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Social media as an important form of local government offices communication

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Abstract

Social media allow for new opportunities and local government's offices approach to communication. Many smaller municipalities and counties practically do not know about the existence of such channels as: Blip, Twitter, YouTube and even Facebook. Large cities already learned about the possibilities these tools provide, but only a few use them; and those that do, not always take thoughtful and systematic action. Employees of local governments sometimes do not have adequate knowledge of these tools and their potential. Officials also feel intimidated by the interactivity of the media and by criticism which can flow from disgruntled Internet users, mostly locals. The main aim of this article is to point out the growing role of the social media in marketing communication of the local authorities, and to analyze whether governments rather focus on presenting information or joining the social dialogue. For this purpose the activity of selected local governments in social networking sites was analyzed. As part of the research the profiles registered on the most popular social network websites were considered. The article also presents the results of the research conducted among municipal offices. The main research method used in the article is a comparative analysis of the individual cases, the interview method, the secondary data analysis and a review of selected literature sources.

Keywords: social media, communication, self-government, authority

1. Introduction

Many people cannot imagine life without access to the Internet everywhere at any time. The development of Web 2.0 on the Internet has contributed to the creation of virtual communities which establish, process and give opinions on a variety of information. Their area of activity are mainly social media, defined as communication channels enabling the interaction between Internet users through various communication technology channels. Social media are now a huge influence on the activities of market participants, including government offices. They can be an effective tool for marketing communication, provided that they are used properly. Activities in social media are focused mostly on creating such content that will attract users' attention and encourage them to share it with others. Using social media has become a trend; the power of social media has also been noted by local governments, because citizens often want to actively engage in current activities. Social media are a good way to supplement the local government's website. It is an excellent platform for public consultation and the opportunity to obtain information about problems of ordinary citizens, even seemingly mundane ones. Here the

boundary between the creator and the reader disappear, because anyone can publish and comment on information, and it is difficult to control this process. Unfortunately, the sole idea is not enough to successfully exist in social media; one should carefully plan the campaign. The basic mistake is, unfortunately, creating a profile on a social networking site or blog, and after a short time leaving it without supervision. Authorities commonly have a problem keeping up with their media profiles. They fear the interactivity of the media and lack of complete control over the information flow. The situation in social media is changing rapidly and one must respond quickly, not just to exist in the virtual world.

The main aim of this article is to point out the growing role of social media in marketing communication for the local governments and an attempt to answer the question whether local governments join in a social dialogue or barely share information through the media. For the realization of the analyzed activity of selected local governments in social networking sites. . The main research method used in the article is a comparative analysis of the individual cases of local governments' social activity. The literature on the subject, secondary sources, observation, benchmarking cases and interview method were used as secondary method.

2. Social media communication – a short literature review

In the functioning of the information society it is an information that plays an important role, especially the speed of its acquisition and transmission. Information is an essential resource for modern civilization. Even A. Toffler's writings mention the society of the third wave (Toffler, 1980). For this reason, the Internet plays an important role in society due to its basic features, such as: global reach, multimedia, interactivity. It is hard to imagine life without the access to new information and communication technologies. As was pointed out by Jeremy Rifkin: "A growing part of our daily life takes place via new digital channels of human expression. Communication is a means by which people find common sense and share with others the world they created" (Rifkin, 2000). Social media enables a two-way communication between the different parties. Each network user unwillingly becomes part of a larger or smaller community portal, news portal or website. Visit of the Internet user is recorded in the statistics, and their presence or absence on these websites show the popularity of the site. Social media have informative function (sharing, acquisition and knowledge) and social function (building a virtual society, building social bonds) (Weinberg, 2009). The social media content publication takes place almost immediately after its preparation, and also the interaction takes place almost at the same moment. The interactivity is therefore very important, and on the Internet we can distinguish its two levels (Gregor & Stawiszyński, 2002):

a) interaction with the media - the user, in order to obtain the desired information, must be actively involved in the communication process, mainly to click on the marked place, their focus is on the screen; the user decides which parts of the service he wants to read, and which to omit;

b) social interaction - interaction of people with each other, exchanging information between people living in different parts of the world; allows for free exchange of views and opinions, allows the creation of diverse groups of users with common interests.

