

# Social media usage at governmental organisations



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# **SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE AT GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS**

*The use of social media as a means for government communication at  
local governmental organisations*

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# PREFACE

This report is the result of the research that was executed to obtain a Master of Science degree in Public Administration at the University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisors of the University of Twente, Jörgen Svensson and Veronica Junjan, for their help. I very much appreciate the effort for reading and commenting the research. Their feedback has been very valuable.

Furthermore I would like to thank Roy Johannink, senior advisor policy and research at consultancy VDMMP, for helping me to formulate an interesting and relevant research topic and giving me valuable advices for my research. His practical view and hands on experience in the field of government communication and social media helped me a lot.

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Lieke Veldhuis

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# SUMMARY

The last decades there have been many innovations in the field of communication and information technology. New forms of communicating have become available and social media platforms are among the new tools for communication.

The use of social media presents challenges for governmental organisations, because it is a rather new communication tool that needs to be implemented in the already existing communication goals and strategies of governmental organisations. It is unknown which changes a governmental organisation has to make to fully engage social media as a communication tool in their communication strategy.

The objective of the study is:

*Identifying criteria for effective use of social media by local authorities as a means for government communication and evaluating to what extent local authorities meet the identified criteria.*

For the identification of the criteria multiple academic books and articles have been used to establish a set of thirty criteria for social media usage by governmental organisations. To provide a clear overview of themes that are important for social media usage by government organisations, the criteria are divided into six categories. The categories can be found in Table I.

Knowledge
• Consists of criteria where the degree of knowledge about social media and its use is the central issue
Monitoring
• Consists of criteria about monitoring conversations and messages and about the reputation of organisations and their stakeholders online
Sharing & Relations
• Contains criteria that include aspects of sharing information and about how to maintain and build relationships
Presence
• Consists of criteria about the presence on platforms, about knowing how to be active and how the represent online
Strategies & Policies
• Consists of criteria that propose to develop strategies and policies such as defining goals and also strategies of how to achieve these goals. It also involves defining policies for personnel
Finance
• Contains financial aspects for the use of social media

Table I: Categories of social media usage

To evaluate to what extent local authorities meet these criteria, eight local authorities in the region of Twente have been selected. At these organisations is studied to what extent local authorities use social media and to what extent they meet the criteria. To investigate how the use of social media is organised, interviews and desk research are used.

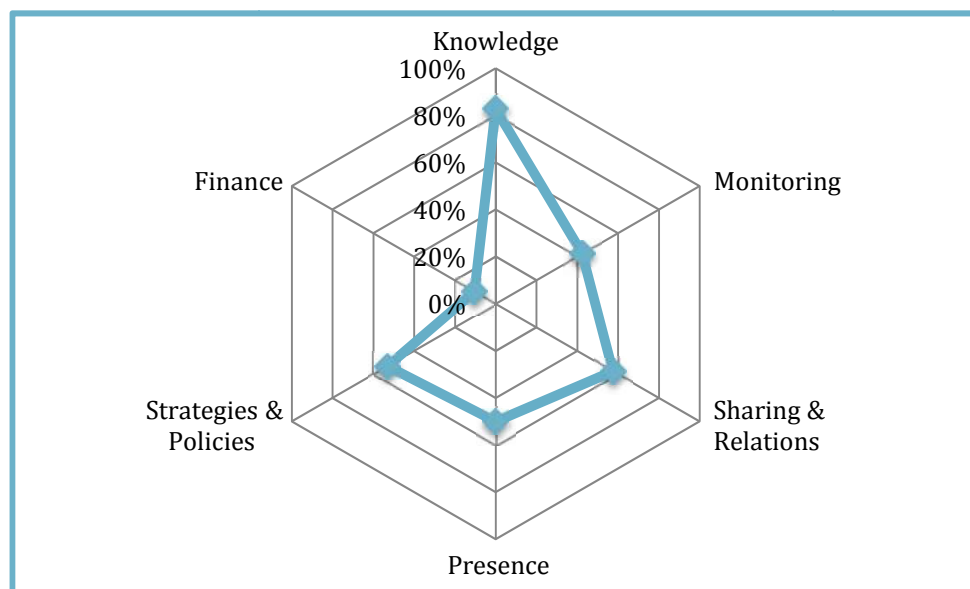


Figure I: Performance of all organisations together per category

The main findings per category are summarised here. Figure I shows the performance of all organisations per category and in Appendix III an overview of the scores per organisation can be found.

All organisations have a high score in the category knowledge. The criteria in this category can be seen as a basic requirement for being active on a social media platform. At every organisation the employees know or have the opportunity to know – with information that is distributed by employees of the communication department - what social media are and how to use them. Not at every organisation it is clear what the public expects from the organisations on social media platforms. Another difference between the organisations is that at some organisations a social media training is available for all employees, at other only the employees of the communication department have had a training and at some organisations there has been no training at all.

In the categories monitoring, sharing & relations, presence and strategies & policies the organisations partly meet the criteria. At some organisations monitoring of stakeholders

and the reputation of the organisation itself takes place on a structural basis and at other organisations on an occasional basis.

In the category sharing & relations are differences between organisations in whether or not the organisations specified in a guideline or a note how the employees have to use social media. This involves who may post and what may be posted on social media platforms and also about what the goal is of the relationship with users.

In the category presence at all organisations the employees of the communication departments think consciously about on which social media platforms they want to be active as an organisation. On the other hand, the involved employees almost not create small specialised groups.

In the category strategies & policies there are differences between the organisations. These differences are caused by the extent to which at the organisations goals, policies, guidelines and strategies are defined for social media usage. And also to which extent other strategies are congruent with the goals and strategies with social media usage.

In the category finance the organisations hardly meet the criteria. At the organisations there is the perception that a specific budget for social media usage is not yet necessary yet. It was not possible to measure exactly how much time and money is spent for social media usage. This was not possible because almost all organisations have no specific budget for social media, they allocate the time and money to the budget for the communication department and other departments when social media is used for specific projects.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter describes the background and aim of the research, followed by the research questions and the relevance of the research. The chapter ends with an explanation of the structure of the report.

## 1.1. Background of the research

The last decades there have been many innovations in the field of communication and information. Due to technological developments, such as the development of the personal computer and the internet, new forms of communication are available. Social media are one of the new ways of communication. Social media is an umbrella term for all internet applications that have a platform or a network function (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12).

Governmental organisations in the Netherlands are exploring the possibilities of social media. Governmental organisations have to find a new way to fit in with the dynamics that are created with the rise of social media. The organisational structure of governmental organisation can be characterized as a structure in which different work processes are standardised. The work processes are defined in rules, manuals and work instructions. As a result every employee knows what is expected of him (Rohde, 2009). Such an organisational structure provides stability, but it also offers little flexibility. Flexibility is what is needed when governmental organisations want to use social media to communicate with citizens (Rohde, 2009).

There are opportunities using social media, such as the flexibility to contact citizens using different communication tools and more direct, two-way communication with citizens (TNO, 2011, p. 8). However, there are also risks involved such as the risk of spreading inaccurate information and the risk of social media becoming a platform for spreading complaints (Shullich, 2011, p. 14). Social media allow organisations to engage in timely and direct contact with individuals at relatively low cost and higher levels of efficiency than can be achieved with more traditional communication tools (Kaplain & Haenlein, 2010, p. 67). This makes social media relevant for multinational firms, for small and medium sized companies and also for non-profit and governmental organisations.

It can be said that the use of social media for the public sector presents challenges to government practices and has the potential to change the relationship between

government and citizens (Bonsón et al., 2012, p. 124). This is certainly also the case for local governmental organisations, such as the police, fire departments and municipalities. Using social media in these governmental organisations means that a change is needed compared to the current situation in the internal management of the governmental organisations. There are new criteria that governmental organisations need to meet, because a new form of communication is added to the existing communication tools. Using social media effectively is not easy and may require new ways of thinking, but the potential gains cannot be ignored.

## **1.2. Problem and aim of the research**

As described in the previous section, the use of social media for governmental organisations to communicate with citizens is relevant. However, the use of social media presents challenges, because it is a rather new communication tool that needs to be implemented in the already existing communication goals and strategies of governmental organisations. Governmental organisations need to adapt in order to make use of the full potential of social media (van Berlo, 2009).

It is unknown which changes a governmental organisation has to make to fully engage social media as a communication tool in their communication strategy.

The objective of the study is:

*Identifying criteria for effective use of social media by local authorities as a means for government communication and evaluating to what extent local authorities meet the identified criteria.*

## **1.3. Research questions**

In this section the central research question and the sub questions are addressed.

The central research question of this study is:

*Which criteria are identified for the use of social media as a means for government communication and to what extent do local authorities meet these criteria?*

To answer the central research question the following three sub questions are developed:

1. Which criteria are identified for the use of social media as a means for government communication?
2. To what extent do local authorities use social media?
3. To what extent do local authorities meet the identified criteria?

#### **1.4. Relevance of the research**

This part discusses the scientific and societal relevance of the study. There are several reasons for developing criteria for the use of social media for governmental organisations.

Social media offer opportunities for local authorities and citizens, who have the ability to communicate with each other via an extra communication channel. As a result, local authorities also reach citizens that they would not have reached via the traditional media, they can communicate with citizens more directly and they can be more transparent about their activities. Local authorities can also build deep and strong relationships with citizens and they can easily monitor the state of affairs on social media and act on this. This research is in particular relevant for society, because criteria are developed for local authorities to use social media effectively. Local organisations can use these criteria to measure and also improve their performances. Therefore it is also possible to be accountable towards the management of the organisation and also towards the public and political superiors. Organisations can use the criteria as a checklist in order to receive more information about to what extent they perform on the organisation of communication via social media. Organisations could also use the general recommendations that are given for local authorities to improve their social media usage.

There is also scientific relevance. Not much research has been conducted on identifying criteria for the proper usage of social media in an organization. In this study criteria are identified in existing literature to give a full image of requirements for an effective use of social media by local authorities. Such an overview does not exist yet. This study also adds to science, because these criteria will be taken into practice: in a number of local authorities will be measured to what extent the organisations meet the criteria. This gives information about the performance of social media usage at local governmental organisations.

#### **1.5. Structure of the report**

In this section the structure of the report is discussed.

The second chapter is devoted to the development of the theoretical framework. The concept of social media is explained. Discussed is the background, history and the definition of this concept. The rest of the chapter is devoted to answering the first sub question, to the identification of the criteria.

In the third chapter the methods for conducting the research are discussed. The strategy of the research is explained and the methods for data collection and analysis are discussed.

The fourth chapter discusses the results of the evaluation of the study. These results are analysed and with this the second and third sub question can be answered.

In chapter five the conclusions and recommendations of the research are presented. The conclusions are answers to the research questions that are listed in paragraph 1.3.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When looking at the developed research questions in the first chapter, there are a number of concepts that are unclear and therefore need to be further explained. That is why the first part of this chapter begins with a discussion about communication and more specifically government communication in the first section, followed by an explanation about the new media and in particular social media. Which role social media can play for government communication is discussed in the third paragraph. In the second part of this chapter the criteria are identified for social media usage by governmental organisations.

### 2.1. Communication

In the first part of this section communication in history and communication in modern times is described. The second part is about communication for governmental organisations.

#### 2.1.1. Communication

Communication can be seen as the transfer of information. It is a process of exchanging data (messages) between two or more actors (individuals, organisations and equipment) within a given context (Waardenburg, 2003, p. 3 ; Flieringa, 2012, p. 81). In this process, the sender carries information directly or via a medium over to the recipient. The communication process is complete when the recipient has processed this information (Waardenburg, 2003, p. 3). The recipient can react on this information.

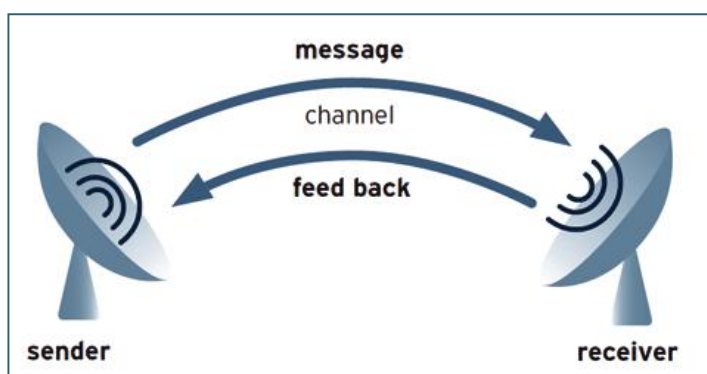


Figure 1: Communication visualised

One or more media types are used, such as the writing system, images and sounds. A choice is made between the modes of transport such as a letter, sound waves or a cable. A communication channel consists of the combination of one or more media types with one or more modes of transport (Flieringa, 2012, p. 81).

Looking at the past, a lot changed in the way people communicate with each other. In pre-historic times people communicated via sending smoke, drum and fire signals over long distances and sending messengers in order to bridge places (van Dijk, 2012, p. 5). One of the next great developments in history was the development of writing and later the printing press. Other important developments are the introduction of new analogue artificial memories (photograph, film, gramophone record and audio recording tape are the most common forms) and of media for a direct transfer of sound, data and images (van Dijk, 2012, p. 5 - 7).

