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Other publications by the Divided Community Project, available at:
http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/dividedcommunityproject/

Planning in Advance of Civil Unrest (2016)

Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest: Effective Problem-Solving Strategies That Have Been Used in Other Communities (2016)

Simulation for Leadership During Crisis (2017), available by request to William Froehlich, Froehlich.28@osu.edu.

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The Ohio State University Emeritus Academy
The Ohio State University Democracy Studies Program
“Give us more detailed counsel for using social media when a community faces division.” A comment such as this one was the most common response to the Divided Community Project’s first two reports, Key Considerations for Community Leaders Facing Civil Unrest and Planning in Advance of Civil Unrest (available at http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/dividedcommunityproject), issued in 2016. This report responds to that request.

We owe a great deal to persons who generously shared their experience, expertise, insight, research, and time for this report. Students in the 2016 Dispute Systems Design Workshop at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law contributed research and papers that provided a basis for a November 3, 2016 gathering of community leaders and social media experts. The language, words, and ideas contributed by Brooks Boron, Ben Cahn, Jennifer Mensah, Alex Pribil, and Robby Southers appear in this report. We are grateful to the Kettering Foundation and its legal counsel, Maxine Thomas, for partnering in bringing together some of the best minds from across the nation to Columbus, Ohio on November 3; to the JAMS Foundation for major support for the Divided Community Project; to the Littlefield Foundation, Nextdoor, the Ohio State University Democracy Studies Program, and the Ohio State University Emeritus Academy for supporting the project; and to Dean Alan Michaels, Laju Mansukhani, Barbara Peck, Lisa Eggert, and many other colleagues at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law. The event was shaped and facilitated by the Divided Community Project Steering Committee: Grande Lum, Director, Divided Community Project, former Director, U.S. Community Relations Service, U.S. Department of Justice; William Froehlich, Associate Director, Divided Community Project, Langdon Fellow, Ohio State University Moritz College of Law; Joseph Stulberg, Moritz Chair in Alternative Dispute Resolution, Ohio State University Moritz College of Law; Nancy Rogers, Professor Emeritus, Ohio State University Moritz College of Law; Chris Carlson, community/public policy mediator; Susan Carpenter, community/public policy mediator, trainer, writer; Sarah Cole, Bricker Professor of Law, Director, Program on Dispute Resolution, Ohio State University Moritz College of Law; Michael Lewis, community/public policy/business mediator, arbitrator, ombudsman, special master, JAMS; Craig McEwen, Fayerweather Professor of Sociology Emeritus, Bowdoin College; Sarah Rubin, Planner in Conflict Resolution, California’s Institute for Local Government; Andrew Thomas, Community Relations and Neighborhood Engagement Director, City of Sanford, Florida.

Those who attended the November 3, 2016 gathering included, in addition to the Steering Committee: Ralph Becker, former Salt Lake City Mayor, former Utah Legislature Minority Leader, attorney and urban planner; Norton Bonaparte, City Manager, Sanford, Florida; Kristy Dalton, CEO, Government Social Media, LLC; Professor Susan Nauss Exon, University of La Verne College of Law; Professor Dennis Hirsch, Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, Director, Program on Data and Governance; Ethan Katsh, National Center for Technology and Dispute Resolution; Professor David Larson, Mitchell Hamline Law School; Giselle Lopez, Senior Specialist, Data and Social Media Analytics, PeaceTech Lab; Katie Nelson, Social Media and Public Relations Coordinator for Mountain View, California Police Department; Joseph Porcelli, Senior City Strategist, Nextdoor; Tracie Powell, Senior Fellow, Democracy Fund; Margarita Quihuis, Co-Director, Sanford Peace Innovation Lab; Colin Rule, Modria; Larry Schooler, Community Engagement Consultant, Austin, Texas; Carl Smallwood, Vorys Sater Seymour & Pease LLP, Chair, Columbus Community Trust; Kyle Strickland, Research Fellow, Ohio State University Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity; Jonathan Tolbert, Social Media Expert, City of Columbus, Ohio; Michelle Vilchez, Executive Director, Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, Convener, Strengthening Communities Project; Gwen Whiting, Director of Training and Leadership, Everyday Democracy. Many of these individuals gave valuable comments on earlier drafts of this report, as did Lisa Holder, Communications Officer for Sanford, Florida; Nelson Hewitt, Neighborhood Programs Specialist for the Columbus, Ohio Community Relations Commission; Cynthia Schmidt, Director at the Center for Law and Policy, University of Central Florida; and Scott Paine, Director of Leadership Development and Education, Florida League of Cities.

The Project has also developed a tabletop simulation to test community leaders’ preparation to deal with community division and a stress test to help communities plan and make these available without charge to community leaders (contact William Froehlich, Froehlich.28@osu.edu).
I. Executive Summary

II. Checklist for Self-Assessment on Community Leaders’ Social Media Use for Divided Communities

III. Potential Social Media Strategies for Community Leaders That Relate to Community Division

1. Create widely-used and trusted online information sources for residents that will help maintain and enhance residents’ confidence and become an antidote to inaccurate news and unsubstantiated rumors.

2. Increase input from residents in ongoing decisions and respond to residents’ concerns.

3. Promote offline, face-to-face events and apps to support online dialogue among residents in order to build community resiliency.

4. Work to reduce and combat online hate speech/discriminatory conduct through social media so as to reduce the effects.

5. Mine social media and other online data as part of an overall ongoing initiative to better understand community concerns.

IV. Glossary of Social Media Terms

V. Useful Sites on Social Media Use for Community Leaders
I. Executive Summary

Phenomenal growth in the use of social media is altering the ways that community members perceive and interact with each other. “Your community is online,” social media expert Colin Rule says to community leaders. “You need to be online too.” This report focuses on how community leaders seize the opportunities and confront the ever-changing obstacles created by the increasingly pervasive use of social media and proliferation of social media platforms as these leaders address community division and civil unrest.

In terms of new opportunities in the context of community division, community leaders can now use social media and apps to provide a reliable source of information for residents, to improve their ability to hear and serve constituents, and to strengthen connections among residents and their pride in community.

In terms of new challenges, unrest can occur with little warning; those concerned about an issue now have inexpensive and effective ways to tell a story, stir emotions, create a sense of involvement in a larger movement, and give notice of protest plans. Community leaders can be even more challenged than before the social media age to distinguish between peaceful protesters and those seeking to take advantage of civil unrest for malicious troublemaking. False rumors spread quickly. Leaders can no longer count on traditional news sources to combat inaccurate news, as residents shift their news intake to social media. Hate speech and bullying online have targeted disproportionately those groups already feeling the sting of discrimination and estrangement from the larger community.

This report offers strategies for community leaders dealing with community division against the backdrop of these opportunities and challenges. It includes examples of what community leaders have done as well as advice from leaders and social media experts. We use “community leaders” to include elected officials, such as mayors, and appointed officials, such as police chiefs and agency directors, as well as business, faith, civil rights, and interest group leaders who also have the opportunity to help communities turn division into positive change. Increasingly, some of the people with substantial social media followings are also community leaders. The suggested strategies deal with social media platforms, web-based networks, and even apps created by cities.

