

HOW TO DEVELOP AN IROPS SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY



A GUIDEBOOK FOR AIRPORTS

Produced by





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Introductory Letter

Social media has caused a major shift in how information is distributed. This is especially true for the aviation industry that regularly experiences irregular operations (IROPS) events that result in surge, capacity, and after-hour situations for airports as well as flight delays, diversions, and cancellations for passengers. Passengers have been using social media to relay comments and video as they personally experience these IROPS events, putting those airports and airlines involved on the defensive. This poses challenges for airports to make sure they are monitoring the right platforms in order to respond to passenger comments with accurate information. However, this type of technology also provides opportunities for airports to quickly notify a broad range of employees and other service providers in order to implement planned IROPS mitigation procedures.

While social media can help airports disseminate vital information during IROPS events, airports need a better understanding of which specific platforms can assist them with maintaining accurate, real-time situational awareness with not only passengers, but also employees and with other aviation service providers. This means developing a robust social media strategy that is both customer-focused and operationally sound, meaning it is coordinated with other aviation service providers, particularly airlines, in order to avoid mixed messages and conflicting information.

This guidebook is designed to help airports work through the process of developing a social media strategy specifically used in times of IROPS. It is written for airports considering new social media efforts, but it can also help guide re-examinations of existing efforts. Airport operations departments can use this guidance as a means to champion the integration of an IROPS social media strategy with an airport's existing social media plan often managed by marketing or public relations personnel. It even can be used by airport IROPS committees as a catalyst to collaborate with various airlines' social media efforts. This is meant to be a flexible framework and a jumping-off point.

As one of the authors of *ACRP Report 65: Guidebook for Airport Irregular Operations (IROPS) Contingency Planning* and as a consultant who has assisted more than a dozen US airports across the nation develop and test their IROPS plans in real-time situations, I have witnessed how critical fast and factually correct information is to successfully carrying out IROPS plans. Social media has the ability to bridge the gap that exists in providing immediate and truthful information to help airports convey the necessary information to provide guidance to passengers as well as manage employees and other organizations in carrying out IROPS mitigation strategies.

As the world of social media is ever-changing, it is difficult to keep up with new platforms. This is why an overall IROPS social media strategy needs to be developed, one that is appropriate for an airport's goals, objectives, targets and resources. This guidebook provides questions, tools and tips to use to help you define these so that as social media evolves, you can assess and evaluate these against your defined needs, making decision making easier. We hope you find that the process described in the following guidebook starts your social media efforts off on a path of continual learning, evaluation, and success.

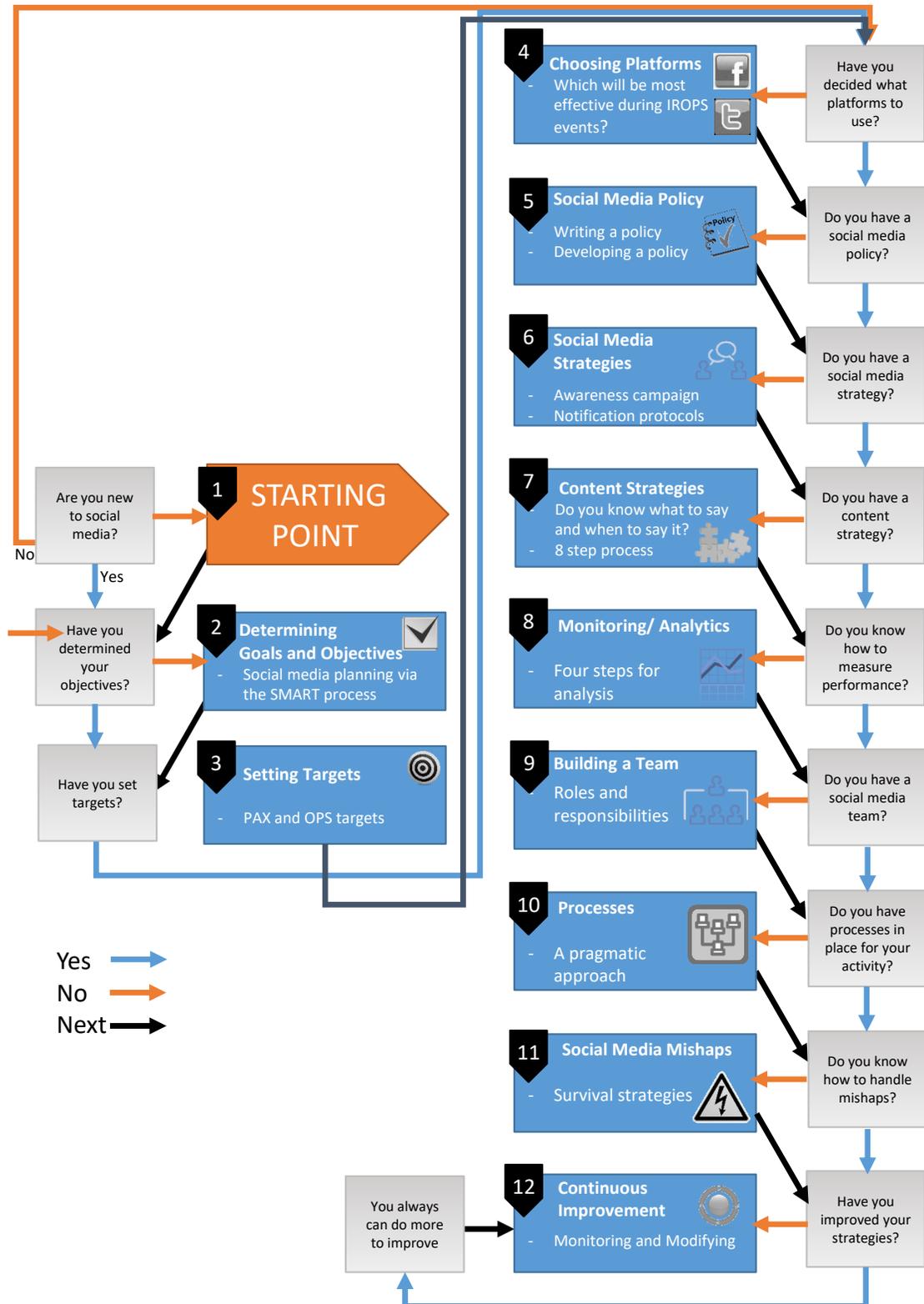
Sincerely,

Rose Agnew
Principal, Aviation Innovation



The Social Media Framework

The image below describes the format needed for forming an IROPS Social Media Strategy. This guidance is set up for you to skip to the sections you need based on answering the questions below.