### 2.1.2. Government communication

Government communication takes place when a government agency sends an expression through a medium to for example an individual citizen or a group of citizens and the citizens react on this (Coninckx, 2004, p. 13). According to Katus (2000, p. 21) the term government communication “refers to processes of systematic communication in which a government is addressing the general public or certain segments of it”.

Government communication includes various dimensions that show that the term government communication includes different processes that are also in distinct ways influenced by changes in technology, media, journalism and the relationship between the citizen and his government. According to the committee Wallage (2001, p. 33 – 34) government communication consists of the following dimensions:

- *Government information*: oral and written communication and information from a government agency to a citizen.
- *Influencing through communication*: campaigns that attempt to influence the public opinion in a socially desirable direction. They are used to reduce risks and to convince the people to behave in a better way. Government communication can be used for braking down undesirable behaviour, such as behaviour that harms the health or safety and security of citizens (Pol, Swankhuisen & Vendeloo, 2007, p. 16).
- *Bilateral contact between government and citizen*: correspondence by post, email or telephone and the visit of government websites on the internet, interactive sites included. Here citizens can directly respond to information from the government and vice versa. It is this dimension of government communication where new technologies can lead to major changes in shape, volume and content.
- *Public relations*: the reputation of the government agency or the political leaders of it. Public activities are consciously planned or avoided.



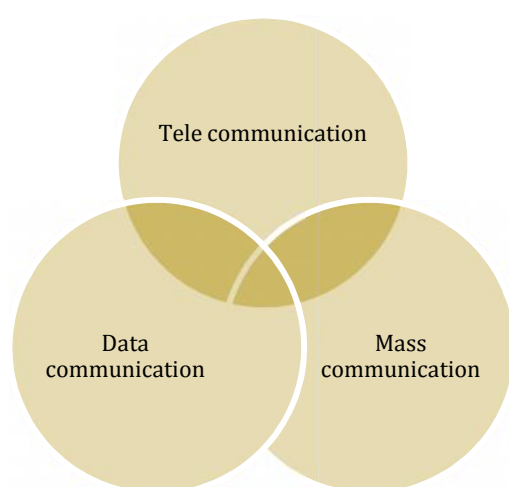
The main goal of government communication can be described as the fulfilment of the right of citizens to government communication (Commissie Wallage, 2001, p. 34). However, typifying government communication as systematic is outdated. Due to the increasing popularity of social media networks, government communication has become more diverse. There is the possibility to communicate faster (ad hoc) and more flexible with citizens and organisations. Already in 2001 according to the committee Wallage a shift was needed, especially when it comes to two-way communication. Due to the technical developments more bilateral contact between government and citizens is possible. The next section of this chapter will continue with the rise of these technical developments.

## 2.2. The new media

Social media is an important concept in this research that needs further explanation. That is why this section begins with a discussion about the development of the new media, followed by a part about what social media are, which types of social media exists and how these types can be categorised. The last section presents the definition of social media that is used in this report.

### 2.2.1. Background and meaning of the new media

New communication tools are available due to technological developments. The possibilities for communication and information exchange are expanded and this trend is still continuing (Lanting, 2010, p. 17 -18). A recent communication development is the rise of the new media. The new media are, according to van Dijk (2012, p. 5), a combination of



online and offline media such as the internet, personal computers, tablets, smart-phones and e-readers. An important characteristic of the new media is the integration of telecommunication, data communication and mass communication in a single medium. That is why new media are often called multimedia (van Dijk, 2012, p. 7).

Figure 2: Characteristics of the new media

The internet is one of the most important forms of the new media. Until the end of the 90's, the internet was primarily a collection of websites that was nothing more than digital brochures. The internet was like a container full of these brochures, but then of an immeasurable size (Lanting, 2010, p. 30). This first form of internet was called Web 1.0 and consisted of simple and static pages of information. A 1.0 webpage is unidirectional. The owner of a website sends information via the website.

Nowadays the internet is much more dynamic and interactive. There is a need to communicate, participate and produce. New techniques made it possible to develop new types of websites, namely interactive and open platforms (Lanting, 2010, p. 30). This new form of internet is called Web 2.0 (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). It allows users to have contact with others, to create own contributions and to share these (Cornelissen et al., 2010, p. 18). According to O'Reilly (2007, p. 17) Web 2.0 is the network as a platform, where the Web 2.0 applications are making advantage of that platform.

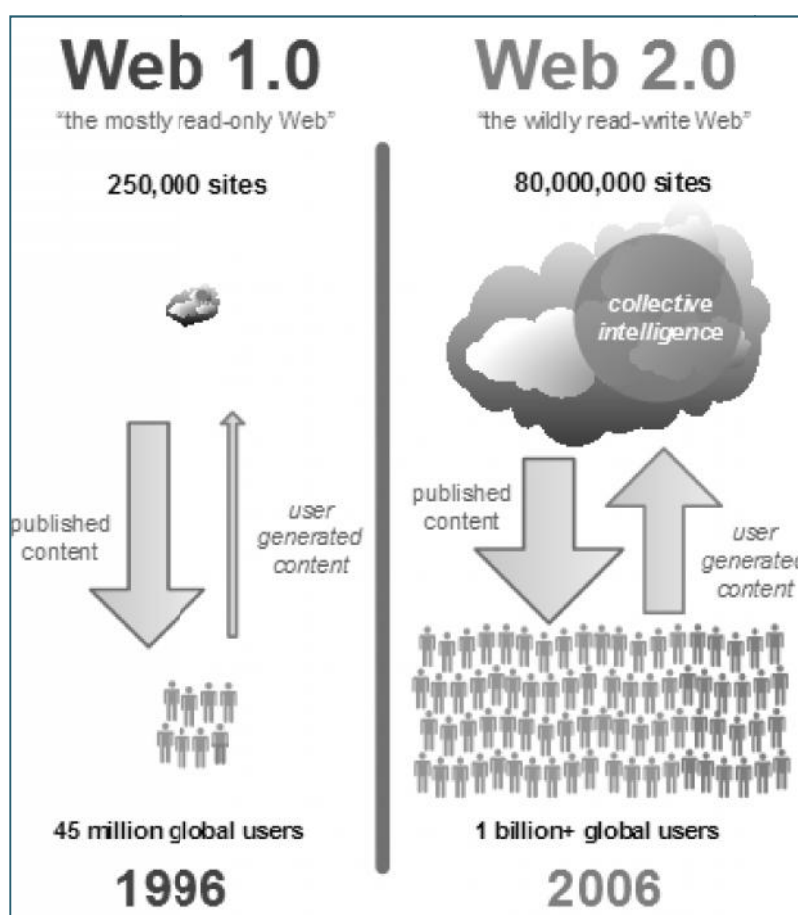


Figure 3: The difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0

Web 2.0 has a couple of important characteristics (Lanting, 2010, p. 30 – 31). First of all *openness*, all content is available for everyone and adaptable. Websites have a *dynamic content*, the content changes over time and is partly determined by the user. Instead of a

limited group of organisations and individuals, the content of the websites will be filled *from 'the bottom up'*. Another important characteristic is *co-creation*: creating content together in openness or enriching existing content together. In addition, the *network factor* is an important characteristic of Web 2.0. This means that the more people participate, the more valuable the interaction and the content created by co-creation will be. *Holistic* is also a characteristic of Web 2.0: the boundaries between different sites and different concepts are merged.

### 2.2.2. Social media

Due to the internet and the emergence of Web 2.0 people can communicate with each other in a new way. Interpersonal communication, mass communication and organisational communication come together. It is possible to communicate time and place independent (van Dijk 2012, p. 6 ; Lanting, 2010, p. 18). The great example of the fusion of these types of communication is social media. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61): "Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content". The authors mean with this that with social media it is possible to have contact with others, to contribute something self and to share this with other people. The user determines the content. Social media make exchange possible between people with the same kind of online needs. Various online social networking sites facilitate these needs of people, namely collaborating, sharing, playing, meeting and creating (Lanting, 2010, p. 34). Social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections by others within the system (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). Briefly said, social media is an umbrella term for all internet applications that have a platform or a network function (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12).

### 2.2.3. Types of social media

Within the general definition of social media there are various types of social media that can be distinguished.

In the first part of this section the existing types of social media are discussed, in the second part a classification scheme for social media are explained.

The *wiki* is one of the first platforms in the Netherlands where knowledge can be shared (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12). Wiki's are online 'workplaces' where people can build knowledge with each other around a variety of subjects, think for example of Wikipedia (Lanting, 2010, p. 34). Besides wiki's *blogs* became more popular. Each individual can open an account and create a page where he puts down his own texts, for example on Blogspot (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12). Besides web pages for personal texts, picture and sound



Figure 4: Different types of social media platforms

can also be added to this. *Podcasts* for example, which are sound recordings that can be downloaded from a website (Aalberst & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12). An example of a webpage for photos is Flickr. In the same time the *social networking site* Hyves became popular quickly in the Netherlands, following the example of the American MySpace (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12). In subsequent years the possibilities with Hyves were expanded. It became a meeting place for photos, videos and blogs (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 12). In the same period the video platform YouTube became the largest provider of videos online.

In recent years Twitter has become popular. This is a website where individuals and organisations can write short messages - called *microblogs* - of 140 characters. There also emerged new social networking sites in the Netherlands that became extremely popular: Facebook and LinkedIn.

Self- presentation / self-disclosure	Social presence / Media richness			
		Low	Medium	High
	High	Blogs	Social networking sites	Virtual social worlds
	Low	Collaborative projects	Content communities	Virtual game worlds

Table 1: Classification scheme of social media applications

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) designed a classification scheme to categorize all these kinds of social media applications. Therefore they used a set of theories in the field of media research on the one hand (social presence, media richness) and social processes on the other (self-presentation, self-disclosure), the two key elements of social media. The combination of both results in dimensions that lead to a classification of social media as can be seen in Table 1.

#### 2.2.4. Social media in this report

This study is about the use of social media at local authorities in the Netherlands. The type of social media that is the most used in the Netherlands are social networking sites (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2011, p. 3). That is why this study will focus on social networking sites only. The most used social networking sites in the Netherlands are Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Hyves and Google+ (Newcom research &



Figure 5: Social media usage in the Netherlands in 2012

consultancy, 2012). Looking at this information, when the concept of social media is mentioned in this study, social networking sites and in particular Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Hyves are meant.

Social networking sites are in particular important for government organisations, because they offer new opportunities besides the already longer existing communication tools to communicate with citizens and reach the public. Social networking sites are integrated in everyday life. Almost 8 out of 10 of the Dutch citizens use one or more social networking sites (Newcom research & consultancy, 2013).

## **2.3. Opportunities and risks for local authorities**

This part discusses the opportunities and risks involved for local authorities when using social media as a tool to communicate with citizens. The next sections discuss different areas where social media have influence on the relationship between government and citizens: democracy, service, accountability and law enforcement.

### **2.3.1. Democracy**

Journalists do not longer determine alone what information about the government is offered and distributed. Also citizens, government agencies and politicians can take decisions. There are many people who think social media are going to play a more important role in the world of politics and government agencies (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 14). The spread of the new media can significantly increase the ability to *communicate with the general public* (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 338).

Digital networks make it possible to organise, mobilise and exchange. This results in new democratic activities of citizens in the field of agenda setting, protest and opinion-forming (Frissen, 2008). There are for example different websites that record proposed legislation ([www.politix.nl](http://www.politix.nl)) and questions from the parliament with the corresponding answers ([www.ikreageer.nl](http://www.ikreageer.nl)) (Berlo van, 2009). When there were organised movements against the 1040 'hour standard' at schools, there was an important role for the social media. Through social media citizens had the opportunity to spread the word and organise protest.

These examples show that the public has a need to be heard. This provided challenges for the government, such as how to handle all these individuals and opinions (Berlo van, 2009). The change that the communication does not only come from a central point anymore is another challenge. This requires a change in the communication strategy, while the uncertainty about who communicates what increases. An employee can simply

communicate something that creates damage to the image of the organisation or even damages citizens. Negative, inaccurate or embarrassing information can be harmful to the organisation or citizens (Shullich, 2011, p. 14). Therefore the use of social media requires a structural change in governmental organisations. Rules may be required with disclaimers made by the employee so that it becomes known whose opinions are being expressed (Shullich, 2011, p. 19).

### 2.3.2. Service

Using social media as a governmental organisation can lead to *democratic participation and engagement* of citizens. It can foster the participatory dialogue and it can provide a voice in discussion of policy development and implementation (Bertot, Jaeger & Hansen, 2012, p. 31). The use of social media can also lead to *co-production* in which governments and the public jointly develop, design, and deliver government services to improve service quality, delivery, and responsiveness (Bertot, Jaeger & Hansen, 2012, p. 31). It can also lead to *crowd sourcing solutions and motivations*: seeking innovation through public knowledge and talent to develop innovative solutions to large scale societal issues. Overall, it can thus lead to *improvement of policy making* and of *public services* (Bonsón et al., 2012, p. 126).

Citizens also take control, with the help of social media. There are various initiatives where social media is used by citizens to take over public service tasks. There are websites where it is possible to see and exchange information about your neighbourhood ([www.buurtlink.nl](http://www.buurtlink.nl)), and websites where it is possible to report problems in the public domain ([www.verbeterdebuurt.nl](http://www.verbeterdebuurt.nl)).

