web 2.0 that is ongoing internally within the GC. This thesis does not claim nor wish to provide a

comprehensive analysis of the entire organizational discourse on this subject (this would not be realistic, given restrictions of time, funding, tangibility of all aspects of the given discourse and access to all necessary materials).

This thesis concludes with reflections on the indeterminacy of the most effective way for the GC to approach public communication via social media. While various challenges have been outlined and the implications of various policies acknowledged, this document serves only as a survey of many preliminary considerations. No definitive solutions to challenges are offered and the necessary changes that, in my opinion, must occur for Web 2.0 programs to prove effective have yet to be considered at any length.

Any successful implementation of new communication initiatives that utilize interactive technologies will inevitably require some institutional change to prove effective and the tenants of ST and Giddens's conception of structure, agency, and the processes of structuration provide GC employees and future researchers with a viable path through which to improve online engagement efforts. Both the theoretical lens and the methodological foundations of qualitative content analysis emphasize the power of individual agency and the ability of actors within a system to transform existing social realities by modifying current actions and approaches to textual construction (Giddens, 1984). Such considerations could serve as a useful theoretical lens for the GC to consider as it moves forward with Web 2.0 projects and strategies. Employees at all levels of the GC need to readily recognize that, at present, the transformative potential of institutional texts has yet to be realized. Currently the rigid structure of the GC and its policy-laden and copy-paste approach to formal writing and communication is ultimately hampering any opportunity that employees have to author any sort of emancipatory discourse that

focuses on embracing change and making strides towards establishing authentic and reciprocal relationships with Canadians.

While programs should ideally comply with existing organizational policies and standards, it is nonetheless important to consider how people engage with their world, and how the organization can communicate with publics in a meaningful and authentic way. Communication policies and practices are a direct result of socially constructed realities, as are the realities of social media. However, the incompatibility of these social realities need to be identified before any successful Web 2.0 projects can be implemented. While the new demands of social media are acknowledged in this text and the many questions that arise when trying to apply current policy to a new media do not go unacknowledged, the Working Group neither affords the unique characteristics of social media any prominence in the discussion of specific policy considerations, nor do they offer any definitive solutions to the questions that arise. A key point that needs to be articulated is that the ideals and pragmatics of policy implementation are not always the same. The rise of social media has fundamentally changed the way that we communicate both socially and professionally. Traditional norms of communication are changing, as are the expectations of those with whom we communicate. For the GC to effectively engage with Canadians online, it is necessary for the actors within this institution to acknowledge the flaws inherent in current communication practices, recognize that they have been socially constructed over time, and then, within the worldview of social constructivism and ST, act contrary to these processes in an effort to affect change and facilitate meaningful engagement with Canadians in online contexts.

The achievement of such an approach is ultimately hampered by the structure of the GC and the text itself is limited because of key structural concerns. Because this document is authored by a working group affiliated with various government departments, the discussion must be general to ensure that all departments can make use of the information. Also, the Working Group refrains from inserting an official GC voice into the discourse, a voice that is necessary if any major change is to occur. The absence of the voice and the relatively lower level positions of the Working Group employees in the GC hierarchy limit their freedom to acknowledge the constraining nature of current social realities and act contrary to them using the transformative function of language to alter these structures.

Therefore, the sample reflects broader concepts that allude to the overall failure of GC communications to engage with citizens in any meaningful way. The text indicates reluctance on behalf of the GC to move with the cultural shift in communication that social media has engendered. Instead, the document ignores thematic considerations that are central to social media communication in favour of themes that focus on traditional GC concerns of security, access, stability, and continuity. As a result, the document proceeds to enforce, through structure, traditional modes of communication, while providing little or no acknowledgement that current communication strategies and practices are a significant barrier to effective social media engagement. This research identifies a definite need for actors within the system to utilize their capacity for action and work to alter the socially constructed view of GC communication as a fixed and static concept that is reflected in existing policy. The results of this analysis, however, reveals that the focus on upholding and maintaining existing GC policies and practices is

enforced through structure, thus revealing that structure ultimately limits the nature of the text, as it constrains and impedes the construction of a text with transformative goals at the fore.

Since *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of Social Media to Communicate with and Engage the Public* was authored and disseminated (August 2009), many GC Departments and affiliated organizations have implemented social media pilot programs intended to serve as the first step towards social media engagement. An overview of all of the existing GC related social media accounts on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and blogging platforms that have been created since the sample was authored in August 2009 are provided, as is an assessment of their use of the medium for public communication (*See Appendix D*). Generally, GC communications on these websites are infrequent, traditional, and strictly one-way; features that have come to be expected from GC communications, but that are not compatible with the nature of Web 2.0 interaction. Amidst the multitude of government departments, agencies, and affiliates who are currently using social media, there are very few who are doing so effectively. For example, of the 18 official GC groups and pages on Facebook, the only affiliates that are using it to facilitate dialogue and build relationships with Canadians are the Department of Natural Resources Canada, the National Gallery of Canada, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada ("Working in Canada"). The moderators of these pages make an effort to actively communicate with users by responding to comments and questions, and attempt to provide useful solutions, information, and advice. It is evident from the amount of account activity and the nature of posts that, for the most part, the GC is still not using social media to its fullest potential. This suggests

that the existing and current discourse of social media, including the sample for this analysis, has ultimately done little to foster effective social media programs.

There seems to be a staunch rigidity regarding the GC structure and communication practices. Recognizing the power of agency and using it to produce a more open and flexible text about social media to create better communication opportunities is imperative if the GC is to successfully engage Canadians on social media platforms. Giddens emphasizes agency as a key factor in the creation and maintenance of organizational structure – but agency does not seem so obviously possible because of the structure, culture, and communication practices of this large bureaucracy. Perhaps the fact that the GC has a huge amount of responsibility for all Canadians is why structure seems to preside over agency. However, this complete dominance of existing structure is something that needs to change if social media programs are to succeed. Organizational theory, such as ST, illuminates the utility that this change could have to the organization as a whole, and to the new demands placed on its communication practices by new media.

The work of Falkheimer (2007) traces the relationship between ST and public relations practice and illustrates the utility of the theory in public relations research. The theoretical lens of ST does not view organizations as stable and fixed, but rather as dynamic and transforming systems. This is the type of perspective that GC and government communicators need to acknowledge and adopt. Structuration Theory ultimately challenges the modernist assumptions upon which the structure of the GC is built. It challenges the very nature of traditional GC communication, pointing to the rigid and restrictive nature of its communication practices, and to the negative effect that such

rigidity can have on public relations practices. “Structuration theory challenges the mass- and systems-oriented paradigm in public relations theory and enhances the holistic understanding of how public relations communication may be used both as a reproductive and a transforming social instrument” (Falkheimer, 2007, p. 292). Through the lens of ST, it can be inferred that the social practices that serve to maintain the status quo within the GC and the texts surrounding them, are the very same practices that could be utilized to transform its structure and its approach to public communication via social media. This is a significant phenomenon as all of the tools for this necessary change are at the GC’s disposal; however, it is a matter of acknowledging and utilizing them to transform, rather than to reproduce the current organizational structure and communication practices. In an applied sense, the tenants of ST could be utilized as a means to overcome the existing barriers to effective online engagement and to develop more dynamic and successful Web 2.0 initiatives.

Recommendations

One of the key findings and recommendations of this research is the need to change the GC approach to talk and text surrounding social media projects. This change needs to occur at all levels of the institution and given the intimate tie between social media technologies and communication, this change needs to begin with the work of the communications function of GC departments and agencies. Communications Branches are where an institution is most likely to find its social media literate employees – it is these personnel that the GC must draw on to successfully enact institutional change and implement successful Web 2.0 initiatives.

My primary recommendation is that this openness to change needs to, first be reflected in existing texts, beginning with a revision of the sample. This collaborative document needs to be refocused with a richer understanding of both the landscape of social media and the role of organizational texts in reproducing and transforming social realities within the institution. This thesis can serve as a means through which to understand this landscape better and provide a thematic guide to the revision.

On a larger scale, the challenges and barriers posed to the ten relevant policies outlined in the sample need to be further examined and addressed with the commission of a formal policy review panel. Although formal policy reviews and subsequent amendments require the allocation of a significant amount of time and resources, the fundamental shift in communication that external actors construct and maintain is unavoidable, and fundamental institutional change is vital if the GC is to successfully engage with Canadians using these new media.

Finally, this document reveals that the existing texts that define the structures surrounding the GC's current social media projects serve only to outline the preliminary considerations that accompany Web 2.0 initiatives. Therefore, for such initiatives to be successful, additional time and resources need to be devoted to further research to be commissioned that builds on both existing GC reports and my study. Additional research will allow for significant progress and change to occur in an informed manner. One such approach to additional research is to build on my study by assessing and incorporating the perspectives by both the actors that work within the system (GC employees) and the actors that wish to engage with the GC via social media platforms (Canadians).

Limitations of the Research

While this research has succeeded in illuminating and examining the structures and processes that influence the Government of Canada's current discourse surrounding social media, it is not without its limitations. Firstly, this document constitutes only a small portion of a much larger conversation that is ongoing internally within the GC. This thesis does not claim nor wish to provide a comprehensive analysis of the entire organizational discourse on this subject. Secondly, because this research is the first of its kind, it is, therefore, preliminary and exploratory. While it does not allow the researcher to provide definitive solutions to the challenges of effective social media engagement, it provides some practical places to begin and also lays the groundwork for future research that aims to achieve these goals. Thirdly, the document utilized as the primary sample is over a year old. This is due to access issues with respect to internal GC documents and the slowly evolving nature of GC texts that address social media. To this extent, the sample was chosen primarily because it represents the beginnings of a formal GC discussion on social media, and also because of its applicability to the subject and the convenience of access. Due to time constraints and limitations of funding, this research does not incorporate human subjects or analysis of the more informal texts of social media offered by GC employees, an addition which could prove beneficial for subsequent studies. The overall design of this research introduces a final limitation of this research, as it is ultimately influenced by my personal opinions and biases. While this analysis was conducted with close attention to my own reflexivity as the researcher for the purpose of remaining as objective as possible, my personal opinions and judgements may be present within the research due to its qualitative, exploratory design.

Directions for Future Study

This research provides a foundation upon which further study of the Government of Canada's formal and informal discussions about social media and use of social media in general can be conducted. It would be useful to delve further into qualitative, and perhaps even quantitative, content analysis by analyzing other, more informal components that likely constitute a significant amount of the GC discourse of social media. This could be achieved through interviews or focus groups with GC employees, particularly communicators, at various levels in the hierarchy, as well as through analysis of more informal institutional texts such as emails and other internal communications. The inclusion of human subjects, particularly GC employees and communicators could serve to illuminate further conclusions regarding the function and limitations of this specific GC discourse that do not materialize in text-based documents and formal institutional writing.

The coordination of research that includes the perspectives of Canadians who wish to engage with their Government via social media would also be useful. Uncovering the demands and desires of key audiences and demographics could serve to illuminate definitive strategies through which the GC can improve its approach to public communication via new technologies. The inclusion of research that utilizes human subjects could also serve to reveal further structural concerns, processes, and relationships that influence the current GC approach to social media engagement initiatives.

While the current GC approaches to social media engagement remain largely ineffective (*see Appendix D*), it is evident that some departments and affiliates are

making positive strides towards facilitating discussion with Canadians via social media.

A case study approach to this topic would also be appropriate and useful to this strand of research, as current efforts (both internal and external) could be utilized as a means to determine practical, research-based solutions to the challenges of two-way communication in a Web 2.0 context.

Continuing to address this subject through qualitative means is important given the necessity to analyze various texts of social media and draw findings from their contents. However, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, could serve to enrich the research and provide an empirical foundation to the body of research.

References

- Agarwal, N. (2009). *Social computing in blogosphere*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3371183).
- Agozzino, A.L. (2010). *Millennial students' relationship with 2008 top 10 social media brands via social media tools*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3405748).
- Ahn, D.Y. (2009). *A dynamic model of usage behavior and network effects in social network sites*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3389752).
- Bekkers, V. & Homburg, V. (2007). The myths of E-government: Looking beyond the assumptions of a new and better government. *Information Society*, 23(5), 373-382.
- Berg, B.L. (1998). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Berger, P.L. & Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. U.S.A.: Anchor Books.
- Boyd, D. (2008). Why youth (heart) social network sites: The role of networked publics in teenage social life. In Buckingham, D. (Eds.), *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media* (119-142). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Breakenridge, D. (2008). *PR 2.0: New media, new tools, new audiences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

- Brewer, G.A., Neubauer, B.J., & Geiselhart, K. (2006). Designing and implementing e-government systems: Critical implications for public administrating and democracy. *Administration & Society*, 38(4), 472-299.
- Budak, A. (2010). *Facebook, Twitter and Barack Obama: New media and the 2008 presidential elections*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 1474900).
- CCO Working Group on Applying Leading-Edge Technologies. (2009). *Considerations for the Government of Canada's use of social media to communicate with and engage the public*. Ottawa: Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.
- Chu, S.C. (2009). *Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth in social networking sites*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3372432).
- Chun, A.E., Shulman, S., Sandoval, R. & Hovy, E. (2010). Government 2.0: Making connections between citizens, data and government. *Information Polity: The International Journal of Government & Democracy in the Information Age*, 15(1/2), 1-9.
- Chun, A.E. & Warner J. (2010). Finding information in an era of abundance: Towards a collaborative tagging environment in government. *Information Polity: The International Journal of Government & Democracy in the Information Age*, 15(1/2), 89-103.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2010). *New citizenship rules*. Retrieved on February 13, 2011 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/citizenship/rules-citizenship.asp>.

- CNW Group & Leger Marketing. (2009). *Social media reality check*. Retrieved on July 15, 2010 from <http://www.newswire.ca/socialmediarealitycheck/>.
- Crawford, K. (2009). Following you: Disciplines of listening in social media. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies*, 23(4), 525-535.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.
- DeSanctis, G. and Poole, M. S. (1994). Capturing the complexity in advanced technology use: adaptive structuration theory. *Organization Science*, 5(2):121-147.
- Eid, M. & Fyfe, T. (2009). Globalisation and crisis communication: Competencies for decision-making in the Government of Canada. *Journal of International Communication*, 15(2), 7-27.
- Eisner, E.W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Erjavec, K. (2005). Hybrid public relations news discourse. *European Journal of Communication*, 20(2), 155-179.
- Eyrich, N., Padman, M., & Sweetser, K. (2008). PR practitioners' use of social media tools and communication technology. *Public Relations Review*, 34, 412-414.
- Falkheimer, J. (2007). Anthony Giddens and public relations: A third way perspective. *Public Relations Review*, 33(3), 287-293.
- Felczak, M., Smith, R., & Glass, G. (2009). Communicating with (some) Canadians: Communication rights and government online in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 34(1), 435-460.

- Fichera, D.M. (2009). *Media richness, uncertainty reduction, and anticipated future interaction on social media sites*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 1467435).
- Fitzgerald, D.C. (2008). *Intersections of the self: Identity in the boom of social media*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3353099).
- Flecha, R., Gomez, J. & Puigvert, L. (2003). *Contemporary sociological theory*. New York, Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.
- Freeman, J. & Hutchins, B. (2009). Balancing the digital democratic deficit? E-government. *Media international Australia*, 1(130), 17-27.
- Gergen, K. (1999). *An invitation to social construction*. London: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Giddens, A. (1995). *Politics, sociology, and social theory: Encounters with classical and contemporary social thought*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-607.
- Government of Canada. (2011). *Departments and agencies*. Retrieved on January 5, 2011 from <http://www.canada.gc.ca/depts/major/depind-eng.html>.
- Hansen, S.S. (2009). *Brands and social interaction of avatars: An exploration in a virtual world*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3384148).

- Harrison, C. and Young, L. (2005). Leadership discourse in action: A textual study of organizational change in a Government of Canada Department. *Journal of Business & Technical Communication*, 19(1), 42-77.
- Hatch, M.J. (2006). *Organization theory: Modern, symbolic, and postmodern perspectives* (2nd ed.). Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, R. A. (2009). *New media, new politics: Political learning efficacy and the examination of uses of social network sites for political engagement*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3396059).
- Holloway, S. and Gill, V. (2001). *Cyberkids: Youth Identities and Communities in an On-line World*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Holsti, O.R. (1968). Content analysis. In G. Lindzey & E. Aaronson (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Holsti, O.R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Hsieh, H. & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277-1288.
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2010). *Contact us*. Retrieved on February 13, 2011 from <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/1info/cnt-eng.asp#compl>.
- Jaeger, P.T., Shneiderman, B., Fleischmann, K.R., Preece, J., Qu, Y., & Fei Wu, P. (2007). Community response grids: E-government, social networks, and effective emergency management. *Telecommunications Policy*, 31(10/11), 592-604.
- Jansen, S. (2009). A community of their own: Redefining social capital for millennials. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT MR52189).

- Jordan, A. & Comrie, M. (2006). Txt sux? Texting and other forms of communication in local government consultation. *Communication Journal of New Zealand*, 7(1), 1-20.
- Keenan, A. (2010). *The discourse of the information age*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT MR55953).
- Kondracki, N.L., Wellman, N.S., & Amundson, D.R. (2002). Content analysis: Review of methods and their applications in nutrition education. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 34(4), 224-230.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Langlois, G., Elmer, G., McKelvey, F., & Devereaux, Z. (2009). Networked publics: The double articulation of code and politics on Facebook. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 34(3), 415-434.
- Lenhart, A. & Madden, M. (2007). *Social Networking Websites and Teens: An Overview*. Washington, DC: Pew. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2007/PIP_SNS_Data_Memo_Jan_2007.pdf.pdf>
- Levinson, M. H. (2008). Examining five “over/under defined” terms used in American political discourse. *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, 65(2), 134-140.
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Liu, B.F. & Horsley, S.J. (2007). The government communication decision wheel: Toward a public relations model for the public sector. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(4), 377-393.

- Liu, B.F., Horsley, S.J., & Levenshus, A.B. (2009). Government and corporate public relations practitioners: Peas in a pod or polar opposites? *Conference Papers – International Communication Association*. Chicago, U.S.A.
- Liu, B.F., Horsley, J.S., & Levenshus, A.B. (2010). Government and corporate communication practices: Do the differences matter? *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 38(2), 189-213.
- Liu, B.F. & Levenshus, A.B. (2008). Testing the government communication wheel: Toward a new theory of government public relations. *Conference Papers – International Communication Association*. Montreal, Canada.
- Livingstone, Sonia. (2008). Taking Risky Opportunities in Youthful Content Creation: Teenagers' Use of Social Networking Sites for Intimacy, Privacy, and Self-Expression. *New Media & Society* 10(3), 393-411.
- MacArthur Foundation (2008). *Hanging out, messing around, geeking out: Living and learning with new media*.
- Mayer, A. and Puller, S. L. (2008). The old boy (and girl) network: Social network formation on university campuses. *Journal of Public Economics*, 92(1), 1-2.
- McGrath, R. (2010). A discourse analysis of Australian local government recreation and sports plans provision for people with disabilities. *Public Management Review*, 11(4), 477-497.
- Murray, A.M. (2009). *Your public is online: Public relations in an online world*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 1464284).