1. STARTING POINT

Are you new to Social Media?

If your airport has not used social media platforms before or if social media has been limited in use (i.e. handled solely by an airport PR or marketing department), you will first you need to determine your airport's current capabilities for using social media. You can use the **questionnaire** in the appendix to determine just how fluent your staff is in social media. It is important to begin by looking at these areas:

- **Governance:** Governance provides a means for airport owners and departments to collaborate and make decisions that achieve common objectives within an airport organization. However, the utilization of social media during IROPS events also requires partnerships and common understanding among an airport, governing agencies, and other service providers like airlines and concessionaires, as well as with passengers and potentially relief organizations, if situations warrant it. Governance can be achieved by:
 - Individual champions working independently (e.g., operations department and public relations department) and coordinating policies and guidance) within an airport
 - Informal or formal collaboration with social media efforts taking place in other agencies (e.g., FAA, CPB, TSA) and other service provider organizations (e.g., FBOs, concessionaires, ground handlers, hotels, etc.)
 - Widespread commitment and buy-in from senior leadership and political officials

What support is needed for proper governance?

- Guidance and standards
 - Technical assistance to help establish the systems
 - Assistance modifying existing IROPS plans to account for social media
 - Educational support to train an individual or group of individuals to carry out this function
 - Assistance addressing potential legal issues
- **Technology:** Social media are technologies. Therefore, to access and make use of social media, airports require basic resources such as internet access, computers, and mobile devices. As social media operations mature, airports must decide whether to purchase additional equipment or leverage existing resources. Moreover, software selected or developed for searching, extracting, aggregating, and analyzing information must be scalable not only to support minor IROPS events, but also large-scale situations.

What level of airport technology capability is needed?

- Basic infrastructure to support social media operations (e.g., internet access).
- Technology used within the airport for other purposes that can be used in an ad hoc fashion to support basic social media operations (e.g., computers, mobile devices).
- Dedicated technology and space for social media operations within the airport.
- Capacity, technology, and infrastructure exist that can support surge operations for large-scale IROPS events.



- **Data / Analytics:** Since social media provide mechanisms to share large quantities of information, it is important that airports consider analyzing this information in order to inform their decisions. On a basic level, airports should be able to review social media posts and be able to address them either individually if resources permit or globally through tailored public statements. Airports should also consider creating more advanced analytic products, such as maps of geo-coded social media data, which aggregate large volumes of information and display this information in an easily understood, geographically referenced, and visual format. Only a small portion of social media posts, however, contain useful information concerning situational assessment. As the rate and number of social media posts increase, manual review becomes increasingly challenging, necessitating the use of tools to help scan for relevant posts. For large-scale IROPS events, a bottleneck in social media operations often occurs. This is due to an airport's inability to digest the amount of data generated.

What type of data/analytics should airports consider?

- Ad hoc, labor-intensive (e.g., manual review – hard to monitor the scaling up of large events)
 - Tool-supported data collection and aggregation
 - Construction of advanced analytic products (e.g., GIS maps that incorporate open source data)
 - Data collection, aggregation, and analysis are robust toward IROPS event scale
- **Standardized Processes:** Standard operating procedures enable individuals involved in social media activities to coordinate these activities and direct information received via social media inputs to where it is most beneficial. Given the potential need to react rapidly to information posted during IROPS events, adequate social media policies and procedures empower airport operations and other staff involved in social media operations to react quickly, but not hastily. However, standardized processes need to be defined and tested

What are the varying levels of structure, specificity, and verification to consider for standardized processes?

- Process social media information in an ad hoc fashion
- General policies in place for processing social media
- Formal standard operating procedures in place for processing information received via social media
- Effective integration of social media procedures with airport operations has been tested and refined via exercises or real-world events

Once your airport has considered all of these options, it is time to define goals and objectives for using social media during IROPS events.



2. Determining Goals and Objectives

How will you use social media in IROPS situations?

Determining goals and objectives requires looking at the big picture. It involves determining how social media during IROPS events relates not only to the bigger airport communication plan, but also to regional communication plans with other service providers.

To get started with determining goals and objectives, airports can use the “SMART” acronym. SMART stands for:

- **Specific:** Answers the question, “What exactly are we going to do and for whom?” This identifies what will change in concrete terms, by identifying the particular population (audience) and/or setting (tools), and the specific actions that come as a result. It is advisable to indicate how the change will be implemented from both an external customer service and an internal risk mitigation/IROPS response effort perspective. Good verbs to use: provide, train, publish, increase, decrease, schedule, purchase, etc.
- **Measurable:** Objectives should be quantifiable and easy to measure as a means for evaluation. It should include the specific metrics you will be collecting like how fast employees were notified of an IROPS situation.
- **Attainable:** Objectives should be feasibly achieved within a proposed time frame with the resources and support available. Don’t make them unrealistic. Make sure your staff can handle the needs of social media during an IROPS event.
- **Relevant:** Your objective, strategy, and overall airport vision and mission should align. Ask: does this objective have an effect on the desired goal?
- **Timely:** Good objectives have deadlines. Ask: When will this be accomplished? A specific and reasonable time frame should be included within an objective.

Some additional questions to ask during the goal-setting phase include:

- How will social media for IROPS be integrated into the airport’s overall communication / social media strategy? With other service providers in the region?
- Who from the airport will engage during IROPS events? Will there be one voice? A team using one branded account? Personal accounts?
- How much time will be spent on social media planning for, during, and after IROPS events?
- How will social media be used for communicating with passengers?
- How will social media address assist with IROPS mitigation efforts?
- How long will the airport “test” the different sites before evaluating their success?
- If an event IROPS events becomes a “worst case scenario” situation (e.g., passengers from international flights diverted to an airport with no FIS provisions after hours), what are the proper protocols and who needs to become involved?
- What are the rules for engagement?
- What are the ways to use negative press?
- What are the rules of conduct for employees engaging in social media during IROPS events?