The element of active participation is an important reason why "social media is perhaps one of the most fluid and dynamic aspects of the Internet" (Charlesworth, 2009). Currently there is a growing importance of social media such as blogs, forums, guides, social networking sites, discussion groups, wiki-wiki, helping Internet users find their way in the new reality. It is all the

media and online services in which individuals, companies or organizations post information about themselves, the products offered, to allow for the integration by individual participation. Social media can be used on any level, and the original information may be modified indefinitely. Everyone has free access to create and receive content. The contents are spread through social interaction and are always available, and their formation is unaffected (Definition social media, 2015). Market subjects can create their own social network or post (on their own website) elements of social networking, for example forums, chats. This may be informative, educational, could serve as a forum for the exchange of experiences and mutual support. Examples would be the non-profit organizations sites or other market-creating social agencies promoting the social issues. Another way to use social media is to create profiles or to post information managed by external actors (general, eg. Facebook or specialized, for example. GoldenLine) social networks (Śliwińska; Pacut, eds., 2011).

Social media have a relatively short, yet very rich history. The 90s are most commonly indicated as the time of their appearance (though some authors date the origins as early as in the late 70s, with the appearance of CBBS, or Computerized Bulletin Board System, which allows computer enthusiasts to exchange information with each other (Krotka historia rozwoju mediów społecznościowych, 2014)). The moment of breakthrough can be the year 2006, when Wikipedia and MySpace reached a peak of popularity, there was YouTube outburst, and there was also a significant increase of interest in, created in 2004, Facebook (Ahlqvist, Bäck, Halonen, & Heinonen, 2008). Social media can be seen as a set of solutions based on web technology, designed in such a way that they could be used by three or more persons (Bingham & Conner, 2010) (Safko & Brake, 2009). They refer to the activity within the community which connects through the online environment to share information, knowledge and opinions. It should be noted that some authors, particularly media experts (eg. Paul Levinson) challenge the legitimacy of the adopted naming, because they see that it poorly highlights the true nature of this medium.

While characterizing social media, one can compare them to the traditional ones (The Complete Guide to Social Media. From The Social Media Guys, 2015). One of the distinguishing features is the range - in both cases the media are able to reach a wide audience. In the case of traditional media, however, there are certain organizational constraints, namely cost or technology, and in the case of social media information is generally decentralized and independent - its range is only dependent on its attractiveness for the customers. Traditional media focus on publishing information, which is the top down message scheme. In social media, every Internet user can post or comment on other posts, giving their opinion. An important distinguishing feature is the availability. Creating and publishing content in traditional media is available for the very few, most often limited by the management units (eg. Governments, corporations); also it requires financing, knowledge and specialist skills. Social media tools are easily (and usually freely), available to everyone. Barriers to access them are low - namely the cost of Internet access. Thus, while traditional media are usually owned by one or another "power holding group", social media are virtually impossible to control. Most of their content is created by users, and it is they who decide what will be published, what will be read, and what should be changed. Social media supply information much faster than traditional ones - through the use of modern information technology and telecommunications, anyone can create information. The essential features are therefore immediacy and durability. Content created by the press, television or radio, once published, cannot be easily (if at all), amended. Their lifespan is often short (TV or radio broadcast). By contrast, social media is an ecosystem where once-created content can be

indefinitely processed, edited, aggregated or cited. It is practically not to be removed – the Internet remembers everything and the information spreads very quickly. It should also be noted that social media content is produced in an unaffected manner.

Social media are usually and primarily associated with social networking and blogs, while in fact they include more forms. You can meet various classifications of social media. One of the most well-known division is by AM Kaplan and M. Haenlein, who used two dimensions to divide them: the level of self-presentation and disclosure level (myself) and the level of social presence, which enables data medium (Fig. 1).

		Social presence/Media richness		
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/Self discolure	High	Blogs	Social networking sities (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)	Virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g. Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g. YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft)

Fig. 1. Classification of social media

Source: A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, *Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media*, Business Horizons 53 (1), 2010, pp. 59–68, Retrieved from http://michaelhaenlein.eu/ Publications/Kaplan,%20Andreas%20-%20Users%20of%20the%20world,%20unite.pdf.

