Basics of Records Management:
Social Media – Blogs, Wikis, Facebook, Twitter and Managing Public Records

<u>Purpose</u>: Provide guidance to state government agencies regarding the retention of public records of posts to social networking websites such as blogs, wikis, Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Agencies need to consider the following four (4) factors when managing the retention of their public records created or received through social networking sites:

1. Are the posts public records requiring retention?
If the posts are made or received in connection with the transaction of the agency's public business (such as providing advice or receiving comments about the agency, its programs, etc.), then they may be public records which need to be retained dependent on the following:
- Do they document government business or provide evidence of an important action?
- Are the records unique?
- Does the information exist elsewhere in a different record or format?

2. Are the posts primary (*record copy*) or duplicate records?
If the posts are copies of records the agency is already retaining for the required retention period (in paper, digital or some other media format), then the posts may be considered duplicates and destroyed when no longer needed. Otherwise, the posts are the agency's primary record (*record copy*) which must be retained according to the schedule.

3. How long do the posts need to be retained?
First, determine if the post is a duplicate record which would not need to be retained. Agencies should use the same retention schedule for posts as they would if the information was distributed via letter or email to everyone within the agency's purview. A good guide to follow is State General Schedule 13 – State Agency Correspondence:
- Transitory – when no longer needed
- General – 2 years
- Program – per specific agency schedules

4. How will the posts be retained by the agency?
Records in social media sites (including metadata) must be copied or otherwise captured and maintained with related records, unless the site has a record management application that can manage the records throughout its lifecycle. Non-record content consisting of duplicate information which is maintained elsewhere may be deleted when no longer needed.

Additional advice regarding the management of public records is available at
http://www.maine.gov/sos/arc/records/state/statetraining.html

"The right record, to the right person, at the right time, at the lowest possible cost"