

Leadership 201 – Action Learning Scenario
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Using Science Center Social Media to Strengthen the USGS Brand

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Issue:

Today, close to half of the world's population (3.03 billion people) are on some type of social media. We're at a point in time where social media is the norm when it comes to the public getting their news, looking for information, and contacting companies/organizations whenever a question needs to be answered.

Social media isn't new to USGS -- we've been using it since 2007. However, as our social presence continues expanding and Science Centers begin to use it as a communications tool, we risk compartmentalizing our science to a point that neglects the broader strategic directions of the bureau. In doing so, we also risk diluting the USGS brand in favor of more Center-specific recognition, especially given the nature of reimbursable funding at some Centers.

Background:

The USGS's first exposure to social media came in 2007 when we launched our first podcast series. Over the course of time our social media presence has grown both in the tools we use and the number of people we are engaging with. USGS has a robust social media strategy that encompasses more than 150 accounts that are focused nationally, state-based, topic-based and organizational-based. These accounts serve to educate the public about the importance of USGS work, encourage discussions and questions about earth science issues, and provide customer service. When successful these social media tools help establish a more informed public, improved brand awareness and heightened recognition of USGS.

Challenge and Expectations:

In this scenario, we want you to assume that every Mission Area, Science Center, and Program has a social media presence of some sort. Some may have several social media presences (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) based on their organizational component, such as a Water Science Center, while others may have more topical driven accounts, or location-based accounts. Your goal in the scenario is to find solutions for being able to support the business and communication goals of the organizational component using various social media presences while simultaneously strengthening the USGS and DOI brand and priorities. How do we incorporate the bureau message in state, topic and organizational account postings?

Resources:

USGS Employee Use of Social Media - <https://www.usgs.gov/connect/employee-use-social-media>

DOI Social Media Policy - <https://www.doi.gov/notices/Social-Media-Policy>