2016 Social Media Strategic Plan

(Last Updated: August 2016)

BACKGROUND

The Utah Department of Transportation encourages the use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration and the exchange of information in support of the Department's vision of "Keeping Utah Moving." Social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) have become important public information tools through which we can communicate with various stakeholders. The purpose in engaging on social media is to provide information about the department to the taxpayers and further the public discussion of transportation projects across the state.

The Department administers 14 Twitter accounts, eight Facebook pages and three Instagram accounts (as of July 2016). We also have an internal blog publishing employee stories and news items and a library of videos and presentations available on our UDOT YouTube page. Together, these pages have more than 55,000 fans/followers.

Social Media at UDOT

Twitter

Twitter is a global microblogging service made up of 140-character messages known as tweets. With more than 310 million active users, Twitter is one of the most widely used and accessible social media sites for quick news. This platform is well suited for brief messages or real-time updates that users can view and share from their desktops or mobile devices.

At UDOT Twitter is used differently depending on the handle. Generally it is used to disseminate project information and educate the general public. The following table outlines the purpose for each of the department's14 currently operating Twitter accounts:

Account	Purpose	Audience
@UtahDOT	Project updates; Department initiatives; Department vision, mission, goals	Utah general public
@UDOTTraffic	Real-time traffic information	Drivers/traveling public
@CarlosUDOT	Thought leadership: Mission, vision, values	Government, industry leaders, employees
@udot_shane	Employee recognition	UDOT employees
@UDOTSNAP	Program updates, School safety information	K-8 parents and school principals
@TravelWiseUtah	Education; Program updates	General public
@ZeroFatalities	Education; Program updates	General public
@UDOTMVC	Project updates; Online hotline	General public
@ThePointProject	Project updates; Online hotline	General public
@UDOTavy	Backcountry closures and highway avalanche hazard notifications for northern Utah canyons	Outdoor enthusiasts, back country skiers
Regions		
@UDOTRegionOne	Project updates; region specific news and events	Box Elder, Cache, Rich, Weber, Morgan and Davis County residents.

@UDOTRegionTwo	Project updates; region specific news and events	Tooele, Salt Lake and Summit County residents
@UDOTRegion3	Project updates; region specific news and events	Juab, Utah, Wasatch, Duchesne, Daggett and Uintah County residents
@UDOTRegionFour	Project updates; region specific news and events	Millard, Sanpete Carbon, Sevier, Emery, Grand, Beaver, Piute, Wayne, Iron, Garfield, San Juan, Washington and Kane County residents

Facebook

Facebook is currently the top social media website, with more than 1 billion active users and 989 million mobile users. Nearly 50 percent of all users log on at least once a day and spend 20 minutes each time surfing their newsfeeds. The average user interacts with 130 friends and is connected to 80 community pages, groups and events. (According to Facebook's 2016 second quarter report.)

This platform is ideal for sharing in-depth announcements and updates to define UDOT's brand as being transparent, approachable, and connected with the public. Currently the Utah DOT Facebook page provides news, videos, pictures and other information about the state's transportation system. The page also serves as a forum for civil dialogue on various transportation issues. UDOT encourages comments from the public and hopes that interested individuals will submit thoughts and reactions on a regular basis. UDOT also hopes that commenters will bring to our attention projects and ideas that will help us keep Utah moving.

UDOT currently operates eight Facebook pages:

Account	Purpose	Audience
Utah DOT	Project updates; Planned closures; Department initiatives	Utah general public
UDOT SNAP	Program updates	K-8 parents and school principals
TravelWise Utah	Education; Program updates	General public
Road Respect Utah	Program updates	General public
Zero Fatalities	Education; Program updates	General public
Don't Drive Stupid	Education, program updates	High school students
Adopt a Utah Highway	Program updates and information	General public
Mountain View Corridor	Communicate project information	Local residents and businesses

Instagram

Launched in 2010, Instagram is a photo- and video-based social media platform with more than 300 million users. Demographics suggest that Instagram is increasingly the platform of choice for younger generations. Currently UDOT has three Instagram accounts – @utahtransportation, @zerofatalities, @roadrespecttour – and is exploring the possibilities of this platform with photos, videos and graphics.

