

**GOVERNMENT 2.0:  
COMBINING FACE-TO-FACE AND INTERFACE-TO-INTERFACE  
INTERACTION TO ENHANCE CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT**

*Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010*



*Presented to the Clark County Board of County Commissioners  
June 21, 2010*

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# GOVERNMENT 2.0: COMBINING FACE-TO-FACE AND INTERFACE-TO-INTERFACE INTERACTION TO ENHANCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

Representing the voice of the youth and the future of Clark County, the Clark County Youth Commission presents the following report including the collection of data, analysis, and recommendations to the Clark County Board of County Commissioners regarding a social network public policy. Our hope is that the ideas we recommend will heighten civic engagement and increase Clark County's government transparency. We feel the issue of civic engagement among citizens, particularly youth, is an issue that is contemporary and meaningful and is important to address.

In October 2009, the Youth Commission met with County Administrator Bill Barron regarding what issue our public policy report would center on. Mr. Barron was very excited to introduce the topic of social networking to the table. The Youth Commission agreed that using social networking as a means of communication between the citizens and the government was a compelling idea, and began working immediately. At our annual winter retreat the Youth Commission continued researching, debating, and collaborating on how social networking could best be utilized by the county. This consisted of numerous workshops and learning sessions, which then were used to teach other members of the group about social networking. We discussed the pros and cons, and then we researched the background of the topic.

We continued our journey by collecting diverse styles of research, including surveys that were distributed to various schools in Clark County, consultations with a social networking expert and a program coordinator whose volunteers use social networking, department head interviews, and hosting focus groups with youth in the county. After compiling this research, we gathered at various sub-committee meetings, and also held an overnight workshop, and began deliberating and writing recommendations. These recommendations were then compiled into this report, presented by the Youth Commission, in hopes that it will assist in increasing youth involvement in the political process, and in increasing civic engagement.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Blog</b>	a website where someone can talk about their life/thoughts/ideas
<b>Bug</b>	a problem that has been overlooked in the testing of a program/website
<b>Chat room</b>	a website where a group of people can type messages to each other. Messages come up by the user's nickname
<b>Client</b>	an application used to access an outside network or service and host a program from that outside server through the client
<b>Cyber bullying</b>	harassing, threatening or embarrassing other social network users
<b>Emoticon</b>	faces created with text symbols to show the emotions behind someone's message; for example, a smiley, a frown, or an excited face :) :( :D
<b>Flame</b>	to post inflammatory or defaming remarks to discredit or show displeasure for the author or user of a site
<b>Formspring</b>	a website where users can post anonymous questions
<b>Formstack</b>	a survey-conducting website
<b>Hacker</b>	someone who gains unauthorized access to a computer or internet account
<b>Hyperlink (link)</b>	words, phrases or images you can click on that will bring you directly to a website
<b>IM (Instant Message[ing])</b>	where two people type messages to each other over a common website such as AOL, MSN, or Yahoo. Users recognize each other by their screen names or nicknames
<b>Inbox</b>	the folder where all of your incoming messages are stored
<b>MySpace</b>	an online community, where users can listen to music, add other friends, and communicate through comments and messages
<b>Network</b>	two or more computers connected to each other
<b>Outbox</b>	where outgoing email/ website messages are stored
<b>Search engine</b>	a site where you can search for web pages relating to whatever topic you want
<b>Skype</b>	an instant messenger client that allows two or more users to IM, voice chat, or video chat, as well as

	share files in between and with each other
<b>Social networks</b>	websites that are online communities where users can communicate with each other with pictures and messages
<b>Spam</b>	junk email or irrelevant posts
<b>Stream</b>	a constant input of information onto and through a user's profile or wall that allows them to see what others are doing. A constant "stream" of information
<b>Stickam</b>	a website that allows users to interact with each other through instant messaging, chat rooms and live video feed services
<b>SurveyMonkey</b>	a survey website which can provide a link you could use to post on other websites and compiles data from survey into charts
<b>Tag</b>	to tag someone is to label them in a picture or status
<b>Text language/text message abbreviations</b>	abbreviations of common words or phrases used to make text messages more short and to the point; for example: LOL= laugh out loud, OMG= Oh my god, l8er= later, Y= why, U= You, etc.
<b>Text message[ing]</b>	using a cell phone or text message service on the internet to send a short message from one phone to another, a phone to a computer, or vice versa; the message sent is the text message
<b>Troll</b>	person who posts offensive and off topic messages on a discussion forum, chat room or blog to provoke an emotional response
<b>Twitter</b>	a social networking site where users can post often about their activities and thoughts
<b>Tweet</b>	a message sent out via Twitter
<b>Upload</b>	sending a file (usually a picture) from your computer to a website
<b>Video feed</b>	the technology of electronically capturing, recording, processing, storing, transmitting, and reconstructing a sequence of still images representing scenes in motion
<b>Wall</b>	a place on a social networking site where people post status updates and media
<b>Webpage</b>	the individual pages that make up the world wide web
<b>Website</b>	a collection of web pages
<b>YouTube</b>	a video sharing website where users can upload and share videos

## DEPARTMENT HEAD INTERVIEWS

County Administrator Bill Barron suggested we interview some of the department heads of Clark County. In order to form recommendations that would be more specific and relevant to all sectors of the county government, the Youth Commission interviewed representatives or department heads. This helped us to gain an in depth understanding of the responsibilities that each department has. This way we could form recommendations that specifically catered to each departments needs. After interviewing the representatives, the Youth Commission reviewed the interviews and formed recommendations. This is the first time that the Youth Commission has interviewed department heads. The recommendations for the interviews are separated in the report by department, and should help provide a more comprehensive policy. Throughout the year, we as a Youth Commission decided that if we were to find a correct use of social networking that specifically works for our county it was necessary to interview county department heads. These personal interviews provided us with valuable information into how social networking could positively or possibly negatively affect their department. In carrying out this process we interviewed 7 Clark County departments:

- ◆ Budget and Information Systems
- ◆ Community Services
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Juvenile Justice
- ◆ Public Health
- ◆ Public Information and Outreach
- ◆ Public Works

## DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND INFORMATION SERVICES

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

For the Department of Budget and Information Systems, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed Glenn Olson, the Deputy County Administrator, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to our social networking policy, including the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Link Budget Talk 101 to the social networks that are implemented.**  
Linking Budget Talk 101 to social networking sites can give easy access to citizens that want to see how the budget office is spending tax-payers money.
- ◆ **Create online visuals/graphs for budget display.**  
Displaying visuals online will make the websites not only more interactive, but also more visually appealing and will add another way to easily educate the public.
- ◆ **Explain how the budget impacts the community using “layman’s terms.”**  
Social networking is an excellent opportunity to educate the public about how the budget impacts decisions and the future. In order for as many people to understand budget as possible, make sure that "layman’s terms", or common language is used online.
- ◆ **Provide notifications of planning and budget meetings.**  
This can inform the public about upcoming meetings and give them a chance to participate in their planning/budget meetings. This also gives the citizens a voice as to how they want their money to be spent.
- ◆ **Use social networking to notify about definite changes.**  
The citizens can see how the money in Clark County is used and distributed. This also lets people know if the county made a good decision. This is mostly to inform the public.
- ◆ **Give citizens an opportunity to say what they think the budget should be spent on through a discussion board.**

This can give the citizens a voice, and lets the county have better communication with the citizens, knowing the citizens better and have a better judgment as to how they want it, and what the citizens say about it.

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **PROCEDURE & METHOD**

For the Department of Community Services, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed Vanessa Gaston, the Director of the Department of Community Services, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to our social networking policy, including the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

### **FUNCTION & SERVICES**

The Department of Community Services is the community's social arm. They work with other agencies to achieve a safe and healthy Clark County. The department provides resources and treatment to its citizens. They administer prevention education, awareness, and treatment. Leaders are developed, and given the proper opportunities to serve our community. They provide services for:

- ◆ Alcohol and Treatment
- ◆ Center for Community Health
- ◆ Community Development Block Grant & HOME Investment Partnership
- ◆ Community Action
- ◆ Crisis Services
- ◆ Developmental Disabilities
- ◆ Housing Preservation and Weatherization
- ◆ Mental Health
- ◆ Veterans
- ◆ Youth Programs

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Through Social Networking the already large supply of volunteers can be drastically increased. The already flourishing Department of Community Services could gain more positive input through both opinions and actions. To create this increase, "advertise" or publicly display the Department through Social networking websites. Demonstrate the positive impacts made by the Department and how it impacts each and

every one of our citizens. With these valuable updates and scarcely known information, post opportunities to get involved with notifications on when, where, why, and how.

Social networking will prove to add more citizens serving our county, but it can also reverse this and give the county easier opportunities to serve its people.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD**

- ◆ **Volunteer opportunities should be listed online, and provided in multiple languages.**

Resources for volunteering, education, support, and much more could be located much more easily on a social networking website. Along with the links and listed resources, past annual reports should be disclosed online.

- ◆ **To get the citizens of Clark County thinking about Community Services different online groups could have status updates such as “did you know...” or “what do you think of...” followed by an interesting community fact or question.**

This is a quick way to reach out to the community yet is valuable in reminding the people how this department affects them.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

### **PROCEDURE & METHOD**

For the Department of Human Resources, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed Francine Reis, the Director of the Department of Human Resources, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to social networking policy, including the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

### **FUNCTION & SERVICES**

The Department of Human Resources controls the internal services of the county. They are in charge of the budget, human relations, and general services. Their budget responsibilities include planning where the money is going and where it will go in the future, along with tracking past funds. General services include: buildings, printing, purchasing, and records. Along with those sections of their department they are in charge of the hiring, firing, and discipline of human relations.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the interview with Francine Reis, it was specifically noted that citizens are often confused as to the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Human Resources. Social networking provides an efficient way to display this information. By creating social networking pages for the department specifically, the county can list the department's job and how they serve the people.

