

City Employees and Social Media: A Descriptive Study

By

Lindsey Rose

Applied Research Project

Lnr22@txstate.edu



Submitted to the Department of Political Science
Texas State University-San Marcos
In Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Public Administration

Spring 2013

Faculty Approval:

Thomas Longoria, Ph.D.

Nandhini Rangarajan, Ph.D.

Valentin DeLeon, MPA

Abstract

The purpose of this applied research project is to describe the attributes of city policies and/or employee handbook sections that address employee personal use of social media. A comprehensive review of the literature was used to develop a conceptual framework composed of three descriptive categories: interaction, confidentiality, and identity. The researcher utilized the content analysis method for this framework to develop a coding protocol. Forty Texas cities of various sizes were examined. These various cities were studied to determine if they had a policy or otherwise in place that addresses the personal use of social media by city employees. Public administrators in charge with creating, maintaining, and enforcing employee use social media policies ought to consider utilizing this research for the benefit of their cities.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
Examples	5
Social Media Policies in Texas	7
Research Purpose	8
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	9
Conceptual Framework	9
Policies Regulating Social Media Interaction	10
‘Friending’ Subordinates	12
Harassment	14
Joining Inappropriate Groups	15
Confidentiality Policies	17
Discussion of Contracts	18
Discussion of Organization Decisions	20
Policies Regarding Online Identity	22
Status Updates	25
Content Pictures	26
Profile Information	28
Conclusion	29
Chapter 3 – Methodology	32
Research Method	32
Content Analysis	33
Variables	34
Data	34
Explanation of each Table Section	37
Sample	38
Conclusion	40
Chapter 4 – Results and Analysis	41
Introduction	41
Data Results and Analysis	42
Policies Regulating Interaction	45
‘Friending’ Subordinates	46
Harassment	47

Inappropriate Groups	48
Confidentiality Policies	49
Discussion of Contracts	49
Discussion of Organization Decisions	50
Policies Regarding Online Identity	52
Status Updates	52
Content Pictures	54
Profile Information	56
Large Cities	57
Medium Cities	58
Small Cities	59
Conclusion	59
Chapter 5 – Conclusion	60
Chapter Purpose	60
Summary of Results	60
Suggestions for Creation of New Policies	62
Future Research	63
References	65
Policies Examined	70

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Social Media, also known as Web 2.0, has been gaining popularity for several years. Social media includes any site that is set up for enabling online interaction and self-expression for its users. Popular social media sites include Facebook®, LinkedIn®, Flickr®, Myspace®, Twitter® and many more (Nations, 2013). Social media is defined by the Federal Web Managers Council as, “Social Media and Web 2.0 are umbrella terms that encompass the various activities that integrate technology, social interactions, and content creation. Social media uses many technologies and forms, such as blogs, wikis, photo and video sharing, podcasts, social networking, mash-ups, and virtual worlds.” (U.S. General Services Administration, 2009, p.1) Many names of social media sites have a copyright; however this research will not use the copyright symbol throughout the rest of the research so not to distract from actual content.

It has been projected that approximately 1.4 billion people worldwide use at least one type of a social media networking site (Arno, 2012). With the world population at just over 7 billion, (El Nasser, 2011) social media users theoretically comprise twenty percent of the world population.

Social media sites can also facilitate sharing of information, increase transparency, advertise an organization, business, or service. The increasing popularity and expansion of social media sites bring various societal challenges. These challenges include new avenues for inappropriate interactions, new opportunities for leaking confidential information, and employees blending their personal and professional identities. These new issues brought about by social media can create a decline in credibility for the employee and the employer. For example, when a city employee

displays inappropriate behavior such as sexist or racist statements, readers of may relate the views expressed by that employee to the views of the city. It is imperative for employers in the public sector to respond to the influence of social media on human communication norms and expectations.

The public and private sector are affected by the unstructured communication brought about by social media. However, the regulation of social media communication is different for a variety of reasons, especially protecting the reputation of the public sector. Due to the nature of public service and the positions of trust they hold within society, occasional restrictions on the first amendment rights of public employee may be necessary. Limits are needed so agencies might perform their functions (Raines, 2013).

City governments work hard to serve their citizens and to better their community. It would be detrimental if confidence in city government were damaged by the social media actions of an employee. Social media is used officially by many municipalities. Additionally, their employees use Web 2.0 in an unofficial capacity. City employees may form inappropriate relationships between other city employees, clients or subordinates. This unstructured/unsanctioned communication can result in the propagation of incorrect or confidential information being leaked. At times, the inability to separate ones professional identity from their personal identity in social media can be destructive to the goals of a city government. Legitimacy and trust from citizens are the keystone of effective local government. Inappropriate use of social media by local government representative can erode trust in leadership.

Increased use of social networking sites can lead to increased communication issues. These concerns include cyber bullying, identity impersonations, violations of

privacy, and workplace disruption. The problems in the workplace caused by social media receive media attention and these problems may become even more severe given the continued evolution and change in social media technology (Jung, 2013).

Workplace disruption is showing up in both the public and private sector. Office disturbance can consist of a decrease in productivity, harassment between employees, organizational information being leaked, potential for computer viruses among many other possible effects (Kelleher, 2009). Public employees are no exception to these social media shortcomings. It is important for public administrators to tackle potential social media disputes and missteps before they create larger problems for both municipalities and the employees themselves. Technology moves at a fast pace, it is imperative that public administrators do their best to keep pace.

Many city employees in Texas have personal profiles on at least one social media site; however the percentage with social media accounts is unknown. Most people identify their employer in their profile, which is available to the public. If one were to search the names of public employees in social media a vast list would be produced. Public employees must be careful about the behaviors they exhibit in public spaces. Employee behavior is a personal and professional reflection. Social media sites have been considered public domain by many even if an individual has their profile and other information established using privacy settings (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010).

Due to the wide usage of social media and the excess of potential negative effects it can have, it is necessary for a city to develop a social media policy that would apply to their employees during both company time and personal time. When generating a new policy, building support for the policy prior to its release can aid in the implementation

process. It is also key that the policy is reasonable so employees are more likely to accept and follow the policy. Continued training throughout the year could be an effective means of getting information regarding a city's regulations on social media to the employees, as could adding such a policy to a city's employee handbook (Gevertz & Greenwood, 2010).

No matter how the policy is brought forth to the employees, it is important that the policy include the following categories to some degree: policies regarding interaction, confidentiality policies, and policies regarding online identity.

Having policies in place and comprehensive employee handbook sections that address Web 2.0 are important steps to keeping city employees from damaging the city through social media actions. Having clear restrictions in place that do not infringe upon the constitutional rights of public employees is important when considering the implementation of an employee account social media policy.

In preparing for this research, it has been observed that many cities have already adopted a social media policy to address official social media pages, but it remains unknown how many of them address the actions of their employees on their own personal accounts as well. The research in the following chapters will lay out the need for a social media policy to address employee personal use. This chapter, specifically, will lay out definitions and give ample examples for why it is imperative for city governments to address the issues brought about by employee social media use.

Examples

In February of 2013, a public school teacher in the Kansas City area was put on paid administrative leave for setting up a private Twitter® account to correspond with students only.

The school district has a pre-existing policy that basically states that all teacher – student communication must be open to school administration and parents (Campbell, 2013), thus making this Twitter account against school policy. While this example is not of a city employee, it is easy to see how interaction can get an employee in trouble with their workplace. The consequences of violating the school’s policy were observed despite there being no intentionally malicious action occurring.

The second reoccurring category is breaching of confidentiality. Employees never have the right to share confidential city business, but there have been many instances where confidential information has been shared online possibly because of the disconnection that occurs when people interact via social media (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010). Confidential information can include discussing contracts and/or pending decisions. Oversharing is also an issue when potential confidential information could be leaked.

Recently, an OB/GYN doctor in a small MidWestern town has been involved in controversy for posting a comment on Facebook. She gave basic personal patient history and made a comment that was in response to a patient arriving late to an appointment. She posted, “May I show up late for her delivery?” Many individuals are questioning whether action should be taken against this doctor for breaching patient confidentiality (Van Susteren, 2013).

This is not only an example of unprofessional conduct online, but a breach of confidentiality as well. When this doctor released confidential information, she broke the trust of her patient. While this example may seem trivial, it is reasonable to expect that this could happen on a larger scale.

A city employee could release confidential information of city contracts, pending decisions, information about other employees or clients, or they could spread false information. If an employee were to breach confidential information, they could lose the trust of residents not only on a personal level but on a professional level. The residents may be less likely to trust the city after an employee releases confidential information. Trust is not the only thing that could be harmed by releasing confidential information. Contracts can be voided, partnerships severed, among various other negative outcomes. It is imperative for cities to set up policy protecting confidential information from being breached (Dogra, 2012) which needs to be comprehensive and expanded to include confidentially breaches on social media sites.

The third category is identity. One's online identity is not always conducive to one's professional identity (Hum et al, 2011). On social media, individuals update their 'statuses,' utilize pictures, and create 'profiles' to depict their social media identity. When this social media identity harms an individual's professional identity and the identity of the city government along with it, there is a definite issue with this blending.

There are various examples of city employees and elected official adding inappropriate status updates. One example pertains to a racially charged status which was updated on Facebook. A Juvenile Correctional Facility employee in Ohio was fired after his threatening and racist comments were seen on the popular social networking site.

The Juvenile Correctional Facility felt this reflected poorly on their facility as he seemed to be discriminative and potentially aggressive. The facility fired this employee.

Another issue within this example is the employee listed his employer in his profile information which automatically tied him to the facility. The facility surely does not want to be seen as racist nor employing racist individuals (Farrell, 2010).

As a potential twenty percent of the world population utilize at least one social media site on a regular basis (Arno, 2012), it is obvious that social media is not a short term trend. Social media has developed in to part of modern life for many people. This creates a need for the public and private sectors to create policies and sections of employee handbooks to address potential issues that can arise from employee's personal social media use (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010).

If a city government is concerned with their image, laying out a policy or section within their employee handbook can help prevent employees from harming that image. A social media policy will help the city and its employees understand what is acceptable in the world of social media as a public employee.

Social Media Policies in Texas

Given that this is a relatively new area of research, little is known about the likelihood of city policies to contain restrictions on employee personal use of social media across the United States. While there are vast regional differences between the fifty states, research conducted in Texas can create social capital for use in other states.

Texas has a vast amount of unique regions and cities of various sizes, all of which are comprised of distinctive cultures. This research examines cities of various sizes located all across the state.

