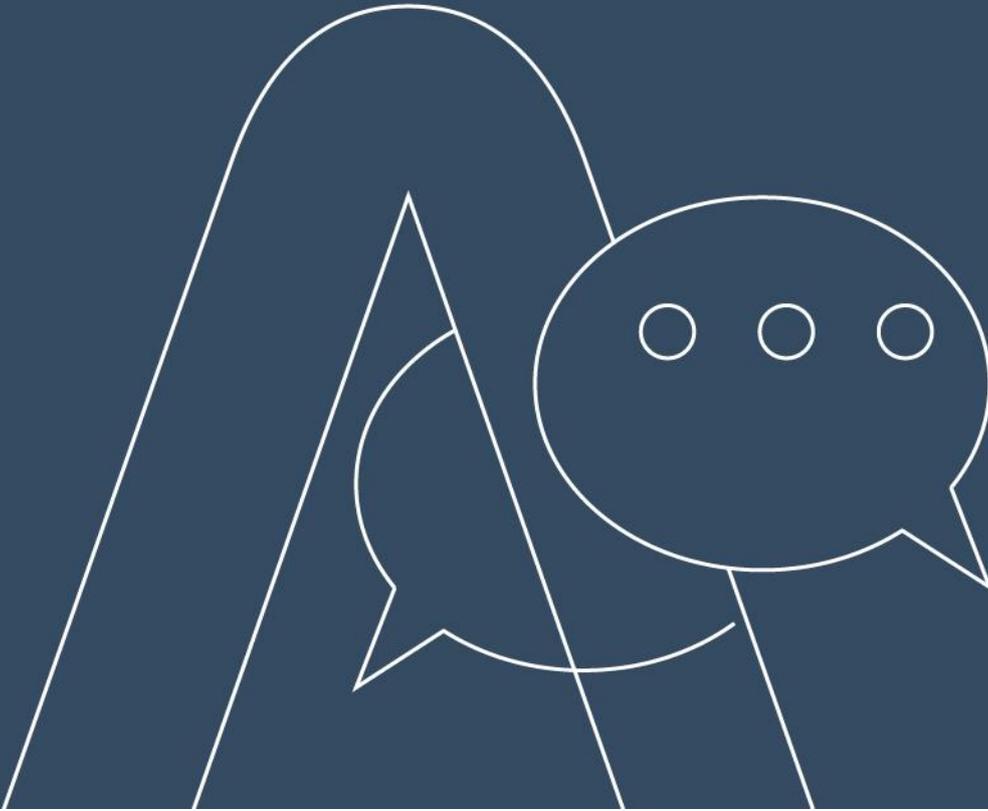


# Social Media Guidelines for UAE Government 2021

By: The Telecommunications and Digital Government  
Regulatory Authority (TDRA)



## Table of Content

<b>Section 1: About This Document</b>	4
Purpose and Scope	4
How to Use This Document	4
<b>Section 2: Introduction</b>	6
The Case for Social Media in Government	6
Social Media in The UAE Government	10
<b>Section 3: Social Media Strategy</b>	12
Principles	13
Goals	16
Target Audience	23
Platforms	25
Content	37
Budget	41
Metrics	43
People	48
Risks	52
Key Success Factors	53
<b>Section 4: Social Media Policy</b>	54
Access to Social Media	55

Account Management	57
Employees Code of Conduct	57
Security and Privacy	59
Risk Management	60
<b>Section 5: Practicing Social Media</b>	<b>63</b>
Content Calendar	65
Managing Hashtags	69
Community Management	74
Social Media for Public Participation	77
Writing for Social Media	79
Accessibility	80
Innovation and Creativity	98
Account Hygiene	99
<b>Section 6: Key Trends for Social Media in Government</b>	<b>86</b>
COVID-19 and the “Infodemic”	86
Digital Diplomacy	90
Video and Stories	92
The Rise of TikTok ... and Video Sharing Apps	109
Data and Artificial Intelligence	95
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>101</b>
Appendix A: List of Case Studies and Examples	101

## Section 1: About This Document

### Purpose and Scope

As part of its mandate to lead the digital presence of the government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), The Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA) has issued this document to offer the federal and local government entities in the country an updated official reference in the topic of social media in government. The purpose of this document is to inspire and help the government entities innovate in using social media in alignment with the national agenda of the UAE government, the international best practices and most recent social media and digital government trends.

### How to Use This Document

In general, this document is organized into two major themes: planning and preparing, and practicing social media.

The document is organised into the following sections:

- Introduction: briefly describes the scene of social media globally and in the UAE, with focus on the public sector.
- Social Media Strategy: explains the need for social media strategy and presents its key elements. This section also offers a set of recommendations on how to design your entity's social media strategy.
- Social Media Policy: this section explains why it's essential to have an internal social media policy for your entity, and the key elements of a well-crafted policy. In addition, it offers a set of recommendations you can use to design or update your entity's social media policy.

- **Practicing Social Media:** while the previous two sections focus on helping you plan and prepare, this section focuses on the actual use of social media. It explains a variety of topics such as content calendar and moderation methods and offers a set of recommendations for each.
- **Trendy Practices:** we dedicate this section of the document to highlight key practices that have emerged recently or have been and promoted as international best practices. The recommendations in this section should offer you a source of inspiration and a starting point to start adopting these practices and elevating your social media game.
- **Appendix:** we share with you in this section a list of learning resources, examples and case studies for your ongoing self learning and capacity building.

The recommendations throughout these sections are supported with examples and case studies from the UAE and around the world. This should make it easier to resonate with them and incorporate them into your social media practices.

For your social media team and stakeholders to gain the maximum value of this document, we recommend the following:

- Review and discuss the recommendations provided in each section in light of your current social media plans and practices.
- Identify the potential opportunities for adopting new practices or improving the way your entity uses social media.
- In essence, this document is meant to be technology-neutral. So, while you should aim at learning from the platform-specific recommendations and examples provided here (e.g. Twitter and Facebook), it's important to make your technology related decision in light of your entity's priorities and preferences. It's also important to check the technical resources of each platform for updated and specific technical information.
- The examples and case studies from around the world are meant to offer a source of inspiration for your social media team. We highly recommend

considering these best practices and the recommendations associated with them in the context of your entity’s social media plans and preferences.

## Section 2: Introduction

### The Case for Social Media in Government

The United Nations e-Government Survey 2020<sup>1</sup> offers a clear link between the use of social media by governments and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals - specifically the (16.7) goal: “ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels”<sup>2</sup>. According to the Survey, because of the growing access to social media, an increasing number of people are proactively using networking platforms and opportunities to connect with others and engage in participatory decision-making. This trend of expanded access to direct channels of communication will likely contribute to the development of new types of collaborative partnerships between government bodies and local residents.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 1 from the survey offers a visual of this trend. As we can see, most government portals have social media networking tools.

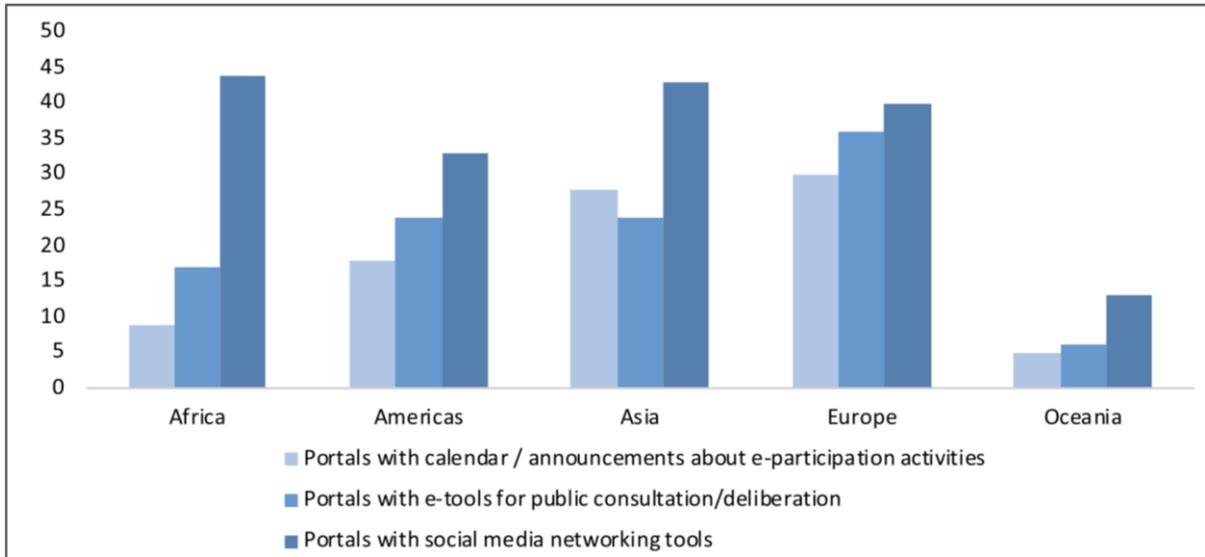
*Figure 1. Number of Countries Offering Selected Features for Online Interaction, by region, 2020<sup>4</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

<sup>2</sup> [United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals](#)

<sup>3</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

<sup>4</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020



The report highlights how leveraging social media at the national and local government levels to engage citizens in decision-making processes has helped Cambodia, for example, move up 42 positions in the E-Participation Index (EPI).

The COVID-19 pandemic and the multi-faceted crisis that has taken the world by surprise has shown us even more evidence that social media can be an effective tool governments can leverage to communicate with their citizens and support the design and implementation of public policies and programs.

In the United States, for example, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has launched a dedicated “Social Media Toolkit” that includes social media- ready content pieces that deliver specific messages in a variety of topics related to the pandemic such as: social distancing, masks, and contact tracing.

These messages are provided in various formats (e.g. text and video) and were made to suit various platforms including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The CDC's Social Media Toolkit offers social media -ready content<sup>5</sup>

## Masks

**Facebook Sample Message**

Wear a mask when you're in public to help slow the spread of COVID-19. When selecting a mask, you have many choices. Avoid masks that are made of materials that make it too hard to breathe. Also avoid masks with valves or vents that allow virus particles to escape and masks that should be saved for healthcare workers. Wear cloth masks with two or more layers to help protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

Learn more about the do's and don'ts of masking: <https://bit.ly/3i9Sy2k> #WearAMask

---

Masks are most likely to slow the spread of COVID-19 when they are widely used in public. Wear a mask when you are around people not living in your household, especially when social distancing (staying at least 6 feet apart) is difficult to maintain. Learn more about the importance of wearing a mask in public settings: <https://bit.ly/3ee8iP4>

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Wondering when to use a mask? Wear a mask when you are in a public setting, especially when it is difficult to stay 6 feet away from others not living in your



**DO NOT choose masks that**

-  Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe, for example, vinyl
-  Have exhalation valves or vents, which allow virus particles to escape
-  Are intended for healthcare workers, including N95 respirators or surgical masks

[Download the video](#) [MP4 - 6 MB]



[Download the video](#) [MP4 - 2 MB]

But governments are not new to the space of social media. Over the past decade, social media has become a vital part of the way modern governments communicate with their citizens and engage them in the decision making process.

And while governments around the world keep expanding their use of social media for disseminating information, promotion of public services and engaging their citizens in the process of decision making, this doesn't come free of challenges.

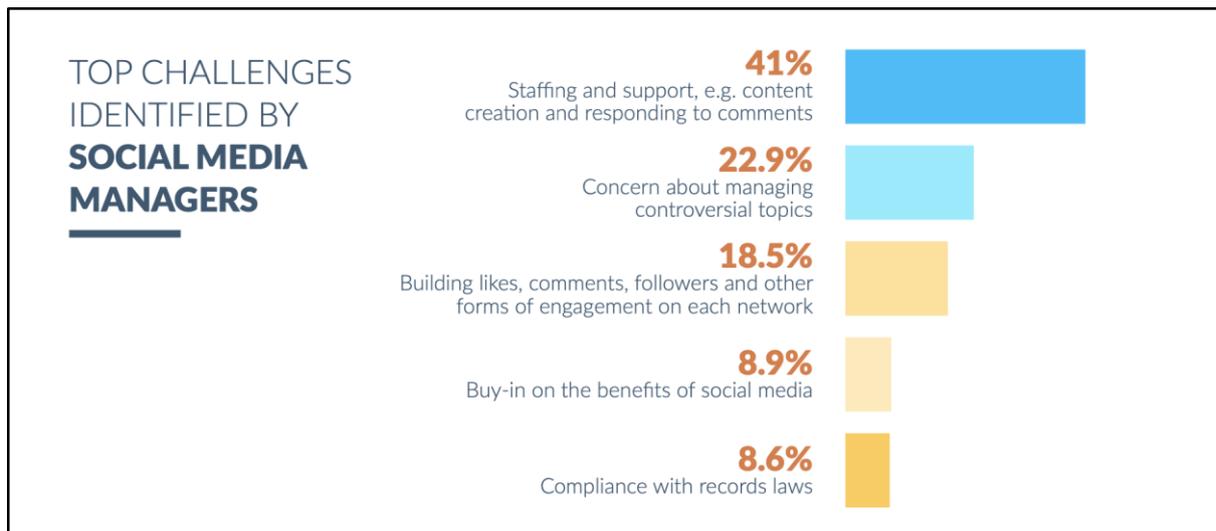
<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/social-media-toolkit.html>

According to a recent survey<sup>6</sup> that covered more than 10,000 public sector agencies in the United States and Canada, the participants identified the following as their top 3 challenges:

1. Staffing and support
2. Managing controversial topics
3. Building engagement on each network

Figure 3 shows the full list of top 5 challenges and their percentages.