Many citizens gain their information through the internet, and often specifically through social networking. Posting job openings and information would cater to an audience that previously might not have received the information. These postings should not replace the policies for job openings already in place, but rather add to them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Update social networking websites with links to applications with “attention getter” headlines.**  
Update social networking websites by providing links to recent job openings. In the update give a brief yet eye-catching headline.
- ◆ **Create “notes” about job opportunities.**  
Using Facebook create "notes" or bulletins that all of your friends can see. Use these pages to advertise county employment opportunities. This, along with the links mentioned above, are easy ways to increase the number of applicants for any given job.
- ◆ **Clearly display the responsibilities of Human Resources in order to avoid further misconceptions. Also write CLEARLY what they do not do. This is similar to the blanket recommendation to identify job responsibilities.**  
To avoid confusion as to the duties of the Human Resources Department, provide clear and concise details on what the department's job is and the entailed responsibilities.

## DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

For the Department of Juvenile Justice, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed Pat Escamilla, the Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to social networking policy, including

the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

## FUNCTION & SERVICES

The Department of Juvenile Justice is the Juvenile Court system including the court rooms and detention center. They are also the generator of programs such as Restorative Justice Programs. They oversee the Connections Team for youth experiencing mental health challenges. Youth receive the necessary help to get off the path of crime which they often can't find elsewhere, and are returned to the community as changed people. The department is under the jurisdiction of ten court judges.

## CONCLUSIONS

Through our Department Head interview with Pat Escamilla we have concluded that social networking could create engagement in three main ways. First the Juvenile Center employees could be contacted by youth who have been, are, or may become involved with the juvenile justice system.

Social networking could also reach out to the public by engaging and educating the citizens about the program, how it affects our community, and what can be done to help. Success stories from the Juvenile court system could be on display for everyone to see.

The department specifically declared a desire to reach truant youth through social networking. The department deals with school truancies and feels that if social networking provided a way to reach out to these youth it would be easier to prevent the truancies before more drastic measures are carried out, or to find out why the student is truant.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Social networking surveys through websites such as SurveyMonkey.com or Formstack.com could be given to youth before and/or after their experiences with the Juvenile Justice programs.**

This would provide the system with very valuable information on the benefits and drawbacks of the programs.

- ◆ **A mentor program through social networking would also prove to be valuable.**

Past Juvenile Justice program members would be paired with current members. This buddy system would help the process run smoothly and give support to new members.

- ◆ **Posting a calendar of events online would be beneficial as well.** If this calendar was displayed online it would create positive publicity and more community engagement.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

For the Department of Public Health, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed John Weisman, the Director of the Department of Public Health, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to social networking policy, including the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

### FUNCTION & SERVICES

The responsibility of the Department of Public Health is to prevent disease, promote health, protect food, water, and air, and prepare for emergencies. They carry out these strategies in many different means of media including: press releases, websites, call lines, radio, print, and television.

### CONCLUSIONS

The Department of Public Health explained to us that they have previously experienced using social networking for their notifications. This has been successful so far, and they are excited about using it in the future. John Weisman said they already used text messages for contacting clients, and have used social networking sites when updating the public about influenza.

We recommend continued, and permanent use of these means of interaction. Along with the mass texts and epidemic updates, video and discussion boards would provide useful information and contact with citizens. YouTube could be used to broadcast videos of important health concerns in a fun and interesting way. Engaging the audience could educate all age groups and possibly hinder the spread of harmful health issues. Through discussion boards the department would be able to provide information pertaining to numerous citizens, in a time efficient

manner. It would also give important help to citizens without the opportunity to get help or notifications in person.

John Weisman explained to our interview group that his department often has difficulty helping in situations where there is a major language barrier between the employees, and their clients. To help ease this situation, surveys, social networking sites, and recorded videos could be produced in multiple languages. Offering up questions in discussion boards with multiple languages would let the differing communities give their opinions on what needs to be created in different languages.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD**

- ◆ **Use YouTube to promote healthy activities such as hand washing in a fun and engaging manner.**

Information posted in the form of a video would be more effective in catching the audience's attention. Present the topic in a fun interesting way that grasps the attention of all age ranges.

- ◆ **Use mass texts to get word out about epidemics, vaccination updates, etc.**

Text messages are instant and widely used. News of health threats or important epidemic information would spread to a wide audience in a very short time. Encourage the news to be passed on so that not only does the county educate a large number of people but someone who does receive the message can pass it along to those who don't.

- ◆ **Use webcams for communication/appointments with clients.**

In many situations it is difficult to meet in person with clientele. To create ease for citizens and employees and also make appointments time efficient, use webcams for contacting/meeting with clients. Quick check ups could take just minutes over the webcam, making it much more practical for clients.

- ◆ **Use social networking to post random & interesting health facts/notifications.**

Posting intriguing facts on social networking sites for followers to peruse would benefit the Public Health Department in many ways. It would educate citizens of important health facts that could possible halt diseases/epidemics, create interest in the department's social networking pages, and also educate the public on all of the beneficial duties of the department.

- ◆ **Answer health-related questions online through discussion boards or on a Formspring account.**

Create discussion boards for citizens to ask questions. Having employees answer these questions online would benefit the citizens by giving them answers, and keep a number of people from creating unnecessary appointments. Creating a Formspring account would allow for people to anonymously ask their questions.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

For the Department of Public Information and Outreach, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed Sara Eckhardt, the Web Editor of the Department of Information and Outreach, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to social networking policy, including the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

### FUNCTION & SERVICES

The function of this department is to communicate to the citizens of Clark County. They work with county news organizations such as the Columbian to distribute all information from the county. They also work with the citizens, news media, etc. to distribute timely and accurate issues in the county. They communicate through many different ways such as face to face, phone calls, newsletters, websites, and public meetings. They are the lead department for county wide communication. They focus on county services and opportunities for public involvement.

### CONCLUSIONS

The department of public information and outreach works with news media and citizens, to answer accurate information about issues. In their department they have web editors and content managers for websites. Since they serve the entire community they could benefit from social networking in a way that could help get their information out more quickly and more efficiently. Many citizens of Clark County use social networking sites. Having a social networking site, they can directly contact the citizens. They use websites and brochures to distribute information. They make sure that the citizens of Clark County get the information they need. Sara Eckhardt, the web editor for Public Information and Outreach says that she is familiar with social networking and is great if it is used correctly. "It expands our ability to reach people and provides different ways for people to access government." She also

manages the Board of County Commissioners' Facebook account. Social networking really affects this department because it's made up solely of communicating with the citizens of Clark County. Implementing social networking to this department would take a lot of time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Put the article(s) in a medium that makes sense to everyone.**  
Sometimes language can confuse people by its wording or how it is phrased. In order to have a medium we must have people look over the text and revise it so it is more comprehensible.
- ◆ **Have multiple languages available.**  
Many people have language barriers. To over-come the language barrier for some people we must have multi-languages programs that can translate words so people who can't speak English have a chance to read the news and know what is happening in the local community.
- ◆ **When the person is writing the press, have a one sentence summary of the article(s).**  
Sometimes people don't have time to read the whole article or just don't want to read the whole thing. Having this one sentence can save time for people that don't have time.
- ◆ **They must have a medium that's between formal and informal.**  
When writing to the press, the language can become too formal. When using social networking sites, it is harder to understand formal writing depending on the reader. The press writers writing for social networking must know the border between too formal and too informal.

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

For the Department of Public Works, a small team of Youth Commissioners interviewed Pete Capell the Director of the Department of Public Works, as a representative of the department. We discussed questions that would be relevant to social networking policy, including the responsibilities of the department, how the department communicates with the citizens, and how the department currently utilizes social networking.

### FUNCTION & SERVICES

The Department of Public Works employs approximately 240 diverse people from around Clark County. They oversee the county's transportation management, including traffic signals, signs, and development. They are also in charge of traffic, parks, and maintaining the equipment needed for both of those. They operate the waste water plants in Felida and Salmon Creek. The Department is in charge of purchasing construction equipment to fix roads and parks, and must choose which construction competitor is awarded the contract.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Department of Public Works can benefit from the use of social networking along with the other county departments. A department intern Collin Rickman recently prepared a report "Social Media and Public Works: Engaging Associates, Agencies, and Citizens with Web 2.0". He believed that at this point in time social networking sites might not prove appropriate for Public Works. However, in his report it states social media would be beneficial when it creates a sense of community that makes the citizens feel valued, is facilitated and mediated often, and displays the feedback from previous policies and other work. If the Department were to monitor their social networking sites often ensuring each person was treated respectfully, encourage collaboration, and then display finished work and policies, these sites would be extremely helpful.

Construction and closure of roads could be greatly enhanced through social networking. Photos posted on department pages would provide insight into what the problem was and how it is being handled. Notifications and updates of the road construction would give citizens another reminder to avoid certain roads. Suggestions of alternate transportation such as information on bus routes and the idea of carpooling would not only benefit the construction, but perhaps even help save our environment with fewer cars on the road.

The Social Media and Public Works report also says that social media just presents the same information in a new way. This may be true but the presentation through social networking proves to be an important form of contact.

The Department could present citizens with surveys to gain public opinions, and discussion boards that would help the construction crews better serve the population by fixing the roads. Along with the Department of Human Resources, Public Works could post work projects in the form of contract listings to increase competition amongst potential providers of services.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Update status or send messages regarding road closures, detours, etc.**

Informing the public of road construction would remind them to change their routes, or use alternate modes of transportation. Along with the update, notify citizens about other possible means of travel such as bus routes that would not be affected by the construction.
- ◆ **Post pictures or videos of road closures, detours, etc.**

Updating the public with photos of the changes will create a better understanding of the projects, and gain the interest of more people than just written statements.
- ◆ **Promote events through the Events App (calendar) on Facebook.**

Sending event invitations through Facebook about county park events, or grand openings would generate interest, and give a tally of anticipated attendees.
- ◆ **Post before and after pictures of public works projects (reconstruction).**

Providing the public with pictures of construction during the projects will give them a better understanding of what the county is working on. By posting before and after pictures it will show the efforts it took to finish the construction, and will attract a higher level of curiosity.
- ◆ **Post a visual of the visionary plan online.**

Citizens are more likely to support a project or building plan if they fully understand what's going on. Supplying them with an image is an easy way to give them a greater knowledge of the situation.
- ◆ **Use survey websites to gather info/opinions about what should be improved/changed.**

Citizen input is very important in creating the final constructed product. More citizens are likely to provide input if the county makes it easy for them to do so. One quick way to gather data is to send out surveys online about positives and negatives in the system.
- ◆ **Use web video websites to post virtual tours of parks.**

Giving the citizens a video synopsis of county parks would build excitement, and could also prove noteworthy not just through social networking, but also public service announcements, or "advertising" at community events.