Once these questions have been answered, you can prioritize answers and determine your top goals and objectives and can move on to determining targets for IROPS events themselves next.



3. Set Targets

What does social media success look like?

It's important to set targets to achieve during the IROPS event itself. You should focus on meeting two main targets during IROPS events:

- Target 1: How well you manage the passenger experience from a customer service perspective.
- Target 2: How well you manage the IROPS situation from an operational perspective with employees and other aviation service providers.

It's important to remember that passengers feel empowered if they know what's going on and goodwill is generated if they hear information directly from an airport rather than other dissatisfied passengers sitting around in the informational dark. Every "crisis" or IROPS event becomes a great opportunity to shine with sensible use of the new media.

In terms of managing resources to mitigate the IROPS event, it is important that you consider goals in terms of timely notification and mobilization of personnel and equipment. It is critical that information between providers be coordinated and communicated in real time.

Target 1: Developing proactive messages to communicate IROPS to passengers.

This involves both communicating proactively as well as listening in order to respond to feedback.

Key factors proactively communicating via social media:

1. Problem – What has occurred outside of normal airport or airline operations?
2. Impact – What impacts will this have on passenger journey (e.g., estimated timeframe, alternative flights, etc.)
3. Advice – What should passengers do? (e.g., rebook at kiosks, consider local lodging options, etc.)

Key factors involved in listening to understand the passenger:

1. Evaluate conversations about the situation.
2. Assess conditions and prioritize.
3. Determine how to respond.

Target 2: Developing proactive messages to communicate to airport employees as well as other affected service providers (i.e. airlines, FAA, TSA, CBP, FBOs, tenants, etc.).

Key factors to communicate via social media:

1. Problem – What has occurred?
2. Impact – How will employees and other aviation service providers address the situation?
 - a. What impacts will this have on airport operations (i.e. surge, capacity, extended delay, after hour)?
 - b. What impacts will this have on airlines / flights (delays, cancellations, diversions)?
 - c. What impact will this have on employees (shifts, lodging, transportation to/from work, food)?
 - d. What impact will this have on agencies (i.e. additional staff availability)?

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- e. What impact will this have on FBOs / ground handlers (i.e. deicing)?
3. Advice – What should employees / service providers do? (e.g., implement SOPs from the IROPS concessions plan, activate MOAs, etc.)

Once goals and objectives are determined and success targets identified, social media platforms can be evaluated to determine which type best meets each airport communication needs.



4. Choosing Platforms

Which social media sites will be most effective in IROPS situations?

There are hundreds of social networks out there, so which ones should your airport be using? At a minimum it is recommended that airports create profiles on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. While this may seem like a lot to manage for a small airport, it is actually made easy by using one of several cross-platform integration tools available that are listed in the Appendix.

Below are some concepts to consider when determining what types of platforms should be used during IROPS events:

- Explain why social media is important for IROPS events. This relates to your goals, objectives and targets and can provide insight on how you intend to meet all of these.
- Describe the opportunities and challenges of using social media applications for IROPS events, considering:
 - Before: prevention, mitigation and preparedness strategies (i.e. social media plan development/integration, training)
 - During: response (i.e. staffing requirements, technology)
 - After: recovery (i.e. level of communication)
- Describe ideal practices for using social media applications during IROPS events.
- Describe the process for building the capabilities and sustaining the use of social media in an airport.
- Describe the major functions and features of common social media sites currently used during IROPS events. A look at a few of the major platforms already in use during IROPS situations are described below:
 - **Facebook:**
 - This is considered a closed technology (internal communications).
 - Pros:
 - Airports and/or airlines can create Facebook pages for emergencies to report updates in real time.
 - When phone lines are down, Facebook can be used to keep people informed, locate loved ones, notify authorities and express support.
 - Cons:
 - Focus here is special offers, supplement to websites.
 - Airports and other aviation service providers have to win “likes” from customers for them to receive messages.
 - **Twitter:**
 - This is open technology
 - This technology should must be an essential part of any comprehensive IROPS management strategy.
 - Pros:
 - When phone lines are down, Twitter can be used to keep people informed, locate loved ones, notify authorities and express support.
 - It is good for broadcast messages, managing events, delays, cancellations, crises.
 - By creating a text-based notification system and encouraging Twitter followers (and employees) to sign up for the alerts and



- encouraging text system users to sign up for Twitter can help ensure everyone receives IROPS notifications.
- Twitter allows the communication process to be followed back up the communications operations chain (and across "silos"). That trail can then be retraced back down the line – keeping frontline staff in the picture.
 - **Cons/Issues:**
 - Airports cannot play catch up with news of IROPS events. Passengers will be tweeting and Facebooking, so airports must be proactive with messages.
 - Need an instant way of getting a message out to the world in an airport's own words.
 - Must have the staffing available to man this – beware of direct messages (DMs).
 - Answers on twitter must be immediate to answer questions (requires manpower). Responses need to be useful: will you be able to provide airline schedule changes (direct them to where they should find this info). If you direct them to call the airline, they might say call the airport or go to the airport website, which might crash it. May need to plan for staffing up Twitter feeds to update passengers on real time information, lodging options, food etc.
 - Need consistency with Twitter hashtags in IROPS situations; inconsistent hashtag on Twitter can make tracking relevant information difficult.
 - **Google Findr:**
 - This has been used in emergency events like the Boston marathon bombing. It may be beneficial in IROPS situations as well for people to find passengers.
 - **Google document:**
 - This has been used in disaster situations to offer strangers lodging, food or a hot shower when roads/ hotels are closed.
 - **LinkedIn:**
 - This technology is more personal, profession info, discussion for and job replacements. This can be used to help in communicating the need for seasonal workers (i.e. snow and ice events) at an airport.
 - **YouTube:**
 - This enables people to upload recorded video to communicate information. CEOs have used this media in crisis situations.
 - **Flickr:**
 - This technology enables users to upload photos and can link to other sites. It is a site that airports should consider monitoring during IROPS events.
 - **Blogger:**
 - This is used as a means to exchange opinions, news and analysis. Airports should monitor this site during IROPS events.



5. Social media policy

Why write a social media policy?