Each city's own cultures will likely affect the probability of that city to address social media in their formal policies and employee handbooks. If a municipality has not addressed employee use of social media, this research can be used as a guide for the creation of a comprehensive policy or handbook section. After using this research to create a basis for an employee use social media policy, a city can adapt the policy for their local norms and expectations. Social media is available and used nationwide and therefore is highly relevant to local governments across the United States.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to describe the policies used by city governments in Texas regarding employee use of social media accounts through the following descriptive categories, interaction, confidentiality, and identity.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Chapter Purpose

This chapter will review the scholarly literature that addresses social media use by employees. The literature will highlight aspects that are vital in developing potential policies to establish restrictions on city employee personal social media accounts.

First, the prospective hazards to cross-employee interactions within social media accounts will be examined. Second, confidentiality issues in social media are discussed. Lastly, the problematic distinction of personal versus professional identity of city employees in their social media accounts will be discussed. The information from this section will inform those seeking to develop city policies to address the use of social media accounts of their employees both at work and in their personal lives. This information could also act in shaping the development of social media guidelines which could be added to employee handbooks.

Conceptual Framework

To examine the use of workplace restrictions of social media accounts, a policy must be comprehensive. For the purposes of this descriptive research the three categories are policies regulating interaction, confidentiality policies, and policies regarding online identity. Each category will be discussed further in depth and then a content analysis will be conducted on a random sample of city policies and employee handbooks in Texas to examine if Texas social media policies are in place.

Table 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Descriptive Category	Literature
Policies Regulating Interaction ‘Friending’ Subordinates Harassment Inappropriate Groups	Bertot et al (2012), Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010), Gibson & Teasley (1973), Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010), Frampton (2010), Gelms (2012), Kietzmann et al. (2011), "Mayo Clinic Employees" (2012), Policy #470 (2012), "Social Media Policy" (2012), Einarsen (2000), Bowling & Beehr (2006)
Confidentiality Policies Discussion of Contracts Discussion of Organization Decisions	Rezny & Dorow (1961), Langheinrich & Karjoth (2010), Rose (2011), Hrdinova et al (2010), Savas (2000), Lee & Elser (2010), Bertot et al (2010), City of Baltimore (2012), "Baltimore City Fire Department" (2012), "205.06 Social Media Policy" (2011), "Social Media Policy" (2012)
Policies Regarding Online Identity Status Updates Content Pictures Profile Information	Hum et al (2011), Lenhart & Fox (2009), Kim et al (2010), Thompson et al (2008), Foulter et al (2009), Paradise (2012), Zwart et al (2010), Papandrea (2012), Policy #470 (2012), 205.06 Social Media Policy" (2011), Social Media Standard" (2010)

Policies Regulating Social Media Interaction

The interaction capabilities of social media are far different and more expansive than that of traditional forms of media (Bertot et al, 2012, p.30). Interaction with other users is one of the primary objectives of using social media sites. Social media sites differ from older forms of online communication and traditional non-internet based communication. Social media provides a much broader platform for interaction. Multiple people can interact and deliver information to several others. For example, two people may be communicating on an individual’s personal Facebook wall, but that conversation is still viewable by many people. Interaction is not necessarily controlled by one single

user of a social media account. Others not originally involved in said conversation may join in at any time. Older forms of traditional media such as e-mail, newspaper, and books provide a one-to-many form of information delivery, where one person delivers information and others take in said information without being able to immediately respond (Bertot et al, 2012, p.30).

Social media interaction is multi-faceted and therefore, a policy to address city employee use of social media should be detailed and evolve along with the technology. Articulating detailed restrictions to social media interaction will give employees a clear idea of what is not acceptable. Due to the First Amendment, it is important that interaction not be barred completely. Having detailed policies communicated to the employees will ideally prevent a situation where there is a 'gray area' that could cause problems for the employee and the city. The most important social media interactions to address in policy are: (1) refraining from 'friending' subordinates; (2) prohibition on harassment or the bullying of fellow employees, clients, or citizens; and (3) involvement in groups that would not be acceptable in a professional setting.

Though many organizations and potentially some municipalities are allowing employees to use social media to enhance a positive work culture, there are many aspects of social media that can upset that same work culture. Interaction can be both positive and negative, which is why it is important that the nature of the restricted interactions should be addressed in a comprehensive social media policy (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010, p.53).

'Friending' Subordinates

Humans have a basic desire to interact with one another. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs includes "belonging." Humans have a need to promote their own psychological self by communicating and relating to others (Gibson & Teasley, 1973, p.92). These theories have been used to assess work satisfaction and each addresses the need for human interaction. When these needs are not met, employees feel less satisfaction with work (p.93). Logically, limiting social media may indirectly affect overall work satisfaction. Social media is now used as a tool for individuals to satisfy this need for interaction. When limiting social media accounts of employees, this need for interaction should not be ignored.

While the true, or 'real life,' connection between these social media "friends" may vary (Boyd, 2008), these connections are still important. People satisfy their needs for belonging in social media by 'following' or adding a person as a 'friend.' These social media terms such as 'friends' or 'friending,' 'following,' 'contacts,' and so forth refer to other social media users an individual has chosen to associate with inside the realm of social media. Indeed some organizations have encouraged employees to 'friend' their coworkers and their supervisors on social media sites in order to create social media groups and improve communication, increase awareness of specific projects, and to connect team members (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010, p. 53).

However, mixing supervisors with subordinates on social media sites can be problematic, especially if these linkages are not made in a formal way as a strategy to improve organizational communication. Many people have reported that being 'friended' by a co-worker or especially a supervisor makes them feel restricted in what they would

be able to post or say on social media for fear of what their co-worker or supervisor would think or how they would react (Frampton, 2010).

When a supervisor ‘friends’ or ‘follows’ a subordinate it can seem harmless until an issue arises. For example, if an organization must perform lay-offs, social media sites have been seen as a large factor towards who is chosen to be laid-off when someone in a management position has ‘friended’ a subordinate in the past. Individuals have assumed they were chosen by their supervisor to be laid off over another employee because their supervisor may have disapproved of what that employee posted on Facebook or other social media sites in the past. In the same facet, when promotions are awarded, a supervisor may or may not promote a specific individual based on what they have observed on said subordinate’s social media profile regardless of their work performance. Supervisors have more access to the profile when they are listed as a social media friend. When managers increase social involvement with subordinates, favoritism can also take place (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010, p. 53). Whether or not social media is an actual factor for any of these scenarios, it is an unnecessary complication.

When management ‘friends’ or ‘follows’ a subordinate, it creates a lack of privacy between managers and subordinates. When there is a lack of privacy between the different levels of an organization’s hierarchy, rash decisions and other corrupt actions can take place (Frampton, 2010, p.3-5). For example, a manager could relate better to one employee due to their social media interaction and therefore favor that specific employee. That same manager could dislike another employee based on what that individual does on social media. The manager could then treat this disliked employee worse by giving them unfair tasks or even target them for firing or lay-offs.

To illustrate workplace policy regarding social media, The Mayo Clinic's Social Media Policy (2012): "discourages staff in management/supervisory roles from initiating 'friend' requests with employees they manage."

Local government policies may also have policies that place limits on supervisors "friending" subordinates on social media sites. In addition to setting out these limitations, cities may outright ban friending of subordinates. These policies may be either in formal policies or a social media section of an employee handbook.

Harassment

Workplace harassment is defined by Bowling and Beehr (2006) as, "interpersonal behavior aimed at intentionally harming another employee in the workplace." This intentional harming of co-workers can be conducted in various forms of harassment. Harassment can be broad and can include: individual derogation, spreading gossip or rumors, direct or indirect insulting of a co-worker, offensive remarks, foul language used towards or around a person, hostility, intentional ignoring, and unwanted sexual advances or references (Einarsen, 2000).

Traditional harassment between coworkers has occurred in a face-to-face verbal or physical manner; however social media and e-mail have made it possible for employees to interact just as if they were physically in the same location despite being geographically distant from each other. These technologies can be used for many positive opportunities, but it also opens doors for negative effects, like harassment (Gelms, 2012, p. 249).

Social media also reduces an individual's sense of accountability (Boyd, 2008). Looking at a computer screen may seem less personal than looking directly at the person

to whom you are speaking. This can lead to problems such as acts of harassment and cyber-bullying.

Via social media, employees can harass or bully fellow employees, clients, partner organization employees and beyond (Kietzmann et al, 2011, p. 244). This type of harassment often does not take place within the walls of the organization, but inside social media cyberspace. Human resource departments, policies, and public law are trying to catch up to address these new avenues for harassment.

Many cities and organizations have established harassment policies. Applying existing harassment policies to apply to social media policies can be an effective route. For example, the Minnetonka Public School District has a social media policy that lists related existing harassment policies as a cross reference with their social media policy. Their social policy explicitly lists, Policy #427: Harassment and Violence and Policy #428: Respectful Workplace, as cross reference policies to be followed at all times while connected to social media (2012).

As social media has now become an avenue for harassment and bullying, it should be considered in the formation of a city policy regarding social media. The capability for cross referencing a social media policy with the city's harassment policy, which is likely to already be in place, could also be an effective route.

Joining Inappropriate Groups

Within certain social media sites such as Facebook, participants can join 'groups.' These groups can be used for many different levels of personal satisfaction such as obtaining peer support, a feeling of community and belonging, entertainment, as well as career and personal networking, among many other reasons. These group pages provide

opportunity for group interaction based on mutual interests (Park et al., 2009, p. 729-730). These groups can be based on substantive topics like election candidates or they can be set up for fun like the group named, Chuck Norris Fans Unite. Groups can also be formed to raise money for a charitable organization or to deliver information. Group pages allow communication between group members about the group's topic.

Unfortunately, groups can also cross the line into offensive, inappropriate, or hurtful subject matter. These groups may not be viewed negatively by an individual member; however that group may be seen as offensive to someone else. In addition to offending co-workers or clients, that individual acts as a representative of their workplace. Dora the Explorer, whom is a Spanish speaking children's cartoon character, is an Illegal Immigrant, which is an actual Facebook group, may leave many people angry with that particular individual and the city. A city government may not want to be associated with this kind of offensive group (Thompson et al. 2008, p.955).

The City of Raleigh's social media policy (Section A) directly states that social network content is unacceptable if that content includes, "Profane or obscene language or content." In addition, the social media policy prohibits joining groups that have, "Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetrates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status with regards to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability, or sexual orientation." ("Social Media Policy", 2012). Clearly both of these sections of Raleigh's social media policy could apply to various social media actions, but would directly apply to social media groups.

As shown in the literature and through the City of Raleigh's social media policy, social media groups need to be restricted. It is important for the city to not lose respect

from citizens because an employee has misrepresented the city by way of their involvement in a social media group.

Confidentiality Policies

All organizations have information that they may not want to be shared with outsiders. Confidential information is basically defined by Rezny and Dorow (1961) as “private affairs,” “communicating in confidence,” and “communicating a secret.” These definitions make it clear that confidential information is not to be shared openly with just anyone.