- ◆ **Give clear and concise reasons for working on roads and such.**  
Road construction often creates unrest amongst drivers. If everyone is notified clearly and in concise terms they are more likely to be at ease.
- ◆ **Use social networking as a resource for reporting construction needs (report potholes, etc.).**  
A citizen who drives a certain route everyday is a much better tool for knowing if a road needs reconstruction than an employee. The citizen is also much more likely to offer their point of view if it isn't a hassle for them. Designing discussion boards or surveys about the roads would be a very easy and efficient way to learn of necessary road repairs.
- ◆ **Construct a platform for competing providers/contractors to offer their services to complete works projects.**  
For the county to gain a larger pool of competitors it should gather the bids online. By doing this it is easier to gather clients from a more diverse group.

## **BLANKET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEPARTMENTS**

- ◆ **On implemented social networking websites, provide a FAQ and refutation of common misconceptions.**
- ◆ **Provide contact information online.**  
Give contact information for each county department on their respective social networking sites. Provide phone numbers, email accounts, and other county run sites. Depending on the department, provide contact information to its programs, or other related departments.
- ◆ **Limit the number of emails/messages/status updates that are sent out.**
- ◆ **In longer posts, include a bulleted overview/summary of important information, especially if the message is particularly lengthy.**  
Quite frankly, many people will not read the messages or posts they are sent. If an email is extremely long they will not read it all. If a brief overview with bulleted points is provided there is a higher chance the person will read and retain some of the information.

- ◆ **Post videos/ notes about success stories and progress.**

## CONSULTATION

**DENE GRIGAR, Ph.D.**

**Director & Associate Professor of Digital Technology and Culture**

She has an extensive background of social media knowledge and wrote at least one book and 28 reviews as well as refereeing at least 29 essays and many more publications. She recently used Beetag, a form of social media for iPhone users to scan the barcode and receive information about what was tagged, to "tag" artwork in the vacant downtown buildings that she co-curated.

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

A youth commissioner interviewed Dr. Dene Grigar over the telephone and had a conversation about her opinions of social networking, what social media she finds new and exciting and what she believes local government should or should not do with social networking. The youth commissioner took notes of her opinions and afterward the Clark County Youth Commission deliberated a recommendation based on her interview.

### CONCLUSIONS

Dr. Dene Grigar strongly believes Clark County government should use social networking to create more transparency. Utilizing social networks in WSU Vancouver has proven beneficial, and she believes it will as well be beneficial for the county.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Carefully post information, but don't hold back or hide anything.**

Make sure all information is accurate and displayed in the proper manners, such as to the right people and on time if time sensitive. While doing so make sure that no information is withheld from the public, and that no one is left in the dark on certain issues.

#### **Focus on**

- **Whose voice**  
Only post from one or a few sources. Don't have numerous people posting the same information multiple times.
- **What is said**  
Post correct and relevant information that people will find interesting.

- **How it is said**  
When posting county information on social networking sites, don't just link political documents. Provide the citizens with a synopsis.
- ◆ **Use Facebook or Twitter; Delicious is for providing links for where, who, and how people are.**  
Look into using "Delicious", a Yahoo-owned "social bookmarking web service for storing, sharing, and discovering web bookmarks, down the road, after the other sites that are up and running" (Wikipedia.org).
- ◆ **Act more business-like than personal. Provide information, but let them pick and choose what to read**  
Do not go onto people's profiles and specifically ask them or comment on their personal stuff. The government is not there to be "friends". It is more than acceptable to reply to their questions but don't force the information upon them.

## KRIS HENRIKSEN

### Program Coordinator for TeenTalk

After reviewing the data and recommendations we had already collected, including information about what other counties' policies around social networks are, we decided that the Youth Commission needed to interview Kris Henriksen, Program Coordinator of Clark County TeenTalk. We decided to interview Ms. Henriksen because TeenTalk has been utilizing the social networking tool of instant messaging for around six years as a means of communication with youth. TeenTalk is an assistance resource for youth who need to express their troubles with a youth who will give them positive feedback and information via phone or instant messaging. We hoped to get insight from the program's coordinator that would be beneficial to the specific policies around information release and disclosure.

## PROCEDURE & METHOD

A small team of Youth Commissioners met with Kris Henriksen at the Youth House and had a conversation about TeenTalk and their experiences with social networks. She told us the program's objectives and responsibilities, and her vision of a policy regarding public disclosure. The team took notes of her viewpoints and opinions and afterwards deliberated a recommendation based on her interview.

## CONCLUSIONS

TeenTalk's core and deepest value is complete confidentiality. If people assume by county disclaimer that their conversation is confidential, it *must* be one

hundred percent. Otherwise public policy will contradict itself. Ms. Henriksen expressed concerns about the combination of social networking policies and the basis on which TeenTalk is built. If the law requires that all information online is subject to disclosure if requested, then TeenTalk will not be able to operate under the same circumstances that it has been for eight years. Laws that protect certain information, such as HIPAA, should be considered when implementing new policies that protect information in order for TeenTalk to continue to operate on the premise of confidentiality.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD**

- ◆ **Create a new policy that protects certain information from public disclosure.**

Personal information that can be potentially devastating should be deleted or kept private, separated from the information required to be disclosed to the public if requested. This includes sexual orientation, abuse in the home, substance use, health tests, and many more. Programs exist in the county, such as TeenTalk, that rely on complete confidentiality for their day-to-day operations and must be accommodated in the county's social networking policy.

## ACADEMIC RESEARCH

### SOURCE

William Laurent. (2009). The Town Hall Model in Governance :Important steps have been taken toward open and transparent interactions between the federal government and citizens; corporate leaders should follow suit. *Information Management*, 19(6), 40. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from ABI/INFORM Trade & Industry. (Document ID: 1815352601).

### WHAT IT SAYS

Barack Obama used social networking for his Town Halls, which has now become a model for many other governments. What he did was set up the town hall, which had a reasonably small amount of people in attendance. Before the event happened, questions were compiled by social networkers online and also voted on. These questions were then asked online during the event, and were answered by officials. The article also mentions that private sectors are going to have more participation than the public sector, and that employee engagement is more valuable than public.

### RELEVANCE

This article speaks about how successfully Obama used social networking and sets a great example for local governments.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Don't expect a large participation rate like President Barack Obama's.**  
Although local politics are very important, naturally, Clark County will not get as many participants as the President. In order for the project to be fulfilling, you have to jump into it with the perspective that nobody will use the social networks that you set up; this way you cannot be disappointed. However, once they are set up and are past the first milestone, many people will utilize these networks and the Youth Commission feels that you will be impressed.
  
- ◆ **Use social network virtual meetings with both the public and with employees.**  
For various reasons many people cannot attend public hearings, whether it be transportation issues or simply being busy. If an online network was set up where citizens could watch public hearings and participate through a live video feed (the technology of electronically capturing, recording, processing, storing, transmitting, and reconstructing a sequence of still images representing scenes in motion), many more people would be able to be continuously aware and politically active.

## SOURCE

Anonymous. Twitter Is the Latest Electronic Tool With Workplace Pros and Cons. (2009, August). HR Focus, 86(8), 8-9. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from Platinum Periodicals. (Document ID: 1803046161).

## WHAT IT SAYS

Twitter has many pros and cons. 45% of employers do not have a social networking policy. It asks the question, “What do you do when an employee engages in an online activity the employer considers inappropriate?” People use business computers for personal reasons every single day, so you cannot expect people not to use it by implementing policy. Assume they will do it, recognize that they do it, and leave it at that. 61% of people stated that they would not change their online habits if they were being recorded, because people have already adjusted their attitude online because they know that it is not a private venue.

## RELEVANCE

This article addresses many of the concerns that employers and the county are worried about.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Any “tweet” or “comment” about the company or county must be approved ahead of time.**

In order to avoid dangerous situations, such as “tweeting” something that the county does not believe in, all tweets, comments, messages, and posts, should be approved before they are posted. This means that guidelines must be made that clearly define what kind of comment is and is not acceptable.

- ◆ **Employees’ non-business use of social networking should be subject to county policy.**

Make sure that employees know that if they are using any type of social networking site during work hours, or at a work computer, anything they say or do is subject to county policy. This means that it is all being monitored (unless it falls under a protected class of information) and, upon request, may be publicly disclosed.

- ◆ **Employees should require a disclaimer stating that they represent the county while online at work and that their comments are recorded.**

While on any social networking site, or on emails, employees and representatives should post a disclaimer after each comment, post, etc. that says that they represent the county and are part of a political entity.

◆ **Policy should advise employees not to share negative or confidential information with the public.**

Any information that is not yet ready to be announced to the public, such as budget cuts that have yet to be determined, should not be posted online by anyone until they have been approved. Posting confidential information online can be potentially dangerous to the county as a whole as well as individuals who represent the county and its departments. Employees should be advised not to share this information online.

## FOCUS GROUPS

### PROCEDURE & METHOD

In order to further collect information and opinions from youth, the Youth Commission held focus groups at Camas High School, Skyridge Middle School, Pacific Middle School, Skyview High School, and Hockinson High School. These focus groups were moderated by two youth commissioners, and recorded on paper or computer by approximately three youth commissioners, including our Coordinator Elizabeth Hill. Participants were asked questions that were related to the topic of social networking and that evoked opinions and new ideas. The questions were similar to the ones asked in the youth surveys with the addition of a few more. The schools that we held focus groups at were determined by whichever Youth Commissioner's teachers allowed us to use their class time. After all of the data was collected, the Youth Commission took the data during the overnighter and, in teams, analyzed it through summaries and questioning. We did this, in part, by thinking about the following questions while reviewing the data:

1. Are there specific themes?
2. Standout comments not mentioned before?
3. Things that they felt strongly about?
4. Was there anything innovative?

We then deliberated as a group and came up with recommendations for the board that reflect directly what the youth in these schools felt needed to be addressed and the unique ideas that came up during the focus groups.

