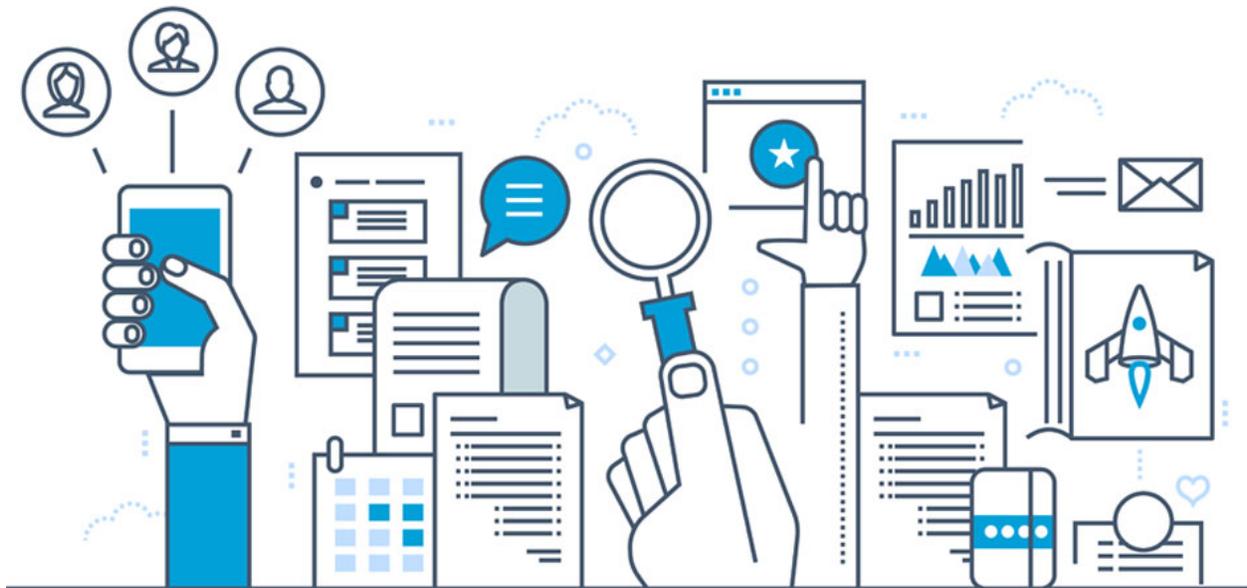


Social Media Analytics 101

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Many important decisions made within a government agency happen after collecting and analyzing pertinent data. Reviewing analytics about your agency's social media presence is smart, but many agencies just don't do it.

Part of the challenge is that a lot of government agencies still don't have a dedicated social media coordinator. In an "other duties as assigned" situation, the nice-to-have aspects of a social media program, such as reporting on analytics, often get pushed aside because there isn't enough time or manpower.

The other challenge is discerning what data is the most meaningful to government agencies.

What Data Should We Track?

Most mainstream social media platforms have some amount of usage and performance data available to profile administrators. With so much information, what type of data is important to analyze as a social media manager?

The easiest number to track is how many followers your agency's profiles have. But can that alone tell you about the effectiveness of your social media presence? While

having many followers is good, properly interpreting how social media achieved real-world results is even better.

Knowing what age groups generally use the platforms your agency is on can be helpful. For instance, your Snapchat followers are likely going to be younger, while you can probably find many of your older constituents on Facebook. It's common for government agencies to have various programs designed for both youth and seniors, so very targeted messages on the appropriate platforms help save time.

Also, when does your audience check social media most frequently? Are they most active at 10 in the morning or 10 at night? What day of the week are they most active on a particular platform? To get the most from each post, you'll want to schedule posts when the most people will see your content.

Examine data that shows where your audience is located. It's helpful to know if your content is reaching people beyond your jurisdiction. For instance, you'd want a broader geographical reach for your economic development initiatives such as bringing new businesses to your community, while a narrower approach is fine for promoting local events.

Why You Should Look at Engagement

Many of the social media platforms you'll be using can track both impressions and reach. Impressions refers to the number of times your content was displayed, while reach refers to how many people your content was displayed to.

Both methods don't really tell you if people just skipped over your content or if they did something with it. This is why we like to track something called engagement: It's a measurement of how many times people interacted with your content. Depending on the platform, engagement could be likes, shares, retweets, replies or mentions.

When your citizens take the time to do one of these, it shows that they're actively involved in what your agency is doing. If your engagement stats are low, it could mean that you need to re-evaluate the type of content you're contributing to social media.

<http://www.govtech.com/govgirl/GT-December-2017-Social-Media-Analytics-101.html>