Once confidential information is revealed, it is difficult to remove the information from social media sites. Many users of social networking sites do not realize how much, how long, and how accessible their posts are to others (Rose, 2011). Of course public sector employees are prohibited from revealing non-public information such as, contracts and pending or recent decisions about the city’s operations. Social media has brought about new threats to confidentiality as employees communicate more openly online. The possibility of false information being spread is also an important issue within city governments. Employees could unknowingly spill secrets to friends or even to competitors. City employees could also damage the city’s credibility by posting false information (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010, p.53).

Confidentiality is of significance in any organization. It is vital to create a policy that will protect an organization’s confidentiality within social media. Some policies that have been put in place state that employee’s social media accounts must follow current IT security policies. These IT security policies typically focus on preventing phishing and

hacking. These policies do not usually cover content that can breach confidentiality, which can be equally as important as internet security (Hrdinova et al, 2010, p.10).

Other organizations are beginning to add restrictions that affect workplace confidentiality and the possibility of employees spreading false information. One city fire department for example recently created a policy that made its employees subject to reprimand for posting specific material about their jobs. Posting sensitive information about fire calls and detailed comments about the public and fellow employees will not be tolerated under this department's new policy ("Baltimore City Fire Department" 2012).

The operations of a city can be damaged if information on contracts, organizational decisions, or oversharing occurs. This is reason for social media policy to include a section regarding the protecting of confidential information.

Discussion of Contracts

Local governments utilize contracts for many reasons. Contracts are a key component to public-private partnerships and many other undertakings of a city. Contracts ensure that both sides of any agreement hold up their end of the arrangement. A city will use contracts for many other reasons including but not limited to: hiring and promoting of employees, cooperation with other municipalities, and public-private partnerships. One of the key principles of contracts is that the negotiations must be kept confidential (Savas, 2000).

The legal status of any work related information is still applicable on social media as it would be in any other form of communication (Langheinrich & Karjoth, 2010, p.54). It is common enough for various employees of an organization to have knowledge of what a contract contains, especially if they were involved in drawing up the contract. It is

also common for employees to be aware that they are not allowed to discuss any part of that contract outside of the workplace or often times within the workplace. Due to the lack of accountability on social media sites discussed earlier, (Boyd, 2008) leaking any important or non-important contractual information on social media can become an issue and have legal ramifications in the contracting process. If a party loses a contract and information is leaked on social media, a situation like this could suggest bias, conspiracy, and even potential illegal activity (Savas, 2000).

Arlington, Texas, has created a social media policy that encompasses both the city's official social media sites used to engage public and the restrictions and expectations of city employees for their use of social media. Sections, C. 6. and C.8., could be used to address confidential information such as contracts. Section C.6. states, "Confidential or proprietary information or similar information of third parties who have shared such information with the City of Arlington should not be shared on social media outlets." Section C.8. could also restrict talk of contracts on social media, "Employees shall not cite vendors, suppliers, clients, citizens, co-workers or other stakeholders without their approval." A city employee, therefore, cannot go on to a social media site and say something such as, "So excited about our contract with AAA Carpentry," because of section C.8. of Arlington's social media policy ("205.06 Social Media Policy", 2011).

Due to the sensitive nature of contractual agreements such as employment, public private-partnerships, and other situations that require contracts, many city governments will see the need for employees to keep such information off of social media sites and therefore should create a policy if such an instance were to arise.

Discussion of Organization Decisions

City governments, have a responsibility of being open and honest. Information being available and transparent to the public is an important part of government. There are cases, when decisions are not yet complete, are untrue, or are just unsuited for social media discussions. (Lee & Elser, 2010).

Raleigh, North Carolina has put confidentiality in to their social media policy in a very broad way, but it could be directly related to restricting city employees from discussing pending decisions. Section E states that non-public information not be shared on any social media sites ("Social Media Policy", 2012). Pending decisions are typically non-public information, therefore making this policy applicable to this sub-category.

Therefore pending decisions and even past decisions should not be discussed on social media sites by city employees. If the city feels the information is appropriate to be shared, the city can put it on the city's own official Facebook or Twitter page, which is far more appropriate than employees posting these decisions on their own social media pages.

A large aspect to regulating discussion of organization's decisions on social media is the need to discourage oversharing. Oversharing can be devastating to a city government or any organization. Whether the information is maliciously false, accidentally false, incomplete, or just more than outsiders need to know, it can be highly damaging.

Oversharing is becoming an issue in social media and organizational information should not be shared by city employees on social media (Rose, 2011, p.37). It is easy for someone on social media to forget every comment, status, and 'like' that is ever

conducted. This is another reason why city employees must be careful. While cities may have their own official social media pages, employees might also offer voluntary assertions on city business. If this information is not based on facts, but office rumor or is only partially true, it can instill distrust and anger from the public (p.38-39).

Many cities use official social media sites to increase transparency and raise trust from the public. If a city employee were to post something untrue on the official city site or on their own social media page, much of that built up trust from the public could be tarnished (Bertot et al, 2010).

To remedy the issue of oversharing city information, the city could restrict all city information from being shared by employees, excluding the individual or team of employees who run the city's official social media page. If restricting completely is too stringent, the policy could alternatively require city employees to have written consent from a supervisor to share city information.

The social media policy of Arlington, Texas (2011) states, "Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems," is not allowed. Oversharing could compromise the safety of the public in various ways (Rose, 2011), therefore Arlington's policy is applicable, but it could be changed, added to, or re-worded to be more explicit in preventing the potential spreading of false information ("205.06 Social Media Policy", 2011).

Consequently, cities ought to create policy and protocol for employees who choose to overshare decisions pertaining to the city. Whether it is a pending decision, past decision, office gossip, inaccurate information on their personal social media accounts, city employees need to be aware that these are not appropriate for online discussion. It is

up to the city to determine how restrictive the policy- how it is implemented and monitored. Nevertheless, it is important that restricting oversharing from all employee social media accounts be added to a comprehensive social media policy.

Policies Regarding Online Identity

The blend of personal and professional identity could also pose problems as individuals are seen as representative their employer. In the case of a city employee, the city would not want their reputation damaged because of an employee's online activity. Social media is seen by many as an extension or representation of one's self (Hum et al, 2011).

A social media site's "home page" or "profile" allows each user to continually update postings and also allows provides interactions between family, friends, and strangers. The actions and information that individuals choose to conduct and expose stand as a reflection of their own personal online identity which is typically used to communicate with the online community (Hum et al, 2011). This online identity is most commonly a reflection of one's actual identity, but it may not reflect the individual's professional identity. This creates a situation where one's personal and professional identity could blend, especially if an individual chooses to 'friend' or 'follow' a co-worker or client.

Feasibly some of the most revealing pieces of an individual's online identity are basic activities, photos, and general profile information. Not only are these actions available for the online community to see, but they can also tie the individual to its place of work if one is not carefully keeping work and social media separate (Hum et al, 2011). If a local government does not want its reputation damaged in any way by an employee's

social media identity, policy needs to address the previously mentioned self-disclosure capabilities.

The blending of a professional identity and personal identities can be unintentional by city employees, but that does not make it any less potentially harmful. A prime example comes from the League of Minnesota Cities. The League of Minnesota Cities provides the example of a public works director who has a Twitter account. In a Twitter account, users send ‘tweets,’ which are short statement/comment/question based updates written by a social media user which all other users connected to that individual can view. This man or woman could use social media to keep in touch with family members and friends through ‘tweeting’ and other means of social media interaction.

When this employee begins ‘tweeting’ about current city-related news, such as which roads are closed or various other city matters, this individual has now blended their personal and professional self. This may seem perfectly innocent; however these actions connected this employee directly with the city. If this public works director makes ‘tweets’ or status updates on the weekend about drinking or if they were to use curse words in another post, that action no longer just affects that person’s reputation, but the city’s reputation as well. There is also the possibility that this city employee eventually becomes disgruntled in some way and then starts speaking ill of the city or of a specific city staff member. What starts out as a simple, innocent situation could make a turn for the worst (“Risk Management Information Social Media and Cities Questions and Considerations”, 2009, p.8).

To remedy this situation, the Minnesota League of Cities (2009) recommends that city employees follow the computer and social media use policy laid out by the city

through either formal policy or through employee handbooks. If there is no policy currently in place, creating one to address identity is of great importance (p.9). Ensuring that this policy addresses the social media identity of a city's employees is a key element to an effective policy.

Identity can be addressed in many degrees through policy. Some cities have addressed identity by having employees provide disclaimers stating that they do not speak on behalf of the city. The City of Dallas requires that employees give the following disclaimer if an employee comments on the official city page. "The statements and policies exposed here are mine only and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the City of Dallas" (Administrative Directive 2-52, 2011, p.7). Other policies bar employees from using their employee e-mail addresses on personal social media sites (Policy on Use of Social Media 1-18, 2011, p.6).

One Minnesota City uses its social media policy to bar employees from blending their personal and professional identities online by restricting an employee from the following actions: (1) an employee is not allowed to post comments on any 'city official' social media sights, unless it is within their job description, (2) an employee will not make comments about official city business or happenings (3) an employee will not list their work phone number or e-mail address in their profile contact information, and (4) all staff members are subject to reprehension if this policy is not followed (p.8-10).

The State of California also briefly addresses the blending of personal and professional personas online by stating, "Users shall avoid mixing their professional information with their personal information" (Policy #470, 2012).

Status Updates

Many social media sites have various features to them and with those features come varying degrees of involvement. Many social media sites have games, photo albums, job postings, music and other ways for members to communicate. It depends on the individual user on what kinds of interaction and how often they are involved in social media. On social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, a status update, also known as a 'post' or 'tweet,' is a common activity that takes place. Motives behind a status update can be mixed. Some individuals use status updates to share their moods, locations, and what they are currently doing. Research shows that a significant amount of Americans use the status updating tool on various different social media sites (Lenhart & Fox, 2009).

A status update can be about whatever topic the user chooses to divulge. Due to the nature of social media and the basic loss of a sense of true connection, users can sometimes lose sense of what is appropriate. This can lead to inappropriate status updates that can make the individual lose credibility with certain people who read it. It can also lead to termination of employment. If the individual's online persona is connected with its employer in any way, the employer could also lose credibility due to a status update. (Kim et al, 2010, p.216).

'Tagging,' which connects a geographical place and/or another individual to a specific individual's status or picture can also become an issue. Specifically on Facebook, a user can tag them at a location. Other social media users are also capable of tagging that individual out at restaurants, public spaces, and other specific or general locations. This may seem harmless; however, organizations are now able to unintentionally catch their

employees using sick days for other uses. 'Tagging' can also place social media users in locations that may not seem appropriate to many people, like strip clubs (Paradise, 2012, p. 281).

The City of Arlington's social media policy was touched on earlier and its section C.8. applies to this status update section as well. This policy also lists various forms of content that is not allowed for posting. Certain activities are prohibited by the City within status updates, comments, and all general social media content. These prohibited actions include profane language or content, sexual content, illegal activity, and promotion of discrimination ("205.06 Social Media Policy", 2011).