### COMMONALITIES & CONCLUSIONS

After reviewing the focus group data the Youth Commission found many commonalities and themes, which played a large role in forming our recommendations. Many youth expressed concerns about the government attempting to sound "cool" or "hip" and thought that the county would give itself a bad reputation by using social networking; MySpace was called out multiple times in particular as harmful to the county reputation. On the other hand, many youth believed that as long as users acted professionally it would be a highly effective tool of communication. In the focus groups a few common themes were that there should be updates regularly with voting topics, opinions, and ideas, that it may be regarded as spam and ignored, that moderators should delete inappropriate language such as cuss words, and that the pages should be open to the public and not private. Also, a number of youth were interested in having live chats and live video feeds of conferences and meetings. The Clark County Youth Commission believes that the following recommendations accurately reflect the opinions of the youth we held focus groups with.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Continue to give public speeches and hearings.**

We recommend that public speeches, hearing, and events still be held, even if major steps to use social networking are taken. This is because although many people have access to social networking media, many still don't. Also, a majority of people using social networking are in the younger age bracket, and therefore if public forums cease to be used, the entire upper age group will be missed.

- ◆ **Post meetings and speeches online.**

We recommend that some, not all, of the more important speeches, meetings, and forum recordings be posted online for all to view. This will make these events more accessible to people who don't have the time or means to attend these events live. If the county wants to find out which events to post online, a page could be made that lists all of the upcoming open meetings and events, and county residents could vote on which ones they want to see. If one event got enough votes, the county would know to post it online. This would also give the county a chance to get more feedback about their events, because people could post comments on the video, if it were posted on a site that has comments enabled (such as YouTube, Facebook, or MySpace). Also, if the county didn't want to host the video for an extended amount of time, instead of posting it, a live feed could be linked to the county website, so people could watch live events from their home. That is, if the event is not also being shown on television.

- ◆ **Remind people that their feedback is valued.**

While opening up new channels for feedback will be helpful in communicating with presently unreachable audiences, if those audiences are not reassured that their feedback is helpful and *needed*, they will interact less or perhaps not at all. Therefore we recommend that the county remind online populations that their feedback is valued, and that the county should do this as much as possible, without seeming patronizing. This is extremely important, especially when it comes to youth populations, because if youth feel like they are not being heard or that the county doesn't care about what they have to say, they may stop giving feedback, or they may troll county websites. Reminders could be given through posts on Facebook or MySpace simply stating, "thanks for all the feedback, we really appreciate it!" or by putting a small section at the beginning of posted videos, along the lines of "please leave a comment, your feedback is greatly appreciated!"

◆ **Regularly update and reply to social networking sites**

While creating social networking sites for the county is a great first step in reaching out to a wider base of community members, just occasionally visiting and updating is not good enough. Therefore we recommend that any and all sites created for use by the county be updated, maintained and interacted with on a regular basis. When posts are made on any of the sites being used, (unless comments are disabled) people are bound to interact with the site and leave comments and questions. So, any sites that are posted on should be checked and updated regularly, and any questions or comments left should be replied to. The amount of posts made will determine exactly how often the sites will need to be checked, but generally, the more posts made, the more the site will have to be checked and updated. If there is a high comment volume, the site may have to be checked once a day or more. While more than once a day may seem too often for some to check sites, generally, the longer the wait in between the time a comment is posted and the time it is replied to, the less likely the poster is to read the comment or reply back to it.

◆ **Make more personal appearances as well as adding social networking**

In order to increase the county's interaction with its citizens, not only should plans be made to use social networking, but more public appearances should be made by county officials. Many youth surveyed were not familiar with any county officials, unless they were very interested in politics or their parents worked in or with politics. If the county wants a wider interactive citizen base from younger citizens, we recommend that they visit schools and talk about how students can get involved with county government. Events like this would also be a good chance to promote new social networking sites being used by the county. Videos suggesting ways to get involved could also be posted.

◆ **Video biographies of officials should be posted online**

In order for people to become more familiar with county officials, people must first know who they are and what they are all about. We recommend that county officials (elected and unelected) post video biographies about themselves, what they do in the county, and perhaps some other bits to help people get to know them, such as how they have used social networking recently, or something they love about Clark County, etc. It would help boost interaction if at the end of these videos the speaker noted something about how citizen input is highly valued, and that they would hope to have the people watching their video go to their social networking sites, become "friends" with them, and post something on their sites.

- ◆ **Voting issues should be posted on county profiles**  
If there is a current hot topic or voting issue in the county, these should be posted on the county's social networking sites. A post, a video, or both, could be posted, and people would be allowed to comment, so that conversation and new ideas could be started around that issue. Remember at the end of these posts to note that citizen input is very desired.
  
- ◆ **Post goals, opinions, and viewpoints on specific issues for the department head profiles**  
In order for people to get to know our county officials better, profiles should include more in-depth information, such as goals, opinions, and viewpoints on specific issues. Keep in mind though: the goal should be to inform citizens of your stances on certain issues, not to cause arguments or anger, so word your views carefully. Tone of voice and nuance of language is not easily conveyed through internet posts, so try use neutral language and avoid sarcasm or other forms of language that require tone of voice to be received in the desired manner. This will help to keep people from misinterpreting posts made about opinions on hot-button topics, and help keep people from flaming (posting inflammatory remarks on) county profiles.
  
- ◆ **Don't tag people or allow people to be tagged in photos**  
Unless express permission is given to tag a person in a photo on a social networking site, we recommend that tagging in photos not be done. Some people prefer to have their privacy, even on social networking sites, so unless direct permission is given, *do not tag people in your personal photos*. Also, unless you give permission to another person, you should not allow yourself to be tagged in photos. The easiest way to ensure this is to just turn off tagging on your profile.

## YOUTH SURVEYS

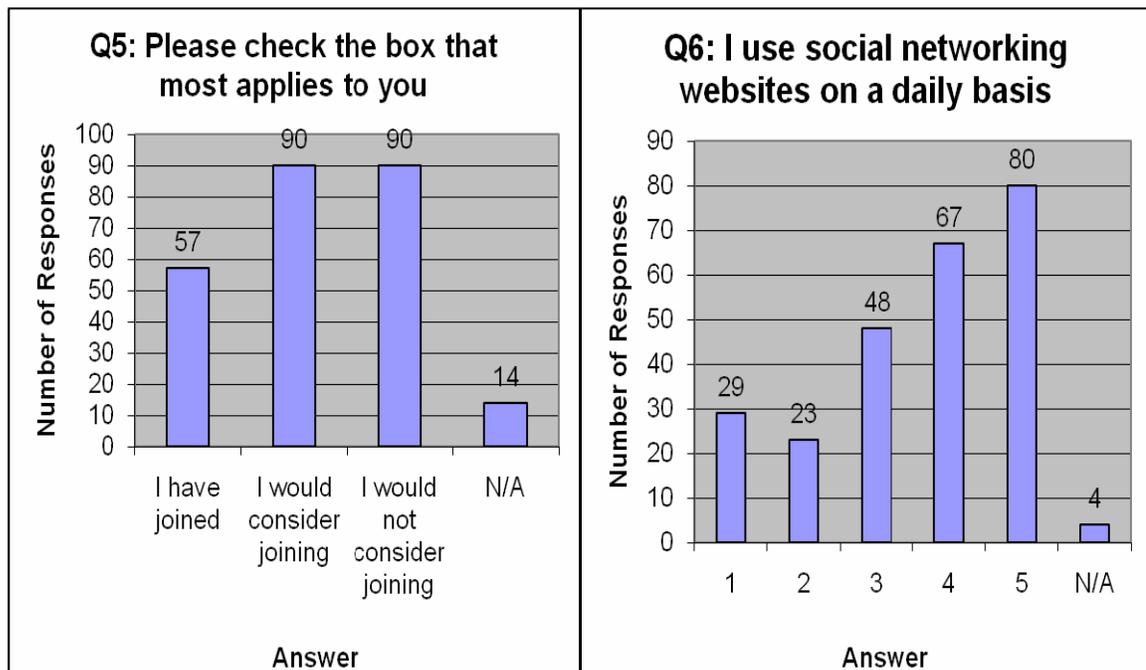
One major part of our data collection was the youth surveys that we created, and distributed. Once we had all of the surveys, they were reviewed, analyzed, and graphically organized. They were then deliberated during our overnighter. These deliberations produced a list of recommendations specific to each question of the surveys. The recommendations from the youth surveys directly represent the opinion and voice of the youth in Clark County.

## PROCEDURE & METHOD

In total, we gathered 261 surveys. Battle Ground High School contributed 71 surveys, Hockinson High School contributed 69, La Center High School contributed 47, Pacific Middle School contributed 57, and Skyview High School contributed 7 surveys. Please note that ten surveys were not included in the report; only 251 were used. We omitted these surveys because they included derogatory terms, contradictory answers, and silly comments. The surveys omitted also appeared to be aimlessly filled out. Some surveys contained impossible answers, for example saying that they were in Hockinson High School and were 210 years old or that they went to Battleground High School and was two years old and did not belong to any gender. Additionally, some included drawings that were not beneficial to our objectives.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

*(The number in parenthesis refers to the survey question which can be found in the appendix. "1" represents strongly disagree and "5" represents strongly agree)*



- ◆ **(Q5) Because 50% of the youth surveyed who have not joined a Clark County social networking page would consider joining, it would be useful to use social networking websites to communicate with citizens.**