- Navasartian, K. (2008). *Digging for votes: An analysis of 2008 presidential candidates' use of new media*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 1454074).
- Netchaeva, I. (2002). E-government and e-democracy. *International Journal for Communication Studies*, 64(5), 467-478.
- Neuendorf, K.A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Opuamie-Ngoa, S.N. (2010). Functional democracy and mass media: A critique. *Global Media Journal: African Edition*, 4(2), 1-19.
- Orlikowski, W.J. (1992). The duality of technology: Rethinking the concept of technology in organizations. *Organization Science*, 3(3), 398-427.
- Orlikowski, W.J. (2000). Using technology and constituting structures: A practice lens for studying technology in organizations. *Organization Science*, 11(4), 404-428.
- Ortu, C. (2008). The denial of class struggle by British governments in their anti-union discourse (1978-2007). *Critical Discourse Studies*, 5(4), 289-301.
- Ovenell-Carter, B. (2009). Learning to Swim in the Information Age. *Dialogue Online for Canada's Independent Educators*. Retrieved from <<http://www.dialogueonline.ca/article.php?id=165>>.
- Pascoe, C. (2007, January 12). You Have Another World to Create: Teens and Online Hangouts. *Digital Youth Research*. Retrieved from <http://digitalyouth.ischool.berkeley.edu/node/65>.
- Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (2008). *New technologies and Government of Canada communications*. Retrieved on June 24, 2010 from

- <http://www.scribd.com/doc/3107720/New-Technologies-and-Government-of-Canada-Communications>.
- Pieczka, M. Case studies as narrative accounts of public relations practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(4), 333-356.
- Phillips, N. & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Poole, M.S. & McPhee, R.D. (2005). Structuration theory. In S. May & D.K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives* (171-195). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Privy Council Office. (1998). *The structure of the Federal Government*. Retrieved on January 5, 2011 from http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/docs/images/pub_decision_9-e.gif.
- Public Safety Canada. (2009). *Who we are*. Retrieved on January 5, 2011 from <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/abt/wwa/index-eng.aspx>.
- Putnam, L. L. (2005). Discourse Analysis: Mucking Around with Negotiation Data. *International Negotiation*, 10(1), 17-32.
- QSR International. (2007). *NVivo9*. Retrieved on January 5, 2011 from http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_nvivo.aspx.
- Ramaprasad, J. (2009). *Online social influence and consumer choice: Evidence from the music industry*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3364967).
- Redmond, J. & Likely, F. (2002). Rebuilding communication in the federal Government

- of Canada. *Strategic Communication Management*, 6(6), 16-20.
- Robertson, K. (2009). *Social media survey results*. Retrieved on July 15, 2010 from <http://www.6smarketing.com/social-media-survey-results/>.
- Ruiz, J.R. (2009). Sociological discourse analysis: Methods and logic. *FQS 10*(2), Art. 26.
- Scott, W.R. (1995). *Institutions and organizations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Sewell, W.H. (1992). A theory of structure: Duality, agency, and transformation. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 98(1), 1-29.
- Simmons, L.C. (2009). *Common sense, social networks and the workplace: The generational divide explored*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 1470588).
- Simone, M.A. (2009) Give me liberty or give me surveillance: A case study of the US government's discourse of surveillance. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 6(1), 1-14.
- Smith, D.C. (2009). *Social media correlates of organizational climate*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3399868).
- Solis, B. & Breakenridge, D. (2009). Putting the public back in public relations: How social media is reinventing the aging business of PR. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson education, Inc.
- Statistics Canada. (2010a). *Canadian internet use survey*. Retrieved on May 25, 2010 from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/100510/dq100510a-eng.htm>.
- Statistics Canada. (2010b). *How Canadians; use of the Internet affects social life and civic participation*. Retrieved on June 5, 2010 from

- [http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olccel?catno=56F0004MWE2008016](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/bsolc/olc-cel/olccel?catno=56F0004MWE2008016&lang=eng)
&lang=eng.
- Steyn, P., Salehi-Sangari, E., Pitt, L., Parent, M., & Berthon, P. (2010). The social media release as a public relations tool: Intention to uses among B2B bloggers. *Public Relations Review*, 36, 87-89.
- Stolley, K. (2009). Integrating social media into existing work environments: The case of Delicious. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 23(3), 350-371.
- Strauss, A.L. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Thurlow, A. (2007). *Meaningful change: Making sense of the discourse of the language of change*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT NR29005).
- Tong, S.T., Van Der Heide, B., Langwell, L., and Walther, J.B. (2008) Too much of a good thing? The relationship between number of friends and interpersonal impressions on Facebook. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(3), 531-549.
- Trappel, J. & Maniglio, T. (2009). On media monitoring – the Media for Democracy Monitor (MDM). *Communications: The European Journal of Communication Research*, 34(2),169-201.
- Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (2006). *Communications policy of the Government of Canada*. Retrieved on January 21, 2011 from <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316§ion=text#sec5.6>.
- Turner, J.S. (2009). *An investigation of the relationships among socially interactive*

- technologies, communication competence, social cognition, and formal written discourse*. Retrieved from ProQuest Digital Dissertations & Theses. (AAT 3371122).
- Urista, M.A., Dong, Q., Day, K.D. (2009). Explaining why young adults use MySpace and Facebook through uses and gratifications Theory. *Human Communication*, 12(2), 215-229.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society*, 4(2), 249-283.
- Vincent, J. & Harris, L. (2008). Effective use of mobile communications in e-government: How do we reach the tipping point? *Information, Communication, & Society*, 11(3), 395-413.
- Wang, S. S., Moon, S.I., Kwon, K.H., Evans, C.A., and Stefanone, M.A. (2010). Face off: Implications of visual cues on initiating friendship on Facebook. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 26 (2), 226-234.
- Wood, L.A. & Kroger, R.O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix A – Acronym Key

GC	Government of Canada
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
PCO	Privy Council Office
HRSDC	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
CCO	Communications Community Office
AFI	Anticipated future interaction
eWOM	Electronic word of mouth
SMA	Social media applications
SMR	Social media release
CRG	Community Response Grid
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
ST	Structuration Theory
AST	Adaptive Structuration Theory
CLF	Common Look and Feel
OL	Official Languages
DFAIT	Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
DM	Deputy Minister
ADM	Assistant Deputy Minister
DG	Director General
IM	Information Management
PSEP-C	Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Canada
CA	Content Analysis

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA TO COMMUNICATE WITH AND ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

August 31, 2009

Table of Contents

Forward	3
Introduction	6
Context (Excerpt from Phoenix Report)	6
Web 2.0/Social Media Environmental Scan	7
Characteristics of Social Media tools and examples of Government use	9
Policy Considerations.....	22
PROCUREMENT (CONTRACTING POLICY)	24
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (FOCUS ON IT SECURITY).....	28
POLICIES ON INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION	31
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES	35
ACCESSIBILITY & COMMON LOOK AND FEEL (CLF) STANDARDS	40
POLICY ON PRIVACY PROTECTION	45
COPYRIGHT	50
COMMUNICATIONS POLICY	54
Conclusion	59
Endnotes	60
Useful References.....	62

Forward

About the Communications Community Office

The Communications Community Office (CCO) is an interdepartmental initiative created and primarily funded by Government of Canada Directors General of Communications to promote professionalism and excellence in the community in order to help the government meet its objectives. It is therefore not a federal institution, but rather a primarily self-funded functional community representing over 3,000 communications professionals in the Government of Canada.

Its mandate is to provide tools and mechanisms to:

- * Support recruitment and retention efforts of managers.
- * Enhance learning, career development opportunities for communicators.
- * Pursue Citizen-centered Communications best practices and techniques.
- * Support the use of new technology and new media.
- * Strengthen the community through the sharing of information and networking.
- * Play an advocacy role in positioning the communications function as bringing value-added to advance Government of Canada priorities.

To fulfill its mandate, it works in partnership with departments, central agencies, and industry when appropriate, to identify and share pertinent existing tools and practices that meet the needs of the community.

The CCO has four working groups to help it achieve its mandate namely: Citizen-centred Communications, Building Capacity through Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning, Learning in addition to the Working Group on Applying Leading Edge Technologies.

The Executive Director and a small number of staff report to a Steering Committee, made up of Directors General and Assistant Deputy Ministers of Communications, whose role it is to provide guidance and leadership.

For more information on the CCO, please refer to the following Web site: <http://cco-bcc.gc.ca/index-eng.aspx>.

About the Working group on Applying Leading-Edge Technology (Working Group)

We are a group of 120 individuals representing 33 federal departments and agencies and across functional communities reviewing best practices and potential risks and opportunities in using social media tools to communicate with/engage the public.

Some highlights of our work from the current year include:

- Use of collaborative technology interdepartmental wiki- GCPEDIA- to accomplish group work and 4th highest page activity of over 4,000 wiki pages as of August 31, 2009.
- 19 Case studies on social media projects (CDC, Privacy Commissioner's Blog, Afghanistan Task Force AfCam). Each case study based on a project that would be relevant to government.
- Government 2.0 Literature Review and secondary analysis of existing Public Opinion Research Analysis focused on 17 discussion papers (white papers, essays and academic studies) and 15 research (public opinion and behavioural) studies (provided by the Government of Canada). Given the rapidly evolving nature of Web 2.0, the report provides a snap-shot of the state of affairs vis-à-vis Web 2.0 and government (January 2009 was the cut-off for materials).
- Document compiling policy questions, considerations and recommendations.

Focus for September 2009 to March 2010

- Share best practices, policy considerations and risk identification for each business driver (recruitment, crisis communications, services, outreach and consultations)
- Influence strategy for proposed Web 2.0 GC external guidelines
- Continue to document and share best practices. Collect sample strategies, Q and As, Briefing notes etc.
- Develop job descriptions, including key competencies
- Develop outreach, learning and engagement strategies
- Connect with partners (CSPS, LAC etc.) and other communities working on this.
- Research (collect relevant research, conduct Public Opinion Research if approved)

Our ultimate goal is to prepare a toolkit with risk analyses, compilation of best practices, sample briefing notes, business cases, Qs and As and presentations, HR descriptions for social media communications by working collaboratively and interdepartmentally for the CCO Communications Conference tentatively scheduled for October 2010. .

Context

The current state of government of Canada online communications

While individual government departments and agencies have started pilots using Web 2.0 tools to engage the public, there are legitimate risks of participating and of not participating in a Web 2.0 environment. It is important to note that doing nothing poses its own risk.

In its initial work, the Working Group identified 5 primary business drivers as reasons to use social media tools to engage with the Canadian public. The business drivers identified are: Recruitment, Crisis Communications, Services to the public, Stakeholder outreach and education, and Consultations. (order reflects where the benefits are likely to outweigh the risks)

Some examples of current government use for the aforementioned business drivers include:

- DFAIT used Facebook advertising as part of its recruiting campaign,
 - PHAC used Facebook, YouTube and Twitter for crisis communications for the listeriosis outbreak and for H1N1 virus,
 - CIDA used YouTube, Facebook and other media for the AFCAM program to educate on assistance projects funded by the Canadian Government in Afghanistan, and;
- the Privacy Commissioner's Office has been using a blog for a number of years to reach out to Canadians on issues related to privacy.

Consultations have not been undertaken using Web 2.0 technology to our knowledge.

Process followed in creating this document

This work was neither approached nor structured as a formal policy review, rather an informal collaboration by working group members using GCPEDIA, in-person brainstorming sessions and web research. Please see the introduction for more information.

Additional areas requiring consideration

Developing a GC hosted, and customized platform.

It has been suggested that there is no way to engage in social media while respecting all policies, laws and guidelines as they are written today.

One solution that has been discussed is for Government to create its own external facing media sharing, social networking sites or other GC domain sites. This would mean a highly customizable version of a popular third-party site but following GC policies, laws and acts.

While this is appealing as it would solve a number of issues, the Working Group held a very animated discussion on this issue. This would require quite a bit of analysis.

Some felt it would be useful as it would allow the GC to ensure the integrity of the message and to comply with applicable policy requirements, others felt strongly that part of the reason for using other channels is to bring the message to where people are spending their time.

Guiding principles

While our scope was to determine some of the key policy considerations for using social media tools to engage with the public, we have often been asked for advice on how to address the question of online participation of public servants both on their own time and as spokespersons for a Department.

We have included some guidelines used in the United Kingdom and from IBM in the appendices which could serve as models.

- **Recommendation:** Guidance to employees for online participation should be addressed early in the hiring of public servants and managers should ensure that they understand all policies for Values and Ethics also apply to online participation in social media tools both on professional and personal time.

How to use this document

First, we provide basic descriptions of commonly used collaborative and social media tools— both Web 2.0 and other collaborative technologies. Then, where possible we have identified cases of government use of social media tools or non-government use which could be applied to the government context.

We then move on to the policy context for use of external facing social media tools. On a policy by policy basis, we provide context, common policy considerations for all social media tools, specific concerns on a tool-by tool basis and some overarching recommendations.

Users may choose to skip the definitions and cases entirely and focus on policy observations referring to background information provided as needed.

Introduction

This document, collaboratively authored by the *Communications Community Office (CCO) Applying Leading-Edge Technologies Working Group*, provides policy considerations, observations and questions regarding the external use of Web 2.0 technologies for the Government of Canada (GC).

Consideration of the use of Web 2.0 technologies to engage and communicate with the public is important to the GC's communications community. Communicators are often the first to be asked by Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and policy and program areas if and how they can use these technologies. As a result, Directors General of Communications are seeking guidance on this issue.

In order for the Working Group to be able to provide advice (how to use tools, which tools are best for communicating which message and for what purpose) members identified the need to gain a greater understanding of Canadian policies, laws and acts to identify policy and legislative concerns for the GC's external use of Web 2.0 technologies.

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by GC pilot projects and all of the work the Working Group has completed using the Government of Canada's interdepartmental wiki GCPEDIA and in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the Working Group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

We would like to thank all working group members who participated directly and indirectly to the creation of this document and subject matter experts we consulted for their guidance and interpretations.

Context (Excerpt from Phoenix Report)

The advent of the Internet rapidly transformed government and the way in which it interacts with citizens. Now, just as most governments have reached a level of maturity with respect to the Internet, the advancement of technology has engendered a new phase, a second generation of web development, and one that requires governments to reconsider their use of the Internet. Widely referred to as 'Web 2.0' to denote its departure from earlier web development, this stage of web development and design presents a significant opportunity for governments to re-envision how they communicate with and serve their citizens, as well as how they conduct their internal administration and activities.

There is widespread agreement that Web 2.0 will continue to have an important impact on government. It is expected to bring sweeping changes to government culture and structure that will result in more collaborative, efficient, effective, and transparent government. Some of the specific areas of influence include government organization, citizen participation, information dissemination, employee recruitment, and cross-departmental collaboration to name a few.

Isolated pilot projects using common social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube within the GC demonstrate the potential of Web 2.0 to become a powerful business tool.

Web 2.0/Social Media Environmental Scan

What is 'Web 2.0'?

First coined at the 2004 O'Reilly Media Conference during a brainstorming session¹, 'Web 2.0' generally refers to a collection of new technologies and the applications made possible by these technologies. Web 2.0 applications, also referred to as social media, are interactive, web-based tools that encourage user participation in terms of content generation and distribution, collaboration, and application customization. Popular social media include applications like YouTube (social networking and video sharing), Wikipedia (reference), Facebook and MySpace (social networking), Second Life (virtual reality), Twitter (micro-blogging and social networking) and Flickr (photo sharing).

Web 2.0, however, is more than just the technology and web-based applications that allow for easy online publishing, sharing and collaboration. It also represents a cultural shift to an online environment that views the Internet as a platform for services and embraces a common set of core values (e.g. user as producer, collective intelligence). In this way, the Web 2.0 world is fundamentally different from the previous generation of web design and development. 'Web 1.0', in contrast, refers to the read-only, static web page model in which content is published by site owners for visitor consumption. Often associated with the period of web development from the introduction of the World Wide Web to the dot.com implosion of 2001, the focus during this first generation web environment was establishing a presence on the Internet and migrating information and service delivery online.

The diagram to the right helps to illustrate the primary differences between the Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 environments.

The following statistics regarding use of several Web 2.0 applications are worth noting:

- As of 2008, there were more than 100 million blogs worldwide² compared to just 60 million as of April 2007.³
- Social networking is more popular than email. In 2008, 67% of Internet users (globally) accessed social networks compared to 65% that used email.⁴
- Facebook reaches over 10% of the national population in 26 countries (as of early 2009), and in December 2008 there were 20 countries in which at least 1% of the total national population had joined Facebook.⁵ In Canada, as of February 2009, there were over 23 million Facebook members.⁶
- Wikipedia sites received well over 11 million unique visitors from Canada between February 2008 and March 2008.⁷
- YouTube is currently available in 19 regions of the world, from North America to the United Kingdom, from France to Russia, from Hong Kong to New Zealand, and in 12 different languages.⁸ The site is used by over 300 million people each day and contains over 100 million videos, with an average of 65,000 new ones added on any given day.⁹
- At the end of 2008, the Twitter user base was estimated at four to five million, and in one year alone, traffic grew by over 600%.¹⁰ Notably, Toronto is 8th among the top 30 English-speaking locations on Twitter and the city is the top Canadian location.¹¹

Characteristics of Web 1.0 vs. Web 2.0

Web 1.0		Web 2.0
Read-only web	➡	Read-write web
Coding skills required	➡	No coding skills required
Few authors	➡	Everyone can be an author
Publishing	➡	Participation
1-way communications	➡	2-way communications
Static web pages	➡	Web as a service platform
Surfing the web	➡	Subscribing to websites
Proprietary software	➡	Open Source software

Compiled from various sources: Joe Thornley presentation, Tim O'Reilly 'What is Web 2.0'.

Contextualized, these statistics are even more astonishing. Blogging only became fairly mainstream in 2004¹², YouTube officially launched in November 2005¹³, Twitter launched in March 2006¹⁴, and Facebook opened to the public on September 26, 2006¹⁵. It seems clear, then, that Web 2.0 is not a fringe phenomenon; rather, use of these applications and tools is widespread and on the rise worldwide.

Web 2.0 presents many opportunities for government (just as Web 1.0 did, which began the online migration of government information and services), but choosing the best paths for implementation will include many critical decisions. For example the degree to which institutions enable or disable features of these applications can also impact the audiences reached.

Social Media tools and examples of Government use

Media sharing sites

Media sharing sites such as video, photo and audio-sharing sites enable users to contribute to and access these resources online. Users can access media sharing sites or may find linked or embedded files in other Web sites and blogs. Media sharing sites typically provide social commentary features, allowing visitors to comment on a post, rate or even mark (classify) a resource as a 'favourite'.

Video sharing sites allow users to upload, view, share, and comment on video clips. Although there are many such sites, the most popular today is YouTube. The site is used by over 300 million people each day and contains over 100 million videos, with an average of 65,000 new ones added on any given day.¹⁶ The site interface is available in 16 languages.

YouTube's popularity is largely due to the ease with which anyone can embed a YouTube video on their own website, or to their profile/group on social sites such as Facebook.

The most successful videos are those that go 'viral'. Viral videos are passed-on from user to user, sometimes generating an incredible number of views. Users are encouraged to share the video with their contacts and review them on their blogs.

Another key element of the video sharing site is the view counter that allows users to quickly judge the popularity of a given video. YouTube allows viewers to rate and comment on videos, either textually (by typing in their comment) or visually (by filming their response and posting it in the Video Response section). As with other social media tools, YouTube allows users to subscribe to RSS feeds for their favorite channels.

Furthermore, a "YouTube channel" allows users to group their videos, include copy, and brand the page with graphic elements.

Photo sharing sites allow users to view, share, organize and comment on digital photos. One of the most popular photo sharing sites is Flickr. There are more than 2 billion photos on Flickr; with over one million new photos uploaded every day. The site interface is available in eight languages.

Members can join and create groups and participate in discussions on any topic. Flickr also offers social networking features that connect people and can help widen an organization's online connections through photo sharing.

Tagging is an important feature of these sites because it forms the basis of a site's search feature. 'Tags' are keywords that describe a photo, video, map, etc... Typically the description includes the type of image and its contents.

Audio sharing (please see Podcasting section)

Characteristics of media sharing sites:

- Allow users to select interface language (majority of sites offer this)
- Allow sharing of content/resources (videos, photos, audio files, documents, etc.)
- User must sign user agreements and create a profile in order to share a resource(s)

- Content/resources are uploaded and stored on third-party servers and can usually be shared privately within a group or made widely available to all users
- Content/resources can be linked or embedded in other Web sites or blogs. Videos and photos posted on YouTube and Flickr can also be embedded on federal institution's websites. Hyperlinks can be embedded into the video and photos to direct the viewer back to a federal institution's Web site.
- When content is posted on third-party media sharing sites, social commentary features are typically enabled. Features include a comments section, ability to rate content/resources and the ability to 'tag' content. These features can often be disabled.

