LGPro VICTORIA
Public Relations Network

BENCHMARKING SURVEY #3
April 2011

Social Media
Web redevelopment
Mobile phones

CONTENTS

RESPONSES	Survey (31)		Victoria (79)
Melbourne	10	32%	22%
Interface	6	19%	16%
Regional City	6	19%	15%
Regional Shire	8	26%	47%
Melbourne	**16**	**52%**	**38%**
Regional	**14**	**45%**	**62%**
Unknown	**1**	**3%**	

Melbourne Councils are over represented.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES

What is the status of your organisation's social media policy?
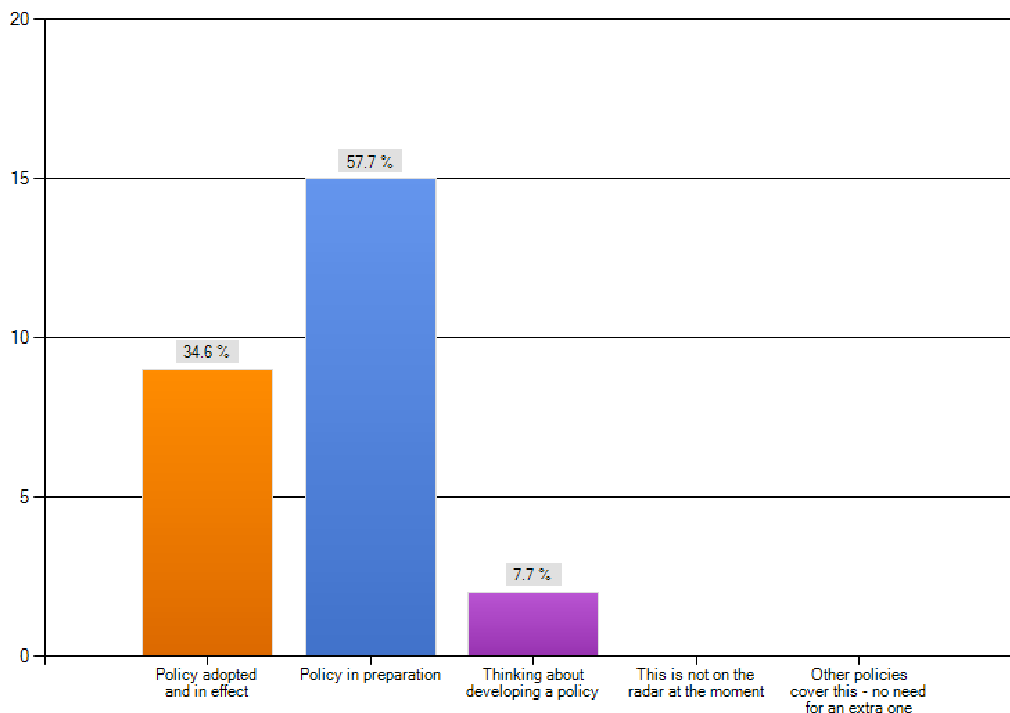
Policy presence

It looks like Victorian councils are well on the way in this journey. Over a third have a social media policy in place, and the rest are working on it. No one has this OFF the radar. Metro and regional councils are on par.

As you will see below, a number of councils had invested in the MAV's social media policy template project last year, and are now adapting it or have already have done so.

NB: The template is still available to other councils for purchase from the MAV.

Respondents' verbatim comments

- We have a draft policy in place and are currently running a trial to test its effectiveness.
- Have received the MAV social media policy and will be adapting this to suit our Council in the coming months. This is a high priority for the organisation, including Councillors.
- Based on the MAV template.
- Participated in MAV development and now customising.
- Just went to Corporate Management Team today for adoption. Re-drafting a final executive summary and can then distribute to all staff.
- Participated in MAV social media policy preparation - not adopted as yet - work in progress.
- Adapting MAV policy to suit.
- Record keeping legislation and broadband availability is our main stumbling block at this point.

SOCIAL MEDIA – BUSINESS USAGE

The survey listed a number of social media types to get a sense of what is common practice, prospectively so, or otherwise.

A chart of results is given overleaf, and to help read the chart, there is also a table to show what the most frequent responses were for each medium. This is an indication of level of usage and interest.

Facebook and Twitter Rool

Not surprisingly, the social networks we hear about every day – Facebook and Twitter – are the most common and are increasingly part of the council communications mix, with almost 40% of councils using these "frequently".