Social media policy for IROPS situations should either be created by an airport or incorporated into an already existing social media policy, normally managed by the airport's marketing or PR department.

What your social media policy should cover

- **Network security:** To avoid viruses, most airports will have controls on the downloading of software. Technical security features, such as firewalls, will usually be managed by the IT department.
- **Acceptable behavior and use of:**
 - **Internet and emails:** If personal use is allowed, state the boundaries.
 - **Smart phones and hand-held computers:** Airports need to regularly review and update their policies to cover the new and evolving ways for accessing social media, and to reflect changing employee behavior and attitudes about their use.
 - **Social networking sites:** Remind employees to regularly check the privacy settings on their social networking profiles, as they can change. Also, research has shown that the majority of employees would alter what they have written on their social networking profiles if they thought their employer could read them. Further, an airport should cross-reference its social media policy to its bullying and harassment policy.
 - **Blogging and tweeting:** If an employee is representing the airport online, set appropriate rules for what information they may disclose and the range of opinions they may express. Bring to their attention relevant legislation on copyright and public interest disclosure.
- **Data protection and monitoring:** An airport should try to find alternatives to checking staff use of social media, if it can. It needs to justify the use of monitoring, showing that the benefits outweigh any possible adverse impact. An airport should consult with employee representatives or a recognized trade union.
- **Business objectives:** As well as setting clear rules on behavior, many airports are integrating the use of social media tools into their business strategy. Social networking can be used internally to encourage employee engagement with the airport, and externally to help promote the airport's reputation.
- **Disciplinary procedures:** An airport should try to apply the same standards of conduct in online matters as it would in offline issues. To help an airport respond reasonably, it should consider the nature of the comments made and their likely impact on the airport. It would help if the airport gives examples of what might be classed as 'defamation' and the penalties it would impose. Further, the employer should be clear in outlining what is regarded as confidential in the organization.
- **The airport's 'intellectual property':** This is material which is the result of creativity in the airport - for example, the airport logo and brands, a song, copyrights, etc. The airport should clearly outline what constitutes its intellectual property.



How to communicate your social media policy

- **Consult:** An airport should talk with employees in determining what will be in the policy. This will help ensure it is fair. It will also help make it relevant to the airport's needs. For example, if your employees handle sensitive and confidential information on members of the public, the policy will need to reflect this.
- **Use social media:** A high proportion of employees do not know if their employer has a policy on internet use. Technology is evolving so quickly that many policies soon become out-of-date, so they need to be reviewed regularly. Social media channels can be an effective way for an employer to raise awareness of its policy and any changes.
- **When settling in new staff:** A 2010 report by the website job board network the My Job Group found that 55% of employees questioned admitted to accessing social networking sites at work. An airport's induction program is a good way to make clear to new starters the boundaries for use of the internet. Each airport will have its own culture and standards of 'acceptable behavior', but it is best to be clear about these from the beginning.

Here is a list of some social media policies airports should consider creating:

- Employee Code of Conduct for Online Communications
- Employee Code of Conduct for Company Representation in Online Communications
- Employee Blogging Disclosure Policy
- Employee Facebook Usage Policy
- Employee Personal Blog Policy
- Employee Personal Social Network Policy
- Employee Personal Twitter Policy
- Employee LinkedIn Policy
- Corporate Blogging Policy
- Corporate Blog Use Policy
- Corporate Blog Post Approval Process
- Corporate Blog Commenting Policy
- Corporate Facebook Brand Page Usage Policy
- Corporate Facebook Public Comment/Messaging Policy
- Corporate Twitter Account Policy
- Corporate YouTube Policy
- Corporate YouTube Public Comment Policy
- Company Password Policy



6. Social Media Strategy

Do you have a social media strategy?

Once goals/objectives, success target, platforms and policies have been decided, the next step is for your airport to consider social media strategies for:

- **Awareness Campaigns:** Making passengers (customer service campaign) and employees / aviation service providers (IROPS mitigation campaign) aware of social media sites for use during IROPS situations.
- **Establishing notification protocols:** Determining when and what type information is communicated via various social media platforms before, during, and after an event.

Awareness campaigns involve:

- **Educating passengers via a customer service campaign:** It is useful to teach the public how to use social media effectively during IROPS events, including how to get information from the airport. This must be accomplished in a proactive way (campaign), meaning that when implementing a new, dedicated social media platform for IROPS situations, this information should be announced on airport signage as well as through other avenues such as an airport's website that links all forms of communication (i.e. email, telephone, company website) with social media. Other methods of education can be accomplished via wikis, blogs, forums, file sharing and calendar applications.
- **Creating beta/tester communities:** This can be done in a couple of ways. You can curate a list of community members (i.e. frequent flyers) who would be most helpful—power users from across the social web, enthusiast bloggers, and so on—into a group connected by email, a Facebook group, or other social mechanism. You can also create special restricted areas of your forum-based communities where these power users can converse, engage, and network while participating in conversations you generate. This special access can serve as a reward for those community members, and it can lead to incredibly useful insights for you and your airport.
- **Educating employees and aviation service providers via an IROPS mitigation campaign:** This involves training front line employees on how social media will be used for notification and communication purposes. This can be done for all new employees as well as can be a part of testing/updating IROPS plans. It also means communicating and coordinating social media use with aviation service providers. This type of education could be accomplished during IROPS committee meetings.

Establishing notification protocols involves:

- **Listening to what other airports are doing:** As you listen for feedback, you'll want to analyze sentiment, look out for specific problems, and see what the greater community says about other airports (and other airport service providers) and how they handle IROPS events. Conversations that focus on other airports can provide endless amounts of insight your own efforts.
 - One airline example comes from Delta. This airline monitors twitter messages to solve customer complaints on the spot – quickly rebooking tweeting airline passengers who didn't want to wait in line after missing a connection.
- **Collaborating by integrating data sources:** By developing an information system-based enterprise platform between the airport and other aviation service providers that can integrate numerous information systems and link with data feeds, this could ultimately provide a web-based common

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operating picture complete with numerous analysis tools. For more information on this concept, please consider the following resources:

- Virginia Department of Emergency Management's VIPER system
- Pier Systems Platform for notifying communities during emergencies
- Make America Safer through Social Media
- DHS first responders' communities of practice.



