



**2012 COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE AWARDS  
Category Worksheet**

**BEST PRACTICES, Social Media**

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**Name of Local Government: City of Terrace**

**Project Summary Paragraph**

To provide timely information regarding a possible flood event this year the City of Terrace, in partnership with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine, established a Facebook page with information such as water levels, emergency preparedness, and local evacuation alerts.

**Check off the social media tools you use:**

- text messaging
- comment-enabled blog or website
- micro-blog service (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr)
- instant messaging or online chat service
- online discussion forum
- social networks (e.g. Facebook, Google+)
- video or photo sharing service (e.g. YouTube, Flickr)

**Help us find your social media tools on-line** (provide website link, account or user names):

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/City-of-TerraceRegional-District-of-Kitimat-Stikine-Flood-Watch-2012/225224817593962>

**Project Analysis**

Please answer the question in 300 words or less in 11 pt Arial font (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked.

**1. FOUNDATION**

- a.) How did your local government come to the decision to integrate social media tools into business operations? Tell us about your process.

Earlier in 2012 the City began preparations for a possible flood event this June/July. We had a number of meetings and tabletop exercises to develop an effective response to any flooding that might occur. During these preparations it was decided to establish a Facebook page to provide residents and those in the surrounding areas as a way to receive information from the City and Regional District and for the local governments to be proactive regarding a potential flood event. Two staff members were assigned to develop the page and manage the information on it. The page went live on May 28.

- b.) How long has each of your social media tools been active?

The Facebook page went live on May 28, 2012 and was unpublished after the flood risk passed.

## 2. ROLE

Discuss the role of social media in your local government's overall communications strategy.

The page will eventually be rolled into a City of Terrace Facebook page as part of a new communications strategy for the City. Establishing the page provided an opportunity to test the use of a Facebook page for a specific event. Many individual Council members have their own Facebook profiles and they receive queries from local residents. Establishing an official City of Terrace page allows residents a way of directly communicating with the City on Facebook for a faster response time and to reach a broad audience.

## 3. SUSTAINABILITY

What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of your social media operations? (*e.g. staff time, staff training, plans, resources, financial*)

In preparation for any potential flooding and during the high water times, the City had two employees updating the site. Our intention is to phase this Facebook page into a City of Terrace page. As we develop our Communications Plan the maintenance of the site may be assigned. The financial resources and training required for this project were negligible.

## 4. INTEGRATION

Explain how the social media tools you employ are integrated, and how they facilitate two-way communication.

The Facebook page was promoted on the City of Terrace website and the local media picked it up and distributed information about the page as a source of information regarding the flood event. The page allowed residents to receive information about the situation, with frequent updates in plain language. Residents were also able to post photographs on the page which also contributed to the information available for the fans of the page.

## 5. BEST PRACTICES

What sets your local government apart from others in your implementation and use of social media? Why should your local government be chosen above the rest to represent "Best Practices in social media"?

The City worked together with the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine to provide a shared page for information on the 2012 freshet. This collaboration allowed us to provide important information to a broad audience in an efficient manner.

## 6. CHALLENGES

Tell us about some of the challenges you have faced in the implementation and operation of your social media platforms and the solutions to these challenges.

A flood can be a fast changing event. Staff would communicate information to the public through the page but needed to provide updated information regularly to keep the information on the page current and to assure those using the page that it was up-to-date and frequently monitored. Links to websites such as the Environment Canada Water Office allowed visitors to see real-time hydrometric data from that site.

7. ANALYTICS

Demonstrate through analytics or other data, how your local government's use of social media has supported dialogue between your local government and its citizens, community and business stakeholders.

Previously, the City of Terrace did not have a Facebook page. The establishment of a Facebook page has allowed the City to provide information to the public and at the same time the City has been able to gather information regarding the traffic to the page. From June 29, 2012 to July 2, 2012 the page reached 8,330 people and 177 people were talking about the page. We had 573 "likes" and through the number of fans the page attracted we had a reach of 85,279 friends of fans.

8. AWARENESS

Provide a specific example (case study) of how using social media has increased citizen engagement with your local government.

Establishing this Facebook page allowed the City to reach out to the public. Residents were able to post photos and questions on the page and receive responses from the city. Rather than answering dozens of calls on the same subject, posting an answer to a question on the Facebook page gave that information to other residents who might have been wondering the same thing.

9. ACCOUNTABILITY

How has this program/project improved upon accountability to the community's citizens?

The development of a Facebook page has allowed the City of Terrace to provide information regarding a potential flood event to our residents in a timely manner. It was interactive and those fans of the page that sent messages or posted on the page were able to receive prompt responses from City staff.

10. KNOWLEDGE SHARING

What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to implement the use of social media in their communications plan?

We recommend having a couple of people identified to be responsible for managing the page. We also recommend updating the information on the page throughout the day as the situation warrants. Using links to sites with pertinent information gives residents a one-stop shop to find information.