*Figure 3. Top Challenges Identified by Social Media Managers<sup>7</sup>*



The United Nations e-Government Survey 2020 features several successful and inspiring ways in which governments from around the world use social media to achieve a variety of objectives. In China, for example, social media applications have been smartly utilized as digital tools to connect people,

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/docs/default-source/resources/state\\_of\\_social\\_media\\_public\\_sector\\_\\_2020\\_report.pdf?sfvrsn=5b88d6d5\\_0](https://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/docs/default-source/resources/state_of_social_media_public_sector__2020_report.pdf?sfvrsn=5b88d6d5_0)

<sup>7</sup> The State of Social Media in the Public Sector 2020 (floridaleagueofcities.com)

businesses and the Government. The most notable examples are WeChat and Alipay, which allow individuals to access public services through their smartphones. And in Argentina, “*The strong social media presence of the Government further promotes the use of online public services and allows for direct engagement with people to obtain feedback on their level of satisfaction with the services.*”

## **Social Media in The UAE Government**

As the world turned to social media and interactive apps like TikTok during COVID-19, similarly in the UAE, TikTok saw a surge in users; one in four residents is active on the platform.<sup>8</sup>

And similar to the situation in leading countries around the world, the UAE government has been offering a series of inspiring examples on how social media can be leveraged by the public sector leaders and institutions to contain the pandemic and its impact on citizens and residents. Figure 4 shows the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed visiting the UAE’s first drive-through Covid-19 test centre.

*Figure 4. The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed visited the UAE’s first drive-through Covid-19 test centre.*<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [The state of digital in the UAE - the 2020 edition - Socialize Agency](#)  
<sup>9</sup> <https://twitter.com/MohamedBinZayed/status/1243929907748626432>


**محمد بن زايد**   
 @MohamedBinZayed

Replying to @MohamedBinZayed

Today, I visited the mobile COVID-19 Test Center set up by SEHA as part of measures to contain the virus. Medical teams out in the field are the first line of protection of the UAE, their sacrifices safeguard our health.



7:56 PM · Mar 28, 2020 

 2.6K
  See the latest COVID-19 information on Twitter

## Section 3: Social Media Strategy

Similar to other parts of your organisational functions such as human resources or information technology, you need to have a strategy for social media.

The main purpose of this strategy is to help you answer key questions such as why to invest in social media, and whom to target. In addition, a well designed strategy should help you navigate some risky or ambiguous areas of social media with a great level of success.

### Recommendation:

The process of designing and maintaining the social media strategy should be led by the team or unit in charge of social media. More on this under the People title in the Strategy section of this document.

### Recommendation:

You can leverage standards frameworks or templates provided by the strategy department in your entity. This can save you time and effort and also offers more consistency with the practices in your entity.

### Recommendation:

Aim at designing the strategy for one or two years maximum. This should help you make it agile and should enable you and your team to review it and update in a more frequent way that suits the ongoing and fast paced change in the social media space.

### Recommendation:

Consider covering the following ten elements in your social media strategy (Figure 5):

Figure 5. Ten Elements of Social Media Strategy



## Principles

The principles offer you a high level guidelines on how your entity should approach social media. They can act like a reference point to remind everyone in your entity why it's active on social media and how to lead your way forward.

Following we recommend a non exhaustive set of principles to consider when deciding on the principles of your social media strategy:

Recommendation:

Adopt the ten characteristics of the Emirati personality as announced by H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 6. H. H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai announces the ten characteristics of the Emirati personality<sup>11</sup>



Recommendation:

<sup>10</sup> <https://u.ae/en/participate>

<sup>11</sup> <https://twitter.com/HHSnkMohd/status/1186976665244786689>

Promote innovation and creativity in your social media activities, in alignment with the guidelines and criteria set by the TDRA and also the UAE's national agenda.

*Recommendation:*

Be people-centric and leave no one behind. Invest in thoroughly understanding your target audience online communities on social media and considering their interests, values, and needs in the content you share and activities you do. You should always respect their diversity and promote inclusion. (Figure 21, Section 3)

*Recommendation:*

Promote openness and transparency, which is essential for any successful and sustainable social media presence. A commitment to openness and transparency is essential to further boost the public trust in your social media presence and to encourage them to be more active and genuinely engaged.

*Recommendation:*

Be intentional and plan your social media investment at both strategic and operational levels.

*Example:* The World Health Organisation (WHO) has adopted a set of six principles for “effective communications” (Figure 7). It's worth noticing that these principles target five different stakeholders: individuals, communities, health care providers, WHO staff, international organisations and policy makers.

*Figure 7. Principles for effective communications<sup>12</sup>*

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.who.int/about/communications/principles>



## Goals

Your social media goals should set the direction of all of your activities and investments, and they should be aligned with some or all of your entity's strategic goals as defined in the corporate strategy.

While researching and defining your social media goals, you can refer to the broad categories for social media goals below as a guidance to stimulate your discussions.

### Category 1: Increase brand awareness

Description: Due to its popularity, social media can be a great tool for winning the attention of your target audience and increasing their knowledge about your entity and its services.

Suggested Metrics:

- Followers count
- Reachability of content

Example: Sony's [PlayStation](#)<sup>13</sup> is one of the most followed brands on Twitter and it consistently uses social media to promote new releases, new game trailers, gaming footage, and streaming events. It recently leveraged social media during COVID-19 pandemic to promote its free games.

*Figure 8. PlayStation promotes its free games on Twitter<sup>14</sup>*



## Category 2: Boost brand engagement

Description: Instead of just broadcasting content, you can use social media to increase the level of engagement between your entity and target audience.

Suggested Metrics:

- Likes, shares, and comments

<sup>13</sup> [PlayStation \(@PlayStation\) / Twitter](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/PlayStation/status/1257395588267675648>

- Mentions and replies

### **Category 3: Drive traffic to your corporate website**

Description: You can leverage your social media content to attract your followers to certain pages and sections of your website.

Suggested Metrics:

- Number of website visits generated from social media
- Share of the visit social media accounts for from the total website visits

### **Category 4: Promote public services**

Description: social media can be used to educate the public about the services offered by your entity and encourage them to use these services.

Suggested Metrics:

- Conversion rates: the ratio of your online service access or transactions that are generated through social media. ,

### **Category 5: Offer customer service**

Description: 54% of customers prefer social media for customer service over phone or email<sup>15</sup>, and it's 80% cheaper for corporations to solve issues via social media than over the phone.

Suggested Metrics:

- Number of customers' inquiries answered

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-business/social-media-customer-service-statistics-and-trends-infographic>

- Average response time

### **Category 6: Build and grow an online community**

Description: You can build a closed or open online community around your entity or one of its services.

Suggested Metrics:

- Number of members in a Facebook group
- Number of monthly issues discussed in the community

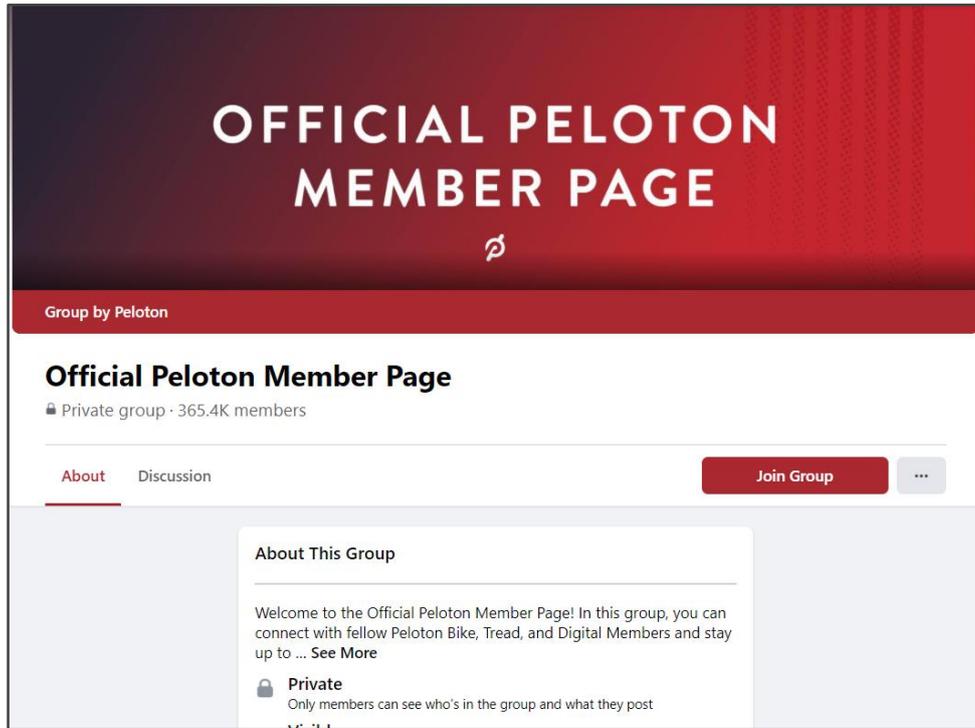
Example: The American exercise equipment brand Peloton has launched an official members [Facebook group](#)<sup>16</sup> which has over 300,000 members. Having a closed group creates higher engagement levels as it is intended to be a safe space for members to share personal stories with Peloton as well as ask questions and share recommendations with other brand members.

*Figure 9. Peloton's official Facebook group for members<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>16</sup> [Official Peloton Member Page | Facebook](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Official Peloton Member Page | Facebook](#)



## Recommendations on defining your social media goals:

### Recommendation:

Align your social media goals with your corporate strategy objectives. Every social media goal should contribute to achieving at least one strategy objective.

Example:<sup>18</sup> “Share our history” is one of the goals of the social media strategy of The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in the United States. The strategy clearly states that his goals contributes to the following four goals in the NARA Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Goal 1: Make Access Happen
- Strategic Goal 2: Connect with Customers
- Strategic Goal 3: Maximize NARA’s Value to the Nation

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.archives.gov/social-media/strategies>

- Strategic Goal 4: Build Our Future Through Our People

Recommendation:

Ensure your social media goals are SMART and in alignment with any internal guide you have for defining strategic goals. SMART goals are:

- S = Specific
- M = Measurable
- A = Achievable
- R = Relevant
- T = Time-based

Recommendation:

Your social media goals should help in making your social media activities diverse and cover your core business domain (e.g. healthcare) and not only support domains (e.g. communications).

Recommendation:

Ensure the alignment of the social media goals with the goals of existing strategies for media, communication, public relations and other related departments or functions in your entity that focus mainly on reaching out to the public.

Recommendation:

When you decide to use social media to promote your entity's services, consider the following:

1. Use your social media accounts to promote both online service and the services offered through your customer service centers.

Example: Ministry of Health and Prevention has leveraged the COVID-19 outbreak to introduce and promote services like “The Virtual Doctor” on its social media channels (Figure 10).

Figure 10. MOHAP Twitter Account<sup>19</sup>



2. When you promote online services, track the conversion rate to measure the effectiveness of your content in sending people to the identified services.

Example: UAE’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation promotes services it offers on its website like documents assertion on its Twitter account.

<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/mohapuae/status/1314115954792689664>

Figure 11. UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation drives traffic to its website and app<sup>20</sup>



3. You can share a variety of content pieces:
  - Explain the steps or instructions for a specific service.
  - Share updates on a specific service or service center.
4. Use videos and visuals as much as possible to make your content more appealing and also easier for the audience to understand and follow.
5. If a certain service has a specific social media account, always promote the content of this account via your corporate account.
6. Ensure you use the language and tone that's suitable for the target audience of the services you aim at promoting.

## Target Audience

Your target audience is the group(s) of people you have decided to target with your social media content and activities. Identifying your target audience is essential for effectively and efficiently allocating your resources and maximizing your success in achieving your social media goals.

<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/MoFAICUAE/status/130007792175206400>

Recommendation:

Your target audience can consist of sub-categories based on factors such as location, spoken language and age.

Recommendation:

Answering the following questions can help you initiate the process of defining your target audience:

- What does your entity's mandate or strategy document say about the target of the entities' services and policies?
- Who are the users of your services?
- What are the demographics of those users?
- Where are they based out? Inside the UAE or abroad? In which countries?
- What language(s) do they speak?
- What digital channels and technologies they use while accessing social media?

Example: The Business department of Australia Government has identified the following three categories of target audience for their social media content:<sup>21</sup>

- People who want to start a business in Australia.
- Businesses and business owners in Australia.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.business.gov.au/About-us/Content-and-social-media-policy>

- People who provide services to Australian businesses, such as accountants, tax agents, business advisers, researchers, and business educators.

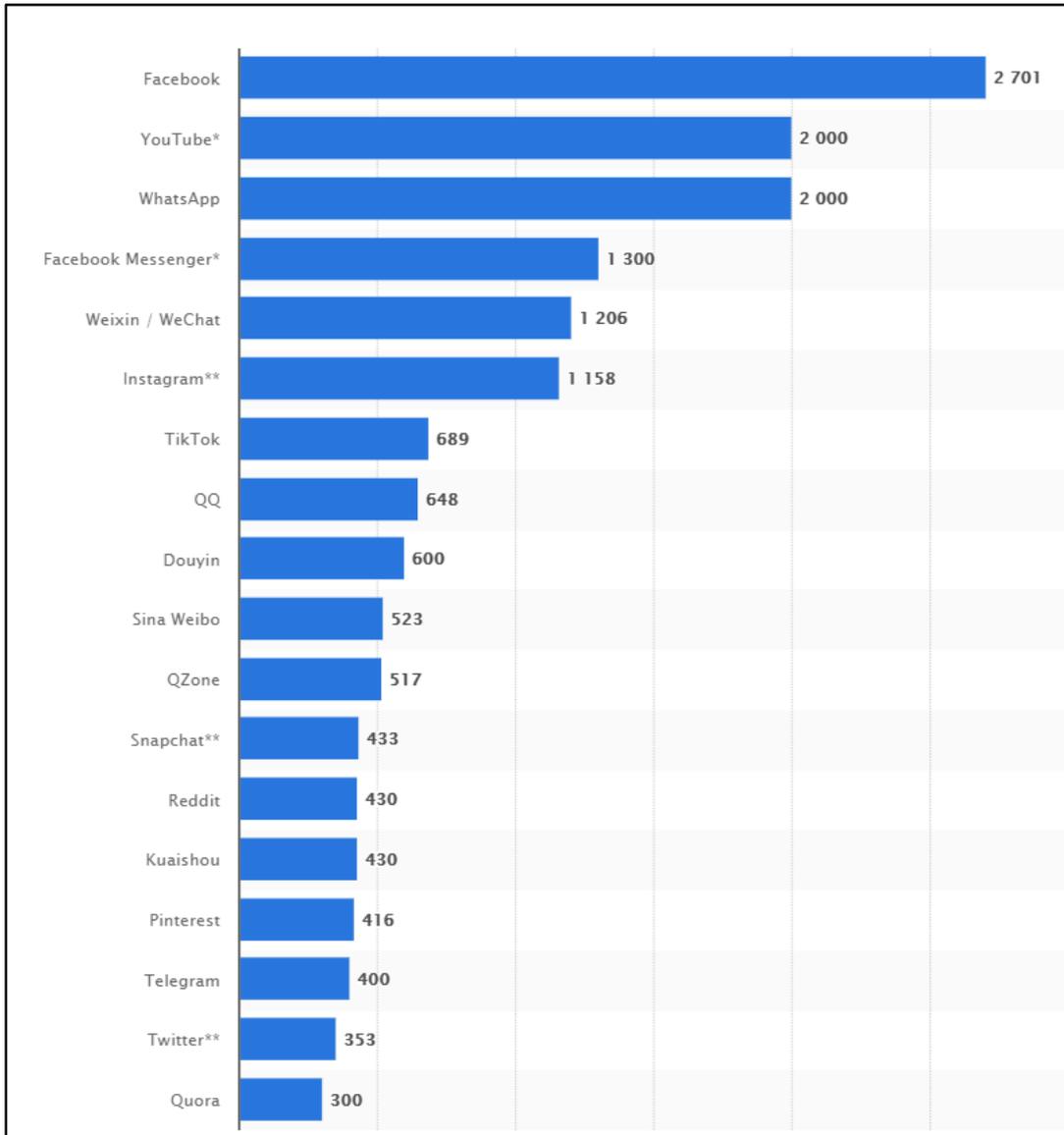
## Platforms

The wide and always growing range of social media platforms can be overwhelming and a source of distraction. That is why you need to carefully identify the social media channels and platforms you will need to establish and manage your presence on. Figure 12 offers a list of the top social media apps globally measured by numbers of active users.