You will notice that this division, because of the dynamics and transformation of social media, does not always reflect appropriate media types. Many of them operate on several levels of social interaction, and should therefore fall into several categories at the same time. For example, Twitter is not just a microblogging platform, but is also used to exchange a widely-understood information (Shi, Rui, & Whinston, 2014). Social media can, as previously mentioned, take a variety of forms; from blogging and photo sharing (by publishing information on social networks), to music exchange and video publishing. Interesting in this regard seems to be the classification of these media based on their function and not on the technologies they utilize. According to Kaznowski, therefore, social media can be divided into the following categories (Kaznowski, 2010):

- Social media for the publication and presentation of opinions and views, which can include blogs, wiki mechanisms and citizen journalism websites; their main task is to enable an open and free expression of the users' opinions and views; the oldest social media solution;
- Social media for sharing resources, which include YouTube, Flick or Slideshare; They are based explicitly on the idea of Web 2.0, and are not focused on the creation of a knowledge base, but on building a resource base (eg. video, images, presentations) which are processed and stored in the "cloud";

- Social media set to co-create and co-operate, for example Google Docs and MMO (Massive Multiplayer Online Games) - have relatively low media attractiveness, and therefore are not always associated with social media; their main role is an established (in advance) goal of obtaining a result of the cooperation of the participants; one feature of this solution is the formation of a spontaneous community, usually for a (relatively) short time or, if it takes longer, it is a closed group (usually not allowing new participants);
- Social media focused on building and maintaining relationships, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, virtual worlds; it is the broadest category of social media; refers generally to social networking sites, whose main objective is to build and maintain relationships, fulfilling one of the main demands of Web 2.0 - the Internet as a platform for connecting people;
- Social media focused on communication and discussion, which include, primarily, forums, chat rooms and instant messaging - these solutions are often integrated with other types of social media, especially social networking sites, or are used in parallel (eg. A chat during the live broadcast) ;
- Social media focused on current information and referring to the news, for example microblogs, alert services (notified citizenship), livestream or livecast - this category is focused on coverage and referencing the current events.

It can therefore be seen that social media are using more and more new solutions and a variety of media. Once the dominant media was the bare text, now we observe an extensive use of images, video, audio and other applications. Social media therefore use the multimedia with the purpose of enriching social interaction.

Because of the presumed volume of the article, it will from now on focus on the presentation of activities of local government offices on social networking sites. Those are a special type of websites whose content is largely created by users, and the main reason for their use is a quick and free communication with friends, as well as meeting new people (Kaznowski, Nowy marketing, 2008). Many authors emphasize that in the context of the communication process carried out via social networking sites, it seems reasonable to use the term "engagement", because their users should be perceived as the active participants, not spectators. This engagement is understood differently than in traditional media case. The difference comes down to active participation (Evans & McKee, 2010). Network users are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to communicate on the available profiles.

However, one should be aware that especially through social networking sites a person is exposed to FoMO. The phenomenon, described by the Americans as FoMO (short for: fear of missing out), in common understanding means the fear of miss important information, and feeling the need for "constant lag"- constant catching up with the newsfeed. FoMO is manifested by persistent refreshing and checking for example one's e-mail or social networking notifications. It is therefore the constant need to be up to date and the associated fear of "falling out of circulation". It is the fear that others may be involved in something interesting that, because of our absence, escapes us; hence he it's important for some to be in constant contact and to keep the news of the activities of our (virtual) friends updated. American sociologist Danah Boyd while analyzing two social networking sites (her subjects were American teenagers who use Facebook and MySpace) further noted, that the differences in the use of social network sites reflect the existing real-world division and differentiation related, among others, to race, social status or

education. It turned out that most MySpace users are young African-Americans coming from poorer families, while Facebook was dominated by white people, better educated, and usually coming from well-off families. (Boyd, 2008)

As already mentioned, the rest of this article focuses on the presentation of the activity of local governments in social media, especially on the most famous social networking sites.