Examples of Government Use:

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

[Waking up Canadian](#) is a 2008 Citizenship and Immigration video announcing a change to the Citizenship Act affecting mostly those living abroad with rights to Canadian citizenship. The video was viewed over 100,000 times on YouTube and was picked up by US media outlets. To learn more about the project visit:
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/department/media/releases/2009/2009-04-09.asp>

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada has established a YouTube channel. One interesting initiative is the video contest aimed at 12 -18 year olds, designed to promote good privacy practices in the use of social networking tools. To learn more about the project, visit:

<http://blog.privcom.gc.ca/index.php/2009/02/11/we-have-our-winners/>
<http://blog.privcom.gc.ca/index.php/2009/06/02/we%e2%80%99re-launching-our-2009-my-privacy-me-video-contest/>
<http://www.youtube.com/privacycomm?gl=CA&hl=en&hl=fr>

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)

In late 2008, CIDA launched "AfCam"- a federal government social and new media project in support of Canada's engagement in Afghanistan. AfCam launched a Facebook page, photos on Flickr, podcasts on iTunes, and a YouTube channel. Still ongoing, this whole-of-government initiative involves specific collaboration on the part of CIDA, DFAIT and PWGSC.

http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/CIDA%27S_Afcam_Social_Media_Campaign
<http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/multimedia/index.aspx>

Canada Revenue Agency

CRA has established a YouTube channel. The agency ran a contest asking Canadians create to a video depicting why the underground economy is a problem for all Canadians. The videos were submitted to CRA's YouTube channel. To learn more about the project visit:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/nwsrm/rlss/2009/m01/nr090123b-eng.html>

LAC Flickr/YouTube Project

Library and Archives Canada (LAC) has released a selection of digital images related to Irish-Canadian documentary heritage on Flickr.com. As part of the pilot project a number of video presentations were also added to YouTube. The objective of the project is to explore new ways to improve access to and increase interaction with Canada's documentary heritage. Library and Archives Canada is excited about the opportunities that social media sharing communities provide for Canadians to discuss and contextualize an important selection of its collective history. To learn more about the project visit:

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/whats-new/013-359-e.html>

The LAC Shamrock and the Maple Leaf geo-tagged image album at Flickr.com

www.flickr.com/photos/28853433@N02/

The LAC album at YouTube.com

www.youtube.com/LACBAC01

YouTube U.S. Government Channel

Linking videos across government. Visit the playlists and other channels for a wide variety of videos

<http://www.youtube.com/user/USGovernment>

UK Government

The British Prime Minister seeks to hear from constituents through a new YouTube initiative. Submit video questions and view the PM's answers in this regular feature.

http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/U.K._Government%27s_Use_of_Youtube

<http://www.youtube.com/user/DowningSt>

Blogs and Micro blogs

Blogs

"Blog" is an abbreviated version of "weblog," which is a term used to describe Web sites that maintain an ongoing journal of information. It is a frequently updated Web site featuring diary-type commentary (an online journal made social), with posts arranged in reverse chronological order. Blogs range from the personal to the political, and can focus on one narrow subject or a whole range of subjects. Many blogs focus on a particular topic. Some are more eclectic, presenting links to all types of other sites, while others are more like personal journals, presenting the author's daily life and thoughts. Of note is the increasing number of mainstream news media that have followed the blog model on their sites – allowing comments on news stories and encouraging mainstream journalists to blog.

Characteristics of Blogs

- Allows authors to post and manage entries
- Entries can include a combination of resources (e.g. text, images, links, embedded videos)
- Tone is typically conversational as is the practice of blogging
- Usually updated frequently
- Includes a main content section with articles listed chronologically, newest on top. Often, the articles are organized into categories.
- Typically encourages readers to comment on posts
- Bloggers typically respond to reader comments
- Usually syndicate their content through one or more RSS or Atom "feeds"
- There are many blog types, from those favouring longer, more analytical content that are less frequently updated to those that are rapid fire, with breaking news, etc.
- Are available in a range of platforms including Word Press, Type Pad, Tumblr, Posterous, etc.

Examples of Government Use

Office of the Privacy Commissioner

This is a group blog written by various employees on privacy issues. Comments are enabled and moderated before posted. They also maintain a youth blog to educate young Canadians about possible privacy risks.

<http://blog.privcom.gc.ca/>

The US Transportation Security Administration blog

This blog has been developed to facilitate an ongoing dialogue on innovations in security, technology and the checkpoint screening process. <http://www.tsa.gov/blog>

Office of Citizen Services and Communications from the U.S. General Services Administration. Gov Gab features five federal government employees blogging about the government information they use in their daily lives: <http://blog.usa.gov/roller/>

List of blogs from the US government
http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Reference_Shelf/News/blog.shtml

Micro blogs

Micro blogs are considered a short-form blog that allow users to send brief text updates that to the whole community or to a restricted group chosen by the user. The appeal of micro blogging is both its immediacy and portability. Today, the most popular micro blogging services include Twitter¹⁷, Jaiku (owned by Google), Tumblr and Yammer. The status update feature of Facebook serves a similar role, making it perhaps the most popular micro blog today.

There are also more than 1000 newspapers and hundreds of television stations that have Twitter accounts. Traditional media organizations, including The New York Times, the BBC, the CBC and the Globe and Mail have begun to send headlines and links in microblog posts. For more information on Twitter, please see the appendices.

Characteristics of micro blogs

- Posts are brief (For example, Twitter only allows posts of 140 characters or fewer)
- Although most micro blog posts consist of text, some micro blogging services allow images, video or audio posts as well
- Posts can be written or received with a variety of computing devices, including mobile devices

Examples of Government Use

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
<https://twitter.com/PrivacyPrivee>

Public Health Agency of Canada
http://twitter.com/phac_gc/
http://twitter.com/aspc_gc/

It is worth noting that as of this writing, the aforementioned GC uses of Twitter are strictly one-way. That is, they do not reply to any "tweets" directed at the account by Twitter users.

Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites are online spaces where members can build and develop networks between people who share interests and activities. Members communicate with each other publicly and privately using a variety of different means such as chat, messaging, email, video, photos, posts directly on a users profile (wall posts), file sharing, blogging, and discussion groups.¹⁸

Characteristics of Social Networks

- Users must create a profile and agree to terms of use.
- Tools allow members to build networks to communicate and share resources
- Social networks tend to be designed as fundamentally closed spaces (i.e., limited to members only).
- Users control what is visible to the public and to the network of "friends" or colleagues.
- Some popular social networking sites allow users to choose the language of their interface/profile

- Users can invite other users to join their network(s) – alternatively, users can also decide to join a network or group of like-minded individuals or cause-related group.
- Some social networking sites have group features enabling anyone to participate, collaborate and share information, content and resources on topics of interest. Some sites also allow individuals or organizations to create ‘fan’ pages, which are simply specific areas for particular content to be posted.
- Social commentary features are typically enabled. Features include a comments section, and the ability to “tag” comments/photos etc. These features can often be disabled.
- Popular social networking sites include Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Bebo and hi5

Examples of Government Use

GCConnex Pilot (Internal to Government)

Internal to GC employees. Networking and group management tool with links to colleagues, blogs, event calendars and other features.

<http://elgg.srv.gc.ca/elgg/pg/moderation/requests/>

Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Public-Health-Agency-of-Canada/10860597051#>

Government of Alberta

Alberta’s “One Simple Act” campaign links to Facebook

<http://www.onesimpleact.alberta.ca/>

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/pages/One-Simple-Act/25909521042?ref=s>


Department of Foreign Affairs

DFAIT’s recruitment advertising campaign: http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/DFAIT%27s_Use_of_Facebook

RSS feeds

RSS feeds are a means of disseminating web content updates to subscribers instantaneously. Updates are viewed using an aggregator tool (e.g. Google Reader) or by being sent directly to one’s e-mail address (using the FeedBurner application, for example). Feeds can be used on blogs, podcasts, news sites and variety of other web applications to enable users to receive news and information as soon as it becomes available.

Characteristics of RSS Feeds

- Users can subscribe to feeds on Web sites for which a feed link is available. This is normally characterized with the following identifier icon:  , or text similar to “RSS Feed,” or “News Feed”
- Feeds are simply XML files that are viewed with an aggregator/reader. The feed is updated when ever new content is available.
- When a feed has been updated, an aggregator/reader informs the user that new content is available.
- Feeds reduce the need for individuals to consult Web sites and increase their ability to receive information in a timely manner.
- Other innovative options include using RSS feeds as a means of distributing content directly to partners (other OGD, service delivery agencies) to allow them to integrate source content into their own.

Examples of Government Use

Public Safety Canada <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/index-en.asp>

Public Health Agency <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

Canada News Centre <http://news.gc.ca/web/index-eng.do>

Transport Canada <http://www.tc.gc.ca/mediaroom/rss/menu.htm>

Podcasts

Podcasts are audio or video media files which are distributed through RSS feeds. They are a form of audio or video distribution intended to broadcast events, interviews, addresses and more.

Characteristics of Podcasts

- Audio or videos files can be accessed through the web via an aggregator or downloaded from a website to a portable media device (i.e. iTunes).

Examples of Government Use*International Trade*

CanadExport podcasts connect Canadian companies to industry experts and leaders in business, not to mention the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service. These podcasts explore hot topics, pan-sectoral exporting and investment opportunities, as well as science and technology partnerships. For samples of podcasts, visit: <http://www.international.gc.ca/canadexport/multimedia/year-annee/2009.aspx?lang=eng>

Other use: Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Audio Vault

http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media_gallery.asp?media_category_id=2&pagelid=64

Discussion Forums

Discussion Forums are comparable to real-world bulletin boards and enable users to post messages or replies to issues or ideas posted by participants. Groups and communities primarily use these for discussion, sharing information questions and answers.

Characteristics of Discussion Forums

- To participate in a web discussion forum, users are typically required to create an account and agree to terms of use.
- Once access is provided, users can post text and in some cases, a variety of other resources (images, links, documents etc.), depending on permission levels
- Discussion forums can be closed at a certain point.

Examples of Government Use*DFAIT's Policy E-Discussions*

DFAIT holds electronic discussions with citizens on Canada's foreign policy to seek their opinion in their policy planning process. Discussions last eight weeks are open to all Canadians and are based on position papers. Previous topics include: The Arctic, Canada's Engagement in the Americas, Ensuring Canadian Prosperity in a Changing Global Economy, Democracy Promotion, Showcasing Canadian Culture and Know-how Abroad and Non-proliferation, Arms Control and Disarmament. At the end of the eDiscussion, the submissions and policy position papers are summarized by policy analysts in the Policy Research Division and a departmental response is drafted and posted to the Foreign Policy website. <http://www.international.gc.ca/cip-pic/discussions/index.aspx>

Virtual Worlds

Virtual worlds are online “real-life” simulated environments where users are portrayed as avatars (a representation of himself/herself or alter ego). Avatars can communicate with others via local chat or global instant messaging and travel throughout the virtual world.

Virtual worlds are used as platforms for education, demonstration and as virtual meeting places (career fairs, presentations and conferences, similar to web casting). Corporate entities often use virtual settings to advertise. Virtual worlds offer similar advertising opportunities as billboards do in traditional advertising models.

Characteristics of Virtual Worlds

- Allow users to interact with each other in a virtual setting using avatars
- To visit a virtual world, users must first create a profile and agree to terms of use
- Language preference is selected by the user but the interface is often available in multiple languages
- Users interact in the language of their choice in the virtual world with other avatars
- Organizations (such as GC) can have a presence in the virtual world in the form of:
 - Training, education or simulation, engaging potential students through interview and recruitment activities.
 - Communicating online through avatars with the use of multiple communications channels such as voice, images, audio and video.
 - Web conferencing (see section 3.14 for more information)

Examples of Government Use

Government of Ontario

The Ontario Government used a Second Life Island featuring a variety of day-in-the-life interactions within five key career destinations. A 12-week pilot project (May 2008 to July 2008) offered a glimpse of the possibilities that online virtual environments can offer public sector organizations for addressing a real business issue – making the Ontario Public Service as a potential employer of choice to thousands of users globally. To learn more visit:

http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Government_of_Ontario%27s_Use_of_Second_Life

Vancouver Police Department (VPD)

The Vancouver Police Department launched a Second Life recruiting seminar in the summer of 2008. Changing demographics, competition from other police departments and the fact that conventional advertising methods were no longer effective in attracting applicants were all factors that led the VPD to develop a social media recruitment strategy. In late 2008, the department also launched Facebook and YouTube sites, and in February 2009 launched a blog: www.behindtheblueline.ca/blog/blueline/tag/vancouver-police-department/

To learn more visit:

http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Vancouver_Police_Department%27s_Use_of_Second_Life

Canada Border Services Agency

Canada Border Services Agency's Training and Learning Directorate is currently exploring the use of virtual worlds to support operational training. Between January and March 2009, 179 CBSA recruits (in a single intake) were offered access to a virtual border in Second Life on a voluntary basis during their four-week online training. The online training precedes a pass/fail residential training program in Rigaud, Quebec.

A series of scenarios were developed for use by learners to integrate the content of the online training materials. The scenarios required learners to ask mandatory questions, consider the policies and procedures they had just

learned online, ask additional probing questions, and make a release or refer to secondary decision based on the interview with a virtual traveller, played by a CBSA instructor. A survey was conducted to gather learner reaction. Performance of recruits during the residential training program was monitored to compare Second Life participants against non-Second Life participants. A summary of the results of the pilot is available at: http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Virtual_worlds

Wikis

A wiki is a Web site designed to enable anyone to easily contribute or modify content. Users can easily add, edit, search and link to content. The online encyclopedia Wikipedia is one of the best-known wikis.

Today, many organizations use wikis to rapidly build communities of interest – sharing information, experiences, ideas and designs. The multiple authoring capabilities of wikis make them effective tools for mass collaborative authoring. For example, wikis can be used by communities to review definitions or documents; or collaborate on developing the wording around directives, standards, or guidelines.

Characteristics of Wikis

- Allow people to add, edit, manage, search and link to content
- Many public wikis allow users to edit pages or contribute content without having to create an account.
- Often used for regional and/or cross-functional collaboration
- Often used as document repository or a knowledge management database
- At present, wikis appear to be more appropriate for collaborative work than for communications or marketing work

Examples of Government Use

GCPEDIA (Internal to Government)

The GCPEDIA wiki is an easily accessible, government-wide, collaborative work environment for people employed in the gc.ca domain. It is a place for creating and sharing knowledge. As of June 2009, there are over 6,500 registered users working on approximately 3,300 articles. For more information visit www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca

NRCan Wiki

The official launch of the NRCan Resource Wiki took place on October 30, 2007. It is Intranet based at this time and therefore only accessible by NRCan employees. The Wiki implementation team has put guidelines and guardrails in place to assist employees in the proper use of the Wiki, and created an Employee Engagement Strategy in order to create a 'cultural mindshift', creating a new, open and flexible way of working. Employees require support and guidance in learning about acceptable and innovative ways to use the Wiki in their day-to-day jobs. Ongoing training initiatives, employee outreach campaigns and Wiki success stories are a few of the many activities that are in place to sustain a high level of Wiki interest. For more information on this project visit http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/NRCan_Resource_Wiki_Information_Session

New Zealand Police Act Wiki

In New Zealand, citizen input was solicited before the *New Zealand Police Act* was sent to parliament.¹⁹ Part of the consultation involved an open wiki (i.e. no password-protection or user registration required) which provided an opportunity for the public (in New Zealand and abroad) to discuss and edit the proposed policing legislation. Visitors made several hundred edits, ranging from single word changes to lengthy commentary. The initial conclusion of the New Zealand government is that the initiative served as a complementary process for public consultation. To learn more visit: http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/New_Zealand_Police_Act_Wiki and <http://www.policeact.govt.nz/wiki/pmwiki.php/PolicingAct2008/PolicingAct2008>

Peer to Patent Review Wiki

The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's *Peer-to-Patent: Community Patent Review Pilot* used Web 2.0 technologies and applications to allow the public to examine patent applications and provide input of prior examples. The objective is to reduce backlog at the office, making the office more efficient and effective. To learn more visit:

http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Peer_to_Patent_Review_Wiki

<http://www.peertopatent.org/>

Social Bookmarking

Social Bookmarking (also known as social tagging) tools are used for two types of applications. For individuals, these tools are used to store, organize, share and manage bookmarks of web pages where they can be accessed on the Internet from any computer.

For organizations, these tools can be used to call attention to specific pages on their Web sites. One common implementation is to place a 'share' button on the website that allows a visitor to easily submit the page to a social bookmarking site. This allows visitors to an organization's website to:

- store the specific information that they have sourced for future reference
- easily share information that is important to them with their social networks (friends, family, like-minded community)

Characteristics of Social Bookmarking

- To set up an account, users must first create a profile and agree to terms of use
- Allows users to add and manage web page bookmarks
-
- Most public social bookmarking sites are in English only
- Many Web sites include links or 'share' buttons to their content for storing on popular social bookmarking tools like Digg, Delicious, Furl, Reddit, Newsvine

Examples of Government Use

Library and Archives Canada (see the bottom of the web page) <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/index-e.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada (see the share link) <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

Mashups

A mashup is a Web site that combines content data from more than one source to create a new user experience. Mashups combine content or functionality from existing web services, Web sites and RSS feeds to serve a new purpose. It can increase the value and utility of government information by integrating multiple sources of data into one tool. By exposing raw data in a standardized format, governments can open this data to use by the public in mashups created without requiring any government involvement.

Characteristics of Mashups

- Many Web sites have opened up programming interfaces (Application Programming Interfaces (APIs)) to allow developers access to underlying data
- The developer can then combine streams of data to create something new and unique
- Mashups are commonly used in services such as real estate prices, restaurant reviews and transit information, but are increasingly being used for emergency management and crisis communications as well
- Many mashups combine streams of data with online mapping tools (such as Google Maps)
- Using data obtained from another source through an API can save time and money; however the mashup is then reliant on one or more third parties. If the API provider experiences downtime, the mashup will be unavailable as well
- Mashups often use raw data as their source, allowing them to exist in whatever language the source data is in

Examples of Government Use

Healthmap

It was created by Google with support from the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC), the National Library of Medicine, and the Canadian Institute of Health Research. The site aggregates news feeds from Google News, the World Health Organization, ProMED (a network for health professionals), and elsewhere to map out all of the disease outbreaks. For more information visit: <http://www.healthmap.org>

City of Ottawa Crime Mapping tool

In 2008, the Ottawa Police Service introduced a new Google-based crime mapping tool to allow users to look up police calls for service in their neighbourhoods and across Ottawa. As a result, the weekly activity reports have been replaced in 2009 with a more comprehensive mapping tool which provides users with more incident types than the previous weekly reports. For more information on the project visit: http://www.ottawapolice.ca/en/resources/crime_analysis_statistics/index.cfm

DriveBC

The Ministry of Transportation in British Columbia combines MapQuest data with real-time traffic data to provide travelers with current road conditions, including traffic incidents and construction delays and detours. For more information visit <http://www.drivebc.ca>

Other: Mashup Matrix, www.programmableweb.com, provides details regarding which APIs have been combined to form each mashup.

Widgets/Gadgets

A web widget (often referred to as a gadget and/or additional terms) is a snippet of code that can be installed and executed within an end user's web page. Widgets often take the form of on-screen tools (clocks, event countdowns, auction-tickers, stock market tickers, flight arrival information, RSS feeds, daily weather, etc). They provide a way to show content or data from one site on another site.

Widgets are now commonplace and appear on a variety of sites across the Internet. Some services provide web pages that are nothing but a collection of widgets, such as iGoogle, Netvibes, or Pageflakes.

- Widgets can be used to improve Web sites by adding syndicated content and functionality from third-party providers, other government departments (OGDs), etc.)

- Institutions/organizations/individuals can create their own widgets, allowing bloggers, social network users to add GC content to their sites.

Characteristics of Widgets/Gadgets

- Widgets are online applications built by one Web site/developer that can be displayed on another Web site
- They can be added to websites without intervention or assistance from the widget owner
- Widgets reuse and re-purpose existing web content
- Usually, but not always, use DHTML, JavaScript, or Adobe Flash

Examples of Government Use

Centres for Disease, Control and Prevention (CDC)

The CDC.gov provides content to the public in several useful ways (e-mail updates, podcasts and RSS feeds). Its newest feature is a series of widgets and gadgets that allow visitors use to keep track of CDC content that is of value to them. The CDC developed its widget and gadget tools in order to deliver content to the population when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it. For more information visit:

http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Centre_For_Disease_Control_Use_of_Widgets/Gadgets

<http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/>

Ottawa Public Library Widget

http://www.biblioottawalibrary.ca/lab/index_e.html

Federal Bureau of Investigation

<http://www.fbi.gov/widgets.htm>

Other: Web widget resource site <http://www.widgipedia.com>

Mobile technology

Mobile technology allows hand-held, always-connected devices to access Internet resources. As these devices increase in capabilities and data transfer rates become faster, they will support much richer user experiences. Web sites can be made to better serve mobile users by presenting content and applications in a form designed for this type of access.