Facebook is most imbedded in metro councils (70% use frequently, vs 30% of regionals), though in terms of any level of usage (frequent + occasional + ad hoc), the two realms are very similar (42% of metro, 35% of regionals).

Twitter gets a good showing as well, with 50% of both metro and regional councils using it frequently, plus higher levels of itinerant use in the regions.

We're looking into it

If this survey says anything it is that are our minds, if not our systems, are highly occupied with the topic. The tipping point for social media usage by councils is probably not far away, and while Facebook and Twitter are leading the way, many other forms are being investigated.

With almost 60% of councils working on social media policies, and many others with one in place, the only hindrance will be having the skills, budgets and technological resources to seize the opportunity. More about that below.

Application

When asked for examples of social media usage, very few posed political or corporate marketing type usages. The main categories were:

• Promotional/informational - City events. Careers. FreeZA. Community centres. Leisure centres.

• Consultation/Engagement – Youth services. Recreation services. Community development. Community safety. Economic development.

• Youth services are high users.

Themes – Written comments to this question highlighted the following themes:

• Social media for consultation.

• Technical/systems integration with social media.

• Hard vs soft usage (e.g. corporate vs services; PR vs information).

• Degree of communications department's control.

Never

As you will see in the table on next page, large swathes of councils have yet to get beyond the obvious ones like Facebook.

SECTOR CONNECTOR.

SOCIAL MEDIA - BUSINESS USAGE
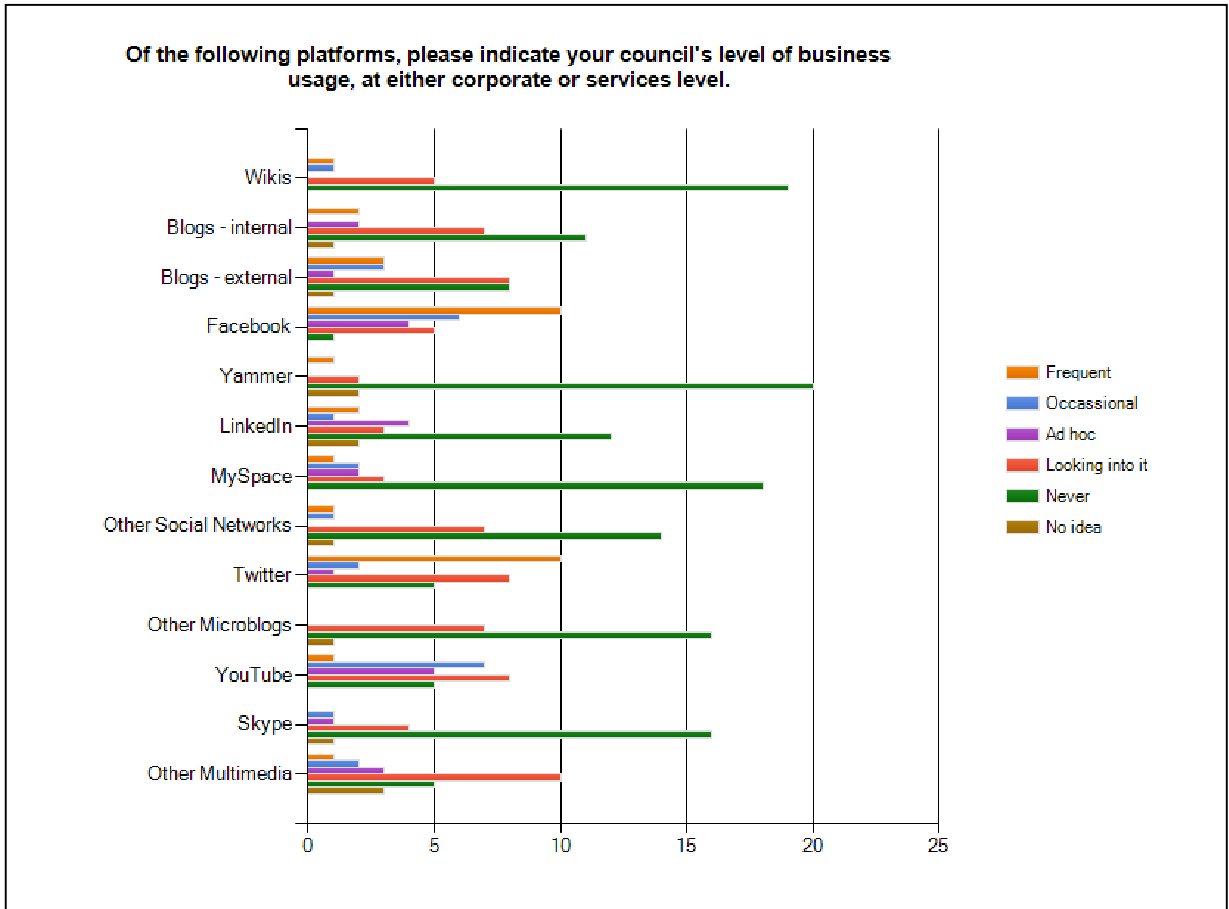
Categories with most responses

