

Oklahoma IT Consolidation Uncovers Potential Network Abuse

Brian Heaton | February 5, 2015



IT consolidation and beefed-up cybersecurity have elevated the standing of Oklahoma's technology infrastructure, but they've also uncovered a possible lack of productivity from state employees.

Three of the top 10 sites used by state agencies in fall 2013 were social media platforms, according to a legislative report. The high rate of social activity initially caught the attention of lawmakers who, while touring Oklahoma's new security operations center, saw a list of "most visited sites" and asked for specific information on network usage.

The study data showed Facebook as No. 1 on the list, with more than 2 million views in a three-month span. Twitter ranked No. 5 at 272,661 page visits, while YouTube checked in at No. 8, with 225,228 views.

Rep. Jason Murphey, R-Guthrie, blogged about the findings last month, calling it "actionable intelligence" that was an unexpected byproduct of consolidation efforts. He

described the discovery as a new way to gauge employee downtime and re-evaluate the workload of state workers.

In an interview with *Government Technology*, Murphey noted that the data could be helpful to budget officials for planning purposes, giving them better insight into how many full-time equivalent employees each agency needs.

“I think at a policy level, it’s clearly our intention to continue asking for the information, but also to make it more granular – agency by agency,” Murphey said. “So if an agency has more social media use than others, maybe there is a good reason for that. But it’s a question that needs to be asked.”

When asked if the age of the workforce and tendency to mix work tasks and personal business more frequently might have played a role in the high rate of social networking views, Murphey said he wasn’t sure. He said he felt that social media use has to be evaluated on a job-by-job basis, as different agencies have different requirements.

Murphey was adamant that the high rate of visits to Facebook is a valuable indicator that public employees may be underutilized. He pointed out that if an employee is put in a cubicle and doesn’t have enough to do, they’ll simply find something to do to occupy their time.

Once state agencies were alerted to the statistics, social media visits from the state network “dropped off exponentially,” according to Murphey. While it’s hard to know how much of that traffic moved to personal cellular networks, he felt the issue clearly needs to be addressed at the agency level.

“That’s not something [the agencies] want to deal with at budget hearings,” Murphey said. “So by virtue of the fact we’ve talked about it and brought it forward, they’re much more attuned to maybe not handing policymakers that leverage, or that ability to look into the resource allocation issue.”

<http://www.govtech.com/gov-experience/Oklahoma-IT-Consolidation-Uncovers-Potential-Network-Abuse.html>