'Mobile government, sometimes referred to as mGovernment, is the extension of eGovernment to mobile platforms, as well as the strategic use of government services and applications which are only possible using cellular/mobile telephones, laptop computers, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and wireless internet infrastructure.' (Source: Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M-government>)

Characteristics of mobile

- Useful for on-demand services (such as transit times, border wait times, emergency updates, rapid polling)
- becoming more common as smart devices proliferate, more and more custom applications are developed specifically for this technology

- Greater demand for mobile government as mobile penetration rates increase (Canada, 2007, 61.5% penetration rate. Source: World Bank http://devdata.worldbank.org/ict/can_ict.pdf)

Examples of Government Use

Government of Canada Wireless Portal

The strategy underlying the GC Wireless Portal involves designing and implementing a service that is specific to the wireless medium and the needs of mobile users. This includes choosing and developing interfaces, navigational elements, content and services that are optimally and usefully accessed via a wireless device. Users have access to useful “bits of information” quickly and easily, consistent with private-sector best practices.

[http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Government_of_Canada %27s Use of a Wireless Portal](http://www.GCPEDIA.gc.ca/wiki/Government_of_Canada_%27s_Use_of_a_Wireless_Portal)
<http://www.gc.ca/mobile/wireless-eng.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada

Information, resources and updates for mobile users (data is usable by mobile devices). Point mobile browser to: <http://m.phac.gc.ca/>

Mobile Government Portal of Singapore Government

The Singapore government provides a number of its eGovernment services for a mobile platform.
<http://www.ecitizen.gov.sg/mobile/index.html>

Instant Messaging

Instant Messaging tools are used in a variety of applications and are aimed to provide two-way “real-time” text communications between two or more people. These applications can either be stand alone applications (MSN Messenger) or integrated in existing Web 2.0 tools (e.g. Second Life, Facebook, Skype).

Characteristics of instant messaging

- Two-way communication tool allowing users to chat online through text. Some applications also offer voice, video, and file sharing.
- To create an account, users must first create a profile and agree to terms of use
- In most mainstream instant messaging tools, users have the ability to select the interface language and can chat in any language

Web Conferencing

“Web conferencing is used to conduct live meetings, training, or presentations via the Internet. In a Web conference, each participant sits at his or her own computer and is connected to other participants via the internet. This can be either a downloaded application on each of the attendees' computers or a web-based application where the attendees access the meeting by clicking on a link distributed by e-mail (meeting invitation) to enter the conference.” (Source: Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_conferencing)

These technologies offer a variety of features varying from service providers which are in the form of sharing documents, presentations, video and audio conferencing, whiteboard to name a few.

Characteristics of web conferencing

- Web conferencing facilitates meeting or training over the Internet reducing travel costs;
- To participate in an event, users can either register for stand-alone computer access or attend public events
- Events are moderated by one or many presenters and can show a variety of views such as presentations, desktop operations, software simulation, chatting, screen sharing and more.
- Events can be saved to be viewed by others on-demand

Policy Considerations

As referenced in the previous section of this document, many federal institutions are already exploring the use of social media tools and running pilot projects. The existing projects identify ways the tools can transform how we engage citizens, communicate our programs and services, and recruit and train potential employees.

However, many GC institutions are not yet using these tools, for a number of reasons. Some include perceived or real lack of resources, cultural resistance, or legal or other challenges of using these tools. There are varying interpretations of whether or how these tools can be used depending on individual federal institutions, and the business objectives for use are not always clear.

For these reasons, members of the *CCO Working Group on Applying Leading Edge Technologies (working group)* volunteered to look at Canadian policies, laws and acts in order to reveal challenges for the GC's (GC) external use of Web 2.0 technologies.

In addition, the working group commissioned *Phoenix Strategic Solutions* to undertake a review of current literature and white papers on Government 2.0. The literature suggested many reasons why governments from around the world have not yet/only partially adopted Web 2.0 as part of their business plans. Implementation challenges include institutional, technical and financial barriers, policy and legislative concerns, and employee capacity and training issues, among others.

Below are a few highlights adapted from their findings. Many of these challenges are neither new (i.e. policy-makers grappled with them when dealing with the first generation of web development) nor discreet (i.e. they are intuitively linked; for example, online privacy and security issues). A more comprehensive list can be found in the report entitled, *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by *Phoenix Strategic Solutions*, 2009. A copy can be viewed on *GCPEDIA* at:

http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/gcwiki/images/5/54/CCO_WG_Web_2_0_Final_Report_March_2009.pdf

1. Institutional barriers

- Web 2.0 may not yet be viewed as a legitimate means of conducting business
- Web 2.0 initiatives are often treated as IT solutions, not as a core business function
- Policy-making is time-consuming and Web 2.0 is rapidly-evolving
- Hierarchical nature of government (vs. a culture of collaboration)
- Emerging participatory environment has the potential to radically transform how Institutions operate internally and interact with citizens

2. Technological Obstacles

- Outdated technology that does not support Web 2.0 or collaboration
- Limited bandwidth; social media can be bandwidth-intensive
- Implications for information architecture and content management systems

3. Workforce Capacity Issues

- Need for appropriately skilled staff dedicated to working on Web 2.0 from various functional communities

4. Financial barriers

- Web communications may lack dedicated budget
- Addressing technological issues will have financial impacts
- Lack of human resources has obvious financial implications for organizations as staffing levels/composition will need to be adjusted and/or training provided to some staff.

5. Policy and legislative concerns

- Accessibility: Some applications contain media and text that may not be fully accessible to all citizens. The knowledge base of users may limit the ability for them to create accessible content on those that do.
- Security: There is a risk that information may be compromised or that our networks would be compromised by opening them to the external world without proper protection. Viruses targeted to social media could be brought into internal networks.
- Privacy: The ability to track users and manipulate data in more sophisticated ways has implications for citizen privacy.
- Legal: Most applications require users to enter into a legal agreement governed by 'terms of use' and applicable legislation.
- Retention of information resources: Electronic communication increases the type and volume of records that may be subject to access to information requests.
- Procurement: Many Web 2.0 tools and applications are free, which makes the selection of suppliers an issue (e.g. YouTube vs. Vimeo).

These five barriers to implementation, while not exclusive, represent some of the key issues that emerged from the research into international governments.

The following sections are organized by policy and include a set of considerations and observations for the external use of Web 2.0 technologies as well as specific challenges that present themselves on an application-by-application basis. Questions and where possible recommendations were included related to perceived and real barriers to GC using social media.

We have structured this section to allow particular policy-related issues, concerns, questions and observations to be easily reviewed. These sections are:

- Procurement
- IT Security
- Information Management and Access to Information
- Official Languages
- Accessibility & Common, Look and Feel (CLF)
- Privacy Protection
- Copyright
- Communications & Federal Identity Policy (FIP)

We are aware of and have been working with a number of functional experts and communities, policy centres and Institutions who have also been working on many aspects of Government 2.0. It is our hope that sharing our observations will facilitate dialogue on these issues and assist policy makers as they continue to review them.

Procurement (Contracting Policy)

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and the GC's procurement process.

Introduction/Context

As many of the popular social media tools/software are either provided as a free service or based on open source software, accepting the terms and conditions or licensing agreements for these (usually free) applications and tools can create challenges for government in the area of procurement. Well-defined policies and procedures govern procurement, such as the number of supplier quotations to be requested and the need for competitive processes.

As more and more GC institutions are considering Web 2.0 pilot projects, current procurement processes and contracting policies may need to be re-examined with these issues in mind to provide GC institutions with clear direction on how to proceed.

Policy Considerations

When current GC procurement processes and contracting policies were drafted, it would have been difficult to predict that so many companies would one day offer free software and services to anyone and everyone. Whether or not institutions choose to use free services or open source software on a GC domain or on a third-party service provider's site, federal institutions are subject to the following policy requirements:

1. **Current buying process:** the buying process of a government starts when an institution sends a requisition to a PWGSC procurement officer. Specific documents must be completed and specific processes must be followed in order to procure products and services for the GC.
2. **Contract authority:** Ordinarily, only specific employees are given authority to bind an institution contractually. This is very cumbersome when trying to establish accounts on social media sites.
3. **Choosing winners without competition:** the GC can not arbitrarily decide which companies will be selected to provide its content. The government's selection of a third-party vendor could unwillingly provide an unfair competitive advantage to the provider selected. For example, federal institutions should have criteria to determine which video sharing sites they will publish its videos to (YouTube, Yahoo Video, AOL Video, Vimeo etc). For comparison purposes, policymakers may wish to revisit the

process for media selection for a GC advertising campaign (as the selection is based on media habits of target audience and reach and audience of media vendor).

4. **Comparing open source software with vendors that provide proprietary software:** in addition to creating selection criteria for open source software, the GC will have to consider how to compare the value of open source software with proprietary software and determine how and when it procures one or the other. “The Hungarian government recently announced that it will change its procurement rules so that public sector organizations can use open source products. New rules will allocate the same amount of money to purchasing open source products as to proprietary ones – 50/50 (previously, procurement rules stipulated the use of vendors like Novell and Microsoft)”^[ii].
5. **Intellectual property and licenses:** Typically, custom development of open source software can be shared back with the larger community, unfortunately, in the GC policy environment, sharing customizations developed internally would be considered contrary to GC intellectual property conditions.

In addition to the procurement challenges, when a GC institution chooses to create a GC presence on a third-party service provider’s site or when a GC employee is asked to participate in an online community, a user agreement with a third-party service provider must be agreed to/signed’.

Account holders are required to enter into legal agreements governed by the site’s ‘terms of service’ or ‘terms of use’ and applicable legislation.^[iii] This can be an issue for government as it might not be able to agree to the standard terms, but may want to establish a presence on Facebook or YouTube.^[iv]

To address this issue in the U.S., the U.S. Federal Web Managers Council recommended that the U.S. government establish a single ‘terms of service’ agreement that could be used by all agencies to govern the relationship between them and social media companies.

As of March 2009, the U.S. General Services Administration – a centralized delivery system of products and services to the federal government – signed terms of service agreements with Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo and blip.tv.

These agreements resolved many of the legal concerns found in the standard user/service agreements including indemnification and limited liability, jurisdiction and choice of law; recognizing that the US government must adhere to the Freedom of Information Act; addressing intellectual property rights and advertising content concerns; providing grandfather clauses and free service, no-cost agreements.^[v] A copy of the US terms of service agreements can be found at https://forum.webcontent.gov/?page=TOS_FAQs

As referenced above, most social media applications are considered free open source software, which is available to anyone to use and modify. The ‘big idea’ behind open source software is that the more people that use and contribute their improvements, the better product it will become. As this is a new concept to the GC, policymakers and legal counsel will be required to examine how the GC can contribute software improvements outside of the federal Crown without putting the Crown at risk of litigation.

Policy Questions

Procurement of Free Open Source Software (FOSS)

- Does the current procurement process apply to open source software? *If so,*
- Will the current buying process be amended to address procurement of social media tools?
- What will be the criteria for procurement of open source software

- How will GC institutions compare the value of open source software with proprietary software and determine how and when to procure one or the other?
- What procurement process will be used to acquire services in which cases? – For example, will IT Software purchase, Communications Advertising purchase or other processes be used to engage with open source software providers?

Specific Challenges

Media sharing sites (video and photo sharing)	<p>Creative production for social media (e.g. web video) – where should it reside? Are current procurement tools appropriate or necessary?</p> <p><i>For reference, the YouTube Terms of Service (TOS) agreement that has been negotiated for US federal institutions:</i></p> <p>https://forum.webcontent.gov/resource/resmgr/Docs/YouTube_TOS_Agreement_forage.pdf</p>
Microblogs	The US Government has advised that they have no issues with signing the standard Twitter 'Terms of Service' agreement (TOS), thus there are no plans to negotiate a specific US Gov TOS.
Virtual Worlds	Linden Labs (Second Life) sells islands. How does the GC procure for virtual space on the Internet?

Summary of Recommendations

A centralized approach to procurement issues would assist GC institutions, who are beginning to use free Web products and services both in their learning and in business applications.

It is our understanding that there is work already being done in this area to assist GC institutions in their work with social media service providers:

- Work is already underway on the acceptable means for the acquisition and use of open source software by a working group of the Chief Information Officers Council (CIOC) to develop a GC position for the acquisition of open source software in the context of Web 2.0 technologies.^{[1][1]}
- Members of a working group of the Chief Information Officers Council (CIOC) has been meeting with members of the US Web Council and many of the third-party service providers that have amended service agreements for the US government to explore developing unique terms of service agreements for the GC.

We recommend that those working on standard user/service agreements with social media sites also consider Canadian legislation specific issues such as privacy, trans border flow of information, official languages and accessibility of the software to the negotiations.

It is recommended that guidance follow very shortly after agreements are issued as federal institutions are continuing to use these sites and may need to adjust their pilots.

In the meantime, we would recommend that if an institution is considering acquiring and installing open source software they should consult with their Federal institutions' Head of IT on the acquisition and use of open source software and/or the Software and Shared Systems Procurement Directorate at Public Works and Government Services.

It is recommended that the GC finds a way to contribute improvements to OSS back to the product. Any improvements/customizations that are made for accessibility, official languages, privacy and other could then become integrated into the source software

While this is a new concept for policymakers and legal counsel to consider, it is essential to address as our improvements to meet our needs may also assist our provincial government counterparts and the larger international government community (For example, all countries with more than one official language such as Belgium or bilingual provinces such as New Brunswick).

Information Technology (focus on IT Security)

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and IT Security.

Introduction/Context

“As the barriers between public and private break down, organizations will need to understand how to move from blocking the use of social media to supporting its use in ways that are consistent with requirements for privacy compliance, security and data loss prevention”.²⁰

Policy Considerations

Access to social media tools by GC employees in the workplace

As policy-makers are likely aware, one of the biggest challenges for GC employees responsible for researching and implementing government projects using Web 2.0 technologies is that most employees are not able to access many popular social media Web sites - including blogs that make reference to the Institutions' work or leaders. This makes it difficult for individuals to effectively serve their clients particularly in the case of researching new ways of communicating, providing services and engaging Canadians.

In many institutions, IT Security officials are concerned about employee use of social media tools as they may introduce security risks. It is often unclear for users and managers what the key risks are, and how serious they may be to the Institution.

On the other hand, new users of these technologies may not understand the real security risks of downloading applications from third-party social media sites. They may also be prey to phishing schemes and may even bring malware into the organization. While these are real risks, it is important to continue to put them in perspective as there are also many risks inherent in our common practices such as transporting USB data keys from home to work. (may introduce viruses or cause security breaches).

Many GC institutions are beginning to use these tools to recruit new public servants. There is a disconnect between using new tools to bring in recruits when access to tools is not provided to them as public servants.

In addition, if Government institutions are using the tools to promote citizen engagement, policy development, and communication, government employees, who are our ambassadors, should also be able to access the same information provided to the public from their work stations. The

Government of Ontario was recently criticized for not allowing access to Facebook while major campaigns against transportation legislation were being organized by citizens using the tool. By the time the story hit the media, these activities may have been going on for days or weeks.

Use of social media tools on GC websites to provide programs and services to Canadians

Many Institutions are considering adding social media applications to GC Web sites such as social bookmarking; video embeds from third-party sites, photo sharing, external-facing blogs, wikis, and discussion forums. In addition, some are considering how to develop mashups and web widgets and how to embed widgets on a GC domain.

As these projects become more commonplace, it will be important that institutions be made aware of their responsibilities for ensuring that the data captured is properly treated and protected and that managers understand security risks and possible mitigation.

Anyone planning a Web 2.0 project should be required to work with IT Security in order to identify best practices for identity management, privacy protection and data integrity. (For example Institutions may decide whether or not to enable social commentary features such as comment fields depending on security and other risks.)

Policy Questions

Social media initiatives hosted by the GC on a GC domain:

- Does enabling comments on a GC site pose any kind of IT security risk?
- Does allowing users to upload video or photos to a GC site pose any kind of security risk?

GC presence on a third-party service provider's site:

- Does accessing social media sites pose a risk to security? If yes, what specifically is the risk? (For example, most social media tools don't require software installation to access and use the tool, however there may be other risks.)
- Is downloading 'group offers', videos or photos considered an IT security risk? If yes, then how do we capture information? And how are other organizations addressing these risks?
- Uploading materials to service providers' websites requires that the third-party website access specific files from the user's hard drive or network. Does this mean that it could have access to GC networks? If so what is the security concern?

Social Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are hungry for information. For example, the information required to open an account on Facebook includes very detailed personal information. If this is of concern for identity theft guidelines for use of applications for both business and personal use on network computers should be created. .
Virtual Worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second-life requires software downloads. .Does this introduce threats to the network?
Web Widgets/Gadgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could web gadgets compromise the network?
Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could social media applications used on mobile devices pose a risk or threat to the GC data on that network? For example, all Blackberries come with a Facebook application. Are there any instances where the

	application could have access to e-mails and attachments containing GC information?
--	---

Summary of Recommendations

It would be helpful for all parties to have a document that clearly explains the security risks of engaging in social media to clarify the risks for managers and employees.

Where access to social media tools and networks do not pose a high-level security threat, granting access should be considered for employees, especially in communications functions and program areas exploring use of these tools and monitoring them for activity.

If the bulk of the risk to an Institution's security lies in user-awareness of malware and possibilities of real security breaches, IT, Communications and Programs could work together to find acceptable alternatives to blocking sites. (for example, solutions could be blocking downloading capabilities, holding training and information sessions, including new pop-up messages about downloading, etc.)

Institutions might also consider addressing the issues of outdated technology and systems (software versions including Internet Explorer) and limited bandwidth as these are key obstacles for those who would like to use Web 2.0 tools and technologies for business functions.

If demand requires, and increasingly communications and engagement functions require more and more bandwidth; institutions would need to budget these costs into their project/program management, much like other infrastructure needs.

We recommend that Institutions clarify how to approach identity management, privacy protection and data integrity from a GC perspective when using social media tools on either GC hosted or third-party sites. We also recommend that Institutions share their approaches with central agencies to reduce duplication of work for institutions.

Policies on Information Management and Access to Information

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and the policies on Information Management and Access to Information.

Introduction/Context

The GC recognizes the right of access by the public to information in records under the control of government institutions as an essential element of our system of democracy. The government is committed to openness and transparency by respecting both the spirit and requirements of the Access to Information Act, its Regulations and its related policy instruments. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12453§ion=text#cha1>

Increasing electronic communication within government and with citizens increases the type and volume of records that in Canada may be subject to access to information requests.²¹ Web 2.0 technologies and applications require architecture and content management systems that make web content interactive, accessible and exportable.²²

The [Policy on Information Management](#) has defined record keeping as: “a framework of accountability and stewardship in which records are created, captured and managed as a vital business asset and knowledge resource to support effective decision making and achieve results for Canadians.”²³

In the Policy’s appendix, records are defined as any documentary material other than a publication, regardless of medium or form. Records are created, received and maintained by an organization or person for business purposes, legal obligations or both.

The Policy on Recordkeeping requires an analysis of business purpose and needs based on the business context, followed by a declaration of business value and the creation of recordkeeping mechanisms and tools. This notion of business value is intrinsic to the work of information management as its definition allows for appropriate record-keeping whatever the form. (electronic, data, paper etc.)

Policy Considerations

It is important that the GC to retain information for a number of reasons. Information found in records may have business value and be needed for future operations. Information contained in records may be necessary for legislative, regulatory or ethical reasons, and finally other records must be preserved for historical purposes²⁴. No one can destroy GC records without express permission of the Deputy Minister of Library and Archives Canada (LAC). In practice, this responsibility is held by

institutions who have delegated authority to alienate or destroy records based on their delegated authorities.

As in any operational environment, it is essential to determine the role of the Web 2.0 application in relation to an organization's business processes in order to identify the business value of the information resources that are created, managed and used within the Web 2.0 environment. Once the business value of the information resources has been determined, it is then possible to establish the recordkeeping requirements.

It is important that we also manage information resources when they are deemed not to be of business value. Disposition can result in several actions, the most common of which are transfer to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) or to destroy. Their disposition must be consistent with LAC Act and the GC disposition program which results in the creation and management of Records Disposition Authorities <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/government/disposition/index-e.html>).

There is much work underway by LAC and the Office of the Chief Information Officer to identify IM principles and best practices for Web 2.0.