A risk is that publishing with social media as a medium provides a mechanism for anyone to spread good news, but it provides a platform for spreading complaints as well. An organisation should be aware of who is talking about them, whether the discussion is positive or negative. When incorrect or negative information gets out, the organisation needs to decide how the damage can be minimized (Shullich, 2011, p. 10).

### 2.3.3. Accountability

The use of social media can also lead to strengthening of established government functions, such as *transparency* (Bertot, Jaeger & Hansen, 2012, p. 35 ; Bonsón et al., 2012, p. 125). Social media have the potential to simultaneously make government more reachable, available and relevant to users while offering users more opportunities to become actively



engaged in government, which is qualitatively different from those offered by traditional websites (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 339).

As also said in the previous section about the public service, social media make it possible for people to give an opinion about the performance of governmental agencies. Platforms emerge where citizens can compare and share their experiences. There are websites to give your opinion about the performance of hospitals and schools for example (Gaan van, 2011, p. 5).

### 2.3.4. Law enforcement

Social media also offers opportunities for citizens to contribute to enforcement. There are police officers active on Twitter. Calls for missing children often lead to a reunification of the child with the parents. The public is also asked to look out for suspicious persons. So not only do citizens help the police, but citizens are also given an insight into what the police is doing (Kok, 2012, p. 44).

### 2.3.5. Practical advantages and disadvantages

The use of social media by local authorities also has practical advantages and disadvantages. In a study from Kok (2011) is investigated what municipalities in the Netherlands find advantages and disadvantages of using social media. The results can be found in the table below.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High speed of the medium</li><li>• Possibilities for two-way flow of communication / interaction</li><li>• Reaching other / new audience</li><li>• Reach</li><li>• Opportunities to follow what is happening / current affairs / monitoring</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Again an additional channel (capacity)</li><li>• Difficult to control</li><li>• Reactions may be oversimplified / rumors emerge quickly (damage to reputation)</li><li>• High expectations for a quick response</li><li>• Speed of developments and answering requires alertness</li></ul>

Table 2: Advantages and disadvantages of social media according to Dutch municipalities



## **2.4. Identification of criteria for the use of social media**

The primary purposes for organisations to use social media are information-sharing and dialogic relationship-building (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 339). However, this does not mean that when using social media as an organisation, this is immediately effective. To use social media it does not lead to a success automatically, it can even lead to problems. Organisations should handle social media with care. Organisations should consider criteria when using them. In this section the criteria are identified with respect to the use of social media as a means for government communication by local authorities. In the first part of this section is explained why the identification of criteria is important and how the criteria are identified. In the second part the criteria are outlined.

### **2.4.1. Identification of the criteria**

One of the purposes of the identification of the criteria is to provide organisations a scheme about what criteria organisations can think of in terms of the internal management when using social media. With the use of such a scheme of criteria, organisations can better monitor their performance in how far they are with the introduction of social media in their organisation. The criteria are also used in a further stage. The criteria are used to measure to what extent local governmental organisations have social media usage implemented in the internal management of the organisation.

The criteria are collected by desk research. Multiple academic books and articles have been used to collect a scheme of criteria. First, academic material that has to do with social media has been collected. After that, the criteria that were mentioned in this literature have been listed. This resulted in a large list of over hundred criteria. These criteria then merged into thirty criteria. In this way an overview is given of criteria that are relevant according to a lot of academic books and articles. When the criteria were listed, they have been categorized by the author to give a structured overview of the criteria that are mentioned. A choice is made for these categories, because the requirements for an effective use of social media by local authorities consist of these components. In this way the criteria can be placed in a category on the basis of the subject of the criterion. Sometimes it was possible to put a criterion in different categories at the same time. A choice has been made for the category that – according to the author – fits the subject of the criterion best.

### 2.4.2. Criteria

In figure 6 the categories are mentioned. The criteria that are found in the literature will be presented below per category. First, the meaning of the category is explained. Thereafter the corresponding criteria are presented.

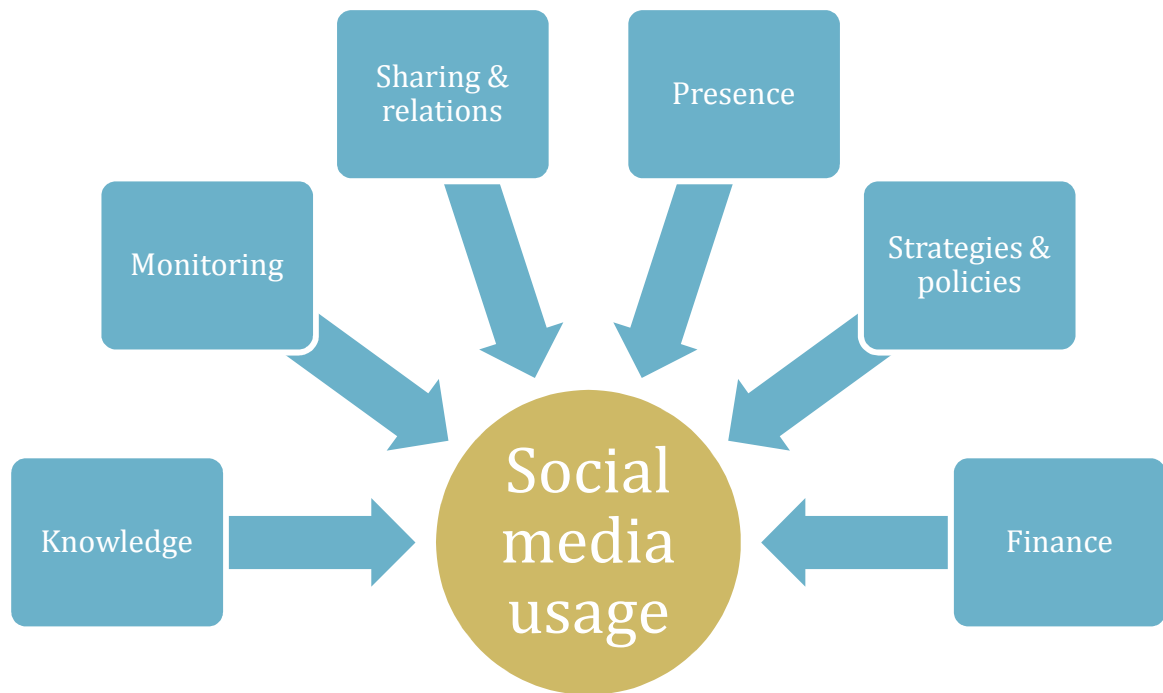


Figure 6: Categories of social media usage (prepared by the author)

#### Knowledge

This category consists of criteria where the degree of knowledge about social media and its use is the central issue. Knowledge about what social media are and cultural codes relating to online communication are important. Also knowledge about the audience is important in order to use social media effectively. Social media training for personnel is also important.

- 1- To have knowledge about what social media are and the various forms they have. Organisations need to know how to use social media to fully engage with stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).
- 2- To have knowledge about the audience and their engagement needs (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.242). It is important to know how to define the audience of the organization (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 41).

- 3- Social media training as a means to obtain knowledge. A training about how to use certain tools, when to use what tools and how to effectively measure their use. It is important to know how to use social media tools (DiStaso et al., 2011).
- 4- Knowledge about cultural codes relating to online communication. Online communities operate according to different norms of conduct than so-called “real” communities do (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 68). It is important to know how to communicate online with stakeholders.

### Monitoring

This category consists of criteria about monitoring conversations and messages that take place in a social media setting and it consists of criteria about the reputation of the organisation and their stakeholders online.

- 5- Monitor conversations and messages about the organisation on social media platforms (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 244).
- 6- Tools and capabilities to monitor the conversations and messages in a systematic way (DiStaso et al., 2011 ; Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 244).
- 7- Define what to do with the reputation of the organisation itself and the reputation of the users. Reputation has significant implications for how to effectively engage in social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 247).
- 8- When looking at the reputation of users, use a metric to measure the reputation.
- 9- When looking at the reputation of users, also monitor these data to obtain more information about the users.

### Sharing & relations

This category contains criteria that include aspects of sharing. Sharing represents the extent to which users of social media platforms exchange, distribute and receive content. Besides sharing, the criteria are also about how organisations can maintain or build relationships with stakeholders.

- 10- Define the degree to which an object (text, photo or video) can or should be shared (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 245).
- 11- Define who of the personnel may post something on social media platforms on behalf of the organisation.

- 12- Define what the assigned personnel may post on social media networks.
- 13- Define what kind of relationship the organisation wants with the users on social media, such as the goal of the relationship and what to have in common with the users.
- 14- Adapt the kind of relationship that the organisation wants with its users with the way the organisation sets up a social media site/profile (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246 ; (Waters et al., 2009, p. 103).

## Presence

This category consists of criteria that contain aspects of the presence on social media platforms. This involves knowing on what social media platforms the organisation wants to be active and how the organisation presents itself in terms of message dissemination, conversations and reaction time on social networking sites.

- 15- Know on what social media platforms the organisation wants to be active. Know that some platforms have a higher social presence (social networking sites) than others (blogs) (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246).
- 16- Define how fast the organisation reacts on a question or suggestion of a user and when to integrate in conversations on social media platforms.
- 17- Maximise the presence on social networking sites by good message dissemination through posting links to external news items, photographs, video, audio, post announcements (Waters et al., 2009 103). It is important to look at the usefulness of social networking site profiles.
- 18- Have conversations with users (two-way flow of communication) and answer questions (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 73) besides sending messages (message dissemination).
- 19- Use social media for communication with small specialised groups, not for communication with an undefined group of people (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 41). An organisation can benefit from the option to make group of users on social media platforms. Then you can select more exactly which users support you.

## Strategies & policies

This category consists of criteria that propose to develop strategies and policies for the use of social media. It involves defining goals for social media usage and defining strategies to

achieve those goals. It also involves defining policies for personnel to know what to do on social media platforms.

**20-** Define in goals what the organisation wants to achieve with the use of social media.

The right way of using social media platforms will be found in understanding an organisation's needs (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 350).

**21-** Develop policies for the use of social media. It is important not to work on a basis of common sense, but to develop a vision (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 41 ; DiStaso et al., 2011).

**22-** Develop strategies that are congruent with the goals of the organisation (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). It is important to have the social media usage in line with existing policies and goals (Bertot et al., 2012, p. 35).

**23-** Any social media strategy needs to focus on becoming transparent in the online communication activities (Waters et al., 2009, p. 103). It is important to make information, data and processes accessible for the public and therefore accept the lack of control associated with social media (DiStaso et al., 2011, p. 326 ; Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). It is important to shift the communicative culture from a model of selective dissemination to one of open conversation and therefore increase member engagement, participation and dialogue (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 159 ; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 66-67 ).

**24-** Integrate a social media strategy with other marketing strategies, whereby one points the audience to the other. Unless users are made aware of the existence of a social media forum, they are unlikely to discover it by chance (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249).

**25-** Identify employees who have the ability to listen and care about the users and those who can create content that is appropriate (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249 ; Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 156 ; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 67). Having the right controls in place is important, as personnel who communicate with users must be given enough discretion and authority to develop relationships (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249 – 250). The organisation needs to find a balance between ethical (more focus on dialogue) and organisational communication (more focus on outcome).

**26-** Make guidelines for personnel who write something under their own name. It is difficult to make a difference between private and work online.

**27-** Develop responsive information policies that are based on principles that are not tied to specific technologies. This is important to ensure that policies remain relevant and useful over a longer period (Bertot et al., 2012, p. 37).

## **Finance**

This category consists of criteria about financial aspects for the use of social media at an organisation in the form of time and personnel, for the technological infrastructure and for expertise.

**28-** Using social media requires resource allocation in the form of time and personnel (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009). It is important to provide constant attention to social media. Creating a profile on a social media platform and then abandoning it will create only minimal exposure for the organisation and it could turn off potential supporters if they witness inactivity on the site (Waters et al., 2009).

**29-** Provide a budget for maintaining and upgrading an organisation's technological infrastructure (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 67).

**30-** Have enough expertise at the organisation to fully utilise the range of applications available to use social networks to their capacity. This is an on-going process. An intermediate to advanced level of technical proficiency is often required (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 67).

## **2.5. Conclusion**

This chapter described a number of concepts that are important for this study.

The term government communication is explained. Government communication includes various dimensions. It consists of government information, influencing through communication, bilateral contact and of public relations. The main goal of government communication is the fulfilment of the right of citizens to government communication.

Another important concept in this report is the concept of social media. Social media is a group of applications that allow the creation and exchange of content generated by the users. For this study, when the concept of social media is mentioned during the accomplishment of the research, social networking sites and in particular Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+ and Hyves are meant.

The opportunities and risks for governmental organisations to use social media are also discussed in this chapter. The primary purposes of organisations to use social media are information-sharing and dialogic relationship-building. The main risks for using social media are first that there is the possibility of employees to spread inaccurate information, and second that social media can provide a platform for spreading complaints about the

organisation. In Table 2 a SWOT analysis can be found of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for local authorities when using social media.

At the end of this chapter the first research question has been addressed. Thirty criteria have been identified for the use of social media by local authorities. These criteria have been put in six categories by the author: knowledge, monitoring, sharing & relations, presence, strategies & policies and finance.