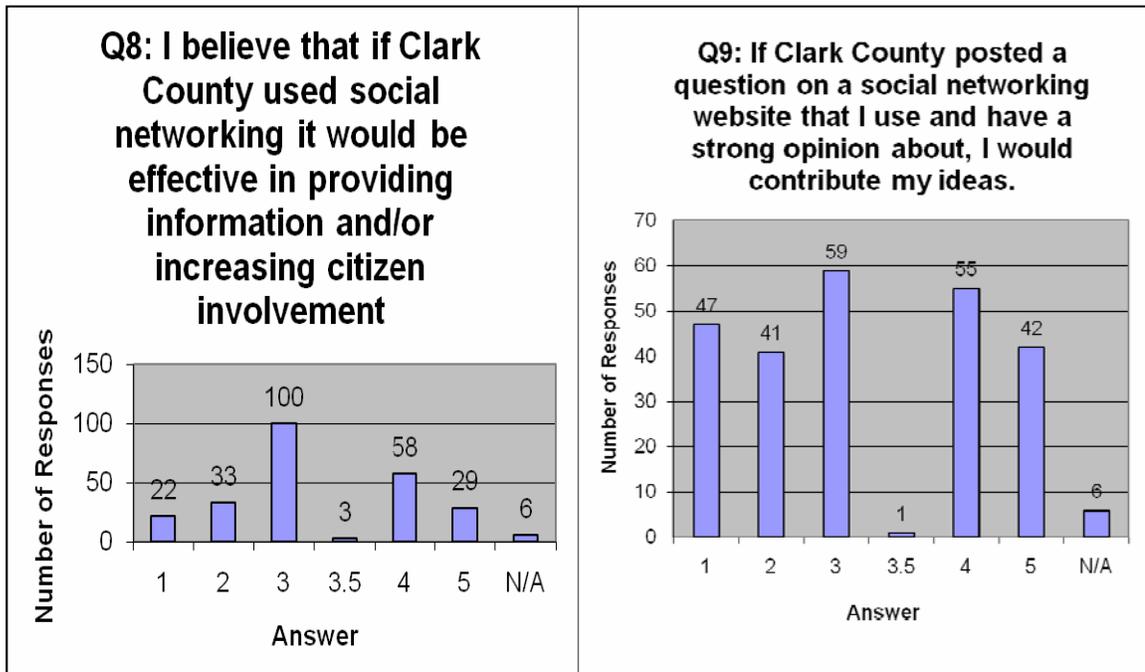
Although there was not a majority who would consider joining these county pages, fifty percent is still a significant amount of people to interact with. As well, it would not be impossible to persuade the other fifty percent of citizens to join these pages once they take off and are created. Being able to interact with fifty percent of youth in the county online is more beneficial than not interacting with those youth at all.

- ◆ **(Q5) Promote social networking pages to bring interest to Clark County social networking sites.**

In order to spread the word about county social networking profiles, they must be promoted. Without promotion, county profiles will be lost in the billions of internet websites. The profiles of the county will be an excellent tool of communication and therefore must be utilized to their full potential. If they are not promoted then there will be no point in creating them and social networking will not increase communication and discussion. The Clark County Youth Commission recommends that you promote the county social networking sites by any means necessary, including press releases, adding the account links to the email signature of county employees, posting them on the websites that the county has already created, and word of mouth. Take note that the promotion of these social networking accounts must be reoccurring, that way if someone didn't notice it the first time they will have another chance to see the promotion and respond to it.

- ◆ **(Q6) The county government should use social networking websites because more than 50% of the survey takers use social networking websites on a daily basis.**

For many youth, the first thing they do after coming home from school or from a friend's house is to go online and update their social networking accounts. Because many people use social networking on a daily basis, creating and updating a county social network account will be a beneficial means of notifying and interacting with the public. If there is an important announcement that must be made, many people will read it online before they read it in the paper or are contacted on the phone. Also, when a question is posed to the public online, it will be visible to many people because they check their accounts and other people's status on a daily basis.



- ◆ **(Q8) The county should use social networking because a large amount of those surveyed believe that it be effective in providing information and/or increasing citizen involvement.**

The goal in creating social networking accounts is to increase citizen involvement and information sharing. The surveys reflect that youth popularly believe that if the county were to create social networking accounts, this goal would be accomplished. The youth who responded to our surveys are the youth that will potentially be visiting these county social networking accounts, and if they say that it will be beneficial, then they must be right. The youth believe that it will be worth it to make and use these social networking accounts.

- ◆ **(Q9) Because the surveyed youth were broad, but balanced, local government should make sure that when asking questions, they make them good.**

Generally speaking, with any type of survey people will not respond unless they feel passionate about the issue being addressed. In order to increase responsiveness, the questions that are posed online should be good questions, meaning they are about issues relevant to the county population, and are written in a way that they are debatable. If the questions are simple and don't mean much to people online, then the users will not answer the question, or feel any need to do so.

- ◆ **(Q10) Use social networking accounts as a means of advertising.**  
One major theme that was revealed when youth were asked what advantages social networking provided was advertisement. The Youth Commission recommends that whatever advertising needs to be done by the county should also be done online. It is fairly simple to post a status update that advertises a certain service of the county or a job opening, and doing it online will potentially reach more citizens. Keep in mind though, that you do not want to advertise any services or products that are not relevant to the target audience, because then it will be considered “spam” and will be ignored. Advertising too much is potentially harmful to the county’s reputation, however online advertisement has been proven to be effective, and will benefit the county if used appropriately.
  
- ◆ **(Q10) Make sure to target both younger and adult populations.**  
In order to utilize social networking to its full potential, both older and younger audiences must be recognized and targeted online. This means that any status updates, questions, discussions topics, or comments, must be written in a language and style that both audiences will comprehend. If the youth population online is ignored, the social networking accounts will not be as beneficial as if both the young and older populations are addressed. On the other hand, if only the youth population is being targeted and not the adult population, then adults may think that the county is simply trying to be “hip” or “cool”, and not actually trying to interact with its citizens. It is in the best interest of the county to target both youth and adult populations.
  
- ◆ **(Q10) Use social networking often.**  
It is not enough to simply create a social networking account; anyone can do that. The account must be updated often, and continuously used in order to be effective. If citizens ask questions online and these questions go unanswered for too long, they may get angry or give up on the service. Also, if the account remains inactive it is possible for people to cancel their subscriptions to these accounts/delete them as friends or ignore them. The social networking accounts that are created by the county must be updated and used on a regular basis.
  
- ◆ **(Q10) Encourage people to share their real and honest opinions on social networking sites.**  
Because the social networking account will be an official government site, many people will be fearful of expressing their honest feelings about something with the knowledge that officials will be reviewing their responses. In order to combat this fear, we suggest that somewhere on the

page, people are encouraged to express their honest opinions. When the Youth Commission poses questions to the general public, we want their true opinions in comparison to an opinion that they change in order to sound more official. Assuming that the county wants the same thing, people need to know that they are allowed to express themselves and share how they truly feel about something.

- ◆ **(Q11) Inform the public that in order for the government to use social networking it will not cost extra money.**  
Many citizens in their surveys expressed concerns about the public having to waste money on the government using social networking. However, the Youth Commission has been informed that by law, the county is required to spend money on public notifications. We recommend that you use some of these public notification dollars differently (i.e. with training staff to maintain social network accounts). Therefore, using social networking will not cost the county any extra money. The public needs to be informed about this as well, because this response was reoccurring. Most social networking is free, and cost is not a disadvantage in using social networking as a means of communication.
- ◆ **(Q11) Inform the public that the government will not be “invading” aka reading into their social life via personal profiles.**  
Some youth in their surveys expressed concerns about the government invading their social life and, in some situations, spying on them. This fear is legitimate, however is unnecessary. People need to be informed that the government will not be “stalking” their followers or friends, and that it will not become a means of invasion.
- ◆ **(Q11) Before creating social networking accounts and policy, express the reasoning behind these decisions.**  
In order to prevent any confusion or misconceptions, the county needs to clearly state the purpose of using social networking accounts, and how they hope it will effect citizen involvement. People have a tendency to fear things that they do not understand; therefore people need to understand the process and reasoning of using social networking accounts. Also, more people will become involved if they understand why it is being used.
- ◆ **(Q11) Have someone who monitors the social networking accounts.**  
One thing that many people were worried about when the idea of interacting with citizens online is that people many people use profanity online in their conversations. These situations are potentially dangerous because people may be offended by profane comments such as cuss words. In order to prevent situations like this, someone needs to be able to

monitor the profile and comments and delete those comments/posts containing profane or foul language. This also means that profane language must first be defined by the county.

- ◆ **(Q11) Provide a disclaimer/warning saying that profane or inappropriate language not be tolerated on a county profile.**

Many people assume that they are guaranteed freedom of speech while discussing topics online and therefore do not filter their language use. In order to prevent the use of offensive or profane language, a disclaimer must be posted online that states that the county reserves the right to delete any comments that may be taken offensively or that contain profane language. It is in the best interest of the county to delete these comments.

- ◆ **(Q12) Tell citizens, adult and youth, how to be civically engaged.**

A common theme that arose in our surveys with youth is that many of them do not know how they can be civically engaged and what they can and cannot do in order to be involved in the political process. In a “note” or discussion board, citizens should be made aware of the opportunities that exist and how they can become more involved and civically engaged.

- ◆ **(Q12) Make a Facebook profile.**

When asked, "What would local government have to do in order to get you civically or politically involved," a number of youth responded with responses that stated that Clark County should create a Facebook profile as a means on interacting and communication with its citizens. Youth specifically called out Facebook as a way to engage youth, and therefore it is recommended that Clark County create a Facebook profile.

- ◆ **(Q12) When using social networking to interact with citizens, make the experience more personal by answering and asking questions not only on the county profile, but also on the citizen’s profile.**

A large amount of youth said that having the county or a local official contact you personally via Facebook would inspire them to participate more in politics. When updating the Facebook profiles, you should not only respond on the county page, but also on the profiles of random individuals and individuals of those who are actively participating on the county profile via personal messages. This will make the experience more personal for those involved, and it will also encourage people to become more politically active.

- ◆ **(Q12) Advertise where public meetings are being held and what time they are online via social networking site.**

Many youth expressed a lack of knowledge around where and when meetings are being held, instructions for what to do and how to participate and what is being discussed at these meetings. Youth said that they would be more likely to attend public meetings and hearings if they were updated online about the schedule. We recommend that you post a calendar of public events on social networking profiles so that anyone can see them.

## SOCIAL NETWORKS

The Youth Commission came up with the following definition of social networks. This definition should be referred to whenever speaking about social networking.

"A social network is an online community that builds and reflects networks and relations among people who share interests and activities."

Social networks are commonly used by youth, and the possibilities are seemingly limitless. The following section of our report discusses a few standout social networks and how the Youth Commission recommends the county utilize their capabilities.

### OVERVIEW

As mentioned before, there are many different social networks that exist online. Below are a few that we are acknowledging as beneficial for increasing civic engagement within the county.