7. Content Strategy

Do you know what to say and when to say it?

After your airport has created and implemented awareness campaigns for passengers and operational staff in preparation for IROPS events, the following eight steps will help you determine when your airport should speak and what it should say during and after IROPS events.

1. **Have a plan.** A content strategy is especially important for passengers who consider your airport a credible resource during a crisis. Formulate your plan by:
 - a. **Developing an internal protocol:** Create a system to identify what types of IROPS scenarios your airport should plan statements and what triggers those responses versus respectfully going dark (i.e. if other providers are taking the lead and you have no pertinent information to offer). Determine which social media platforms should receive which messages, remembering you are not only mobilizing internal resources to mitigate the situation, but also communicating publicly with passengers. Messages and timing should be based on social media strategies that you should have already coordinated with airlines and/or other service providers.
 - b. **Developing standardized messages:** Create generic messages for typical IROPS situations that your airport has or may encounter. These can be released quickly, both internally to staff and externally to passengers.
 - c. **Establishing a communication center:** Consider establishing a location for a communication center that can monitor social media and respond with statements.
2. **Remove pre-scheduled posts.** Collaborate with marketing and public relations departments to ensure the airport isn't in the middle of a contest or time-sensitive promotion as an IROPS event is unfolding, so that they can extend the deadline if at all possible. It looks bad and insensitive when airports continue to post happy-centric content during a crisis.
3. **Listen and categorize:** Use a social media monitoring platform to pull in relevant keywords around your airport across the social web, not just Twitter and Facebook, during an event. Be prepared to categorize incoming posts into tiers such as Tier One for items requiring an immediate response, Tier Two for mentions that need a response but aren't urgent in nature, and Tier Three for items that need no reply, and then route them to airport departments or service providers accordingly.
4. **Respond:** As IROPS events unfold, respond quickly on the predetermined appropriate social media platforms. As a rule of thumb, if a passenger conversation is taking place on Twitter, your first response should be on Twitter. You can share your message across platforms/channels as the need arises, but your first response should be where the crisis erupted so you can respond to those who are posting comments. When you are experiencing times of surge, capacity, extended delay or after hour conditions, provide critical information to passengers to make the best decisions for their journey. Also make sure employees (including seasonal workers when necessary), concessions, FBOs, ground transportation, and other aviation service providers have the latest notifications.
5. **Don't go dark, just "dim the lights."** Make sure your message is appropriate and heartfelt. And take note of when others involved resume regular posting before you jump back into your



regular schedule. Remember to send out apologies or condolences via social networks like Twitter (from both the company account and personal accounts) when you may not have handled a situation in the best possible manner and then stay silent the rest of the day.

6. **Don't promote or sell.** Don't boast about how fast you responded to an event, nor critique how a service provider could have done something better. This is not an opportunity to profit off of a crisis. This also holds true for IROPS events that happen at other airports. Don't compare your handling of events with other airports via social media. Only post if you can contribute in a positive or helpful way (maybe use Twitter or Facebook to help inform people). If not, it's ok to be quiet so your fans and followers can find the information that's most important.
7. **Be Flexible:** Listen to how people are reacting to your responses and update your replies based on that information. If they need more information, provide it. If they need resources, provide them. Most importantly, be prepared to toss it all out at a moment's notice and change things up to adapt to any situation that may arise.
8. **Analyze, Measure and Follow Up:** Set up a monitoring dashboard for keywords, customer names and user names that will help you follow up after the IROPS event has been mitigated. Having that report will help with the continuous improvement process, identifying where communication breakdowns occurred. Institute analytics that continue to track any backlash from the IROPS situation, track visitors on your platforms for follow up conversations.



8. Monitoring / Analytics

Do you know how to measure performance?

Here are the top four items your airport should be monitoring during an IROPS event:

1. **Traffic and conversions from social media sites:** The source and amount of traffic generated by social media is one of the easiest metrics to measure. Analytics packages allow you to filter by traffic sources, so you can see how many users come from which social media sites. You can also see whether or not that traffic goes on to convert (e.g., signing up for a newsletter etc.)
2. **Fan or follower numbers:** Most social media sites will only track the total number of fans or followers you have, so you will need a third-party tool to track when people have joined or left.
3. **Conversation participation:** Conversation participation metrics attempt to quantify how people are interacting with your social media campaigns. These metrics will largely include things like comments or likes on a Facebook post or responding to a tweet.
4. **Social reach performance:** This looks at whether or not people are sharing your content by retweeting or writing a blog post about your social media campaign.



9. Building a Team

Do you have a social media team for use in IROPS situations?

It is important to build from both your airport's marketing and public relations department and the IT department to form an internal team. This team should also include IROPS committee members from aviation service providers in order to ensure collaboration between all parties.

Its important people on your airport's social media team are passionate about social media and your airport. They also need to be able to integrate completely with your current processes, so that the right department can address issues – whether positive or negative – immediately.

The list of personnel below are just a guideline for developing a team. Remember that one person may well be able to fulfill more than one of the roles, and whether or not you need all of these roles filled will depend on your objectives and goals. Still, most social media teams include the following:

The 'Digital Native': The digital natives at your airport are probably the easiest to spot. They participate in many different social networks, they probably blog; and they know how to find and gain followers, how to engage with other users and the opportunities in and limitations to the media. They will be the most enthusiastic to work on the team, since they will be able to enjoy one of their favorite activities in order to help the airport. They can come from any department, but they are likely outgoing and keen conversationalists, so they might easily be found in the marketing, PR, tech or online departments.

What you should look for?

- Socially active using mediums like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn
- Regular users of social news sites e.g. Digg, Reddit etc.
- May already have their own blog

The Coordinator: Coordinators need to know how social media activities fit within airport operations as a whole. They need to be able to notify personnel, forward queries, conversations, leads and issues to the appropriate departments and providers as quickly as possible. Moreover, they need to be able to get those issues and queries in front of the people best placed to answer, not just a generic email address, so they need to know the airport and its service providers inside and out.

Knowing who to forward a query to can be learned, but the person responsible for this should have impeccable organizational skills. They will have to be able to handle issues as they arise during an IROPS event, make sure old issues have been resolved and probably engage in some social media activity, all while also doing their daily work.