Therefore, status updates can be a damaging element for employees and employers. If a city does not want their employees to potentially damage the City's integrity, City policies should address the potential status update actions of its employees. Keeping employees from discussing workplace activities on their status update can be especially important in order to keep an individual's online identity separate from their professional self. In addition to these considerations, city policy should also address potential cases of fraudulent sick leave and other instances where social media has ousted employee actions that directly affect other workplace policies.

Content Pictures

A picture on a social media site can say a lot about a person. Different social media sites may promote different types of pictures. Facebook users may tend to use fun pictures of groups of friends or vacations photos, but LinkedIn members tend to show head-shot style photos that try to show the individual as a professional. Not only are

photos present on home pages, but there also capabilities of sharing photos, creating photo albums, and ‘tagging’ other social media users in your photos.

Social media users post photographs, not anticipating those pictures being viewed by individuals outside of their own group of friends and family (Zwart et al, 2010, p.320). There have been numerous situations where teachers have been terminated for displaying alcohol, provocative clothing, and what could be considered offensive behavior in social media photos (Papandrea, 2012). One could make the connection that this could happen to city employees, especially as they raise in rank.

‘Tagging,’ which was described earlier with status updates, can also affect pictures on social media. ‘Tagging’ another social media user in a picture is a relatively common practice on Facebook. This means that a person can upload a photo and connect whoever is in the photo to it with a simple click of the mouse. This picture can then be viewed by other social media users. A person does have the ability to ‘untag’ themselves once tagged, but in some cases, the damage of the picture is already done. When an individual ‘untags’ themselves from a photo, it can be for an abundance of reasons. They may fear repercussions from a boss, significant other, or parent. One can ‘untag’ because the picture is unflattering, or simply because they saw said photo as unwanted attention (Paradise, 2012, p.279-281).

Many policies do not specifically state that photos of a specific nature cannot be used on employee social media sites. Numerous policies have sections that could easily apply to photos however. Section C.13 of Arlington, Texas’ social media policy basically states that any inappropriate activities, speech, or conduct (on or off duty) will not be acceptable. This action could be considered disruptive and the employee would be

subject to reprimand. This policy could incorporate content pictures and all photos posted on social media sites ("205.06 Social Media Policy", 2011). One does not have to look far to see a story of a teacher being fired because of a photo posted or 'tagged' on Facebook. It is only a matter of time before the same stories begin to circulate about city managers, city attorneys, or any city employee.

The literature shows that photos on social media sites can greatly affect a person's online identity. Creating a policy to keep social media photos from affecting the workplace can be an important consideration.

Profile Information

Basic profile information can apply to most any social media account and can vary greatly on what is revealed. Profile information sets up the foundation for one's online identity. Some social networking sites allow users to make their profiles private so that their information is only viewable by those who have 'followed' or 'friended' them. A public profile would be viewable by all who use the site. Utilizing privacy settings can be a useful tool for individuals that do not want strangers viewing their home page and profile information (Thompson et al, 2008, p.955). Requiring employees to use privacy settings and barring the employee from listing their employer (the city) can be one way to keep the online identity separate from the professional identity. There are numerous instances of where individuals have lost their jobs due to inappropriate or unprofessional information displayed in their basic profile information. When a public employee has overly revealing profile information, it can lead to rumors and other undesirable consequences. When the public employee also lists their employer as the city, the city can

then be connected directly to that person and their social media information, comments, and pictures (Fouler et al, 2009, p. 2).

The State of California's social media policy mostly pertains to use of the official City sites, but it does touch briefly on employee personal use. Under the User's Requirements Section, Clause Seven states, "Users who are not authorized to speak on behalf of the agency or State shall clarify that the information is being presented on their own behalf and that it does not represent the position of the State or an agency." While this policy does not directly restrict what employee's put on their profiles, it does address the problematic connection between employer and employee ("Social Media Standard", 2010).

A policy created for a city government to address the social media actions of their employees should suggest that privacy settings be considered and employees not list the city in any part of their profile information or to have a disclaimer on their page stating that they do not speak on behalf of the city (Hrdinova, p.11, 2010). These recommendations can be in conjunction with any other restrictions the city sees necessary and fair. Having this information laid out in both formal policy and the employee handbook would be an effective way of highlighting the importance of keeping the city out of an individual's basic profile information.

Conclusion

Social media can create copious amounts of consequences for users. Users of social media tend to have a slight disconnect from those they are speaking to; which can be a large and diverse group of people. This can lead to inappropriate comments, pictures and associated consequences. Social media actions also have the capability of staying

around for quite some time. Oversharing is another issue brought about by social media. All social media users are susceptible to these newly emerging issues, but so are their employers (Zwart et al, 2009, p.322).

Due to the fact that city governments, like any organization, want to minimize risks and unwanted situations, cities ought to create a specific social media policy for employee social media use. These policies may be supplemented with continuing education, employee handbooks, and any other source that individual cities choose to use when delivering information on restrictions to their employees.

It is imperative that prospective policies not infringe on the employee's rights, but guide them to making decisions on social media that will not hurt their own or especially the city's credibility (Foulger et al, 2009, p. 3).

It is important that the prospective policies are comprehensive and detailed to best protect the city. The following categories have shown to be relevant and are becoming increasingly imperative. First the policy must regulate interaction between employees. Regulating interaction can prevent the following unwanted situations; management from 'friending' or 'following' subordinates, harassment, and employees taking part in inappropriate groups. Second, the policy needs to address confidentiality. City governments desire to be transparent; however there are situations where information does not need to be released to the public at the current time. This section of the policy ought to bar discussion of contracts, discussion of pending decisions, and the general oversharing of information. Lastly, the policy needs to apply restrictions to basic social media activities, pictures, and profile information. It is also important to keep in mind

that social media and other technological forms of communication will change over time and therefore the policies will need to change as well.

Many cities are harnessing the popularity of social media to increase transparency and citizen input. It is vital that that same tool not hurt the city, its employees, or its residents. Throughout this research, numerous examples of social media policy have been laid out. As time goes on, more of these social media policies will be enacted. It is imperative that these policies be comprehensive and incorporate all necessary categories, without stripping employees of their civil liberties.

Clearly regulating the social media actions of city employees is important. Now the question turns to see if cities in Texas have utilized policy regarding their employee's personal social media use.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of the methodology chapter is to explain the procedures for determining if cities in Texas are utilizing detailed social media policies. This chapter operationalizes the three descriptive categories of the conceptual frameworks into variables. Then these specific indicators will be used to measure individual social media policies in Texas cities.

This chapter discusses the research methodology used to describe the social media policies of Texas cities. Forty cities in Texas will be examined to see if they have any range of social media restrictions for city employees in city policies or employee handbooks. There will be 10 large cities examined, 15 medium cities, and 15 small cities. Descriptive categories developed in the literature review are used as the basis to conduct a content analysis of the policies and employee handbooks.

Research Method

This research's conceptual framework uses descriptive categories to identify the potential existence and extent of each city's social media policies. As shaped in the Literature Review Chapter of this research, each category is comprised of three sub-categories. Each sub-category is related to the other subcategories within the overlying category. These separate categories work to organize the conceptual framework.

The separated categories allows for a coherent connection between the original research purpose, supported by literature, and the research model. In the case of this

research, the research purpose is connected directly in a clear way to the content analysis used to analyze the social media policies of cities in Texas (Shields, 1998, p.213).

Content Analysis

A content analysis will be conducted on a random sample of city ordinances in Texas cities. Klaus Krippendorff (2003) has defined content analysis as, “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text to the contexts of their use.”

According to Johnson (2010, p.74), “content analysis converts qualitative data into quantitative analysis.” Content analysis will allow the research to be converted the qualitative data from city policies into something measurable. This will be an effective way to assess if cities in Texas are adopting policies or sections in their employee handbooks that for employee personal use of social media.

Advantages to content analysis include time, cost, and “safety.” This form of methodology does not require much in the way of materials or large amounts of staffing for research. Time is also an advantage as content analysis can be conducted in a much more flexible manner than other forms of research. Safety is noted as an advantage due to the ease of re-doing a section of the research if mistakes surface (Babbie, 1989, p.313).

Content analysis is not without its problems of course. Coding can be problematic if not done correctly because it could affect the reliability of the research. Reliability is important in all research, but it is vital in coding. Creating clear conceptual and operational definitions for the coding is of great importance (Johnson, 2010, p. 75,89).

Inter-rater reliability also provides reassurance that the research is “consistent and reliable.” Peer review of findings can increase the validity and strengthen the research

overall (Babbie, 1989, p.313-314). For this research, utilizing an additional independent coder has validated the findings by coding two of the city policies. The independent evaluator's results matched the primary researcher's results precisely. Due to these outcomes, it is reasonable to assume that the findings are reliable.

Variables

Certain aspects within particular social media policies may be contained within other policies as well. A situation where multiple policies addressed a specific topic is possible. For example, a city may have a clear harassment policy that addresses workplace sexual harassment, bullying, and other forms of harassment. Additionally the social media policy may also address harassment when it occurs on social media sites.

It is also possible for various social media policies to not encompass certain aspects because they are covered under a different policy. One could argue that it is better for an issue to be covered multiple times rather than not at all. This is why an element of this content analysis will examine if harassment is covered by the social media policy despite the fact that many cities have distinct harassment policies. It is important for social media policies to address harassment due to the new avenues for harassment it can create. Some cities address employee social media use through a formal policy, a section in its employee handbook or it may even be part of an IT policy. Regardless of where a city's social media policy is addressed, it will be examined and coded if one exists.

Data

Formal policies and city employee handbooks will be coded utilizing the following conceptual framework shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Operationalization of Conceptual Framework	
Descriptive Category	Criteria to be Evaluated for Presence
1. Policies Regulating Interaction	
- 'Friending' Subordinates	1. Are managers prohibited from "friending," "following," etc. subordinates on social media sites?
- Harassment	2. Does the policy address harassment or link to a separate harassment policy in any way?
- Inappropriate Groups	3. Does the social media policy ban employees from joining groups that use inappropriate language? 4. Does the social media policy ban employees from joining groups contain discriminatory language? 5. Does the social media policy ban employees from joining groups that could be interpreted as offensive?
2. Confidentiality Policies	
- Discussion of Contracts	6. Does the social media policy bar employees from discussing past, present or future contracts on social media sites?
- Discussion of Organization Decisions	7. Does the social media policy ban discussion of any workplace decisions and actions? 8. Does the social media policy ban employees from intentionally or unintentionally spreading false city information on social media sites?
3. Policies Regarding Online Identity	
- Status Updates	9. Does the policy prohibit inappropriate status updates and comments? 10. Does the policy prohibit the employees from "tagging" themselves to inappropriate locations? 11. Does the policy prohibit employees from "tagging" themselves or co-workers at the workplace or during any workplace functions?
- Content Pictures	12. Does the social media policy address pictures to any degree? 13. Does the policy address alcohol, nudity, or lewd behavior that may be shown in pictures?
- Profile Information	14. Does the policy ban the listing of their employer (the city) in the employee's basic profile information? 15. Does the policy place any other restrictions on profile information?