3. Social media in local governments communication - selected aspects

For social media it is the quality of the established contacts and the possibility of open dialogue with the customer that is important. Users are searching for knowledge, information, opinions on issues of interest to them. Some of these comment, evaluate or speak in the forums. The purpose of using these media by local governments may be to increase awareness and brand recognition in the region, although it is often the formation of opinion on the subject and provide information about the events. Attracting a number of users is one thing, and keeping them, another. The presence of local government in social media requires a certain commitment. The problem in communication through social media is, sometimes, an excess of messages transmitted by the local government to its customers or treating this type of media like a website which one does not need to constantly monitor. It is worth to the unregistered user to see part of the content. One happy customer is willing to share their impressions with a few others and encourage them to have a look at a service website. Governments communication with the customers comes down primarily to creating groups of fans of the place, municipalities, events or - and perhaps above all – to interacting with the group. Unfortunately, sometimes the official profiles offices lose to the lower administration initiatives which become more popular.

In addition to creating their own communities around the municipality (eg. Forums) people are no longer surprised by the presence of local governments on popular portals like Facebook and Twitter. A popular form of activity on, e.g. Facebook, is clicking "Like". Important theme of using social networking sites is also satisfying curiosity. Local governments must bear in mind that the activity undertaken on the Internet is independent of whether or not to grant it. If we want to really engage in a dialogue, we should be given plenty of time and energy. One should be aware that there may be negative comments, which need to be addressed, not deleted. Part of the local government's fear of criticism is to avoid engaging in discussions, and their message is sometimes one-sided. Most large cities have already marked its presence on social networking sites. However, these should be planned. They cannot be neglected, as the lack of response from the municipality may meet with criticism and unfavorable comments. The preferred option for governments may be to entrust the profile to the care of specialists in the field of social marketing or providing support for the person who will be responsible for such actions. The presence on social networks makes it possible to obtain a quick opinion on a specific topic or suggestions for changes. The power of social media is increasingly observed by the administration. An example is the reaction to the bombings during a marathon in Boston (To nie był zamach ery social media), during which witnesses of the events, mainly through Twitter, were the first to report these explosions, sending pictures and short messages. Some Boston public services, such as the police, just by Twitter reported the incident and developments, and collected information from citizens, including the potential terrorists' whereabouts. This example shows that a skillful use of social media is a good way of explaining, informing or reducing the information overflow. Social media may, in fact, help people and entities to work together and communicate in a variety of

social issues. Media also carry the danger of which you should be aware, for example unkind entries can spoil the image of the municipality.

Interviews and observations made in the selected municipalities allow us to conclude that local governments have different approaches to the management / use social media. Some of them create new posts dedicated to the media, other appoint coordinators (eg. Gdansk). Some cities (eg. Poznan, Warsaw, Gdansk) decide to transfer all or part of the communication on the Internet to external companies, because they say representatives of cells / departments promotion at the office, the employees already have to handle citizens or journalists and do not have to be present at social portals when there is a need to react quickly. Very often, external companies are characterized by a greater understanding of the mechanisms of social media. A very important matter is to determine precisely the topic or questions that customers of the portal may ask and consider what may occur in connection with the comments. It is important to adapt the method and form of expression to its users. Active Users can be observed on many sites, each of which satisfies different needs. The profiles must therefore be present where the relevant audience can be found. Local governments are trying to be in many social networks, not only on the popular Facebook. Internet users are increasingly involved in such services as (Facebook przestał być modny. Zobacz, gdzie uciekają jego użytkownicy): Google+, which is different from FB as it is more intimate; Twitter offers not only writing and tracking post, following acquaintances, but also famous people; Instagram - a service that allows the use of the advantages of the camera and showing what is currently going on; or Pinterest - a virtual pin board, to which an Internet user can attach whatever they want, from stimulating quotes and articles by photos and drawings, to music and movies. The popularity of new sites and the development of mobile devices (including the growing popularity of smartphones) and reduced Internet costs should translate into communication activities undertaken by local governments.

