# SOCIAL MEDIA in New Jersey Municipalities

NJLM Annual Conference, November 20, 2013 Morris A. Enyeart, Ed.D. City Connections LLC Enyeart@citiesnj.com

Have Municipalities Gone "ALL-IN"?



At last Count there are 292 ways to share content

In early 2011
A study of 200 NJ Municipal
Websites found only 30%
Used Social Media

Facebook 21%

Twitter 9%

Google + 1%

### In 2012 Monmouth University

Polling Institute & Graduate Program in Public Policy
Studied 540 NJ Municipal Web Sites

Facebook 18%

Twitter 14%

Google + N/A

Also recorded use of Blogs, Photo Sharing, Videos (You Tube, etc)

Accounted for less than 10% of the total score

## What About the Monmouth University Top 10 - Were they more involved?

#### **Facebook**

- 8 out of 10 had a Facebook page
- 1 had Share buttons, but did not appear to have a social media page
- 1 had no social media or share buttons

#### **Twitter**

4 out of 10 had a Twitter link

In 2013 did we see an

**Explosion** 

or a

**Paradigm Shift** 





#### In 2013

City Connections

Studied the same 540 NJ Municipal Web Sites

Use of Social Media was designated by presence of one or more of the following:

#### **Included**

Facebook

**Twitter** 

Google +

YouTube

#### Not Included

Blogs

**Photo Sharing** 

LinkedIn

Videos (non-YouTube)

RSS

Flickr

**Pinterest** 

Tumblr

In 2013
City Connections

Visited the same 540 NJ Municipal Web Sites, but focused on the use of Social Media

33% (177) of Municipalities used Social Media

Facebook 31%

Twitter 21%

Google + 1%

## In 2013 City Connections

Study of 540 NJ Municipal Web Sites

## Of the 177 municipalities that used Social Media

- Facebook (169), Twitter (107), Google+ (2), YouTube (20)
- 8 Sites used only Twitter

In 2013

City Connections

Study of 540 NJ Municipal Web Sites

On the 177 municipalities that used social media

There were links to 305 Facebook & Twitter accounts

But was it Social? (2-Way Communication)

On the 169 municipalities that used Facebook

150 allowed public comments

In 2013

**City Connections** Study of 540 NJ Municipal Web Sites

#### **Most Common Social Media sites**

- Facebook Municipal
  - Recreation
  - Police/OEM

- **► Twitter Police/OEM** 
  - Recreation
  - Mayor

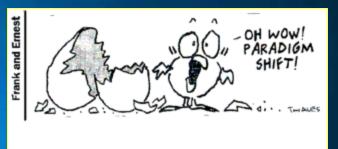
#### **WAS THERE AN**

**Explosion** 



or a

**Paradigm Shift** 



#### The Answer is no

In an EXPLOSION we would have seen a significantly higher overall percentage of municipalities involved with Social Media.

That has not happened.

#### The answer is NO

In a PARADIGM SHIFT we would have seen a move of how and what municipalities are doing with Social Media.

That has not happened.

What caused the apparent drop and rise in the use of Facebook by municipalities from 2011 to 2013?

Year	Facebook %	Twitter %	Overall %
2011	21	9	31
2012	18	14	
2013	31	21	33

## Municipal Use of Social Media The answer?

- ➤ Many of the links to the social media website were hard to find.
- ➤ Both the 2011 and 2013 study spent more time on each website searching for just social media links.
- In the 2012 study, social media accounted for less than 10% of the final score. In the 2011 and 2013 studies, it was the only facet being studied.

#### The answer?

In other words, the difference was due to the different study focus and the amount of time searching for a single facet of a municipal website.

# Municipal Use of Social Media The Implication

There is clearly no general agreement on the value or best practice relating to the use of social media by a municipality.

### So where are we now?

The early adopters of social media are all accounted for and the remaining 2/3rds of municipalities are in a "wait and see" period to see if social media really makes a difference in their information and resident interaction mission.

Recommendations for current and future municipal website implementations of social media.

- Design and place your social media links to maximize their visual impact.
- ➤ Don't invent your own designs. Use what people will immediately recognize.

- ➤ If you have more than 2-3 social media options, place them in a "Social Networking Toolbar."
- ➤ Different social media buttons mean different things. Don't use a Facebook "LIKE" button if you want people to visit your Facebook page. That just registers a "like" on your Facebook page. Use a Facebook "Follow Us" or "Find us on Facebook" button to take them to your Facebook Page.

- ➤ If you have multiple Facebook or Twitter pages, label them so people know what Facebook or Twitter page they are going to visit. (i.e., town name, Police, Recreation, etc)
- ➤ Make sure your links work.
- ➤ Place the links to social media in the same place on every page that has them.

➤ Update your social media pages frequently — daily or at least weekly. If you do not update it frequently, people will not see it when you do because they stopped looking.

In the March 2014 time frame I will be doing a webinar on Social Media for the League of Municipalities. In that webinar we will cover specific things to do and avoid with creating a social media presence. A best practices and resource guide will also be included.

Watch your email and the League's website for this important webinar. It has been approved for CEUs.

Remember the League of Municipalities has a free web and internet consulting service for its members. All you have to do is call the League

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