Most common response in black	■	2nd most common in grey		▨

Medium	Frequ-ently	Occas-sionally	Ad hoc	Looking into it	Never	No Idea
Facebook	■	▨				
Twitter	■			▨		
You Tube		■		■		
Linked In			▨		■	
Wikis				▨	■	
Blogs internal				▨	■	
MySpace				▨	■	
Blogs external				■	■	
Other multimedia				■	▨	
Skype				▨	■	
Other social networks				▨	■	
Other micro blogs				▨	■	
Yammer *				▨	■	

* One metro council using Yammer.

SOCIAL MEDIA - BUSINESS USAGE

Respondents' comments to the question: *Of the following platforms [see chart above], please indicate your council's level of business usage, at either corporate or services level.*

Verbatim comments as follows.

- Also trailing iPads for consultation, survey monkey, Bang the Table
- Investigating mobile apps for business use - about to launch bulk sms service
- About to launch epathways
- About to develop new CMS to ensure better integration (among other things) with social media and mobile apps.
- Facebook and Twitter currently used to promote events and other areas of Council only, not Council itself.
- We have asked staff not to use social media for their business units until a social media policy is in place. … the Communications team will be working with youth services, public health and the arts centre to implement social media, most likely Facebook.
- We have used facebook for events and mayor and deputy mayor and other Councillors have facebook pages without consulting with PR unit.
- Recently mayor has handed over his facebook page management to PR.
- We have created twitter accounts but are not using them yet.
- Blogs are being used for consultation - for soliciting feedback to a question posed by Council.
- Feel like we need to explore all the options available. Currently only able to facilitate facebook and YouTube social media platforms.
- Current Facebook group has around 200+ members. Not a priority to use this medium to inform the community.

EXAMPLES OF BUSINESS USAGE

The survey got an energetic response to the question:

Are there areas of the council already making what you consider good use of social media? If so, please describe - e.g. which departments/services; for what purpose?

Some editing for better readability and less repetition.

- We are currently trailing our twitter account for the library and its seems to be working well. Our youth FReeZA and RED Carpet Awards committees also have a Facebook with a number of friends.
- Our Youth Services department is utilising Facebook effectively to engage young people and promote youth events.
- Events, careers, community centres. Venues, festival and youth area.
- Council uses Facebook for community engagement initiatives - i.e. recreation department has had a good response when redesigning the skate park.
- Corporate, arts, events, youth, leisure centres, gallery, advisory groups, community development
- Our 'Wyndham City Events' facebook page is working really well, as is a 'Careers at Wyndham' Page
- Community Safety - trailed a facebook page for schoolies to target young people coming to our area.
- The Mayor - to generate two-way contact directly with constituents Youth - main communications tool for the demographic

- Economic Development - to build business networks and information hubs
- Frankston Arts Centre - YouTube Channel and facebook to communicate with databases and promote events to new residents
- Youth Resource Centre - facebook - to engage with youth demographic.
- Library Services - twitter and facebook - engage with members.
- Mayor's and Ambassador Finn the Dolphin facebook page - communicate with residents.
- Leisure network for communicating special offers, programs etc to members.

Getting it together

Anyone looking for a plan of action should read this detailed response:

In August 2010 we established a social media working group comprised of about 30 employees who expressed an interest. They were from across many departments. This group has:

Developed a social media policy. Developed and launched Facebook (now 530 fans and growing), CEO Blog and Mayoral blogs).

Commitment from organisation to answer posts within 24 hours.

Investigated and trailed SKYPE. Researched and reported on use of YouTube, Twitter, Mobile apps, Linked In.

Use of yammer widespread across organisation (in addition to intranet)

Researched and built a business case for a new CMS and initiated a capital works bid.