*Figure 12. Top Social Media Apps Globally by Numbers of Active Users (July 2020)<sup>22</sup>*

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

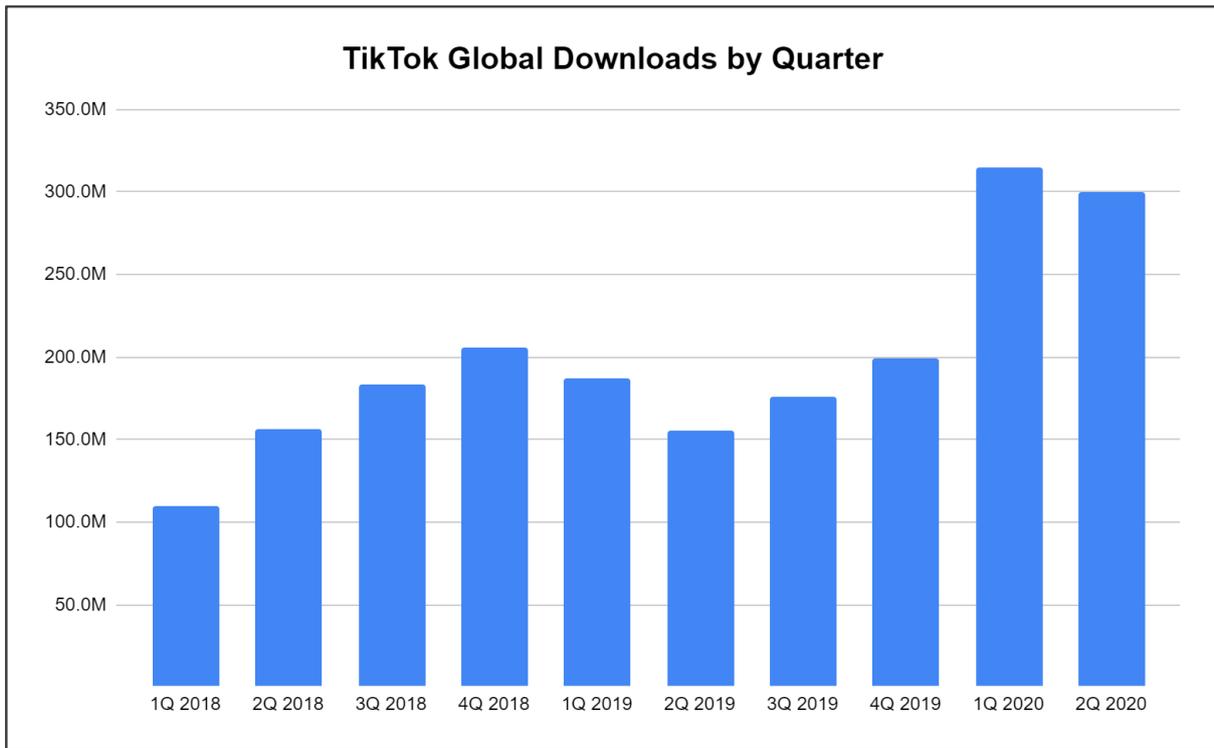


The year 2020 has seen a surge in increased social media use and global internet traffic has grown by as much as 30 percent this year<sup>23</sup>. And many of the trends that emerged in 2020 are predicted to carry over to 2021.

The skyrocketing growth of TikTok and other interactive media / video sharing platforms is definitely one of these trends. As shown in Figure 13, the global downloads of TikTok jumped from 199 Million in the last quarter of 2019 to around 300 Million in the first two quarters of 2020.

<sup>23</sup> <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2020-july-global-statshot>

Figure 13. TikTok’s Quarterly Numbers of Downloads<sup>24</sup>

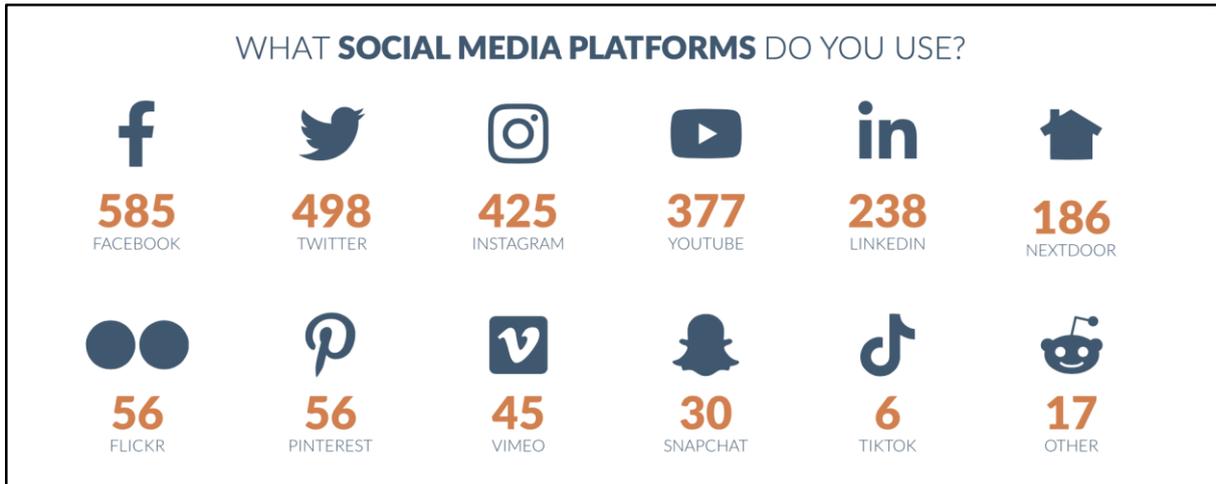


In a recent survey that covered more than 10,000 public sector agencies in the United States and Canada, the participants identified the social media platforms shown in Figure 14 as the platform they use in their entities<sup>25</sup>.

Figure 14. Most used Social Media Platforms among Survey Public Sector Agencies in the US and Canada

<sup>24</sup> SensorTower

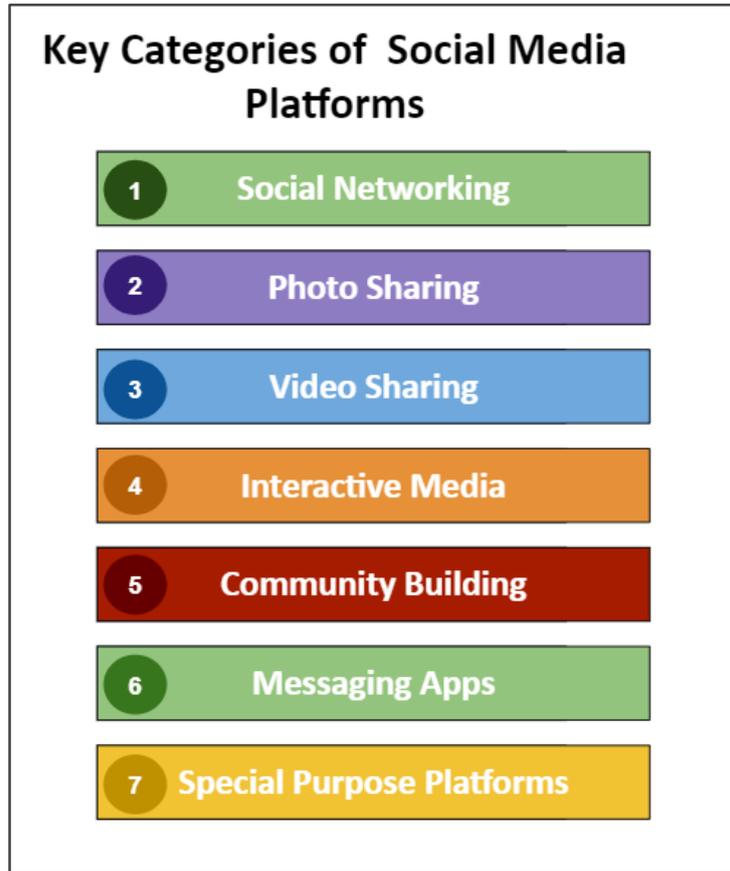
<sup>25</sup> <https://archivesocial.com/guides-templates/the-state-of-social-media-in-the-public-sector-2020/>



To help you have a sense of the full picture of social media platforms as of early 2021, and decide which ones you should consider using. You can look at them through the following seven categories demonstrated in Figure 16.

It's important to remember that the boundaries are not always clear between these categories. A photo sharing platform for example (e.g. Instagram) can also enable you to share videos.

*Figure 15. Key Categories of Social Media Platforms*



### Social Networking Platforms

These are the most popular among all social media platforms. They allow individuals to create profiles and interact with each other, and they enable brands too to establish their presence and engage with the other users.

Examples of the most popular platforms: [Facebook](#)<sup>26</sup>, [Twitter](#)<sup>27</sup> and [LinkedIn](#)<sup>28</sup>.

Figure 16. Twitter Account of UAE’s Ministry of Finance<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/>

<sup>27</sup> <http://twitter.com>

<sup>28</sup> <http://linkedin.com>

<sup>29</sup> <https://twitter.com/MOFUAE>



## Photo sharing platforms

Platforms that allow individuals and brands to share visual content about themselves in the form of images with a variety of features. Some platforms like Instagram offer filters and other types of effects.

Examples of the most popular platforms: [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/)<sup>30</sup> and [Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/)<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.pinterest.com/>

Figure 17. Instagram Account of UAE's Ministry of Climate Change and Environment<sup>32</sup>



## Video sharing platforms

Similar to the photo sharing platforms, the video platforms enable individuals and brands to post videos with a variety of specifications and features.

Examples of the most popular platforms: [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)<sup>33</sup> and [Vimeo](http://vimeo.com)<sup>34</sup>.

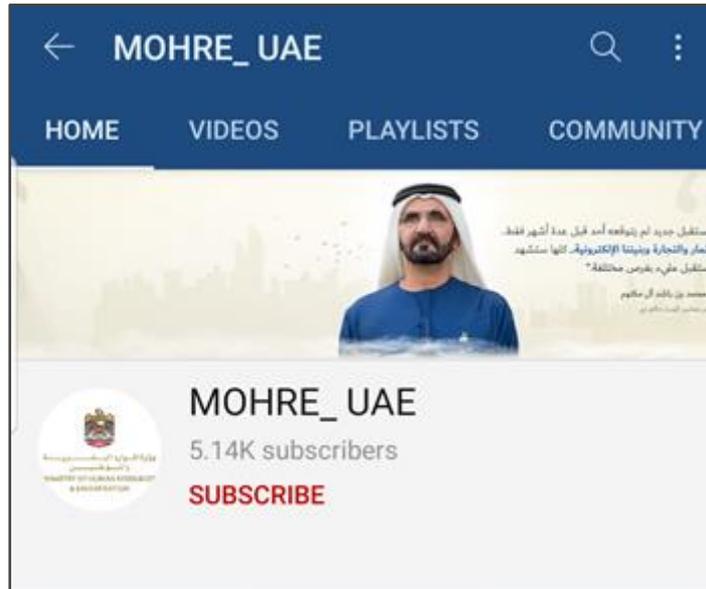
Figure 18. Youtube Account of UAE's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.instagram.com/moccaeuae/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.youtube.com>

<sup>34</sup> <http://vimeo.com>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/user/MOLUAE/videos>

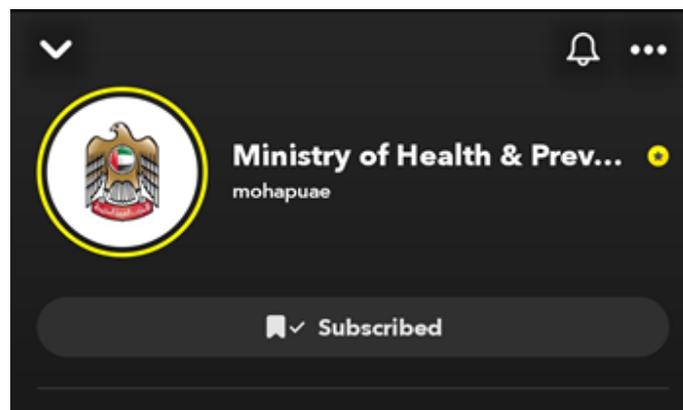


### Interactive media platforms

These platforms allow their users to share photos and videos and apply a variety of interactive features including AR/VR filters, musical overlays, and interactive games. Their audience bases are also prominently Gen-Z.

Examples of the most popular platforms: [Snapchat](#)<sup>36</sup> and [TikTok](#)<sup>37</sup>.