Instagram is a highly visual platform. Our purpose in using Instagram is to highlight the visual story of keeping Utah moving. Through photos and short videos, we can show Utahns the art of

transportation, and provide insight into the work being done everyday by UDOT crews. Content should be focused on unique photos, videos and graphics. The use of hashtags is also very important for having a broad reach on Instagram.

YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing website that allows users to upload, view, rate, share and comment on videos. With more than a billion users, YouTube can have impact in many ways – even in shaping world events. UDOT operates one YouTube site, https://www.youtube.com/user/UtahDOT. With over 900 subscribers (as of July 2016) the goal is to tell our story, both internally and externally, through video. These videos focus on project updates, future project introduction. The channel also serves as a hosting site for internal videos.

Social Media Primary Objective

These social media accounts present an opportunity for the Department to communicate directly with individuals as well as broadcast to a wide mass audience. In addition, news outlets often report stories based directly on a posting on one of the UDOT accounts.

UDOT's various social media platforms serve as a forum for civil dialogue on transportation issues. UDOT encourages comments from the public and hopes that interested individuals will share thoughts and reactions on a regular basis.

We will use social media to advance UDOT's vision, mission, strategic goals and emphasis areas by engaging in public conversation, discussion and education.

OBJECTIVES

- Use social media to communicate openly, honestly and regularly with all of UDOT's stakeholders, which includes the general public, employees, and industry leaders.
- Use social media to increase public perception that UDOT:

  - ✓ Communicates traffic & congestion information in an effective, timely manner to minimize delays (currently at 68 percent and currently at 5.18 on a 1-7 scale, according to UDOT annual survey)
  - ✓ Completes cost-effective construction projects on or before deadline (currently at 66 percent)
  - ✓ Values innovation and plans proactively for future transportation needs (currently at 75 percent)

KEY AUDIENCES

The following audiences will be targeted to accomplish the stated goal and objectives:

Primary

- General public
- Motorists

Secondary

- State government officials

- National transportation industry (AASHTO, state DOT leadership)
- UDOT employees

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

Primary Audiences

General Public, Motorists

This audience is mostly concentrated along the Wasatch Front because of population density and the location of employment. There are also significant populations outside the Wasatch Front that are in this audience, and their needs and concerns will be addressed through our social media outreach as well.

The self-interests of this group are primarily traveling to and from work, but especially returning home in a timely fashion. They desire more time for family, recreation and personal pursuits. They are typically less concerned about UDOT until construction, maintenance issues, or hazardous weather conditions on the roadway inconvenience them.

Daily commuters are generally quick to adapt their routes once made aware of construction delays and dislike being impacted without prior knowledge. This group is predominantly cost conscious and concerned with the current economic climate.

The current relationship and trust with this key audience fluctuates throughout the construction season and/or according to the project(s) encountered on the commute. But UDOT's annual public opinion research indicates that the public holds UDOT in high regard and generally trusts the organization. That trust is considered by UDOT leadership to be our currency with our stakeholders, and it is something of which we are fiercely protective.

Strategy 1: *Improve and unify UDOT's social media presence through consistent and relevant messaging and design across all social media platforms.*

Tactic 1: Review each social media account and develop individual goals for the account.

Tactic 2: Avoid duplication of social media presence and consolidate social media accounts where appropriate. (See Appendix E)

Tactic 3: Develop unified logo and cover images for social media channels and accounts.

Tactic 4: Develop an editorial calendar for each account to show when information will be posted. (See Appendix D)

Tactic 5: Develop a quality assurance/quality control plan (see Appendix C)

Tactic 6: Review analytics, brainstorm, and the upcoming social media messages during the monthly Regional Communications Manager meeting.

Strategy 2: *Increase quality engagement on social platforms by employing process guidelines for posting and responding to comments in a timely and appropriate fashion.*

Tactic 1: Develop content guidelines. (See Appendix A)

Tactic 2: Develop response protocol and guidelines. (See Appendix B)

Tactic 3: Require every major project to provide the UDOT social media specialist a fact sheet with contact information, potential hot-button issues and a Q&A.

Tactic 4: Add UDOT social media specialist to UDOT media alerts email distribution list.