For example, the Office of the Chief Information Officer, TBS has posted a draft "Guideline on Information Management: Web 2.0" which can be found on GCPEDIA (http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Guideline_on_Information_Management:_Web_2.0). This guideline is for use of Web 2.0/collaboration tools internal to GC. However, the authors identify in the scope of the document that in the "meantime, departments should refer to the IM principles found in this guideline and apply them where feasible to external environments and to other Web 2.0 tools such as video, professional networking and instant messaging, which will be detailed in further guidance."

In addition, LAC held a GC Community Workshop on June 29, 2009 during which they identified a number of projects and initiatives to look at "Recordkeeping 2.0". These include case studies for applying the Directive on Recordkeeping in collaboration environments, thought leadership (research) papers and sharing results of activities with Departments, International Organizations and within the institution.

Policy Questions

These are policy questions, but could just as easily be posed to users creating content or communicating using social media tools as institutions work to develop their guidance.

Common tools

- How do we determine what records are of business value in a Web 2.0 environment?
- Once we determine business value, how should we retain these records?(what format, what document management system etc.)?
- As referenced at the LAC Recordkeeping meeting, how does Web 2.0 affect the information environment and how does it affect current recordkeeping practices? If information is made available to the public, does this make it then a "publication" in the terms of the LAC Act?

For GC information hosted on third-party sites:

- If GC information is being posted/hosted to a third-party site what are the IM considerations?
- If records are deemed to be of business value, and the GC is responsible to capture and archive GC content hosted on third-party sites, what information, what format, and how and where should information be archived?
- How sustainable are the records produced by third-party sites and what are the options for alternate archiving of items of business value?

- Are there any third-party service provider policies on retention of content that could conflict with any GC policies or legislation?
- How should the GC safeguard and protect against loss or inappropriate distribution of user generated content placed in a GC environment hosted by a third-party site?
- To what extent should the GC be responsible for keeping records of user-generated content relating to information posted by the GC?
- The nature of the Internet is that all records (even those with little to no business value) might be able to be accessed and used forever. Does this have an impact on information that GC has in the public domain, and especially if information becomes outdated or erroneous? (Canadians could use old or non-updated content)

Ownership/IM Stewardship of collaboratively authored documents

- If records are not institution-based, who owns the content and who should be responsible for stewarding the record-keeping process? For example on a wiki, is the initial author, the community manager or both, responsible for keeping informational records of business value. If records are related to a particular institution this is clear, but less clear as we move to an enterprise model.

Access to Information

- Under the policy on Access to Information Canadians have the right to access government records.
- Does policy need to be updated regarding what types of electronic communications are subject to ATI requests?
- Content placed on third-party sites is considered information in the public domain. Does this mean it is not subject to ATI requests as it is already in the public domain? If not, should it be recommended that the project lead take responsibility for the retention and disposition of records on decisions and business processes only? Would ATI offices be required to point requestors in the direction of publicly available information regarding their requests?
- If content is placed on a GC environment (channel, space etc.) on a third-party site such as a GC YouTube channel, GC Flickr album, a GC Facebook fan page or a GC Twitter account, is it required to be part of the ATIP request?
- Who is responsible for the coordination and release of information posted on an internal social media site involving multiple departments and agencies such as GCPEDIA? What processes would need to be updated on this?

Specific Questions and Considerations

Wikis	Can and should collaborative tools such as wikis be considered official document repositories? What are the risks to GC if these are third-party hosted tools?
Virtual Worlds	How do we define a government record in a virtual world? While this question is referenced above, virtual worlds are unique as a social media tool. For example, how to determine whether GC-owned avatars or other virtual information could be considered records of business value. If so, what information and in what format should Federal Institutions keep records? What are the appropriate measures to do this as they reside on third-party servers in a virtual world? Do we in fact own these records or does the third-party? How do we reflect this information in an ATI request. If we point users to the site, we may introduce accessibility issues and may need to reproduce electronic content.
Mashups	How do we define what information and format to keep when using mashups? This is particularly an issue when dealing with geographic

	satellite-based mapping as the information is constantly changing. Mashups, especially when fed from live information sources, are significantly different “records” from what government policy-makers would have considered when these policies were drafted and/or updated.
--	--

Recommendations regarding Social Media, Information Management and Access to Information

Institutions, with guidance from their IM officials, should be in a position to understand whether or not what they are creating has business value (traditional methods and 2.0) before starting projects. As is consistent with current policy, we recommend that IM principles and recordkeeping requirements be established at the outset of project/program/communications development and design in the same way that we review official languages and CLF compliance.

Where work is interdepartmental and records are being created that have business value to the GC or particular Institutions, project leads or functional community managers may wish to clearly identify a records management process and key IM roles and responsibilities for those involved.

We recommend that project leads should take responsibility for the retention and disposition of records regarding decisions and processes using the Institutions’ information management pre-approved authority and working with IM specialists. Initially could this be as simple as moving finished content to another document form and maintaining the official record on a departmental shared drive or in a records management repository, such as the Institution’s Records Document and Information System (RDIMS).

In addition, project leads may wish to clarify the processes for “disposition of materials” following standard procedures such as destroying transitory records and information resources of low business value. These processes should follow official guidelines and procedures. For example, where documents must be retained, retention schedules should be observed, and where documents are destroyed, leads should ensure that there is a record of their destruction.

When individuals are creating documents using collaborative authoring, it is recommended that they identify how, when, why and where they will keep records. For example, it could be stated that at certain stages of the documents’ development or when the policy or process is altered paper copies or electronic records would be filed. As per the Draft guidelines written on GCPEDIA, where possible, the IM objectives and processes should be stated clearly at the top of a collaborative document.

It would also be helpful to identify lead Institutions in the case of Access to Information requests where documents, business processes or other are Interdepartmental in nature.

These recommendations are our understanding of some of the key issues for IM/ATI. More comprehensive guidelines and recommendations on IM can be found in the following documents:

- Guideline for Employees of the GC: Information Management (IM) Basics <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=16557>,
- Draft Guideline on Information Management: Web 2.0, posted on GCPEDIA²⁵, http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Information_Management_Guideline_for_use_of_Wikis_and_Blogs_for_the_Government_of_Canada

Official Languages

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and Official Languages.

Introduction/Context

This section has been inspired by work which is currently being done by the TBS Official Languages Branch on developing Web 2.0 guidelines for Communicating with and providing services to the public. Any recommendations or errors are entirely ours but based on our conversations.. Policy requirements relating to official languages apply as stated in the Treasury Board [Policy on the use of Official Languages for Communications with and Services to the public](#), [Directive on the Use of Official Languages in Electronic Communications](#) and [Directive on the Use of Official Languages on Web sites](#).

English and French are the official languages of Canada for communications with and services to the [public](#). Members of the public have the right to communicate with and receive services in either English or French from [offices or facilities designated bilingual](#), including an institution's head or central office, offices located in the National Capital Region, and all offices of an institution that reports directly to Parliament on its activities. These offices or facilities [actively offer](#) communications with and services to the public in both official languages.

In addition, institutions ensure the public's right is respected when communicating with or receiving services from a [third-party](#) acting on the institution's behalf. When using media to communicate with the public, the institution ensures that its linguistic obligations are met. The obligation to communicate with and serve the public in the official language of its choice takes precedence over employees' language-of-work rights.

A [Web site](#) of a GC institution respects the institution's linguistic obligations regarding communications with and services to the public, as well as language of work. It reflects the equality of status of English and French. The English and French versions of a [Web site](#) of an institution are of equal quality and are available simultaneously. Subject to the requirements set out in the *Directive on the Use of Official Languages* on Web sites, a Web site may be in one or both official languages.²⁶

An institution respects its linguistic obligations regarding communications with and services to the public, as well as language of work, when it uses [electronic communications](#). Electronic communications issued by the institution reflect the equality of status of English and French. The English and French versions of electronic communications are of equal quality and are available

simultaneously. Subject to the requirements set out in this directive, electronic communications may be in one or both official languages.²⁷

Policy Questions

- If social commentary features are enabled on a GC Web site or in a GC environment on a third-party site, users should be given the opportunity to respond to any post in the official language of their choice.
- If questions are posed, is the GC required to respond in both official languages? Please see Summary of Recommendations section for recommendations.
- Should federal institutions distribute a French / English equivalent for materials being posted on a unilingual online service provider website? For example, is the GC responsible for uploading both a French and English version of a video on a site that provides a French-only interface site and only contains French content? Please see Summary of Recommendations section for recommendations.

Specific Questions and Considerations

Media sharing sites (video and photo sharing)	<p>Video files should be made available in both official languages. This can be achieved by making both English and French text versions available. Good practice would be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for videos: if the file is available in one language, include sub-titles for the other language version;
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog posts on GC Web sites should be available in both official languages – one in English and one in French. It should be noted which version was the original document. If possible, it is recommended that a departmental blogger be bilingual or two different bloggers could be identified – one to serve a Francophone audience and one to serve an Anglophone audience.
Microblogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For micro-blogging tools such as Twitter, given the character limitations, it is recommended that federal institutions create two accounts – one in English and one in French. The following represents a good practice OL example: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/sm-ms/index-eng.php
RSS feeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeds provided from the GC Web sites must be posted in both official languages simultaneously and of equal quality; • A RSS feed from a unilingual office or facility can be available in the official language of the majority of the population of the province or territory where the office or facility is located only when the content of the site is intended exclusively for the public served by that office or facility.
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Podcasts in either audio or video formats should be made available in both official languages. This can be achieved by having both English and French text versions available. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ for videos: if the file is available in one language, include sub-titles for the other language version; ○ for audio: if the file is in one language only, create a voice-over version for the other official language.; • For bilingual audio and video files, ensure that the English and French content is comparable in length and of equal quality.
Virtual Worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For virtual classrooms and live web conferences, information about the event and its language versions should be indicated. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If there are separate unilingual events (English and

	<p>French), federal institutions should indicate times and language for each event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the event is bilingual, federal institutions should ensure that an equal combination of English and French is used.
Wikis	<p><u>Pages in development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Federal institutions can decide to make these pages available in either one or both official languages as long as there is a notice of intent to translate once completed; b) When users are asked to edit pages they can do so in their preferred official language c) Once the content is finalized and approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. it must be bilingual or a link to the final document where there are English and French versions must be provided ii. English and French versions must be posted simultaneously and must be of equal quality iii. appropriate links should be established between the English and French versions d) In the case where the content does not reach a final version but continues to change as new events take place, the federal institution should determine an appropriate point that the content is made available in both official languages. <p><u>Discussion pages</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Discussion pages should be made available in both official languages b) Users should be able to contribute in their preferred official language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. This raises the question of whether or not federal institutions should create bilingual or unilingual discussion pages. ii. If the pages are unilingual, institutions should concern themselves with ensuring there is a way in which the information can be shared between the two communities. (for example, summary of comments in both official languages) b. Reasons for creating unilingual discussion pages : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A bilingual discussion page may be a deterrent for unilingual participants. ○ It is vital that participants feel at liberty to participate and trust that they will be understood in their language of choice. <p>Regardless of the decision, it is recommended that federal institutions not take the responsibility of translating user generated content. Please see summary of recommendations section for more detail.</p>

Social bookmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal institutions including social bookmarking links on GC Web sites must include a link to both English and French content in respective sites. Federal institutions including social bookmarking links on GC Web sites should ensure that consideration is given that some of the sites included on the federal institution's 'share button' serve an Anglophone audience and others a Francophone audience.
Mashups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that all mashups created by the GC are offered as two separate tools – one English, one French. If a mashup allows the public to contribute data, the French version and English version will likely have different content. However, if the GC contributions are made to both Official Languages, is the government meeting its OL obligations? Should it be recommended that the project lead monitor data updates and add public content to the other language tool?
Web Widgets/Gadgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All widgets created by the GC must be available in both official languages simultaneously and of equal quality What if the GC would like to post a widget to a GC website, but the content is only available in one official language
Instant Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal institutions using instant messaging tools should begin the chat session by offering the active offer using the prescribed order <p>Follow-up conversation is provided in the preferred language of the user.</p>
Web Conferencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When moderating a bilingual session, the moderator(s) should ensure that English and French are approximately equal in delivery. It is also recommended to provide frequent bilingual summaries to ensure equal comprehension. Where possible, URL's or web addresses should apply the Common Look and Feel Guidelines for the Internet, Standard on Web addresses All conference information and summaries must be provided in both official languages.

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that institutions draft a content translation/adaptation plan for Web 2.0 projects. The plan should identify timelines (turnaround times), resources and budget as they relate to translation.

If an institution chooses to use social media tools on a third-party site, it is recommended that they select third-party media sharing sites that offer a bilingual interface or an interface that offers English and French-language options. .

All profile content should be bilingual. This includes names, descriptions, summaries and all other details. For example, a channel description on a YouTube channel should be in available in both official languages. When two accounts are created (one in English and one in French), the content can be available in one official language).

A notice should be posted on all third-party sites indicating the terms of reference/terms of use including the use of official languages.

Resources posted on social media sites should be available in both official languages. Both English and French versions must be made available simultaneously and be of equal quality. If it's not appropriate to post bilingual content on a third-party site, it is recommended that the other language version is referenced in the descriptive text where that option is available. In the event that links to resources are posted on a GC Web site, the English and French versions should be available on their respective sites or alternatively, be included in both language versions.

For photos posted on third-party sites, it is not recommended that institutions provide bilingual alt text or bilingual captions as bilingual alt text impedes accessibility.

Departmental discretion can be used to determine if users will be best served by a unilingual or bilingual social networking community, discussion forum, channel, etc. Regardless of the decision, it is recommended that institutions not take the responsibility of translating user generated content. The primary concern is that the translation will be considered 'inaccurate' by the user who wrote the initial comment/post. However, it is recommended that federal institutions take the following steps to ensure equal treatment of both official languages:

- If two sites (in each official language) are developed then provide a link on each to ensure there are no gaps in knowledge, information sharing and discussions.
- Always respect the principle of equal treatment of both official languages
- When social commentary features are enabled, users will respond in the official language of their choice. Responses posted on behalf of the federal institution should be provided in the language in which it was received.
- Recognize that divergent conversations will happen in both official languages.
- If a federal institution decides to provide 'discussion summaries', the summaries must be posted in both official languages simultaneously and must be of equal quality. It is appropriate for the project lead to determine how often summaries will be issued (based on number of posts, complexity of discussion, etc.)

Machine translation is not recommended until such a time as it is akin to the work of translators.

Accessibility & Common Look and Feel (CLF) Standards

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and Accessibility & Common Look and Feel (CLF) standards.

Introduction/Context

Compliance to CLF 2.0 standards helps ensure that GC institutions meet many of their requirements under the policy related to Official Languages Act, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Federal Identity Policy (FIP), security and privacy. Failure to comply exposes an institution to a number of potential risks. For the purpose of this document, this section will deal with accessibility issues in these standards.

Deputy Heads are required to monitor and report compliance as set out in the standards. CLF is also assessed under the Management Accountability Framework (MAF).

Institutions are aware that the Human Rights Act and Charter require that the GC's electronic and information technology is accessible to persons with disabilities. In addition, meeting the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines supports this requirement.

Ensuring accessibility means it is:

- **Perceivable**
 - Provide text alternatives for non-text content.
 - Provide captions and alternatives for audio and video content.
 - Make content adaptable; and make it available to assistive technologies.
 - Use sufficient contrast to make things easy to see and hear.
- **Operable**
 - Make all functionality keyboards accessible.
 - Give users enough time to read and use content.
 - Do not use content that causes seizures.
 - Help users navigate and find content.
- **Understandable**
 - Make text readable and understandable.
 - Make content appear and operate in predictable ways.
 - Help users avoid and correct mistakes.
 - Markup inline language changes
- **Robust**
 - Maximize compatibility with current and future technologies²⁸.

Because the term 'Web 2.0 technologies' covers such a broad spectrum of tools and applications, accessibility concerns regarding the GC's external use of social media tools are numerous.

While social media tools such as blogs, discussion forums, etc. are typically considered accessible because they are primarily text, others such as virtual worlds are in a higher risk category due to the nature of this environment.

The degree to which institutions enable or disable features provided by these third-party applications can also impact how accessible the GC content is to persons with disabilities.

And, while third-party service providers are not held to specific accessibility standards in Canada, institutions are aware of their responsibilities to consider and accommodate the needs of all Canadians.

Policy Considerations

If social media applications are wholly owned by the GC then CLF applies, however institutions may be hesitant to deploy Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis, blogs, video or photo sharing software, social bookmarking, mashups, widgets, etc. as many have not evaluated whether or not these applications and tools are CLF compliant.

While it is clear that CLF standards address requirements for content on GC websites, it is less clear what is required of institutions when they establish a GC presence on a third-party Web site.

Policy Questions

Whether or not Federal Institutions are required to or deemed 'accountable' to provide accessible content on third-party sites, it is important that the GC consider and accommodate the needs of all Canadians. Therefore, policymakers may wish to address the following questions:

1. Do CLF standards apply to GC content that is hosted on third-party sites?
If yes:
2. Is there a need to amend the existing [CLF 2.0 \(http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/clf2-nsi2/index-eng.asp\)](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/clf2-nsi2/index-eng.asp) compliance assessment methodology in order to accurately identify accessibility issues on third-party Web sites?
- If no:
3. Is there a recommended best practice or approach for identifying accessibility issues and mitigating risks? (I.e. a checklist based on CLF 2.0 compliance assessment or accessibility standards provided by the W3C?)
4. Should the GC only use third-party applications that follow comparable accessibility guidelines? Or is it sufficient that a federal institution ensures that the GC content is available by other means? i.e. either:
 - by offering content in traditional forms or;
 - by including multiple platforms in a Web 2.0 strategy. For example, virtual worlds and audio podcasts could be used to deliver the same message, while one may not be accessible for visually impaired persons the other one is.

Specific Challenges

Media sharing sites (video and photo sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many video sharing sites do not provide closed captioning or allow users to post transcripts. When videos start automatically on screen, they confuse screen readers "ALT" text may not be available when uploading a GC photo to a third-party site Sites may not support accessible browsing (e.g. through keyboard)
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A GC employee could be a 'guest blogger' on a third-party site which may not meet GC accessibility standards. The GC blogger may choose to include a note in his/her blog post that indicates how to access the GC information in an alternate format.
Social Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often not accessible Users post inaccessible content
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audio is not accessible to hearing impaired so it is recommended to provide links to text equivalents Video should have text (captions) and descriptions of actions
Virtual Worlds	<p>Due to the nature of the virtual environment there is a high risk of not meeting accessibility standards. For example, Second Life (SL) presents a number of challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> software will not work on older computers requires microphone and speakers/or headset with microphone requires access to high speed Internet/broadband requires dexterity on the part of the user requires a certain level of visual ability
Wikis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User-generated: i.e. users post content that may introduce accessibility challenges Tool-generated: i.e. some aspects of wiki software may introduce accessibility challenges.
Social bookmarking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share buttons reliant on JavaScript (JS) may not be accessible. On GC domains, institutions should ensure that the 'share buttons' are in-line, rather than pop-ups and work when JS is off.
Mashups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often use technology that is not compatible with adaptive technology and do not provide keyboard navigation. In particular, maps and geographical data are difficult to explain to a user. If an institution is creates a mashup, it should create accessible user interfaces. http://dev.w3.org/2006/waf/widgets-api/ and http://www.w3.org/WAI/intro/aria.php
Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Users of mobile devices and people with disabilities experience similar barriers when interacting with Web content. For example, mobile phone users will have a hard time if a Web site's navigation requires the use of a mouse because they typically only have an alphanumeric keypad. Similarly, desktop computer users with a motor disability will have a hard time using a Web site if they can't use a mouse. Additionally, people with disabilities may use a mobile device to access the Web site".²⁹
Instant Messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As long as the interface does not introduce accessibility barriers, instant messaging is usually accessible. .

Summary of Recommendations

As referenced above, compliance to CLF 2.0 standards helps ensure that institutions meet their requirements under the policy related to Official Languages Act, Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Federal Identity Program (FIP), security and privacy.

If social media applications are hosted on a GC domain it is clear that CLF standards apply. Institutions should conduct a CLF 2.0 compliance assessment to identify accessibility issues.

