

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

18 October 2012

Question: SR41
Topic: Social Media
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Senator Bushby asked:

1. Has there been any changes to department and agency social media or protocols about staff access and usage of Youtube; online social media, such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter; and access to online discussions forums and blogs since May 2012 Budget Estimates? If yes, please explain and provide copies of any advice that has been issued.
2. Does the department/agency monitor usage of social media?
 - a) If yes, provide details of the usage (for example details could include average hours per employee, hours when usage peaks)
 - b) If no, will the department/agency monitor usage in the future?
3. Does social media impact on employee productivity? Provide details (details could include increased internet usage in general or increased internet usage in standard business hours)

Answer:

The Department & Australian Renewable Energy Agency

1. On 16 November 2012, the Department changed its social media policy to give all staff open access to social media on their desktop and laptop machines. This access allows staff to view all social media platforms that have not been blocked in accordance with security protocols.

A copy of the Department's social media procedural rule is at **Attachment A**.
2. Whilst the Department's IT service provider (the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science, Research and Tertiary Education) do log internet usage they do not report on the use of social media specifically. There are no plans to generate regular reports in the future which specifically focus on social media usage.
3. As the Department's social media policy only allows for work related access, employee productivity is not impacted.

Geoscience Australia

1. Staff access to YouTube and Vimeo was enabled from late April 2012. Prior to this, only select staff had access. Each staff member is limited to 50MB of data per day. There have been no other changes to protocols relating to staff access and usage of YouTube since the May 2012 Budget Estimates

2. Geoscience Australia (GA) does not monitor the usage of social media, although volume was monitored during the trial period for YouTube and Vimeo.

During the trial period for staff access to YouTube and Vimeo, the average daily usage for the whole agency was approximately 800MB. There are no future plans to monitor usage.
3. There is no evidence to suggest social media access has impacted productivity.

Tourism Australia

1. There has been no change to Tourism Australia (TA) social media policy.
2. TA does not monitor the usage. Tourism Australia has no plans to monitor social media. Social media is a core part of Tourism Australia's digital and public relations strategy.
3. No.

National Offshore Petroleum & Environmental Management Authority

1. There has been no change to the National Offshore Petroleum and Environmental Management Authority's (NOPSEMA's) social media policy.
2. NOPSEMA does not monitor the usage. NOPSEMA has no plans to monitor social media.
3. No. Employee productivity and any impact on deliverables are actively monitored by team managers; as a small agency, the overuse of social media using departmental resources is easy to monitor informally. Regular ICT Systems Usage training is provided, and the induction process makes it clear that social media applications during work hours are generally incompatible with work activities.

Australian Solar Institute

There have been no changes to the Australian Solar Institute's social media policy. Usage has not been monitored, nor are there any plans to do so in the future.



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1. Overview

This is the Department's policy governing use of Social Media for Official Purposes.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarity and guidance to staff using Social Media.

If you have questions about interpreting the requirements of this policy contact the RET media inbox RETmedia@ret.gov.au.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the official use of social media by RET staff.

In this policy:

'Official use' means commenting as a RET representative.

'Social media' is technology that encourages online discussion, sharing and collaboration. It uses web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into socially interactive dialogue, as distinct from traditional one-way media such as newspapers, television, and film

This policy applies to the official use of all Social Media platforms.

'RET staff' includes contractors and staff on secondment.

This policy does not apply to professional or personal use of social media, which is governed by the ICT Conditions of Use Policy. **'Personal or professional use'** is any use of social media that is not an Official Use. It includes accessing social media for a work related purpose, such as research. It also includes all use of a personal nature.

3. Compliance

Disciplinary action may be taken if staff are found to be in breach of the RET Social Media Procedural Rule or the ICT Conditions of Use Policy.

Further, depending on the circumstances, inappropriate use of social media may constitute a breach of the APS Code of Conduct, sexual harassment or discrimination.

Access to social media sites for professional and personal use is governed by the limits of acceptable internet usage outlined in section 2.4 of the ICT Conditions of Use Policy . Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are not using ICT facilities and resources in a manner that has a negative impact on productivity.