Table 3.2: Coding Sheet	
Criteria	Coding
1. Are managers prohibited from “friending,” “following,” etc. subordinates on social media sites?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
2. Does the policy address harassment or link to a separate harassment policy in any way?	0 – No 1 – Yes
3. Does the social media policy ban employees from joining groups that use inappropriate language?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
4. Does the social media policy ban employees from joining groups contain discriminatory language?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
5. Does the social media policy ban employees from joining groups that could be interpreted as offensive?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
6. Does the social media policy bar employees from discussing past, present or future contracts on social media sites?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
7. Does the social media policy ban discussion of any workplace decisions and actions?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
8. Does the social media policy ban employees from intentionally or unintentionally spreading false city information on social media sites?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
9. Does the policy prohibit inappropriate status updates and comments?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
10. Does the policy prohibit the employees from “tagging” themselves to inappropriate locations?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
11. Does the policy prohibit employees from “tagging” themselves or co-workers at the workplace or during any workplace functions?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
12. Does the social media policy address pictures to any degree?	0 – No 1 – Yes
13. Does the policy address alcohol, nudity, or lewd behavior that may be shown in pictures?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
14. Does the policy address the listing of their employer (the city) in the employee’s basic profile information?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present
15. Does the policy place any other restrictions on profile information?	0 – Not Present 1 – Yes Present

Explanation of each Table Section

As stated earlier, both formal policies and employee handbooks will be examined and evaluated for each city. This is to ensure a well-rounded examination of each city's potential restrictions on employee personal social media actions.

Each section of the table correlates with the descriptive categories laid out in the Literature Review Chapter. Section 1 of the Table addresses the interaction dilemma that social media creates. Questions number 1 asks if cities have a policy or employee handbook section that prohibits management from connecting with subordinates on social media. Questions 2 and 3 examine city policies and handbooks to see if the city is working to prevent harassment conducted on social media. The last three questions in this section address inappropriate groups.

Section two investigates whether cities are preventing employees from sharing confidential information on social media sites. One question refers to contracts, the other mentions pending decisions, and the last question for this section examines potential restrictions on employees oversharing information.

The third section measures policies and handbooks that regard online identity. There are three questions that address potential restrictions on status updates. The next two queries will investigate to see how, if at all, a city's policy or handbook restricts content pictures and what specific things may be restricted. The last two questions of the content analysis are involved with addressing profile information. Knowing if the city restricts employees from listing the city under the employer section or if there are any other restrictions on profile information will be a valuable way to assess what kind of policies or employee handbook limitations are being placed upon city employees.

Sample

This content analysis will be of a random sample of cities. These cities were chosen randomly from the 2010 census of Texas. These cities span across the state and vary greatly in populations. These cities also vary in demographics, average level of income, and main industries.

For the purposes of this research, a large city will be classified as any city with a population larger than 150,000 residents. The large cities to be included in this research will be Austin, Arlington, Corpus Christi, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Lubbock, Plano, and San Antonio. A medium sized city will be any city with a population of 75,000 to 150,000 people. The medium sized cities to be studied will be Abilene, Allen, Beaumont, College Station, Denton, Edinburg, League City, Longview, McAllen, Round Rock, Sugar Land, Tyler, Wichita Falls, and The Woodlands. A small size will be classified as a city or town with less than 75,000 residents. The small cities to be examined will be Alvin, Del Rio, Flower Mound, Gonzales, Hutto, Kermit, Kingsville, Lockhart, Perryton, San Marcos, Temple, Tomball, University City, Quanah, and Waxahachie.

The cities chosen for examination of their policies and employee handbooks were chosen via a simple random sample. This method was used to show no bias towards choosing specific cities (Johnson, 2010, p.132). This was conducted by randomly selecting cities from a list of Texas Cities which was organized by population. The list was sectioned off into the three determined size categories creating new lists. The cities were then blindly chosen at random from each list.

The following cities were selected (see Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5).

Table 3.3 : Large Sized Cities (Population > 150,000)

City	Population
Austin	790,390
Arlington	365,438
Corpus Christi	305,215
Dallas	1,197,816
El Paso	649,121
Fort Worth	741,206
Houston	2,099,451
Lubbock	229,573
Plano	259,841
San Antonio	1,327,407

Table 3.4: Medium Sized Cities (Population 75,000 – 150,000)

City	Population
Abilene	117,063
Allen	84,246
Baumont	118,296
College Station	93,857
Denton	113,383
Edinburg	77,100
Frisco	116,989
League City	83,560
Longview	80,455
McAllen	129,877
Round Rock	99,887
Sugar Land	78,817
Tyler	96,900
Wichita Falls	104,553
The Woodlands	93,847

Table 3.5: Small Sized Cities (Population < 75,000)	
City	Population
Alvin	24,236
Del Rio	35,591
Flower Mound	64,669
Gonzales	7,237
Hutto	14,698
Kermit	5,708
Kingsville	26,213
Lockhart	12,698
Perryton	8,802
San Marcos	44,894
Temple	66,102
Tomball	10,753
Universal City	18,530
Quanah	2,641
Waxahachie	29,621

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the population and the criteria to be examined, the foundation behind using content analysis for the description, the operationalization of the conceptual framework, and the coding that will be used to measure the policies. This research design will support the conceptual framework laid out in earlier chapters and will show if Texas cities are enacting detailed social media policies for their employees.

The following chapter will present the results of the content analysis of social media policies developed by cities in Texas for their employee's personal social media use.

Chapter 4 – Results and Analysis

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the content analysis. A descriptive account of the findings is used to describe the social media policies and applicable employee handbook sections laid out for city employees in Texas. The data collected through content analysis will be presented and examined. Tables will be used to lay out the data and the statistical results which will be accompanied by narrative reviews.

The results present an overview of employee use social media restrictions put in place by forty Texas cities which vary in size. Conclusions and suggestions for further research will be presented in the final chapter.

It is important to know that the various cities that did have an employee use social media policy in place had numerous ways of presenting these social media policies. Some cities utilized their employee handbook or employee policy manual by adding a section for personal social media use. Another common practice is to have a section of a city's official use social media policy address employee personal use. Other cities used their internet policies, communication policies, or they created a new policy to address this issue.

San Marcos and McAllen are two cities that do not currently have an employee use social media policy in place, but both cities expressed interest in creating one.

McAllen stated that the city's public information office and the information technology (IT) department are currently working together to create a policy for both employee use and official use. San Marcos stated that they were working with local cities of similar

sizes to get a general idea of how other cities address both official use social media policy and employee personal use social media policies.

Data Results and Analysis

Three comprehensive tables show each city's results from the content analysis. The tables have been sectioned by descriptive category due to spacing constraints. The results are presented in tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3. Large cities are highlighted in pink, medium cities are highlighted in blue, and small cities are highlighted in green.

Table 4.1: Interaction

	'Friending' Subordinates	Harassment	Groups - Inappropriate Language	Groups - Discriminatory Language	Offensive Groups
Austin		✓	✓	✓	✓
Arlington					
Corpus Christi					
Dallas					
El Paso		✓			✓
San Antonio					
Fort Worth					
Houston		✓			
Lubbock					
Plano					
Abilene					
Allen		✓			
Beaumont					
College Station		✓	✓	✓	
Denton					
Edinburg					
Frisco					
League City					
Longview					
McAllen					
Round Rock					
Sugar Land					
Tyler					
Wichita Falls					
Woodlands		✓	✓	✓	✓
Alvin					
Del Rio					
Flower Mound					
Gonzales					
Hutto*		✓			✓
Kermit					
Kingsville					
Lockhart					
Perryton					
San Marcos					
Temple					
Tomball					
Universal City					
Quanah					
Waxahachie					
TOTALS:	0	7	3	3	4
TOTAL PERCENT:	0	17.5%	7.5%	7.5%	10%

Table 4.2: Confidentiality

	Contracts	Workplace Decisions and Actions	False Information
Austin			
Arlington	✓	✓	
Corpus Christi			
Dallas			
El Paso	✓	✓	✓
San Antonio			
Fort Worth		✓	
Houston			
Lubbock			
Plano	✓	✓	
Abilene	✓		
Allen			
Beaumont			
College Station			
Denton			
Edinburg			
Frisco			
League City			
Longview			
McAllen			
Round Rock			
Sugar Land			
Tyler			
Wichita Falls			
Woodlands	✓	✓	
Alvin			
Del Rio			
Flower Mound			
Gonzales			
Hutto*		✓	
Kermit			
Kingsville			
Lockhart			
Perryton			
San Marcos			
Temple			
Tomball			
Universal City			
Quanah			
Waxahachie			
TOTALS:	5	6	1
TOTAL PERCENT:	12.5%	15%	2.5%

Table 4.3: Identity

	Inappropriate Status Updates	'Tagging' Inappropriate Locations	'Tagging' the Workplace	Pictures	Lewd Behavior in Pictures	Listing the City on Profile	Other Profile Restrictions
Austin							
Arlington	✓		✓			✓	
Corpus Christi							
Dallas							✓
El Paso	✓						
San Antonio							
Fort Worth							
Houston	✓		✓	✓			✓
Lubbock							
Plano				✓			✓
Abilene	✓						
Allen				✓		✓	✓
Beaumont							
College Station	✓						
Denton							
Edinburg							
Frisco							
League City							
Longview							
McAllen							
Round Rock							
Sugar Land							
Tyler							
Wichita Falls							
Woodlands	✓					✓	✓
Alvin							
Del Rio							
Flower Mound							
Gonzales							
Hutto*	✓						✓
Kermit							
Kingsville							
Lockhart							
Perryton							
San Marcos							
Temple							
Tomball							
Universal City							
Quanah							
Waxahachie							
TOTALS:	7	0	2	3	0	3	6
TOTAL PERCENT:	17.5%	0	5%	7.5%	0	7.5%	15%

*Hutto's policy is still in progress

Policies Regulating Interaction

Interaction will refer to sections of a policy or employee handbook that restricts how city employees chose to interact with other social media users. Interaction is one of the main reasons individuals use social media sites. It is very feasible for the way city employees interact with other social media users to reflect upon the city in a negative way. A comprehensive employee use social media policy will address interaction so that the city's reputation does not become harmed due to an employee's social media action.

This descriptive category focuses on three specific indicators which are supported by the literature: 'friending' subordinates, harassment, inappropriate groups.