Community leaders are variously using the following general strategies (discussed under these section heads in more detail), each of which warrants creation of accompanying policies and training.

1. Use social media, websites, and apps to create widely-used and trusted online information sources for residents that will help maintain and enhance residents’ confidence and become an antidote to inaccurate news and unsubstantiated rumors.
2. Use social media, websites, and apps to increase input from residents in ongoing decisions and respond to residents’ concerns.
3. Use social media, websites, and apps to promote offline, face-to-face events and to support online dialogue among residents in order to build community resiliency.
4. Work to reduce and combat online hate speech/discriminatory conduct through social media so as to reduce the effects.
5. Mine social media and other online data as part of an overall ongoing initiative to better understand community concerns.

We suggest that you begin reading with the chart that follows immediately in Part II and lists strategies pertinent to three different situations: during tranquil times, during unrest, and following unrest. Use the chart as a stress test for your community – have you taken advantage of all the opportunities social media offers for building trust and dealing effectively with divisions? If you want to learn more about a particular idea, these strategies are discussed in more detail in Part III (the strategies briefly identified in Part II link to detail in Part III). Part IV is a glossary of social media terms. Part V provides sites that offer additional guidance on social media use by community leaders.
II. Checklist for Self-Assessment on Community Leaders’ Social Media Use for Divided Communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEFORE UNREST - STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL LEADERS</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Strategy 1: Create widely-used and trusted online information sources and capacities during tranquil times. When in crisis, people use existing communication vehicles.**  
  - Provide detailed information online quickly (1a)  
  - Provide information that residents will find useful (1b)  
  - Publicize the social media sites ahead of time (1c)  
  - Use an authentic voice (1d)  
  - Use multi-media (1e)  
  - Use hashtags (1f)  
  - Get verified (1g)  
  - Develop strategies to reach each key group, sources that will resonate with each, and a list of critical people to get out messages (1i-k)  
  - Create and announce policies for staff using social media (1l)  
  - Develop an on-call staff list (1m) | • Serve residents  
• Build trust  
• Counteract inaccurate news |
| **Strategy 2: Use social media to gain input from and respond to residents**  
  - Provide opportunities for residents to ask questions (2a)  
  - Gain residents’ input on some decisions (2b)  
  - Act on residents’ ideas (2c)  
  - Adopt policies and training for staff to implement these strategies (2d) | • Serve residents  
• Keep them engaged  
• Build trust in public officials  
• Improve decision-making |
| **Strategy 3: Promote offline and online dialogue among residents**  
  - Bring residents to in-person discussion sites (3a)  
  - Stream key live events online (3b)  
  - Recognize positive contributions (3c) | • Build resiliency of community |
| **Strategy 4: Reduce and combat hate/discriminatory/threatening online speech**  
  - Monitor to discover such speech (4a)  
  - Call on social media platforms to change (4b)  
  - Ask local employers to adopt guidelines for such speech (4c)  
  - Help residents understand that you care about their hurt, and instruct them about how to deal with the online harassment  
  - Work with social media platforms for change (4d) | • Help reduce residents’ fears and alienation |
| **Strategy 5: Mine social media & other online data to learn about community concerns**  
  - Watch residents’ questions (5a)  
  - Track hashtags and trending topics (5b)  
  - Use data to understand where concerns are arising (5c)  
  - Use analytics on own sites (5d)  
  - Consider more predictive uses (5e)  
  - Make and communicate policies/ethical standards re potential privacy, free speech and assembly, and discrimination (5f) | • Anticipate residents’ concerns in order to deal with these concerns during tranquil times |
## DURING UNREST - STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL LEADERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Goals</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Strategy 1: Add to widely-used and trusted online information sources** | • Counteract inaccurate news  
• Maintain trust  
• Reduce fear |
|   • Be especially attentive to speed and detail in putting information online, including photos and videos; phone numbers for national media requests (1a)  
   • Put up information that residents seek in the midst of crisis, including information about any key incidents, and about residents’ traffic and safety. Consider a place to check rumors. (1b)  
   • Let residents know where they can get help with trauma, injuries, and property damage  
   • Put forth a message that can unify all groups (1h)  
   • Use lists of critical people to reach the sources that will reach each group and resonate with them (1i-k)  
   • Expand the staff available (1m) | |
| **Strategy 2: Use social media to gain input from and respond to residents** | • Counteract inaccurate news  
• Maintain trust  
• Reduce fear |
|   • Bring in staff to respond quickly to residents’ questions (2a)  
   • Add questions inquiring how things are going for them. | |
| **Strategy 3: Promote offline and online dialogue among residents** | • Create sense of commonality across divisions and permit positive ways to express views and emotions |
|   • Use social media to bring residents to events that allow to express views and emotions (3a)  
   • Live stream key events (3b) | |
| **Strategy 4: Reduce and combat hate/discriminatory/threatening online speech** | • Reduce fears and alienation |
|   • Monitor to discover such speech (4a)  
   • Help residents understand that you care about their hurt, instruct them about how to deal with the online harassment  
   • Work with social media platforms for change (4d) | |
| **Strategy 5: Mine social media data to learn about community concerns** | • Be responsive as new concerns and feelings develop |
|   • Use the means developed during tranquil times to monitor more frequently both the content of concerns and the intensity of feelings about these concerns (5a-f) | |
## IN THE AFTERMATH OF UNREST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy 1: Add to widely-used and trusted online information sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Keep residents informed about ongoing negotiations as well as progress in dealing with concerns that were raised during unrest (1a)</strong></td>
<td>• Build trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• If consensus was reached on changes, provide an easy way to monitor implementation of the changes</strong></td>
<td>• Counteract inaccurate news</td>
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<th>Strategy 2: Use social media to gain input from and respond to residents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Provide opportunities for residents to ask questions about developing plans (2a)</strong></td>
<td>• Serve residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Gain residents’ input on some decisions (2b)</strong></td>
<td>• Keep them engaged</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>• Act on residents’ ideas (2c)</strong></td>
<td>• Build trust in public officials</td>
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<td>• Improve decision-making</td>
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<td><strong>• Use social media to bring residents to events that allow expression of views and emotions (3a)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>• Help residents understand that you care about their hurt, instruct them about how to deal with the online harassment</strong></td>
<td><strong>• Use social media research to help structure the conversations with residents</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>• Work with social media platforms for change (4d)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy 5: Mine social media data to learn about community concerns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>• Use the means developed during tranquil times to monitor both the content of concerns and the intensity of feelings about these concerns (5a-f)</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
III. Potential Social Media Strategies for Community Leaders That Relate to Community Division

Several successful strategies have emerged as community leaders grapple with the intersection of rapid pace of change in social media use and community division. Some of the strategies suggested below concern how to use communications on social media to stay in touch with residents and keep them in touch with each other: pushing out accurate information, pulling information in, engaging residents in decision-making, transacting business with residents, and helping residents appreciate what they share across communities within the larger community. Other strategies relate to advocacy with the social media platforms themselves and even with employers within the community.

Leaders pioneering the use of these strategies counsel other leaders to develop, often with public input, new policies and staff training as they implement these approaches. As the Major City Police Chiefs explained in a February, 2017 policy statement, “It is far better practice to create a policy or protocol before a critical event occurs, to educate the community and stakeholders about that policy and protocol before a critical event occurs, and then to follow your policy and protocol when a critical event does occur.”