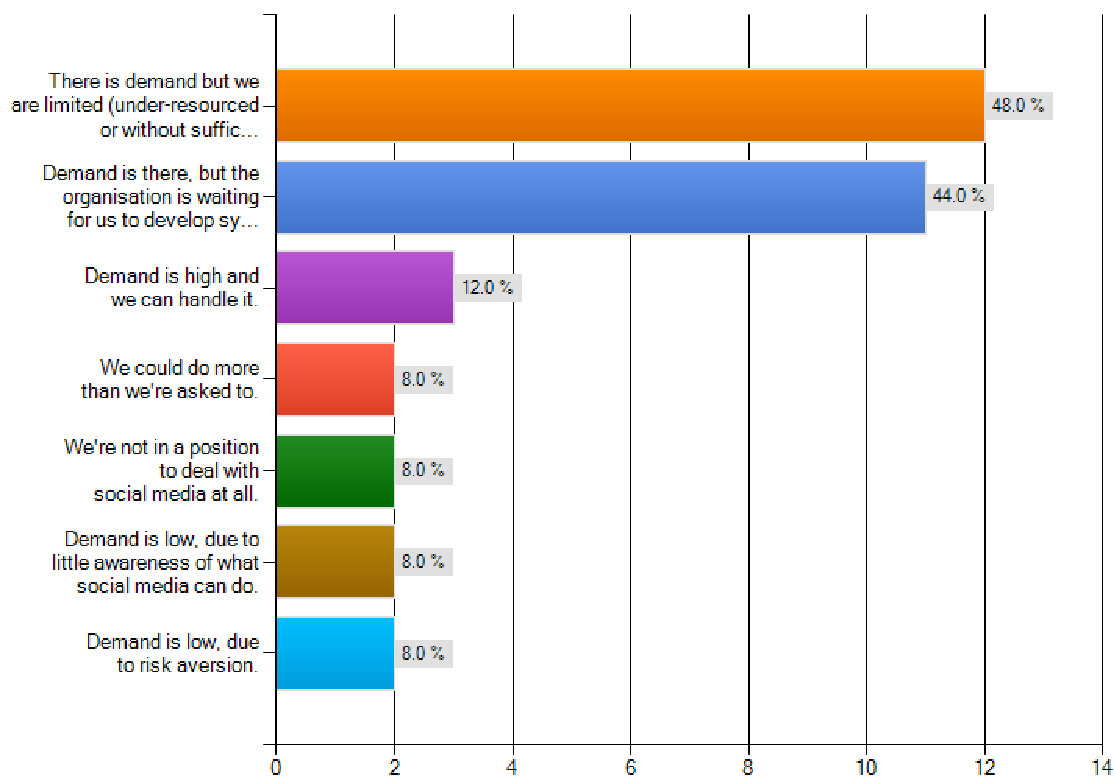Use of WIKIs for project teams (about 7 currently active)

In addition to this we have encouraged all departments to explore social media. From here we have had some great examples of departments using social media. For example:

- Youth Services, Arts Centre and leisure centres developing their own Facebook pages
- Emergency management team incorporating social media into communications plan.
- Chelsea Community Renewal using social media for consultation (skype, survey monkey, you tube, facebook and use of IPads to key information in directly)
- Leisure Services using Bang the Table, Facebook advertising and IPads for consultation
- Festivals team using Ipads to sign more than 200 people up to Facebook over the festival weekend.
- A major sykpe project for seniors.
- Youth services launching facebook and using Ipads for survey monkey consultation at skate event.
- Executive services and governance using Ipads for all council agendas and minutes instead o large volumes paper.
- Youth services using youtube for a great dvd.
- IT championing a bulk sms service

SOCIAL MEDIA – DEMAND AND SUPPLY

Multiple responses allowed.

This question is about demand and supply of social media in the organisation. Please review the list and check those that apply the best.

Response	Value
There is demand but we are limited (under-resourced or without suffic...	48.0 %
Demand is there, but the organisation is waiting for us to develop sy...	44.0 %
Demand is high and we can handle it.	12.0 %
We could do more than we're asked to.	8.0 %
We're not in a position to deal with social media at all.	8.0 %
Demand is low, due to little awareness of what social media can do.	8.0 %
Demand is low, due to risk aversion.	8.0 %

Clearly, demand for social media applications and innovation is high, but only a few councils are meeting the demand – just 12% have everything in hand (3 councils of 31).

A neat summary is to say that organisational expectations are high, it is looking to the communications department to show the way, and the challenge is converting this expectation into budgets and resources.