'Friending' Subordinates

The interaction between supervisors and their subordinates within the workplace ought to be conducted in a professional manner at all times. Preventing supervisors from establishing favorable or unfavorable views of employees based on the interaction between them on social media is vital. This unnecessary complication has a simple solution; preventing or at least discouraging managers from connecting with their subordinates.

A city's social media policy or employee handbook was examined for 'friending' subordinates by coding each policy or handbook with a 1 if there was any actual language that would ban connections between subordinates and management and a 0 if it was not addressed. As shown in Table 4.1, no cities have banned management from 'friending' their subordinates on social media sites, as seen in the analysis of this element.

Perhaps cities do not see potential favoritism or discrimination based on social media interaction between manager and subordinates. It is also possible that cities feel that prohibiting an individual to connect with co-workers, which may be friends as well, is overly intrusive.

Harassment

As social media has provided alternative avenues for harassment between colleagues, policy needs to expand to address this important issue. Question 2 asks whether or not cities address harassment on social media or if they have linked their existing harassment policies to include social media policies in any way.

Six out of the forty city policies/employee handbooks that were examined showed a link to their existing harassment policy. Four out of these seven cities, Houston, Allen, El Paso, and Arlington, had specific language stating that sexual or other forms of harassment would not be tolerated of employees. Some also state that their current employee harassment policy applies at all times.

Under Section 5.2 entitled 'Use of Social Media at Home,' the of City of Allen's Administrative Directive states directly, "The City of Allen encourages its employees to make good use of their off-duty time, certain activities on the part of employees may become a concern if they have the effect of impairing the work of any employee; harassing, demeaning, or creating a hostile work environment." This statement makes it very clear that harassment off-duty and on social media is not tolerated by the city (City of Allen Employee Policy Manuel, p.183).

The other three cities, College Station, Hutto, and The Woodlands, had slightly more vague language stating that the city's harassment policy also applies online.

Harassment has shown to be an important issue in the workplace and it is becoming a clear issue on social media as well. As only ten out of forty cities had a policy or section in their employee handbooks addressing social media in place, seven out of ten policies/handbooks addressed harassment on social media. This shows 70% of the examined existing policies address harassment.

Inappropriate Groups

Inappropriate groups can damage the reputation of an individual along with their employer. Many interactive social media groups contain discriminatory language, inappropriate language, and offensive messages. As cities do not want their reputation hurt by these optional social media groups, banning or at least discouraging their employees from joining these groups is worth considering.

Questions 3, and 4, and 5 address city employees joining potential inappropriate groups. Question 3 found three cities that had a policy/handbook sections in place that restrict employees from joining groups that use inappropriate language, showing 7.5%. The cities that address the third element were Arlington, College Station, and The Woodlands. These three cities each had similar approaches by stating profanity should not be used by the employee on social media. By joining a group that utilizes inappropriate language, the social media user is using that language as well.

Question 4 found the same three city policies/handbook sections for a 7.5% likelihood that groups containing discriminatory language would not be acceptable to the city. These three cities each stated that “ethnic slurs,” were not acceptable conduct on social media sites. Ethnic slurs are clear examples of discriminatory language, which The

Woodlands, College Station, and Arlington are not okay with their employees using through groups or otherwise.

Question 5 also had four cities that addressed employees joining groups that could be interpreted as offensive. This issue shows 10% of the cities examined address groups that can be interpreted as offensive. A prime example of cities barring employees from joining groups that can be interpreted as offensive is where The Woodlands' Social Media Guidelines states, "topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory," are not acceptable in employee personal use of social media.

Confidentiality Policies

Confidentiality policies are sections of a policy or employee handbook that restricts how cities prevent employees from releasing confidential city information through their social media policies or sections in employee handbooks. As social media can create a disconnect from real life consequences, it is important for cities to keep employees from releasing confidential information, recent or upcoming decisions, and false information. A comprehensive employee use social media policy will address confidentiality so that the city's employees do not act as unofficial spokespersons.

This descriptive category focuses on three specific indicators which are supported by the literature: discussion of contracts, discussion of organization decisions.

Discussion of Contracts

Even in a transparent government setting, contracts should not be discussed by employees, especially in an informal setting like social media. Question 6 asks if city

policies/handbook sections bar employees from discussing past, present, or future contracts on social media sites.

A total of five city social media policies state clearly that employees are not to discuss contracts on their personal sites. Arlington, Plano, El Paso, Abilene, and The Woodlands. A total of 12.5% of the cities examined do not allow discussion of contracts along with other city specific knowledge gained in confidence as an employee.

Social Media Guidelines of The Woodlands provides an example in its statement, “All Township information that is considered non-public in nature must be protected. Respect and maintain the confidentiality entrusted to you. Do not divulge or discuss proprietary information, personal details about other people or other confidential material.” Many of the other social media policies used similar language.

Discussion of Organization Decisions

All of the cities that were found to have a ban on discussing contracts also had a ban on discussing pending city decisions except for Abilene as according to question 7, which asked if employees were restricted from discussing workplace actions and decisions on social media. Fort Worth and Hutto did address prohibiting the discussing of organization decisions without discussing contracts however. This could be due to the general language not being specific enough in these two cases. The discussion of organization decisions were found in 15% of the cities examined. The in the still in progress draft of the City of Hutto’s Social Media and Broadcast Information Policy states, “use discretion before discussing any residents, customers, projects or business matter.” This is a clear indication that the City of Hutto does discourage, but does not

explicitly ban, employees sharing organization decisions and occurrences on employee's personal social media sites.

The issue of oversharing is prominent in online communication, especially on social media sites. Oversharing can encompass information that is false, partially true, or could even be something that simply should not be shared on such a medium like social media, such as office gossip. Oversharing may be intentional or unintentional, but it is an important issue regardless. Keeping employees from spreading false information and these other variations of the organization's decisions on social media sites is important to prevent residents of the city from becoming distrustful of the city or city employees as a whole.

Oversharing is an important aspect within the subcategory 'Discussion of Organizational Decisions. Element 8 asks if cities ban employees from spreading false information on social media sites. One city out of the cities forty examined lay out an expectation of employees regarding false information in their policies/employee handbooks; El Paso. This shows 2.5% of the cities examined address oversharing, most specifically the releasing of false information.

The City of El Paso's Administrative Policies and Procedures (2012) spells out not only that false information is not allowed, by stating, "Employees, board members, and volunteers are free to express themselves as private citizens on social media sites to the degree that their speech does not impair or impede the performance of their duties, impair discipline and harmony among coworkers, or is untrue, presents the City in a false light or divulges confidential information or plans about the City or their department." El Paso's policy also lays out possible ramifications for such actions by asserting, "All

employees, board members or volunteers should be aware that they may be subject to civil litigation for publishing or posting false information” in regards to the city, clients, or residents (p.4). This would mainly refer to defamation claims, but it is wide-ranged that El Paso reminded their employees of other possible implications than the general loss of employment’ claim that many policies make. As one can see, El Paso’s policy covers the entire confidentiality section of the content analysis.

Policies Regarding Online Identity

Identity will refer to sections of a policy or employee handbook that restricts how city employees chose to portray their identity with other social media users. Identity is a large aspect to social media use. Many social media users enjoy creating, maintaining, and evolving their online identity. An issue arises when the online identity of an individual blends with their professional identity. A comprehensive employee use social media policy will address interaction so that the city’s reputation does not become harmed due to an employee’s social media identity.

This descriptive category focuses on three specific indicators which are supported by the literature: status updates, content pictures, profile information.

Status Updates

In various social media sites, users can update their status to reflect their current mood, activities, or thoughts. The tool of updating statuses can be coupled with ‘tagging.’ ‘Tagging’ can connect the user to a location, a picture, and other social media users as well. For example, one can ‘tag’ themselves at a specific restaurant with friends who are

also a social media user. ‘Commenting’ on the status updates of another user is within the same realm as status updates.

Social media status updates with or without ‘tagging’ can be completely benign, but these actions can easily bridge into inappropriate as well. An issue can arise when employees use status updates to bash the city or other city employees or to ‘tag’ themselves at inappropriate locations such as strip clubs, or playing golf when they are supposed to be at work. The literature supports a city’s consideration of addressing status updates in their policies and employee handbooks.

Questions 9, 10, and 11 all addressed the issue of status updates. Question 9 had the highest likelihood of being present. Question 9 asked if the policy/handbook prohibits inappropriate status updates. The issue of inappropriate status updates was shown in seven city policies. With seven cities qualifying under this element, it has a 17.5% likelihood of showing up in a city’s policy/handbook in accordance with this research.

An issue with this question however, could be that the language is slightly vague. The word ‘inappropriate’ may seem straightforward, but it is subjective so this could lead to an issue where someone subjectively thinks they are making an appropriate status update that their employer may not see as proper.

The City of College Station reminds their employees that, “your personal and professional lives overlap in your online activity,” and asks that employees, “behave as if you are in any other public setting.” They also ask that comments and other social media behavior refrain from using ethnic slurs, vulgarity, personal insults and other actions that would not be acceptable at work. Many of the other cities that qualified for this question

noted similar guidelines against profanity, discrimination, and personal attacks against others (Employee Conduct Internet Policy 9.12. p. 3).

The City of Abilene states that, “Comments must be civil and may not contain communication which is slanderous, libelous, defamatory, malicious, offensive, threatening, or profane.”

Question 10 did not find any cities that have addressed employees ‘tagging’ themselves to inappropriate locations on social media. This could be for various reasons from being too invasive to a city not wanting to regulate relationships between fellow employees. Perhaps the language is too specific here as well.

Question 11 had a positive response for two cities, or 5%, of the policies examined. This question asked if employees would be prohibited from ‘tagging’ themselves or co-workers at the workplace or during any workplace function. Houston and Allen were the only cities that addressed this issue in their policies/handbooks. The City of Allen’s policy makes it very clear that they employee should not depict the city in any way. Employees engaging on personal social media in the City of Allen should not use their city e-mail account, pictures of employee in a city uniform, city logo, city name, nor incorporate the city in their identity in any way. ‘Tagging’ one’s self at a city function would certainly be incorporating the city in their identity and a ‘tag’ would be using the city name.

Content Pictures

Questions 12 and 13 each address pictures on social media. Pictures can be used on social media as a profile picture, an album of vacation pictures, or even cartoon

pictures you have posted. Some social media sites, like Instagram®, are entirely based on photo sharing. Photos play a large part in the social media experience.

Houston, Plano, and Allen all had a policy in place that addresses pictures to at least some extent as asked by Question 12. This shows 7.5% of the given sample of Texas cities does address pictures at least in some capacity. The City of Houston does not allow city employees to post images depicting city property, equipment, or personnel (Policy on Social Media Use, p.6). The cities of Allen and Plano tell their employees that pictures of employees in their city uniforms should not be used as content pictures on social media sites (City of Allen Administrative Directive, 2001) (City of Plano Policies and Procedures, 2000, p.7).