1. Use Social Media, Websites, and Apps to Create Widely-Used and Trusted Online Information Sources for Residents That Will Help Maintain and Enhance Residents’ Confidence and Become an Antidote to Inaccurate News.

- Put detailed information online quickly (1a)
- Provide information that residents will find useful (1b)
- Publicize the social media sites ahead of time (1c)
- Use an authentic voice (1d)
- Use multi-media (1e)
- Use hashtags (1f)
- Get verified (1g)
- Develop strategies to reach each key group, sources that will resonate with each, and a list of critical people to get out messages (1i-k)
- Create and announce policies for staff using social media (1l)
- Develop an on-call staff list (1m)

Community leaders across the nation are putting information online in efforts to serve residents’ needs, build trusting relationships with them, and counteract inaccurate news. Putting information online requires additional effort. Because social media use differs by age and income, leaders will have to continue to use traditional information sources as well. Yet, despite the additional resources required, leaders who implement these approaches seem to be pleased with the outcomes.

Among local public officials, law enforcement has made the most extensive use of social media. The International Association of Chiefs of Police reports that 96.4% of police departments used social media variously for crime notifications, public relations, or citizen engagement. Police departments used multiple social media platforms: Facebook (94.2%), Twitter (71.2%), YouTube (40%), Apps (33%), LinkedIn (26.5%), Nixle (24%), Instagram (21%), and

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3 Int’l Ass’n of Chiefs of Police, 2015 Social Media Survey Results (2015). The issue of police monitoring social media for criminal investigations is not covered in this report.
Nextdoor (20%). Other divisions of local government and other leaders have been active as well.

Social media’s surging use over the last few years provides community leaders with this significant new means of direct communication between local leaders and residents. Use has jumped sevenfold in the last decade. It is even increasing dramatically among those who were reluctant initially to try social media -- those over age 65. The Pew Research Center concluded that 65% of U.S. adults and 95% of U.S. teenagers use social media. Eighty-six percent of 18-29 year olds use social media every day.

### INSTAGRAM MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS FROM JANUARY 2013 TO JUNE 2016

![Instagram Monthly Active Users Chart]


### TWITTER MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS FROM Q1 2010 TO Q2 2016

![Twitter Monthly Active Users Chart]


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Particularly pertinent to community division, people increasingly depend on social media for news, thus expanding the effects of inaccurate news postings. Sanford, Florida’s City Manager, Norton Bonaparte, discussed the significant role social media played in bringing national attention to the Trayvon Martin shooting in 2012 and noted, “The challenge we continue to have with social media is accuracy of information.”

Gone are the days when most people used and trusted newspapers or television news broadcasts to develop their understanding of news (though some newspaper subscriptions surged following the 2016 elections). Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults read their news online. These online users do not all flock to news organizations sources. Instead many rely on peer evaluation. When 18-59 year olds get news online, only 17% visit a news organization website. Social media users are more likely to trust information about politics and current news shared by friends on social media. Fifty-seven percent of respondents stated that shared information was trustworthy, whereas as only 48% trusted other forms of news delivery.

When they use social media, community leaders communicate directly with residents (and interested nonresidents), taking advantage of their new means of quick access to them and reaching them with accurate information. There are indications that residents are responding by using the information. In early 2017, the Seattle Police Department has over 333,000 followers on Twitter; Dallas has 267,000 followers. The goal is to improve residents’ trust in their leaders. Eighty-three percent of police departments report that social media has improved police-community relations in their jurisdiction, according to the International Association of Police, though these perceptions have not been

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6 Norton Bonoparte, City Manager for Sanford, Florida, Remarks at the Divided Community Project Meeting at the OSU Moritz College of Law (Nov. 3, 2016).
9 How Social Sharing is Reshaping the 2016 Race: Key Takeaways from Our Research for BuzzFeed, ECHELON INSIGHTS (April 22, 2016), https://medium.com/echelon-indicators/how-social-sharing-is-reshaping-the-2016-race-key-takeaways-from-our-research-for-buzzfeed-d808cbdc313#.sh8jiuxpt.
10 Twitter users or Instagram users who has subscribed to an account in order to view the account’s Tweets or pictures in their timeline.
11 Seattle Police Department (@SeattlePD), TWITTER, https://twitter.com/SeattlePD (last visited Mar. 28, 2017); Dallas Police Department (@DallasPD), TWITTER, https://twitter.com/DallasPD (last visited April 9, 2017). (Both Twitter and Facebook require departments to pay to reach the entire audience and they do not have the budget to do so. The average Facebook fan only sees 3 to 6% of posts.)
Thirty-five percent of users stated that following political leaders on social media made them feel more personally connected to those they follow.\(^\text{13}\)

The need for community leaders to reach their residents quickly and effectively through social media continues to grow. Advocates for various viewpoints already use social media to display video and provide a narrative that can trigger feelings of injustice, group identity, and anger, and promote social movements. The use of a hashtag, such as \#BlackLivesMatter, can give people a sense of a common voice. Advocacy group leaders can draw from this online discourse to create messages that will resonate in public meetings. Princeton Professor Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor noted these phenomena in social action regarding alleged police misconduct, especially how advocates combined incidents to demonstrate patterns.\(^\text{14}\)

National and even international viewpoints may be shaped on social media before any public sources release information, and, if inaccurate, may be hard to correct later.

Communities have employed a number of approaches to increase the likelihood that the information released through social media will reach and be trusted by residents and others:

a. **Put detailed information online quickly.** That is what brings users to the information. In one study, 41% of those using elected officials’ websites did so to “find out about political news before others.”\(^\text{15}\) Boston’s quick, detailed, accurate, and ongoing online releases in the midst of the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013 provides an example of how community leaders forestalled panic and gained the appreciation of their residents.\(^\text{16}\) At times when people may not trust a public source, the detail provided permits people to draw their own conclusions and makes the information more credible to them. The Major Cities Police Chiefs Association said, in a February, 2017 policy statement:

> To promote accountability, public trust, and public safety, agency practices should seek to offer a narrative early in the investigation that is based upon facts and evidence. The best, most accurate information, if shared timely, can both mitigate attempts by those outside of law enforcement to “write the story,” and calm community tensions that might otherwise be fostered by agency silence in the midst of media or third-party supposition. This is not to say that agencies should rush to judgment or jump to quick conclusions, but rather should engage and educate the public early in the life of a critical incident with basic factual explanations, supported by evidence. Importantly, agencies should also explain why certain information cannot yet be shared.\(^\text{17}\)

b. **Transmit the types of information that residents will find useful.** Some leaders post not only traffic, construction, school closings, and other daily concerns, but also create data sets that residents want to see, and make them downloadable. Some media experts suggest that they also refer residents to places that may help them find jobs or training. Houston Interfaith Ministries hosts a blog that deals with such day-to-day subjects as how to obtain “meals on wheels” and special help during flooding, an approach that can lead to people going to that site independently verified.\(^\text{12}\)

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\(^{15}\) **Pew Research Center, More Americans Are Using Social Media to Connect With Politicians** (May 19, 2015), http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/19/more-americans-are-using-social-media-to-connect-with-politicians/.