The "low demand" responses came from the regions.

Respondents' added comments

- What we are currently doing at the moment we can handle but I think I will have a different answer in 6 months when more pages come on board!
- There is demand and we can cope with it.
- Events, youth services, Organisational development and libraries have ideas for social media but not detailed ones yet. PR is developing business plan and policy.
- We really need a full time person for social media to handle it properly.

SOCIAL MEDIA

STAFF DEDICATED TO SOCIAL MEDIA

Question: *Do you have staff with specific responsibility for social media? (i.e. separate from web site or intranet content management).*

On the **POSITIVE**	**12**	**40%**
Yes	7	23%
Planning to	5	17%
On the **NEGATIVE**	**18**	**60%**
No	16	53%
No plans to	2	7%

Contrasting the 53% of councils without social media staff, and the 7% with no intention to have any anyway, you could stretch the inference and say that 46% of councils wouldn't mind solving this but couldn't say they were planning to yet.

That indicates a lot of latent unfulfilled desire in the PRN community.

EFFECTIVE FULL TIME SOCIAL MEDIA STAFFING

Question: *This question seeks to quantify staffing devoted to social media. You can answer in two ways - (a) % of department's EFT; or (b) number of hours per week.*

Almost half of respondents skipped this question. Empirical analysis is hardly meaningful.

Perhaps it's just too hard to separate from the rest of the communications suite. From the responses available, it looks like the most common EFT numbers are 0.1 to 0.5, with two examples of around 2 EFT devoted to social media.

WORKING WITH THE TECH DEPARTMENT

Please describe satisfaction with the relationship you have with your IT department regarding the application/development of web, social media and mobile platforms.
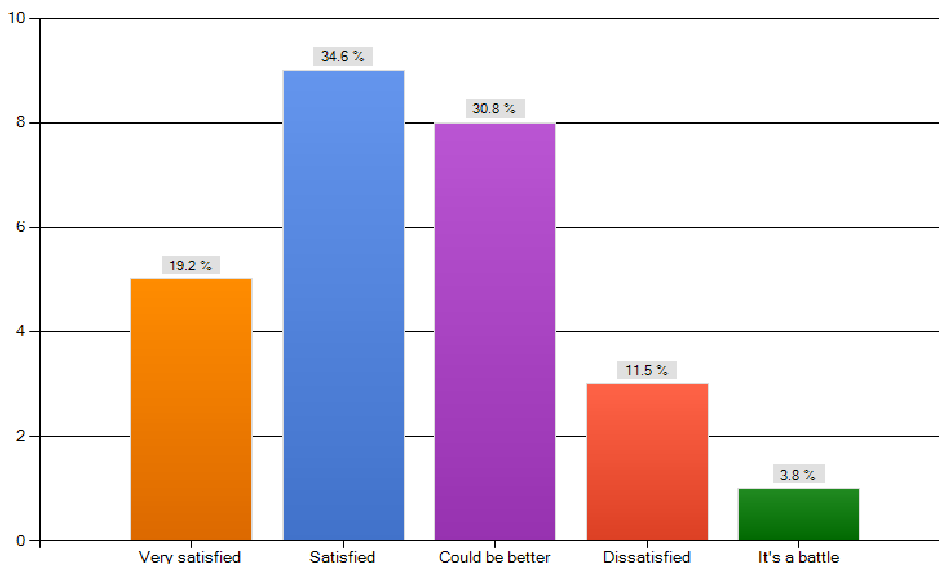
More respondents are satisfied than not with their IT departments, though this is hardly a shared experience. Satisfaction levels are a little higher among metro councils, perhaps reflecting larger IT departments.

SECTOR CONNECTOR.