Though it seems quite challenging to require CLF compliance for GC content placed on third-party Web sites (as the GC does not own these sites) it is important for Institutions to consider and accommodate the needs of all Canadians. One way to do so is for Institutions to conduct a CLF accessibility assessment using W3C or WCAG priorities 1 & 2 checkpoints

(<http://www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/full-checklist.html>) for each Web 2.0 tool and/or third-party site it considers using.

If key accessibility features are missing, federal institutions may wish to draft a risk mitigation strategy that identifies how each of the risks will be addressed and how the content will be made available in alternative formats. Results of these assessments should be shared in order to reduce the duplication of efforts across the GC. For example, results could be shared on *GCPEDIA* or with TBS.

Using third-party delivery sites are should not be viewed an opportunity to circumvent CLF obligations. These are an opportunity to deliver business objectives including programs and services in a new way to targeted audiences and the broader public. Institutions should be encouraged to continue to provide content by traditional means and in alternative formats.

As referenced in the Procurement section of this document, it is recommended that standard accessible, CLF-compliant blog, social network, forum, and wiki software be identified or created so that Institutions are not duplicating efforts by researching and testing the same applications and can easily deploy the recommended software on GC servers or deploy on common service providers where an Institution is externally hosting a Web 2.0 site. Experience with *GCPEDIA*, *GCConnex* and *DFAIT's Lotus connections* forum software should prove excellent starting points. In addition, it would be helpful if standard closed-captioning software were recommended.

It is recommended that a 'terms of use' and/or 'service standards' template be created including a common statement to users on how to access alternative formats. It is recommended that policy makers confer with one another regarding content for a complete template.

- Institutions may wish to include a notice on both institutional and third-party sites informing users:
 - of the official Departmental URL and how to view it
 - of a generic .gc.ca email address to ensure users can contact appropriate GC contacts
 - how to access the GC information in alternate formats (for example a video that is bilingual, closed captioned, and accompanied by a transcript can be found on the departmental Web site), with direct links when possible.
 - that third-party service providers may not follow GC standards, policies, but that the GC is committed to achieving a high standard of accessibility and is working to address issues with third-party service provider platforms. An example of a similar document can be found at <http://www.number10.gov.uk/footer/accessibility>

Assuming that accessible content is available on an institutions' Web site the following principles could apply. If "ALT" text is not available when uploading a video, photo, chart, etc. to a third-party site, check to see if "caption" is available and is a suitable replacement. If using captioning, please link to accessible content on an Institution's Web site (link directly where possible).

Where possible, Institutions should use multiple tools/sites/applications to reach their target audiences while understanding that these products may cater to different audience segments and different levels of accessibility.

Most contributors will have very limited knowledge related to developing accessible content. In time, both Government and citizen users should be empowered to generate accessible content. Although posting plain unformatted text will introduce fewer accessibility issues, it can be difficult for contributors to make specialized content accessible. Examples of specialized content include data tables, images, maps, links, and multimedia.

It is recommended that tools and guidance documents be provided to assist users in creating accessible content. Policymakers may wish to consider whether CLF guidance can be repurposed or if current documentation is sufficient.

Content monitoring is recommended to mitigate/correct accessibility issues with user-generated content. In many cases, tools and guidance documents alone will not be sufficient for ensuring contributors are generating accessible content. Monitoring can help users with administrative privileges detect and correct accessibility issues. Some accessibility checks can be automated through the use of accessibility validation tools but other accessibility reviews can be more subjective and should be performed manually.

And finally, it would be helpful if efforts were made to encourage third-party service providers to become more accessible to all users. We recommend that central agencies work with third-party service providers to address accessibility gaps.

While this section focussed on accessibility only as it is the most challenging, due consideration should also be given to parts 1, 3, and 4 of the CLF standards. This section is focussed on corporate identity, consistent service, official languages, and e-mail requirements.

Policy on Privacy Protection

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and Privacy Protection.

Introduction/Context

The *Privacy Act*, which came into force in 1983, requires government institutions to respect privacy rights in Canada. The *Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act (PIPEDA)*, which took full effect in January 2004, protects personal information held by the private sector.

To review external use of Web 2.0 technologies and Privacy Protection the working group reviewed the *Privacy Act* obligations of civil servants and the third-party tools and services covered by PIPEDA.

The purpose of the Privacy Act is to extend the present laws of Canada that protect the privacy of individuals with respect to personal information about themselves held by a government institution and provide individuals with a right of access to that information.^{[1][1]}

The Privacy Act defines precise boundaries for what is and what is not personal information.

The following types of information are considered "personal information".^{[1][1]}

- the general rule: information about an identifiable individual that is recorded in any form
- personal opinions or views of the individual
- race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age or marital status of the individual
- education or the medical, criminal or employment history of the individual
- financial transactions in which the individual has been involved
- any identifying number, symbol or other particular assigned to the individual
- address, fingerprints or blood type of the individual
- the name of the individual where
- it appears with other personal information relating to the individual, or
- where the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about the person

The following types of information are not considered "personal information".^{[1][1]}

- personal opinions or views of the individual that are:
 - related to a grant, an award or a prize to be made to another individual by a government institution
 - related to another individual
 - given in the course of employment
 - the fact that the individual is or was an officer or employee of the government institution
- the title, business address and telephone number of the individual

- the classification, salary range and responsibilities of the position held by the individual
- the name of the individual on a document prepared by the individual in the course of employment
- information relating to any discretionary benefit of a financial nature
- information about an individual who has been dead for more than twenty years

“PIPEDA is intended to “support and promote electronic commerce by protecting personal information that is collected, used or disclosed in certain circumstances...” This acknowledges that proper protection of personal information both facilitates and promotes commerce by building consumer confidence. Today’s globally interdependent economy relies on international flow of information. These cross-border transfers do raise some legitimate concerns about where personal information is going as well as what happens to it while in transit and after it arrives at some foreign destination.”^{[iv][v]}

Policy considerations

The advent of the social web, in particular the development of online social networking services^{[v][v]} has significantly increased the ability to track online identities and personal information, as well as manipulate data in more sophisticated ways. The use of Web 2.0 applications has significant implications for citizen privacy.^{[vi][vi]}

Web 2.0 tools (wiki, blogs, social networks, discussion forums, etc.) are different than most corporate systems that collect, retain and manage personal information. Corporate information systems that retain personal information are typically ‘closed’ systems, in the sense that use is subject to prior training by selected employees, and only those employees have access to the system. In addition, these corporate systems are often designed to manage specific information in the context of specific processes and do not access all data together at one time.

Web 2.0 tools, on the other hand, are an ‘open’ suite of tools. Each tool can, theoretically, be used by anyone, without the context of specific processes identified in advance. Therefore, it can be difficult to predict, with certainty, all the possible uses of these technologies and thus, impacts on privacy.

The *Privacy Act* defines principles and rules to be observed at three stages of the management of *personal information*:

Stage	Principles / Rules ^[45]
Collection	<p>No personal information shall be collected by a government institution unless it relates directly to an operating program or activity of the institution</p> <p>A government institution shall, wherever possible, collect personal information directly from the individual to whom it relates</p> <p>A government institution shall inform concerned individuals of the purpose for which the personal information is being collected</p> <p>Note: The latter two rules do not apply where compliance might result in the collection of inaccurate information or defeat the purpose or prejudice the use for which information is collected</p>
Retention	<p>Personal information that has been used by a government institution shall be retained</p>

	by the institution in order to ensure that the individual to whom it relates has a reasonable opportunity to obtain access to the information
	A government institution shall take reasonable steps to ensure that personal information is accurate, up-to-date and complete
Disposal	A government institution shall dispose of personal information in accordance with the regulations, <i>and</i> any directives or guidelines issued by the designated minister in relation to the disposal of that information.

These principles and rules are applicable to personal information collected, retained and disposed of on GC servers; however institutions considering using social media for outreach and consultation with Canadians will have to determine whether they are, in fact, creating a new Personal Information Bank (PIB) and therefore be required to conduct a preliminary Privacy Impact Assessment. Decisions regarding whether collecting name, email and IP as part of blogging software or comment moderation is building a new PIB is required.

And, will these principles and rules be applied to the GC's participation on third-party service provider sites?

According the TBS position paper: [Privacy Matters: The Federal Strategy to Address Concerns About the USA PATRIOT Act and Transborder Data Flows](#), it is recommended that the GC address access rights to data through a contracting mechanism. However, this recommendation refers to contracts developed for GC outsourcing projects.

In Web 2.0 applications, individuals and institutions typically agree to standard user agreements, rather than negotiate specific terms. As third-party service providers do not generate revenue from one-on-one contracts, it isn't a priority nor is it profitable to offer customized user agreements. That being said, the US Government has negotiated US federal government-wide contracts with individual service providers that addresses some of its policy concerns (more details are provided in the Procurement section of this document). As TBS will likely take the same approach with the same providers, policymakers will want to provide advice regarding how to address these questions.

Policy Questions

GC presence on a third-party service provider's site:

If the GC participates on an individual's or organization's discussion forum, wiki, social network, blog etc. or if the GC creates a government environment (channel/group/community) within an online community:

- What responsibility does the GC have to protect a citizen's personal information on a third-party service provider's site?
- What is the reasonable public expectation?
- To what extent does the GC need to protect a citizen's personal information on a third-party service provider's site?
- To what extent will citizens participating in a GC hosted environment assume that their personal information is protected to the same extent as if they were sharing this information with the GC?
- Are there concerns regarding what the GC can access in terms of user profiles? I.e. if a citizen completes a third-party service provider's user profile that includes personal

information, the GC, as a community member may have access to that user's personal information. How will the GC address this issue?

- How will the GC ascertain:
 - who will have access to this information?
 - how this information will be used and stored?
 - how long they can access it?

Issues that span both scenerios (GC domain and third-party domain)

Are there privacy concerns regarding transborder data flow when content is stored on servers in foreign countries? (as it is in most cases)

- If yes, how can the GC address this privacy concern when using networks hosted in foreign countries. (In the US, we typically reference the US Patriot Act.)
- Privacy concerns for most social media tools are similar, however different service providers have different levels of privacy concerns based on the organization or the tool.

Comments

Whether or not a GC video or photo is hosted on the main section of a video or photo sharing site or within a channel or album, the 'comment' feature may be enabled.

- If users of the third-party platform write comments regarding GC content, or rate the GC content, etc., how will that information be archived?
- Will information be stored regarding the comment and the individual? Who will have access?
- Will comments made by public users regarding GC content or other user's comments be kept and stored?
- How will we deal with real breaches of privacy

Access to Personal information from Users

- Will the GC need to prepare a disclaimer for all "fans" or users subscribing to our "channel" or presence on a third-party site to ensure they understand that whatever is posted (photo, address, e-mail or phone information) is in the public domain?
- Should GC be able to see subscriber's information for those who sign up to a "channel"?

Will the GC keep information about IP addresses RSS feed of GC content?

Summary of Recommendations

It is recommended that TBS continue to review the impact of Web 2.0 technologies on privacy policy and directives and update as needed to guide GC Institutions who choose to incorporate Web 2.0 technologies. (i.e. external wiki, discussion forum, etc.)

As per the existing policy requirement, institutions should conduct a preliminary privacy impact assessment (PIA) before implementing social media initiatives. Central coordination of assessments for popular social media sites would also be helpful in avoiding having multiple and possibly differing assessments for each tool.

It is recommended that disclaimers be posted for all government environments within online communities like YouTube channels, Facebook Fan Pages or Groups, Twitter accounts, etc. to advise users that they are not on government websites and that the privacy policy of the company applies.^{[vii][vii]} Institutions could:

- add that the GC will not engage in any matters involving an individual's specific case or file (e.g. SIN card applications, EI claims, student loans, tax files, etc.)
- reference that the service is being provided by a supplier in the US or another country (to ensure that users are aware that their information will likely be held by a non-Canadian supplier).
- include contact information to direct enquiries regarding privacy concerns.
- add a reminder to users to learn all they can about the privacy controls available on social media sites.^[viii]

It is recommended that institutions share examples of disclaimers with TBS and that they share them via GCPEDIA/Publiservice in order to reduce duplication of efforts across the GC.

It is recommended that experts including Justice Canada review existing privacy policy statements to ascertain if the policies of popular third-party service providers conflict with GC legislation, regulations or policies.

It is recommended that trans border flow issues be clarified and addressed as soon as possible and that institutions be provided with guidance as this issue is often cited as a reason not to pursue social media initiatives.

We recommend that institutions identify a primary contact in the case where Web 2.0 privacy concerns arise. E.g. the social media project lead could work with the federal institution's legal counsel to respond to privacy concerns.

Finally, the fact that many social media sites are currently experiencing privacy challenges, as recently illustrated by the Privacy Commissioner of Canada's challenge to Facebook's privacy protection measures and policies, means that policy-makers may wish to identify possible improvements to third-party service provider sites and include them in negotiations for common service agreements and/or share them with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Copyright

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and the Copyright Act.

Introduction/Context

Government of Canada content is created to be widely and freely available to the public. This is becoming increasingly possible with the ability to publish digital content to the Internet as the interconnectivity of the web and social media allows for mass distribution and exchange of information through various applications.

One of the major challenges this poses is the management of copyrighted content. In general, the Crown (GC) owns the copyright of all works prepared by or under the direction or control of the GC for the duration of 50 years. The Crown holds the exclusive right to authorize and license the usage of its works.

This is problematic for widespread sharing and accessibility of GC information. So an innovative and practical policy was adopted for non-commercial reproduction of Crown copyright digital material. This is the standard disclaimer that is in the “important notices” section of each GC Web site. It reads as follows:

“Information on this site, other than government symbols, has been posted with the intent that it be readily available for personal and public non-commercial use and may be reproduced, in part or in whole and by any means, without charge or further permission from the [Federal Government Institution]. We ask only that:

- Users exercise due diligence in ensuring the accuracy of the materials reproduced;
- The [Federal Government Institution] be identified as the source federal institution; and
- The reproduction is not represented as an official version of the materials reproduced, nor as having been made, in affiliation with or with the endorsement of the [Federal Government Institution].”

Written permission from the GC's copyright administrator, Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) is still required for the reproduction in whole or in part of Crown copyright material for the purposes of commercial redistribution. The challenge is that most social media sites are privately owned and operated by third-party service providers so it is our understanding that posting GC materials on those sites automatically makes the products for commercial use.

Policy Considerations

Crown copyright management policies are clearly defined but the infrastructure is an encumbrance when dealing with Web 2.0. All third-party service providers are deemed commercial ventures therefore it is our understanding that PWGSC has the sole authority to license Federal Government content on these platforms. At the moment, in accordance with policy, Federal Government Institutions should work with PWGSC to open social media accounts and agree to commercially license GC content onto those platforms.

As stated above, unless otherwise stipulated, the Crown owns the copyright of all works prepared by or under the direction or control of the GC for the duration 50 years.

Furthermore, some social media sites require the users to agree to “Terms of Use” stipulating that once users post an item on the social media site they waive their moral rights over the material posted or transfer the ownership rights to the third-party service provider that owns that site.

The copyright legislation and the policies in place to administer Crown copyrights present certain complications when implementing a social media communications strategy. It is therefore necessary to obtain clear guidance when facing the challenges surrounding copyright within a Web 2.0 context in order to avoid any legal or other consequences.

Policy Questions

Social media initiatives hosted by the GC

If a social media initiative is prepared under the GC’s direction or control:

1. Does the GC own the copyright of all material posted by citizens that are engaging in the social media activity? This includes research findings, uploaded documents, pictures etc...
 - a. Is it implied through legislation that the Crown will own the copyright over anything posted on a social media initiative hosted by the GC or;
 - b. Is it required, before engaging in a social media initiative hosted by the GC, to have users agree to terms of use, which stipulate that the GC will own the copyright over anything that users post?
2. Is the GC responsible for displaying copyrighted content uploaded on their site by a user who did not have the authority of the copyright holder to post that content?
 - a. Is a disclaimer stating that “the GC cannot be held accountable for the content generated by a user” sufficient to protect GC from any legal dispute?

GC engaging in social media hosted by a third-party service provider

When the GC engages in social media hosted by a third-party service provider it must agree to terms of use which waive the Crown’s exclusive right to authorize and license the usage of its works posted on the social media site.

1. Can the GC publish on sites that revoke Crown Copyright Ownership through their Terms of Use (Such as Facebook did in the past) and transfer the copyright to the online service provider?
2. Can public servants publish Crown Copyright material on an online service for Federal Institutions?

If not:

3. Can Federal Institutions own an online service account where designated public servants can publish Crown copyright material through that account?

4. Can Federal Government Institutions or individual public servants agree to terms of use with third-party service provider that would waive the Crown's exclusive right over licensing the work it posts when engaging on that social media site?

Specific Challenges

Media sharing sites (video and photo sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that release forms have been obtained for all identifiable subjects in a photograph or in a video or rights have been obtained prior to posting the media. • Technologies allow content creators to embed metadata in order to track owner of the media • Ensure proper licensing for mass publishing in order to avoid inadvertent infringement on third-party rights (e.g. a photo that we've obtained a single use license that gets reused by Flickr after we've posted it to a GC brand page.)
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If GC content is copied in part or in full according to the terms of a non-commercial reproduction license agreement on a personal blog that generates advertising revenue does this constitute Crown copyright infringement?
Microblogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who owns the content of a conversation stream when a public servant delivers GC content on Twitter?
Social Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If third-party users post copyrighted content on a Federal Institution's Social Network site/channel, is GC responsible for copyright infringement because the item is displayed on that page?
Virtual Worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing screen shots may violate the creative licence when multiple users generate new content. This could be in violation of the creator's rights.
Wikis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who owns what content and does copyright really matter as it is a collaborative tool?
Mashups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When creating a mash-up other copyright violations should be considered. For example, just because content is accessible via an API doesn't mean that the content is not infringing upon copyrights, content for mature audiences, and accuracy of information. Must be sure to use relevant disclaimers and site policies to address these legal considerations.
Web Widgets/Gadgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can users post GC widgets on a commercial websites without obtaining a licence through PWGSC? (e.g. The CMHC offers a free mortgage calculator to all stakeholders. Mortgage brokers can embed that calculator on their websites for clients to use.)
Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would GC be in violation of copyright for creating an application that can only be uploaded on an unlocked device? (e.g. A Federal Institution creates an application for the iPhone)

Summary of Recommendations

If the GC chooses to host a social media initiative it is recommended that it follows similar terms of use policies as popular social media sites. We recommend that the GC draft generic terms of use for our social media initiatives with respect to retaining the exclusive ownership of content posted on a GC Social media site, as stipulated in the Crown copyright legislation.

A review of each user agreement for third-party social media platforms should be made by the institution's legal branch (and or by the centre for popular platforms) to be aware of legal risks

involved. Federal Institutions should also refrain from engaging on social media platforms that retain exclusive copyright of all works prepared under the direction or control of the third-party service provider.

We recommend that institutions ensure they own the non-restrictive right to post and/or sub-license content to a third-party website.

Before creating a social media initiative, it would be helpful if institutions had mechanisms in place to allow users to report copyright violations posted on the the GC hosted site and resources necessary to remove content with copyright violations.

If Federal Institutions choose to use and modify open source software it would be beneficial to the institutions and to the government community as a whole to contribute these innovations to the open source community and waive Crown copyright over these works.

Finally, if the GC notices a Crown copyright infringement on a social media platform it should hastily notify the third-party service provider. Most social media networks will take down material that has been flagged to be in copyright violation within 48 hours of the notification.

If the GC chooses to engage in social media on a third-party site, it is recommended that PWGSC review popular third-party sites Terms of Use and User Agreements to understand the licensing specifications of each site.

Furthermore, it is recommended that GC continue to respect content creators' rights.

Communications Policy

While every effort has been made to ensure that there are no factual errors, it should be noted that the majority of the working group members are communications professionals who use many of the policies in their day to day work but are neither policy nor social media experts. In reviewing policies, members have identified and compiled considerations, observations, questions and recommendations.

This document was created using collaborative authoring, web-based research and informal meetings with experts. It takes into consideration literature written by international governments, lessons learned by Government of Canada (GC) pilot projects and all of the work the working group has completed using GCPEDIA and in in-person meetings. Excerpts are also taken from a report commissioned by the working group entitled *Web 2.0 and Government: A Secondary Analysis*, by Phoenix Strategic Solutions, 2009.

In reviewing the policies, laws and acts that impact the GC and its use of social media, the group has come across and compiled a number of observations, considerations and questions as they relate to the external use of Web 2.0 technologies and the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada.

