



# Using Internal Social Media Platforms in the Government of Alberta

**NOTE:** NOTE: This guideline has been superseded by the [Management of Instant and Text Messages Directive](#), and will be removed from the IMT Policy Page 1 June 2021.

Please revise any policy instruments linking to this guideline, and redirect users to the Management of Instant and Text Messages Directive.

## Purpose

In the Government of Alberta (GoA) all internal social media platforms are subject to mandatory business requirements that ensure:

- compliance with the Records Management Regulation; and
- employees follow standard practices for the creation, use, management and disposition of information.

The purpose of this document is to inform individuals using a GoA internal social media platform of established information management practices.

## Internal Social Media Platforms in the GoA

An internal social media platform enables information sharing and synthesis by incorporating social networking capabilities into business processes. The primary purpose of internal social media platforms is to enhance productivity. Examples of internal social media platforms commonly used in GoA include: departmental intranet sites, OneNote, Skype for Business (formerly Lync) and Yammer.

As a general rule, internal social media platforms are suitable for casual, informal interactions, and may be used as a substitute for phone calls and email regarding routine matters where key business decisions are not made.

When information is captured in internal social media platforms, it becomes a record of the government. These records are:

- the property of the GoA;
- potentially responsive to litigation that has been commenced or is reasonably anticipated;
- subject to the privacy and access requirements of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and
- subject to the requirements of the Records Management Regulation, and must be managed accordingly.

Examples of internal social media platform records may include, but are not limited to, web links, files (e.g., documents and audio visual files) and interactions between staff (e.g., comments on posts).

GoA records can be in any medium or format (including discussion threads), and provide evidence of government business. There are two types of records:

**Official records** document and provide evidence of decisions and transactions. They must be retained and filed in official records systems, and managed in accordance with government policies, standards and practices.

**Transitory records** are records in any format that are of short-term value, with no further uses beyond an immediate transaction.

## Business Requirements

Regardless of function, all internal social media platforms in the GoA must adhere to applicable [Information Management and Technology \(IMT\) Standards](#).

## Business Practices

In using internal social media platforms, the following business practices must be followed:

1. Internal social media platforms must only contain information assets with the Data and Information Security Classification level “Public.”
  - The Data and Information Security Classification level “Public” applies to information assets that will not result in injury or harm to individuals, governments or to private sector institutions; and financial loss will be insignificant.
  - No sensitive, confidential or proprietary information may be created or shared in internal social media platforms.
2. Internal social media platforms must only contain transitory records and as such may not be used to document government decisions or transactions.
  - Custodians (i.e., group or chat moderators) are responsible for monitoring the platform to ensure that any decisions or transactions are appropriately documented and managed as official records.
3. The integrity of automatically generated metadata must be maintained.
  - Users may not make changes to automatically generated metadata fields (such as date) used to determine disposition.
4. The transitory information in internal social media platforms must be disposed of regularly.
  - Information that has not been updated after one year should be disposed of by custodians. This includes documents, site content, group chats, etc.
5. Information in internal social media platforms must be protected from risks, including unauthorized access, use, disclosure, disruption, modification and/or destruction.
  - Link to IMT Standards site: <https://imtpolicy.sp.alberta.ca/standards/Pages/default.aspx>

## Resources

- [IMT Standard A000025 – Data and Information Security Classification](#)
- [IMT Standard A000059 – Metadata – Core Content](#)
- [Official and Transitory Records: A Guide for Government of Alberta Employees](#)

## Contact

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