<b>Strengths</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Speed of the medium</li> <li>2. Possibilities for two-way flow of communication/ interaction</li> <li>3. Reaching other / new audience</li> <li>4. Reach</li> <li>5. Opportunities to follow what is happening / current affairs / monitoring</li> </ol>	<b>Weaknesses</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Again an additional channel (capacity)</li> <li>2. Difficult to control</li> <li>3. Reactions may be oversimplified / rumours emerge quickly (damage to reputation)</li> <li>4. High expectations for a quick response</li> <li>5. Speed of developments and answering requires alertness</li> </ol>
<b>Opportunities</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improvement of public services</li> <li>2. Democratic participation and engagement</li> <li>3. Dialogue - and relationship building</li> <li>4. Transparency / information-sharing</li> </ol>	<b>Threats</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Platform for anyone to spread complaints</li> <li>2. How to handle all individuals and complaints</li> <li>3. Communication does not come from one central point in the organisation</li> </ol>

Figure 7: SWOT analysis of social media (prepared by the author)

## 3. METHODS

The previous chapters described the problem, the aim of the research and also the theoretical framework. In this chapter the methods used to answer the research questions are discussed. The next section discusses the research strategy. After that the methods for case selection and data collection are explained. At the end of this chapter the methods for data analysis are discussed.

### 3.1. Research strategy

This study consists of qualitative research, here is explained why is chosen for qualitative research.

In the previous chapter criteria have been identified for the use of social media by government organisations. These criteria will be used to measure to what extent local authorities perform on the use of social media. To collect and analyse data about the performances of local authorities is relatively time-consuming. It is only possible to study a small number of units. Qualitative research is a useful strategy when the numbers of units in a study are small. It can provide a valuable and rich understanding on the performance of organisations. Quantitative research is less suitable for this study, because quantitative research is suitable only when there is a large of number of units to give a representative picture of the entirety.

Qualitative research is a term for various methods of research. All of them aim to describe or explain behaviour or experience in the natural environment without disturbing it ('t Hart, Boeije, Hox, 2005, p. 253). The data that are derived in this type of research are not easy to translate into numbers (Babbie, 2007, p. 24). Qualitative research can be used for the study of a small number of units. With qualitative research it is possible to collect more information from a relatively low number of units.

### 3.2. Case selection

For this study a number of local authorities are selected. The local authorities are selected on the basis of a convenience sample. The local authorities are part of Twente, a region in the eastern part in the Netherlands. Because the measurement of the performance of local authorities is time-consuming, it is not possible to select all local authorities in Twente.

Six municipalities have been selected. The sizes of these municipalities are taken into account. Selected are municipalities with a different number of inhabitants, this means that



municipalities with relatively different sizes (small, medium and large population) are examined. The police and fire department in Twente are also selected. These organisations are also examined to also give an overview of how other local authorities than municipalities perform on social media usage.

Municipality of Enschede  
Municipality of Hengelo  
Municipality of Almelo  
Municipality of Haaksbergen  
Municipality of Hof van Twente  
Municipality of Oldenzaal  
Fire department Twente  
Police East – Netherlands

Table 3: The studied organisations

The person that is most responsible for the implementation of social media use at the organisation is selected for an interview. This is most often the head of the communications department. A choice has been made for this employee, because this person is likely to know much about what is happening in the field of social media at the organisation. The list of interviewed employees can be found in Appendix IV.

### 3.3. Methods of data collection

In this section is explained for which methods of data collection has been chosen. The methods for data collection are discussed and there is explained why these methods are used in this study.

#### 3.3.1. Desk research

Desk research is used in this study for different purposes. Desk research is first used for collecting information about different concepts that are relevant in this study. These concepts concern government communication, the new media and social media. Desk research is also used for getting an answer to the first research question. This question concerns the criteria that can be identified for the use of social media as a means for government communication. Therefore academic material has been collected where criteria for social media are addressed. The criteria that are found in this material are listed in section 2.4 of the previous chapter. Desk research is also used to for getting an answer for the second research question. This questions involves in what way the use of social media is organised at local authorities. Social media accounts of the involved local authorities have been identified and analysed to get to know in what way they use these accounts. Besides desk research, also interviews are used for this research question.

Desk research is a research strategy where the researcher uses material that is produced by others. Advantages of this strategy are that a large number of data can be collected in a short period of time.

### 3.3.2. Interviews

Interviews are used to collect information about how organisations currently organise the use of social media and to what extent they meet the criteria that are developed in the previous chapter.

An interview protocol is designed to use as a guide during the interview. The questions focus on to what extent the organisation currently uses social media, and how the use of social media is organised. To investigate how the use of social media is currently organised, the questions are structured with the categories of criteria, that are already founded in this study, in mind. However, the questions are not placed in the same order as the categories of the criteria. The reason for this is that this order ensures that the interview proceeds on the most logical course. Open and general questions are asked to the communications officer deliberately, so that the officer can do her or his own story without being influenced. Only when more information is needed according to the interviewer - and this information cannot be collected by asking open and general questions - more specific questions are asked. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix I. The interviews are held in the months March, April and May of 2013. The interviews are recorded and after the interview they are completely written out.

Semi-structured interviews are used in this study. Using semi-structured interviews, it is possible to set up questions where you at least want an answer to. However, with the use of semi-structured interviews there is also the possibility to ask more questions when interesting information is discussed during the interview.

An interview is a conversation where the interviewer asks questions to an interviewee about behaviours, beliefs, attitudes and experiences regarding social phenomena. The interviewee answers these questions. The interviewer leads the conversation and has a clear goal, namely collecting information for the research. Interviews can be distinguished by the degree of structure. The more the interview is structured, the more the interviewer determines the direction. The structure is determined by four factors: 1) the content of the questions is more or less fixed, 2) the way the questions are asked is more or less fixed, 3) the order in which the questions will be asked is more or less fixed and 4) the possible

answers are pre-determined by the researcher or are open. If these four points are fixed, we speak of a structured or standardized interview. If they are not fixed we speak of an unstructured interview and when they are partially fixed we speak of a semi-structured interview ('t Hart, Boeijs, Hox, 2005, p. 274 – 275).

### **3.4. Methods of data analysis**

This section explains how the collected data are analysed.

The interviews are analysed to describe how the organisations currently use social media and to what extent the interviewed organisations meet the criteria.

The interviews are used to describe how the organisations currently use the social media in practice. Subsequently a description is given of how the organisations organise the use of social media in general. When this is clear, it needs to be analysed to what extent the organisations meet the criteria. To what extent the organisations meet the criteria is measured using a list of values that is added to the criteria. These values can be found in Appendix II. These values are indicated by plus (1 point), plus/minus (0,5 points) and minus (0 points). It is not said that the operationalisation of the values of the criteria is the only one, the best one or the most complete one. The values of the criteria may be determined in other ways. With these values it is easier to make a comparison between organisations, between criteria and between categories.

In a table an overview is given of the organisations and the values that are assigned to them per criterion. The table forms the basis for drawing conclusions about to what extent the criteria are present at governmental organisations. Using this matrix, it is possible to compare the organisations between each other and it is possible to see per criterion and per category how well the organisations perform in general. The table can be found in Appendix III.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

In this chapter the methods to obtain an answer to the research questions have been discussed.

Qualitative research is used for data collection. The methods of data collection are semi-structured interviews and desk research. Eight local authorities in the region of Twente have been selected to measure to what extent they perform on the criteria that are

identified in chapter 2. The collected data are analysed by identifying to what extent the organisations perform on the criteria. For this a list is identified with values per criterion.

## 4. ANALYSIS

In this chapter the results of the study are presented. In the first section the use of social media is discussed per organisation, followed by a section with a general analysis of social media usage. The third section covers to what extent the organisations together meet the criteria.

### 4.1. The use of social media at the studied organisations

In this section a description is given of the social media usage at the studied organisations. Every subsection covers a studied organisation. First the presence on social media platforms is described. After that, the way the organisation organises the use of social media is discussed, based on the interviews with the communication officers. A summary of the performance of the organisation on the criteria is also given in text boxes. This summary has to be taken into perspective; a low percentage does not immediately mean that the organisations did not perform well. Sometimes the organisations made a deliberate choice not to have a budget for social media for example or not to have a lot of policies about how to use social media. The criteria give an interpretation of how the organisations have the use of social media internally organised.

#### 4.1.1 Municipality of Enschede

The municipality of Enschede is active on different social media networks: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn. Facebook and Twitter are the most used platforms of the four. There is activity on these accounts on a regular basis. On behalf of the organisation, two employees of the communication department post messages on Twitter usually multiple times a day and also on Facebook they post at least a couple of times a week a message. On Twitter employees of the municipality almost only sends information. This information concerns news about the neighbourhood, but also a register about who is married and born in the municipality. Employees also place news on the Facebook account. However, they try to be more interactive and try to involve stakeholders more on Facebook than on Twitter. Besides the central accounts of the municipality on Facebook and Twitter, there are also several accounts for more specialised information. For example 'Henk Designs' on Facebook. On this account citizens of a district in Enschede can help the designer Henk with re-designing the green zone in their area. Another example is the Twitter account 'Enforcement053', where a department of the municipality places information about enforcement in the city and where citizens can ask questions and make

suggestions. This account is also more interactive. Besides Twitter and Facebook, Enschede also has an account on YouTube, where they place new videos on a regularly basis. The municipality of Enschede also has LinkedIn, but this is for employees of the municipality only.

The municipality of Enschede has **knowledge** of social media. Social media is used by different departments of the municipality. Besides this the staff of the department of communication also followed an external social media training to learn more about how to use social media. This staff also gives workshops to other employees to spread information about how to use social media.

*Performance municipality of Enschede on criteria:*

Knowledge: 87.5%  
Monitoring: 30%  
Sharing & Relations: 20%  
Presence: 50%  
Strategies & Policies: 37.5%  
Budget: 16.7%

*An overview can be found in Appendix III*

Table 4: The performance of the municipality of Enschede

**Monitoring** of information on social media networks does take place at the municipality of Enschede, but not on a regular basis. Monitoring takes place for specific topics, to find out which topics are important for stakeholders or what stakeholders think of specific topics.

In terms of **sharing & relations**, the municipality does not have any guidelines for personnel about how to use social media yet. In the future the municipality wants to have basic principles about the way social media are to be used. Every department of the municipality is allowed to start an account on a social media platform. The communication department wants to know about the existence of separate accounts, because it needs to fit the municipal values and must fit the whole image of the municipality.

The municipality of Enschede thinks about the **presence** of the organisation on the social media platforms. They make specialised groups (for example 'Henk Designs') of stakeholders with a certain goal and they try to involve stakeholders on social media.

In terms of **strategies & policies** the municipality made a memorandum about the activity of two employees of the communication department that are responsible for the practical implementation of social media. In the future the municipality wants to design a plan for a web care team. They want to structure their ideas and plans in a policy plan.

In terms of **finance**, the only costs for social media are the costs for the two employees.

### 4.1.2. Municipality of Hengelo

The municipality of Hengelo is active on a couple of social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Twitter is the most important social media network for Hengelo. On Twitter the employees of the communication department send information on a regular basis, at least once a day. They send information about practical issues, such as traffic interruptions, but also local news and news from the city council. Besides sending information the municipality also answers questions from stakeholders. The safety department of the municipality of Hengelo also has a separate Twitter account called 'Hengelo\_safe'. Hengelo is also active on YouTube, they place videos on a regular basis. For example a number of videos with the name 'Hengeler Proat'. The municipality of Hengelo also has an account on Facebook. This page is not used on a regular basis, every now and then a message is posted on this page.

In terms of **knowledge**, the communication department has expertise about what social media are and what the audience expects from them. The way social media needs to be used is for other employees also defined in some points of attention.

The communication department 'listens' to the audience by **monitoring** what stakeholders do on social media networks. They listen to what is being said about them and they also look at important cases for the management.

#### *Performance municipality of Hengelo on criteria:*

Knowledge: 75%  
Monitoring: 70%  
Sharing & Relations: 70%  
Presence: 70%  
Strategies & Policies: 62.5%  
Budget: 0%

*An overview can be found in Appendix III*

Table 5: The performance of the municipality of Hengelo

In terms of **sharing & relations**, the municipality set up some point of attention for employees about what may be posted online. Besides this, the communication department set up a document for them self about how to use social media and how to deal with some questions. The municipality also looks at the **presence** on social media. They deliberately choose to be active on some social media platforms, they answer questions from stakeholders as soon as possible and they also made specialised groups, such as the Twitter account 'Hengelo\_safe'.

The municipality of Almelo has, in terms of **policies & strategies**, no official strategy yet. They do have goals and policies in the document from the communication department. The

mayor also has a priority with the use of social media, to be more transparent towards the stakeholders.

In terms of **finance**, the municipality does not have any budget for using social media. The employees are busy with social media besides their other work for the municipality.

### 4.1.3. Municipality of Almelo

The municipality of Almelo is active on different social media platforms. They are active on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Hyves and LinkedIn. Facebook and Twitter are used regularly by the municipality. The communication department try to involve citizens with news from their neighbourhood, news from the municipality self and they also inform citizens about practical issues. Twitter is only used for sending information, where they try with Facebook to be more interactive. The municipality of Almelo is only active on Hyves with “Young in Almelo”, an initiative from the Centre for Youth and Familiy. Though, this page is currently not up to date. The same is the case for YouTube. A few videos are posted there and it is only used occasionally. The municipality also has a LinkedIn page, but this is for staff only.