Figure 19. Snapchat Account of UAE's Ministry of Health and Prevention<sup>38</sup>



### Community building platforms

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.snapchat.com/>

<sup>37</sup> <http://tiktok.com>

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.tiktok.com/@shjpolice?source=h5\\_m](https://www.tiktok.com/@shjpolice?source=h5_m)

Unlike other platforms, the community building platforms are designed to allow their users post and have conversation around specific topics. This can include music, sports, fashion, food and so on. This also includes blogging platforms.

Examples of the most popular platforms: [Medium](#)<sup>39</sup> and [Reddit](#)<sup>40</sup>.

## **Messaging Apps**

The popularity of mobile and social media messaging apps are growing globally. As of February 2020, the users of WhatsApp, for example, exceeded two billion users globally.<sup>41</sup>

These apps can play a special role in your social media strategy, mainly to enable a better communication channel with your target audience. The data shows that 55% of consumers worldwide prefer to communicate with businesses using these apps over other communication channels.<sup>42</sup>

In addition, these apps offer a new space for innovation in social media as demonstrated by the example below and the Case Study in section 6.

The list of most popular messaging apps includes: Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp and Telegram.

**Example:** Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) has added an AI-based chatbot called Rammas to its smart App that was featured in the United Nations e-Government Survey 2020. Rammas provides instant responses to customers in both Arabic and English.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> <https://medium.com/>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.reddit.com/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://blog.whatsapp.com/two-billion-users-connecting-the-world-privately>

<sup>42</sup> <https://blog.hubspot.com/service/mobile-messaging-platforms>

<sup>43</sup> [Dubai Electricity & Water Authority \(DEWA\) | DEWA adds instant voice chat to Rammas on its smart app](#)

## Special purpose platforms

These are the platforms that are not always part of the mainstream and not necessarily for the average user, but it might be useful for your entity to consider them while designing your strategy.

According to the United Nations e-Government Survey 2020: “the development of Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 functionalities (including social media interactivity and semantic social networking) has led to a dramatic increase in the volume of one-to-many and many-to-many communication among people. In many countries, people-to-people platforms (not moderated by the Government) aim to generate ideas that people would like to see featured on the political agenda.”<sup>44</sup>

Examples:

- Government owned or operated platforms like [Sharik](#)<sup>45</sup>.
- Developers platforms like [GitHub](#)<sup>46</sup>.
- Gaming platforms like [Discord](#)<sup>47</sup>.
- The Emirati platform dedicated to the subject of innovation in government [01Gov](#)<sup>48</sup>.

## Deciding on which platforms to join:

### Recommendation:

The simple rule of social media is that you follow your target audience. This means you should establish a presence on the social media channels or platforms that are used by all or any of your target audience.

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<sup>44</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

<sup>45</sup> <https://u.ae/en/participate>

<sup>46</sup> <https://github.com/>

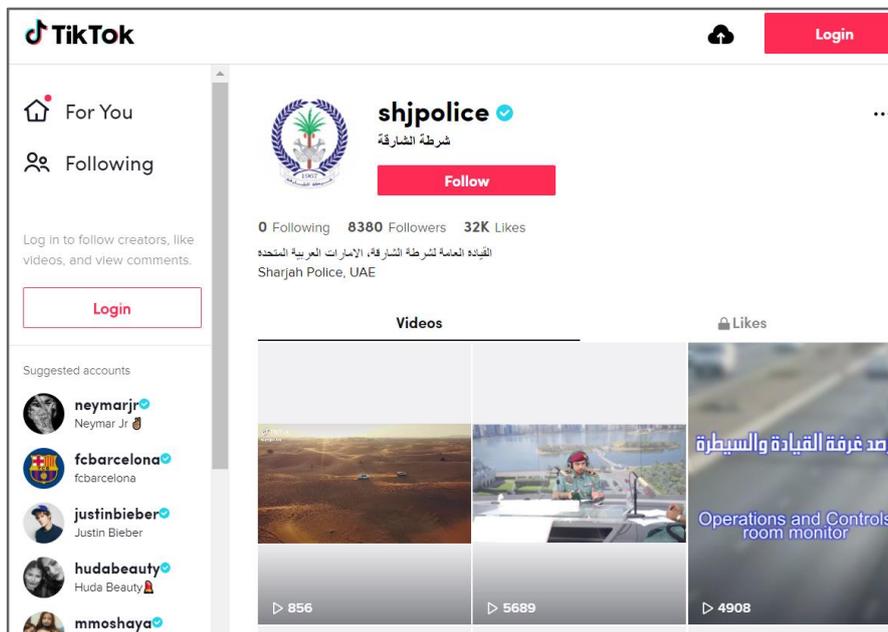
<sup>47</sup> <https://discord.com/>

<sup>48</sup> <https://01gov.com/>

Example: Sharjah Police has launched an account on [TikTok](#) - the interactive media platform that has proven to attract the younger generation, as 41% of its users are between the ages of 16 and 24<sup>49</sup>. In the UAE, one in four residents is active on the platform, and “29% of internet users aged 16 to 64 in UAE stated they had used the platform in the last month.”<sup>50</sup>

Sharjah Police has stated that the objective of starting a presence on TikTok is to “ contribute to highlighting the police efforts and to deliver the security and awareness messages through security videos and film materials in different languages, to ensure that they reach the biggest possible segment of the public and to enhance their security message.”<sup>51</sup>

Figure 20. TikTok Account of Sharjah Police<sup>52</sup>



**Recommendation:**

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/08/24/tiktok-reveals-us-global-user-growth-numbers-for-first-time.html>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.socializeagency.com/2020/02/12/uae-2020-digital-report/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://shjpolice.gov.ae/Pages/PoliceNews/PoliceNewsDetails?id=5eef770a917f41af475d556>

<sup>52</sup> [TikTok الرسمي | شاهد أحدث فيديوهات شرطة الشارقة على TikTok \(@shjpolice\) شرطة الشارقة](#)

Always study and research the most recent statistics about the popularity of social media channels among your target audience, and consider this data in the process of choosing the decision making process.

Recommendation:

In addition to the popular platforms such as [Twitter](#)<sup>53</sup> and [Facebook](#)<sup>54</sup>, you should consider platforms from all the categories provided above.

Recommendation:

It's essential to link your social media presence to the [Sharik](#)<sup>55</sup> platform and contribute to its content as per the requirements set by the TDRA.<sup>56</sup>

Recommendation:

Different social media channels can be popular among different segments of users and can require a different type of content. Accordingly, this can require additional investments in human resources and other resources, which means you should consider this factor before starting a presence on a new social media channel.

### Case Study: WhatsApp COVID-19 bot<sup>57</sup>

As the Covid-19 pandemic made its way across the world, fake news and viral spread of misinformation was an additional challenge for governments. On March 5, the first coronavirus case arrived in South Africa, but a voice note had already circulated on WhatsApp, claiming the virus had arrived early on. Another widely-spread message on WhatsApp alleged that all schools in South

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<sup>53</sup> <http://twitter.com>

<sup>54</sup> <http://facebook.com>

<sup>55</sup> <https://u.ae/en/participate>

<sup>56</sup> <https://u.ae/en/participate>

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.whatsapp.com/coronavirus/who>

Africa would close on March 16, 2020, while, in reality, the government had announced that all schools would be shut after March 18. The South African government had set up hotlines, but they were unable to handle the massive volume of calls and misinformation continued to spread at a fast pace.

And to help with this challenge, a WhatsApp chatbot service was launched by Praekelt - a not for profit organization. The service which is endorsed by the National Department of Health delivers automated informational responses providing answers to the most frequently asked questions about COVID-19 and the coronavirus. In just a few days, more than (1.5) million South Africans have engaged with the chatbot and have received over fifteen (15) million messages. Following this success, the World Health Organisation has decided to adopt the service and launched (WHO HealthAlert) to deliver similar messages in several languages including Arabic, French and Italian.



## **Content**

The actual implementation of your social media is mainly about the content you post on your accounts. At this point in the strategy, we recommend agreeing on a set of strategy guidelines for the content you intend to publish. Later on when you start the actual execution of the strategy, your social media team should develop and maintain a detailed calendar for the production and publishing of the content.

### *Recommendation:*

Align your content strategy with your target audience features as you have defined them in a previous section in your social media strategy. The key features you need to clearly define include:

- Their age range
- The language(s) they speak
- Their geographic locations
- Their values and what's important to them
- Their needs and expectations from your entity
- Their previous experiences and history with your entity

Example: UAE's Ministry of Health and Preventions is inclusive in its use of Urdu language in its tweet about the Flu Vaccine.

Figure 21. MOHAP tweets in Urdu



Recommendation:

Analyse the performance of your previous social media content across all the platforms you have used. From this analysis, identify the highest-performing pieces of content you published and analyze the elements they have in common including:

- What type of content was it? Images? Video? Text?
- What was the tone?
- What day of the week was it posted on?
- What time of the day?
- What type of message did the content convey? Was it about your entities' services? Policies? Was it an announcement?

Recommendation:

Similarly, Identify the lowest-performing pieces and also the factors they have in common.

Recommendation:

Use the social media analytics tools as described under the Metrics title in the Strategy section of this document.

Recommendation:

Decide your content style which can consist of elements like: the look and feel, the tone and of course the alignment with your entity's brand. It's acceptable to have a slightly different style for different platforms or segments of your target audience.

Example: The American National Basketball Association, NBA, is among the most popular brands on [TikTok](#)<sup>58</sup> with over 10.6M followers, where they post short comedic skits and memes. However, when it comes to [Twitter](#)<sup>59</sup>, they exhibit a more formal tone and stick to news and updates.

Figure 22. The NBA’s Twitter Account vs its TikTok Account



Recommendation:

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[https://www.tiktok.com/@nba?referer\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fnogood.io%2F&referer\\_video\\_id=6816026930937203973](https://www.tiktok.com/@nba?referer_url=https%3A%2F%2Fnogood.io%2F&referer_video_id=6816026930937203973)

59 <https://twitter.com/NBA>

Depending on the elements above including the content format and style, you can decide on the investments you need to make on the skills, software, hardware and other logistics. Creating a TikTok video requires a different set of skills and tools than the regular post on LinkedIn for example. More on this under the titles of People and Budget in the Strategy section of this document.

*Recommendation:*

Decide the frequency of publishing on each of your social media accounts. This can be different from one platform to another. More on this under the Content Calendar title in the Practicing Social Media section of this document.

*Recommendation:*

In deciding on all the above elements of your content strategy, engage your various stakeholders and align your content strategy with them.

*Recommendation:*

Also consult your entity's leadership and seek their advice and input.

*Recommendation:*

Engage your audience in the process by openly asking them about their preferences. This can be a smart way for boosting their level of engagement with your accounts.

## **Budget**

Establishing and maintaining an effective social media presence requires financial investment in a range of areas such as creating an interesting visual content and investing in advertising.

*Recommendation:*

Aim at defining your list of cost items into two broad categories of costs: initial cost (CAPEX) and ongoing cost (OPEX). Table 1 Provides examples of the cost items that can fall under each category:

*Table 1: Examples of the cost items that can fall under each category of costs*

Sample Initial Cost Items	Sample Ongoing Cost Items
Design of social media strategy	Content research and planning
Design of social media policy	Multimedia and creative content creation
Software license	Advertisement
Hardware (e.g. cameras)	Training and knowledge management
Establishing media assets	Social media monitoring and analysis

**Recommendation:**

Consider any budgeting guidelines and practices from your internal finance department or other related government entities.

**Recommendation:**

Some of the cost items in this table might already be covered in your entity's payroll, in case these items are handled by your full time employees as part of their job.

**Case Study: Decide Madrid<sup>60</sup>**

<sup>60</sup> <https://decide.madrid.es/>

Decide Madrid (DM) is the first e-participation platform that allows citizens, associations, NGOs and companies to be involved in the policy cycle in Madrid municipality. It was launched in 2015 and allows citizens to make proposals, vote in citizen consultations, propose participatory budget projects, decide on municipal regulations and even open debates to exchange opinions with others on issues of mutual interest.

The municipal service managing the platform has an annual budget of almost 2 million, which covers costs for the following:

- (a) the production and dissemination of materials such as voting circulars, posters, information brochures, and press and social media content, as well as positioning in social media networks and search engines and relevant monitoring;
- (b) conference attendance;
- (c) procedures and processes relating to participation and election activities, such as dynamization by professionals, the generation of mobile information and voting points, and web analytics; and
- (d) the evaluation of all participatory projects.

Read the full [story](#)<sup>61</sup> in Arabic.



## Metrics

Just like any other business activity your entity carries out, you should measure your social media performance and the progress you make towards your defined goals. The challenge here is that there is a wide range of metrics that

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<sup>61</sup> <https://01gov.com/madrid-participatory-democracy-technology/>

can be used and they can be tracked easily. This can be a source of distraction and you might end up measuring the wrong metrics.

*Recommendation:*

Your focus should be on measuring the progress you are making towards your defined social media goals. For example: you should ask if your [Twitter](#)<sup>62</sup> account contributes to improving customer service, as opposed to only measuring the number of followers and retweets.

*Recommendation:*

To help you identify the suitable metrics for your entity's social media performance, we recommend this categorization system that groups them into four groups that follow the customer journey:

- **Awareness:** these metrics reflect the extent to which current and potential audience recognize and recall your brand and content.
- **Engagement:** these metrics refer to the capacity to which the audience interacts with the content presented by you.
- **Conversion:** these metrics indicate the effectiveness of your social engagement. It reflects how many people on your social media channels are taking the actions you want them to take, such as using your online services.
- **Sentiment:** these metrics emulate how your active audience thinks and feels about your brand. It is an indication of your value to them.

Table 2 provides examples of the metrics that fall under each one of these four groups.

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<sup>62</sup> <http://twitter.com>

This list is not exhaustive, and you should do your research to identify the metrics that work best for your entity.

*Table 2: Examples of metrics that fall under each category*

#	Category	Sample Metrics
1	Awareness Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Follower count</li> <li>● Number of mentions</li> <li>● Number of shares</li> <li>● Number of likes</li> <li>● Posts reach</li> </ul>
2	Engagement Metrics	Average Engagement Rate: the ratio of interactions your content pieces receive in relation to your fan or followers base..
3	Conversion Metrics	Conversion Rate: the number of referred visitors, from a link on your social media content, who take an action on the page (e.g. apply to an online service) they were directed to in relation to that page's overall visitors.
4	Sentiment Metrics	the amount of responses your audience leaves to express their feelings about your entity and its services.