Question 13 asks a more specific question regarding content photos on social media sites. This question asks if the city addresses alcohol, nudity, or lewd behavior that may be shown in pictures on social media sites. Zero cities had language that specifically barred employees from posting pictures of them drinking or doing other thing that could be considered offensive to some segments of the local population.

In many instances, school districts do ban teachers and other school faculty from having alcohol, nudity, and other activities in social media content pictures. There could be various reasons that cities do not restrict pictures of this nature. It is plausible that cities feel the restriction of pictures is too much of an invasion on an individual's freedom of expression, or it is also possible that city officials do not see it being a problem.

Profile Information

Profile information acts as the base of social media identity. Profile information can include who you are in a relationship with, place of employment, birthday, e-mail address and other basic information. This basic information may seem harmless, but this is a main facet where an employee can directly tie themselves to the city they work for.

The last two questions in the content analysis address profile information. Question 14 asks, does the policy/handbook address the listing of their employer (the city) in the employee's basic profile information? A total of three cities put some kind of restriction on listing the city on an individual's profile showing 7.5%. Arlington, The Woodlands, and Allen both ask that if the employee lists the city as their employer that they then give a disclaimer that they do not speak on behalf of the city in any way (Management of Information Systems Policies and Procedures, p.183) (205.05 Social Media Policy, p.4).

Question 15 is more vague, asking if the policy/handbook places any other restrictions on profile information. This element showed up in 15% of the forty cities examined, with six cities. This element illustrates a significantly higher likelihood of being found in a city policy than which also relates to profile information. Most of the cities that qualified for this question prohibited the employees from using city e-mail addresses on their profile information. Many of the cities promote privacy settings for personal profiles so the employee's information is not viewable by everyone on social media.

Large Cities

The large cities, which are cities with a population of greater than 150,000 residents, were the most likely to have a policy in place. In fact, nine out of the ten cities reviewed in the large city category had a social media policy in place. Of these nine cities, four of them had a social media policy that only pertain to official city social media pages. San Antonio's social media policy states, "This directive provides guidance for how the city communicates to the employees, residents, visitors, businesses, and various audiences through social media outlets." Their policy briefly addresses the fact that employees also use social media for personal reasons by stating, "This directive does not apply to individual personal accounts owned by city employees for personal use. However, individuals must exercise good judgment when using personal social media outlets to not bring negative publicity or discredit to the city" (Administrative Directive 6.15).

When speaking with a representative of the City of Austin, which also only has an official use policy, their representative expressed that it would be difficult to implement and especially enforce a policy addressing employee personal use.

If examining each of the descriptive categories for each category of city size, it is easy to see that large cities have the highest percentage in each category. Table 4.3 shows the percentage of policies from large cities that qualify within each descriptive category. The first column shows each descriptive category, the second column shows the number of policies that qualified for the elements in question over the total number of questions multiplied by the number of cities in the large city category, ten. The third column is the percentage that reflects the number of policies that address each descriptive category.

This method will also be used for Table 4.4 and 4.5.

Table 4.3: Big Cities by Section	
Interaction (Q: 1-5)	14%
Confidentiality (Q: 6-8)	26.7%
Identity (Q: 8-15)	15.7%

As seen in the table, the confidentiality category is the most likely to be addressed in a social media policy for employee use. Clearly keeping city information off social media sites is important to the large cities.

Medium Cities

This category showed that medium sized cities, which have a population of between 75,000 and 15,000, had a slightly lower likelihood to have an employee use social media policy or employee handbook section in place. A total of four out of the fifteen medium sized cities examined did have an employee use policy in place. Many of these cities did have an official use policy in place however. When asked, representatives of cities which did not have a policy in place disclosed that city employees are expected to follow the city's code of conduct at all times, even online despite the fact that there is no policy or section within the employee handbook to address social media actions.

Table 4.4: Medium Cities by Section	
Interaction (Q: 1-5)	10.7%
Confidentiality (Q: 6-8)	6.7%
Identity (Q: 8-15)	7.6%

As Table 4.4 shows, medium sized cities are most likely to address interaction than the other two descriptive categories. Confidentiality is the least likely to be addressed, which is opposite of the results from the large city category.

Small Cities

Small cities, which have a population of less than 75,000 residents, were fairly unlikely to have a policy/handbook section in place. None of the small cities have a completed and implemented policy in place. For the purposes of this research, Hutto is the only small city that has a policy. Hutto's policy is still in progress, but the city was helpful in allowing use of their policy draft for this research.

Many of the smallest cities did not have an official use policy in place for their official social media pages either. The small cities that had larger populations tended to have official use policies in place, like the City of Flower Mound.

Interaction (Q: 1-5)	2.7%
Confidentiality (Q: 6-8)	2.2%
Identity (Q: 8-15)	1.9%

As Table 4.5 depicts, interaction is the most addressed descriptive category addressed by the small cities, but only by a small percentage. Since only one out of fifteen cities in the small city category had a social media policy pertaining to employee personal use, the percentages were bound to be low.

Conclusion

This chapter presented and analyzed the results of the content analysis of employee use social media policies/handbook sections in Texas cities. The coding mechanism used to gather these results is based upon a conceptual framework supported by scholarly literature. The following chapter will conclude this applied research project by summarizing the outcomes, present best practices, and offer recommendations for prospective research.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion

Chapter Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to wrap up the research project and summarize the results discussed in the previous chapter. Also presented are best practices from those results, and outline recommendations for future research. Public administrators are seeing the advantages of using social media to increase transparency and citizen participation in city government. These public administrators are also seeing the downside to social media in that city employees and fellow public administrators may feel unclear on what is and is not acceptable behavior on social media sites. Creating a policy is paramount to communicating how city employees can conduct themselves is on these popular online sites.

Summary of Results

The purpose of this research has been to describe the policies used by Texas City governments regarding employee use of social media accounts. The following descriptive categories were used based on an emphasis from the scholarly literature, interaction, confidentiality, and identity.

This research has shown that no two employees use social media policies are the same. Each city that had a policy or section of their employee handbook in place seemed to focus on different elements. No single policy covers each issue, but only three of the elements from the content analysis had zero policies qualify.

The first of these two questions asked if managers were prohibited from connecting with subordinates on social media sites. Although the literature seems to

support this concern, it is possible that the cities do not see this being a problem or feel it would be too intrusive. The second question that had zero policies qualifying was Q:10, which would ban employees from ‘tagging’ themselves in inappropriate locations. This could be for various reasons. It is possible that this issue has never come up, but if the city attorney gets ‘tagged’ at a local strip club, maybe the policy will rethink the need for this. The third question was in regards to employees posting pictures containing alcohol, nudity, or lewd behavior. This is a very common policy for school districts and sometimes for police departments, but cities do not seem to think it is a problem. Potentially if a problem arises then cities will then address this.

Major findings for each section of the content analysis are presented in Table 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3.

Table 5.1: Interaction	
Q:1 ‘Friending’ Subordinates	Zero policies addressed this subject.
Q:2 Harassment	Cities cited actual policy numbers or stated more generally that harassment will not be tolerated online and on social media.
Q:3 Groups with Inappropriate Language	Cities were slightly vague by stating that inappropriate language should not be used in any way as it reflects poorly upon the city.
Q:4 Groups with Discriminatory Language	Cities stated that discriminatory language and/or actions should not be used in any way as it is not conducive with the city’s anti-discrimination policy
Q:5 Offensive Groups	Cities stated broadly that employees should not take place in objectionable or offensive actions.

Table 5.2: Confidentiality	
Q:6 Contracts	Cities made a point to say that confidential information was not to be discussed on social media sites and contracts/proprietary information were typically listed as said confidential information.
Q:7 Decisions and Actions	Cities stated that decisions and city actions are not to be discussed by employees and discourage talking about the city at all on their personal social media accounts.
Q:8 False Information	Cities directly addressed the potential spread of false information by saying the spreading of false information is not acceptable.

Table 5.3: Identity	
Q:9 Inappropriate Status Updates & Comments	Cities state that status updates and comments that are inappropriate reflect poorly on the city and are not allowed. Cities elaborated to state what made a status update inappropriate such as curse words or anything that would go against the city's anti-discrimination policy.
Q:10 'Tagging' to Inappropriate Locations	Zero policies addressed this subject.
Q:11 'Tagging' at Workplace	Cities that ban 'tagging' at workplace functions and the actual workplace itself. City policies pointed out that the workplace should be kept separate from your personal online identity.
Q:12 Pictures	Cities that address pictures asked that there be no pictures of the workplace, the employee wearing a city uniform, or other things that tie the employee visually to the city.
Q:13 Pictures with Alcohol, Nudity, Lewd Behavior	Zero policies addressed this subject.
Q:14 Listing City in Profile Info	Cities state that if the employee does list the city they need to give a disclaimer that they do not speak on behalf of their employer, the city.
Q:15 Any Other Profile Restrictions	Cities that place other restrictions on employee social media account's basic profile information asked employees to not post or use their work e-mail address.

Suggestions for Creation of New Policies

A comprehensive employee use social media policy ought to be well rounded and fairly specific. An effective social media policy could be delivered through a section in the city's employee handbook, an independent policy, or coupled with any other relevant

policy. To make it more effective, training on appropriate personal social media use could be added for new employees or for all employees on a periodic basis.

Addressing the three categories, interaction, confidentiality, and identity, is important to a comprehensive policy. Not being overly vague is also important. Being too lengthy can also be an issue as employees will likely forget much of what is in the policy. Finding a respectable middle ground with specific language is ideal. It is also important that cities not go overboard and restrict too much. Organizations all around the United States have gotten bad press for making overly intrusive and overbearing social media policies for their employees (Gevertz & Greenwood, 2010).

Finding that medium ground may be difficult, but hopefully this research will shed some light on the important subjects to address. It is also essential that cities evolve their policies as social media sites advance.

When a city is considering creating a new employee use social media policy or changing their existing policy, reaching out to a city of a similar make-up and size can be helpful. Each city has its own local norms and expectations for appropriate behavior, but attaining ideas from fellow cities can aid in getting the process started. This research has presented various policies that could be used as a guideline for a city in creating their own employee use social media policy.

Future Research

There is ample opportunity to further the research presented here. The results are likely to change from year to year as more cities develop or make adjustments to their already existing social media policies for employee personal use.

Changing the research just slightly to see how city employees view these social media policies could utilize the research presented here with employee viewpoints.

Another option is to change the methodology and do a practical ideal type. This research could also be changed to be conducted on a state or federal level. Social media research could also examine police departments, universities, or other public entities to see if they have employee use social media policies.

One emerging topic that this research did not cover is that of hiring. This research pertains to existing city employees and potential restrictions for their actions on social media, but employers are now beginning to ask and check to see if new applicants have social media accounts. Employers may then potentially use that applicant's social media account in their decision to hire said applicant or not. The issue of social media affecting hiring is a closely related topic to that of current employee restrictions and would make for relevant and thought-provoking future research.