SOCIAL MEDIA

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS   Charts & Tables

This question is canvassing your opinion about the potential social media have ... Please rank the organisational functions listed below, in terms of THE DEGREE to which social media will (or does) significantly improve ways of working, engaging and communicating. (NB: 5 = high degree; 1 = low degree)
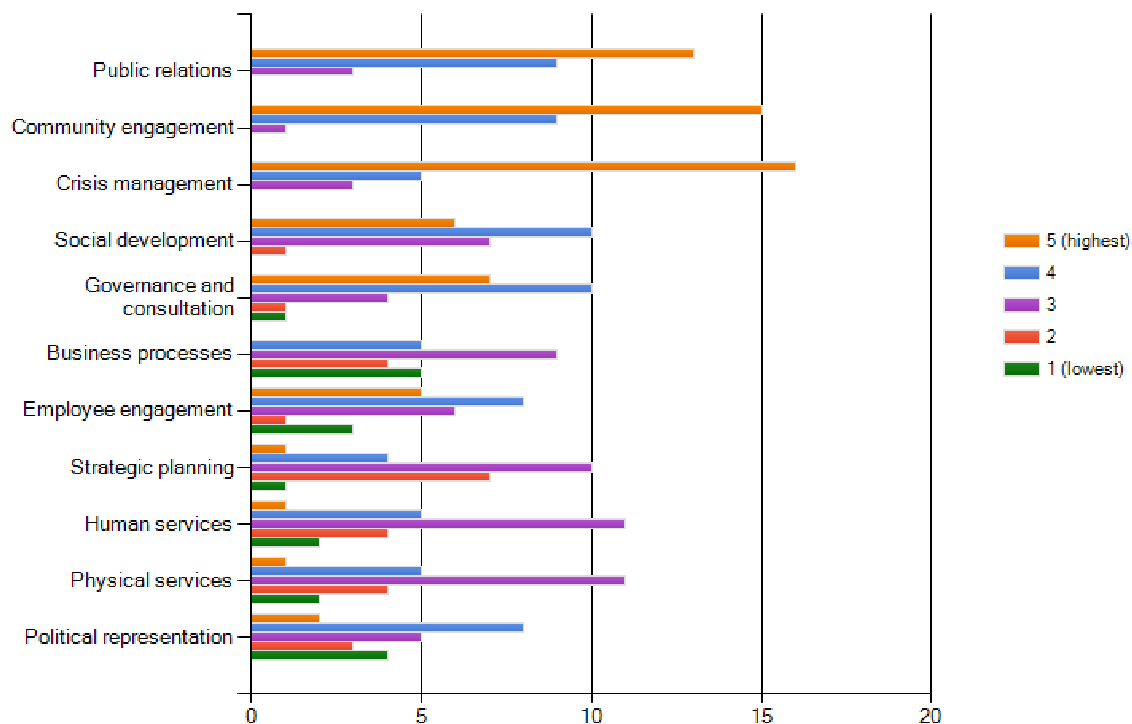
Weighted scoring

Calculated as = No. responses per importance value (i.e. 1 to 5) x Value.

Opportunity	Metro	Regional	All	Hierarchy
Community engagement	55	59	114	
Public relations	55	55	110	Level 1 **Corporate**
Crisis management	50	59	109	
Social development	41	52	93	
Governance & consultation	43	47	90	Level 2 **Relationships**
Employee engagement	34	46	80	
Human services	30	38	68	
Physical services	29	39	68	
Political representation	28	39	67	Level 3 **Services**
Strategic planning	29	37	66	
Business processes	27	33	60	

SOCIAL MEDIA

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS   Commentary

Top of the list

Little surprise that respondents rate the top three areas for the future of social media as crisis management, community engagement and public relations. These are of course some of the core functions of council communications.

Bottom of the list

The lowest rating was given to social media for business processes, reflecting a serious lack of interest in wikis and the like. Of course, wikis are really a system for intellectual exchange, and require more that the communications department's efforts to happen.

Council services are seen as an opportunity area, but at a significantly lower level than the rest.

Hierarchy of social media purpose

The table above tells a story, even suggesting a 'hierarchy of social media purpose', which strategists may find useful.

1. At the top are the top three - crisis management, community engagement and public relations.

2. Then social development, governance & consultation, and employee engagement – a level tagged as being social media for relationships (and dialogue etc.).

3. Finally, social media for service delivery, which includes just making information accessible in a variety of mediums.

NB: Some may be taken aback that political representation is listed as a service, but from a communications department point of view, it arguably is. One would have thought social media are an ESSENTIAL way forward for political representation. Then again, it is up to the Mayor and Councillors individually, and ye can but service them.

Information in a crisis

The effectiveness of social media for communicating in a crisis was fully demonstrated during the northern Queensland and Brisbane floods, and gives all councils a system to aspire to. No wonder it is in the top three.