Introduction/Context

In part 6 of the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada Policy Statement one of the policy objectives is to: “Consult the public, listen to and take account of people’s interests and concerns when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services. The government’s obligation to reach out and communicate with citizens is concomitant with the right of citizens to address and be heard by their government. In a democracy, listening to the public, researching, evaluating and addressing the needs of citizens is critical to the work of government. The government must learn as much as possible about public needs and expectations to respond to them effectively. The dialogue between citizens and their government must be continuous, open, inclusive, relevant, clear, secure and reliable. Communication is a two-way process.”

Social media enhances the possibility of meaningful dialogue between GC and its citizens.

This dialogue with Canadians can be somewhat challenging to traditional communications models as Federal Institutions would need to open themselves up to dialogue, possible changes in direction and criticism directly from citizens on its activities. This is no different than letters to the editor, or ministerial correspondence but new technologies give citizens the means to create groups on particular issues and make comments which de facto become public to the World Internet population for no fee. For the most part, engaging Canadian citizens via social media is positive as it allows for active citizenship and encourages a democratic society.

The Communications Policy refers to a number of other policies and directives including; the Access to Information Act, Copyright Act, Official Languages Act, regulations and related policies, Privacy Act and policies, Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines, and Management of Government Information Policy. Most of these were addressed in previous sections of this document. This section will address some of the additional requirements that are unique to the Communications Policy.

Policy Considerations

Social media communications must be treated with the same care as all other communications initiatives. Federal Institutions must consider how they will reach citizens whose access to technology may be limited or who prefer to receive government information through more traditional means.

Section 17 of the Policy entitled “Technological Innovation and New Media” is relevant in this context. Web 2.0 and social media allow the GC to stay current with new trends. In addition it reminds us of our obligation to ensure that those who do not or cannot access materials via the Web would also receive the information.

This section states that:

“Institutions must maintain a capacity for innovation and stay current with developments in communications practice and technology. As they adopt new means of communication, institutions must continue to reach, in a timely manner, citizens whose access to technology may be limited or who prefer to receive government information through more traditional means.

To ensure new technology advances an institution's ability to connect with Canadians in efficient and practical ways, all investment plans and decisions must be developed collaboratively by managers in information technology, communications and other key functions, such as program and service delivery, and human resources.

Investments in new communications technology must serve to:

1. enhance public access to information, programs and services;
2. achieve efficiencies in the preparation, accessibility and dissemination of information, while preserving its availability to current and future generations;
3. foster interactive communications with Canadians and facilitate public consultation in the development and delivery of policies, programs, services and initiatives; or
4. improve service performance and integrate service delivery.”

Public environment analysis forms the basis of any coherent communications strategy. In accordance with the Communications Policy, social media monitoring should be considered as a precursor to engaging in social media activity. An evaluation of the appropriateness of the online tool and the target community as well as an assessment of potential risks involved should be conducted prior to using social media platforms.

Engaging in social media activities is not the same as placing an advertisement on a social media site. Social media tools should be used and written into communications strategies as part of an ongoing effort to engage citizens in an exchange with the GC. Many popular third-party service providers offer paid advertising services on their social media networks. If a Federal Institution chooses to advertise on social media sites, it needs to follow the GC advertising directive and all other relevant policies apply.

The role of spokespersons in federal institutions is also particularly relevant as almost any public servant can become a spokesperson unintendedly with the advent of Web 2.0. It is important to distinguish that Ministers are the spokespersons and that other designated spokespersons have the authority to speak on behalf of the GC and the institution. The role of spokespersons reads as follows:

“Ministers are the principal spokespersons of the GC. They are supported in this role by appointed aides, including executive assistants, communication directors and press secretaries in ministers' offices, and by the senior management teams of government institutions, which include deputy heads, heads of communications and other officials.

Ministers present and explain government policies, priorities and decisions to the public. Institutions, leaving political matters to the exclusive domain of ministers and their offices, focus their communication activities on issues and matters pertaining to the policies, programs, services and initiatives they administer.

An institution's senior management must designate managers and knowledgeable staff in head offices and in the regions to speak in an official capacity on issues or subjects for which they have responsibility and expertise.

Officials designated to speak on an institution's behalf, including technical or subject-matter experts, must receive instruction, particularly in media relations, to carry out their responsibilities effectively and to ensure the requirements of their institution and this policy are met. (See Requirement 19 for policy direction on media relations.)

Spokespersons, particularly senior managers, are often called upon to represent institutions before parliamentary committees and boards of inquiry. To ensure effective communication that respects official protocol, spokespersons must be familiar with Privy Council Office guidelines on appearing before Parliament and other official bodies.

Spokespersons at all times must respect privacy rights, security needs, matters before the courts, government policy, Cabinet confidences and ministerial responsibility. When speaking as an institution's official representative, they must identify themselves by name and position, speak on the record for public attribution, and confine their remarks to matters of fact concerning the policies, programs, services or initiatives of their institution.

An open and democratic government implies that all employees have a role in communicating with the public while respecting the constitution and laws of Canada.”

Social media initiatives conducted by Federal Institutions should also be appropriately communicated to internal audiences. It is important that all employees and senior management are made aware of social media engagement by the Federal Institution and that terms of use and/or guidelines are clearly communicated to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear.

Policy Questions

Corporate Identity

The Federal Identity Program ensures that the GC represents itself in a consistent and distinct visual way so that the public can recognize it in all circumstances including when individuals represent the Government at public events.

- How should the GC adhere to Federal Identity Program requirements on a third-party Web site given that the participation on a third-party sites are not collaboration or partnerships?
- How do we maintain the integrity of GC employees' identity?
- How do we manage the identity of participants in online GC communities such as GC YouTube channels, Facebook fan pages or groups, Virtual Worlds, discussion forums, etc?

Plain Language

- If an institution is planning a high-level consultation (for example on science) discussion with complex terms of reference and a specific target audience but the platform is open to the general public, do plain language considerations apply?

Public Opinion Research (POR), Consultations and Citizen Engagement

- Is using a social media platform considered public opinion research, consultation or citizen engagement?

If so:

- Should Federal Institutions include their plans to use social media platforms in their annual public opinion research plan when these are used to collect feedback from users/participants?
- Should federal institutions provide Service Canada with the information it requires, including Web links, to maintain the national and regional consultation listings on the Canada Site?

Spokespersons

- Can all public servants represent their Federal Institution and engage in online discussions?

If not:

- Should social media engagement always be the responsibility of a spokesperson designated by the Communication Branch or can any Policy, Program and Service Groups independently initiate or participate in social media conversations?
- Should there be media lines written specifically for social media online use or are the designated spokespersons positioned to answer to the public online in the same way they would be answering general enquiries lines, speaking at conferences or representing the institution in its exhibits program?

Specific Challenges

Media sharing sites (video and photo sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the FIP Television Advertising Guidelines be used for videos and motion pictures uploaded on a Web 2.0 platform to comply with the policy? • Federal producers will need to adhere to the Status of the Artist Act • How/Will the GC provide a corporate identity on pictures?
Blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online participation requires transparency from the blogger, the identity of each content creator should be provided. • An institution's blog could be hosted on a GC domain or on a third-party site. It is recommended that a institution's blog is hosted on a GC Web site as this authenticates the message.
Microblogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly state that a public servant representing the Federal Institution is providing the information in the conversation stream • What constitutes a spokesperson for this media?
Social Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should there be only one Social Network account created for the Federal Institution, which outlines all activities or should there be different accounts created for each activity conducted by a Federal Institution?
Podcasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the GC also create an audio version of its corporate identity (slogan/tune) to maintain GC identity on Podcasts?
Virtual Worlds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is FIP used the same way in virtual worlds as in the physical world or will standard avatars and virtual building/billboard designs be created to clearly identify the GC's presence in the virtual world? • How would the GC maintain public servants' identities in a virtual world- Should there be GC Avatar standards?

Summary of Recommendations

The objectives for social media engagement by the GC are to inform the public of its priorities, policies and decisions; to correct misleading information; and to identify citizen's needs and expectations. It is recommended that GC Communications Branches start to consider how to use

these tools to engage and communicate with Canadians given that a majority of Canadians engage in social media activities.

As highlighted in the Policy, it is recommended that Communications Branches work with Information Technology Branches in all institutions. This is extremely important to promote and obtain authorized access to social media networks. (Also mentioned in IT Security section)

As Institutions' Head of Communications "oversee(s) Web content to ensure it meets communication standards"³⁰, *the same should apply to* social media content

Enabling comments on a social media platform is strongly recommended, where possible, in order to maintain the public's view of the GC's integrity and commitment to democracy.

Public servants should not disclose any matters concerning an individual's specific case or file and must respect departmental and cabinet confidentiality requirements. It is recommended that online comments provided by the representatives of Federal Institutions should direct the public to well-established GC channels that contain the information requested.

We recommend and it is common practice that if a journalist engages in online enquiries, the questions should be directed to the federal institution's media relations group. It is strongly recommended that designated online communicators receive training prior to engaging in any social media activities.

Canadians value an independent, professional Public Service that treats individuals with respect, fairness and integrity. The Federal Communicator must adopt these etiquettes on a social media platform and so should the public when engaging on a GC social media initiative. It is recommended that the GC write "Terms of Engagement" or "User Agreements" that clearly state its objectives and that openly outlines accepted behaviors, appropriate comments and remedies used when someone breaches the agreement. The GC's social media initiatives should be monitored on an ongoing basis in order to ensure a positive environment where Canadian citizens can exchange openly with their government.

Given that the GC must identify itself in a distinct, consistent way the public can recognize in all circumstances, it is recommended that the Federal Identity Program create additional corporate identity guidelines that reflect the realities of social media. Standards on personal identification, corporate logo, personal profile picture and account design and layout should be created in collaboration with the Accessibility Office as part of the FIP tool kit.

We recommend that media training courses provided to institutions' spokespersons include social media awareness training. In the age of videotaping, small hand held devices and new technologies all conversations have the potential of going public in an instant.

Conclusion

"Web 2.0 and other collaborative technologies provide a new challenge to old norms. Society and technology are ever-changing and the GC needs to adapt to these changes while still respecting existing laws, policies, directives and standards."³¹ Communicators, in particular are in a position to understand how these technologies will enable the GC to listen to Canadians and communicate and engage them.

However, most GC institutions are slower to adopt these Web 2.0 and other collaborative technologies primarily because there are a number of interpretations regarding how they can be used and even if institutions are permitted to use them. In addition, those institutions that understand the potential risks inherent in the social media platforms may or may not be in a position to take them.

This document provides a number of recommendations regarding actions which would enable institutions to explore these technologies. The following list highlights a few of the key actions that the GC could take but which would benefit from a centralized approach and/or coordination including:

1. *Highly coordinated approach to all policy and legal considerations as all policies inter-relate. For example, when addressing official language requirements one can inadvertently compromise or introduce accessibility issues.*
2. *Guidance document for Institutions on the corporate use of social media/Web 2.0 tools to engage the public*
3. *Guidance on public servant use of social media sites for both personal and professional purposes referring to relevant portions of the Values and Ethics Code where applicable*
4. *Guidance on access to social media sites from an IT Security perspective.*
5. *Guidance to senior officials responsible for IT regarding employee access to social media tools and Web sites in the workplace, including acceptable use, security risks etc. Possibly provide uniform and equal access across the GC*
6. *Guidance document for creating accessible content using the most popular social media sites.*
7. *Guidance on how to apply Official Language requirements including spirit of the law to content hosted on third-party sites.*
8. *Guidance on Web 2.0 information management process including record keeping, sample definitions of Web 2.0 records and how to define information of business value in a web 2.0 environment.*
9. *Guidance on procurement and procurement tools for Free Open Source Software (FOSS)*
10. *Negotiation of standard user agreements for GC use of third-party websites for Government business as has been done in the U.S.*
11. *Guidance on privacy concerns and trans border flow of information*
12. *Template for user 'terms of use' including what statements should be included on how to access information in accessible formats, privacy policy, OL, etc.*
13. *Draft service standards with regards to new technologies as the public will expect quicker turnaround rates.*
14. *Guidance on crown copyright licensing process as it relates to use of social media tools.*
15. *Clear articulation that governance of Web 2.0 content should reside with Heads of Communications and that the federal institutional senior official for IT continue to be responsible for the selection, acquisition and implementation of IT-enabled applications platforms in accordance with the Policy on the Management of Information Technology.*

It is our hope that sharing the observations and recommendations of the *CCO Working Group on Applying Leading Edge Technologies* will facilitate dialogue and assist policy-makers as they grapple with policy and legislative concerns for the GC's external use of Web 2.0 technologies.

Endnotes

- ¹ Chang, A. and Kannan, P.K. (2008). *Leveraging Web 2.0 in Government*. E-Government/Technology Series. The IBM Center for The Business of Government.
- ² Technorati. (2009, February 8th). In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved March 2nd, 2009 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technorati>.
- ³ Wyld, D. C. (2007). *The blogging Revolution: Government in the Age of Web 2.0*. IBM Center for The Business of Government. E-Government Series. The IBM Center for The Business of Government.
- ⁴ Ostrow, A. (2009, March 9th). *Social Networking More Popular Than Email*. Retrieved March 9th, 2009 from <http://mashable.com/2009/03/09/social-networking-more-popular-than-email/>.
- ⁵ Inside Facebook. (2009a). *Inside Facebook*. Retrieved on March 9th, 2009 from <http://www.insidefacebook.com>.
- ⁶ Internal Facebook statistics, February 2009.
- ⁷ comScore. (2008b). *Top 25 Properties by Number of Canadian Unique Visitors: March 2008 vs. February 2008*. Retrieved April 28th, 2009 from http://www.comscore.com/press/data/top_canadian_properties.asp.
- ⁸ YouTube. (2009a). *Frequently Asked Questions*. Retrieved on March 10th, 2009 from <http://www.youtube.com/t/faq>.
- ⁹ Kujawski, M. (2009). *Social Media Monitoring*. A presentation prepared for the Canadian Marketing Association. Ottawa, Ontario: Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing.
- ¹⁰ HubSpot. (2008). *State of the Twittersphere: Q4 2008*. Cambridge, MA: HubSpot Inc.
- ¹¹ HubSpot. (2008).
- ¹² History of blogging timeline. (2009, March 20th). In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved March 2nd, 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_blogging_Timeline.
- ¹³ YouTube. (2009b, April 7th). In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved March 2nd, 2009 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YouTube>.
- ¹⁴ Twitter. (2009). *About Twitter*. Retrieved April 28th, 2009 from <http://twitter.com/about#about>.
- ¹⁵ Facebook. (2009, April 5th). In *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved March 2nd, 2009 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Facebook>.
- ¹⁶ Kujawski, M. (2009). *Social Media Monitoring*. A presentation prepared for the Canadian Marketing Association. Ottawa, Ontario: Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing.
- ¹⁷ It can also be argued that Twitter is used by many as more of a social network model than a micro blog. For the purpose of this paper we will focus on twitter's use to disseminate GC information.
- ¹⁸ **GCPEDIA**
- ¹⁹ New Zealand Police. (2007). *Policing Act Review: E-communication Strategy*. Wellington, New Zealand: New Zealand Police.
- ²⁰ Managing Social Media Conference brochure, Canadian Institute
- ²¹ Sandler, 2008.
- ²² Environmental Protection Agency, 2008.

²³ As referenced in the presentation: *Recordkeeping Directive 101: Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask*, Pierre Desrocher and Sharon Smith, Government Records Branch, Library and Archives Canada (Slideshare, uploaded in April 2009) .

²⁴ DFAIT e-collaboration guidelines-GCPEDIA, Records management

²⁵ Guideline on Information Management: Web 2.0, 2nd major draft found on GCPEDIA

²⁶ Directive on the Use of Official Languages on Web sites

²⁷ Directive on the Use of Official Languages in Electronic Communications

²⁸ W3C : <http://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCA20/INTRO.HTM#introduction-fourprincs-head>

²⁹ <http://www.w3.org/WAI/mobile/>

³⁰ Communications Policy of the Government of Canada, Accountability, section 6

³¹ TBS Guidelines on Internal Use of Wikis and Blogs

Useful References

Guidance for public servants/employees

- Civil Service Principles for Participation Online (UK)
<http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/about/work/codes/participation-online.aspx>
- IBM Social Computing Guidelines: <http://www.ibm.com/blogs/zz/en/guidelines.html>
- US Air Force (sent by Attachment)
- Government of Ontario social networking pilot principles are excellent but in a closed system that we did not have direct access to. CIOB has access to these principles.

Web 2.0 Terminology Glossaries

- Collaboration 2.0 Wiki and Blog
 - <http://www.collaboration20.com/wiki/show/Web%202.0%20Glossary>

Web 2.0 and Government: Secondary Analysis

- http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Web_2.0_and_Government:_Secondary_Analysis

Working Group Case studies

- GCPEDIA address:
 - http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Applying_Leading-Edge_Technology_%28CCO_Working_Group%29/Best_Practices_%28sub-working_group%29/Case_Studies

Powerpoint presentations

- Presentation to GCPEDIA Steering Committee (ENG).
 - http://www.gcpedia.gc.ca/wiki/Leading_Edge_Technology_Working_Group_-_Social_Media_Presentations

UK Department Twitter Strategy Template

- <http://blogs.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digitalengagement/file.axd?file=2009%2f7%2f20090724twitter.pdf>

Appendix C – Final Code Book

- Access
 - Policy (existing)
 - Challenges
 - Free and open source software
- Cultural Shift in Communication
 - Fundamental Changes
 - Embracing the medium
 - Innovation of traditional communication
 - Offline moves online
 - Immediacy
 - Portability (*Mobile communications*)
 - Web 2.0 as rapidly evolving
 - Social Communication
 - Collaboration
 - Interactivity
 - Participatory
- Language of Democracy
 - Democratic idealism
 - Meeting the public, not vice versa
 - Power of the average user
 - Existing provisions of Canadian democracy
- Dialogical Necessity
 - Two-way communication
conversation/dialogue/interaction/reciprocity
 - Citizen engagement
 - Articulations of necessity
 - Ignoring the obligation
- Organizational Change
- Organizational Confluence
 - Change and continuity intertwined

- Organizational Continuity
- Security
 - Cyber-security
 - Concerns
 - Implications
 - Legal & Privacy concerns
 - Existing policy implications

Appendix D – Environmental Scan (January 2011)Departments, Agencies and Programs on Twitter:

Name	Twitter ID	Metrics	Overall Assessment of Communication <i>(Nature and flow of communication, general overview of followers, etc.)</i>
Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada (Department of Indian & Northern Affairs)	Français: @AINC_INAC	Tweets: 117 Following: 1 Followers: 59 Listed: 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Strictly information focused – links to traditional GC websites, use hashtags (HTs), some relevant ReTweets (RTs) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only their English account
Affaires étrangères et Commerce international Canada (MAECI) (Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade)	Français: @MAECI_DFAIT	Tweets: 446 Following: 13 Followers: 100 Listed: 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Information focused – links, HTs, RTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only other government accounts (French and English)
Affaires étrangères et Commerce international Canada - Service des délégués commerciaux du Canada	Français: @TCS_SDC	Tweets: 270 Following: 140 Followers: 335 Listed: 41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government (French and English), general public
Agence de la Santé Publique du Canada	@ASPC_GC	Tweets: 312 Following: 375 Followers: 659 Listed: 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government (French and English), general public

Bank of Canada	@bankofcanada	Tweets: 319 Following: 6 Followers: 4119 Listed: 307	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs, some RTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: Government, other financial institutions and economic based orgs.
Canada Business	@canadabusiness	Tweets: 894 Following: 317 Followers: 2380 Listed: 192	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only – links & HTs • Sporadic mentions to thank followers for RTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, Canadian businesses, general public
Canada's National Science Library	@cisti_icist	Tweets: 25 Following: 7 Followers: 48 Listed: 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info - links, HTs, RTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: mainly organizations in the same industry, (only a small number of Canadians)
Canada Border Services Agency	@CBSA_BWT (French & English hash-tags)	Followers: 381 Following: 0 Tweets: 19,127 Listed: 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info - delays at the border is the only topic of posts • Strictly one-way communication • Following: nobody
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety	@CCOHS	Tweets: 476 Following: 226 Followers: 1,126 Listed: 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info - links, HTs, RTs (from their own magazine) • Various mentions or thank yous for RTs (but mainly only at other similar organizations) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, other health and safety related users, some general< Canadian users
Canadian Embassy, Washington DC -	@Connect2Canada	Tweets: 1,461 Following: 1,768	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info - links, HTs, RTs • Strictly one-way communication