The results from the interview also clearly describe that Twitter is not used for interaction with stakeholders. It is only used for sending information to the press and other stakeholders. Twitter is linked with the website of the municipality (Almelo.nl), the news that is placed on this website is also placed on Twitter. Facebook is for Almelo the counterpart of Twitter. Facebook is a more informal communication channel for Almelo, there interaction is possible.

In terms of **knowledge** about social media, the involved employees of the municipality of Almelo know what social media are and they create awareness for other employees about what they are and the possibilities with it. They do not make use of social media training.

*Performance municipality of Almelo on criteria:*

Knowledge: 62.5%  
Monitoring: 30%  
Sharing & Relations: 70%  
Presence: 40%  
Strategies & Policies: 43.75%  
Budget: 0%

*Overview can be found in Appendix III*

Table 6: The performance of the municipality of Almelo

Involved employees of the communication department do **monitor** on especially Facebook and Twitter. They look at what is mentioned, what topics are interesting and look at



possible responses from stakeholders or if there is a response expected from the municipality.

In the category of **sharing & relations** the municipality of Almelo has a list of do's and don'ts for employees. The municipality trusts the employees and gives freedom to be active on social media platforms, but they do try to make the employees aware of the risks with a list of do's and don'ts.

The municipality of Almelo is deliberately **present** on different social media platforms, each platform with a different purpose.

In terms of **strategies & policies** the municipality has developed a vision and do's and don'ts about how they want to use social media. The goals with social media are also congruent with other goals that are described, such as more interaction with new target groups and transparency towards citizens.

In terms of **finance**, the municipality of Almelo does not have a specific budget for social media. Everything they do is for free. They do not buy anything and the time the employees spend for social media is in between other work they have to do.

#### 4.1.4. Municipality of Haaksbergen

The municipality of Haaksbergen is active on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. They use Twitter as an extra communication channel to send news messages and practical information to the public. They use it primarily for sending messages and answering questions. The same is the case for Facebook, they send the same messages via Facebook. The municipality also has an account on YouTube, but there is not much activity. The last video has been placed over a year ago.

Two people are responsible for the social media at the municipality of Haaksbergen. They have **knowledge** about what social media are and look at the audience needs.

They **monitor** occasionally what happens on social media and what people say about the municipality online.

They do not do that structurally and they also do not use tools to monitor online.

In terms of **sharing & relations**, the municipality has guidelines about who of the municipality may post something online. Everything is centrally organised. They also developed a policy plan for the use of social media. This plan involves what they want to achieve with social media and how they want to achieve that.

In this policy plan the **presence** on social media is also discussed. This is about on which platforms they want to be active, they focus especially on Twitter and sending information. They only interact when people ask questions to them directly.

*Performance municipality of Haaksbergen on criteria:*

Knowledge: 62.5%  
Monitoring: 40%  
Sharing & Relations: 50%  
Presence: 40%  
Strategies & Policies: 62.5%  
Budget: 16.7%

*An overview can be found in Appendix III*

Table 7: The performance of the municipality of Haaksbergen

As discussed the municipality of Haaksbergen has a small policy plan where the **strategies & policies** are outlined. They also integrated social media with other marketing strategies, to promote their new communication channel.

In terms of **finance**, Haaksbergen does not have any specific budget for social media. Only the two people that are responsible for the social media, but they do this between their other work.

#### 4.1.5. Municipality of Oldenzaal

The municipality of Oldenzaal has an account on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. For Oldenzaal Twitter is the most used social media platform. They place messages every day. These messages are about practical information in the municipality, news from the neighbourhood, political news and possible activities for citizens. The municipality also places news messages on Facebook. On Facebook they focus more on the younger audience and they send more formal messages. On both social media platforms they answer every question and try to have some interaction. They also have a YouTube account, on this account there is not much activity, a few videos are placed there.

The department of communication is responsible for the use of social media at the municipality of Oldenzaal. This is a group of five employees, every work day another employee is responsible for the activity on social media. These people also had a social media training to obtain **knowledge** about how to use social media. Now they also

give training to interested colleagues. These trainings include practical information about the do's and don'ts on social media.

The involved employees also **monitor** what is happening on Twitter and Facebook. They also use a tool for this, a Hootsuite account, to make it easier to follow what people say about the city Oldenzaal online. They look at what the councillors and aldermen post on social media, but also the press, the police and the fire department for example.

*Performance municipality of Oldenzaal on criteria:*

Knowledge: 87.5%  
Monitoring: 70%  
Sharing & Relations: 50%  
Presence: 50%  
Strategies & Policies: 43.8%  
Budget: 0%

*An overview can be found in Appendix III*

Table 8: The performance of the municipality of Oldenzaal

In terms of **sharing & relations**, the municipality has written rules of conduct about how to behave on social media for other employees and what news they can spread on social media. They deliberately give employees the freedom to express their doings online without a lot of rules.

Looking at the **presence** on social media, Oldenzaal looks at the usefulness of social networking sites. They made a choice for Facebook for the more informal messages, Twitter for the formal messages and YouTube for videos. They do not have any policies defined about how fast they want to react on questions online. In practice they try to answer questions and suggestions as soon as possible, within one day.

In terms of **strategies & policies**, they do not have specific police plans for the use of social media. The employees do focus on transparency and integrating the website and new messages with social media.

In terms of **finance**, the municipality does not have a specific budget for social media. Until now they online use resources that are for free. When money or personnel needs to be used for social media for specific projects in the future, then the budget for that project will be used.

#### 4.1.6. Municipality of Hof van Twente

The municipality of Hof van Twente is active on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube. Twitter is the most used account for them. They use this account for sending news messages and sending updates about council and information meetings. They also try to have interaction with citizens of the municipality by asking on a regular basis if they have questions for the councillors. They also answer to questions and suggestions. Hof van Twente also has a Facebook account, but there is not much activity there. A few messages are sent by the municipality. They also have a YouTube account. A few videos are posted there by the municipality. The municipality is in the phase of finding out what opportunities there are when using social media and what the capital gains can be.

The employees of the department of communication have **knowledge** about what social media are. They obtained this knowledge with following a social media training. Also other employees know how to work with social media; there have been meetings to discuss how they present themselves online. The mayor and aldermen also followed a Twitter training.

**Monitoring** takes place at the municipality of Hof van Twente, but not structurally. They monitor the most when they send messages themselves. There is no feedback back to the organisation about the information that is obtained during monitoring.

In terms of **sharing & relations**, the municipality developed points of attention for the use of social media for their employees. These points of attention are set out in the integrity policy.

#### *Performance municipality of Hof van Twente on criteria:*

Knowledge: 87.5%  
Monitoring: 30%  
Sharing & Relations: 40%  
Presence: 40%  
Strategies & Policies: 25%  
Budget: 50%

*An overview can be found in Appendix III*

Table 9: The performance of the municipality of Hof van Twente

The **presence** on social media is a choice from the municipality not to be very active on different platforms. First they want to find out what their strategy is and what they want to achieve with social media.

The municipality does not have written out [strategy & policies](#). There are no policy plans for the use of social media. When the strategy and plans are formulated, they will be integrated with existing communication policies.

In terms of [finance](#), Hof van Twente has a temporary budget for the use of social media. However, it is not clear yet how this budget will be spent.

## **4.2. Description of social media usage at the studied organisations**

In this section a description is given about to what extent the organisations make use of social media and how they organise the use of social media at their organisations.

The organisations think consciously about how they want to make use of social media, what they want to achieve with social media and how intense they want to integrate social media in their communication strategy. Most organisations are still finding this out and are busy with developing a policy plan and a strategy for this. Most organisations also find that social media are not isolated communication tools; they see it as a channel that can exist alongside the traditional communication channels. Therefore a social media strategy and policy is not a separate policy or strategy, it is entangled with already existing strategies. This means in practice that most organisations at this moment are not using social media that much as they want to. They first want to have a plan and a strategy.

This is also visible on the social media platforms. Looking at to what extent the organisations make use of social media, every organisation is the most active on Twitter. By far the most activities on Twitter are sending news messages to the stakeholders. These are the same news messages that are placed on the websites of the authorities; they are automatically linked to Twitter. After Twitter, Facebook is the most used platform. This platform is used for the more informal news messages. There is not much interaction between the organisations and the citizens. When citizens ask question on social media platforms these questions will be answered, but there is not much initiative from the organisations to use the platform as a two-way flow of communication. YouTube is also used, but only videos are posted. There are no further messages and there is no interactivity there between the authorities and stakeholders.

Although there is often no official policy or strategy yet, the communication departments do have some practical guidelines for themselves about how many messages they want to send and how and how fast they want to react on questions and suggestions from stakeholders. For employees of the rest of the organisation they often did not develop a

extensive policy about how they need to act online. They often have some rules of attention or some do's and don'ts. Beside these guidelines they trust the employees on that they work on a basis of common sense and that they act with integrity.

The organisations spend little time in the promotion of their social media accounts. Because most organisations are still in the phase of developing the use of social media, they do not want to promote on a large scale. First they want to have everything well in hand, because they are afraid that this will otherwise end up in a lot of questions and suggestions from citizens. They think they are not ready for this yet. The promotion that takes place is promotion on their website or a small message in a (news) paper.

The monitoring of data on the internet happens in several ways at the organisations. At some organisations every now and then an employee of the communication department checks what is happening on Twitter by searching for their name for example. At other organisations this happens structurally and they also search for data using other key words. At some organisations they also use tools to track these data such as Tweetdeck or Hootsuite. This makes it easier for organisations to have an overview of interesting topics that is talked about online. The organisations do not use professional paid software. One is taking this in consideration. Some organisations also investigate the reputation of users online, for example to find out if suggestions from them can be taken seriously.

The identification of employees that are responsible for the social media usage at the organisations always happens on the basis of the people that are the most engaged with social media. Most of the time these employees were already using social media platforms for private purposes. This means that the identification did not take place on the basis of qualities that different literature asks for. This does not mean that these qualities are not present right now, but they did not select the employees on this basis.

Most employees of the communication departments have had a social media training. Some even have had several social media trainings. Some organisations think of giving employees also the opportunity to get a social media training, at other organisations the staff of the communication department is able to give a small training with basic principles to interested employees.

A majority of the organisations have the desire to have more interaction with citizens, but they find it difficult to achieve this. Currently social media platforms are primarily used as an additional communication channel to reach another audience than they reach with the

traditional communication channels. They also see it as a means to be able to let citizens participate in the policy making process. It is believed that it takes a lot of time to let people participate, if you want to do this right. The communication department does not have the time for this, because they are busy with social media in addition to their other work. There are a lot of ideas. An example is the initiative 'Henk Designs', a Facebook page of the municipality of Enschede. Such initiatives take a lot of time. Another criterion is that when citizens are asked to participate, it needs to be clear what happens with their ideas and information.

A couple of organisations consider developing a web care team that is linked to the customer contact centre. In this way questions and suggestions can be answered more quickly. Besides this, not a specific person is responsible anymore for the social media usage, but this will be linked to a job. There is no specific plan yet for this, they see it as a goal to work towards.

There are almost no special funds for the use of social media at the organisations. All the work for social media is something the employees do between their other regular work. Besides this, social media do not have to cost anything. When there are costs, this will probably be assigned to the specific project where the costs are made for. In the future it is possible that there will be a budget for social media usage, for example for a web care team what several organisations are taking into consideration.

	Municipality of Enschede	Municipality of Hengelo	Municipality of Almelo	Municipality of Haaksbergen	Municipality of Oldenzaal	Municipality of Hof van Twente	Fire department Twente	Police East Netherlands	
Content criteria	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Percentage
Knowledge	87.5%	75%	62.5%	62.5%	87.5%	87.5%	100%	100%	81.25%
Monitoring	30%	70%	30%	40%	70%	30%	30%	40%	42.5%
Sharing & Relations	20%	70%	70%	50%	50%	40%	100%	60%	57.0%
Presence	50%	70%	40%	40%	50%	40%	60%	50%	50%
Strategies & Policies	37.5%	62.5%	43.75%	62.5%	43.75%	25%	81.25%	68.75%	53.13%
Finance	16.67%	0%	0%	16.67%	0%	50%	0%	0%	10.24%
<b>Total Percentage</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>61.67%</b>	<b>43.33%</b>	<b>48.33%</b>	<b>51.67%</b>	<b>41.67%</b>	<b>66.67%</b>	<b>42.5%</b>	<b>51.04%</b>

Table 12: Overview performances studied organisations per category

Based on this study, all the organisations have an overall average score between 40% and 67%. However, there are some differences between the organisations. There are two organisations that have a higher overall score than the other organisations: the municipality of Hengelo and the Fire Department Twente.

The score of the municipality of Hengelo can be explained by the fact that they have a high score on every category, except Finance. The Fire Department Twente has a good overall performance, because they have a high score in the fields of knowledge, sharing & relations and strategies & policies. The expectation could have been that “major organisations” such as the municipality of Enschede and for example the Police East-Netherlands would have a higher score than the other organisations. For example, because of the probability that a larger organisation also has more employees, and also has more professionals as employees in the field of social media usage. There is also an explanation that larger organisations are more bureaucratic than small organisations, with the result that more policies, guidelines and strategies are defined in larger organisations. But this is also not the case. It could also be the case that a larger organisation has not defined policies and strategies yet, because it takes longer in a larger and more bureaucratic organisation to define these. It can be concluded that no logical explanation can be found for the differences in performance between organisations.