What you should look for?

- Someone who knows a variety of people in departments across the airport and across service providers
- 'Safe hands' – someone who ensures things get done
- Strong organizational and/or project management skills

The Communicator: The communicator of the team will interact directly with passengers and the general public. While everyone on the team will probably communicate with a fan or a follower at some



point, the communicator will need to know what the airport wants to say, when it should be said and how best to phrase it. They will also need to be professional, calm, friendly and open, especially when things get a bit heated.

For this role, you may want to look in the customer care or PR departments for someone who is well practiced at keeping their cool and keeping communication on-message.

What you should look for?

- Great written communication skills
- Someone who really cares about giving great service to your customers
- Someone who keeps calm in a crisis

The Customer Service Expert: The customer service expert needs to be on the team to quickly and easily answer passenger queries or complaints. People often go to an airport's social media sites with these issues, and you do not want a query sitting unanswered on your profile page for very long. A knowledge of IROPS events and airport operations should be the one thing your public-facing representatives know inside and out. Still, it is unlikely that every person you hire will know every detail about how you operate, so you should have someone on the team who can answer most of those kinds of queries. They could be from customer care or other customer-facing function.

What you should look for?

- Someone who knows your operations inside out
- Excellent problem solving skills

The Analyst: The analyst should be someone who understands tracking, analytics and statistics. They should know what to track to show the ROI of your social media efforts, and they should be able to use web analytics to demonstrate whether or not your social media team are reaching their goals. It is obvious that this person will be essential at first, helping determine baselines and metrics for tracking goals, but their work will continue. It is through the tracking and measurement of metrics that you test the effectiveness of your strategies and approaches, so this person should be as committed to the success of the social media team as anyone else.

The analyst could be from finance, marketing or other departments that are used to measuring the monetary value of their work.

What you should look for?

- Strong analytical skills
- Someone who is detail oriented

Marketing, PR and Customer Service: Social media efforts need to keep followers up to date with what the airport is doing and the services it offers, and the efforts also need to ensure that fans and followers feel like they are being taken care of. This should all feel like a seamless social customer experience that fits in with the other marketing, PR and customer service activities your company is engaged in.

Even more than that, social media are often the first channels through which people try to contact a company when they have a customer service issue or when they want to know a company's position on

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a particular matter. These things need to be addressed quickly, or the community can begin to feel ignored or even betrayed.

Information Technology: Some social media platforms, like blogs, forums or the more advanced Facebook apps, may require some IT support in order to get the best results or to fix issues. Someone from IT should be on the team so that the right tools for the analysis or implementation of the social media strategy can be selected and set up, so that updates can be done smoothly and so that technical issues can be fixed.

A final comment about staff: It's important to note that your airport simply can't handle all of the social media surrounding an IROPS event. And you most likely don't have the resources to become an expert in social media. Just as you hire employees to specialize in or take care of certain airport operational area, and you outsource other jobs as well. There's tremendous value in hiring a social media consultant or agency to help you. You shouldn't, however, hand over the reins entirely. Airports will be well-served by working closely alongside their social media expert to learn about the various social platforms, communities, and protocol.



10. Processes

Do you have processes in place for your IROPS events?

Start by gaining intelligence, first by getting educated about how business has changed for everyone including airports, then develop a plan that aligns with the needed resources. While many of these phases are an ongoing effort, and have overlap to each other, this process is designed to help airports who don't know where to start to use as a checklist. Education, Research, Measurement should be ongoing efforts across the entire program, but in order to get started this pragmatic set of steps are an ideal way to start. This process described below isn't a new one, it's a classic pattern found by most seasoned program and project managers, but added specific 'social business' questions have been added.

A Pragmatic Approach to Social Business

Phase	Description	Questions to Answer	Where to find resources
1) Education	Become informed on the impacts of social technology to your passengers, employees, and service providers	How have passengers changed their behaviors? How has business changed due to this power shift?	Conferences, Books, Analyst Firms, Thought Leaders, Webinars
2) Research	To document the changes in your specific market, and tools	How do my passengers and employees use social technology? How will they in the future? What tools are most used? What are my competitors doing?	Socialgraphics studies, Research firms, Marketing Research departments
3) Strategy	Defines specific goals of what is to be accomplished	What are the goals? How will we measure success? How does this support the airport and passengers mission?	A combination of aligning with your executive leadership and aviation service providers
4) Planning	Defines specific resources needed in what timeline	How much money do we need? What skills are needed? How much time is needed? When will we complete this? Which vendors do we need?	Aviation service partners, project managers,
5) Implementation	Initiating the plan	How will this be integrated into existing efforts?	Managers, developers, aviation service providers, technology vendors.
6) Management	Ongoing support of efforts	How will we keep this long term effort going forward? What resources and staff are needed for continual program growth?	Manager, aviation service providers, technology vendors
7) Measurement	How effective was our effort?	How well did we perform? What can we do better? What didn't work, what worked and why?	Analytics and measurement groups, monitoring vendors, aviation service providers, and business intelligence providers
8 Renewal	Improving the effort after understanding how it has been deployed	How can we improve IROPS response going forward? How can we integrate it?	All teams, but most importantly expand beyond the social team into the rest of digital marketing, events, and real world experiences.



11. Social Media Mishaps

Do you know how to handle mishaps?

Even though you may have conducted simulations to test your plan and have run through every possible scenario your airport could face, you still might encounter an IROPS event that you aren't prepared for or mistakes might be made, causing public scrutiny and possibly anger. Here are some tips to remember during these situations, and ways to use social media to account for them.