- ◆ Blogs
- ◆ Closed Networks
- ◆ Facebook
- ◆ Formspring
- ◆ Google Documents "Google Docs"
- ◆ Instant Messaging
- ◆ MySpace
- ◆ Skype
- ◆ Stickam
- ◆ Survey Monkey
- ◆ Texting
- ◆ Twitter
- ◆ YouTube

### CLOSED NETWORKS

#### WHAT ARE THEY?

A closed network is a network that doesn't give their information to everyone, only a selected few. The only way you can get into it is to be approved by the administrator(s) and these things are typically protected by a password. Think of them as similar to county email. The only way of making a county email is if you work for the county. If you try to make one by-yourself and don't work in the county, you would be denied. Once you are able and approved to make a county email, the only way to access is to have designated password for your user.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Make sure only Clark County citizens can gain access to closed networks.**

Closed networks should be used for special or more in-depth topics/projects than on social networks such as Facebook. If the citizens of Clark County have access to closed networks, then the information would come from people actually from Clark County, Washington, not Clark County, Nevada. If we got people outside of Clark County, Washington, then we would be receiving issues that aren't even present in Clark County.

- ◆ **Create separate closed networks for only county employees.**

This can allow employees communicate with each other. This creates communication between two employees better. It reduces the amount of emails sent, because there is constant change.

- ◆ **Use live video feed for inter county discussions.**

Use live video feed to present to the citizens of Clark County and put inter-county discussions onto closed network pages. The live video feed (the technology of electronically capturing, recording, processing, storing, transmitting, and reconstructing a sequence of still images representing scenes in motion) would be easily accessible and citizens would be able to see the whole speech if they missed the live presentation.

- ◆ **Use closed networks for employee notifications.**

## FACEBOOK

### WHAT IS IT?

Facebook is a social networking site designed to connect people and keep members up to date on other each other's statuses and lives. Facebook has an audience of over 400 million active users, and is becoming quite popular in the 35-54 year old age range. This gives it the opportunity to be extremely effective in communicating with many people throughout Clark County. Although this is a great opportunity, some precautions and guidelines must be kept in mind.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Get a Facebook for county as a whole, as well as for each department.**

We recommend this because, with a whole county Facebook page, people could get the broader idea of what the county does. Each department should have one to explain what it does in the big picture of helping the County get to their goal. Also, if people have questions about a certain department, they could go to the department's page and see if what they are thinking and ask questions there as opposed to asking the county that doesn't know specifics. An example could be that a person is looking to see if they could see how the county uses the budget. Instead of asking the county page, they could go to the budget department page. This can be more efficient for the user asking the question.

- ◆ **Make discussion boards for discussing various topics.**

This can create a more distinct connection to the citizens. It would encourage more communication and conversation. This would in turn give valid and important information to the county.

- ◆ **Regularly post voting topics and updates that affect the county as a whole.**

Doing this can let the citizens be more informed and feel more included in the process of voting on certain things. Updating the citizens also gives them a primary source of information. There wouldn't be as a biased updates and things that affect the county as much from a person who knows the information fully instead of a person who knows insufficient amounts of information.

- ◆ **Set the page as a public page not private.**

If the page's privacy setting are set to private instead of public, no one will be able to interact with the web page or be able to view its contents. In order to be accessible to as many constituents as possible, the page should be public.

- ◆ **Use in conjunction with other social networking sites.**

Facebook is a prime example of a social network site and all of their capabilities. This being said it is most valuable when used in conjunction with other social network sites, such as Twitter, because their capabilities complement each other.

- ◆ **Get a site moderator to monitor inappropriate language and comments.**

One thing that many people were worried about when the idea of interacting with citizens online is that people many people use profanity online in their conversations. These situations are

potentially dangerous because people may be offended by profane comments such as cuss words. In order to prevent situations like this, someone needs to be able to monitor the profile and comments and delete those comments/posts containing profane or foul language. This also means that profane language must first be defined by the county.

◆ **Disable Facebook chat when online.**

Instant Messaging services in general cause many problems, particularly in the area of documentation. One recommendation that may or may not solve this issue is to disable Facebook Chat for the county profiles. This will make it so that people cannot instant message the accounts and will make it more easy for the IT department to document and capture the conversations that occur online. Disabling Facebook Chat will simply show the public that the user is "offline" at all times.

◆ **Facebook pages should all be approved by the county before they are created for official purposes.**

No pages should be created under the guise of being an official county page without pre-approval. This is because the pages that are created represent the county, and any pages that are created and not approved may present values that are not true to the county, and therefore will not accurately be representative of the county and its values/beliefs.

◆ **Facebook pages should be created for entire county departments, not individual users.**

The only pages that should be for individual users in an official capacity should be reserved for elected officials, department heads, or people that are of high standing in their departments. That's not to say that people working for Clark County shouldn't have individual pages for their own personal use, but official pages should be reserved for the above mentioned groups.

◆ **All department pages made should be fan pages, not groups.**

Fan pages allow anyone to join if they request whereas group pages need approval by the administrator to allow people to join. Official individual pages should be individual type account pages, not fan pages or groups.

◆ **All official county pages should conform to a similar page setup, so as to show conformity and relatedness to other county pages.**

Profile pictures should be neat and professional, and should (preferably) include a county logo in it.

- ◆ **The section that says “write something about yourself” should include: department name and a short description of the department and its duties, and the fact that all comments or posts to the page are subject to public disclosure laws.**

The “Bio” section on all official Facebook pages should also include the department name, a longer description of the department, what the department hopes to accomplish with the page and the fact that all posts are open to public disclosure. Also, a note about what type of comment will be allowed on the page should be posted, and if so desired, a list of members that work for that department and their positions could also be added. If the department is rather large, just heads of the department could be listed.

- ◆ **All official pages for entire departments should have screen names that follow an outline as such: “Department of (insert name here)” a comma, then “Clark County, Washington”.**

Example: “Department of Community Services, Clark County, Washington.” All official pages for individuals (such as department heads) should follow this: “Name of person and title (which should include their department), comma, Clark County, Washington.”

Example: “Vanessa Gaston, Head of the Department of Community Services, Clark County, Washington.”

## GOOGLE DOCUMENTS “GOOGLE DOCS”

### WHAT IS IT?

Google Docs is a fairly new technology that only recently caught the Youth Commission's attention. Google Docs is a type of closed network that allows users to share documents online. It acts as an online local hard drive that is shared between anyone who is given access to it online. Documents can be uploaded onto Google Docs, and then viewed and edited by multiple users, all at the same time. Think of it as a "flash drive" or "zip drive" that is online and that you don't have to worry about carrying around and losing.

In order to increase the credibility of this report and the following recommendations, the Youth Commission tested out this technology while writing and editing the report. All Youth Commissioners were given access to the account which we created, and then we all wrote the report and made edits in different colors. This allowed us to

simultaneously review the document and see what has already been added and deleted as it was happening. The Youth Commission highly recommends that the county utilizes the capabilities granted by Google Docs.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Make one for county employees for exclusive access of employees.**

This can enable the collaboration of many people when finishing a project, whereas email, you have to have many different emails to edit a single part from different groups. This makes a project more central and easier to access. This also reduces the chance of losing documents and information. Because Google Documents is a non-central documentation system, you could access it from any computer, if you have administrative rights.

- ◆ **Make one for public use to post documents, flyers, and minutes or for citizen advisory groups working on specific projects.**

The citizens would be able to have a better idea as to what is going to happen/happened. Sometimes people would miss meetings and don't know what happened in the process. Minutes could tell the citizens the process and final decisions. Flyers and documents would further enforce people's knowledge as to what will/has happened. Some people don't read the news so, this can give people an opportunity to learn about the events.

## MYSFACE

### WHAT IS IT?

MySpace is a social networking site that allows users to connect with each other, in a similar manner to Facebook. Unlike Facebook, MySpace focuses more on interactive media and personalization. MySpace features sections for music and video, and hosts many creative artists. Users can customize their profiles with unique pictures and backgrounds, can share pictures, and build playlists of songs from throughout the site. People can post status comments, moods, blogs, pictures, links, and other forms of media into their stream. MySpace is notorious for having a younger, less mature audience.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Because of MySpace's younger user base, and likelihood of low quality interactions between MySpace users and county profiles, we recommend that MySpace not be used by the county.**

If extrapolation on this point is needed, it can be given, but we recommend that you take our word for it when we advise the county not to use this site.

## TEXT MESSAGING

### WHAT IS IT?

Text messaging is the act of sending a text from one phone to another, a computer to a phone, or vice versa. Text messages are usually short and can (and usually do) include commonly used abbreviations and/or emoticons. Text messages are a quick and effective way to communicate, especially with younger people. Often times, young people will not answer calls quickly or at all, but when sent a text, they may reply immediately. Text messages are extremely useful for sending quick messages, especially to youth.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Text messages can be used for reverse 911.**

Social networking is an excellent method of sharing information quickly. Reverse 911 means that instead of people calling 911 in times of crisis, the county would call its citizens in times of crisis to raise awareness. Social networking can be the avenue by which the county contacts its citizens in a 911 emergency. This includes, but is not limited to, natural disaster, disease outbreak, and criminals on the loose. With Reverse 911 notifications the county can update its citizens about important emergencies and the proper strategy for best getting through them.

- ◆ **A question/answer service with the county could be a good service could be used through text.**

People could send in texts to a designated question answering person (or persons) and ask them questions pertaining to laws and permits, such as "Is there a bike helmet law in Clark County", or "Can I build a shed in my back yard?". We did not brainstorm exactly how this could be set up beyond what is listed here, but we believe it should be fairly simple.

## TWITTER

### WHAT IS IT?

Twitter is a social networking and micro blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based

posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers who are known as followers. It's a great place for keeping people informed on what you are up to without the need to spend a lot of time crafting an entire post on the subject.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Use Twitter for public safety and health announcements.**  
Twitter is quick to update and immediate notification to all of your followers. When public health needs to send out epidemic or other necessary information they can post it on Twitter and the public will be notified.
- ◆ **Use Twitter for interdepartmental announcements.**  
Use it for quick updates on interdepartmental meetings, or events that a wide range of employees will be attending. Different accounts can be set up to post to tweet to specific groupings of county employees.
- ◆ **Use Twitter for emergency notifications.**  
When an emergency occurs the quickest way to alert employees and citizens is the best. Twitter notifies a wide range of people in a very short amount of time.
- ◆ **Use Twitter for events & meetings announcements.**  
Send out a quick update before meetings to make sure each employee remembers to attend. This can be paired with Facebook event calendars, which would provide a suggested number of attendees.
- ◆ **Use Twitter only as commissioners and department heads, not as a county as a whole.**  
Tweeting from an account for the whole county would provide an overwhelming amount of updates. Creating Department Head and Commissioner accounts would let followers sign up for the specific updates they choose to read.
- ◆ **Should not be the only source of social networking that is used.**  
Use a wide range of social networking to get the point across to a very broad group of people; however many citizens may be followers of multiple county social networking sites, so don't feed the exact same information numerous times.