Direction not to publish inappropriate material

You must not publish any material that is:

- in breach of privacy, confidentiality and information security obligations
- offensive or obscene
- defamatory or threatening

- racist, sexist or anti-social
- infringes copyright
- constitutes a contempt of court or breaches a court suppression order, or
- is otherwise unlawful

4. Statement of Policy

In May 2010, the Australian Government agreed to a Declaration of Open Government. The declaration aims to reduce barriers to online engagement, utilise social networking, and support online engagement by employees, in accordance with the Australian Public Service Commission Guidelines.

The Australian Government's support for openness and transparency in Government has three key principles.

1. Informing: strengthening citizen's rights of access to information, establishing a pro-disclosure culture across Australian Government agencies including through online innovation, and making government information more accessible and usable.
2. Engaging: collaborating with citizens on policy and service delivery to enhance the processes of government and improve the outcomes sought.
3. Participating: making government more consultative and participative.

5. What is social media and how can it be used?

Social media is technology that encourages online discussion, sharing and collaboration. It uses web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into socially interactive dialogue, as distinct from traditional one-way media such as newspapers, television, and film.

Examples of social media tools include:

- social networking sites: Facebook, LinkedIn
- video and photo sharing websites: YouTube
- blogs: GovSpace
- microblogs: Twitter
- wikis: Wikipedia
- private collaboration platforms: Govdex

Making public comment through social media is becoming increasingly common for Australian Public Service (APS) employees—in official, professional, and private capacities.

The speed and reach of online communication means that comments posted online are available immediately to a wide audience. Material online effectively lasts forever, may be replicated endlessly, altered without consent, or may be sent to recipients who were never expected to see it, or who may view it out of context.

6. What policies and guidance apply to social media?

The use of social media by public servants is ultimately governed by the APS Values and Code of Conduct. These apply in the same way as when participating in any other public forum.

The requirements include:

- remaining apolitical, impartial and professional
- behaving with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- dealing appropriately with information, recognising that some information needs to be treated according to classification levels
- delivering services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to the Australian public
- being sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public
- taking reasonable steps to avoid conflicts of interest
- making proper use of Commonwealth resources
- upholding the APS Values and the integrity and good reputation of the APS.

APS employees are required to ensure that they fully understand the APS Values and Code of Conduct and how they apply to official and unofficial communications. If in doubt, they should consider carefully whether to comment, or seek advice from the RET ICT Team; Parliamentary and Communications Team; the Information Management Team or the Human Resources Team, as appropriate.

For more information on how the APS Values and Code of Conduct apply to making public comment and participating online, refer to the Australian Public Service Commission's Circular 2012/1: Revision to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online.

RET employees accessing social media sites must also have regard to RET ICT policies and procedures, including the Online Communication Procedural Rule.

7. Using social media at work

This policy makes a distinction between *accessing* and *using* social media.

All RET staff have been provided with open *access* to social media on their desktop and laptop machines. This access allows staff to view all social media platforms that have not been blocked in accordance with security protocols.

Before *using* social media sites (i.e. creating accounts and posting comments/material), users must understand the social media tool and: determine if it is the most appropriate tool for communication; read and understand the terms of use; analyse existing content to understand site etiquette; consult with their manager and register the proposed social media activity.

Users should also determine the amount of time needed to participate online and what value is generated by the Department's participation and the benefit return for the Department.

RET Social Media Procedural Rule

Version: April 2012
Next review: April 2013

Social media accounts and registration

Before commencing social media engagement to communicate on behalf of the Department, users must complete the Social Media Registration Form (Attachment B) detailing the social media activity to be undertaken and any accounts created. The form must be approved by the Branch General Manager (GM), who will be responsible for the content published, and submitted to the Parliamentary and Communications Team.

The information contained in the form is used by Corporate Services Division to undertake compulsory reporting requirements on the use of social media to the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO). Details of these social media accounts are recorded on the Social Media Register maintained by Corporate Services Division.

Social media accounts used to communicate on behalf of the Department must use an authorised departmental identity and not a personal identity. Staff are encouraged to use official RET branded social media accounts where possible (for example, @RET and youtube.com/retgovau) to ensure consistent and standard communication through social media.