Tactic 5: Develop weekly editorial calendars for @UtahDOT Twitter, UtahDOT Facebook page and UtahTransportation Instagram page. (See Appendix D)

Secondary Audiences

Employees

The Utah Department of Transportation's 1,600 employees have a lot of pride in the Department and the work they do. However, morale is low due to a number of factors (e.g., pay inequalities, erosion of benefits) and there is skepticism that the Department values its employees.

According to UDOT research, employees prize recognition, and they give and receive it regularly among their peers. They don't receive it as often as they would like from their direct managers or senior leaders.

Strategy 1: Improve employee loyalty and morale and involvement by recognizing internal accomplishments through the UDOT blog and the Deputy Director's Twitter account.

Tactic 1: Develop monthly editorial calendar for the Deputy Director's Twitter account. (See Appendix D)

Tactic 2: Spotlight an employee or division once a month on the UDOT blog. Share blog posts on social media.

Tactic 3: Share UDOT employee or division spotlight blog on the Deputy Director's Twitter account,UtahDOT Facebook page, and YouTube website

Strategy 2: Highlight interesting aspects of UDOT and employee accomplishments through monthly Talking Orange episodes on YouTube.

Tactic 1: Develop monthly editorial calendar for Talking Orange segments. (See Appendix D)

Tactic 2: Talk to various employees to encourage participation.

Tactic 3: Share episodes on other social media platforms to increase exposure and allow for employee sharing.

Government officials, National Transportation Industry (AASHTO, state DOT leadership, Etc.)

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is an influential group of state transportation leaders who exchange information, best practices, and innovations to develop and maintain a national transportation network. This audience also promotes national legislation, sets technical standards, and adopts innovative engineering and management techniques. UDOT social media posts targeted to these audiences will help reinforce the department's standing as a national leader in support of transportation innovation.

Strategy 1: Reinforce UDOT's standing as a national leader in transportation innovation through posting consistently on the UDOT Executive Director's Twitter account.

Tactic 1: Develop weekly editorial calendar for the Executive Director's Twitter account. (See Appendix D)

Tactic 2: Gather news articles and trend pieces to link to and add commentary and share articles on the Executive Director's Twitter account. Route through Communications Director.

Tactic 3: Research other social media outlets that would be appropriate in order to have an industry presence.

Key Performance Indicator

Each social media platform contains analytic monitoring tools to help gauge success of social media content and reach. Statistics are typically divided into impressions, interactions, and followers.

UDOT's social media goal is to reach as many Utahns as possible about transportation and road safety issues, and engage users to further that reach. Thus, the goal is to consistently increase the number of followers and interactions with users.

Analytic tools should be reviewed regularly to identify what content is performing well and what areas need improvement. UDOT will strive for an average engagement rate of .5%-.9% across social media channels. (Engagement rate is defined as the number of people who liked, commented, shared or clicked on a post/ People who saw the post.)

Appendices

SOCIAL CONTENT GUIDELINES (Appendix A)

All content on UDOT's social channels should promote UDOT's goals and emphasis areas. In general, if the content doesn't fit into one of the following charts, it is not appropriate to post:

UDOT Goal	Topics for Social Channels
Zero Fatalities	Safety messages, seat belts, speed limits, work zone safety
Preserve Infrastructure	Projects, maintenance, planned roadway restrictions related to construction work, innovation
Optimize Mobility	Projects, studies, traffic signals, planned and unplanned roadway restrictions, real time traffic information, event traffic info, innovation

UDOT Emphasis Area	Topics for Social Channels
Integrated Transportation	Multi-modal transportation, bicycling, pedestrian issues, transit,

	complete streets, safe walking and biking to school
Collaboration	Work with partnering agencies and local governments: cities, counties, MPOs, UTA
Education	STEM outreach and community service and/or sharing links to project websites where people can learn more about what we do, i.e. “How a bridge is built,” or “How traffic signals are coordinated”
Transparency	Info on decisions and decision-making processes; data sharing
Quality	Awards and recognitions

In addition to the subject matter, the tone of UDOT social media outreach is of paramount importance. The following guidelines should be strictly observed for both original postings and responses:

- Remember at all times that you are representing a high profile state government agency, and through that agency, the governor of the state of Utah.
- Be polite, respectful and courteous.
- Be friendly and conversational, but still professional.
- Avoid sarcasm or colloquialisms.
- There is no place in UDOT social media for “snarky” comments, or comments that are condescending, snide, critical or anything less than completely professional.