Connect2Canada (Article on their presence)		Followers: 2,252 Listed: 134	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following: government accounts and general public
Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) / Réseau canadien d'information sur le patrimoine (RCIP)	@vmc_mvc / @mvc_vmc	Tweets: 62 Following: 126 Followers: 116 Listed: 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info - links, HTs, RTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, libraries, scientific organizations, general public
Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada	@cihr_irsc	Tweets: 187 Following: 345 Followers: 727 Listed: 69	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs, RT's of info from other similar organizations • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government & health organizations, media outlets, general public
Canadian International Development Agency / Agence canadienne de développement international	@cida_ca / @acdi_ca	Tweets: 178 Following: 79 Followers: 1,209 Listed: 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info- links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, public health and safety organizations, general public
Canadian Museum of Civilization / Musée Canadien des civilisations	@Civilization / @Civilisations	Tweets: 1,481 Following: 608 Followers: 1,268 Listed: 209	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only- links, HTs, RTs (only of similar/partner orgs.) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government & similar organizations, general public
Canadian Register of Historic Places	@Historicplaces	Tweets: 259 Following: 140 Followers: 212 Listed: 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links with very few HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government & similar orgs., general public
Canadian War Museum / Musée Canadien de la guerre	@CanWarMuseum / @MusCanGuerre	Tweets: 766 Following: 143 Followers: 921 Listed: 134	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only- links, HTs, RTs • Mention/reply only to other users with similar interests (other museums or exhibitors but not average Canadians) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, other Ottawa-

			based users, Museum exhibitors etc.
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	@CitImmCanada	Tweets: 508 Following: 24 Followers: 4,777 Listed: 121	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only government agencies
Balanced Copyright (Bill C-32) / Droit d'auteur équilibré (projet de loi C-32)	@cdacopyright / @cdadroitdauteur	Tweets: 2 Following: 44 Followers: 1,101 Listed: 137	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Only 2 tweets in total • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, general public
Digital Economy Consultation / Consultation sur l'économie numérique	@canadadigital / @canadanumerique	Tweets: 31 Following: 5 Followers: 562 Listed: 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only- links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only 5 government-related users
Economic Action Plan (PCO)	@economicplan	Tweets: 451 Following: 1,051 Followers: 1,114 Listed: 96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, general public
Entreprises Canada	@EntreprisesCan	Tweets: 848 Following: 164 Followers: 580 Listed: 61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: links, HTs, RTs • Some mentions, replies, thanks for RTs • TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION • Following: government, businesses, general public
Environment Canada / Environnement Canada	@environmentca / @environnementca	Tweets: 109 Following: 17 Followers: 1,732 Listed: 142	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only- links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only government accounts
Environment Canada / Environnement Canada (Minister / Ministre)	@jimprentice / @jimprentice_fr	Tweets: 143 Following: 64 Followers: 1,548 Listed: 164	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, public figures, media outlets
Department of Finance Canada / Ministère des Finances Canada	@FinanceCanada / @financescanada	Tweets: 286 Following: 1 Followers: 2,565 Listed: 259	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links to traditional GC materials (info/news releases) • Strictly one-way communication

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following: only French version of own account
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	@DFO_MPO	Tweets: 316 Following: 14 Followers: 423 Listed: 58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs, minimal RTs from similar pages • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only other government accounts
Foreign Affairs & International Trade Canada - Official departmental account	English: @DFAIT_MAECI	Tweets: 454 Following: 23 Followers: 614 Listed: 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs, RTs from other similar government pages • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government agencies
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada - Eyes Abroad (info about Embassies, Consulates, High Commissions, aka "Missions")	@eyesabroad / @yeuxsurlemonde	Tweets: 99 Following: 118 Followers: 333 Listed: 57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info - links, HTs, RTs • Some mentions for RTs and "Follow Friday" tweets (FF) • SOME TWO WAY COMMUNICATION (low-levels) • Following: government & similar agencies, public figures, media, general public
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada - G8 G20	English: @canadaIntl / Français : @canadaIntlfr	Tweets: 139 Following: 2 Followers: 1,210 Listed: 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only 2 others (similar users) • Account not active unless there is an event to promote
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada - Trade Commissioner Service	English @TCS_SDC Trade Commissioner Service	Tweets: 267 Following: 140 Followers: 335 Listed: 41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only other government accounts
Gendarmerie royale du Canada	@grcrcmppolice	Tweets: 92 Following: 9 Followers: 896 Listed: 51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - mainly links • Strictly one-way communication • Following: other RCMP/justice pages

Governor General of Canada	@GGDavidJohnston	Tweets: 128 Following: 0 Followers: 2,548 Listed: 137	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • A few mentions (other government-related users) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: nil
Groupe intégré de la sécurité de Vancouver 2010 (GRC/DDN)	@gisv2010	Tweets: 40 Following: 4 Followers: 111 Listed: 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only other related accounts (related to security at Vancouver Olympics) • Account not active since October
Health Canada	@HealthCanada / @SanteCanada	Tweets: 952 Following: 25 Followers: 5,010 Listed: 404	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, RTs (of similar agencies, recalls etc.) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only government-affiliated accounts
Human Resources and Skills Development - Working in Canada	@workingincanada @travailaucanada	Tweets: 112 Following: 88 Followers: 1,076 Listed: 97	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only - links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only government-affiliated accounts
Human Resources and Skills Development - Working in Canada (Chinese)	@workingincanada	Tweets: Following: Followers: Listed:	No account
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)	@INAC_AINC English	Tweets: 156 Following: 1 Followers: 254 Listed: 42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info only- links • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only the French version of INAC
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) Internal important news and updates (emergency)	@NR_RNbulletin	Tweets: 4 Following: 1 Followers: 136 Listed: 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info– links only (only 4 tweets in total) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: one member of general public

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Account inactive for a year
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) jobs	@NRCanJobs / @EmploisRNCan	Tweets: 209 Following: 64 Followers: 567 Listed: 67	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: Info only - links, HTs Strictly one-way communication Following: government accounts, universities, media outlets
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) Earthquakes Program	@CANADAquakes / @CANADAseisme	Tweets: 14 Following: 0 Followers: 119 Listed: 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: Info only - links Strictly one-way communication Following: nil
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) Library	@nrcanlibrary / @biblioRNCan	Tweets: 20 Following: 2 Followers: 220 Listed: 44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: Info only - links, HTs, RTs Strictly one-way communication Following: government accounts
Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) The Source - La Source (The Source is the internal employee newsletter of Natural Resources Canada)	@source_lasource	Tweets: 169 Following: 83 Followers: 106 Listed: 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: info only – links, HTs Some mentions (thanks for RTs and mentions) Some TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION Following: government accounts, general public
Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada	@PrivacyPrivee	Tweets: 715 Following: 108 Followers: 1,926 Listed: 248	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: links, HTs, RTs mentions, replies, blog link Utilize TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION Following: government accounts, general public
Parks Canada / Parcs Canada	@ParksCanada / @ParcsCanada / @ParksMtnSafety	Tweets: 658 Following: 53 Followers: 2,502 Listed: 193	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: links, HTs, RTs, photos Mentions, replies, thanks (RTs, FF etc.) TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION Following: parks, government accounts, general public
Plan d'action économique (BCP)	@planeconomique	Tweets: 571 Following: 883	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: info only – links, HTs Strictly one-way communication

		Followers: 572 Listed: 55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following: government agencies, general public • Following more people than they have following them, yet no dialogue ongoing
Public Health Agency of Canada	@PHAC_GC	Tweets: 356 Following: 680 Followers: 3,621 Listed: 273	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – public notices, links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government, media outlets, general public
Public Safety	@Get_Prepared	Tweets: 367 Following: 91 Followers: 734 Listed: 83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government accounts, media outlets
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	@rcmpgrcpolice	Tweets: 164 Following: 14 Followers: 2,060 Listed: 145	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: links, HTs, RTs, minimal replies to related users • Strictly one-way communication • Following: other RCMP/police, justice related pages
Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "E" Division (B.C.)	@bcRCMP	Tweets: 5,899 Following: 6 Followers: 3,121 Listed: 247	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: mostly info - links, HTs, minimal replies to related users • Strictly one-way communication • Following: other RCMP/police-related accounts
Le Répertoire Canadien des lieux patrimoniaux	@Repertoirelieux	Tweets: 282 Following: 142 Followers: 57 Listed: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government accounts, city councils, municipal pages
Ressources humaines et développement des compétences - Travailler au Canada	@travailauCanada	Tweets: 109 Following: 14 Followers: 240 Listed: 38	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government accounts, related agencies
Royal Canadian Mint / Monnaie royale	@canadianmint /	Tweets: 1,446	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: links, HTs, RTs,

canadienne	@monnaieroyale	Following: 217 Followers: 2,260 Listed: 128	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mentions, replies, thanks for RTs, • TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION • Following: government accounts, bank related pages, financial institutions, general public
Sécurité Publique	@Preparez_Vous	Tweets: 258 Following: 82 Followers: 163 Listed: 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government accounts, related pages, general public
Service Canada	@Service_Canada	Tweets: 34 Following: 0 Followers: 400 Listed: 40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – NO links, HTs only • Strictly one-way communication • Following: nil
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council	@SSHRC_CRSH	Tweets: 320 Following: 272 Followers: 431 Listed: 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – links, HTs, RTs (only from related users) • Strictly one-way communication • Following: government accounts media outlets/personalities, universities, general public
Statistics Canada	@StatCan_eng / @StatCan_fra	Tweets: 389 Following: 1 Followers: 6,038 Listed: 382	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: Info – links only • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only French version of Stats Canada account
Vancouver 2010 Integrated Security Unit (RCMP/DND)	@v2010isu	Tweets: 42 Following: 4 Followers: 206 Listed: 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication: info only – links, HTs • Strictly one-way communication • Following: only other security/Vancouver 2010 related pages • Account inactive use since October 2010

Departments, Agencies and Programs on Facebook:

Name	Facebook Page/Group	Likes/Fans	Overall Assessment of Communication <i>(Nature and flow of communication, general overview of followers, etc.)</i>
Public Health Agency of Canada / Agence de la santé publique du Canada	Public Health Agency of Canada (page) / Agence de la santé publique du Canada(page)	47 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only – Wikipedia explanation of agency • Strictly one-way communication
Veterans Affairs Canada	Canada Remembers (page) / Le Canada se souvient	456,753 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - post events, relevant links and photos • Most communication on page is between other Facebook users. • With such high levels of members, there should be more of an attempt to engage with the public • Strictly one-way communication
Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan / L'engagement du Canada en Afghanistan	Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan / L'engagement du Canada en Afghanistan (page)	790 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - post events, relevant information and links • Strictly one-way communication

Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) / Réseau canadien de l'information sur le patrimoine (RCIP)	Virtual Museum of Canada / Musée virtuel du Canada	208 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - post links and info • Strictly one-way communication
Environment Canada / Environnement Canada	Environment Canada (page) / Environnement Canada	1,798 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post info, reply to user comments • Two-way communication
Working in Canada (HRSDC) / Travailler au Canada (RHDCC)	Working in Canada / Travailler au Canada	2,897	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post info, share links • Reply to users questions • Two-way communication
NRC-CISTI / ICIST-CNRC	CISTI	0 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only – Wikipedia explanation of agency (no actual page) • No communication
Natural Resources Canada	Natural Resources Canada - Jobs (page) Ressources naturelles Canada - Emplois (page)	735 likes 162 likes (French)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share info, post job opportunities, events, tips, helpful links, etc. • NRC replies to users regularly, giving them tips on how to get in touch with them most effectively. • NRC makes comments on how to communication with them via social media outlets as well as traditionally. • Two-way communication

			<i>(high-level)</i>
CIHR Café Scientifique IRSC	CIHR Café Scientifique IRSC (group)	18 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - links • Strictly one-way communication
National Gallery of Canada / Musée des beaux-arts du Canada	National Gallery of Canada (page) Musée des beaux-arts du Canada (page)	3,879 likes 991 likes (French)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share links, post events, photos – specific to certain regions • Respond to comments and questions • Two-way communication
Canada Science and Technology Museum Official Page (English)/ Musée des sciences et de la technologie du Canada site web officiel (Fr)	Canada Science and Technology Museum Official Page (English) (page) Musée des sciences et de la technologie du Canada site web officiel (page)	533 likes 57 check-ins 117 likes (French)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share info/links • Links to their Flickr, YouTube, Twitter accounts • Check in feature is useful – it allows people to say when they have been there. • Regardless, this is not a communication medium. • Strictly one-way communication
Canada's Air Force / La Force aérienne canadienne	Canada's Air Force (page)	5,369 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - content is mostly comprised of

			YouTube videos, photos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly one-way communication
Canada's Action on Climate Change / L'action du Canada sur les changements climatiques	Canada's Action on Climate Change (page) L'action du Canada sur les changements climatiques (page)	583 likes 183 likes (French)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - links, events • Mainly one-way communication
G8	Canada International/Canada International (français) (pages)	294 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Info only - links, events • Strictly one-way communication • Account inactive since July 2010
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council	SSHRC_CRSH (page)	1 like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No posts
Royal Canadian Mounted Police / Gendarmerie royale du Canada	Royal Canadian Mounted Police / Gendarmerie royale du Canada	19,459 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information only, share relevant links • Reply to some comments mostly by directing to another site or source of information • <u>Some two-way communication (low level)</u>

Parks Canada / Parcs Canada	Parks Canada / Parcs Canada Canada	1,678 likes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post general information, photos, video etc. • Links to Twitter, YouTube, their own French site • Extra tabs (Welcome, Plan Visit) make the site more interactive. • Allows for users to post photos as well. Parks Canada often comments on user photos. • <i>Two-way communication</i>
-----------------------------	--	-------------	--

Departments, Agencies and Programs on YouTube:

Name	ID	Views/Channel Subscribers	Overall Assessment of Communication <i>(Nature and flow of communication, general overview of followers, etc.)</i>
------	----	---------------------------	--

Science Canada (science.gc.ca site)	ScienceCanada - Bilingual	Channel views: 6,419 Subscribers: 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Users can post videos (moderated) • Strictly one-way communication
AfCam (Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan)	Afghanistan Camera - AfCam/ Caméra Afghanistan - Bilingual	Channel views: 8,191 Total upload views: 21,929 Subscribers: 66	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Canada Revenue Agency	CanRevAgency - Bilingual	Channel views: 30,880 Total upload views: 25,063 Subscribers: 115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Canada's Economic Action Plan / Le plan d'action économique du Canada	EAP Brand Channel - English PAE Brand Channel - Français	Channel views: 7,864 Total upload views: 6,332 Subscribers: 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Canada's Digital Economy / Économie numérique du Canada	CanadaDigital / CanadaNumerique	Channel views: 356 Total upload views: 3,314 Subscribers: 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No activity for over 6 months • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) / Réseau canadien d'information sur le patrimoine (RCIP)	CHIN-RCIP / Virtual Museum of Canada / Musée virtuel du Canada	Channel views: 1,603 Total upload views: 3035 Subscribers: 79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments enabled but must be approved before they appear (no replies) • Strictly one-way communication
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	CitImmCanada - Bilingual	Channel views: 27,987 Total upload views: 335,668 Subscribers: 405	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some comments but unable to comment on most videos (no replies) • Strictly one-way

			communication
Connect2Canada (Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C)	Connect2Canada	Channel views: 3,241 Total upload views: 53,995 Subscribers: 57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Copyright Consultations (Heritage Canada & Industry Canada)	CopyrightCanada - Bilingual	Channel views: 428 Total upload views: 1,436 Subscribers: 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Environment Canada	Environment Canada - English Environnement Canada - Français Canada's Action on Climate Change - English L'action du Canada sur les changements climatiques - Français	Channel views: 17,734 Total upload views: 19,299 Subscribers: 180 Channel views: 4,354 Total upload views: 2,085 Subscribers: 58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario	FedDev Ontario - Bilingual	Channel views: 831 Total upload views: 1,239 Subscribers: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada	dfaitmaeci - Bilingual (Working towards having a unique English and French channel) investincanada - Bilingual CommerceCDA – Bilingual	Channel views: 10,732 Total upload views: 179,938 Subscribers: 154 Channel views: 3,425 Total upload views: 12,608 Subscribers: 25 Channel views: 4,090 Total upload views: 2,420	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication

		Subscribers: 25	
Health Canada	Health Canada - English Santé Canada - Français	Channel views: 19,220 Total upload views: 59,692 Subscribers: 365	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	Canlearn – English Cibleudes - Français WorkinginCanada.gc.ca English TravaillerauCanada.gc.ca - Français	Channel views: 1,848 Total upload views: 2,294 Subscribers: n/a Channel views: 19,181 Total upload views: 356,959 Subscribers: 417 Channel views: 5,152 Total upload views: n/a Subscribers: 105	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication • Comments enabled (moderated) – no replies • Strictly one-way communication
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	INAC - English AINC - Français	Channel views: 2,712 Total upload views: 4,673 Subscribers: n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments enabled (all comments are from native groups – assume they are moderated) - no replies • Strictly one-way communication
The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service	tcssdcCDA - Bilingual	Channel views: 4,886 Total upload views: 12,086 Subscribers: 39	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Library and Archives Canada (LAC)	LACBAC01 - Bilingual	Channel views: 2,573 Total upload views: 2,897 Subscribers: 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments enabled (no replies) • Strictly one-way communication

National Defence and Canadian Forces	Canadian Army News – English Nouvelles del Armee Cdn - Français Canadian Forces Videos English Les Forces Canadiennes - Français	Channel views: 84,344 Total upload views: 1,611,898 Subscribers: 2,278 Channel views: 13,552 Total upload views: 215,570 Subscribers: 206 Channel views: 123,951 Total upload views: 183,827 Subscribers: 1,936 Channel Views: 42,207 Total upload views: 37,262 Subscribers: 223	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication • Comments posted by NDCF but not enabled for users to comment • Strictly one-way communication
National Film Board of Canada	nfb - English onf - Français	Channel views: 582,822 Total upload views: 12,865,287 Subscribers: 28,260	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No comments enabled • Strictly one-way communication
Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada	privacycomm - Bilingual	Channel views: 31,980 Total upload views: 106,282 Subscribers: 148	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments enabled (moderated) no replies • Strictly one-way communication
Parks Canada	parkscanadaagency - English parcsCanada - Français	Channel views: 32,791 Total upload views: 171,334 Subscribers: 443	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments enabled (moderated) no replies • Strictly one-way communication • Links to Twitter and FB

Public Health Agency of Canada	phacaspc - Bilingual	Channel views: 6,866 Total upload views: 8,319 Subscribers: 76	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments enabled Strictly one-way communication
Royal Canadian Mounted Police / Gendarmerie royale du Canada	rcmpgrcpolice - Bilingual	Channel views: 9,367 Total upload views: 55,129 Subscribers: 261	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments enabled Strictly one-way communication
Veteran's Affairs	VeteransAffairsCa - English AnciensCombattants - Français	Channel views: 31,140 Total upload views: 106,282 Subscribers: 148	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments enabled Strictly one-way communication
G8	2010MuskokaG8 - English 2010MuskokaG8fr - Français	Channel views: Total upload views: Subscribers:	Not available
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency / L'Agence de promotion économique du Canada atlantique	ACOOAAPECA - Bilingual	Channel views: 208 Total upload views: 0 Subscribers: 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments enabled Strictly one-way communication Inactive account – only 2 things posted, no views
Canadian War Museum	CanWarMus (English) / MusCanGuerre (Français)	Channel views: 7,271 Total upload views: 8,612 Subscribers: 46 Channel views: 2,897 Total upload views: 5,007 Subscribers: 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments enabled Some comments and replies to user questions two-way communication (low level)
Canadian Grain Commission	GrainsCanada - Bilingual	Channel views: 107 Total upload views: 335 Subscribers: 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments enabled Strictly one-way communication
National Capital Commission	nccvidccn - Bilingual	Channel views: 2,152 Total upload views: 46,129	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No comments enabled Strictly one-way

		Subscribers: 46	communication • Launch Pending
Natural Resources Canada	French and English Branded Channels (To be launched in January 2011)	Channel views: Total upload views: Subscribers:	