### **4.3. Presence criteria at the studied organisations**

In this section is discussed to what extent the studied organisations meet the criteria. This is described per category. In Table 12 an overview of the performances of the studied organisations can be found. The detailed performances of the studied organisations and the corresponding argumentation for that can be found in Appendices III and IV.

#### **4.3.1. Knowledge**

The category knowledge is the category where all organisations performed well. All the organisations almost fully meet the criteria that are part of this category.

At every organisation the employees know or have the possibility to know how to use social media. The employees of the communication departments have created social media accounts and use these to communicate with stakeholders. The employees of the communication departments also raise awareness for other employees.



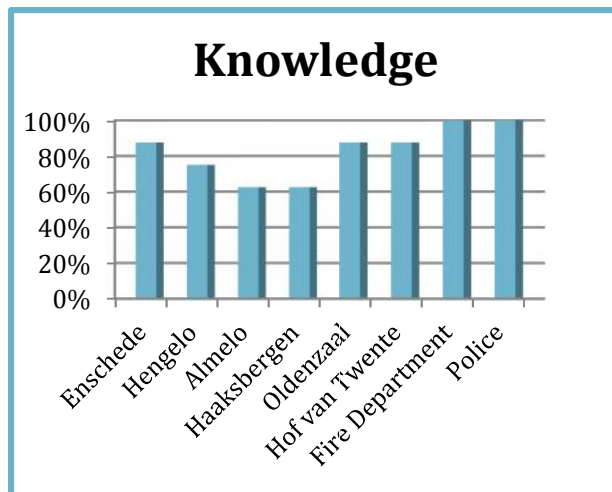


Figure 8: Performance in the category Knowledge

The organisations partly know who their audience is and what this audience expects of them. With regard to the municipalities, the involved employees do not specifically examine what the public expects from the municipality on social media platforms. That is why that it is more unclear for them what the audience expects from them.

For the police and fire department it is automatically more clear what the public expects from them, because they have a clear goal. Simply said they exist to keep the society safe and to fight fires. It is easier for them to know what the audience likes to know from these organisations.

Another difference between the organisations is that some have had a social media training for all employees of the organisation to learn how to use social media and what the characteristics are from social media platforms. At other organisations only the employees of the communication department have had a training and at some organisations there has been no training at all.

#### 4.3.2. Monitoring

In the category monitoring are more differences between the organisations.

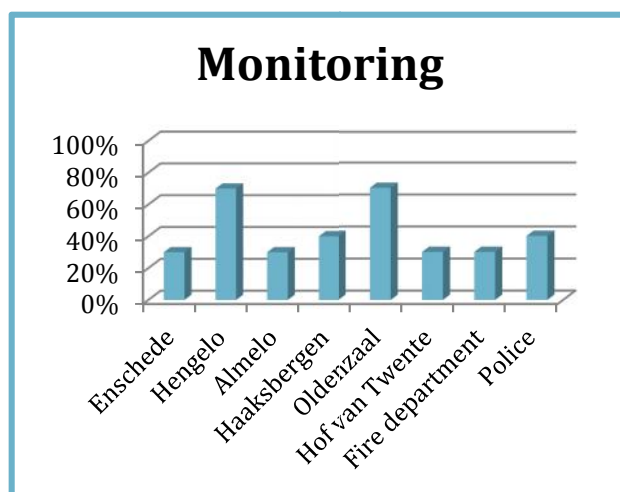


Figure 9: Performance in the category Monitoring

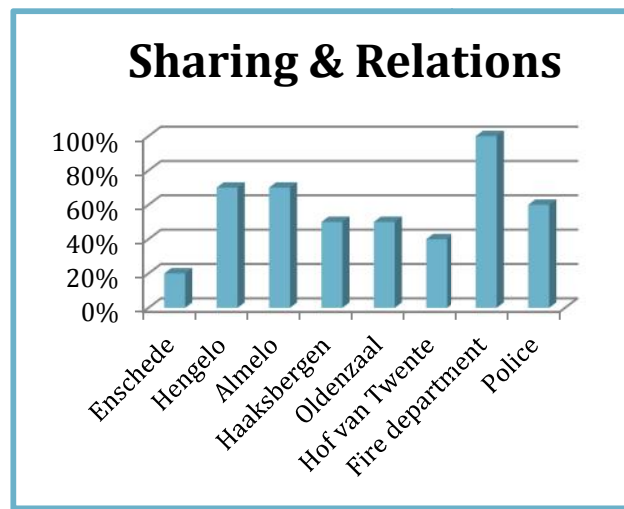
These differences are caused by the fact that at some organisations monitoring of information takes place on a structural basis and at other organisations on an occasional basis. Also, at some organisations tools such as software to help monitor information is used and at others not.

It is remarkable that at no organisation a metric is used to monitor users. A reason for this can be that only two organisations actually look at the reputation of users online. The involved employees do not use a method for this, because this does not happen structurally. As is described in section 4.2. the employees of the communication department use social media besides their other work, monitoring users may be too time consuming and using a metric for that may be then certainly too time consuming.

#### 4.3.3. Sharing & relations

In the category sharing & relations are also differences between the organisations.

The cause for the differences between the organisations is whether or not the organisations specified in a guideline or a note how the employees have to use social media. This involves who may



post and what may be posted on social media platforms and also about what the goal is of the relationship with users. Whether or not these points have been defined cause the differences between the organizations.

Figure 10: Performance in the category Sharing & Relations

#### 4.3.4. Presence

In the category presence the performance of all organisations is average.

At all organisations the employees think consciously about on which social media platforms they want to be active as an organisation. On the other hand, the involved employees almost not create small specialised

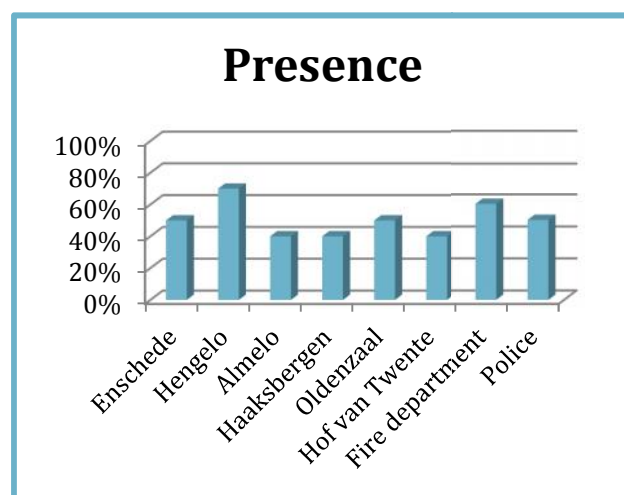


Figure 11: Performance in the category Presence

groups. There are only a few

examples where organisations created groups for users to inform or involve them in a decision making process.

#### 4.3.5. Strategies & policies

There are relatively large differences between the organisations at the category strategies & policies.

The differences are caused by the extent to which at the organisations goals, policies, guidelines and strategies are defined for social media usage. And also to which extent other strategies are congruent with the goals and strategies with social media usage.

Taken all organisations together, the performance is on every criterion average.

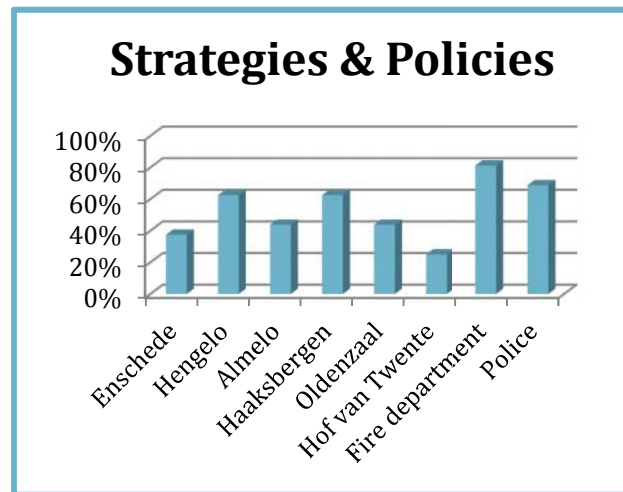


Figure 12: Performance in the category Strategies & Policies

#### 4.3.6. Finance

At the category finance the performances of all organisations are relatively low.

Five of the eight organisations have no budget for social media usage. The reason for this if there are costs involved some organisations allocate these costs to the involved projects. The employees that are responsible for the presence on social media platforms do that between their other work for the organisation. As a result no hours are allocated for the time that they spend.

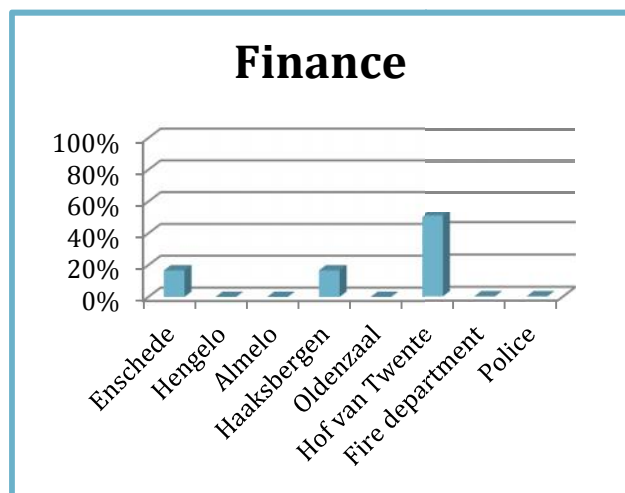


Figure 13: Performance in the category Finance

The other organisations have a budget for social media usage, but only in terms of personnel that is most of the time working for social media usage. One organisation has a budget, but does not have a plan yet to use it.

#### 4.3.7. Differences between categories

There are a couple of differences that can be identified in the performance of the organisations between the categories. There may be appointed one category where is scored well, namely the category knowledge. At four categories the organisations scored average: Monitoring, sharing & relations, presence and strategies & policies. At one category the organisations did not perform well: Finance.

The reason that the organisations scored the best in the category knowledge, lies in the fact that every studied organisations is active on social media. When an organisation is active on social media, this means that there is at least knowledge present in the organisation about what social media are. In addition, at every organisation also at least some points of attention are formulated for employees about how to communicate online.

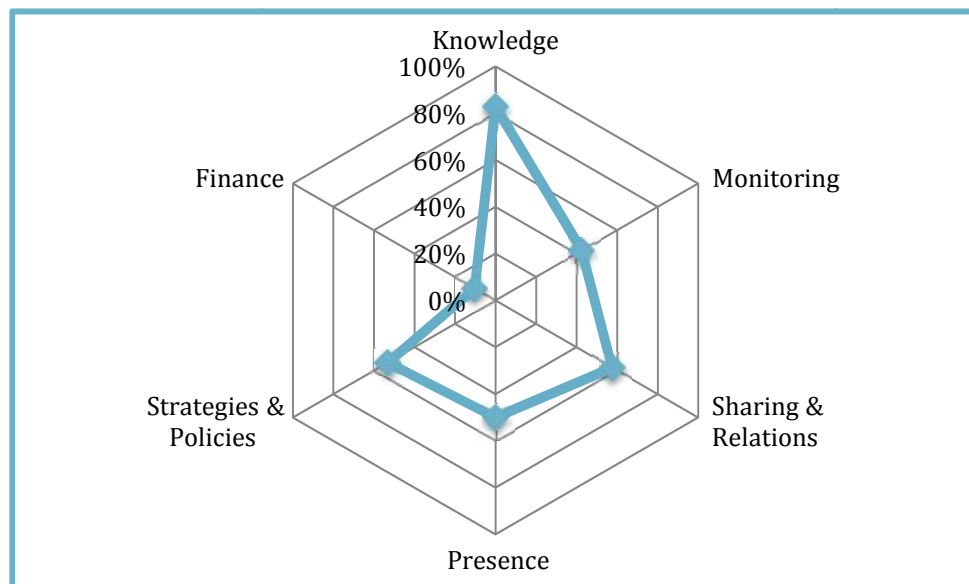


Figure 14: Performance of all organisations together per category

The organisations scored average on the categories Monitoring, Sharing & Relations, Presence and Strategies & Policies, this can be explained as well. In principle it is not necessary to monitor information and to establish guidelines, policies and strategies. It is in principle possible to create accounts and give an employee all responsibility to represent the organisation online. When this happens, in theory, the organisation will not perform well on these categories. Looking at the results of this study and the organisations taken together, the performance on these categories is around the 50%.

The performance on finance is low, because at the organisations there is the perception that a budget is not necessary yet. The organisations can perform online, without having a

budget. This can also be explained by the fact that all organisations currently have to make savings. There is no money that just can be used for social media. Another explanation is that they do spend money for social media usage. For example the staff works a couple of hours a week, they followed a social media training and they spend time to establish points of attention. For these activities a part of the budget of the communication department and other departments can be used.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter the results of the study are presented.

Looking at to what extent the organisations make use of social media, every organisation is the most active on Twitter. By far the most activities on Twitter are sending news messages to the stakeholders. After Twitter, Facebook is the most used platform. This platform is used for the more informal news messages. There is not much interaction between the organisations and the citizens. When citizens ask question on social media platforms these questions will be answered, but there is not much initiative from the organisations to use the platform as a two-way flow of communication. A majority of the organisations have the desire to have more interaction with citizens, but they find it difficult to achieve this.