*Recommendation:*

Operational social media metrics such as likes and number of followers don't always provide an accurate assessment of the effectiveness of your social media presence because they can easily be manipulated. Therefore, consider these metrics carefully and as part of your review of the more strategic metrics.

*Recommendation:*

Use the analysis and reporting tools provided by various social media platforms. These tools can be very useful in providing you with timely statistics about your

performance on these platforms. Table 3 provides a list of the analysis and reporting tools offered by the most popular platforms in the UAE.

*Table 3: Key Social Media platforms and their analysis and reporting tools*

Key Social Media Platforms	Analysis and Reporting Tool
Facebook	<a href="#">Facebook Insights</a> <sup>63</sup>
Twitter	<a href="#">Twitter Analytics</a> <sup>64</sup>
Instagram	<a href="#">Instagram Insights</a> <sup>65</sup>
YouTube	<a href="#">YouTube Analytics</a> <sup>66</sup>
LinkedIn	<a href="#">LinkedIn Analytics</a> <sup>67</sup>
Snapchat	<a href="#">Snapchat Insights</a> <sup>68</sup>
TikTok	<a href="#">Tiktok Analytics</a> <sup>69</sup>

**Recommendation:**

Some of these tools provided in the table above might have access restrictions depending on the type of your account and its popularity. In addition, these tools vary in the breadth and depth of the statistics they provide. Therefore, you might need to invest in using third party analytics tools in addition to these tools.

**Recommendation:**

We don't endorse specific third party tools but you can consider the following factors as guidelines when deciding to use any:

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/business/insights>

<sup>64</sup> <https://analytics.twitter.com/>

<sup>65</sup> [https://help.instagram.com/1533933820244654?helpref=page\\_content](https://help.instagram.com/1533933820244654?helpref=page_content)

<sup>66</sup> <http://analytics.youtube.com>

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/4499/linkedin-page-analytics-overview?lang=en>

<sup>68</sup> <https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/a/public-profiles>

<sup>69</sup> <https://blog.hootsuite.com/tiktok-analytics/>

- Does the tool provide you with the data and insights you need and are not provided by the analytics tool of the social media platform itself?
- Do you have the financial investment required to sign up for the tool and keep using it?
- Do you have the skills required for using this tool in an effective way?
- To what extent does the tool offer some additional features such as integration with other platforms or systems you might be using?
- To what extent does this tool offer good customer support service?
- Does the tool support Arabic language?
- Does the tool comply with the security and privacy requirements of your entity?

*Recommendation:*

In addition to using social media metrics, it can be useful to benchmark your performance against the performance of other government entities in the UAE and around the world. You can also consider non-government organisations that might share some similarities with your social media focus and techniques.

Example: The Government of Western Australia uses a similar multi-tier metrics for measuring its social media success. This consists of: Activity metrics, engagement metrics, and business metrics. It assesses its success in reaching each tier of metrics by reviewing a set of KPIs. This is followed by close monitoring of the results over time to reveal opportunities or necessary changes

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<sup>70</sup> [https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-10/Social%20Media%20Guidelines\\_1.pdf](https://www.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-10/Social%20Media%20Guidelines_1.pdf)

## People

Among many other factors, the success of your social media strategy will mainly depend on the human resources available for the job. This includes both your internal social media team and external parties you hire for various assignments.

In this part of your strategy, you should provide answers to key questions like:

- Who should lead the social media efforts within your entity?
- What roles need to be fulfilled to ensure the success and sustainability of your social media presence?
- What are the essential social media skills?
- Is it a must to have all these roles from inside your entity? Or you can outsource some of them to third parties?

### Recommendation:

Several departments or divisions within your entity can be qualified to lead the social media efforts. This includes for example corporate communications. Choose the department that best fits your needs and priorities and comply with any requirements from the TDRA in this regard.

Example: Figure 23 shows the roles of the respondents to a social media survey that covered more than 10,000 public sector agencies in the United States and Canada. You can easily notice the diversity in these roles.

*Figure 23. Roles of the respondents to a social media survey that covered more than 10,000 public sector agencies in the United States and Canada<sup>71</sup>*

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<sup>71</sup> The State of Social Media in the Public Sector 2020 (floridaleagueofcities.com)



## Skills and knowledge

An essential part of your strategy is to invest in empowering your employees with the skills and knowledge they need to use social media in alignment with defined social media strategy.

### Recommendation:

Design a capacity building plan for all your employees to help them contribute to the success of your social media strategy in their various capacities. Consider the following four categories to decide what level and kind of skills and knowledge each one needs:

- Official use of social media: for your employees who directly deliver your social media activities. Usually they represent a small portion of your entire workforce.
- Professional use: for your employees who can use social media to help them succeed in their core business duties. Depending on your social media policy, this should be the case for the majority of your employees.

- Personal use: for your employees who are allowed to use social media for personal purposes. The percentage of employees in this category depends mainly on how strict your social media policy is.
- Leadership use: the managers in your entity who are needed to provide support to your social media strategy and various activities.

Recommendation:

These categories are not mutually exclusive. For example, the same employee can use social media for professional and personal purposes at the same time.

Recommendation:

Review Table 4 for a list of the skills that you can consider in your capacity building plans for the employees in each category.

*Table 4: List of skills to consider for the employees*

#	Category	Examples
1	Official Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Community management</li> <li>● Copywriting</li> <li>● Analytics</li> </ul>
2	Professional Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Using content aggregation tools</li> <li>● Access online professional communities</li> <li>● Blogging</li> </ul>
3	Personal Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Security</li> <li>● Privacy and safety</li> <li>● The social media policy</li> </ul>
4	Leadership Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social media for change</li> <li>● Cultural and behavioural impact of social media</li> <li>● Digital diplomacy</li> </ul>

**Social Media Team**

For the core social media team, you need to consider securing the following list of roles at minimum:

*Table 4: List of key roles in your social media team*

#	Role	Key Job Responsibilities
1	Team leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leading the strategy design and execution</li> <li>Ensuring the social media team functions properly</li> <li>Managing the relationship with key stakeholders</li> </ul>
2	Community manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building and grow the entity's presence on social media</li> <li>Daily engagement with the audience on social media accounts</li> <li>Listening to what people say about the entity on social media</li> </ul>
3	Content creator and curator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating creation of written content</li> <li>The curation of written content from various sources</li> <li>Creating and curating content that fits various social media formats and requirements</li> </ul>
4	Multimedia producer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating images or graphics for various social media platforms</li> <li>Producing mobile-optimized stories for Twitter, Instagram and the likes.</li> <li>Producing content for Tiktok, Reels and similar interactive platforms.</li> </ul>
5	Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gathering and analysing data about social media metrics</li> <li>Generating insights for the team leader and management</li> <li>Recommending data-driven goals and actions</li> </ul>

### **In-house Vs. outsourcing**

Recommendation:

Always have the leader of your social media team as one of your full time employees. This should help in securing the sustainability of your social media activities.

*Recommendation:*

You can outsource some of your social media activities when your entity can't have the needed skills internally.

**Risks**

The proven and potential benefits of social media don't come free of risks. And no more obvious and recent example than the "pandemic of misinformation" as in the words of the U.N. Secretary-General António.<sup>72</sup> He was referring to the "dangerous outbreak of misinformation" accompanying the COVID-19 pandemic"

This "infodemic" as described by the WHO shows, once again, the need for government and non-government organizations to study and prepare for the risks that social media brings everyday.

In the Social Media Policy section of this document, we provide detailed information on this including the categories of potential risks to look for, and a set of recommendations for mitigating them.

*Recommendation:*

Define the potential risks that your entity can be exposed to and your counter mitigation methods in your Social Media Policy. Here in the strategy, you can offer a high level brief of these risks and refer to the policy for the full details.

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<sup>72</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1063152>

## Key Success Factors

### Recommendation:

It's essential to secure the buy-in of your entity leadership and their support for your social media strategy. Build a business case that demonstrates how social media can contribute to achieving the corporate strategic goals, and use this business case as the base for your communication with the leadership.

### Recommendation:

Be clear in communicating your needs from the leadership and your expectations for their level of involvement throughout the design and execution of the social media strategy.

### Recommendation:

Openly discuss with them their concerns and potential social media risks, and demonstrate how the strategy is designed to handle these risks.

### Recommendation:

Your communication with the leadership should continue even after winning their support for the strategy. To do this, establish and maintain a mechanism to frequently update them on the progress of the strategy execution. This should consist of written reports, meetings and workshops among other means of communication you consider effective.

### Recommendation:

Always maintain an active communication with the TDRA and respond to their initiatives related to social media. This includes for example complying with their social media guidelines and requirements.

Recommendation:

Exchange knowledge and experience with other government entities in the UAE. This spirit of collaboration can help in cr

eating a win-win situation for all.

Recommendation:

Also be open to the idea of learning from non-governmental organizations inside and outside the UAE. This is especially valid for mastering the new trends in social media where the private sector can be ahead of the public sector.

## Section 4: Social Media Policy

For your government entity to be able to harness the power of social media in an effective and responsible way, there is a need to develop a social media policy. This policy aims at offering clear guidelines to your employees on how they are expected to access and use social media in the way that serves the entity's goals and helps the employees deliver their work in the best possible way.

Recommendation:

Your social media policy can cover a wide range of topics. To help you with identifying these topics, we provide the following list that every policy should cover at least (Figure 24):

Figure 24. Key Topics to be Covered by Social Media Policy



**Access to Social Media**

In this section, your social media policy should clarify who of your entity’s employees can access social media platforms during working hours. Following are recommendations to help you design your policy in this regard:

Recommendation:

In principle, an employee might need to access social media platforms for one or more of the following three purposes:

- Official use: to access the entity's official social media accounts.
- Professional use: to access social media to help them fulfill their job.
- Personal use: to use social media for personal purposes.

*Recommendation:*

The access to the entity's social media accounts should only be granted to the employees who have the official mandate to manage these accounts.

*Recommendation:*

The line between the professional and personal use is not always clear. This might make it impractical to grant access to one rather than the other.

*Recommendation:*

As a best practice, employees should be allowed and even encouraged to access and use social media applications in a responsible manner. They should also be held accountable for any improper use.

*Recommendation:*

The access to social media in any capacity should be in alignment with the entity's security and privacy policies and any other related policies or guidelines.

*Recommendation:*

Remember that employees can technically access social media through their personal smart devices without the need for the entity's network or infrastructure. Therefore, a total access ban might not be practical.

Example: The Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet in New Zealand assents “The Privacy Act 1993”<sup>73</sup> and it covers various topics and principles such as information privacy principles as well as codes of practices from these principles.

## **Account Management**

### Recommendation:

The policy should cover three common phases of managing a social media account: creation, usage and deactivating or deleting.

### Recommendation:

Coordinate with your social media team or the department in charge of social media when deciding on the issues under Account Management.

### Recommendation:

In addition to issuing general guidelines or terms, it’s important to consider the fact that different social media platforms and applications might have different processes for each one of the three phases.

## **Employees Code of Conduct**

### Recommendation:

In essence, the conduct and behavior of the entity’s employees on social media websites shouldn’t differ from their behavior in general. However and due to the special nature of social media, you need to clarify to your employees how you expect them to behave while using social media.

### Recommendation:

When designing the Code of Conduct, refer to the related policies issued by the Human Resources division in your entity in addition to the government

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1993/0028/latest/DLM296639.html>

regulations such as Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct <sup>74</sup> issued in July 2010, and the UAE Human Resources law (Federal Decree Law #17 for the Year 2016)<sup>75</sup>.

*Recommendation:*

In addition, refer to the Risk Management section in this document, and make sure you cover the risks related to the employee behaviour in the Code of Conduct.

*Recommendation:*

The Code of Conduct should also cover the conduct of the external resources and vendors who might carry out some social media related activities on behalf of the entity or as part of its team.

Example: The government of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) covers the Code of Conduct in a dedicated policy titled “Use of Social Media Policy”. The policy covers several topics including Principles, Personal Use, Responsibilities and Consequences.<sup>76</sup>

## **The Public Code of Conduct**

*Recommendation:*

You should have a Public Code of Conduct and share it online on your social media profiles wherever possible. This brief one pager document should act like an “external policy” and should explain to your audience how you expect them to engage with you.

*Recommendation:*

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<sup>74</sup> Can be accessed on: <https://www.fahr.gov.ae/Portal/en/legislations-and-guides/systems/professional-conduct-document.aspx>

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.fahr.gov.ae/assetsmanager/Files/HR\\_LAW-eng.pdf](http://www.fahr.gov.ae/assetsmanager/Files/HR_LAW-eng.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> [https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/762155/Social-Media-Policy.pdf](https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/762155/Social-Media-Policy.pdf)

In principle, the public code of conduct can explicitly state that certain forms of content are prohibited and will be removed, including, but not limited to:

- Comments that are out of context or irrelevant.
- Profane language.
- Comments or content that promote discrimination.
- Comments or content that promote illegal activity.
- Comments or content that violate any legal or intellectual property rights.

*Recommendation:*

When drafting or updating your Public Code of Conduct, refer to TDRA's requirements in this regard.

## **Security and Privacy**

As per the United Nations e-Government Survey 2020, privacy and security concerns appear to have intensified in recent years, fuelled by well-publicized breaches of private databases and social media platforms.<sup>77</sup>

*Recommendation:*

In general and where appropriate, the requirements and recommendations offered by the security and privacy policies issued by your IT Department should be covered here.

*Recommendation:*

Study the risks related to security and privacy as explained in this document and address them accordingly in the policy.

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<sup>77</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

## Risk Management

While the use of social media is an essential part of the daily work of any government or non-government entity for the obvious value it can bring, it can also be the source of risks at many levels.

These risks can be reviewed from various angles depending on your entity's priorities and level of readiness and experience in handling these risks. In Figure 25 below, we offer a high level categorization of the most common risks that you should prepare to deal with.

Figure 25. Social Media Risks



And here are key examples of the risks under each category:

### Content related risks

- Plagiarising or breaching copyright/ conditions.