when a hate crime or other interfaith crisis occurs.\textsuperscript{18} By becoming the “go-to place” in tranquil times, community leaders can increase the chances that residents will go to their social media sites during times of crisis. For example, during Hurricane Irene, a pertinent county website’s hits increased 3,000\% increase and its Facebook page “likes” increased by 135\%.\textsuperscript{19}

c. **Publicize the social media sites ahead of time so that residents know where to find them.** Columbus, Ohio, for example launched and publicized “myColumbus,” a mobile application that “puts City Services at the fingertips of residents and visitors.”\textsuperscript{20} Explain ahead of any crisis how community leaders will communicate should an event happen and how residents can get in touch with public officials. The Major City Police Chiefs explained in a February, 2017 policy statement that if there will be a delay in posting police web cam videos or other eagerly sought materials, it may build public trust to post the policy well ahead of a crisis, including an explanation of how it was adopted (with input from the public, if applicable) and when the posting will occur.\textsuperscript{21}

d. **Use an authentic voice.** Social media users are accustomed to a more informal style of communications that community leaders can adopt to “connect” more effectively with users. Here are some specific ideas:

i. Use an informal voice (showing personality). A case study suggests that conversational updates performed better.\textsuperscript{22} For example, a recent exchange over an interruption in service on San Francisco’s BART produced a widely-followed exchange that conveyed information about the system, as noted in a San Francisco Chronicle article:\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{center}
\textbf{chuchuch @shakatron}

16 Mar 16

@SFBART we’ve come to expect rush-hour equipment problems and train delays from you. what you’re saying is that today ends with ‘-day’

@SFBART

BART was built to transport far few people, and much of our system has reached the end of its useful life. This is our reality.

9:22 PM - 16 Mar 16

\end{center}

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Interfaith Ministries, \textit{About Interfaith Ministries} (Mar. 28, 2017), https://www.imgh.org/about/about-interfaith-ministries.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Fairfax County, \textit{Hurricane Irene Web and Social Media Metrics Report}, http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/metrics/hurricane-irene-metrics.pdf.
\item \textsuperscript{20} The City of Columbus, Department of Technology, https://www.columbus.gov/technology/innovation/Mobile-Application (last visited Mar. 28, 2017).
\end{enumerate}
ii. Celebrate when the community is celebrating and commiserate when the community is sad. “Don’t only respond to tragedy. Be a presence through the life of the community, the ups and the downs,” counsels social media expert Colin Rule.

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iii. Humanize communications by posting photos that demonstrate leaders’ interest in the community.

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iv. Be compassionate, empathic, open to complaints, and accountable for errors. The informality of social media allows for this more human connection. People who apologize or take responsibility for errors convey respect for the persons they interact with and attention to accuracy. Once they feel a connection, people are likely to trust the communications.24

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GCRTA External Affairs Administrator Jose Feliciano Jr. interacted with riders on Twitter, in exchanges that were captured by the Cleveland Plain Dealer:

The Mountain View California Police Department posted an announcement that one of its officers had been charged with possession of child pornography, responding to each of the posts that followed that announcement, including, for example:

v. Use communicators who are experienced in digital communications and intuitive in its use.

e. **Use multi-media to attract users or link to videos and photos, even those posted elsewhere.** Cynthia Schmidt notes, “We are finding at the University of Central Florida that young people are more driven by images than written text.” Tweeting what is posted elsewhere may also generate responses that will increase “likes” and therefore the impact of your postings, she adds. Scott Paine, Florida League of Cities, adds a caveat that it is important to include enough of the context for images so that people will know where an event occurred and will not worry unnecessarily about their own safety.

f. **Use hashtags, including those hashtags already in use elsewhere by those interested in a topic.** Hashtags may bring more residents interested in the topic to community leaders’ sites and therefore to accurate information. Sanford, Florida’s Communication Officer Lisa Holder suggests creating hashtags specific to a cause, event, or purpose also facilitates measurement of the effectiveness of the communications.

g. **Get verified.** Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter offer to verify the accounts of those that generate public interest and place a checkmark to legitimize accounts.

h. **During unrest particularly, put forth a message that can unify all groups.** For example, frame the issues in a manner that does not put protestors at opposite ends with law enforcement and that reflects the depth of residents’ feelings. Thus, community leaders can characterize a protest by 20,000 peaceful marchers and 75 looters following announcement of a federal immigration policy as “a demonstration expressing concern about immigration policies” rather than “a protest conducted by thugs.” Defining the issues this broadly gives some portions of the community confidence that their leaders appreciate the depth of their concerns and also helps leaders explain those concerns to other parts of the community.

i. **Develop a strategy to reach each key group through social media.** “Connecting with people who are influential in the community is really important,” explained Giselle Lopez of PeaceTech Lab. “Often these are not the people you would expect. They might not even be physically in the community, but might be located elsewhere.” For example, many people within the community may follow a well-known athlete who has been active on a particular social issue and gained credibility in speaking on that issue. You can use social media to identify networks that point to these individuals and reach out to them as potentially powerful allies. Jonathan Tolbert,

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27 A word or phrase preceded by the “#” sign. Hashtags are a simple way to mark the topic of social media messages and make them discoverable to people with shared interests. Clicking a hashtag will reveal all of the public and recently published messages that also contain that hashtag. Hashtags first emerged on Twitter as a user-created phenomenon and are now used on nearly every social media platform.

28 Hodder adds that best practices would indicate using relevant keywords with no more than three hashtags per tweet.

29 See, e.g., *Twitter Help Center, Request a Verified Account*, https://support.twitter.com/articles/20174631 (providing instructions for securing verification).
Social Media Expert for Columbus, Ohio, suggests that information should sometimes be targeted to particular individuals, with direct messaging, for example, through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor.\textsuperscript{30} Nextdoor for Public Agencies allows them to target specific locations. The targeted communication might ask particular local bloggers and tweeters to re-tweet\textsuperscript{31} and repost the message, thus broadening the reach and improving the likelihood that social media users will trust the message.

An email from Lisa Holder, Sanford, Florida Communications Officer to social media leaders with substantial followings within that community, as part of an initiative to create moderators who have an accurate understanding of government decisions and can discuss ongoing city issues:

\textbf{SANFORD FLORIDA 1877}  
We are contacting you because you have been identified as an influencer and leader on Sanford’s private social media platforms. As an influencer you have obtained large followings on social media networks, providing great opportunity to engage with citizens and increase public awareness. From time to time your Facebook pages contain information and opinions the public may have regarding the City of Sanford. The City’s goal is to foster better communication with you and your followers, our customers, around your on-line community leadership. As a leader, we’re asking you to consider being part of the City of Sanford’s first Social Media Ambassador program.

The goal of this initiative is to close the communication gap between your followers and the City, by providing you access to accurate and timely messaging which you can post as it relates to the interest and inquiries of City related comments and inquiries. We would like to invite you to the inaugural meeting of the City of Sanford Social Media Ambassador program to discuss this proposal, hear your ideas, and see how we can all work together through social media for our beautiful city.