- **Gather your advisors and trust them.** Build a network of consultants, agencies and/or teams you trust to give you the facts and act in your best interest.
- **Plan for the worst, hope for the best.** You should have a plan in place before disaster strikes. Learn from the misfortune of others. You cannot plan for everything, but try to picture the absolute worst case scenario. What would you do? Once you've envisioned it and thought through your options the unknown will feel far less intimidating.
- **Implement an early warning system.** You might want to consider using an online reputation monitoring solution like Radian 6, Visible Technologies, Trackur or even just Google Alerts. You need a way to gather news about the aviation industry and service. Find a solution that is cost-effective and easily managed. Learn how to use it and start monitoring those mentions.
- **Mobilize early.** When you discover something disconcerting, put your plan into action. You should have scenarios built out and based on your discovery, you or a member of your team will know what to do. This may be as simple as further monitoring or as complex as implementing a coordinated PR/Marketing offense. Get everyone that needs to be involved in those decisions together early. If it's nothing, you'll have some practice under your belt.
- **Communicate frequently.** If disaster really has struck, make sure you're communicating with your advisors for the most recent insight, your team who should be implementing your plan and your passengers who need to know what is going on. If you're in charge, you need to be transparent, timely and available for questions. There is no role more important, it will gain your communities' respect regardless of whether you have all of the answers.
- **Act.** The sooner you make a decision, the sooner you will be on a path to recovery. If you make a mistake, you'll find out sooner if you act now, which gives you more time to recover. Here are some tips to remember:

If someone says something bad or erroneous:

Can you turn a complaint into an opportunity?	IF YES , you should probably respond. Figure out who will respond and what you will say. Be respectful, courteous, and solution-oriented in your reply.
Does the post have misinformation in it?	IF YES , you should probably respond. Figure out who will respond and what you will say. Clear up any misleading information.
Will it damage your reputation?	IF YES , consider taking the post down
Does it include vulgarity or purposefully inflammatory language?	IF YES , take the post down.



Are they likely to keep posting objectionable things simply because you're responding?	IF YES , you may want to stop responding after a certain point.
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If you didn't make a mistake, perfect, you're on your way. This is vital. The number one way to fix a reputation management problem is to get back to business. Remember, people have this incredible capacity to forgive when things return to the status quo. If you made a mistake, fix the problem, apologize and get back to work.



12. Continuous Improvement

Have you improved your strategies?

To continually improve your airport's social media strategy for IROPS events, you will need to monitor and modify. You can also keep on top of recent developments in social media and on social perceptions and viewpoints by using the following resources:

For the latest news and discussions:

- *Google Discussions* – What's the latest [keyword] talk in the forums?
- *Google News & Bing News* – Hot off the press [keyword] news.

For determining what content is being shared:

- *Digg* – the most dugg content relating to [keyword], there is also an additional column for the most recent dugg content.
- *Reddit* – The top rated reddits relating to [keyword].
- *Youtube* – The most viewed videos relating to [keyword].
- *Topsy Latest Tweets* – the most popular [keyword] related tweets in the last day, including twitter name and number of RTs received.
- *Topsy Latest Top Trending Tweets* – this is then aggregated in the same way as the previous point.
- *Twitterati Search* – the most 'authoritative' tweets relating to [keyword] based on the Twitterati authority score.
- *All Things Now* – the most popular content Facebook shares relating to [keyword].

For determining what questions are being asked:

- *Yahoo Answers* – questions relating to [keyword] filtered by questions with the most answers.
- *Wiki Answers* – this is split in to two columns, the latest questions that have been asked relating to [keyword] and the top answered questions.
- *How Stuff Works* – articles answering a problem relating to [keyword].

For aggregating content:

- *Blog Catalog* – the latest blog posts relating to [keyword].
- *Fark* – the latest and most popular items shared on Fark relating to [keyword].
- *Redux* – discover further video content relating to [keyword].
- *Helium* – The latest [keyword] articles shared on Helium.

Remember not to forget to monitor all of your platforms after each event and learn how you can improve by advanced planning or improved content.



Summary

After reading this guide, we hope that you are on your way to creating a social media strategy that meets the need of both operational and customer service communication during IROPS events. As the nature of social media is to continually evolve and improve, so must you be vigilant and change as technology does. This will require sufficient staffing and time, so you would be well advised to ensure you can account for this. Good luck



APPENDIX



Social Media Facts

Statistics

- YouTube stats - 1 billion unique monthly users
- Facebook - 1.06 billion monthly active users, 680 million mobile users, over 50 million pages and 10 million apps
- Pinterest - 48.7 million users
- Tumblr - 170 million users, 100 million blogs
- Twitter - 500 million total users, more than 200 million active users
- Vimeo - 12.6 million users
- Word Press - 74 million blogs

News cycle is instantaneous:

- 72% said the most common way they hear about news is from family in friends by talking in person or on the phone.
- 15% get news from family and friends through social media sites.
- 25% of 18-to-25-year-olds get their news from social media



Social Media Cost

Projected Initial Social Media Costs

Getting started with social media doesn't require a great deal in terms of initial investment in products and services. For most organizations, custom-built social media tools aren't necessary. Facebook and Twitter are great places to start.

Price approximations as of spring 2012

<u>Initial Investment</u>	<u>Product/Service</u>	<u>Approximate Range of Costs</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
Equipment	Computer equipment		\$90–1,500/year
Social Media Tools	Facebook, Twitter, YouTube		Free
Measurement Tools	Facebook Insights, Google Analytics, Topsy (for Twitter), YouTube Insight, Klout, Social Mention		Free
	Scoutlabs		\$250/month
	Radian6	\$500/month	
Initial Content & Strategy Development	Social media strategist (10 hours/week, \$100/hour)		~\$13,000/3 months
Training	Workshops		\$300/workshop
	Webinars		Free–\$75/webinar

**Sources: <http://www.bestbuy.com/>; <http://dannybrown.me/2010/01/17/the-real-cost-of-social-media/>; <http://thenextweb.com/socialmedia/2011/02/18/social-media-tools/>; <http://new-york-social-media-workshop.eventbrite.com/>*



Projected Ongoing Costs: Staff Time

Ongoing social media costs are largely driven by staff time.

These time estimates are starting points for organizations just getting involved in social media. For such organizations, having a meaningful presence on Facebook and Twitter can take a minimum of a quarter to half of one full-time staff member’s time.

How much staff time you will need to devote to your social media strategy depends on a variety of factors, such as how many channels you use, how frequently you post, how closely you want to manage the community, and how many voices you want in the channel.