### Reputation and brand related risks

- The reputation of the entity and, at times, its employees may be compromised due to a content or activity that violates the entity's policy.

## Productivity related risks

- Employees using and browsing social media feeds excessively and exorbitantly can turn into a habit of wasting corporate time, leading to compromised productivity.
- Continuous access and usage of social media platforms can end up dominating and taking over the network bandwidth and trying it.

## Security and privacy related risks

- The misuse of social media can include fraudulent acts like spear phishing, social engineering and possibly introducing malware, and can also cause the employees to fall victim of these acts.
- Could disclose personal information relating to the entity's employees or users, or official information which is classified

## Risk Mitigation

These risks can be mitigated by applying the proper measures.

### Recommendation:

Study and analyze these potential risks with your social media team and other stakeholders such as your IT department and vendors who might be appointed for handling part of your social media tasks.

### Recommendation:

Prepare a risk assessment and mitigation plan that identifies the most potential risks and your detailed action plan for mitigating them. Use the list of risks provided above as a guideline or a starting point in this exercise.

### Recommendation:

For preparing your risk mitigation plan, apply a mix of the following measures:

1. Policy controls: These outline appropriate behavior and content guidelines when using social media tools such as the ones outlined in this section.
2. Acquisition Measures: this includes setting strict authentication measures or managing cookies for example.
3. Education Measures: provide continuous education and awareness to your employees on all issues related to the risks of social media.

Example: The Australian Government has established the Office of eSafety Commissioner<sup>78</sup> to help citizens and especially children learn to use the Internet safely and avoid cyber world risks such as cyberbullying and financial fraud.

Watch the story in a 1 minute [video](#)<sup>79</sup> (Arabic) or scan the QR Code:



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<sup>78</sup> <https://www.esafety.gov.au/>

<sup>79</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usULQN87m4E&ab\\_channel=01Gov](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usULQN87m4E&ab_channel=01Gov)

## Section 5: Publishing on Social Media

Both your strategy and policy documents offer you a great set of assets that you can leverage while practicing social media on a daily basis.

In this section, we tackle key topics that you need to consider to engage with your audience in an effective and innovative way, and in alignment with your social media strategic goals.

### **Innovation and Creativity**

Social media offers you an open space, and when it comes to innovation, it's up to your imagination to define the limits.

#### Recommendation:

Diversity stimulates innovation, so aim at promoting diversity in every aspect of your social media activities: team members, sources of inspiration, stakeholders and so on.

#### Recommendation:

Be open to the idea of seeking inspiration from organisations of all sectors and all sizes, from around the world. And while doing so, remember to reflect on your entity's local context in the UAE.

#### Recommendation:

Accept that innovation is risky by nature, and mistakes happen. Your social media strategy and policy should offer you good guidance to strike the balance between experimenting with innovative ideas and minimizing the potential risks.

## Case Study: Sweden Twitter<sup>80</sup>

The Swedish government implemented an innovative and unique experiment in cultural promotion that lasted seven years since 2011, during which it assigned the management of the Sweden account on Twitter to the citizens themselves, and every week a citizen managed the account in a way that reflected the diversity of Sweden's culture. And 356 citizens participated in the experiment.

Watch the story in a 1 minute [video](#)<sup>81</sup> (Arabic) or scan the QR Code:



## Account Hygiene

### Recommendation:

On regular basis, your social media team should run a social media hygiene across your accounts to ensure they comply with a set of standards that includes the following at least:

<sup>80</sup> <https://twitter.com/sweden?lang=en>

<sup>81</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scalshfcVI4&ab\\_channel=01Gov](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scalshfcVI4&ab_channel=01Gov)

- The correct and updated logos, background images and media assets are used.
- Logos and other branding assets are used consistently across your social media accounts.
- All profile fields are filled with updated and correct information
- The interaction with the audience and the published content pieces are all in alignment with your social media policies and guidelines
- All your security and privacy policies are strictly followed across your social media accounts.
- All your social media activities are in alignment with your overall social media strategy and objectives.

*Recommendation:*

When issues are detected, take the required actions to fix them and ensure they are avoided in the future.

## **Content Calendar**

It's essential to create and always update a calendar for your social media content. This calendar can be defined as a central place in which you define what content pieces you will share on which social media platform and when to do that.

Here are the key benefits of this calendar<sup>82</sup>:

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<sup>82</sup> <https://blog.hootsuite.com/how-to-create-a-social-media-content-calendar/>

### Time saving

Having a content calendar allows planning ahead and creating a batch of content that can be posted without having to risk multitasking or researching for content multiple times a day.

### Regular and consistent posting

Preparing the content calendar ahead of time allows for consistent posting, which in turn, is one of the key elements to increase audience engagement.

### Lower risk of mistakes

A content calendar gives enough time to make sure the prepared content is free of typos or any other type of mistakes.

### Achieve strategy goals

Having a content calendar allows to see clear patterns in content and makes implementing a strategy and running campaigns a smoother process.

### Stay current

A content calendar allows for observation of global moments and preparing for yearly events ahead of time, which ensures you don't miss any current events that your audience cares about.

### Post better content

Creating a content calendar helps you post higher quality content as it helps you allocate your assets in an effective manner, allowing for a smooth process of collaboration between various team members.

## Creating and maintaining your content calendar

This process should be easy and doesn't distract you from the key job here which is posting content and managing your community. The following recommendations can be helpful:

### Recommendation:

As a start, study the content guidelines in your social media strategy.

### Recommendation:

Your social media content calendar doesn't have to be complicated. You can start with a simple version that contains the basic details and then keep enriching it.

### Recommendation:

You don't need to use sophisticated software tools for creating your calendar. You can have your calendar in spreadsheets.

### Recommendation:

Aim at having a monthly calendar. This will give your team enough time to plan and create the content. It will also help you create a routine for the process of updating the content.

### Recommendation:

Pay attention to the frequency of publishing content on each one of the social media platforms you are active on. Best practices show that the audience of different platforms have different frequency preferences. Table 5 shows the

recommended frequency for some of the most popular platforms with regard to the government context.

*Table 5: Posting Frequency on Social Media*

Platform	Suggested frequency
Facebook	Once a day or less
Twitter	An average of five tweets a day
LinkedIn	Three to five times a week, no more than once a day
Instagram	Average of two to three times a day

*Recommendation:*

The calendar should maintain consistency and create a routine that your audience can get used to.

*Recommendation:*

Remember to cover the organizational, national and international events that are officially celebrated by your entity. This includes for the UAE National Day for example.

*Example:* The Dubai Health Authority took to Twitter on World Diabetes Day with a post that raises awareness on the symptoms of Diabetes.

*Figure 26. DHA raises awareness on different Diabetes symptoms on twitter on World Diabetes Day*<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> [https://twitter.com/DHA\\_Dubai/status/1327508994202759180](https://twitter.com/DHA_Dubai/status/1327508994202759180)



## Managing Hashtags

The hashtag (#) has become a common feature across social media platforms including the relatively newcomers like TikTok. And when you use the hashtag properly, it can help boost your social media engagement. Here are three key specific benefits and reasons to use hashtags:

- When you create your own branded hashtags, they can help you promote your entity or specific services or campaigns.

Example: The UAE has launched its own hashtag campaign to prepare for UAE's next 50 years.

Figure 27. The use of the hashtag to promote the campaign of UAE's next 50 years<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> <https://twitter.com/UAENext50/status/1312686922792423425>



- Participating in social media hashtags that are related to your business domain or important to your target audience can show them that you care about them and available for a conversation around the causes that matter to them.

Example: Dubai Public Persecution celebrated World Children's Day on its [Twitter account](#)<sup>85</sup> by posting a video using the established hashtag for this day.

*Figure 28. Dubai Public Persecution Twitter Account Celebrating World Children's Day<sup>86</sup>*

<sup>85</sup> [نيابة دبي \(@DubaiPP\) / Twitter](#)

<sup>86</sup> [نيابة دبي on Twitter: "#يوم\\_الطفل\\_العالمي#" https://t.co/7Yf13MoxFs" / Twitter](#)



- Hashtags can add more meaning to your social media content because they can offer context.

Example: UAE's Ministry of Community Development has launched a 100 Good Deeds challenge on its [Twitter account](#)<sup>87</sup> and it posts about one good deed everyday with the hashtag providing context of the challenge.

*Figure 29. UAE's Ministry of Community Development provides context on its tweets using hashtags<sup>88</sup>*

<sup>87</sup> [وزارة تنمية المجتمع \(@MOCDUAE\) / Twitter](#)

<sup>88</sup> لا تنتظر من الآخرين أن يقدّموا هدايا لك، بل يادر أنتِ ودلّل نفسك من خلال شراء هدية تستحقها من [وزارة تنمية المجتمع](#) فترة إلى أخرى. خطوة تعزّز سعادتك، واذكر صديقاً مقرباً للقيام بالمثل من خلال هاشتاغ #100 عمل إيجابى. [وزارة تنمية المجتمع](#) <https://t.co/NjOy6i0uK4> / Twitter



## Recommendations for using hashtags

The following recommendations can help you create and participate in hashtags in a more effective way and responsible way:

### Recommendation:

When using an English hashtags with multiple words, capitalize the first letters of compound words.

### Recommendation:

When using an Arabic hashtags with several words, use ( \_ ) between words.

Recommendation:

Limit the number of hashtags you use in the same content piece. It's better not to use more than one or two hashtags on Twitter and Facebook, and you can add a few more hashtags on media based social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok.

Recommendation:

When you over use hashtags, you might risk making your content look spammy and overwhelming. This can discourage your audience from engaging with your account.

Recommendation:

Refrain from using hashtags with an anonymous source or origin.

Recommendation:

Refrain from using hashtags that are not within the business domain of your entity, or the high level agenda of the UAE government.

Recommendation:

You might use specific tools to find the most popular hashtags on each social media platform, and then consider using the appropriate hashtags in your content.

Recommendation:

Some hashtags can be seasonal (e.g. #RamadanKareem), therefore you can plan for their use ahead of time and pin the content needed for them in your content calendar.

## Community Management

### Moderation of User Generated Content

Moderating this type of content is an essential and crucial part of the community management process.

Being on social media means accepting the fact that it's a two-way conversation. Good part of the content on your accounts at any point will be posted by the visitors of your account.

Depending on the platform, this content can appear in different forms such as comments, replies and wiki entries.

The moderation of user generated content means reaching a conclusion whether to approve it or remove it, and there are several methods that can be applied to make this decision.

There is a need for moderating this content because of several potential risks associated with it, as explained in Table 6:

*Table 6: Common Risks Related to User Generated Content*

Common risks related to User Generated Content	Description
IT Security risks	A user might post content that has a link to an external website that's infected with malware applications
Privacy risks	A content (e.g. photo) can expose the personal information of individuals without their consent
Legal risks	Mainly associated with violating the content copyright.
Brand risks	A user might post content items that are not aligned with the entity's brand guidelines, and negatively affects its reputation.

Inappropriate Content	The content might promote hate speech, racism or other types of violation to the entity's social media charter charter.
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Recommendation:

Publish your Digital Participation Policy\Charter and Moderation Policy as per the TDRA requirements.<sup>89</sup> This will help educate the users about what they can and can't post on your platform or social media account.

**Methods of content moderation**

Selecting the appropriate method for moderating the user generated content depends on the entity approach towards it, and also the platform this content is published on. Different platforms can allow different methods of moderation.

Following are six different moderation methods that you can use:

**User-moderation**

It is left up to the user to self-censor according to a platform charter created by the entity. This is the least restrictive form of moderation.

Pros: requires the minimal resources.

Cons: constitutes the largest amount of risk for posting inappropriate content.

**Pre-moderation**

The entity's moderator screens every piece of content posted by the user before allowing it to go live.

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<sup>89</sup> TDRA - Federal Websites Guidelines 2020

Pros: offers you a greater control over the content.

Cons: slows down the conversation between people and might discourage them to keep active on your platform or account. Alos, it might require considerable resources.

### **Post-moderation**

The content posted by the users goes live instantly, and the entity's moderator only reviews it after that to decide quickly whether to retain or delete the post.

Pros: helps in keeping the conversation going.

Cons: there is a risk of unwanted content to stay online.

### **Community moderation**

The content posted by the users goes live instantly and it's up to the other members of the community to decide if it's inappropriate or violates the platform charter in any way. Members of the community can use a variety of methods to do so including voting and report features.

Pros: encourages richer and more organic conversation, and promotes a sense of belonging and loyalty among the community members.

Cons: it doesn't guarantee full compliance with platform charter.

### **Automated moderation**

Content moderation applications are used to detect the unwanted content by using a range of techniques such as detecting offensive words

Pros: among the most cost effective methods.

Cons: the applications lack human reasoning and judgement which might limit their ability to properly moderate the various types of content posted by a variety of users.

Recommendation:

Not all moderation types are suitable for all social media platforms or all types of social media charters. Instagram, for example, doesn't enable pre-moderation for users' comments. However, you can use this method in your entity's website forum. Study the features of each social media platform you use before deciding on the moderation methods you will end up using.

Recommendation:

Some entities might have a social media charter that's more relaxed or strict than others. Consider this before choosing your method for moderation.

Recommendation:

It's very possible that you might use a combination of two or more methods to moderate the user-generated content on a certain platform. You might for example, use the automated moderation and back it up with a human moderator from your team.

## **Social Media for Public Participation**

Social media should play a crucial role in the success of your e-Participation and Public Participation campaign as it's demonstrated in the Case Study below and in section 3 of this document.

Recommendation:

Study the TDRA's Public Participation Guidelines document and identify how social media is expected to contribute.

Recommendation:

In most of the cases, public participation campaigns are planned in advance. So, use this time to prepare and schedule the content needed for the campaign in your content calendar.

Recommendation:

Coordinate with the team in charge of the Public Participation.

**Case Study: Jun's Twitter Town Hall<sup>90</sup>**

The Spanish town of Jun is not satisfied with using Twitter to announce breaking news or receiving suggestions, but rather relies on the micro-blogging site to manage many of its affairs and considers it an essential way to interact with citizens. Jun's remarkable experience began in the province of Granada in 2011, when the town's mayor encouraged all employees from the deputy mayor to the cleaning workers, to open Twitter accounts, write about their daily duties and offer basic government services; In an effort to enhance transparency in local government. He chose "Twitter" because it allows for quick interactions compared to "Facebook." He also urged citizens to register on "Twitter" and the turnout increased gradually, and at the present time about half of the town's 3,500 residents use it, and the Jun administration encourages its citizens to document their accounts with the Municipal Council. The elderly also take lessons to learn to use the site.