\textbf{j. Use sources that will resonate with users.} When people are angry with local officials, faith leaders or community representatives may be the most effective people to communicate through social media. Individual police officers may connect with residents more effectively and authentically about their own work than public relations staff. Consider whether someone other than the police should respond during a time of crisis. For example, some portions of the public may trust the mayor’s statement more than the police chief’s when a protest relates to a police action. Social media leaders can become thought leaders in a matter of hours even though not previously recognized as leaders, as occurred during the Arab Spring.\textsuperscript{32}

\textbf{k. Maintain a list of critical people who can use their own social media to get the same messages out at a time of crisis, thus reaching more people with a source that they consider reliable.} Depending on the crisis, these may include respected individuals in various groups within the community as well as social media users who have amassed large followings and can promote messages that people would not otherwise see. For example, Deray McKesson of the Black Lives Matter movement has more than 750,000 followers on Twitter and over 21,000 likes on Facebook.\textsuperscript{33} Shaun King of Black Lives Matter has about 640,000 followers on Twitter and over 1.4 million likes on Facebook.\textsuperscript{34} The local and state bar associations in Missouri used their websites, where people often go to look for attorneys, to announce that over a hundred lawyers were available to those affected by the unrest in Ferguson in 2014.

\textsuperscript{30} Jonathan Tolbert, Remarks at the Divided Community Project Meeting at the OSU Moritz College of Law, Columbus, Ohio (Nov. 3, 2016).

\textsuperscript{31} A Tweet that is re-shared to the followers of another user’s Twitter account. A Retweet allows another account’s followers to easily favorite the original Tweet. It is considered good etiquette to use this method rather than Quote Tweeting unless there is something valuable to add.

\textsuperscript{32} Note to authors from Margarita Quihuis, Stanford University’s Peace Innovation Laboratory, February 16, 2017.


I. Create policies for staff members who use social media. For example, they should understand the importance of releasing accurate information quickly so that the public goes to this source rather than to other social media sources. These policies can take into account privacy rights and concerns. The Major Cities Chiefs Association emphasized the importance of securing community input into such policies in a February, 2017 policy statement. The policies may have to indicate optimal choices when there are competing legitimate concerns. For example, Margarita Quihuis of Stanford University’s Peace Innovation Lab, pointed out that the policies do not permit quick responses in the midst of critical events if they require levels of approval. She notes, “Policy makers will need to weigh the risk of fast responses that may not be on point versus slow or no response that may be perceived as indifference in the public eye.” Former Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker notes, “Building trust in government is tough (especially today), and that speed of delivering information needs to be balanced with doing everything possible to be accurate. That is difficult, especially during an emergency. Once trust is lost, it is hard to regain.”

m. Have social media staff on call. A list of potential additional staff/consultants will make it feasible to deal quickly with volume at times of residents’ concerns.

2. Use Social Media, Websites, and Apps to Increase Input from Residents in Ongoing Decisions and to Respond to Residents’ Concerns.

- Provide opportunities for residents to ask questions (2a)
- Gain residents’ input on some decisions (2b)
- Act on residents’ ideas (2c)
- Adopt policies and training for staff to implement these strategies (2d)

Social media has become a game changer because leaders can create a dialogue more easily with residents, who increasingly have a smartphone or tablet computer with them throughout the day. And, as discussed in Strategy 1, people are increasingly active on social media. Thus, in addition to releasing information through social media, as just discussed, some community leaders use social media for two-way communications with residents.

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Community leaders have encouraged community engagement to:

a. **Provide opportunities for residents to ask questions so that they understand how officials serve the community.** For example, police in Knoxville, Kentucky sometimes use Periscope to transmit their work on Friday evenings or engage in “live tweeting,” recounting events while working. Residents respond with comments or ask questions.36

b. **Gain residents’ input on decisions under consideration.**38 Katie Nelson, Social Media and Public Relations Coordinator for the Mountain View, California Police Department, said, “People first and foremost want to feel like their feelings are being heard.”39 For example, Toronto police asked residents to give them suggestions for speed traps, using their blog or through Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.40 Residents will be more engaged when public officials disclose names and not just departments or titles. Seattle offers virtual question and answer with the mayor and other city officials on its Seattle Channel.

c. **Act on good ideas that residents submit, for example, to fix potholes or solve crimes, and let them know that you have done so:** In San Jose, California, residents can submit anonymous tips to police.42 Fresno, California has launched a highly rated app, FresGO, that steers residents to solutions without requiring them to understand which department handles it.43 Columbus, Ohio’s MyColumbus app enables residents to inquire about and get

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36 To comment on something is a way to leave a message on another user’s content. Along with shares, likes, and favorites, comments are tracked as proof of engagement.

37 Casey Wheeless, *Knoxville Police Using Periscope to Live Stream Traffic Stops*, CBS WVLTV (Sept. 28, 2015), http://www.local8now.com/home/headlines/Knoxville-police-using-Periscope-to-live-stream-traffic-stops--329839441.html; Bertot et al., The Impact of Policies on Government Social Media Usage: Issues, Challenges, and Recommendations, 29 Gov’t Info. Q. 30, 32 (2012) (In order for social media usage by governments to be effective in engaging civic participation, “members of the public must be able to access and use social media technologies.” Finding that “the ability to use social media technologies by the public is predicated on the following: (1) Access to the technologies...(2) The development of technology, programs, and internet-enabled services that offer equal access to all users; and, (3) Information and civics literacy necessary to understand government services, resources, and operations.”).

38 Some scholars refer to such open discussion and dialogue as “deliberative democracy.” There is no single agreed upon definition of deliberative democracy, but a common thread through all definitions is that there is a discussion of issues and decisions by individuals of differing viewpoints in a free and open process. See Gerald B.H. Solomon & Donald R. Wolfensberger, The Decline of Deliberative Democracy in the House and Proposals for Reform, 31 Harv. J. on Legis. 321, 323 (1994). (This article states that deliberative democracy allows “the full and free airing of conflicting opinions and ideas on legislative policies through hearings, debates, and amendments.”). See also Jon Elster, Deliberative Democracy 8 (Cambridge University Press 1998).

39 Divided Community Project Discussion with Katie Nelson, Social Media and Public Relations Coordinator, Mountain View, California Police Department, Moritz College of Law (Nov. 3, 2016).


responses regarding service requests. Former Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker said, “We started adding Apps for all our city participant functions. One area, for example, that improved input and performance was around identifying city projects that needed to be addressed. If someone opened a SLC APP, took a picture of the offense (like a pothole or broken light) and sent it in through the App, it could be immediately directed to the pertinent city agency and we would have an accurate location because of the phone geo-coding. This created efficiency and accuracy.”

From the City of San Jose’s my90 interactive website.

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d. **Adopt policies and training for these new avenues of communication:** For this two-way communication, training and policies for communicators become especially important. The Knoxville Police Public Information Officers are trained for a week with media members and then have hands-on training. The policies and training can deal with privacy when conversations are streamed publicly, avoidance of offensive statements, inaccuracies, and gaffes, how to handle errors when they inevitably occur, and when the expense of live camera equipment is justified.