Category	Activity	Approximate time required
Content	Creating content	2-6 hours per week
	Screening for relevant third-party content	1-5 hours per week
	Screening audience content	1-5 hours per week
Web	Posting to social media tools	2-6 hours per week
	Responding to comments/questions	1-4 hours per week
	Surfing relevant web and social media sites	2-5 hours per week
Measurement	Measuring results of social media tools	1-3 hours per week
	Evaluate progress towards goals	4 hours per month
	Quarterly strategic review	3-6 hours per quarter



Social Media Examples

- Hurricane Sandy. After Hurricane Sandy, Justin Auciello created a Facebook page called Jersey Shore Hurricane News to report updates in real time with 191,000 "likes." It demonstrated how two-way communication between governmental agencies and the public occurred.
- Progressive Insurance. Progressive failed to respond timely which may have helped to control the situation and manage the brand: 51.33% of the social media comments were negative, 40.67% were neutral and only 8.00% were positive.
- American Red Cross. In 2011, a Red Cross employee accidentally tweeted something personal about drinking Dogfish Beer to its network of 260,000 followers. The Red Cross deleted the tweet and turned the incident into a fundraiser with Dogfish Beer asking fans to donate to Red Cross.
- Japan's Earthquake. Using Ushahidi, Japan earthquake in 2011, Ushahidi created the largest crisis map to date with more than 8,000 reports via social media identifying shelters, food, cell phone charging stations and road closures.



Terms and Acronyms

Blogging The act of maintaining or adding content to a discussion or informational site on the World Wide Web; content entries are typically displayed in reverse chronological order

Crowdsourcing The practice of obtaining needed services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people, especially from an online community

Facebook A social networking service

Flickr An image-hosting and video-hosting website, web services suite, and online community

Foursquare A social networking tool that allows users to post their location at a venue (i.e., “check-in”)

Google+ A multilingual social networking and identity service owned and operated by Google, Inc.

Hashtags A word or phrase prefixed with the symbol “#” that is used as a metadata tag to provide a means of grouping messages on services such as Twitter

Hootsuite A dashboard tool that allows users to integrate and manage multiple social media accounts and networks

Instagram A social networking service that allows users to take pictures, apply digital filters to them, and share them

LinkedIn A social networking service mainly used for professional networking

MCUrgent is a social media notification system that allows alerts issued through social media or via text message to be sent across a central countywide platform. Citizens who subscribe to the system will receive alerts about emergencies that cross municipal borders. Can be used with HootSuite, a social media management system. (A city or town can announce a gas leak or road closure, it does so through MCUrgent, and that message is pushed through not just the city’s Twitter and Facebook feeds, but also a countywide feed).

Microblogging Blogging using entries of very short length (e.g., Twitter)

Micro-tasking Distribution of small, discrete, short-duration tasks to online workers

MySpace A social networking service with a strong music emphasis

Natural language processing Field of study concerned with interactions between computers and human languages

Nixle A service that allows verified government agencies to deliver messages to local residents via phone, email, and web

Open source data Data that is freely available to everyone for use and republication, without restrictions from copyright, patents, or other mechanisms of control



Picassa Software that allows for organizing, editing, and sharing of digital photographs

PIDD: Passenger Information During Disruption

Pinterest A digital pinboard that allows individuals to organize and share images, videos, and other items

Podcasts A type of digital media comprising episodes of audio and video files subscribed to and downloaded, or streamed online to a computer or mobile device

Reverse 911 A public safety communication system that can deliver recorded emergency notifications to a selected set of telephone service subscribers

RSS feeds RSS stands for Rich Site Summary or Really Simple Syndication; allows publishers to automatically syndicate their content and readers to obtain updates and aggregate information from multiple websites in one place

SMS Stands for Short Message Service; allows for short text messages to be sent from one cell phone to another

Tweetdeck A customizable dashboard application that allows users to manage Twitter accounts

Twitter An online social networking service and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as “tweets”

Ushahidi A nonprofit organization that develops free and open source software for information collection, visualization, and interactive mapping

Ustream A platform that allows users to stream live video

YouTube A website on which users can upload, view, and share videos



Questionnaire: How fluent is your airport?

Social Media Familiarity gauges survey respondents' knowledge of social media, as well as their interpretations of what social media means through word associations.

- On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 = unfamiliar; 5 = extremely familiar), how knowledgeable are you about social media?
- Which of the following terms do you associate with social media? Are any of these terms unfamiliar to you?
 - Blogs/Microblogs
 - Personal Web Pages
 - Message Boards
 - Chat Rooms/Programs
 - Wikispaces
 - Online Forums
 - Social Networking Sites
 - Video Sites
 - Virtual Worlds
 - Web 2.0

Social Media Capability provides insights on current use of and capabilities for social media in emergency management agencies

- What types of social media does your airport monitor?
- In the context of the airport's operational structure, where does your airport's social media activities primarily lie?
- Does your airport have a dedicated social media position?
- Does your airport have a goal in mind for social media operations?
- Relative to your airport's goal(s), how mature do you feel your social media capabilities are?

Social Media Capability explores social media activities, performance, and roles and responsibilities in the context of large-scale events.

- Has your airport ever used social media in response to a real-world IROPS event?
- How would you characterize your airport's use of social media during that event?
- Would your airport be able to effectively incorporate social media activities into a large-scale IROPS event?
- During a large-scale event, what level of management should be responsible for monitoring social media channels?
- Have you previously worked with any volunteer technology communities?

Social Media Value and Trustworthiness addresses survey respondents' views on social media relative to more traditional forms of media, and their perspectives on its current and future value.

- What is your airport's policy on using information received via social media?

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- Compared with traditional media outlets, how much does your airport trust information received via social media?
- What is your opinion on the current impact of social media on airport's ability to respond? The potential future impact?

Social Media Development identifies barriers to social media use and prioritizes the types of support the airport can provide to help address these barriers.

- Relative to your airport's goals, what is the *primary* barrier for your airport in its use of social media? What are other significant barriers?
- Have social media training opportunities been made available within your organization?
- Has the use of social media been incorporated in any of your airport's exercises?
- To what degree do you feel that outside support is necessary for your airport to reach its social media goals?
- What type(s) of support from outside organizations would your airport find worthwhile?

Barriers to Social Media Use

Identify the primary barrier for the airport in its use of social media.

- Absence of leadership backing
- Insufficient funding
- Lack of dedicated personnel
- Lack of established policies
- Lack of knowledge
- Personnel lack sufficient training
- Other barriers
- No barriers