Interaction between the government and the public on an open platform such as "Twitter" supports the principle of reward and punishment; This shared transparency allows government performance to come under public scrutiny. At

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<sup>90</sup> <https://twitter.com/AyuntamientoJun>

the same time, it will highlight good performance, generate acclaim and rewards that range from favoring and reposting tweets, to gaining status in the small community. Mayor Rodriguez Salas praises the effect of using Twitter in government services on increasing efficiency, getting rid of the burdens of phone calls and reducing expenses. Since 2011, the town has succeeded in reducing 13% of its annual budget, equivalent to 380 thousand dollars, and reducing the number of police officers from four to one officer. One. The sole police officer in Jun receives dozens of tweets every day from citizens, including minor complaints about disturbing neighbors, reports of domestic violence and car accidents.



Read the full [story](#)<sup>91</sup> in Arabic.



## Writing for Social Media

### Recommendation:

Use short sentences when writing for social media. Short sentences are better for conveying complex information as they break the information up into smaller, easier-to-process units.

<sup>91</sup> <https://01gov.com/spanish-town-run-on-twitter/>

Recommendation:

By eliminating excess words, you create an enjoyable rhythm and a pleasurable reader experience. You communicate your message with more clarity and strength.

Recommendation:

Try to avoid negative form when writing. And never use double negatives in one sentence.

Recommendation:

Review the Web Content Guidelines for UAE Government<sup>92</sup> for detailed recommendations on how to content pieces that are short, concise, accessible and have all the essential features you need for compelling social media written content.

## **Accessibility**

It's essential to ensure that your social media content is accessible by everyone including the people of determination. And this means that anyone with any type of disability should be able to access and benefit from the content you publish on variou social media platforms.

Recommendation:

As part of your overall web accessibility policy and practices, you should have a dedicated coverage for social media accessibility. The reason is that different social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have different designs and they are not fully accessible on their own. Table 7 below provides examples of accessibility issues with some of these platforms:

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<sup>92</sup> TDRA, Web Content Guidelines for UAE Government

Table 7: Examples of Social Media Accessibility Issues<sup>93</sup>

Platform	Examples of Accessibility Issues
Facebook	Facebook often makes changes to its layout. This creates a difficulty when trying to remember the navigation way.
	Facebook’s alternative audio CAPTCHA, in the sign up process, has been reported frequently to not work efficiently on all devices and browsers.
Twitter	Twitter does not provide an accessibility hotlink. This makes it complicated to find a list of available accessibility features and measures.
Instagram	Instagram relies heavily on visual content, this creates a difficulty for those who have visual disabilities.

### Overall Accessibility Recommendations

Recommendation:

Review the accessibility recommendations provided in the Web Content Guidelines for UAE Government<sup>94</sup> and consider the recommendations related to publishing content on social media.

Recommendation:

Consider the following overall accessibility practices when publishing on social media platforms:

- As much as possible, provide the contact details of your entity on your social media account page or provide a link to the Contact Us page on your website.

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.queensu.ca/accessibility/how-info/social-media-accessibility>

<sup>94</sup> tdra.gov.ae

- Different social media platforms might have different accessibility features, invest in educating your team about these features and how to use them.
- Offer your target audience the possibility to provide feedback on the accessibility of your content.
- Periodically test your content to assess the level of accessibility and invest in improving it.

### **Twitter-Specific Accessibility Recommendations**

#### Recommendation:

In your Twitter profile, make sure you provide contact details or a link to the contact details on your website.

#### Recommendation:

Ensure you have good colour contrast between the background, avatar, and bio information.

#### Recommendation:

When you Tweet a photo, Twitter offers the option to compose a description of the image so the content is accessible to more people, including those who are blind or low-vision.<sup>95</sup>

#### Recommendation:

Make the image description concise and descriptive. The aim is to help people understand what's happening in an image.

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<sup>95</sup> <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/picture-descriptions>

Recommendation:

Check Twitter Help Center for accessibility recommendations that are specific to certain devices, operating systems or software applications.

Recommendation:

To stay up to date on the accessibility features provided by Twitter, frequently review the accessibility recommendations on to Twitter Help Center.

### **Facebook-Specific Accessibility Recommendations**

Recommendation:

When publishing single photos or albums, add a description to each photo.

Recommendation:

Add captions to every video you upload to your page or profile. A step by step guidance on this process is provided at the Accessibility section in Facebook Help Center.<sup>96</sup>

Recommendation:

To stay up to date on the accessibility features provided by Facebook, frequently review the accessibility recommendations on Facebook Help Center.<sup>97</sup>

### **Instagram-Specific Accessibility Recommendations**

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<sup>96</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/help/accessibility>

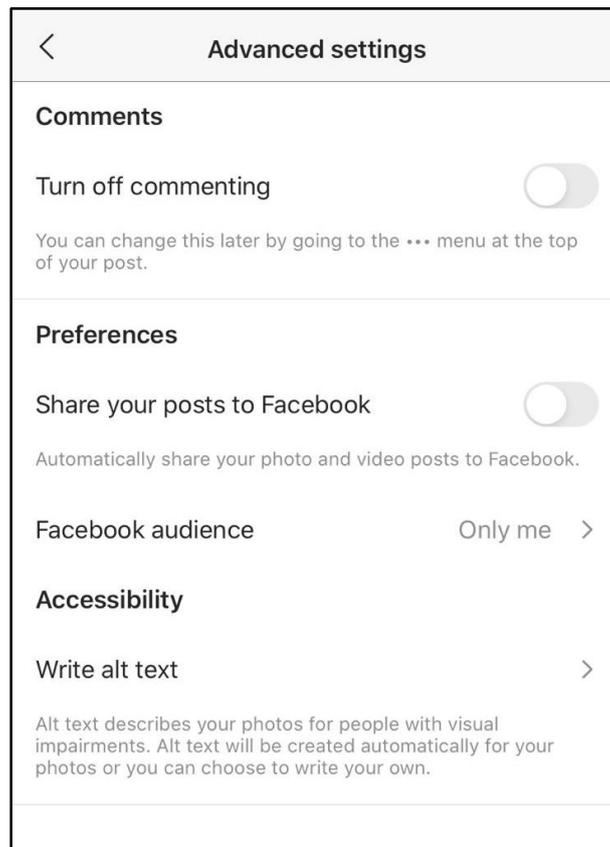
<sup>97</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/help/accessibility>

Recommendation:

Instagram automatically creates alt text to provide a visual description of photos for people with visual impairments. They can read it when they use a screen reader to access Instagram. Replace this text to provide a better description of your photo and help people with visual impairments easily understand what is in the photo.

Follow the steps provided by Instagram<sup>98</sup>.

Figure 30. Adding the Alt-Text for a new photo in Instagram



Recommendation:

<sup>98</sup>[https://help.instagram.com/503708446705527?helpref=search&sr=4&query=screen%20reader&search\\_session\\_id=c8de0d51f4937dbc92ddc9d189857b68](https://help.instagram.com/503708446705527?helpref=search&sr=4&query=screen%20reader&search_session_id=c8de0d51f4937dbc92ddc9d189857b68)

Access Instagram Help Center frequently to stay up to date on the accessibility features and recommendations.<sup>99</sup>

Recommendation::

For specific accessibility recommendations and tips on any other social media platform, review the accessibility section within its help center. Table 8 provides links to the help center of the most popular platforms.

*Table 8: Platforms with links to accessibility help sections*

#	Platform with link to the accessibility help section
1	<a href="#">Twitter</a>
2	<a href="#">Facebook</a>
3	<a href="#">Instagram</a>
4	<a href="#">YouTube</a>
5	<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>
6	Whatsapp: <a href="#">iPhone</a> , <a href="#">Android</a>
7	<a href="#">Pinterest</a>
8	<a href="#">Telegram</a>
9	<a href="#">Vimeo</a>

<sup>99</sup> <https://help.instagram.com/>

## Section 6: Key Trends for Social Media in Government

There are different perspectives through which we can scan the social media sphere and identify key trends for the public sector organisations. In this section, we present five of these key trends that are also in alignment with the priorities and context of social media in the UAE government.

We don't aim at presenting these trends in detail. Rather, the goal of this section is to highlight them and offer you a starting point from which you can further research these trends and develop your own perspective and conclusion.

### **COVID-19 and the “Infodemic”**

Over the past months of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, social media has been an essential tool for governments to connect with the public and promote updates and verified information.

“Throughout the pandemic, Governments have shared information through their national portals, mobile apps, and social media platforms. A review of the national portals of the 193 United Nations Member States indicates that

Governments have exhibited high levels of transparency when reporting and sharing crisis-related information.”<sup>100</sup>

Example: In China, public authorities are increasingly using social media as a tool for crisis management; during the outbreak of COVID-19, members of the public used Alipay to report their health status and emergencies.<sup>101</sup>

Recommendation:

Consider allocating a certain portion of your weekly social media content calendar for COVID-19 related content.

Recommendation:

Carefully review any piece of content before publishing it, ensure you don't promote any content that's not verified.

Recommendation:

Refrain from interacting with or promoting online content shared by other organisations or individuals unless validate the correctness of the content.

Recommendation:

Make a “white list” of local and international UAE organisations that are verified as trustworthy sources for COVID-19 information and updates. This can include for example the Ministry of Health and Prevention in the UAE and WHO.

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<sup>100</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

<sup>101</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

### Case Study: New Zealand<sup>102</sup>

On the 8th of June, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced to her citizens and the world the end of the lockdown measures after the last patient with Coronavirus (Covid-19) recovered and the country had not recorded any new infections over the previous seventeen days. The announcement heralded the return of public transportation and economic activities to normal, allowing citizens to gather in public and private, and the beginning of the country's journey towards economic recovery.

Before the New Zealand government decided to raise the alert level to Level 4 and impose a general lockdown, the government sent citizens' phones a detailed text message explaining the reasons and benefits of the lockdown that will appear within two weeks. The message began with "This is a message to all of New Zealand, we are counting on you." New Zealand's handling of the Corona pandemic was characterized by frank and continuous communication with citizens, and Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern usually held daily press conferences. She also utilized social media to directly communicate with her citizens from home and offer them updates on the situation (Figure 31). New Zealand publishes daily detailed updates on the status of the Corona pandemic, the numbers of tests and injuries and their breakdown by ethnicity and region. Social media was an essential part of this communication policy followed by the Prime Minister and the government.

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<sup>102</sup> <https://www.dw.com/en/jacinda-ardern-leadership-in-coronavirus-response/a-53733397>

Figure 31. Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, using social media from home to stay in touch with her citizens during COVID-19 (March, 2020)



This made citizens an active part of the solution, not the crisis, and contributed to citizens' acceptance of government decisions and their participation in implementing them. Google data showed that New Zealand citizens are more committed to staying home than their counterparts in other countries such as Australia and the United States.

Read the full [story](#)<sup>103</sup> in Arabic.

<sup>103</sup> <https://01gov.com/coronavirus-new-zealand-leadership-crisis-management/>

Watch the story in a 1 minute [video](#)<sup>104</sup> (Arabic) or scan the QR Code:



## Digital Diplomacy

The pandemic has also demonstrated the horizontal nature of social media platforms. Content initiated in one location can travel around the world with little or no consideration to geography or political borders and jurisdictions. This can disrupt or at least challenge your social media practices if you are not prepared for dealing with such content.

### Recommendation:

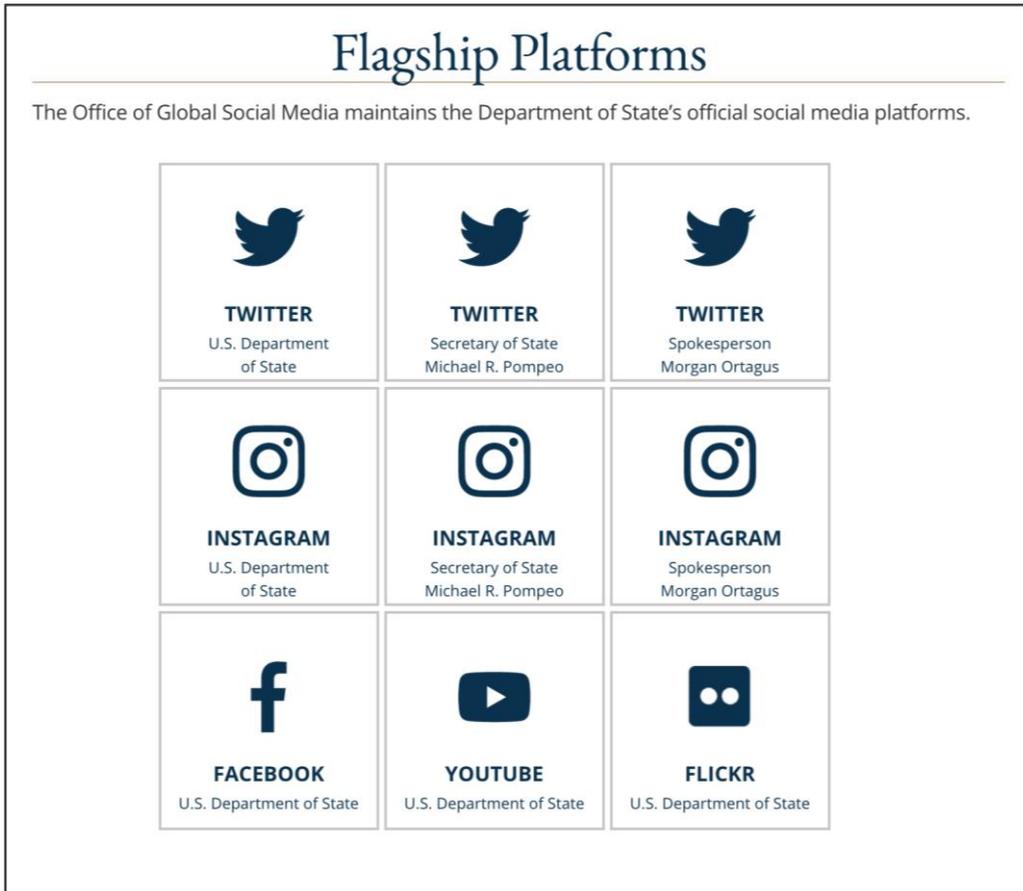
If the mandate of your entity requires you to operate or reach out to audiences outside the UAE, then you should organise your social media presence for this purpose.