3. **Use Social Media, Websites, and Apps to Promote Offline, Face-to-Face Events and to Support Dialogue Among Residents in Order to Build Community Resiliency.**

   - Bring residents to in-person discussion sites (3a)
   - Online stream key live events (3b)
   - Recognize positive contributions (3c)

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Community leaders can use social media communications to promote in-person conversation and to allow those who cannot attend an event to watch it. Social media can also build people’s appreciation for each other. This is a time of change in which social media experts are developing platforms aimed at building a sense of community and yet researchers continue to extol the superiority of in-person events. Research indicates that in-person conversations, compared to online ones, less often turn negative, and people are more open to each other’s views. In addition, as people spend more time online, social scientists point out that they are interacting less often in person, with a loss of the humanizing effects of friendships gained and the potential for more demonization of other groups. There is more experience in using live events to help people express emotions and affirm their support for each other in times of grief, though online means may eventually achieve comparable results.

In this changing environment, community leaders can use social media to:

a. **Bring residents to in-person events**: Leaders can use social media to promote attendance at in-person events held in less formal or more convenient locations than city hall, such as a recreation center, faith-based institution, school, or even a local coffee shop. As discussed in Strategy 1, a variety of platforms, key words, and community partners can be used to reach multiple audiences. Management platforms, such as HootSuite, can push out messages on a variety of platforms, and at pre-set schedules. Social media, such as Nextdoor, can target information to neighborhoods near the event. Social media can build momentum. For example, the Knoxville, Tennessee police department markets online that its officers are available to listen to and talk with residents at a community recreation center.

From Leadership Austin:

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b. Expand the audience for live events through online streaming: Some cities allow streaming of governmental meetings or of important community meetings or vigils. The live streaming can be done on platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube, and Periscope.
c. Celebrate when people make important contributions. Joseph Porcelli of Nextdoor states, “There is a big opportunity [with social media] to help people do great things and kind things for their neighbors and celebrate each other’s success.”

4. Work to Reduce and Combat Online Hate Speech/Discriminatory Conduct Through Social Media so as to Ameliorate the Effects.
   - Monitor social media for hate/discriminatory/threatening speech (4a)
   - Ask local employers to adopt social media guidelines for employees (4b)
   - Hold users accountable for their comments (4c)
   - Help residents when trolling occurs (4d)
   - Employ persons who have long experience with social media and who can structure public websites to reduce hate speech online (4e)
   - Call on social media platforms to modify the structures (4f)

The pervasive effects of social media on users’ lives makes them think of these platforms as one might have viewed radio or television in the past – as responsible for accuracy and fairness. Thus, users react with surprise to the unregulated nature of social media platforms. Online hate speech, bullying, negative emotions, and racial profiling have grown and, with that growth, contributed to a sense of exploitation by certain groups. Seventy percent of 18-24-year-old internet users have experienced harassment online. Women, people of color, and LGBTQ users are disproportionately recipients. In addition, a quarter of women users have been stalked online, according to a 2014 Pew Research Center survey. Online rhetoric is often more offensive, more frequent, and heard by a larger audience, and

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53 Divided Community Project Discussion with Joseph Porcelli, Senior City Strategist, Nextdoor, Moritz College of Law, Columbus, Ohio (Nov. 3, 2016).
goes unaddressed. Social scientists report that social media insults negatively affect a person’s sense of well-being. Anonymous deliberately offensive posting, often of racist and sexist comments, has become so common that it has an official name: trolling.

“Trolling” responses even to Sesame Street videos on YouTube and Twitter:

If community leaders can reduce this personalized hate/discriminatory/threatening online speech, they will improve their residents’ sense of well-being and might reduce their sense of marginalization. Such avenues might seem impossible for local officials, but they might be achieved when communities join.

Possible avenues for reducing hate speech and/or its effects on residents include:

a. **Monitor social media for hate/discriminatory/threatening speech.** Community residents want to hear from their leaders when they feel threatened or marginalized. Community leaders can maintain regular lines of communication with those likely to hear about such speech and apply social media monitoring technology to better understand how it manifests. Illustrating another approach to monitoring, PeaceTech Lab (a nonprofit spin-off of the U.S. Institute of Peace), has worked in South Sudan to identify and monitor trends of hate speech in

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social media, which has recently become a key driver of ongoing violence in the country. PeaceTech Lab worked with local organizations and groups to identify terms and sources most closely associated with hate speech and has been able to point to important trends that can support efforts to counter hate speech. A similar approach for communities in the U.S. can be used to identify terms likely to be used in attacks on groups in social media, and to demonstrate trends such as increases in their use and platforms on which they appear (see next section for more on this).\textsuperscript{57} Cynthia Schmidt, University of Central Florida, advises, “During unrest, make it a high priority to monitor Twitter.” Scott Paine, Florida League of Cities, counsels, “If you find a negative comment on social media and want to post a reply, just post a link back to your own site. The point is that you don’t want to ‘fight on their turf’ or let an argument occur. You also don’t want their page to get more traffic. You want to bring the discussion back to your turf, on your terms.”

b. Ask local employers to adopt social media guidelines for employees with regard to hate speech. A widely-publicized hateful Facebook post in 2017 was traced to a Florida civil servant in a clerk of court and comptroller’s office,\textsuperscript{58} where there were no employee social media guidelines. Private employers might also be reminded about the benefit of such policies. (For guidelines from such companies as GAP, Best Buy, the Los Angeles Times, Dell, see http://blog.hirerabbit.com/5-terrific-examples-of-company-social-media-policies/.)

c. Hold users accountable for their comments on community leaders’ own websites and encourage social media platforms and prominent users to do the same. A combination of actions may be required to improve accountability. Requiring commenters to provide real names might be a start when combined with other measures. For example, a Pulitzer Prize reporter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer, created a Facebook community for political discussions that has drawn 130,000 “friends,” in which commenters must include their names and profile pictures and support statements with credible sources.\textsuperscript{59} She sometimes calls out those who show disrespect, and then eliminates them from her feed.

d. Let residents know that you care; help residents understand how to reduce trolling; and encourage social media platforms to provide more workable ways to reduce trolling, ones not likely to lead to vindictive responses. Users can remove unwanted followers or friends on the three primary networks – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram – as shown on the chart below, but the blocked\textsuperscript{60} individual will be notified. While there seems merit in the notification in some cases, in the case of threats and hate speech some users fear that the blocked individual will retaliate, perhaps even with a physical attack. It may be helpful to work with social platforms toward solutions for this latter situation.

\textsuperscript{57}PeaceTech Lab, \textit{Social Media and Conflict in South Sudan: A Lexicon of Hate Speech Terms}, http://www.peacetechlab.org/hate-speech-in-south-sudan/.