Privacy setting on departmental accounts must be appropriate for the scope of engagement.

Business Need

The Department has determined that a business need exists to provide access to social media platforms for the following reasons:

- professional networking to engaging local and international stakeholders
- knowledge sharing and research activities
- facilitating improved program delivery and promotion
- accessing to and provision of fast and reliable information to stakeholders and the community during natural disaster and/or crisis
- monitoring media and industry commentary relating to the Portfolio
- maintaining a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining staff

Communication Strategy

To ensure a positive outcome from the use of social media as a communication tool, users should consider what they are trying to achieve and their wider communication strategy. Social media tools should be used to supplement, not replace existing business processes.

The communication strategy is a documented plan with measurable objectives/outcomes. The success of these objectives/outcomes should be assessed so that changes to the communication strategy can be made if they are not working or no longer appropriate.

If the use of social media does not fit into the wider communication strategy, it should not be employed as a communication tool. It is not appropriate to pursue the use of social media simply because others are using it.

Professional and personal use of social media

The Department allows access to social media sites in the workplace for official purposes. An official purpose includes instances where staff are required to use social media sites to engage with the public or provide comment in their capacity as an Australian Public Servant while acting in accordance with the *Public Service Act 1999*. An official purpose also includes the use of social media for the monitoring of industry or stakeholders information or events when that monitoring does not involve communication from the side of the employee or the Department.

Access to social media sites for professional and personal use is governed by the limits of acceptable internet usage outlined in section 2.4 of the ICT Conditions of Use Policy .

Professional use is when you are commenting personally, but as an experienced person in your particular field. Personal use is when you are commenting on a matter in neither an official or professional capacity.

In accordance with the ICT Conditions of Use Policy, ongoing and non-ongoing employees, guests, and contractors are responsible for maintaining compliance with the Department's ICT policies. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that staff are not using ICT facilities and resources in a manner that negatively impact on productivity.

Copyright

You should be aware that the conditions of use of Social Media platforms can affect ownership or use of what is published on the site. Some sites provide that ownership of copyright is transferred to the site. Other conditions give the Social Media operator a licence to use and reproduce the posted material.

You should assume that once material is posted on Social Media, the Department loses all control of the published information and that it can be shared, distributed or modified without permission.

Accordingly, staff must determine if that material is suitable for publication. Simply because material is unclassified does not mean that it is suitable for publication. The Department operates under a need-to-know policy, and this extends to information released through social media sites. If divisions require assistance in this area, please contact the Parliamentary and Communications Team or the Department's Security Advisor.

You should respect copyright laws and fair use of copyrighted material and attribute work to the original author/source wherever possible.

Intellectual Property

All official social media accounts, contacts and posted content remain the property of the Department.

Passwords to official social media accounts are official information. Unauthorised disclosure of official information may breach section 70 of the *Crimes Act 1914*

Social media protocols

Attachment A provides a basic checklist for staff proposing to use social media platforms for official purposes.

In accordance with the Media and Communication Procedural Rule, all media enquiries must be referred to the Parliamentary and Communication Team and staff must not engage with the media directly.

When using social media for official purposes, users must disclose their position and title, and that they are authorised to communicate an official viewpoint.

Users must also ensure the following.

- Commentary is factually correct and does not breach privacy, security, or other sensitivity and legislative requirements.
- Matters that are subject to handling restrictions (e.g. DLM markings, Protected, AUSTEO and Confidential material) are not discussed using social media.
- Online communication is consistent with information and advice being provided through other media forums.
- Personal information within the control of the Department not disclosed in accordance with the *Public Service Act 1988*.
- All commentary is courteous, constructive and expressed in a manner that limits misinterpretation.

User-submitted content will be removed or modified if it is deemed to be inappropriate, unlawful or otherwise harmful for the Department or the Australian Government.

Records

All RET employees are responsible for appropriate recordkeeping to support accountable and transparent government practices. The same records management principles apply to social media content as to any other record created within the Department. Records created as a result of using social media are subject to the same business and legislative requirements as records created by other means. As an example, if the use of social media produces evidence of RET's business activities, these records must be captured.