There are numerous options moving forward on this contemporary issue. Social media is sure to change and evolve into the future as can the research that examines the interaction between public administration and social media.

References:

- Arno, Christian. Search Engine Watch, "Worldwide Social Media Usage Trends in 2012." Last modified Dec. 26, 2012. Accessed February 16, 2013.
<http://searchenginewatch.com/article/2167518/Worldwide-Social-Media-Usage-Trends-in-2012>.
- Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Wadsworth, Inc., 1989.
- Bertot, John, Paul Jaeger, and Justin Grimes. "Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools for societies." *Government Information Quarterly*. 27. no. 3 (2010): 264-271.
- Bertot, John, Paul Jaeger, and Derek Hanson. "Government Information Quarterly." The impact of polices on government social media usage: Issues, challenges, and recommendations, Vol. 29. (2012): 30-40.
- Boyd, D.M. and Ellison, N.B. "Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Vol. 13 No.1. (2008):210-230
- Boyd, Danah. "Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies." Facebook's Privacy Trainwreck. 14. no. 1 (2008): 13-20.
- Bowling, Nathan, and Terry Beehr. "Workplace Harassment From the Victim's Perspective: A Theoretical Model and Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 91. no. 5 : 998-1010.
- Bryer, Thomas, and Staci Zavattaro. "Social Media and Public Administration Theoretical Dimensions and Introduction to the Symposium." *Administrative Theory & Praxis*. 33. no. 3 (2011): pp. 325-340.
- Campbell, Matt. "Oak Park Teacher Under Review After Tweets to Students." *Kansas City Star, Breaking News* edition Feb 13, 2013.
<http://www.kansascity.com/2013/02/13/4065430/oak-park-teacher-under-review.html> (accessed February 15, 2013).
- City of Arlington, Texas Personnel Manual. City of Arlington, 2011. s.v. "205.06 Social Media Policy."
- City of Baltimore, "Baltimore City Fire Department." Last modified 2012. Accessed December 10, 2012.
<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/Government/AgenciesDepartments/Fire.aspx>.

- de Zwart, Melissa, Michael Henderson, Michael Phillips, and David Lindsay. "‘I like, Stalk Them on Facebook’: Teachers’ ‘Privacy’ and the Risks of Social Networking Sites." In *Technology and Society (ISTAS)*, 2010 IEEE International Symposium on, pp. 319-326. IEEE, 2010.
- Dogra, Aastha. Buzzle, "Confidentiality in the Workplace." Last modified Feb 23, 2012. Accessed April 1, 2013. <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/confidentiality-in-the-workplace.html>.
- Einarsen, Stale. "Harassment and Bullying at Work: A Review of the Scandinavian Approach." *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. 5. no. 4 (2000): 379–401.
- El Nasser, Haya. "World population hits 7 billion." USA Today, Oct 11, 2011. <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/world/story/2011-10-30/world-population-hits-seven-billion/51007670/1> (accessed February 15, 2013).
- Farrell, Rachel. "8 Ways to get Fired Because of Social Media." Career Rookie. N.p., n.d. Web. <<http://www.careerrookie.com/Article/CB-221-The-Real-World-8-Ways-to-Get-Fired-Because-of-Social-Media/>>. (accessed February 13, 2013)
- Foulger, Teresa, Ann Ewbank, Adam Kay, Sharon Popp, and Heather Carter. "Moral Spaces in MySpace: Preservice Teachers' Perspectives about Ethical Issues in Social Networking." *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*. 42. no. 1 (2009).
- Frampton, Bethany. "College of Communication and Information Kent State University." *Managing Facebook Friend Requests in Workplace Relationships: An Application of Communication Privacy Management Theory*. (2010).
- Gelms, Jeremy. "High-Tech Harassment: Employer Liability Under Title VII for Employee Social Media Misconduct." *Washington Law Review*. 87. no. 1 (2012): 249-279.
- Gevertz, David, and Gina Greenwood. "Crafting an Effective Social Media Policy for Healthcare Employees." *Health Lawyer*. no. 6 (2010).
- Gibson, Frank, and Clyde Teasley. "The Humanistic Model of Organizational Motivation: A Review of Research Support." *Public Administration Review*. 33. no. 1 (1973): 89-96.
- Hum, Noelle, Perrin Chamberlin, Brittany Hambright, Anne Portwood, Amanda Schat, and Jennifer Bevan. "A picture is worth a thousand words: A content analysis of Facebook profile photographs." *Computers in Human Behavior*. 27. no. 5 (2011): 11828-1833.
- Johnson, Gail. *Research Methods for Public Administrators*. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe,

- 2010.
- Jung, Brian. "The Negative Effect of Social Media on Society and Individuals." Chron, 2013. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/negative-effect-social-media-society-individuals-27617.html>
- Kelleher, David. Information Management, "5 Problems with Social Networking in the Workplace." Last modified Oct. 6, 2009. Accessed March 7, 2013. http://www.information-management.com/specialreports/2009_165/social_networking_media-10016208-1.html.
- Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Kietzmann, Jan, Kristopher Hermkens, Ian McCarthy, and Bruno Silvestre. "Social Media? Get Serious! Understanding the Functional Building Blocks of Social Media." *Business Horizons*. 54. (2011): 241-251.
- Kim, Won, Ok-Ran Jeong, and Sang-Won Lee. "On Social Websites." *Information Systems*. 35. no. 2 (2010): 215-236.
- Langheinrich, Marc, and Gunter Karjoth. (2010), "Social Networking and the Risk to Companies and Institutions." *Information Security Technical Report*. 15. 51-56.
- Lee, Mordecai, and Ethan Lee Elser. "The Nine Commandments of Social Media in Public Administration: A Dual-Generation Perspective." *Public Administration Times*. 33. no. 3 (2010).
- Lenhart, Amanda, and Susannah Fox. *Twitter and Status Updating*. Washington D.C.: Pew Internet & American Life Project An initiative of the Pew Research Center, 2009.
- Mayo Clinic, The, "Mayo Clinic Employees." Last modified 2012. Accessed December 13, 2012. <http://links.visibli.com/2d4ec98c82e7ca77/?web=968cdc&dst=http://sharing.mayoclinic.org/guidelines/for-mayo-clinic-employees/>.
- Minnetonka Public Schools. Minnetonka, MN: Minnetonka School District, 2012. s.v. "Policy #470"
- Nations, Daniel. About.com, "What is Social Media?." Last modified 2013. Accessed April 1, 2013. <http://webtrends.about.com/od/web20/a/social-media.htm>.

- Papandrea, Mary-Rose. " Social Media, Public School Teachers, and the First Amendment." *North Carolina Law Review*. 90. (2012): 1597-1642.
- Paradise, Angela. "Picture Perfect? College Students' Experiences and Attitudes Regarding their Photo-Related Behaviors on Facebook." (2012): 261-292.
- Park, Namsu, Kerk Kee, and Sebastian Valenzuela. "Being Immersed in Social Networking Environment: Facebook Groups, Uses and Gratifications, and Social Outcomes." *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*. 12. no. 6 (2009): 729-733.
- Raines, Christopher. Chron, "Private Sector vs. Public Sector Employee Rights." Last modified 2013. Accessed April 2, 2013. <http://smallbusiness.chron.com/private-sector-vs-public-sector-employee-rights-47957.html>.
- Rezny, Arthur, and Ernest Dorow. "Confidential Information and the Guidance Program." *Journal of Educational Research*. 54. no. 7 (1961): p.243-245.
- "Risk Management Information Social Media and Cities Questions and Considerations." Leauge of Minnesota Cities. (2009): 1-12. www.lmc.org (accessed Dec 1, 2012).
- Rose, Chris. "The Security Implications of Ubiquitous Social Media." *International Journal of Management & Information Systems*. 15. no. 1 (2011): 35-40.
- Savas, Emanuel S., and Emanuel S. Savas. *Privatization and public-private partnerships*. New York: Chatham House, 2000.
- Shields, Patricia M. 1998. Pragmatism as a Philosophy of Science: A Tool for Public Administration. *Research in Public Administration* (4):195-225. <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/33>
- Shields, P. and H. Tajalli 2006. Intermediate theory: The missing link in successful student scholarship" *Journal of Public Affairs Education* 12 (3): 313-334. <http://ecommons.txstate.edu/polsfacp/39/>
- Social Media Policy. Raleigh: City of Raleigh Public Affairs Department, 2012. www.raleighnc.gov (accessed December 1, 2012).
- State of California: Office of the State Chief Information Officer, 2010. s.v. "Social Media Standard." http://www.cio.ca.gov/Government/IT_Policy/pdf/SIMM_66B.pdf (accessed December 12, 2012).
- Texas State Library and Archives Commission, "2010 Census: Population of Texas Cities Arranged in Descending Order." Last modified 2010. Accessed December 27, 2012. <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/popcity32010.html>.
- Thompson, Lindsay, Kara Dawson, Richard Ferdig, Erik Black, J Boyer, Jade Coutts, and

Nicole Black. "The Intersection of Online Social Networking with Medical Professionalism." *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 23. no. 7 (2008).

U.S. General Services Administration. (2009, July). GSA social media policy. (GSA publication no. CIO 2106.1). Washington, DC.
www.gsa.gov/graphics/staffoffices/socialmediapolicy.pdf

Van Susteren, Greta. Fox News, "Should a Missouri doctor be fired for her Facebook rant about a patient?" Last modified Feb. 5, 2013. Accessed February 13, 2013.
<http://gretawire.foxnewsinsider.com/2013/02/05/should-a-missouri-doctor-be-fired-for-her-facebook-rant-about-a-patient/>.

Policies Examined:

Administrative Directive 2-52, Social Media/Social Networking – Dallas (2011)

Administrative Regulation D-12 Use of Social Media for Official City of Fort Worth Business, Section 6.7, p.4

Arlington Social Media Policy Standards of Conduct 205.06, p.3-4

City of Abilene Social Media User Agreement, p.2

City of Allen Administrative Directive, Management of Information Systems Policies and Procedures (2001), p.182-187

City of Houston, Policy on Use of Social Media (2011), p.2-6

City of Hutto Social Media & Broadcast Information Policy (2013), p.1-8

City of San Antonio Administrative Directive 6.15, Social Media Policy (2010)

City of Sugar Land Inter-Departmental Policy and Procedure Policy Number: CO 108 (2012)

City of Plano Policies and Procedures, 223.000, Human Resources Manual (2012), p.7

College Station, Employee Conduct - Internet Policy, 9.12. (2008), p.2-3

El Paso, Administrative Policies and Procedures – Human Resources Social Media Policy (2012), p.2-5

The Woodlands – Social Media Guidelines, p.1-3