\textsuperscript{60}A feature that enables users to prevent another user from interacting on social media.
e. Employ persons who have long experience with social media and who can structure public websites to reduce hate speech online. Mechanisms to remove hateful comments so that they are not easily visible may help, especially if done quickly, for example. A recent study indicates that people are more likely to act like trolls if they view others’ trolling comments.61 New software now makes it possible to sift through comments on a platform to reducing trolling comments.62

f. Call on social media platforms to modify the structures that seem to facilitate hate/discriminatory/threatening speech. Opportunities for change may open when the platforms feel the public disdain for their existing structures.

i. In a recent review of Facebook, the three most commonly associated phrases with the site were “fake news,” “hate speech,” and “social media abuse.”63 Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey has acknowledged that advertisements

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declined due to Twitter users’ disgust with the hate speech that they experienced on that platform. Facebook hired academics as a “compassion research team” that developed new ways to ask users to remove offensive posts and made empathy-building tweaks designed to create a gentler, kinder, and more emotionally complex platform.

ii. Providing another example of responsiveness, news media carried a story in 2015 that Nextdoor, a location-based social networking application for neighborhoods, “allowed” racial profiling and fear mongering through its reporting mechanism. Leaders of an Oakland, California community group raised the issue with Nextdoor executives. Nextdoor took the issue seriously, noting that divisiveness was counter to the company’s mission. The company took a variety of steps to address the issue. It updated its user guidelines to prohibit profiling by race and made modifications to the platform. The company looked at this as an opportunity to help educate neighbors on the best way to be thoughtful in making a post, according to Nextdoor Senior City Strategist and Professional Neighbor Joseph Porcelli. Porcelli said, “By helping our members identify which behaviors constitute suspicion and effectively communicate them, our goal was to reduce racial profiling and increase the utility of our platform.” Nextdoor consultant Grande Lum explained, “For the most part, neighbors did not intend to racially profile. Providing well-thought through guidelines for how to post on suspicious behaviors and changing the way neighbors shared information in the crime and safety category on Nextdoor had a significant impact. Being more precise on descriptions increases accuracy, and as a result: 1) residents feel and are safer, 2) innocent individuals are less likely to be targeted, and 3) resident relationships are enhanced when racial profiling does not happen online.” Those changes reduced racial profiling by 75%, according to Nextdoor.

iii. To fight discrimination on the site, Airbnb reduced the prominence of profile pictures and required all users to agree to a new “community commitment” that included a stronger non-discrimination policy.

5. Mine Social Media and Other Online Data as Part of an Overall Ongoing Initiative to Better Understand Community Concerns.

- Watch residents’ questions for trends (5a)
- Track hashtags and trending topics (5b)
- Use social media data and location to understand where concerns are arising (5c)
- Use social media analytics on one’s own sites (5d)
- Consider future use of predictive algorithms (5e)
- Create data mining policies/ethical standards and training (5f)

As a way to keep track of concerns raised by groups within their communities, and the depth of their feelings about them, community leaders can augment their advisory councils, community relations commissions, and constituency reports with policies and practices to mine social media data (sometimes called data analytics). Developing these policies and practices with the involvement of a stakeholder group can avoid both the reality and the perception that data mining will interfere with users’ privacy or be used to chill speech or assembly.

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Social media mining varies. It may mean merely watching the trending information already available on social media platforms. At the other end of the social media mining continuum, it might involve the use of powerful algorithms that combine social media data with geography, research on human behaviors, and other factors. The mining may also range from noting existing concerns to predicting future actions. Social media is a powerful data source for research.67

Common ways to learn about trending concerns include:

a. **Watch residents’ questions for trends**: For example, if community leaders allow virtual questions and answers with citizens, such as the Seattle Channel,68 discussed in **Strategy 2** above, what concerns underlie the questions?

b. **Track hashtags and trending topics**: On most major social media sites, users can discover topics that are popular within their communities through the websites’ use of trending topics lists. Both Facebook and Twitter have created algorithms that keep the trending lists up to date and specific to a user’s interests and community in which they live.

Hashtags symbolized by the “#” symbol are used to group posts about the same subject together in one place. Originally created for Twitter, hashtags have since spread to most major social media sites. Hashtags have become an important tool for activists and others concerned with issues within their communities. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatters was one of the most tweeted hashtags of 2015 and was central in starting and maintaining the overall movement.69

c. **Use social media data and location to understand where concerns are arising**: Most social media sites allow users to include their location when creating a post. Mapping users creates controversy though if users suspect that public officials track them in order to dampen their ardor to protest. In 2016 during the North Dakota Pipeline Protests, users believed that public officials were tracking those who were communicating

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67Globally—as measured at 11:10 am on March 31, 2017—each second, 7,562 Tweets are sent, 774 photographs are posted to Instagram, and 68,702 YouTube videos are viewed. Further, that data can be combined with material from other sources. Each second, for example, users conduct 59,537 Google searches. **Internet Live Stats**, http://www.internetlivestats.com/one-second/#tweets-band (last visited Mar. 31, 2017).


69Tanya Sichynsky, **These 10 Twitter Hashtags Changed the Way We Talk About Social Issues**, The W ashington Post, The Switch (Mar. 21, 2016), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-switch/wp/2016/03/21/these-are-the-10-most-influential-hashtags-in-honor-of-twitters-birthday/ (ranking the “10 most influential hashtags around social causes, ranked by the number of times they’ve been used since their inception” as provided by Titter).
from the protest site to identify them. In response to this story, users around the world began reporting falsely that they were at the protests to thwart what they thought were the authorities’ use of geographic location to suppress speech and assembly rights.\(^70\) Although this rumor was false according to a statement released by law enforcement on Facebook, it increased the distrust between the protesters and law enforcement and made legitimate police work related to the protests more difficult.\(^71\) Nextdoor allows public use of location without also allowing disclosure of individual identities, permitting monitoring of concerns without leading to residents’ concerns about repercussions for raising them.

d. **Use social media analytics on one’s own sites:** It may be simple to use social media analytics on one’s own sites (followers, posts, and related information) and such an approach will help to connect with community members and tailor messages to build community relations. On Facebook, for example, users with professional pages can use the Insights tool to learn the age, gender, location, and language spoken by people who “like” their page. They can find out how many people have viewed a post or followed a link, and other useful pieces of information. Users can learn the reach and performance of specific tweets on Twitter and some basic information about the people who follow the account and their interests. Instagram offers similar analytic tools for professional users (not individual accounts). Community leaders can learn about topics of interest, when to post important messages, what formats can reach the largest audience, and more.

e. **A possible future strategy -- combine social media data and other data with algorithms:** Some services use social media data to analyze community problems and to predict the next occurrence of civil unrest. Through these predictive analytics programs, communities can identify issues that are gaining traction so that they reach out during tranquil times to convene constructive discussions about the issues that might lead to change.

One predictive model that has found success in Latin America and has been used recently in the Middle East and North Africa is the Early Model Based Event Recognition using Surrogates program (EMBERS).\(^74\) Though not available in the U.S. as of this writing, research on EMBERS shows the capacities of such complex predictive models that use publicly available data including social media data and economic data among other sources. EMBERS predicted violent incidents in Brazil and Venezuela between six and 11 days before they occurred.\(^75\)

f. **Local leaders will want to accompany any data mining with transparent policies/ethical standards that take into account the public’s likely fears concerning privacy, free speech and assembly, and discriminatory use of data.** In other words, using data to learn more about the community to build trust and to improve community relations risks doing just the opposite if local leaders do not develop transparent policies that take these concerns into account. Though the data may be publicly available, the public often responds negatively to new ways of using it though data analytics, especially when done by the government.

Concerns seem to mount if the data mining involves:

- Use of a predictive model that will negatively affect a particular individual. For example, people may oppose use of social media data to predict behavior, such that law enforcement questions that individual. People have criticized the legal use of public data through algorithms such as programs that determine the price of

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\(^{71}\) Morton County Sheriff’s Department, FACEBOOK (Oct. 31, 2016), https://www.facebook.com/MortonCountySD/posts/34798172887505.