Keep in mind that as an extension of the public forum, all social media interactions are obtainable to the public via GRAMA request. Each platform has a built in archive system, and should be retained for that purpose.

RESPONSE POLICY__(Appendix B)_____

Choosing to employ social media means taking on the responsibility to field questions and respond to comments. Social media provides a venue for two-way and interactive communication, and it is important that UDOT does its best to respond to comments, questions and queries in a timely manner, (ideally within one business day.) Failure to do so, in some cases, may damage UDOT’s reputation with the public and harm its efforts to be transparent and approachable.

Not every comment requires a response. Facebook, in particular, should be seen as a public forum where the public can interact, ask questions and in some cases provide answers (often from a third-party source, thereby giving UDOT credibility). UDOT should answer questions from the public and respond where appropriate, but should not sacrifice quality or accuracy for the sake of immediacy.

Sensitivity is required to know when a response is appropriate. Sometimes even negative comments should be allowed to stand without response. This is especially true when members of the public are simply expressing an opinion – even a negative one. People are allowed to disagree with UDOT and the decisions we make and approaches we take. Once we have explained our position, we don’t need to continue defending or explaining it. Allow commenters to express themselves without being defensive.

Deleting comments from social media should be done very rarely and with care. A statement should be included in the page’s description that indicates profane and crude or hateful comments will not be tolerated. Any comment deleted should be retained on file with an explanation of why it was deleted.

As a matter of policy:

- Do not engage with commenters who are vulgar, belligerent or not adding to the conversation.

- Profanity, vulgarity, crudeness, rudeness and unkind comments toward UDOT, our partners or other commenters are not to be tolerated in our social media postings and should be deleted.
- Advertising inserted into a conversation thread should be deleted.
- If a valid complaint or concern is expressed, respond to the situation quickly and try to address the concern through more direct communication, such as private message or email.
- Do not engage with stakeholders who are asking off topic questions or are not contributing to the conversation.
- Always focus on facts, UDOT's vision, mission and goals.

If a question arises about a project that has its own official social page, redirect the question/concern and let the administrator of that page answer the question. For example:

AFTER HOURS RESPONSE

Credibility on social media platforms is established by providing accurate information in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to respond to questions/concerns through social media as soon as possible. Account administrators will work to determine what a reasonable and obtainable response time can be, (Ideally no longer than one business day). A statement in the account description should indicate when the account is monitored, and indicate when users can expect a response. *(Example: This account is monitored during business hours. Questions are typically answered within 24 hours.)* If the account is not regularly monitored, users should be directed to a place where questions/concerns can be directed. *(Example: This account is not regularly monitored. Questions and concerns should be sent to srwebmail@utah.gov)*

A chain of command or on call rotation should be set up for emergency/after hours response to inquiries that require immediate response through social media channels.

EMPLOYEE INTERACTIONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Keeping in mind the fast pace of information dissemination through social media channels, employees are encouraged to immediately bring any issues or misinformation regarding UDOT that is published, broadcast or posted on any social media networks to the attention of the UDOT social media specialist (SMS). The SMS will work to appropriately respond and clarify any online questions, issues or other matters in an open and transparent manner. This response may involve collaborating with parties internally to provide technical and other information. In the event the SMS is not available within one hour of notification, the UDOT Public Information Officer (PIO) and/or UDOT Director of Communications should be contacted to determine how to respond to the matter.