Social networks allow differentiation of content based on the audience. For example, the most common Twitter, Facebook, Nk or Google+ serve local governments to establish relations mainly with the residents, YouTube, Pinterest and Flickr - to present their traits, events, using the multimedia content (videos, photos), Twitter - to communicate with journalists or 'opinion leaders', while Instagram and Foursquare to show, inter alia, the best side to the tourists. It is a common practice for local governments to establish separate accounts for large events and festivals, eg the Poznan's "Malta" festival. It should be emphasized that portals - compared to the websites of municipalities - should avoid duplication of official and bland information. The main types of content published by local governments include: information on important events (eg. Large sport events, concerts, natural disasters), news of city life (ie. Traffic congestion, alternative stops, power outages), cultural announcements and entertainment events, links to other sites, interesting facts about the city, announced competitions, surveys and multimedia (images, audio and video). The most popular social media content on those profiles are the photographs. It is also important to make sites more attractive by encouraging the user to interact; the simple click of the "Like" button, although present on all profiles, is not a factor which encourages participation. One can be encouraged by being offered participation in competitions, where they can win city-related gadgets, such as tickets for events organized by the city (eg. Legnica), or merchandise related to the city; publishing photos sent by fans (eg. Zakopane), to encourage to share their experiences, photo-riddles and other quizzes, vote for the most beautifully decorated balcony (eg. Szczecin), etc. are also encouraging factors.

Table 1 provides the information about the official account of the selected capitals in certain social networks and the number of Likes.

Table 1. Presence of the selected capitals (official accounts) on social networking sites

City	Number of likes Facebook	Number of tweets Twitter	The city has an official account on the social networking site				
			Google+	Instagram	Pinterest	YouTube	Other
Bydgoszcz	64 395	656	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	NK
Cracow	83 743	785	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Gdansk	153 266	23 100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	FourSquare, Spotify
Lodz	90 850	–	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
London (gov)	20 735	2271	No	Yes	No	No	No
London (visitlondon)	764 893	32 200	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Paris	2 780451	862 384	No	Yes	Yes	No	Dailymotion, LinkedIn, Vine
Poznan	157 632	3971	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	FourSquare
Prague	27 223	2053	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Tumblr
Strasbourg	59 524	8901	No	Yes	No	No	Dailymotion
Szczecin	32 987	6315	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	NK
Warsaw	96 442	8462	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Wroclaw	190 672	18 500	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

One may notice that the most popular social networking site is FB, but one cannot neglect the others, because the users that the city wants to reach are different. According to the Sotrender report on the activity on Facebook in September 2015 (Fanpage Trends 09.2015, 2015) biggest fanpages were *Warszawa nieznana (Warsaw unknown), Wroclaw [Wroclove]* and the *City of Poznan*. Most fans joined to the websites: the City of Poznan, the City of Warsaw and the City of Gdansk. Most fans were recored on: the City of Gdansk (50% concerned), the City of Poznan (30%) and Wroclaw [Wroclove] (19%) websites. 'Involved' user is the one who, in the specific period, interacted with the content of the page by clicking "Like", commenting or posting. Interactivity Index in terms of the highest ranked Websites: City of Gdansk, Wroclaw [Wroclove] and Warsaw. This index shows all activity within a fanpage during the month. The biggest number of posts to which the cities reacted virtually are City of Gdansk (reaction time is 4h1m), Life of Czestochowa and the county (1d14h), Dabrowa Gornicza - official profile (12h46m), Smile - you're in Szczecin (36m13s). The Capital City of Warsaw fairly quickly responds to posts - 1h6m, but unfortunately not very often (0.54% Posts commented). The response time is the time median between the publication of the user's comment and the profile owner's reaction published under the said post.

One must not underestimate the unofficial profiles created mostly by enthusiasts of the specific location, because sometimes those are more popular than the official ones. This may be caused by

the lack of the official profile of the place, creation of unofficial sites (mostly informally) which incorporate the media files obtained from the fans and users themselves. An example of this phenomenon is Warsaw (official account has more than 96 thousand Likes, the unofficial capital of "Warsaw Unknown" approx. 250 thousand). Communication in social media is also attempted by other public institutions operating in the city as well as local and regional tourist organizations. One can then enrich its contents and strengthen and spread the message of educational institutions, cultural and social announcements, and cooperate in the promotion of attractive destinations.