Example: The State Department in the US has established the Office of Global Social Media<sup>105</sup> which organises the department social media presence to be globally active and maintains the Department of State's official social media platforms. Also, this office ensures different social media accounts are managed by the right people inside the department (Figure 32).

*Figure 32. The Office of Global Social Media's Flagship Platforms*

<sup>104</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usULQN87m4E&ab\\_channel=01Gov](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=usULQN87m4E&ab_channel=01Gov)

<sup>105</sup> <https://www.state.gov/social>



**Recommendation:**

If the mandate of your entity requires you to operate or reach out to audiences outside the UAE, your entity should also consider expanding its social media strategy to be a global digital diplomacy strategy.

**Recommendation:**

If your mandate limits your authority to the UAE only, which is the case for the majority of government entities, refrain from interacting with content or hashtags that are initiated outside the UAE unless they fulfill the following criteria at minimum:

- They are related to your entity's core business
- You have fact checked their content
- The content doesn't violate the laws or regulations of the UAE in any way

- The content doesn't contradict with the values of the UAE society
- And interacting with such content can add value to your target audience.

### Case Study: Australia

Australia launched its "International Cyber Engagement Strategy"<sup>106</sup>. The strategy aims to take care of Australia's interests and maximize its economic gains through digital trade as well as international cooperation in a way that maintains cyber peace and reduces the risks of digital crimes.

The strategy works to encourage innovation in cybersecurity solutions in cooperation with the relevant authorities from the private sector, civil society, academic institutions, individuals and governments, whether on a local, regional or international scale, with the aim of supporting the decentralization of control over the international network and allowing all parties to cast their votes in discussions on policy management And the Technical Administration of the Internet.

Read the full [story](#)<sup>107</sup> in Arabic.

### The Rise of TikTok and Video

"TikTok will change the way your social media works — even if you're avoiding it."<sup>108</sup>-The New York Times.

As we are approaching the end of 2020, the number of TikTok's active users has exceeded 800 million worldwide.<sup>109</sup> And more than 40% of its users are

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.dfat.gov.au/publications/international-relations/international-cyber-engagement-strategy/aices/index.html>

<sup>107</sup> <https://rb.gy/o8tkku>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/10/style/what-is-tik-tok.html>

<sup>109</sup> Data Portal, 2020

aged between 16 and 24. And in the UAE, 1 in 4 residents has an account on TikTok.

Following the massive success, other social media platforms have started launching similar services including Instagram which has launched Instagram Reels in August, 2020.<sup>110</sup>

The rise of these video and media platforms are not isolated from the rise of the video as the preferred medium on social media. According to a Cisco study, by 2022, 82% of all online content will be video content.<sup>111</sup>

This demonstrates the high value of video content and how essential it's to consider it a central piece in your social media content strategy.

Example: The Singapore government has launched its official TikTok [account](#)<sup>112</sup> with over 25,000 followers. It promotes a number of its government services through a collection of skits and memes, in addition to videos of trendy and viral dances and challenges. One of its most viewed videos is a comedic post celebrating the Diwali Holiday, with over 128,000 views.

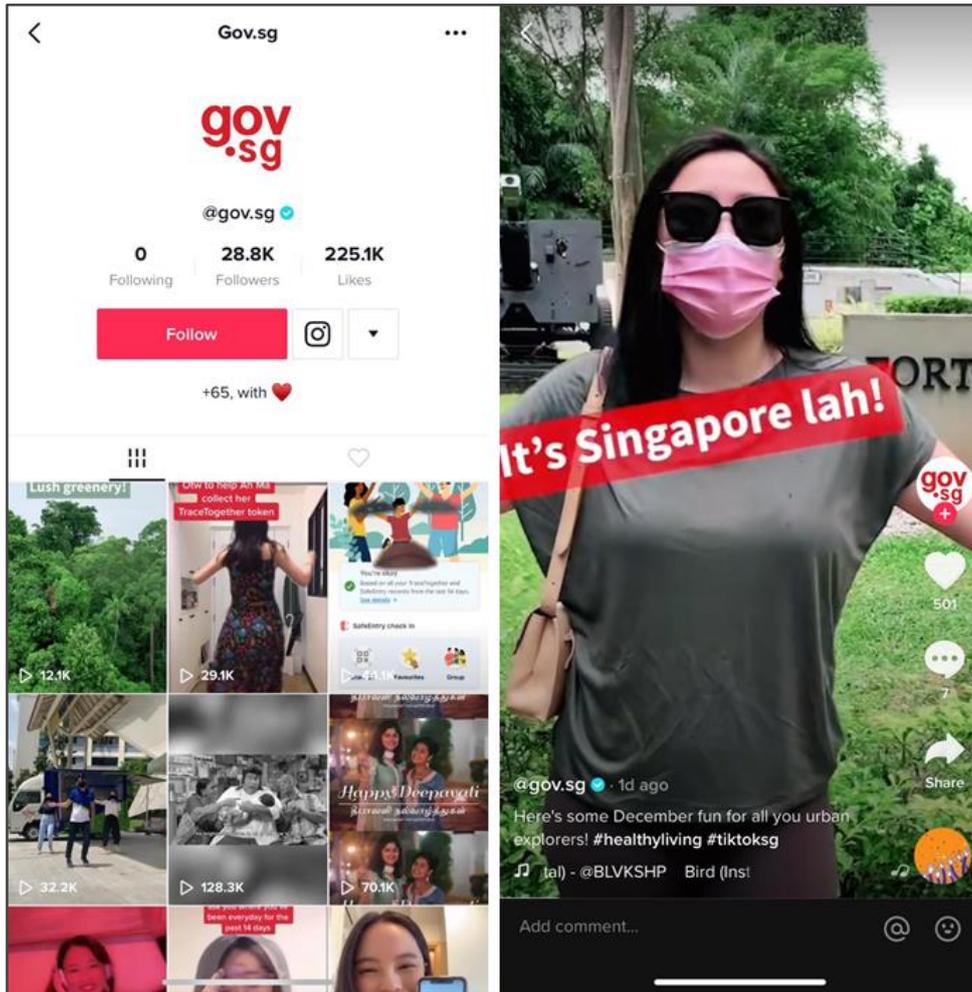
*Figure 33. TikTok account of Singapore government*

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<sup>110</sup> <https://about.instagram.com/blog/announcements/introducing-instagram-reels-announcement>

<sup>111</sup> <https://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/executive-perspectives/annual-internet-report/white-paper-c11-741490.html>

<sup>112</sup> [Gov.sg \(@gov.sg\) Official TikTok | Watch Gov.sg's Newest TikTok Videos](#)



Recommendation:

When designing both your social media strategy and the recurring content calendar, discuss with your team members and stakeholders how you can increase both the quality and quantity of your video content pieces.

Recommendation:

Stories are becoming available across social media platforms. In addition to the fact that they are most likely in video format, they represent the “snackable,” posted regularly, and increasingly personal and authentic in style and tone”<sup>113</sup>.

<sup>113</sup> Hootsuite, The state of social media in government 2019

Invest in creating more creative stories across the social media platforms covered by your strategy.

*Recommendation:*

When deciding about joining TikTok and the likes, make sure your target audience, or at least a segment of them exist there.

*Recommendation:*

For your content to be engaging on TikTok and the likes, it has to have the right tone and style, which might be different than what you are used to on Twitter or LinkedIn. Prepare well and ensure you have the suitable content before start sharing.

*Recommendation:*

Learn from other government entities, inside and outside the UAE who have activated their accounts on Tiktok and started sharing content there. Try to find out what has worked for them and what has not.

## **Data and Artificial Intelligence**

Throughout the various sections of this document, we have referred to the use of data as an essential part of your activities to plan and use social media. For example, we have used or advised you to use this data-driven approach in the following areas:

- Defining and understanding your target audience
- Identifying the most popular social media platforms
- Analysing your social media performance on various platforms
- Adjusting your social media content calendar based on the performance of your past content

- A key role in your social media team is dedicated for data collection and analysis

Recommendation:

Rely on correct and high quality data: Ensure a standard process for data collecting, reporting, and processing data to make sure its reliability and accuracy is not compromised.

Recommendation:

Build the internal capacity in the various fields of data science. This can happen over time with the priority given to the most essential use cases of data in your social media strategy.

Recommendation:

Protect the privacy of personal data of people inside and outside your entity. This can be achieved by a mix of policy and technical measures, in addition data skills and culture.

Recommendation:

Before investing in AI technologies, define a business case for the use of AI to achieve your social media objectives (See the Case Study below).

Recommendation:

Invest in building and foster the data culture among all employees, and not only the members of your social media team.

**Case Study: Inequaligram<sup>114</sup>**

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<sup>114</sup> <http://inequaligram.net/>

Inequality unfolds in a variety of ways, and two researchers at the Graduate Center at New York University sought to study the disparity between regions by analyzing the millions of photos that are added daily to the Instagram site to share photos.

The project used 7.5 million publicly posted geotagged images in the Manhattan area of New York over five months in 2014; With the aim of studying the disparity in social media through factors such as the variation in the level of interest that residential neighborhoods enjoy in platforms such as "Instagram" and "Facebook". The researchers divided the images into two groups; One was picked up by tourists and the other belonged to locals.

And based on the general distribution of photos, the researcher calculated the "Gini Index" for the collection of photos taken by tourists as well as photos of local residents. The index is used to compare the variation in inequality in social media over time and between different cities.

The researcher said he assumed a fairly large discrepancy in the images shared by Manhattan residents, but was amazed at the size of the difference. According to the analysis, the square kilometer with the largest number of images outperformed the least photographed region with 250,000 images. As for the importance of this study and similar ones at a time when researchers and city planners have already demonstrated the huge disparity through measures such as household incomes, the inability to bear housing costs, and slow wage growth.

Read the full [story](#)<sup>115</sup> in Arabic.

Watch the story in a 1 minute [video](#)<sup>116</sup> (Arabic) or scan the QR Code:

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<sup>115</sup> <https://rb.gy/qr7xzp>

<sup>116</sup>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktLXnhbiffY&list=PLRlBkvwJsNTLcnPDDoiAb41YtwxbS3rVn&index=6&ab\\_channel=01Gov](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktLXnhbiffY&list=PLRlBkvwJsNTLcnPDDoiAb41YtwxbS3rVn&index=6&ab_channel=01Gov)



### Case Study: SUVE - AI Powered Chatbot<sup>117</sup>

Given the rise of misinformation and fake news on the Covid-19 pandemic in Estonia, there was a strong need to connect citizens with reliable information at times of uncertainty. In order to ensure that the official government hotline stays reserved for people who are truly in need of support and personal consultations, this AI-powered chatbot, Suve, is a means for many people to use the government websites to be directed to the factual and reliable information on the pandemic.

The hackathon culture has truly grown in Estonia, as well as around the world, as it is a way for the public and private sectors to come together and experiment with ideas, which improve engagement between governments and citizens through the use of innovative technology. Chatbot Suve was one of the ideas that started at the [Hack the Crisis](#) hackathon organised by the government in collaboration with private partners. The purpose of the hackathon was to leverage the experimentation spirit within the startup community to tackle the challenges due to the pandemic situation. From active participation of the startup community, Suve was born in this hackathon as one of the ways to

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<sup>117</sup> <https://eebot.ee/>

minimize the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the citizen-government relationship during a crisis.

Since the chatbot has already been added to many government websites, which include webpages of the Government of Estonia, Estonia's Health Board, Ministry of Social Affairs, Work in Estonia, International House of Estonia and Invest in Estonia, and more to follow. A team of volunteers has also contributed to ensure that the chatbot can soon speak in Russian as well. Moreover, the chatbot collects and transmits unanswered questions to its editors, helping develop the chatbot even further over time.



UNICEF has also partnered with Governments to provide COVID-19 related information to more than 10 million young people using U-Report, UNICEF's mobile platform for youth participation.<sup>20</sup> Through a chatbot embedded in all social media platforms, U-Report provides COVID-19 related information by country, assesses needs based on real-time surveys and offers e-learning, and job skills training programs particularly designed for adolescents.<sup>118</sup>

*Recommendation:*

Adapt the required machine learning methods to ensure that the AI-enabled solution keeps improving its performance over time.

*Recommendation:*

Deploy the AI-enabled and data driven solution on the social media platforms that suit your target audience.

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<sup>118</sup> UNDESA, e-Government Survey 2020

*Recommendation:*

Aim at building your internal capacity in the areas of data science and AI. This should help in maximizing your Return on Investment (ROI) and sustaining your success.

*Recommendation:*

When you don't have the needed skills or capabilities to develop the solution internally, you can tap into the outside community by organizing hackathons and other collaborative methods.

## Appendix

### Appendix A: List of Case Studies and Examples

- [WhatsApp COVID-19 bot](#), South Africa
- [Decide Madrid](#), Spain
- [Sweden Twitter](#), Sweden
- [Jun's Twitter Town Hall](#), Spain
- [Coronavirus: 5 things New Zealand Got Right](#), New Zealand
- [Office of Global Social Media](#), United States of America
- [SUVE - AI Powered Chatbot](#), Estonia
- [WeChat](#), China & Argentina
- [Inequaligram](#), United States of America
- [Office of eSafety Commissioner](#), Australia
- [Content and Social Media Policy](#), Australia
- [The National Archives and Records Administration](#), United States of America
- [The Government of Western Australia](#), Australia
- [The Privacy Act 1993](#), New Zealand

### Appendix B: Learning Resources and International References

- [UN e-Government Survey 2020](#), United Nations
- [Social Media Guides, Digital.gov](#), United States
- [Government Social Media PlayBook](#), United Kingdom
- [Use social media - digital guide, Victoria Government](#), Australia
- [CDC Guide to Writing for Social Media](#), United States of America

- [Social Media content on 01Gov.](#)