Looking at to what extent the organisations meet the criteria, differences can be addressed between categories. In the category knowledge all the organisations have a high score. The explanation for this is that, before an organisation has an account on a social media platform, there at least is knowledge present in the organisation about what social media are and how the platforms can be used. The criteria in the category knowledge can be seen as a precondition. In the categories Monitoring, Sharing & Relations, Presence and Strategies & Policies the organisations scored average. In the category Finance the organisation had a low score, this can be explained by the fact that almost no costs are directly allocated to the organisation and use of social media.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter the conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented. The following section gives an answer to the central research question. The second section discusses recommendations for further research.

### 5.1. Answer to the central research question

The central research question of this study is:

*Which criteria are identified for the use of social media as a means for government communication and to what extent do local authorities meet these criteria?*

In order to identify criteria, information is collected from academic material about conditions for organisations to effectively use social media. As a results of this, thirty criteria about the organisation of social media usage at governmental organisations have been identified. These criteria have been divided into six categories in order to provide an overview of themes that clearly outline the subjects which have been dealt with. The criteria are being showed in table 13, a more extensive overview of the criteria can be found in section 2.4.2.

Categories	Criteria
<b>Knowledge</b> Consists of criteria where the knowledge about social media and its use is the central issue	1. Knowledge about what social media are and the forms they have 2. Knowledge about the audience and their needs 3. Social media training to obtain knowledge 4. Knowledge about cultural codes for online communication
<b>Monitoring</b> Consists of criteria about monitoring conversations and messages and about the reputation online	5. Monitor conversations and messages 6. Use tools and capabilities for monitoring 7. Define what to do with the reputation of the organisation and the users 8. Use a measuring instrument to measure the reputation 9. Monitor data about the reputation of users
<b>Sharing &amp; Relations</b> Contains criteria that include aspects of	10. Define the degree to which an object can be shared 11. Define who of the personnel is authorised to post on a social media platform

sharing information and about how to maintain and build relationships	12. Define what the assigned personnel may post 13. Define the kind of relationship the organisation wants to have with the users 14. Adapt the kind of relationship the organisation wants with the social media profile
<b>Presence</b> Consists of criteria about the presence on platforms, about knowing how to be active and how to respresent online	15. To have determined on what social media platforms the organisation wants to be active 16. Define how fast the organisation wants to react on a question or suggestion 17. Maximise presence through message dissemination 18. Have conversations and answer questions 19. Use social media for communication with small specialised groups
<b>Policies &amp; Strategies</b> Consists of criteria that propose to develop strategies and policies, in temrs of defining goals and strategies about how to achieve those goals.	20. Defining goals about what the organisation wants to achieve with social media 21. Develop policies for the use of social media 22. Develop strategies that are congruent with the goals of the organisation 23. Develop strategies that focus on transparency in the online activities 24. Integrate a social media strategy with other marketing strategies 25. Identify employees with the ability to listen to users and ability to create appropriate content 26. Make guidelines for employees who write on behalf of themselves 27. Develop resonsive information policies that are not tied to specific technologies
<b>Finance</b> Contains financial aspects for the use of social media	28. Resource allocation in the form of time and personnel 29. Budget for maintaining and upgrading technological infrastructure 30. Expertise in the organisation to fully utilise the range of applications available

Table 13: Criteria for social media usage at government organisations

The empirical part of the study was aimed to assess the extent to which local government organisations meet the identified criteria. To answer that question, eight local government organisations in the region of Twente have been selected. Measured is to what extent these local government organisations use social media and to what extent they meet the criteria. Therefore interviews and desk research have been used to investigate how the use of social media is organised at local authorities. The collected data are analysed by identifying to what extent the organisations perform on the criteria. For this a list is identified with values (0, 0.5 or 1) per criterion.

An overview of the scores of the organisations per category can be found in Appendix III. The main findings per category are summarised below.

In the category **knowledge** the organisations met the criteria for 82%. At every organisation the employees know or have the opportunity to know – with information that is distributed by employees of the communication department - what social media are and how to use them. Not at every organisation, especially at the municipalities, it is clear what the public expects from the organisations on social media platforms. Another difference between the organisations is the availability of social media training for employees at some organisations, at some organisations this is only available for the employees of the communication department and at some organisations there has been no training at all. An explanation for the high score can be that every studied organisation is active on social media. When an organisation is active on social media, this means that there is at least knowledge present in the organisation about what social media are and how to use the platforms. The criteria in the category knowledge are a precondition to be active on social media platforms as an organisation.

In the categories **monitoring**, **sharing & relations**, **presence** and **strategies & policies** the organisations partly meet the criteria , between 42.5% and 57.5%. At some organisations monitoring takes place on a structural basis and at other organisations on an occasional basis. In the category sharing & relations can be found differences between organisations in whether or not the organisations have specified in a guideline or a note how the employees have to use social media. This involves who may post and what may be posted on social media platforms and also about what the goal is of the relationship with users. In the category presence all employees of the communication departments of the organisations consciously think about on which social media platforms they want to be active as an organisation. On the other hand, the involved employees almost do not create small specialised groups. The differences at the category strategies & policies are caused by the



extent to which organisational goals, policies, guidelines and strategies are defined for social media usage. And also to which extent other strategies are congruent with the goals and strategies of social media usage. The average performance of the organisations in these categories can be explained. It is not essential to comply with the criteria that belong to these categories in order to be active on social media platforms. This means for example that it is not necessary to monitor information and to establish guidelines, policies and strategies. It is possible to create accounts and give an employee all responsibility to represent the organisation online. In this study all the organisations are still in the process of developing a strategy about how to organise the social media usage. This means in practice that the involved employees did monitor online and they also developed points of attention for employees. But most of the time there are no written official policies and strategies about the organisation of social media usage. That is why the performance of the organisations is average, this means that the organisations partly meet the criteria that are part of these categories.

In the category **finance** the organisations hardly meet the criteria (10%). According to the organisations a specific budget for social media usage is not yet required. The organisations can perform online, without having an assigned budget. This can also be explained by the fact that all organisations currently have to cut costs. There are no funds that just can be used for social media. In practice the organisations do allocate resources for social media usage. For example the staff works a couple of hours a week, they have followed a social media training and they have spent time to establish points of attention for the use of social media. A part of the budget of the communication department and of other departments can be used for these activities. The finance category is important, but the way it is measured at the organisations does not clarify the extent to which the organisations do spend money for social media usage. The money and time the involved employees use for social media is not directly allocated and administered.

A number of points of the criteria that are developed and identified in this study can be discussed. The results show that the criteria which have been defined have the ability to discern differences between the studied organisations. The different scores of the organisations per criterion, per category and the overall score, indicate this. Although the categories are designed only to simplify the framework, something can be said about these categories. All organisations almost fully meet the criteria in the category knowledge. It is understandable that the organisations have a high score in this category, because they all are already active on social media platforms and this requires knowledge in the field of

social media usage. The criteria for this category can be seen as a basic requirement for being active on a social media platform. This means that the organisations have a high score in the category knowledge, because otherwise it would not have been possible to be active already on social media platforms. With respect to the category finance, it was not possible to specifically measure how much time and money is spent for social media usage. This was not possible since most organisations have no specific budget for social media, they allocate the time and money to the budget for the communication department and other departments when social media is used for specific projects.

Another fact that can be pointed out about the criteria is the usefulness of the criteria. The use of social media brings challenges for government organisations, because it is a rather new communication tool that needs to be implemented in the already existing communication goals, strategies and daily activities of the organisation. The criteria measure the level of formalisation of government organisations in the field of internal organising this social media usage. It shows the extent to which social media usage is already integrated in the existing operations of the organisations. The criteria do not indicate the extent to which the organisation of social media usage is functioning effectively and they also do not measure how an organisation performs online.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

In this section the recommendations for further research are given. Further research on the issue of social media usage at local authorities is scientifically interesting for several reasons.

First of all, using social media as a communication channel is relatively new for local authorities. That is why the organisations are still in a stage of constructing their policy on how to organise their social media usage. There are many ideas that they wish to implement. It is interesting to repeat this study after a certain time to study to what extent the organisations have developed their social media usage.

Second, this study only focused on eight local authorities in the region of Twente. This number of units is too small to generalise the findings for the whole region of Twente, let alone for other organisations in the Netherlands. Therefore it is interesting to study a large group of local authorities in the Netherlands to draw conclusions about the differences between the organisations and finding general explanations for these differences.

Third, this study looked at how organisations internally organised their social media usage. The study did not focus on the extent to which organisations perform online for their

stakeholders and the relationship between the performance on the criteria (internal organisation) and the performance on the platforms. It would be highly interesting to ask stakeholders how satisfied they are with the government organisations being present on social media platforms and to relate these answers to how the organisations are internally organised their social media usage.

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# APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## 1. Kunt u beschrijven in hoeverre uw organisatie op dit moment gebruik maakt van sociale media?

- Welke platforms, bewuste keuze of niet?
- Door wie in de organisatie
- Intensiteit
- Intensiteit reageren
- Gesprekken of alleen eenzijdig
- Richtlijnen door wie er mag worden geplaatst
- Richtlijnen wat er mag worden geplaatst
- Doel van relatie met gebruikers op sociale media
- Wordt het profiel aangepast op de relatie met gebruikers (gesloten/open)
- Worden de sociale media kanalen ook gepromoot?

## 2. Is er kennis aanwezig in uw organisatie over sociale media en het gebruik ervan?

- Hoe is deze kennis georganiseerd, medewerkers in dienst/uitbesteed
- Sociale media training
- Communiceren via sociale media
- Personeelskeuze: kunnen communiceren met burgers, luisteren en reageren, verstand van sociale media

## 3. Hoe ziet het beleid er uit binnen uw organisatie op het gebied van sociale media?

- Doel met sociale media
- Welke strategie is er met betrekking tot sociale media?
- Strategie in lijn met: andere doelen organisatie, marketing strategie.
- Richtlijnen personeel
- Identificeren van personeel
- Transparantie naar de burger toe, culturele omslag naar meer openheid
- Richtlijnen door wie er mag worden geplaatst
- Richtlijnen wat er mag worden geplaatst, door medewerkers, communicatieafdeling en privé
- Wordt het profiel aangepast op de relatie met gebruikers (gesloten/open)

## 4. Worden gesprekken op sociale media platforms door uw organisatie gemonitord?

- Wordt er software voor gebruikt
- Gekeken naar eigen reputatie
- Gekeken naar reputatie gebruikers die iets plaatsen
- Wordt reputatie gemonitord

## 5. Wordt er binnen uw organisatie geld vrijgemaakt voor het gebruik van sociale media?

- Voor personeel
- Technische expertise

# APPENDIX II: CRITERIA WITH CORRESPONDING VALUES

## Knowledge

- 1- Have knowledge about what social media are and the various forms they have. Organisations need to know how to use social media to fully engage with stakeholders (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012).
  - 1 Employees know what social media are and the various forms they can take
  - 0,5 A part of the employees know what social media are and the various forms they can take
  - 0 A small part of the employees know what social media are and the various forms they can take
- 2- Have knowledge about the audience and their engagement needs (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p.242). It is important to know how to define your audience (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 41).
  - 1 It is known who the audience is and what they expect
  - 0,5 It is partly known who the audience is and what they expect
  - 0 It is not known who the audience is and what they expect
- 3- Social media training as a means to obtain knowledge. A training about how to use certain tools, when to use what tools and how to effectively measure their use. It is important to know how to use social media tools (DiStaso et al., 2011).
  - 1 Possibility for social media training for all employees of the organisation
  - 0,5 Social media training for a part of the organisation
  - 0 There has been no social media training at all
- 4- Knowledge about cultural codes relating to online communication. Online communities operate according to different norms of conduct than so-called “real” communities do (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 68). It is important to know how to communicate online with stakeholders.
  - 1 Employees know the cultural codes relating to online communication
  - 0,5 A part of the employees know the cultural codes relating to online communication
  - 0 Employees do not know the cultural codes relating to online communication

## Monitoring

- 5- Monitor conversations and messages about the organisation and its relevant topics on social media platforms (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 244).
  - 1 Monitoring takes place structurally
  - 0,5 Monitoring takes place, but incidental



- 0 Monitoring does not take place
- 6- Tools and capabilities to monitor the conversations and messages in a systematic way (DiStaso et al., 2011 ; Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 244).
  - 1 Use tools structurally to monitor
  - 0,5 Use tools occasionally
  - 0 Do not use tools
- 7- Define what to do with the reputation of the organisation itself and the reputation of the users. Reputation has significant implications for how to effectively engage in social media (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 247).
  - 1 Looked at both the reputation of organisation itself and of the users
  - 0,5 Looked at only the reputation of the organisation itself
  - 0 Not looked at the reputation of the organisation itself and of the users
- 8- When looking at the reputation of users, use a metric to measure the reputation.
  - 1 A metric is used to measure the reputation of users
  - 0,5 A metric is used occasionally to measure the reputation of users
  - 0 Not a metric used to measure the reputation of users / not looked at the reputation of users
- 9- When looking at the reputation of users, also monitor these data to obtain more information about the users.
  - 1 Data is monitored structurally
  - 0,5 Data is monitored occasionally
  - 0 Data is not monitored / not looked at the reputation of users

## Sharing & Relations

- 10- Define the degree to which an object (text, photo, video) can or should be shared (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 245).
  - 1 Clearly defined
  - 0,5 Partly defined
  - 0 Not defined
- 11- Define who of the personnel may post something on social media platforms on behalf of the organisation.
  - 1 Clearly defined
  - 0,5 Partly defined
  - 0 Not defined
- 12- Define what the assigned personnel may post on social media networks.
  - 1 Clearly defined
  - 0,5 Partly defined
  - 0 Not defined / No guidelines

- 13- Define what kind of relationship the organisation wants with the users on social media, such as the goal of the relationship and what to have in common with the users.
- 1 Clearly defined
  - 0,5 Partly defined
  - 0 Not defined
- 14- Adapt the kind of relationship that the organisation wants with its users with the way the organisation sets up a social media site/profile (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246 ; (Waters et al., 2009, p. 103).
- 1 Is adapted
  - 0,5 Is partially adapted
  - 0 Is not adapted

## Presence

- 15- Know on what social media platforms the organisation wants to be active. Know that some platforms have a higher social presence (social networking sites) than others (blogs) (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 246).
- 1 Deliberately chosen for the social media platforms on which it operates
  - 0,5 Partly deliberately chosen for the social media platforms on which it operates
  - 0 Not deliberately chosen for the social media platforms on which it operates
- 16- Define how fast the organisation reacts on a question or suggestion of a user and when to integrate in conversations on social media platforms.
- 1 Clearly defined
  - 0,5 Partly defined
  - 0 Not defined
- 17- Maximise the presence on social networking sites by good message dissemination through posting links to external news items, photographs, video, audio, post announcements (Waters et al., 2009 103). It is important to look at the usefulness of social networking site profiles.
- 1 Thorough message dissemination
  - 0,5 Partial message dissemination
  - 0 No message dissemination
- 18- Have conversations with users (two-way flow of communication) and answer questions (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 73) besides sending messages (message dissemination).
- 1 Structural two-way flow of communication
  - 0,5 Occasional two-way flow of communication
  - 0 No two-way flow of communication
- 19- Use social media for communication with small specialised groups, not for communication with an undefined group of people (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 41).