## YOUTUBE

### WHAT IS IT?

YouTube is a popular free video-sharing website that lets registered users upload and share video clips online. To view the videos you are not required to register. As of early 2007 YouTube was one of the top ten most popular websites on the Internet. The wide variety of site content includes movie, TV clips, music videos, as well as amateur content such as video blogging.

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BOARD

- ◆ **Post videos of speeches and announcements and meetings.**

If citizens didn't have a chance to go to like, the State of County Address, they citizens can go onto YouTube and search for it. This can also let people "be" at meetings, seeing what the meeting is about and listening in, and taking the information that is being said.

- ◆ **Only have one YouTube for all of Clark County not one for each department.**

Having one for Clark County is better than having one for each department because Clark County as a whole can post meetings and speeches. If it is one for each department, then it would just take up time for people, not posting informational things but rather, looking up interesting things.

- ◆ **When you make a YouTube account, don't make it a standalone social networking site.**

Use other social networking sites to promote this site with the video you post. YouTube itself isn't a blogging/micro-blogging site. To promote county videos, you must have a social networking such as Facebook or Twitter.

## STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

For his State of the County Address presentation, Chair of the Clark County Board of County Commissioners Steve Stuart came to the Youth Commission for advice on how he could interact with citizens during the process of writing his speech, giving his address, and reviewing the address. The Youth Commission was very excited to be involved in the process, and took leadership of the project.

The Youth Commission consulted with Public Information and Outreach and learned about specific concerns they had, and also continued to keep contact with Steve Stuart about the project's advancement. We decided to set up multiple online social networking accounts that would act as a portal for citizen involvement in the political process of giving the State of the County Address. A Facebook account was created for Steve Stuart, and also a Facebook group called "What Clark County (WA) Thinks...". This group hosted discussion boards and posed questions as status, which users could respond to and talk about. The page gained around two hundred or more users, and was a success in encouraging civic engagement.

The Youth Commission also set up a Survey Monkey account, which was distributed around the county online, and collected information about which issues people felt most passionate about and which issues people wanted Steve Stuart to discuss at the Address.

Overall the project was a success, and it encouraged many people to become involved in the political process. The pages and sites are still existent, however many of them remain inactive for the time being.



## TYPES OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In order to fully wrap our heads around this policy assignment, the Youth Commission held discussions about what constitutes civic engagement. We developed the following list:

- ◆ volunteering
- ◆ voting
- ◆ discussing politics with peers
- ◆ fundraising
- ◆ campaigning
- ◆ displaying personal opinions or beliefs
- ◆ urging others to be politically active
- ◆ watching the news/ reading the newspaper
- ◆ peacefully protesting
- ◆ contacting officials
- ◆ writing petitions
- ◆ signing petitions

One issue that has been on the forefront of the Youth Commission's minds has been civic engagement for those who do not have social networking accounts. For these people a social network policy will be irrelevant and not at all useful. In order to benefit all citizens of Clark County, including those without social networking access, the Youth Commission developed a few ideas that address this specific issue.

In our surveys and focus groups, youth said that they do not have social networking accounts because some of them are too young; most accounts require you to be thirteen in order to create one. Other youth mentioned that their parents did not allow them to use them, for personal reasons. Not much can be done for these youth social networking-wise, however, these youth can still be accommodated.

**You can also accommodate citizens who do not use social networking by continuing and expanding on traditional forms of civic engagement.** Citizens who do not have social networking must be kept in the loop. You cannot simply ignore this population of people, especially since this population is considerably large. By continuing to offer the traditional forms of civic engagement and the traditional political scene, people will continue to be involved if they choose to be.

## EXAMPLES OF OTHER CITIES & COUNTIES

Through thorough research into the Seattle, Washington's policies on social networking, we agree with the following policies they used:

- ◆ **Have a disclaimer about reserving the right to delete or remove comments; display that the site will be governed closely and that the county maintains total control**  
Make the rules obvious and easy to understand so that when the consequences are carried out no one can say the rules weren't clear. Make them easily accessible.
- ◆ **Don't allow for anonymous comments; require contact information**  
Depending on the site, make sure that all friends, followers, etc. have valid contact information and are truly who they claim to be.
- ◆ **Each department moderates and owns their own site**  
Social networking site for each county department is run through that department and they individually are able to manage it. The county as a whole would oversee the program, but the departments implement it.
- ◆ **The current websites remain the priority, rather the social networking sites are used to enhance the others**  
Do not leave behind the county website just because the social networking sites are created. Make sure that the previous sites are updated and monitored with priority, and that the social networking sites come second.

Through thorough research into the Wake County, North Carolina's policies on social networking, we agree with the following policies they used:

- ◆ **Let the public email their requests that certain event videos be posted**  
After an event is hosted citizens may present requests of video uploading to a widely displayed e-mail address. This could work for many other things. If an overall social networking e-mail was created for questions, comments, and concerns, valuable information would be provided.
- ◆ **Provide employees with guidance and a set of rules for use of social networking.**  
Any employee managing a social networking site at work needs a specific set of rules/code of conduct.

◆ **5 Levels of Engagement**

- Listen and monitor social chatter
- Brand your organization across social media platforms
- Broadcast your message across social media
- Promote your social media profile and social bookmarking
- Engage your audience through social media

◆ **To avoid legal issues:**

- **Set up accounts solely through business emails, phone numbers, etc.**  
Do not use any personal information of the commissioners, employees, etc for creating these accounts. Using personal information would only lead to potentially dangerous situations, and is best avoided at all costs.
- **Restrict use to finding and following people only. Do not go to profiles and comment or search through their information.**  
When on a county social networking page only respond, or post from your own page. Do not go to other people's pages and create posts or go through their "personal" information.
- **Refrain from joining in on discussions/wall posts**  
Do not post onto any discussions that either aren't yours, or that you weren't asked to join. This is because many people may be fearful of the government "invading" their privacy by writing in their personal discussion boards.

Through thorough research into the San Francisco's policies on social networking, we agree with the following policies they used:

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom posted a 7.5 hour long State of the City Address on YouTube. Because of the length of the Address, no detail was left on the cutting room floor. The videos were posted in increments of approximately 45 minutes and separated and marked by what was the topic of the video. Although the videos took longer to prepare, the Address was still given on time and allowed the mayor to expand on many more issues than he would have if he gave a traditional State of the City Address. One example could be found at:

◆ **Post the State of the County Address on YouTube indicating the topic spoken during that particular segment.**

This would allow for more viewers to see it and allow them to select which part of the speech pertains most to them. It would help those who cannot watch the Address on CTV during the regular hours and is at the discretion of when,

where and how to watch it. This also allows citizens to provide feedback by commenting on the videos.

- ◆ **Expand on the State of the County Address to address more issues and explain on how the county has solved, or is going to solve them.**

Citizens would be more likely to watch the Address if issues they thought were important to their daily livelihoods were raised; this was a common theme among the department head interviews, consultation, youth surveys and focus groups.

## CLOSING

We as the Clark County Youth Commission believe this report accurately and solidly expresses the viewpoints of our fellow young people concerning the topic of social networking and how Clark County could utilize this resource to enhance civic engagement.

The Youth Commission strives to be as objective as possible, and as such, we continually checked our own actions and opinions to be sure the recommendations from our academic and investigative research are clearly evident and we clearly state when our personal opinions as a group differs from our research.

As the surveys and focus groups show, although young people have a strong interest in seeing local government use social networking there are certain hesitations. The Youth Commission believes we have addressed these hesitations in a satisfying manner.

As the department head interviews show, social networking is also an interest of county departments. Specific recommendations and requests the department heads or representatives expressed during interviews and the Youth Commission believes we have addressed these ideas.

As the academic research shows, cities and counties have adapted clear and concise policies that would allow the government to be able to manage and control their social networking accounts while still following laws such as public disclosure. The research also shows how beneficial social media has been to cities by their creative use of the resource.

On behalf of Clark County's youth, the Clark County Youth Commission would like to extend sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the Clark County Board of County Commissioners for their continuous support of youth and for their interest in using social media as an extra tool to reach out to citizens to increase citizen engagement. We would like to thank you for your support of the Clark County Youth Commission and for enabling our involvement in the county through assignments like this policy report; it has given us a chance to shed light on a subject of great influence to many young people. As representatives and advocates for Clark County's youth, we feel that our report accurately and effectively addresses the subject of social networking and how it can enhance citizen engagement and we appreciate your time and care in the issue.

## APPENDIX

- ◆ Department Head Interview Question Set
- ◆ Dr. Dene Grigar Question Set
- ◆ Focus Group Script
- ◆ Youth Survey
- ◆ State of the County Address “Tell us about your story” speech contest entry form

**QUESTION SET:**

1. What is your agency's function within the county government and what services do you provide?

**FOLLOW UP QUESTION SET:**

- i. Do you have several different units within your department?  
If so, how many?
  - ii. What are some of the key responsibilities of each unit (or if small department, each staff person.)
  - iii. You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_ service. Can you explain more about this function? (Do this for all major functions of this department, so you have a clear understanding of their role.)
  - iv. Which populations do you primarily serve? Are there specific target populations for some of your services?
2. How do you communicate with the people you serve?
  - i. Are there specific populations you serve that you have had trouble connecting with, or would like the opportunity to communicate with in more detail?
  - ii. What kinds of barriers do you face - if any - with communication?
  - iii. Clark County residents come from all different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In your experience, have you had any challenges with residents not understanding what functions or services your dept. provides?
3. What kinds of information do you need to convey to citizens? What would not be appropriate to convey to community members?
  - i. Are there any topics or aspects of county government, or your department specifically, that you wish residents knew more about or understood better?
  - ii. Are there any topics that would benefit from increased citizen input or participation?
  - iii. Are there any topics where you wish you could limit, or change the structure of citizen involvement?
  - iv. What, if any, topics are your department required by law to provide public notices about?
4. Are you familiar with social networking and what are your feelings about it?
5. Does your department have a social networking account?
  - a. If so,
    - i. What is it?
    - ii. What is it used for?
    - iii. How often is it used?