\(^{72}\) To like something on social media is originally a Facebook feature that evolved into an understood expression of support for content across platforms. You can “like” an Instagram post, for example. Along with shares, comments, and favorites, likes are tracked as proof of engagement.

\(^{74}\) Andy Doyle et al., Forecasting Significant Societal Events Using the Embers Predictive Analytics System, 2(4) Big Data 185, 186 (2014).

bail for an accused individual.\textsuperscript{76}

- Use of algorithms that affect people differently (and negatively) on the basis of race, gender, or income levels. Although the algorithms have proven that they are important factors in making determinations, such as predicting civil unrest, the use of factors such as race, gender, and income level produce risks of discriminatory outcomes if applied to whether a particular individual is protesting or likely to protest.\textsuperscript{77} If these mathematical prediction models do not account for societal issues such as racial inequality or problems associated with poverty, they can result in outcomes that are viewed as inherently unjust.\textsuperscript{78}

- Use of data to stifle protests. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has warned that the practice of tracking protesting individuals in an effort to stifle protests is an unconstitutional action that violates individuals’ First Amendment rights to free speech and assembly.\textsuperscript{79}


\textsuperscript{77}See \textit{Generally} articles cited in note 76.

\textsuperscript{78}See \textit{Generally} articles cited in note 76.

IV. Glossary of Social Media Terms

**Block:** A feature that enables users to prevent another user from interacting on social media.

**Comment:** To comment on something is a way to leave a message on another user’s content. Along with shares, likes, retweets, quote tweets, and favorites, comments are tracked as proof of engagement.

**Digital Immigrant:** A person born or raised before the widespread use of digital technology.

**Digital Native:** A person born or raised during the age of digital technology and therefore familiar with computers and the Internet from an early age.

**Direct Message:** A direct message (DM) is a private Twitter or Instagram message sent to a user’s follower.

**Facebook Check-In:** Checking-in is to declare when a user has physically visited a geographical location or event. Checking-in allows the user to let their friends know where they are, and in emergency situations, that they are safe.

**Facebook Events:** A calendar-based resource which can be used to notify users of upcoming occasions. Events can be created by anyone, and can be open to the public or be made private. The creator can invite Friends, member of a group, or fans of a page.

**Facebook Groups:** A space on Facebook where users can communicate and share content within a select group of people. There are three types of groups: public, closed, and secret. Facebook users can join a maximum of 6000 Facebook groups.

**Facebook Live:** A Facebook feature that allows users to stream live video to Friends. Users can interact with viewers in real-time and get live reactions to the broadcast.

**Facebook Messenger:** The app that allows Facebook users to message one another instantly through a smartphone. Updates to the app allowed for the ability to find their friends more easily, the possibility of reaching additional users not on the app, and increased the privacy settings.

**Facebook Reactions:** Introduced in February of 2015, Reactions allow Facebook users to react to a post beyond a simple “Like.” Reactions include: “love,” “haha,” “wow,” “sad,” and “angry.”

**Favorite:** An indication that someone likes a Tweet, given by clicking the star icon. Along with shares, likes, retweets, quote tweets, and comments, favorites are tracked as proof of engagement.

**Follower:** Twitter user or Instagram user who has subscribed to an account in order to view the account’s Tweets or pictures in their timeline. Facebook also allows followers. Followers happen when an individual has hit the 5000 person limit on friends.

**Friend:** A person a user connects with on Facebook or other social networking platforms. Unlike a fan or a follower, a friend is a two-way connection; both users have accepted the relationship.

**Hashtag:** A word or phrase preceded by the “#” sign. Hashtags are a simple way to mark the topic of social media messages and make them discoverable to people with shared interests. Clicking a hashtag will reveal all of the public and recently published messages that also contain that hashtag. Hashtags first emerged on Twitter as a user-created phenomenon and are now used on nearly every social media platform.

**Like:** To like something on social media is originally a Facebook feature that evolved into an understood expression of support for content across platforms. You can “like” an Instagram post, for example. Along with shares, comments, retweets, quote tweets, and favorites, likes are tracked as proof of engagement.
Geotagging: The practice of tagging a photo, video, or message with a specific location. The ubiquity of GPS-enabled smartphones has made geotagging a core aspect of social media.

Mention: The act of tagging another user’s handle or account name in a social media message. Mentions typically trigger a notification for that user and are a key part of what makes social media “social”. When properly formatted (for example, @mention on Twitter), a mention also allows the audience to click through to the mentioned user’s bio or profile.

Mute: A feature available on Twitter that allows users to remove select people from the feed without the other user’s knowledge. The muted account still sees the muting account in the muted account’s feed. The muted account can continue to favorite, retweet, and reply to the muting account’s tweets. The muting user does not see any of muted account’s activity on their timeline. Muting is not the same as blocking an account.

Number of Monthly Active Users: The most common way to measure the success rate of a social networking service; measured by counting the number of unique users during a 30-day period.

Private Accounts: The state of a social media account, such as Instagram, that protects content from the public. Users must request to follow private accounts to see content.

Protected Accounts: A private Twitter or Instagram account. Only approved followers can view Tweets and photos from a protected account or access its complete profile. Tweets from protected accounts cannot be retweeted, even by approved followers.

Quote Tweet: A type of retweet that allows another user to include his or her own comments in addition to the original Tweet. Along with comments, likes, shares, retweets, and favorites, quote tweets are tracked as proof of engagement.

Retweet: A Tweet that is re-shared to the followers of another user’s Twitter account. A Retweet allows another account’s followers to easily favorite the original Tweet. It is considered good etiquette to use this method rather than Quote Tweeting unless there is something valuable to add. Along with comments, likes, shares, quote tweets, and favorites, retweets are tracked as proof of engagement.

Share: When content is reposted on a social media site through another user’s channel. Along with comments, likes, retweets, quote tweets, and favorites, shares are tracked as proof of engagement.

Tag: A keyword added to a social media post with the original purpose of categorizing related content. A tag can also refer to the act of tagging others in a post, which creates a link to their social media profile and associates them with the content.

Timeline/Feed: The user’s data format that provides users with a steady stream of updates, content, and information.

Troll: Social media user who makes a deliberately offensive or annoying posting with the sole aim of provoking another user or group of users.

Tweet: Twitter message. Tweets can contain up to 140 characters of text, as well as photos, videos, and other forms of media. Tweets are public by default and will show up in Twitter timelines and searches unless they are sent from Protected Accounts or as Direct Messages. Tweets can be embedded in webpages.

Unfollow: The action of unsubscribing from another Twitter or Instagram user’s account.

Unfriending: Removing someone as a social media contact, most commonly used on Facebook.
V. Useful Sites on Social Media Use for Community Leaders

1. Directly from the social media sites:

2. Outside sites that provide social media advice:
3. Sites that allow for more in-depth discussions, surveys, and other forms of public engagement online and via text messaging:


4. A site that helps to understand which platforms might be most useful for particular purposes:

Divided Communities and Social Media

Strategies for Community Leaders

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