An organisation can benefit from the option to make group of users on social media platforms. Then you can select more exactly which users support you.

- 1 Makes use of small specialised groups structurally
- 0,5 Makes use specialised groups occasionally
- 0 Does not make use of small specialised groups

## Strategies & Policies

20- Define in goals what the organisation wants to achieve with the use of social media. The right way of using social media platforms will be found in understanding an organisation's needs (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 350).

- 1 Clearly defined
- 0,5 Party defined
- 0 Not defined

21- Develop policies for the use of social media. It is important not to work on a basis of common sense, but to develop a vision (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 41 ; DiStaso et al., 2011).

- 1 Policies exist for the use of social media by the organisation
- 0,5 Policies exist for a part of the use of social media by the organisation
- 0 No policies (yet) for the use of social media by the organisation

22- Develop strategies that are congruent with the goals of the organisation (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). It is important to have the social media usage in line with existing policies and goals (Bertot et al., 2012, p. 35).

- 1 Strategies with social media congruent with goals
- 0,5 Strategies partly congruent with goals
- 0 Strategies not congruent with goals

23- Any social media strategy needs to focus on becoming transparent in the online communication activities (Waters et al., 2009, p. 103). It is important to make information, data and processes accessible for the public and therefore accept the lack of control associated with social media (DiStaso et al., 2011, p. 326 ; Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249). It is important to shift the communicative culture from a model of selective dissemination to one of open conversation and therefore increase member engagement, participation and dialogue (Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 159 ; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 66-67 ).

- 1 Focus on transparency in the online communication activities
- 0,5 Partly focus on transparency in the online communication activities
- 0 No focus on transparency in the online communication activities

24- Integrate a social media strategy with other marketing strategies, whereby one points the audience to the other. Unless users are made aware of the existence of a social media forum, they are unlikely to discover it by chance (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249).

- 1 Social media strategy is integrated with other marketing strategies
- 0,5 Social media strategy is partly integrated with other marketing strategies

- 0 Social media training is not integrated with other marketing strategies
- 25- Identify employees who have the ability to listen and care about the users and those who can create content that is appropriate (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249 ; Aalberts & Kreijveld, 2011, p. 156 ; Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 67). Having the right controls in place is important, as personnel who communicate with users must be given enough discretion and authority to develop relationships (Kietzmann et al., 2011, p. 249 – 250). The organisation needs to find a balance between ethical (more focus on dialogue) and organisational communication (more focus on outcome).
- 1 Employees chosen for their ability to listen, care and creating appropriate content
  - 0,5 Employees partly chosen for their ability to listen, care and creating appropriate content
  - 0 Employees not chosen for their ability to listen, care and creating appropriate content
- 26- Make guidelines for personnel who write something under their own name. It is difficult to make a difference between private and work online.
- 1 There are guidelines for personnel who write something under their own name
  - 0,5 There are partly guidelines for personnel who write something under their own name
  - 0 There are no guidelines for personnel who write something under their own name
- 27- Develop responsive information policies that are based on principles that are not tied to specific technologies. This is important to ensure that policies remain relevant and useful over a longer period (Bertot et al., 2012, p. 37).
- 1 There are responsive information policies
  - 0,5 There are partly responsive information policies
  - 0 There are no responsive information policies / there are no policies

## FINANCE

- 28- Using social media requires resource allocation in the form of time and personnel (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009). It is important to provide constant attention to social media.. Creating a profile on a social media platform and then abandoning it will create only minimal exposure for the organisation and it could turn off potential supporters if they witness inactivity on the site (Waters et al., 2009).
- 1 Personnel and time are allocated for the use of social media
  - 0,5 Personnel and time are partly allocated for the use of social media
  - 0 No personnel and time allocated for the use of social media
- 29- Provide a budget for maintaining and upgrading an organisation's technological infrastructure (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 67).
- 1 There is a budget for maintaining and upgrading an organisation's technological infrastructure
  - 0,5 There is not a specific budget allocated to maintaining and upgrading an organisation's technological infrastructure

- 0 There is no budget for maintaining and upgrading an organisation's technological infrastructure
- 30- Have enough expertise at the organisation to fully utilise the range of applications available to use social networks to their capacity. This is an on-going process. An intermediate to advanced level of technical proficiency is often required (Greenberg & MacAulay, 2009, p. 67).
- 1 Expertise of technical proficiency is present at the organisation
- 0,5 Expertise of technical proficiency is partly present at the organisation
- 0 Expertise of technical proficiency is not present at the organisation

## APPENDIX III: OVERVIEW ANALYSIS CRITERIA

		Municipality of Enschede	Municipality of Hengelo	Municipality of Almelo	Municipality of Haaksbergen	Municipality of Oldenzaal	Municipality of Hof van Twente	Fire department Twente	Police East Netherlands		
Crit eria nr	Content criteria	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Total value	Percent age
	<b>KNOWLEDGE - total value</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26,5</b>	<b>82,81%</b>
	<b>KNOWLEDGE - percentage</b>	<b>87,50%</b>	<b>75,00%</b>	<b>62,50%</b>	<b>62,50%</b>	<b>87,50%</b>	<b>87,50%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>		
<b>1</b>	What social media are	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>	<b>100,00 %</b>
<b>2</b>	Audience	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	1	<b>5</b>	<b>62,50%</b>
<b>3</b>	social media training	1	0,5	0	0	1	1	1	1	<b>5,5</b>	<b>68,75%</b>
<b>4</b>	cultural code for online communication	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>	<b>100,00 %</b>
	<b>MONITORING - total value</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>42,50%</b>
	<b>MONITORING - percentage</b>	<b>30,00%</b>	<b>70,00%</b>	<b>30,00%</b>	<b>40,00%</b>	<b>70,00%</b>	<b>30,00%</b>	<b>30,00%</b>	<b>40,00%</b>		
<b>5</b>	monitoring	0,5	1	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	0,5	1	<b>5,5</b>	<b>68,75%</b>
<b>6</b>	tools and capabilities for monitoring	0,5	1	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	<b>5</b>	<b>62,50%</b>
<b>7</b>	reputation of organization and users	0,5	1	0,5	1	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	<b>5,5</b>	<b>68,75%</b>
<b>8</b>	metric monitoring users	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0,00%</b>
<b>9</b>	monitor reputation users	0	0,5	0	0	0,5	0	0	0	<b>1</b>	<b>12,50%</b>

	<b>SHARING &amp; RELATIONS - total value</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>57,50%</b>
	<b>SHARING &amp; RELATIONS - percentage</b>	<b>20,00%</b>	<b>70,00%</b>	<b>70,00%</b>	<b>50,00%</b>	<b>50,00%</b>	<b>40,00%</b>	<b>100,00%</b>	<b>60,00%</b>		
<b>10</b>	sharing an object	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	<b>4</b>	<b>50,00%</b>
<b>11</b>	guidelines who may post	0,5	0,5	1	1	1	0,5	1	0,5	<b>6</b>	<b>75,00%</b>
<b>12</b>	guidelines what may be post	0	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	<b>4,5</b>	<b>56,25%</b>
<b>13</b>	goal of relationship with users	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0	0	1	1	<b>3,5</b>	<b>43,75%</b>
<b>14</b>	adapt the relationship with the profile	0,5	1	1	0	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	<b>5</b>	<b>62,50%</b>
	<b>PRESENCE - total value</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>50,00%</b>
	<b>PRESENCE - percentage</b>	<b>50,00%</b>	<b>70,00%</b>	<b>40,00%</b>	<b>40,00%</b>	<b>50,00%</b>	<b>40,00%</b>	<b>60,00%</b>	<b>50,00%</b>		
<b>15</b>	on which platforms you want to be active	1	1	1	0,5	1	1	1	0,5	<b>7</b>	<b>87,50%</b>
<b>16</b>	how fast you want to react	0	1	0	0,5	0	0	0,5	0,5	<b>2,5</b>	<b>31,25%</b>
<b>17</b>	usefulness social networking site profiles	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	<b>4,5</b>	<b>56,25%</b>
<b>18</b>	also have conversations and answer questions	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	<b>4,5</b>	<b>56,25%</b>
<b>19</b>	make groups of users	0,5	0,5	0	0	0	0	0	0,5	<b>1,5</b>	<b>18,75%</b>
	<b>STRATEGIES &amp; POLICIES - total value</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3,5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6,5</b>	<b>5,5</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>53,13%</b>
	<b>STRATEGIES &amp; POLICIES - percentage</b>	<b>37,50%</b>	<b>62,50%</b>	<b>43,75%</b>	<b>62,50%</b>	<b>43,75%</b>	<b>25,00%</b>	<b>81,25%</b>	<b>68,75%</b>		
<b>20</b>	goals what you want to achieve with SM	0,5	0,5	1	1	0	0	1	1	<b>5</b>	<b>62,50%</b>
<b>21</b>	policies for the use op of SM	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	0	1	1	<b>5</b>	<b>62,50%</b>
<b>22</b>	strategies congruent with the goals	0,5	0,5		0,5	0,5	0	1	0,5	<b>3,5</b>	<b>43,75%</b>
<b>23</b>	focus on transparency	0,5	1	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	0,5	<b>4,5</b>	<b>56,25%</b>
<b>24</b>	integrate SM strategy with other marketing strategies	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	<b>4,5</b>	<b>56,25%</b>
<b>25</b>	identify employees who have the ability to listen and care	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0	<b>3,5</b>	<b>43,75%</b>
<b>26</b>	guidelines for personnel who write on their own name	0	1	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	1	1	<b>5</b>	<b>62,50%</b>
<b>27</b>	development more responsive information policies	0	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0	0,5	0,5	<b>3</b>	<b>37,50%</b>
	<b>FINANCE -total value</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0,5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>10,42%</b>
	<b>FINANCE - percentage</b>	<b>16,67%</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>16,67%</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>50,00%</b>	<b>0,00%</b>	<b>0,00%</b>		

<b>28</b>	resources for time and personnel	0,5	0	0	0,5	0	0,5	0	0	<b>1,5</b>	<b>18,75%</b>
<b>29</b>	costs for technological infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0,5	0	0	<b>0,5</b>	<b>6,25%</b>
<b>30</b>	technical proficiency	0	0	0	0	0	0,5	0	0	<b>0,5</b>	<b>6,25%</b>
	<b><i>Totale value per organisation</i></b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18,5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14,5</b>	<b>15,5</b>	<b>12,5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>51,25%</b>
	<b><i>Percentage</i></b>	<b>40,00%</b>	<b>61,67%</b>	<b>43,33%</b>	<b>48,33%</b>	<b>51,67%</b>	<b>41,67%</b>	<b>66,67%</b>	<b>42,50%</b>		



## APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEWED PERSONS

Dhr A. Maat, communicatieadviseur Gemeente Haaksbergen

Dhr. T. Schothuis, webcoördinator Gemeente Haaksbergen

Mevr. M. Dalhoeven, communicatieadviseur Gemeente Oldenzaal

Mevr. E. Koel, communicatiemedewerker Gemeente Hengelo

Mevr. P. Braat, senior medewerker communicatie Gemeente Hof van Twente

Mevr. S. Neesan, communicatieadviseur digitale media Gemeente Almelo

Dhr. B. van Heijningen, communicatieadviseur internet Gemeente Enschede

Mevr. L. Hilbrink, communicatiemedewerker Brandweer Twente

Mevr. B. Bottone, communicatiemedewerker digitale media Politie Oost-Nederland