Some local governments use more and more multimedia content and video blogs on YouTube. Popularization of social media is due to an increasing simplicity of technology and increasing bandwidth of Internet connections. The user can see not only TV spots but also many informational materials, which are not commercial. Video channel is highly efficient – it requires relatively little user effort, and triggers a lot of his attention and interest. The key is a published content – it must be interesting and unconventional. Taking an active part in the dialogue and properly monitoring responses to posted threads, government wins trust and credibility: the features that users value most. There is also a noted increase of other types of urban activity on the Internet, for example virtual platforms, built on the model of reality. The best-known of these is The Second Life, which is a partially paid, virtual meeting place, managed by Linden Lab in the United States. The game users, called Residents, are functioning as virtual characters (ie. Avatars) and can modify their virtual world, including participation in its economy, based on its own currency (Linden dollars). The first Polish city (and the second in the world - after Amsterdam), of which the selected fragments were carefully mapped in The Second Life, was Krakow. All elements of virtual architecture and infrastructure are an exact copy of the city. The Second Life is an excellent platform for communication and a great tool to both build and promote the city as well as to strengthen ties among its residents and enthusiasts. Thus, geographical barriers disappear, and there is an exchange of views in which users not only see, but also can create to-date events that happen in the real world. On the Main Market Square, you can meet friends, buy a pretzel or even rent an apartment with a view of the Sukiennice- the Cloth Hall. Other Polish centers which appeared in the virtual space are Wroclaw, Poznan and Katowice.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

Social media are constantly evolving. Initially a simple exchange of information was replaced by a live dialogue via instant messaging or social networking sites. File Sharing and editing has become commonplace. Social media, by their nature, functionality, interactivity, variety and potential, are satisfying the many diverse needs of different audiences and provide an important platform for marketing communication in a virtual environment also for self-government. These media serve local government stakeholders, including the residents with a primarily informative function (sharing, acquisition and knowledge) as well as social one (building a virtual society, building social bonds). Currently, local governments' activities in social media profiles are primarily reputational, encouraging participation in the events and public consultations. This should be a friendly and open dialogue, though without much familiarizing. A guarantee of success and a necessary condition for the existence of local governments in the online community is openness and giving up marketing efforts for knowledge sharing and customer interaction. Social media are changing the rules of communication between local authorities and their customers –they should, in fact, acquire the ability to get into a direct relation with

representatives of their target groups and learn to listen to them. It is important to build trust and keeping promises. Thanks to the media, local authorities can gain new ideas for solving various problems, get to know their audience or even obtain the brand/ city ambassadors. The dialogue allows one to build loyalty and commitment of residents who share the insights and ideas with the authorities.

However, be aware of certain principles / recommendations for local government activities in social media, which increase the effectiveness of communication. There should be a distinguished communication style – it should be more informal, so that it is perceived as natural, preferably in the first person. Published content should be interesting; about a particular city which will be of interest for visitors and that will allow users to make profile entries and to upload multimedia content. Among the news appearing on the city's website, choose the most interesting and important, and then briefly describe them. Not everything that is on the website should immediately appear in the portal. Such repetition is primarily designed to allow Internet users to make entries or add comments. The interaction, cooperation, exchange of opinions between local residents and representatives of local authorities makes a huge difference. The emergence of separate pages devoted to public consultation (eg. In Warsaw), conducting part of the roster (by councilors on the watch) in social media (eg. In Poznan) and involvement of representatives of local government in discussions on the Internet are all a good practice which show changes in the communication relationships between the resident and the authorities, and a sign of appreciation of sources of information, which are social media. A direct response to Internet users' comments (both those positive and negative for the cities) is very important. Local governments should engage in a dialogue with people visiting the profile by asking questions and encouraging posting comments, as well as organize various forms of interaction, for example competitions (in order to gain/give away rewards), while at the same time generating re-visits in the profiles. One should ensure the graphical consistency on all the profiles and its compliance with the visual identification elements of the cities, post the content which follows one main idea, following the promotional strategy of a territorial unit (eg. Szczecin - Floating Garden). A good practice is also to enable the network users to transfer to the official account of an urban center from its website. Mechanisms of social media can also be used in the internal networks of local government in order to create an effective platform to discuss and share common content. It should enhance professionalism in the operation of entities or persons responsible for handling social media. It can be noticed that more and more cities decide to diversify communications in a variety of social media depending on, among others, the profile of users or communicated content. Effective use of social media by local governments is to contribute primarily to the creation of a desired image and to improve the quality of communication; especially with groups that are hard to reach through traditional media. This is not an easy task and a time consuming one, but it is the current trend, which cannot go unnoticed. Without the use of social media in communication, local government does not have the capability to mark its presence on the Internet. However, one should do it with common sense.

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