Social media platforms are often provided by third-party providers and are not official recordkeeping systems. Due to this, staff that use social media for official purposes are required to capture social media records on departmental files. Guidelines on capturing social media records is outlined in the Information Management and Records Procedural Rule.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Users of social media are expected to understand and follow the requirements of this policy and other relevant RET ICT policies and procedures. All staff will be required to acknowledge that they have read and understood this policy when completing the ICT Acknowledgement Form on an annual basis.

Users are required to register their social media activity, and maintain and regularly monitor any social media accounts they create for business purposes. CSD is responsible for posting content on official RET branded social media accounts (for example, [youtube.com/users/RET](https://www.youtube.com/users/RET)).

Managers are responsible for ensuring that staff are not using ICT facilities and resources in a manner that negatively impact on productivity.

The Department will not provide training or support services for social media sites.

Corporate Services Division will maintain a register of all social media accounts established for the Department under this policy. All access to and use of social media sites will be recorded. Monitoring of activity on social media sites will be undertaken on a needs basis.

9. Policy Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following documents:

- APS Values and Code of Conduct
- Circular 2012/1: Revision to the Commission's guidance on making public comment and participating online
- RET ICT Strategic Plan 2010-2013
- RET ICT policies and procedures
- Online Communication Procedural Rule
- Information Management and Records Procedural Rule

Attachment A - Social Media Checklist

The following steps are required to use social media sites.

Determine the need

1. Take time to understand the social media tool and: determine if it is the most appropriate tool for communication; read and understand the terms of use; and analyse existing content to understand site etiquette.
2. Determine the amount of time needed to participate online and what value is generated by the Department's participation and the benefit return to the Department.
3. Consider what you are trying to achieve and link the use of social media the wider communication strategy.

Seek approval

4. Read and understand the Social Media Procedural Rule and ICT Conditions of Use Policy.
5. Complete the Social Media Registration Form detailing the social media activity to be undertaken and any accounts created. . The form must be approved by the Branch GM, who will be responsible for the content published, and submitted to the Parliamentary and Communications Team. The details of the accounts will be recorded on a departmental register and are used for reporting to AGIMO.

Use

6. Follow the policies in the RET Social Media Procedural Rule and the ICT Conditions of Use Policy.
7. Your activity and login will be recorded with tracking software.
8. Participation may be subject to moderation where deemed inappropriate in accordance with the Social Media Procedural Rule.

Maintenance and record keeping

9. Users are required to maintain and regularly monitor and social media accounts they create for business purposes.
10. Record activity on social media platforms in accordance with the Information Management and Records Procedural Rule.



Attachment B - Social Media Registration Form

Title of account	<i>Social media accounts must use an authorised departmental identity and not a personal identity.</i>
Proposed platform(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> LinkedIn <input type="checkbox"/> YouTube <input type="checkbox"/> GovSpace <input type="checkbox"/> GovDex <input type="checkbox"/> Blog (existing external) <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion (existing external) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)
Project	Identify the specific project relevant to this request.
Level of engagement	What level of engagement with the public are you proposing? <input type="checkbox"/> Publish – one way messaging <input type="checkbox"/> Respond – publicly responding to questions <input type="checkbox"/> Engage – starting conversations, building a community
Link to Communication Strategy	Has social media been identified in your Communication Strategy? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Reasons for choosing the proposed platform	<i>What led you to choose the proposed platform(s)?</i> <i>Before requesting access to social media sites, users must understand the social media tool and: determine if it is the most appropriate tool for communication; read and understand the terms of use; and analyse existing content to understand site etiquette.</i> <i>Users should determine the amount of time needed to participate online and what value is generated by the Department’s participation and the benefit return for the Department.</i>
Length of use	<i>Specify the length of time access is required.</i>
Users	<i>Specify the names of staff who will require access.</i>
Terms of use	Have you read and understood the terms of use associated with the proposed social media platform?

	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Record keeping	Do you have appropriate record keeping strategies in place? See the Information Management and Records Procedural Rule for further information. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Social media policy	Have you read and understood the Social Media Procedural Rule? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Contact officer	<i>Insert name and title</i>
Approving officer	<i>Insert name and title (must be a Branch General Manager or higher)</i>