- iv. Who manages it?
    - v. What was your experience like?
  - b. If not,
    - i. Would you and your department be willing to try it out?
- 6. What are the pros and cons of using social networking to communicate with constituents on a county government level?
- 7. What impact would the use of social networking have on your department? What are the implications of implementing the use of social networking?
- 8. Is there anything else we should know about your department and how it communicates with the people it serves?

Dr. Dene Grigar

1. How do you define social media/social networking?
2. What are the pros and cons of local government using social networking to reach out and connect with its citizens?
3. What social media outlets do you believe would be beneficial for local government to consider for increasing awareness and citizen involvement? Why?
4. Is there any new social media you are excited about?
5. Do you believe local government should utilize social media to reach out to citizens? Why or why not?

**Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010  
Focus Group Script**

**Introduction:**

**SPEAKER 1:** Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_

**SPEAKER 2:** And my name is \_\_\_\_\_

**SPEAKER 1:** We are from the Clark County Youth Commission, a group of 32 diverse youth from across the county.

We are here to get your input because your classmate \_\_\_\_\_ is a member of the Youth Commission and would appreciate your thoughts on our current public policy assignment.

The Youth Commission reports to the Clark County Board of County Commissioners, a group of three elected officials who decide and uphold county policy.

**SPEAKER 2:** Each year the Board gives us a topic that pertains to the county's current issues, which we then research, getting youth perspectives.

This becomes our yearly public policy report.

We are here to get your input about how Clark County can use social networking to interact with its citizens.

**SPEAKER 1:** So today / tonight we'll be running a focus group with you.

This will consist of us asking you some questions about social networking.

Any honest answer you give will be respected.

Sometimes we will ask you to answer in a popcorn-style and sometimes round robin.

**SPEAKER 2:** Does anyone want to explain how a popcorn-style discussion goes?

*When you want to make a comment, you can raise your hand and let one of us call on you after one of your classmates finishes answering.*

**SPEAKER 1:** Does anyone want to explain how a round robin discussion goes?

*We go around, letting each person have a chance to say something if they want to.*

**Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010  
Focus Group Script**

**Ground Rules:**

**SPEAKER 2:** Here are the rules we are asking everyone to agree to for the discussion.

*-show rules-*

**SPEAKER 1:** 1. Assume good will.

If someone says something that may sound hurtful, assume that they are not trying to hurt anyone by their comments.

**SPEAKER 2:** 2. Be specific in your remarks rather than making generalizations about people.

**SPEAKER 1:** 3. Be respectful.

Respect people while they are speaking and respect their opinions, even if you disagree.

**SPEAKER 2:** 4. Honor anonymity.

We will not attach your names to any comments we decide to record.

Please support us in that by not remarking on what others have said once this meeting is over.

**SPEAKER 1:** 5. Raise your hand to speak.

**SPEAKER 2:** 6. Stay on topic.

**SPEAKER 1 :** 7. Vegas Rules.

What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas. So, what happens in this classroom stays in this classroom.

**SPEAKER 2:** 8. Be serious, but have fun.

Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010  
Focus Group Script

**Transition from Introduction & Ground Rules to “Where You Stand”:**

**SPEAKER 1:** Throughout the discussion we will be taking notes; we will not be participating in this discussion but feel free to ask us clarifying questions if you need to.

**SPEAKER 2:** Remember that everything will be kept confidential so feel free to speak openly and candidly.

All comments referenced in our final report will remain anonymous so it won't be connected back to you.

If you would like a copy of our final report please leave your contact information with our coordinator, Elizabeth.

**SPEAKER 1:** First we would like to start off with an activity to get everyone up and on their feet.

This activity is called “Where You Stand.”

**SPEAKER 2:** We will say a statement and where you go will depend on “where you stand” on that statement.

There are four sheets of paper marked...

*-point to the paper as you call its name-*

...Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

**SPEAKER 1:** After going to your spot, you will have the chance to collaborate with your group about why you feel that way.

Then, you would elect a member of your group to speak and represent why you feel that way.

Let's begin!

**Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010  
Focus Group Script**

**“Where You Stand” Statements:**

**SPEAKER 2:** I get most of my news online.

**SPEAKER 1:** I interact with the groups I join or the fan pages I “like.”

**SPEAKER 2:** If I recommended a friend to a local government’s social networking page, they would add and interact with that person.

**SPEAKER 1:** I believe that the advantages of social networking outweigh the disadvantages.

**SPEAKER 2:** If an elected official asked for my input, I would give it to them.

**SPEAKER 1:** If I were to “friend” a local government’s social networking page, I would add and interact with that person.

**Transition from “Where You Stand” to Focus Group Question Set:**

**SPEAKER 2:** Thank you for participating in that exercise; it was really helpful.

**SPEAKER 1:** If you could get seated we would like to get started on asking you some more questions.

Again, please remember the ground rules as you are participate.

Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010  
Focus Group Script

**Focus Group Question Set:**

**SPEAKER 2:** What do you think the county should do to interact with its constituents?

**SPEAKER 1:** What do you think are the advantages of local governments using social networking?

What do you think are the disadvantages?

**SPEAKER 2:** What are the dangers or risks local governments would have if they used social networking?

How could this be fixed, if possible?

**SPEAKER 1:** If local governments used social networking what should it be used for?

What should it not be used for?

What about elected officials themselves?

**SPEAKER 2:** What would you expect to find on an elected official's social networking account?

**SPEAKER 1:** Do you think that local government should use social networking? Why or why not?

*(If they ask about how it would be funded, mention how local governments already have a pot of money to use for communication with the public.)*

**SPEAKER 2:** What policies or rules should be required of county employees if the county were to use social networking?

**SPEAKER 1:** How could local government include the voices of non-social networking users or stay connected with them?

**SPEAKER 2:** If local government got heavily involved in social networking, would that compel non-social networking users to get a social networking account? Why or why not?

**SPEAKER 1:** How would being a "friend" with a local government official affect your civic engagement?

**Clark County Youth Commission 2009-2010  
Focus Group Script**

**Conclusion:**

**SPEAKER 2:** We would like to remind you that the comments we will reference in our public policy report will remain anonymous so it will not be connected back to you.

**SPEAKER 1:** Thank you for your time.

The information we obtained from you will be helpful with our report.

If you would like a copy of our final report, please leave your contact information with our coordinator, Elizabeth.

**SPEAKER 2:** If you have any follow-up questions or suggestions, Elizabeth brought some business cards so you can contact us.

We encourage you to come to our presentation to the Board of County Commissioners.

We will contact you if you leave your information, or your teacher if you don't, to let you know of the specifics.

**BOTH:** Thanks again!

**Clark County Youth Commission – Public Policy Assignment 2010  
Social Networking – Youth Survey**

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Gender:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Ethnicity:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:**

All responses obtained from this survey will remain anonymous. Your name will not be attached to any comments you write.

---

**1. A. Do you have a social networking account? YES / NO**  
**If yes, why?**

**If no, why not?**

**If yes, what social networking websites do you have an account for?**

Facebook    MySpace    Twitter    YouTube    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Of those social networking websites, which do you use most often?**

Facebook    MySpace    Twitter    YouTube    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. A. Do any adults in your life use social networking websites? YES / NO**

**B. If yes, how many adults?**    1-5    6-10    11-15    16-20    21-25    26+

**C. What adults in your life use social networking websites?**  
**(i.e. parents, grandparents, etc.)**

**3. What kind of information do you get from social networking websites?**

**4. What social networking website is the most effective in spreading information the quickest? Why?**

**5. Clark County has “like” (previously known as “fan” pages) and group pages on Facebook, as well Twitter accounts, for several of its programs and departments. Please check the box that most applies to you.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have joined one or more of these groups.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I would consider joining one or more of these groups.  
\_\_\_\_\_ I would not consider joining any of these groups.

---

**Please answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.**

**6. I use social networking websites on a daily basis.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE    1    2    3    4    5    STRONGLY AGREE

**7. I get most of my news and information from social networking websites.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE    1    2    3    4    5    STRONGLY AGREE

**8. I believe that if Clark County used social networking it would be effective in providing information and/or increasing citizen involvement.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE    1    2    3    4    5    STRONGLY AGREE

**9. If Clark County posted a question on a social networking website that I use and have a strong opinion about, I would contribute my ideas.**

STRONGLY DISAGREE    1    2    3    4    5    STRONGLY AGREE

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**Please feel free to attach an additional sheet of paper if needed.**

**10. What are the advantages of local government using social networking?**

**11. What are the disadvantages of local government using social networking?**

**12. What would local government have to do to get you politically or civically involved?**

**13. Should local government use social networking? Why or why not?**

## TELL US ABOUT YOUR STORY!

Similar to the State of the Union Address given by the president of the United States of America, the State of the County Address is a speech given each year by the chair of the Board of Clark County Commissioners. The chair of the Board this year, Clark County Commissioner Steve Stuart, would like to invite a young speaker to share an experience that changed their beliefs and shaped their life.

The selected applicant will be invited to present their story during the State of the County Address on February 4, 2010. To help Commissioner Stuart select the young speaker, he would like to hear your story. Anyone under age 24 can submit their story.

**Please email your response to [ClarkCounty.YouthCommission@gmail.com](mailto:ClarkCounty.YouthCommission@gmail.com).**

**NO Later than Friday, January 8, 2010**

**NAME:**

**AGE:**

**SCHOOL:**

**GRADE:**

**ADDRESS:**

**EMAIL ADDRESS:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

1. What is one thing you believe is important for the community to address OR what is one thing you are passionate about?
2. Describe an experience, event, or struggle that has made you feel that this issue is important or made you passionate about this belief? (Or tell us a story about your life that has shaped the person you have become)
3. What have you learned or have taken from this experience that you feel others could learn too?

Please use this space to respond to all three questions.