It must be said though, that using social media for information provision is not rocket science – once the systems, databases and protocols are in place and when a crisis comes, it is a matter of constructing simple messages and sending them out, hopefully in a targeted way. After that, hopefully the operations people act in a way consistent with your message!
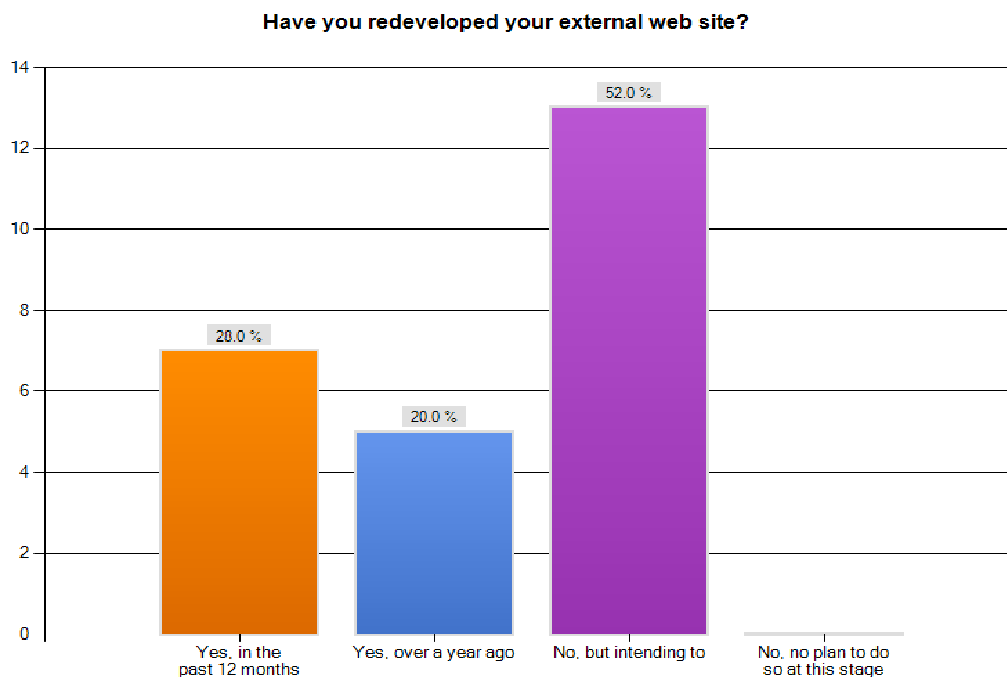
Other comments

Respondents posed other useful social media application categories: advocacy, customer service, internal communications, promotion of events and services (it's clearer), reputation management, branding, and events. *These will be taken into account in any future re-survey.*

WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

Web redevelopment history

Axis = number of respondents.

Have you redeveloped your external web site?

Web redevelopment providers

Axis = number of respondents.

If you have redeveloped the web site (or currently doing so), what route did you use to find and appoint a provider?
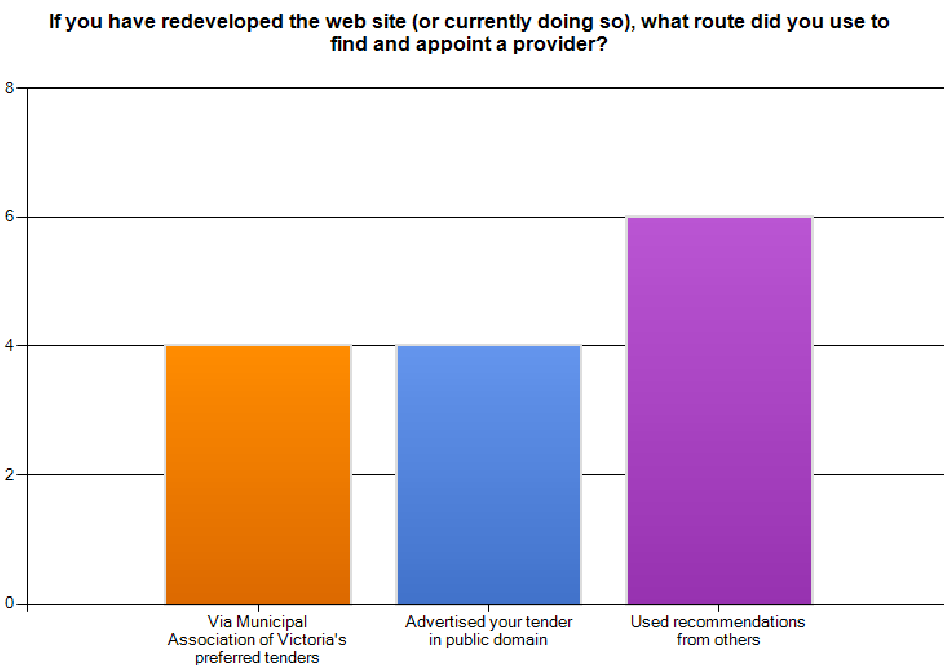
WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT

Web redevelopment budget

Question: *If you have or intend redeveloping the web site, please indicate the budget for this.*

Type	Average budget	Budget range	Councils all	Councils $100K +
Melbourne Metro	$106,250	$20K - $240K	4	2
Melbourne Interface	$83,600	$8k - $150K	5	2
Regional City	$26,250	$15K - $35K	4	0
Regional Shire	$82,000	$20K - $250	5	1
Melbourne	$93,670			
Regional	$57,220			

The range of expenditures is extreme, reflecting that not everyone is starting from the same base, either in terms of what is needed for improvement, or what the expectations are. There is undoubtedly a problem of definition as well.

The councils that cited $100K to $250K budgets have clearly taken the bull by its horns and made long term investments. Others at the lower end are likely to be tweeking or building their collateral incrementally.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Products

Question: *With regard to mobile phones, what product is the corporate standard? (e.g. Blackberry, Nokia, etc).*

The list here gives total number of mentions for each phone type (out of 24 replies). The phone types are as stated in responses.

Blackberry [*]	**13**
Nokia [*]	**12**
iPhone	**7**
HTC	**5**
Samsung	**2**

[*] *9 respondents mentioned Blackberry and Nokia n the same breath.*

Brands

Nokia gains one of the highest mentions still, despite the demise of that brand's offerings to the smart phone and tablet market today (pushed out by the likes of Samsung and other Androids, and of course Apple).

This suggests that councils are lagging in the up take of mobile technologies, but also that a tipping point is near. For instance, a number of councils commented that they are taking on or trailing iPads and iPhones.

As it is, the product itself is probably not as much an issue as the procurement process and setting up provider contracts.

At the end of the day, most smart phones and tablets will be able to integrate with council's email and phone system, regardless of product or carrier.

Slowly slowly

It appears also that the testing ground for mobile communications is first and foremost with the manager and councillor class, and next as ways of delivering better services.

That is encouraging, because once the leadership branch of the organisation gets to love their mobile technology, they will be delivering budgets so that services (and perhaps communications departments) can do the same.

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY - EXAMPLES AND ANECDOTES

Question: *With regard to mobile phone technologies, please describe specific uses by your organisation.*

Examples of usage	General comments
Instant communications.	Unsure - this is handled by IT
Bulk sms. SMS for HACC workers.	Managers and above have iPhones.
Client contact.	Managers and select staff are allocated mobile phones for work purposes. Executive Team are allocated iPhones.
Management and councillors.	Outdoor staff, EMT, managers and coordinators.
Outdoor/outreach staff and services.	Review of staff who have mobile phones being undertaken by IT.
GIS. Photos using coordinates/GPS - for outdoor staff. Comms with staff who are out and about.	(Author's comment: Why would IT be entrusted to review such a strategically important human communications resource, and not communications, HR or organisation development?).
Access to emails, websites, twitter, facebook from smartphones.	Managers can decide if staff need a mobile phone (just phone) or a HTC (phone, emails and web) depending on their role. It depends on what they need if they are out of the office.
Several are used as mobile modems for off site communications.	Blackberry functions for management and councillors such as email, planners, voice recorders, social media applications, instant messaging etc.
Informal photography.	Currently not using mobile technologies effectively.
Direct push technology/client contact.	We have a facility to use Telstra desktop messaging but rarely used.

LAST WORDS

The end of these surveys ask for any last comments, but of course most people have already had their say. These are the last words of three troopers:

Person 1 - Love social media - our community are using social media and will continue to do so (and leave us behind) even if we decide not to. Don't be afraid to play and explore (you can't break it). Have a clear policy - don't be afraid of interaction with the community. Negative posts are an opportunity to respond positively and tell thousands of people.

Person 2 - Social Media is part of the new age thinking, and it would be great to see all Council's sharing innovative ways to introduce this new media to our communities.

Person 3 - Surveys are great. Keep them going. *The author says Thank You!*

NEXT AND FINAL SURVEYS

The next (4th) survey will deal with internal communications, intranets and to an extent, that most elusive of topics, employee engagement. The final (5th) survey in this series will be more of an open microphone, details next time.

Please get in touch anytime of course: verne@sectorconnector.com.au - 0411 258 455.