Only a few UDOT employees are authorized to speak for the Department online. If you are not one of them (if you are unsure, assume you are not), you should be very careful in speaking about UDOT projects, policies or issues in your personal social media interactions. If you choose to express an opinion, you must make clear that you are speaking for yourself and not

the Department. You can use a disclaimer like, “These are my own thoughts and do not necessarily represent the position of UDOT.” (See also follow Human Resource Rule R477-9-8 *Personal Blogs and Social Media Sites* and Policy 04-02 *Working with the Media)*

QA/QC POLICY_____(Appendix C)_____

Department employees and consultants using and managing social media on behalf of UDOT must employ the following quality assurance/quality control policy in all content development and management:

1. Assign a content developer, who will draft posts and social media updates.
2. Assign a content approver, who will review and approve content. Content should not be posted until approved. **Every post should be approved by someone in the central communications office.**

Do not sacrifice quality or protecting UDOT’s reputation for the sake of immediacy. Where possible, posts should be planned out, drafted, and approved ahead of time. (See Appendix D) Even last-minute posts should follow the process listed above.

SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR EXAMPLE___(Appendix D)_____

August 2016 Social Media Calendar

Title	Author	Topic	Postsing Date	Content	Platform
		Monday			
		Tuesday			
		Wednesday			
		Thursday			
		Friday			
		Saturday			
		Sunday			

ADDING SOCIAL CHANNELS___(Appendix E)_____

All UDOT social media sites shall be (1) approved by the Director of Communications; (2) published using approved social networking platforms and tools; and (3) administered by an approved employee or consultant with appropriate content and technical experience.

To obtain approval to use social media on behalf of UDOT (whether a division, region, project, program, or other group/purpose), consult the Communications Office.

UDOT wants to minimize the number of social media pages. If your division or region sees a need, a plan must be provided, including:

- The purpose for using social media and the intended audience(s).
- The social media tool(s) planned for use.
- The type and amount of information that will need to be posted, as well as frequency of information posted.
- How customer interaction will be handled.
- The name and title of the person who will be responsible for content development.
- How often the platform will be monitored and by whom.
- Passwords and user names must be shared with the UDOT communications office.

A member of the communications office staff will review the plan and determine how to proceed.

Each UDOT social networking site shall include a statement specifying the purpose of the site and linking back to an applicable department website. All UDOT social networking moderators shall be trained regarding the Department's social media policy by Communications office staff.

As new social media channels emerge, the Communications office staff will review conduct a review and determine which are appropriate for our presence.

Deleting Channels

When it is determined a social media channel is no longer needed, steps should be taken to phase out its use. This includes informing followers the account will no longer be active. As a matter of public record, the channel's content should still remain active. The account will be added to a list of "Inactive Social Media Accounts," maintained by the SMS.

SHARING CONTENT ___(Appendix F)_____

Content Origination

Content should originate from the social media account where it most closely matches the goal of that channel. (See *Social Media at UDOT*). In situations where there could be origination from multiple channels, the administrators of those channels should collaborate and come to an agreement on where it originates. (For example: a tweet about a project in Provo should originate from Region three; a tweet about an employee receiving a prestigious award should originate from the Deputy Director.)

"Sharing" content

Posts on social media are meant to be shared. This is done with the primarily objective of reaching a larger audience. Users share content by "retweeting," "sharing," or "liking" social media posts. Discretion should be taken before sharing content from a social media channel outside of UDOT. As a general rule, only content with a direct relation to UDOT, it's projects, or

employees should be shared from outside sources. Content from other social media channels within UDOT is considered appropriate for sharing as long as it is still in line with the channel's main goal.

APPENDIX G

OFFICIAL UDOT SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Utah Department of Transportation encourages the use of social media to enhance communication, collaboration, and information exchange in support of the department's mission to keep Utah moving. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have become an integral part of everyday life for millions of people around the world.

UDOT can use these tools to communicate and educate the public about the department's mission, vision, and values through posts about UDOT's goals and five emphasis areas.

Examples of social media include:

1. Communication: blogs, Internet forums, micro-blogging sites, social networking sites (like Facebook and Twitter), and online reader comments and forums, including websites of traditional media.
2. Collaboration: wikis and social bookmarking sites (Wikipedia and Delicious).
3. Multimedia: photo and video sharing (YouTube and Flickr).
4. Review and Opinion: product reviews and question and answer sites (Quora).
5. Entertainment: virtual worlds, online gaming and game sharing.

Because social media is viewed by many as credible and influences traditional media, UDOT treats information exchange through social media and online sources in a similar manner as it does traditional media. This document is to be used in conjunction with Policy 04-02 *Working with the Media* to provide guidelines on using social media on behalf of UDOT.

While many UDOT employees use social media personally, only a few approved individuals are allowed to use it on behalf of the Department. Any division, consultant, contractor, employee or partner must gain approval from the Communication Office before engaging in an official social media capacity.

Keeping in mind the fast-paced nature of information dissemination through social media channels, employees are encouraged to immediately bring any issues or misinformation regarding UDOT that is published, broadcast or posted on any of these online and social media networks to the attention of the UDOT social media specialist (SMS). The SMS will work to appropriately respond and clarify any online questions, issues or other matters in an open and transparent manner. This response may involve collaborating with parties internally to provide technical and other information. In the event the SMS is not available within one hour of notification, the UDOT Public Information Officer (PIO) then UDOT Director of Communications should be contacted to determine how to respond to the matter.

Personal use of social media should follow Human Resource Rule R477-9-8 *Personal Blogs and Social Media Sites*. This rule outlines state policy that no employee:

- Should post information representing the state or its agencies.

- Use the state seal or agency logo.
- Share protected or confidential information.
- Should discriminate, harass or threaten fellow employees or people wishing to do business with the state.

Other questions regarding personal use of social media should be directed to Human Resource Rule R47-9 *Employee Conduct*, or to the appropriate HR representative.

Ownership of Content

Content (photos, documents, etc.) posted on a UDOT social media channel becomes property of UDOT. As department property, the asset is available to the public through a creative commons license. UDOT asks that if UDOT content or materials are used that proper attribution is given to UDOT.

Additionally, if an employee or consultant seeks to use his or her own social media accounts (or company accounts) to show project or program progress, this is permitted as long as credit is given to UDOT and the Department is listed as the go-to source for information about the project or program. This can be done by tagging UDOT on the appropriate social platform.

Guidelines for Use

- **Tone and content considerations:** UDOT is a state agency, and the tone should reflect that. As a rule of thumb, do not post anything that UDOT leadership wouldn't say themselves. Use proper grammar, correct spelling and double check facts before posting. It is also important to follow UDOT's style guidelines. Be friendly and conversational, but still professional.
- **Maintaining a professional space:** Social media encourages two-way communication, which benefits organizations and key stakeholders by allowing ongoing, regular interaction. However, some users abuse this and may post or use inappropriate photos, language and videos on the social media sites. To protect UDOT and to help maintain a professional space, UDOT encourages the posting of and adherence to this policy for interacting on social sites, for all parties.

UDOT Social Media Participant Code of Conduct

We welcome and encourage comments, conversations and feedback. To maintain a professional space where ongoing communication can take place, please be advised of the following:

Foul language, threats, obscene comments and other unacceptable comments, content and posts will be deleted at the administrator's discretion.

Spam, off-topic or other similar posts and comments will be deleted at the administrator's discretion.

Opinions are welcome. We ask that you support these statements with research, findings or even the original source so we can best respond to your query.

This account is monitored during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.)

Some issues are best handled off-line. We may ask you to call us, message us privately or email us to best respond to your question or address a concern. Additionally, some great resources include:

- *Traffic and road conditions: visit udottraffic.utah.gov or download the UDOT Traffic app on your smartphone.*
- *General UDOT questions or queries: call (801)965-4000 or email srwebmail@utah.gov*

- **Responding and answering:** Choosing to employ social media means taking on the responsibility to field questions and comments. Social media provides a venue for two-way communication, and it is important that UDOT does its best to respond to comments, questions and queries in a timely manner, (Ideally within one business day). Failure to do so, in some cases, may lead to negative feedback that could damage UDOT's reputation with the public and harm its efforts to be seen as a transparent, approachable agency. Not every comment requires a response. Facebook, in particular, should be seen as a public forum where the public can interact, ask questions, and in some cases provide answers (from a third-party source, thereby giving UDOT credibility). Answer questions from the public and respond where appropriate, but do not sacrifice quality or protecting UDOT's reputation for the sake of immediacy. Questions should be answered in a timely manner as determined by
- **When in doubt:** If you have any questions or comments, or need assistance in addressing a situation that began in the social media space, contact the Communications Office.